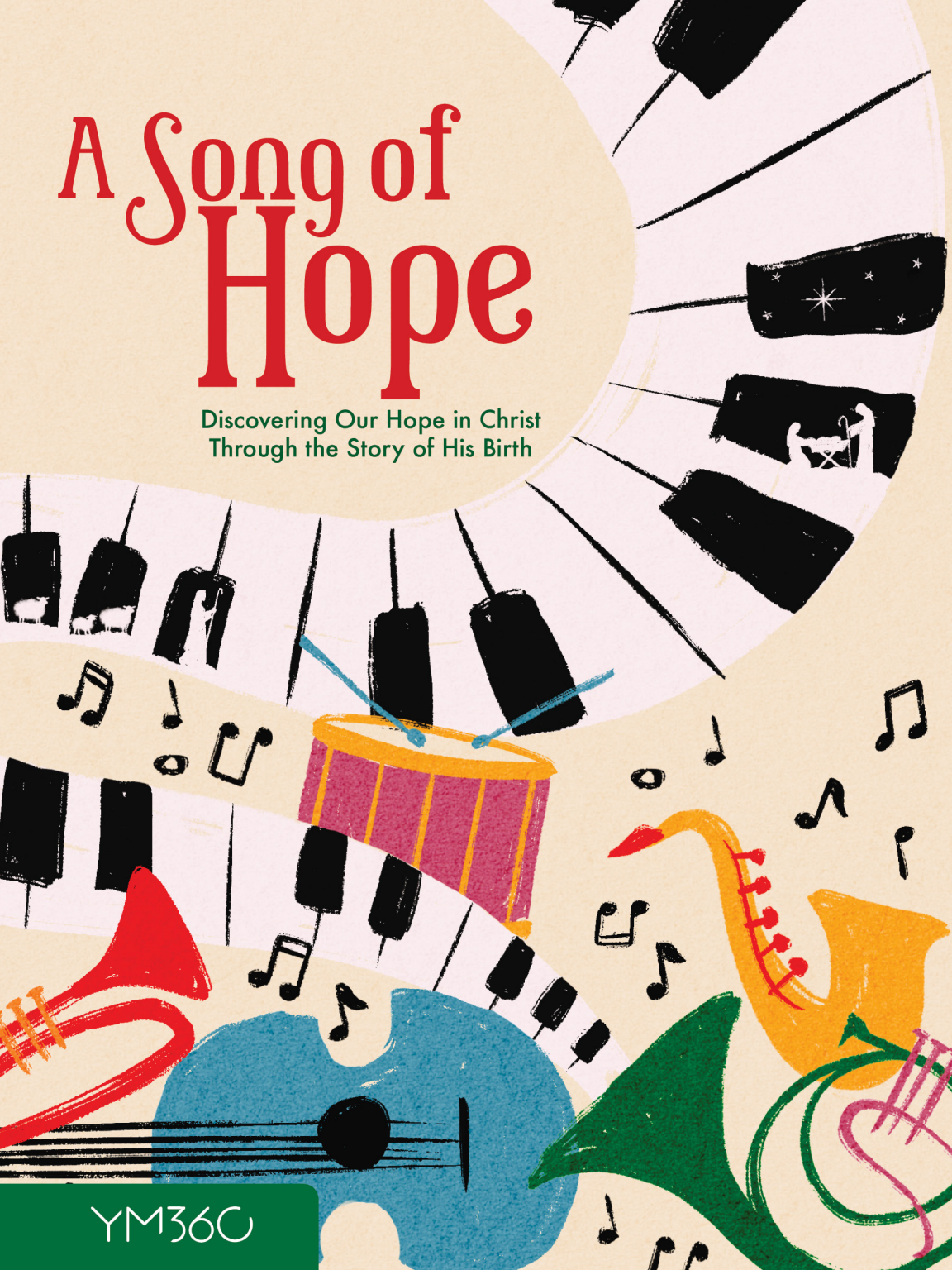


# A Song of Hope

Discovering Our Hope in Christ  
Through the Story of His Birth



YM360

# A Song of Hope

Discovering Our Hope in Christ Through the Story of His Birth

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# A Song of Hope

Discovering Our Hope in Christ  
Through the Story of His Birth

A 25-Day Christmas and Advent Devotional

PUBLISHED BY YM360



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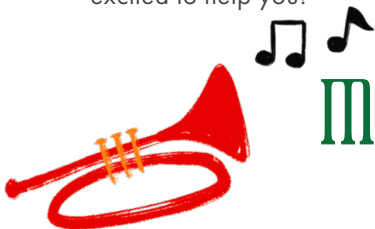
# about the Devotional

