



*Making All Things New*

## **Candle Devotions Advent and Christmas 2015**

**Advent 1:** Week of November 29-December 5th, 2015

Renewing Our Stories—Our renewal this week focus in on God’s story and our story and how the connect together

**Gather Together** around your advent wreath or other candle.

**Faith+ Pray:** God of story and song and love and grace, be with us this week as we await for you and as we walk in our own stories of faith. Be with me and my family and community as we renew our stories in you each day. Take care of those who wander and are lost, bless the food in our homes and the love in our hearts and send your mercy to those without.

Amen

**Light One Candle**

**Faith+ Bible:** Sunday or the day that works best for you, do the **Faith+Focus and Faith +Connect** that are on the following page. On other days do just the daily reading/reflection.



## Homes with Children Faith+Focus

**Read or tell Luke 2:1-7** or use a children's Bible. The story is of the going to Nazareth, the birth story of Jesus. Talk about the people in the story and where Jesus was born—it would have been kind of like a cave. Show different pictures of animals.

Recommended Children's Book: Who is Coming to Our House by Joseph Slate and Ashley Wolff

Tell the children where they were born, get out pictures and talk about what you did to get ready for them to be born.

Tell them in Advent we get ready for Christmas, for Jesus' birthday! Say, lighting the candle is one way we get ready. Have them point out the other ways—tree, decorations, special books, whatever you do in your home.

### Faith+Connect

Get some construction paper or any paper you have on hand and make a journal book with several pages. (or buy a sketch book or journal book). Write the words Renewing Our Story at the top.

Tell the children where they were born, get out pictures and talk about what you did to get ready for them to be born. Paste or draw pictures in the journal about their birth. Then draw, write, cut out magazine pictures or take pictures around your house of ways that you get ready for Christmas. You can do this all at once or a little each day! For multiple children, have them each do one or two ideas and put their names by them.

Play or sing a favorite Christmas song while you journal!

## Homes with Teens/Adults Faith+Focus

### Read Luke 21:25-36

Luke tells us to watch, to be present, to know God is coming and here. We begin Advent knowing that it is a season of urgency, busyness and a season where our faith and our world sometimes clash. We are invited to rest in the promises of God, experience Advent from a new place of calm and to renew our stories--the stories we live each day in the present and the stories that have shaped us and will shape us in the years to come. How does your story of living your faith each day get lived out? How does God's story shape how you will live and walk in the coming days of this Advent season. Take some time to pray for God's guidance, calm, and simplicity of love to renew your heart and your spirit.

### Faith+Connect

Get some recycled paper or take an old book and cover it with new pages. Write these headings at the top of pages: Renew My Story, Renew My Days, Renew My Spirit, Renew My Ways.

For this week, write this verse: "The one who was seated on the throne said, "See I am making all things new." Rev. 21:5 and take a few moments on renewing your story--how do you see your life connected to God and how to hope for God's love and spirit to be with you this advent. Also write a prayer for the world to be renewed in God's story focusing in on refugees or other parts of the world that need prayer.

Song connection: Listen to and/or watch this video of the song "Write your story" by Francesca Battistelli <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eKclmiTxqKg>

## Homes with Children Daily Bible

### Light One Candle

**Faith+Chat:** What was the best part of your day today? What was the hardest part of your day today?

*Looking back... Renewing our Stories rooted in God's story...*

**Monday:** Matthew 1:23—God is with us!  
Teach new word: Emmanuel

**Tuesday:** Psalm 79:13—Generations of family-talk about family members who do not live with you.

**Wednesday:** Romans 8:38-39—we are always with God.

*Looking ahead... Renewing our Stories hope in what is to come*

**Thursday:** Hosea 6:3—God promises to come to us in all kinds of ways. What are the ways that you see God in creation?

**Friday:** Acts 11:25-26—What church do you worship in? What are some things you learn and do there?

**Saturday:** Matthew 29:19-20—Jesus comes as a baby and then leaves as a grown up who promises that he will be with us always. What ways do we show Jesus' love is with us?

