



CHRISTMAS COUNTDOWN

HOPE CANDLE

As God's people were about to head into exile, God delivered hope through a promise. Someday, this will all be over—a King would come who would make all things new. Christmas celebrates the hope that God sent Jesus to fulfill that promise and rescue creation once and for all. Knowing that God has kept God's promises in the past gives us hope that God will continue keeping God's promises in the future.

READ

Isaiah 9: 6-7

ASK

What is something you hope for?

How can you stay hopeful even when you don't get what you want?

When have you seen God take care of your family?

DO

Light the Hope candle.

PRAY

"Dear God, thank You for reminding us during this time of year that You keep Your promises—every single time! Thank You for the promise of Jesus. Thank You for the hope that we have in Him. Please help us to remember what You did for Your people—and for us—when You sent Jesus to be our Savior. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name, amen."



PEACE CANDLE

The angel Gabriel appeared to Mary to announce that she would be Jesus' mother. This must have come as quite a surprise. After all, Mary wasn't married yet, and she had a different plan for her life. Gabriel reminded her that nothing is impossible with God. She could have been overwhelmed by this startling news, but she chose to trust God instead. Just like Mary, we can trust that God has an ultimate plan for our lives. Discover the peace that comes from believing in Jesus and God's plan for us.

READ

Luke 1:26-38

ASK

- Who are we planning on seeing this Christmas?
- How do you feel when your plans don't happen like you want?
- How can we remember to have peace, even when our plans change?

DO

Light the Hope and Peace candles.

PRAY

"Dear God, thank You for sending Jesus to be our Savior. We can see how Mary trusted Your plan, and You filled her heart with peace. Thank You for reminding us that You have a good plan for our lives, too. Help us to find our peace in You because Your plans are ALWAYS good. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name, amen."



JOY CANDLE

After Jesus was born, the first people to find out are some unassuming shepherds in a field minding their own business. The angel announced Jesus' birth along with an angel choir that proclaimed God's peace for everyone on earth. They rushed to see the baby for themselves. They were so filled with joy that they spent the rest of the night telling everyone they could about Jesus. We hope that this Christmas you would come to know God's love and believe that Jesus truly is the Savior of the world.

READ

Luke 2:8-20

ASK

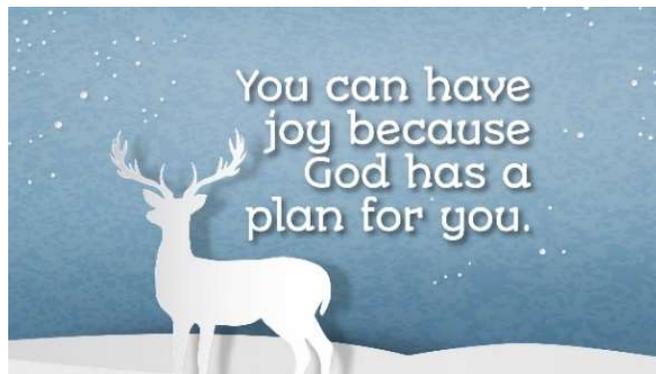
- What does it mean to have joy?
- Is there a difference between joy and happiness?
- How can knowing God loves us and sent us Jesus bring us joy?

DO

Light the Hope, Peace and Joy candles.

PRAY

"Dear God, thank You for this reminder that Your joy is for everyone. You love and care about each and every one of us. You love us so much that You sent Jesus to be our Savior! Thank You for the joy that comes when we put our faith in You. Please help us to trust You and live Your way every day. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name, amen."



LOVE CANDLE

From a human perspective, this whole situation must have seemed crazy to Mary and Joseph. Not only was Mary expecting the baby who would save the world, but now she and Joseph had to travel to Bethlehem for the census. When they arrive, there's no room for them to stay except for the place where animals are kept. As hectic as this might have seemed, this is exactly how God wanted Jesus to enter the world. Right from the start, God wanted to have a relationship with us. Even when we messed that up with our sin, God continued to love and make a way to rescue us. Jesus is proof that God loves us unconditionally.

READ

Luke 2:8-20

ASK

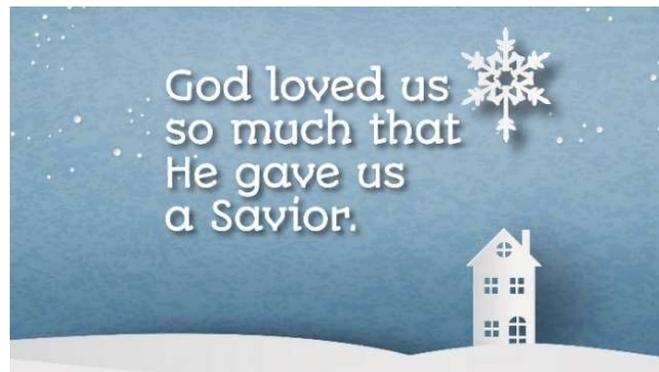
- What are we giving others this Christmas?
- How does it make you feel knowing God loves you so much?
- How can we show God's love to others?