It's the best time of the year: Christmas is almost here! Over the next 25 days, we'll get to spend time learning more about Jesus, why His birth is so amazing, and how we can get ready as Christmas Day gets closer. Each day, we'll discover something new about the story of Christmas and the hope that Jesus offers each one of us.

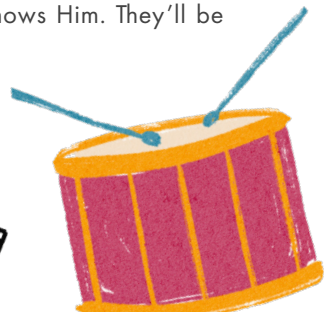
In each day of this devotional, we're going to learn more about that hope by reading verses from the Bible about Jesus' birth. We'll also look at the lyrics of some famous Christmas hymns, which are songs that people have sung for hundreds of years because they tell the truth about Jesus that we learn from the Bible. These songs are more than just beautiful music or holiday traditions. In fact, most people don't know that these Christmas hymns actually mention or even directly quote parts of the Bible, and were written to celebrate and to help remind us of the hope and joy that Jesus' birth brings to the world!

In the same way, the days leading up to Christmas are a time when we get our hearts and minds ready to celebrate the moment that Jesus was born. And that's just what this book is for! Every day, you'll have a Bible verse that focuses on a specific part of the Christmas story. Once you've read that verse, you get to read a message written just for you! Then, there are questions after each message and a fun activity you can do with your family.


As you and your family go through *A Song of Hope*, you will learn how you can spend the days leading up to Christmas preparing to celebrate the greatest gift ever given—God's gift of hope found in the birth of His Son, Jesus. It's going to be so much fun doing that together with your family! If you have any questions about Jesus or how you can know Him better, make sure you talk to an adult who already knows Him. They'll be excited to help you!



## Merry Christmas!



# Christmas Hymn Vocabulary Guide



Many of the Christmas hymns you'll see in this devotional book were written a very long time ago. As you read or sing these hymns, you are going to find some words that are new or might sound a little strange. That's because the English language back then and the English language today have some differences. To help you out, here are some words you'll see throughout this devotional and what they all mean.

Dost- do

Bid - to offer

Lo - a word used to call attention to something or to show wonder or surprise

O'er - over

Nigh - near or nearly

Herald - a royal or official messenger

'twas - it was

Thee - you

Thou - you



e'er - ever

Shall - will

Thy - your

Hath - have

Henceforth - from now on

Foretold - to tell beforehand

Doth - do

Ye - you

Hark - listen

Godhead - the nature of God, the Trinity

Hail - to greet with enthusiasm

Yonder - over there

Dwelt - lived





# DAY 1



## A First Promise of a Hope to Come

Read Genesis 3:15

We often think the Christmas story begins with Jesus' birth, but it starts long before then. In fact, we read about the promise of a coming Savior way back in Genesis, the very first book in the Bible. When God created the world, everything about it was perfect! God made Adam and Eve, and they lived in a beautiful garden. God provided everything they needed, including His love and His presence. Adam and Eve had one very important rule to follow. God told them they could eat food from any tree in the whole garden except for one.

But one day, God's enemy, Satan, came to Adam and Eve, looking like a snake, and asked them if God really said they couldn't eat from that tree. He wanted them to be disobedient and listen to him instead of listening to God. Adam and Eve chose to do what the snake said and ate the fruit from the one tree God said not to.

Adam and Eve's choice to disobey God was sin. Sin meant they could no longer live in the perfect garden created for them. Because God Himself is perfect and holy and sin is not, Adam and Eve would not be able to have the same closeness with Him that they once had. Sin broke what God designed, not just for Adam and Eve, but for all humans.