**Faith+Bless:** After your time of scripture mark one another with the sign of the cross on the forehead. You can use water, oil, or nothing. You are also invited to pray together about the things you talked about. Hold hands or sit around the candle and invite each person to say one sentence prayer to God. Then share this blessing: +May your story be renewed through the hope in Jesus+

## Homes with Teens/Adults Daily Bible

### Light One Candle

**Faith+Chat:** What is Renewing you today? Where do you need to be renewed today?

*Looking back... Renewing our Stories rooted in God's story...*

**Monday** Micah 4:1-5

**Tuesday** Psalm 79

**Wednesday** Luke 21: 37

Psalm 79:13 says 'from generation to generation we will recount your praise' after a long list of pleading for God's salvation. Micah prays for following in God's ways. As we enter into Advent, waiting for Jesus to come into the world, we wait knowing we are connected to God through these stories and through the promise of Christ. What stories from scripture resonate with you today? What brings you hope in darkness?

*Looking ahead... Renewing our Stories hope in what is to come*

**Thursday** Hosea 6:1-6

**Friday** Acts 11:19-26

**Saturday** Mark 11:27-33

We are connected in baptism through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Our story is that we are named and claimed children of God. How does your baptism story connect with your daily work and play? What about your story in the next year to hope to say about yourself next year?



**Advent 2:** Week of December 6th-December 12th, 2015

Renewing Our Days—Our renewal focus this week is on how we spend our days, our time, our energy

**Gather Together** around your advent wreath or other candle.

**Faith+ Pray:** God of all of our days, as we walk together in and through you be with us each day and each step. Thank you for the gifts you have given me. Open my eyes to see your grace and mercy each day and to share this love with others. Amen

### Light Two Candles

**Faith+ Bible:** Sunday or the day that works best for you, do the **Faith+Focus** and **Faith+Connect** that are on the following page. On other days do just the daily reading/reflection.

#### Homes with Children Faith+Focus

**Read or tell Luke 2:8-20** or use a children's Bible. This is the story of the shepherds and the angels hearing the news of Jesus birth.

Recommended Children's Book: This is the Star by Joyce Dunbar

The word angel means 'messenger'. Talk about messages. How do they get messages? Talking, letters, postcards, phone calls, notes from parents.etc.

The angels were special messengers to the shepherds so that they would hear of Jesus birth and know God's big love.

#### Homes with Teens/Adults Faith+Focus

##### Read Luke 3:1-6

How do we renew our days? What brings you the ability to feel refreshed, and ready for tomorrow? John the Baptist simply asked people to prepare the way of the Lord. You could also say John the Baptist connected people with the bigger story that was calling to them. How can we connect to a story bigger than our own? What promise of God is awaiting your voice to carry it anew?

## Homes with Children Faith+Connect

In the journal you created last week, pick a page and write the title *Renewing our Days*

Talk together about a message they could write to a friend or relative about Jesus. Write or draw that picture in the journal and/or in a letter that is mailed. You can also take a picture of it to email or post.

Then get out your advent calendar or regular calendar and talk about how many days until Christmas. Make a list together of things that you do to prepare. Then circle the ones that are most important.

### Daily Bible

#### Light Two Candles

**Faith+Chat:** Where did you see God today? Where did you need God today?

*Looking back... Renewing our Days with God....*

**Monday:** Luke 2:10—Do not be afraid! What are things that make you afraid? Pray about them & assure that God is there.

**Tuesday:** Isaiah 55:1-3—God helps take care of us and listens to us each day.

**Wednesday:** Ephesians 2:8—We have life with God each day and eternally.

*as a baby and then leaves as a grown up who promises that he will be with us always. What ways do we show Jesus' love is with us?*

## Homes with Teens/Adults Faith+Connect

In the journal you made last week or on a new sheet of paper, write the words *Renew My Days*. Now write out your holiday 'to do list' Get everything on it. Now look it over and place a star next to the things that are most important to you in these days of advent and a black dot on those that are less important. Reflect on how you will continue to walk through Advent staying true to your values and callings.