DO

Light the Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love candles.

PRAY

"Dear God, thank You for showing Your love by sending Jesus. You kept Your promise to send a Savior, and You sent Him at just the right time. Help us to always remember how much You love us—so much that You sent Your own Son to rescue us. And help us remember the true meaning of Christmas as we celebrate with our family and friends. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name, amen."



CHRIST CANDLE

READ

John 1:1-5, 14

The “Word” John is talking about is Jesus. Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. He has been with God from the beginning, giving life and breath to all things. Christmas is the celebration that Jesus became like us. He lived and died and rose again, so that we could have life that lasts forever with God. This Christmas let’s celebrate that Jesus came to rescue us and God is always with us.

ASK

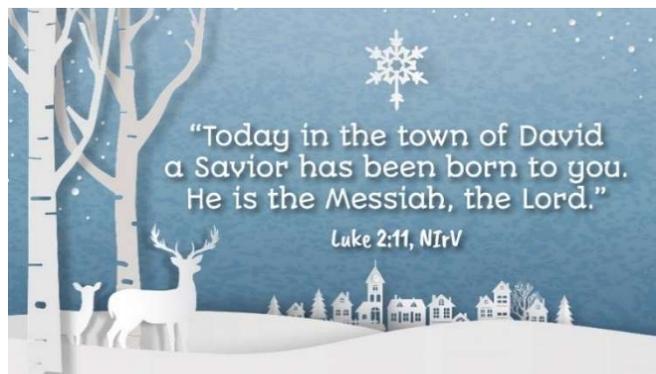
- What’s your favorite thing about Christmas? Why?
- How can we focus on Jesus this Christmas?
- How can we stay focused on Jesus throughout the whole year?

DO

Light all five candles with the Christ candle last.

PRAY

“Dear God, thank You for sending Jesus to be our Savior. Thank You for sending Jesus to be a light in this world that can seem so dark. This Christmas, keep us focused on Jesus, the true reason for why we celebrate. As we remember how much You love us, help us know how we can show Your love to others this Christmas. We love You. We pray this in Jesus’ name, amen.”



HOPE CANDLE

Isaiah 9:6-7 NiRV

6 A child will be born to us. A son will be given to us. He will rule over us And he will be called Wonderful Adviser and Mighty God. He will also be called Father Who Lives Forever and Prince Who Brings Peace **7** There will be no limit to how great his authority is. The peace he brings will never end. He will rule on David's throne and over his kingdom. He will make the kingdom strong and secure. His rule will be based on what is fair and right. It will last forever. The Lord's great love will make sure that happens. He rules over all.

Isaiah 9:6-7 NIV

6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

PEACE CANDLE

Luke 2:1-7 NiRV

2 In those days, Caesar Augustus made a law. It required that a list be made of everyone in the whole Roman world. ² It was the first time a list was made of the people while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ Everyone went to their own town to be listed. So Joseph went also. He went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea. That is where Bethlehem, the town of David, was. Joseph went there because he belonged to the family line of David. ⁵ He went there with Mary to be listed. Mary was engaged to him. She was expecting a baby. ⁶ While Joseph and Mary were there, the time came for the child to be born. ⁷ She gave birth to her first baby. It was a boy. She wrapped him in large strips of cloth. Then she placed him in a manger. That's because there was no guest room where they could stay.

Luke 2:1-7, NIV

2 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ² (This was the first census that took place while^[a] Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³ And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

JOY CANDLE

Luke 2:8-20 NlrV

⁸ There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby. It was night, and they were taking care of their sheep. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them. And the glory of the Lord shone around them. They were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news. It will bring great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² Here is how you will know I am telling you the truth. You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger. ¹³ Suddenly a large group of angels from heaven also appeared. They were praising God. They said, "May glory be given to God in the highest heaven! And may peace be given to those he is pleased with on earth!" ¹⁵ The angels left and went into heaven. Then the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem. Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and the baby. The baby was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ After the shepherds had seen him, they told everyone. They reported what the angel had said about this child. ¹⁸ All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary kept all these things like a secret treasure in her heart. She thought about them over and over. ²⁰ The shepherds returned. They gave glory and praise to God. Everything they had seen and heard was just as they had been told.

Luke 2:8-20 NIV

⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." ¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." ¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

LOVE CANDLE

Luke 2:1-7 *NirV*

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Luke 2:1-7 *NIV*

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CHRIST CANDLE

John 1:1-5 *NirV*

1 In the beginning, the Word was already there. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ All things were made through him. Nothing that has been made was made without him. ⁴ Life was in him, and that life was the light for all people. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness. But the darkness has not overcome the light ¹⁴ The Word became a human being. He made his home with us. We have seen his glory. It is the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father. And the Word was full of grace and truth.

John 1:1-5 *NIV*

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome^[a] it. ¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.