From that point on, sin became part of life on Earth, and that means hurt and pain and death for everyone. But because God loves us all so much, He had a rescue plan. He promised to send someone who would make it possible for sins to be forgiven. That someone was Jesus!

Today's Christmas hymn talks about waiting for Jesus expectantly or with a strong belief that something *will* happen. Even though we already know Jesus was born, died on the Cross, was raised back to life, and returned to Heaven, we are still waiting for Him to return and make all creation new again. That is definitely something we can feel hopeful and joyful about!



"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." - Genesis 3:15



# Reflection Questions

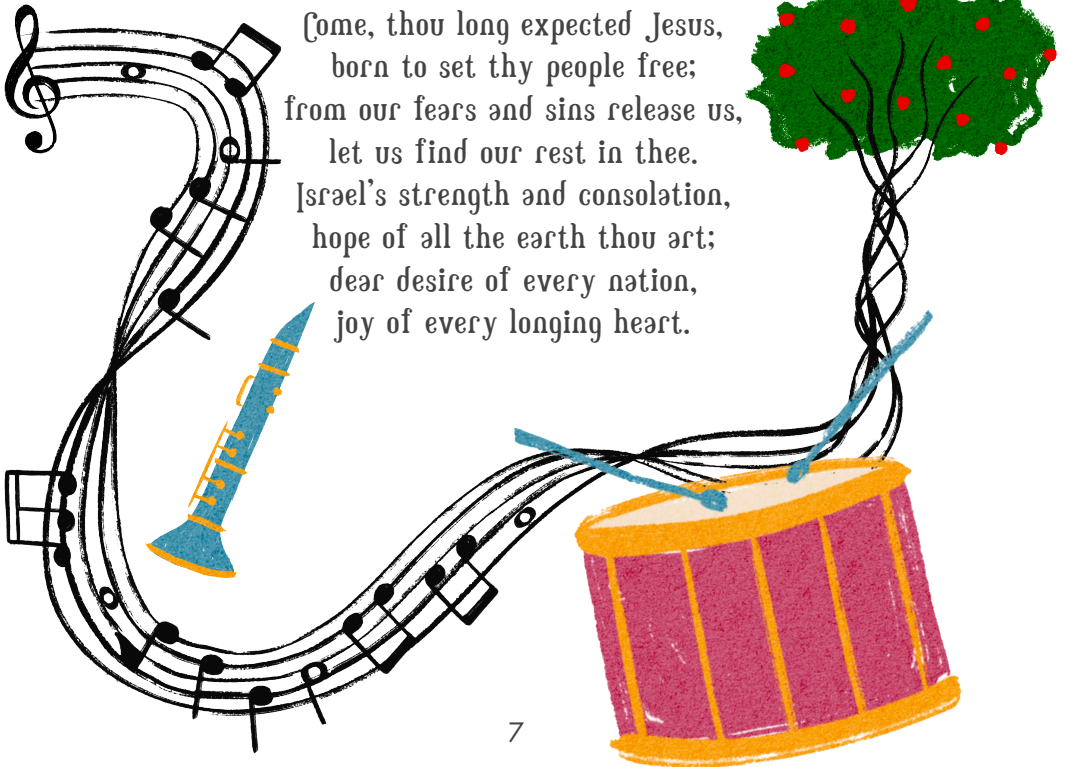
1. How do you think Adam and Eve felt after they disobeyed God?
2. What does it feel like to wait for a promise to happen?

# Activity

It's hard to wait for exciting things like Christmas to happen! Here's something you can create to help you see how many days are left until December 25. All you need is a clear jar and 25 marbles, pom-poms, jingle bells, or any other small item that will fit in the jar. Each day, remove one of the items. As the jar empties, you'll know that Christmas is getting closer until you remove the last item on Christmas morning.

## “Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus”

Come, thou long expected Jesus,  
born to set thy people free;  
from our fears and sins release us,  
let us find our rest in thee.  
Israel's strength and consolation,  
hope of all the earth thou art;  
dear desire of every nation,  
joy of every longing heart.