Write this verse at the top or bottom of your list: "So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day." 2 Cor. 4:16

Song connection: Listen to and/or watch this video of the song "All the Broken Pieces" by Matthew West

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X5L44RmHY9s>

### Daily Bible

#### Light Two Candles

**Faith+Chat:** Where did you see God today? Where did you need God today?

*Looking back... Renewing our Days with God....*

**Monday:** Isaiah 7: 7-10

**Tuesday:** Isaiah 55:1-3

**Wednesday:** Ephesians 2:8-10

We mark our days in Advent oftentimes by what we have to get done and where we need to be. Take time each day this week to just breath, read God's word and know that your day is more than a task list. Spend 5 minutes in silence today and reflect on how it feels to focus in on your spirit.

## Daily Bible continued

**Thursday:** Matthew 6:25-God cares for us each day, do not worry. What worries you? Who else takes care of you?

**Friday:** Isaiah 58:5-9—God asks us to help those who are in need. What are ways that you help?

**Saturday:** Philippians 4:8-9—Think about things each day that you are grateful for. Say them out loud or add them to your journal pages.

## Daily Bible continued

*Looking ahead... Renewing our Days in God's joy and promise...*

**Thursday:** Matthew 6:25-34

**Friday:** Isaiah 58:5-9

**Saturday:** Philippians 4:8-9

What we focus on and how we see things can shape our days, our attitudes and our hearts and actions. Philippians says to think on what is just, pure, pleasing, excellent and to know that the God of peace is with you throughout any turmoil. Take time today to name out loud to another person or to yourself or to write down 3-5 notes of gratitude or hope.

**Faith+Bless:** After your time of scripture mark one another with the sign of the cross on the forehead. You can use water, oil, or nothing. You are also invited to pray together about the things you talked about. Hold hands or sit around the candle and invite each person to say one sentence prayer to God. Then share this blessing:+May you walk with Christ in all your days+

**Blessing option:** To talk about how God's love surround us each day and in us all the time say this blessing together while making the sign of the cross from the head to the heart and from the left to the right.

God in my head  
God in my heart  
God on my left  
God on my right

## Renew Our Spirits



**Advent 3:** Week of December 13th-December 19th, 2015

Renewing Our Spirits—Our renewal focus this week is on our spirits, our hearts, our whole selves

**Gather Together** around your advent wreath or other candle.

**Faith+ Pray:** Holy Spirit, come. Come be present in our stories, our days and in all the ways we follow you. Surround our meals, our activities, our plans, our preparation, our neighbors and our strangers. Open our hearts and ears and eyes to know your movement and calling to us in this world. Amen

### Light Three Candles

**Faith+ Bible:** Sunday or the day that works best for you, do the **Faith+Focus and Faith+Connect** that are on the following page. On other days do just the daily reading/reflection.

#### Homes with Children Faith+Focus

**Read or tell Luke 3:15-21** or use a children's Bible. This is the story of John the baptist announcing baptizing Jesus

Recommended Children's Book: God Gave Us Christmas by Lisa Tawn Bergren

Jesus was baptized by his cousin John. John wanted people to know that Jesus was the Messiah, God's son who promised to save and love the whole world.

We baptize people today, often babies, as a way to remember and to announce God's love for each child. Tell your children about their baptism, look at pictures together. If they are not baptized talk about what it means and how God loves them even before baptism.

#### Homes with Teens/Adults Faith+Focus

##### Read Luke 3:7-18

Imagine that you are in the crowd listening to John the Baptizer. You hear people in the crowd asking him, "What should we do to prepare?" How might John instruct you, or your church, to prepare for the coming of God's reign? This week we focus on the renewal of our spirits--in connecting with God through prayer, preparing to know God in this world through reading scripture, worship, the meal and confession we are renewed with the promises of God's love and mercy and in welcoming the stranger in our midst.

## Homes with Children Faith+Connect

In the journal you created, pick a page and write the title Renewing our Spirits

Talk together about what a spirit it is—how we are filled inside with God’s love. Write the word Peace really large in the journal or on a big piece of paper, as big as you can find! Either color in that peace sign or use old puzzle pieces and glue them all inside the word piece. Talk about how we are renewed piece by piece and how God wants peace for our spirits and Jesus comes to help us find that and to give it to the whole world.

