



Here Comes Heaven

AN ADVENT SERIES

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**Used by permission from Every Moment Holy by Douglas McKelvey*

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Family Prayer

“A LITURGY TO MARK THE START OF THE CHRISTMAS SEASON”

Instructions: The leader reads the part that is not bolded. The whole family reads the bolded parts together.

***Leader:** As we prepare our house for the coming Christmas season, we would also prepare our hearts for the returning of Christ.*

***Family:** You came once for your people, O Lord, and you will come for us again.*

Though there was no room at the inn to receive you upon your first arrival,

We would prepare you room here in our hearts and here in our home, Lord Christ.

As we decorate and celebrate, we do so to mark the memory of your redemptive movement into our broken world, O God. Our glittering ornaments and Christmas trees, our festive carols, our sumptuous feasts—

By these small tokens we affirm that something amazing has happened in time and space—

That God, on a particular night, in a particular place, so many years ago, was born to us, an infant King, our Prince of Peace. Our wreaths and ribbons and colored lights, our giving of gifts, our parties with friends—These have never been ends in themselves.



Family Prayer

They are but small ways in which we repeat that sounding joy first proclaimed by angels in the skies near Bethlehem.

In view of such great tidings of love announced to us, and to all people, how can we not be moved to praise and celebration this Christmas season?

As we decorate our tree, and as we feast and laugh and sing together, we are rehearsing our coming joy!

We are making ready to receive the one who has already, with open arms, received us!

We would prepare your room here in our hearts and here in our home, Lord Christ.

Now we celebrate your first coming, Immanuel, even as we long for your return.

O Prince of Peace, our elder brother, return soon. We miss you so!

Amen.

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Week One

DECEMBER 2-6, 2024

Advent Time

Monday: *Read Isaiah 40:30-31*

Q. Think back to a time of great anticipation for you. What were you waiting for? How long did you have to wait? Describe your feelings as you waited. Did it live up to your expectations?

Q. What does hope mean? How is hope different from faith?

Q. Interesting quotes to help conversation:

- *“...hoping is not dreaming. It is not spinning an illusion or fantasy to protect us from our boredom or our pain. It means a confident, alert expectation that God will do what he said he will do. It is imagination put in the harness of faith. It is a willingness to let God do it his way and in his time.” - Eugene Peterson, Long Obedience in the Same Direction*
- *“Hope is a projection of the imagination; so is despair. Despair all too readily embraces the ills it foresees; hope is an energy and arouses the mind to explore every possibility to combat them.” - Thornton Wilder, Theophilus North*



Week Two

DECEMBER 9-13, 2024

Advent Time

Monday: *Read Mark 1:4-5*

Q. The people in this story went somewhere that had a lot of meaning for them (the Wilderness). Think back and remember a place that meant a lot to you and your family. What memories do you have of that place? Why is it important?

Q. Can you name some places that are important to our country? Why are they important? What stories do they tell?

Q. What do you think is the significance of the wilderness to the Jewish people? Why is that place important? What stories does the wilderness tell?

Tuesday: *Read Mark 1: 5 & Deuteronomy 8:1-5*

Q. What do you think was going through the minds of the people leaving Jerusalem to go into the wilderness to see John the Baptist? Why were they thinking these things? How might God have been working in their hearts as they entered the wilderness?

Q. During Advent, we are asked to go (with our imagination) into Bethlehem, a stable, and fields with angels. How does God use these settings to stir our hearts for the coming Kingdom?

Wednesday: *Read Mark 1:6 & 2 Kings 1:7-8*

Q. When the Jews got to the wilderness, they saw John the Baptist. Of whom did his appearance remind them? Why is this significant?

Q. Who does a fat man with a white beard dressed in a red suit remind us of? What identity or characteristics do we assign to that man?

Q. How did John's appearance remind the Jewish people that the Kingdom was coming?

Thursday: *Read Mark 1:6-8*

Q. Who is reminding you lately that the Kingdom is coming? How have they done so (a transformation you've seen, a kind word, a smile...etc)?

Q. What is one tangible thing you can do this week to remind the people around you that the Kingdom is coming? How can you "light the firework?"

Friday: *Read Romans 15:13*

Q. Can you name a hopeless situation (or person) in your life right now? What makes that hopeless? What could you do to bring some hope?





Week Three

DECEMBER 16-20, 2024

Advent Time

Monday: Read Psalm 130:5-6

*Q. Do you think most people are patient? Why/Why not?
Would you call yourself patient? Why/Why not?*

Q. Why do you think we lose focus and patience with things that take a long time?

Tuesday: Read Psalm 27:13-14

Q. Read this quote from Eugene Peterson's Long Obedience in the Same Direction: "One aspect of the world that I have been able to identify as harmful to Christians is the assumption that anything worthwhile can be acquired at once. We assume that if something can be done at all, it can be done quickly and efficiently." Do you agree with Eugene Peterson? Why/Why not?

Q. What are some ways people DO manage to maintain focus on these things that take a long time (perhaps start by making a list of things that we normally have to wait a long time to get - drivers license, promotion,...etc)? How do these strategies relate to our own Spiritual Growth?



Week Four

DECEMBER 23-27, 2024

LET THERE BE LIGHT

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.”

- JOHN 1:1-4 -

Advent Time

Monday: *Read Psalm 27:1*

Q. Take a few moments to have everyone go around and share a time when they were afraid.

Q. How does light affect our fear?

Tuesday: *Read John 3:19-21*

Q. What kind of “light” is John talking about in this passage?

Q. Why are some people afraid of the LIGHT instead of afraid of the dark?

Wednesday: *Read 1 John 1:7*

Q. What does it mean to “walk in the light?”

Thursday: *Read Psalm 139:23-24*

Q. What is a search light used for?

Q. Why do we need God to search our hearts?

Friday: *Read John 8:12*

Q. How is Jesus the light of the world?





Week Five

DECEMBER 29 - JANUARY 3, 2025

Christmas Time

Monday: *Read Matthew 1:23*

Q. Can you share a story about when you felt alone?

Q. Why is it important to remember that God is with us?

Tuesday: *Read Matthew 28:19-20*

Q. We can't see Jesus. What does he mean by, "I am with you always...?"

Wednesday: *Read Luke 10:38-42*

Q. Would the people who you know you best say that you pay attention to your environment? (Do you notice the laundry on the floor?!)

Q. What are some things that are distractions to you?

Q. What usually distracts people from paying attention to God?

Thursday: *Read Hebrews 12:1-3*

Q. What does it mean to fix our eyes on Jesus?

Friday: *Read Psalm 121*

Q. How does it increase your joy to remember that God is watching over you?



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