## DAY 2

# A Sign of Hope Through a Miraculous Birth



Read Isaiah 7:14

We often think that if a person practices long enough and tries hard enough, they can do the impossible. People can accomplish amazing things. We see it a lot in sports. Runners and swimmers set speed records. Skaters and gymnasts perfect exciting spins and jumps that no one else has tried. But just when it seems like someone's accomplishment can't be topped, another person comes along and does it better. Humans can truly only do things that are possible.

However, God is more than able to do the impossible! We see it in all the miracles He did throughout the Bible. He made a dry path through the middle of the Red Sea so the Israelites could walk through and escape from Egypt (Exodus 14). He protected Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego when they were put into a fiery furnace (Daniel 3). In the New Testament, we read about Jesus healing people who were really sick, feeding a crowd of thousands with just the food from a young boy's lunch, and even raising people from the dead. God can do absolutely anything!

In today's verse, we read more about the promise God made to send a Savior. Isaiah was a prophet, someone who received special messages from God to share with others. God told Isaiah how everyone would know the One He would send. It would be a baby that God miraculously placed inside of Mary, even though it was humanly impossible for her to be pregnant. But God did the impossible!

Our Christmas hymn today was written about Jesus' coming. The rose the song talks about reminds us of the beauty of the Savior, who came in a most miraculous way. Roses also represent love, and in this case, they are a symbol of the great love God has for all of us. As we look forward to Christmas, we remember the hope we have in a God who makes all things possible.



“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign.  
Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and  
shall call his name Immanuel.” - Isaiah 7:14

# Reflection Questions

1. Why would God want Jesus' birth to be different from every other baby's birth?

2. What other miracles do you know from the Bible?

# Activity

Can you do the impossible? The following list is made up of things that are physically impossible (or almost impossible). Have fun giving them a try!

- Lick your own elbow.
- Breathe in through your nose while talking at the same time.
- Tickle yourself.
- Move your leg in a clockwise circle and draw a "6" with your hand at the same time.
- Touch your nose with the tip of your tongue.

## "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"

Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming  
From tender stem hath sprung!  
Of Jesse's lineage coming  
As men of old have sung.  
It came, a flow'ret bright,  
Amid the cold of winter  
When half spent was the night.  
Isaiah 'twas foretold it,  
The Rose I have in mind:  
With Mary we behold it,  
The virgin mother kind.  
To show God's love aright  
She bore to men a Savior  
When half spent was the night.





# DAY 3

## Hope in the Root of Jesse

Read Isaiah 11:1-2

Trees are marvelous creations. We see the trunk, branches, and leaves above the ground, but what's underground, the roots, is often bigger than the tree itself. Tree roots anchor the tree and absorb water from the soil. They also take nutrients and chemicals out of the soil and use them to produce what's needed for the tree's growth.

When a tree is cut down, the small part of the trunk left above the ground is called the stump, which is still attached to the roots. If the roots still have life left in them, it's possible for a branch to grow out of the stump and become a brand-new tree.

This information helps us better understand what Isaiah 11:1 is saying. The Bible uses a lot of symbols, or one thing that stands for something else. We read about a shoot, a new branch, growing from the stump or root of Jesse. Jesse was King David's father. It's important to know this because Old Testament prophecies tell us that Jesus would be part of the family of David. However, David lived around a thousand years before Jesus was born. So how can this be? Well, Jesse was the father of David, who had kids, and those kids had more kids, who had more kids, and on and on until finally Jesus was born. Like the amazing beauty of an enormous tree full of branches and vibrant green leaves, Isaiah 11:2 goes on to tell us some things that would make Jesus more wonderful than anyone could imagine.

The song "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" reminds us first of the awful consequences of sin—sadness and mourning over separation from God. Because the consequences of sin are so terrible, people throughout history have longed to be rescued from it. Without a Savior, people feel hopeless. Jesus was the only one who could restore hope. When Emmanuel (another name for Jesus that means "God with us") came to rescue the world from sin, it was certainly a reason to rejoice then and now!



"There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord." - Isaiah 11:1-2


# Reflection Questions

1. Why do you think family is so important to God?
2. What do you learn about God's character in today's verses and the song that was written about them?