Listen to Joy to the World or Silent Night while you color or glue puzzle pieces! Parents/Grandparents/Guardians—check out Amy Grant’s “I need a Silent Night” for yourselves!

### Daily Bible

#### Light Three Candles

**Faith+Chat:** Where do you see peace? Where do you need peace?

*Looking back... Renewing our Spirits through God’s word....*

**Monday:** Luke 2:21 — Jesus was officially named! What is your name? What does it mean?

**Tuesday:** Psalm 25—We praise God with all of creation!

**Wednesday:** Romans 12:4-5—We can praise God with our spirits and our bodies. We are all one in Jesus.

## Homes with Teens/Adults Faith+Connect

In the journal you made previously or on a new sheet of paper, write the words Renew My Spirit with this verse as well: Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. John 14:27

Write the word PEACE large and fill it with colors or words that bring you peace and may bring the world peace. Another family activity to do would be to take old puzzle pieces and glue them into the word piece on a large sheet of paper or do a puzzle together and talk about how we are renewed piece by piece in all that we do and leave our hearts open to.

Song connection: Listen to and/or watch this video of the song

“Just be held” by Casting Crowns  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yutmTFtalks p>

### Daily Bible

#### Light Three Candles

**Faith+Chat:** How was your spirit renewed today? How did you share renewing spirit with another person or with the world around you?

*Looking back... Renewing our Spirits through God’s word....*

**Monday:** Romans 8:1-17

**Tuesday:** Ezekiel 11:14-31; 37-41

**Wednesday:** Romans 12:1-13

Life in the spirit is a walk of life that can be messy and heart breaking and also grounding and peaceful. We are promised by God that our spirits are a part of our whole being just as our bodies, feelings, and minds. In this third week of Advent our spirits may wane, our waiting may seem long. How are you staying mindful and spirit-full in this season?

## Daily Bible continued

*Renewing our Spirits in living and sharing God's promise...*

**Thursday:** Isaiah 40:26—Name all the things you can think of that God created. What is your favorite?

**Friday:** Luke 1:46-55—Mary sings a song of praise to God and her song makes her spirit glad. What are your favorite songs to sing? Sing one now!

**Saturday:** Psalm 51:10—God makes our spirits and hearts clean, forgiving us and loving us. What can you make clean? As you clean something talk about how God loves you always.

## Daily Bible continued

*Renewing our Spirits in living and sharing God's promise...*

**Thursday:** Isaiah 40: 12-31

**Friday:** Acts 21:1-21, 29-36

**Saturday:** Psalm 51:1-17

We come to God asking for renewal of spirit, a cleansing, a wiping the slate clean. Rest assured that God, through Christ, brings this not just to us but to the world. These three days as you read the paper and watch the news, pray for the hurting parts of the world, pick one to meditate on and make it a part of your spirit to know your calling in sharing light with the world and praying without

**Faith+Bless:** After your time of scripture mark one another with the sign of the cross on the forehead. You can use water, oil, or nothing. You are also invited to pray together about the things you talked about. Hold hands or sit around the candle and invite each person to say one sentence prayer to God. Then share this blessing: +May your spirit be renewed through God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit

**Blessing option:** To talk about how God's love surround us each day and in us all the time say this blessing together while making the sign of the cross from the head to the heart and from the left to the right.

God in my head  
God in my heart  
God on my left  
God on my right

## Renew Our Ways



**Advent 4 & Christmas:** Week of December 20th-December 25th, 2015

Renewing Our Ways—Our renewal focus this week is on how we walk with God

**Gather Together** around your advent wreath or other candle.

**Faith+ Pray:** God of all our ways, move within us in this last week of Advent. Help us to see you clearly in this broken world and make our paths follow you. Bring healing, hope, and love to this life. Amen

### Light Four Candles

**Faith+ Bible:** Sunday or the day that works best for you, do the ***Faith+Focus and Faith+Connect*** that are on the following page. On other days do just the daily reading/reflection.

#### Homes with Children Faith+Focus

**Read or tell Luke 1:39-56** or use a children's Bible. This is the story of Mary, Jesus mother, and the joy and peace she had in following God.

