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Christmas 2010

Devotions



Welcome to the final week of Advent! We
hope that this devotion offers you and your
household a sacred time together to spend
time with each other and God.

By Leta Behrens and Brigitte Weier

Devotional Format:

Faith+Open: To begin each day everyone picks an ornament off the tree that interests them. Have either a candle to light or use your advent wreath/candles. A song is also a part of the opening. You can use a hymnal or songbook or listen to a cd.

Faith+Share: Read scripture from a Bible of your choice and talk about the scripture and songs. There is also a time to hang your ornament back up and for households that desire to make an ornament from the supplemental pages.

Faith+Prayer: A time to pray together. Feel free to add in your own prayers or simply pray the one provided.

Faith+Blessing: This is a time to bless one another. You can hold hands and say the words together, each hold a candle, or dip your fingers in a small water bowl and make the sign of the cross on one another's foreheads.

Bible: any Bible of your choice! See www.faithformationjourneys.blogspot.com for suggestions

Music: if you like to sing together then use a hymnal (ELW and LBW hymn numbers are given. Or you can use a songbook. If you prefer to listen to music (cd, stapes, iTunes, etc.) then simply use any Christmas music you have with the suggested songs or go to a weblink or other music source.

Supplemental Pages: These include an ornament to make. You can take as many as you need or print from the links. The whole devotional is available online at:

www.faithformationjourneys.blogspot.com

December 24th

Faith+Open: Pick ornaments and light a candle

Song: Listen or Sing together *Away in the Manger* (ELW 277, LBW 67, or recording) and/or *O Holy Night* recording.

Faith+Share: Matthew 1:18-25

- Share your ornament and why you picked it today. Was it from someone special? Does it remind you of a special time?
- How is the story of the birth of Jesus different in Matthew than Luke?
- What is missing? What is added?
- Both stories have angels that give good news to Mary, Joseph and others. Who are people who share the good news of Jesus with you?
- Who do you share the good news of Jesus with?
- Hang your ornament back up while listening to song again or sharing why it's important and/or make ornament pattern (supplement page).

Faith+Prayer: God of Good News, we thank you for the giving of your son Jesus to us. Help us to share this wonderful gift with all around us. Thank you for truly being "Emmanuel, God with us." Be with us this holy night and all others. Amen

Faith+Blessing: Jesus the light that no darkness can overcome is with you/us now and always.

December 23rd

Faith+Open: Pick ornaments and light a candle

Song: Listen or Sing together *Silent Night* (ELW 281, LBW 65, or recording of your choice)

Faith+Share: Luke 2:1-20

- Share your ornament and why you picked it today. Was it from someone special? Does it remind you of a special time?
- Think about a time that you were surprised. Was it a good surprise? Do you think the shepherds were surprised to see the angel?
- If you were the shepherds would you have gone to find the baby Jesus? Why or Why not?
- How can we look for Jesus in our world today?
- Where do you see Jesus in your life?
- Hang your ornament back up while listening to song again or sharing why it's important and/or make ornament pattern (supplement page).

Faith+Prayer: Dear God, we thank you for good surprises. We thank you for all of the ways that you show us Jesus in our lives: our families, our friends and all creation around us. Thank you for the best gift of all, your son, Jesus. Bless all of us tonight and always, Amen.

Faith+Blessing: Jesus the light that no darkness can overcome is with you/us now and always.

December 20th

Faith+Open: Pick ornaments and light a candle

Song: Sing or Listen together *Come Thou Long Expected Jesus* (ELW 254, LBW 30, or recording of your choice)

Faith+Share: Isaiah 9:2-7

- Share your ornament and why you picked it today.
- Tell about time you have been in the dark (literally or figuratively) and how it felt to emerge to the light.
- What surprises you or brings you joy this time of year? How can you surprise or bring joy to someone else this year?
- Isaiah lists many names for God and we hear these names at Christmas for Jesus. What are some of your 'other names'? What word would you use to name God. (suggested resource book "What is God's Name" by Sandra Eisenberg Sasso)
- Hang your ornament back up while listening to song again or sharing why it's important and/or make ornament pattern (supplement page)

Faith+Prayer: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace-We thank and praise you for all that you have given us. Guide us in the dark with your light and teach us to share your Holy Spirit. We pray tonight especially for those experiencing darkness. May your light shine. Amen

Faith+Blessing: Jesus the light that no darkness can overcome is with you/us now and always.

December 21st

Faith+Open: Pick ornaments and light a candle
Song: Listen or Sing together *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*
(ELW, LBW, or recording of your choice—Jewel suggested)

Faith+Share: Psalm 148

Those who desire (recommended for young children) can do some acting out of this psalm! Have one person read and others become the animals and earth elements in a fun improv!

- Share your ornament and why you picked it today.
- How does the earth praise God? How do we praise God together? What is your favorite way to praise?
- Sharing our faith and traditions can be ways of praising—what is your favorite tradition this time of year and how can it help you remember to praise God?
- Have you ever heard angels singing? What do you think it was like for those who heard Jesus' birth announced? What would you like to hear angels singing for today?
- Hang your ornament back up while listening to song again or sharing why it's important and/or make ornament pattern (supplement page).

Faith+Prayer: God we praise you and thank you for your mighty works of creation, for all the creatures and people you have given us to love and be loved by. We lift our thoughts, voices, words, and sighs to you as we wait your coming. Amen

Faith+Blessing: Jesus the light that no darkness can overcome is with you/us now and always.

December 22nd

Faith+Open: Pick ornaments and light a candle
Song: Sing or Listen together *O Come O Come Emanuel* (ELW 257, LBW 34, or other recording—Amy Grant Suggested)

Faith+Share: Matthew 3:1-11 & Isaiah 40:1-5

- Share your ornament and why you picked it today.
- How do you prepare for Christmas celebrations? How does this devotion help you prepare for Christmas day?
- How was John the Baptist asking people to prepare?
- What are practices or rituals that we do in this season that we could carry with us through the year?
- Review or listen to the song again---what strikes about the words and/or music in O Come Emanuel?
- How is God with us today and in our tomorrows? How have you experienced God with you in your past?
- Hang your ornament back up while listening to song again or sharing why it's important and/or make ornament pattern (supplement page).

Faith+Prayer: Jesus who comes to be with us, we come before you in prayer and song and sharing our faith. Guide us in preparing our hearts to be open your Holy Spirit. Help us to remember in the darkest times and in the light that you are with us through your birth in Bethlehem and throughout our lives. Amen

Faith+Blessing: Jesus the light that no darkness can overcome is with you/us now and always.