# Activity

Create a family tree together. You can look online to find examples and a template to use. Start with the people who live in your home. Add grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. See how far back you can go with your relatives. Ask older family members to share stories about their siblings, parents, and grandparents. If you're able, capture these stories in a video or write them down to go with your family tree.

## “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”



O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
and ransom captive Israel  
that mourns in lonely exile here  
until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, thou Rod of Jesse, free  
Thine own from Satan's tyranny;  
From depths of hell thy people save,  
And give them vict'ry ov'r the grave.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to thee, O Israel.



## DAY 4



# A Promise of Hope From the Town of Bethlehem

Read Micah 5:2

The world's largest-known tree is located in Sequoia National Park in California. It's called the General Sherman Tree. The trunk of this enormous tree is approximately 100 feet around. It would take about 20 people holding hands to completely circle it. This tree stands 275 feet tall, which is about the height of a 26-floor building. Scientists estimate that the General Sherman Tree weighs around 2.7 million pounds. That's the same weight as 900 average-sized cars. It is certainly an impressive tree!

You would think that an enormous tree like the General Sherman must have grown from a giant seed, right? Wrong! A sequoia seed is the size of a flake of oatmeal. It just doesn't seem possible that something so majestically huge could come from something so very small, but that's exactly the way God designed it.

God often does things in ways that don't make sense to us. For example, today's Bible verse gives us more information about God's promise to send a rescuer. It says that the ultimate ruler for God's people would come from Bethlehem, which was not what you'd expect.

When you think about a ruler, like a king or a queen, they should be born in an important place with lots of riches, right? Perhaps a palace decorated with gold and silver or a huge castle with all the finest furniture and artwork. Jerusalem was that kind of city. There were tons of people, many of whom were wealthy, and the Jewish temple where people came to worship God. It was a city of great importance.

But Bethlehem was neither wealthy nor important. It was a small town where people most likely were humble farmers and shepherds. There weren't any fancy buildings or powerful leaders. Yet that's exactly where God planned for Jesus to be born. "O Little Town of Bethlehem" was written about Micah 5:2. The song paints the picture of this quiet, ordinary place where an enormously extraordinary thing happened: Jesus, our Savior, was born!



"But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days." - Micah 5:2


# Reflection Questions

1. Can you think of anything else God created that starts out small but ends up being amazingly big and wonderful?
2. In what ways is Jesus unlike any other kind of ruler?


# Activity

There are a number of plants you can grow indoors that start out as itty-bitty seeds. Some of the best tiny seeds to grow into plants in the winter are herbs, like basil, parsley, or mint. You can also grow lettuce or mustard greens. As a family, research how to grow seeds indoors and choose what you want to grow. Unless you live in a warmer climate and can get them in a store, you'll need to order seeds online. As you watch your tiny seeds grow, think and talk about how God surprises us by doing things in ways we don't expect.

## “O Little Town of Bethlehem”



O little town of Bethlehem,  
how still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
the silent stars go by.  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
the everlasting light;  
the hopes and fears of all the years  
are met in thee tonight.





## DAY 5

# The Light of Hope



Read Isaiah 9:2 & 6

Many people have been afraid of the dark at one point or another. Darkness can signal our brains to go into high-alert mode. When this happens, it's difficult to keep our minds from playing tricks on us. We can easily convince ourselves that we see things that aren't there or hear strange noises, and it can be pretty scary.

When Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of Eden before they sinned, they were never afraid of the dark. In God's perfect world, fear didn't exist. All they knew was God's love. However, when they sinned, everything changed. Purposely doing what God told them not to meant that fear, sadness, and pain would affect them and all of God's creation for the rest of their lives. Every person after Adam and Eve, including us, would be hurt by those things, too.

Sin is often described as being dark. It's not the kind of darkness we see with our eyes. The darkness of sin is more of a feeling deep inside that things are very serious and awful, and no matter how hard we try, we cannot fix it ourselves. But God can!

When you're scared of the dark, think about what happens when someone comes in to comfort you. They turn on a light, don't they? As soon as it comes on, the darkness disappears. You see what's really there instead of the scary things you imagined in the dark. With the light on and someone who loves you nearby, all fear is gone.