Recommended Children's Book: Song of the Stars by Sally Lloyd Jones

Mary's song brings us joy in the birth of Jesus and takes us back to creation. God created the whole world and sent Jesus to love it.

Talk about how we show love to one another at Christmas and other times.

#### Homes with Teens/Adults Faith+Focus

##### Read Luke 1:39-56

The song of Mary, the words of hope, promise and justice. These are words that we love and that we are also challenged by. Through music, the word and meal we experience how we renew our ways of following Christ. Where do you see the light of Christ magnified in your person, your life, and the ways of your family and community? Notice in the coming week one time each day when the light of Christ is made present for you by others.

## Homes with Children Faith+Connect

In the journal you created, pick a page and write the title *Renewing our Ways*

Talk together about what a path or a 'way' might be. Go for a walk around your neighborhood and pray for the people and the things you see. Or walk around your house and look at pictures and offer prayers for family and friends. Get out a map or globe and show different places of the world. Cut out a heart and write places you love on it then say a prayer.

Listen to *O Little Town of Bethlehem* while you cut out your hearts and pray

### Daily Bible

#### Light Four Candles

**Faith+Chat:** How did you walk with God today? How did God walk with you?

*Looking back... Renewing our Ways connected in faith...*

**Monday:** Luke 2:41-52: Jesus went to learn in the temple. How do you learn to follow Jesus?

**Tuesday:** Lamentations 3:22-23—God's love will last forever. What else lasts forever?

**Wednesday:** Luke 5:1-11—Jesus called the disciples and Jesus calls us to follow him.

## Homes with Teens/Adults Faith+Connect

In the journal you made previously or on a new sheet of paper, write the words *Renew My Ways* with this verse as well: The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning. Lam. 3:22-23a

Cut a heart shape out of map paper, an old map, or a piece of paper that you write the names of places you love on. Think about where your heart and where your journey need God's direction. Write a brief prayer or a couple of words as you consider this or talk about it as a family/household.

Song connection: Listen to and/or watch this video of the song "Through all of it" by Colton Dixon  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=91KliTa1ksY>

### Daily Bible

#### Light Four Candles

**Faith+Chat:** How did you walk with God today? How did God walk with you?

*Looking back... Renewing our Ways connected in faith...*

**Monday:** Ephesians 4:17-24

**Tuesday:** Lamentations 3:22-25

**Wednesday:** Isaiah 66:7-11

We are coming to the end of our wait for light, hope, Christ to enter the world. Emmanuel means God with Us. This is a statement and a promise. A way to live in this world with God and way to know God is in the world with us.

## Daily Bible continued

*Renewing our Ways of walking in Light...*

**Christmas Eve:** John 1:1-5—The Light comes to the world. Sing this Little Light of mine or Silent night together.

**Christmas Day:** Matthew 1:18-25—Jesus is Born! After you open gifts, read the Christmas story and remember the gift of Christ's love and birth.

**Saturday:** Isaiah 43:15-19—Remember that Jesus love, God's promise, and Holy Spirit continue on in our lives even after Christmas.

## Daily Bible continued

When you promise to be with someone, what does this look and feel like to you? How can **we** share God's promise of being with us even in (or especially in ) brokenness and mess?

*Renewing our Ways of walking in Light...*

**Christmas Eve:** Revelation 21:1-5

**Christmas Day:** 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

**Saturday:** Isaiah 43:15-19

God promises to be our God at all times. As we are getting closer to Christmas we seek to see new things and find peace in the world. Even as wars still rage and evil still is present where do we find light and see the promise of God break forth? How can we be the ones who heed the call of God's voice?

**Faith+Bless:** After your time of scripture mark one another with the sign of the cross on the forehead. You can use water, oil, or nothing. You are also invited to pray together about the things you talked about. Hold hands or sit around the candle and invite each person to say one sentence prayer to God. Then share this blessing: +May you be renewed in all the ways of God's love and mercy+

**Blessing option:** To talk about how God's love surround us each day and in us all the time say this blessing together while making the sign of the cross from the head to the heart and from the left to the right.

God in my head  
God in my heart  
God on my left  
God on my right