In Isaiah 9:2, we read about people seeing light come to the darkness that was around them. This light brought hope into a world where fear was a consequence of sin. This light was God's promised rescuer: Jesus. As we continue with Isaiah 9:6, we learn some powerful and comforting names of Jesus that are also lyrics in today's Christmas song, "For Unto Us a Child Is Born," from a larger piece of music called Messiah written by George Frideric Handel. These names describe who Jesus was then, who He is now, and who He will always be!



*"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone... For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." - Isaiah 9:2 & 6*



# Reflection Questions

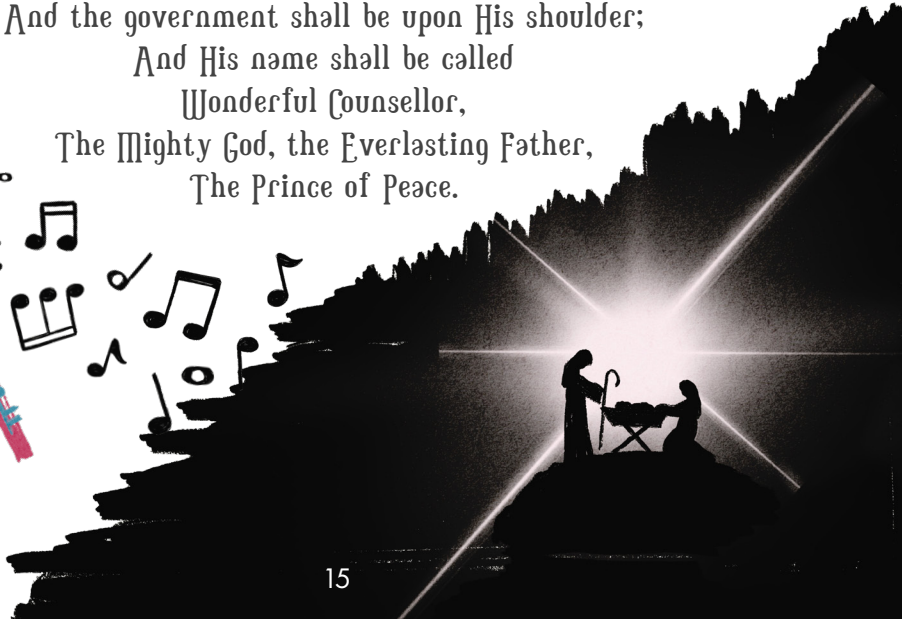
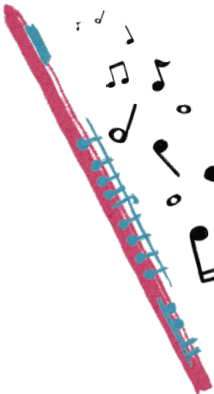
1. Why do you think sin is sometimes described as darkness?
2. How do you feel when you read about God's promises to send someone to rescue us from the hurt and pain sin causes?

# Activity

Create your own lights that remind you of this truth: God's promised Savior, Jesus, brought light into our world that was dark because of sin. You'll need four battery-operated tealight candles, four large clear plastic cups, and some colorful permanent markers. Using the markers, decorate the outside of the cups with the names of Jesus found in Isaiah 9:6. At nighttime, put a tealight in the bottom of each cup to shine the light into the darkness.

## “Handel’s Messiah: For Unto Us A Child Is Born”

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given;  
And the government shall be upon His shoulder;  
And His name shall be called  
Wonderful Counsellor,  
The Mighty God, the Everlasting Father,  
The Prince of Peace.





# DAY 6

## The Announcement of Hope



Read Luke 1:26-31

An announcement is a public statement sharing information about something that has already happened or is going to happen in the future. A meteorologist on TV gives the weather forecast for the next day and predicts rain. A store puts a sign in the window saying that they are having a sale on dog food. Announcements that give information about regular, everyday things don't have a big impact on people's lives.

There are more important announcements that are terribly exciting and life-changing. One example of this is when a new baby is on the way. Parents cannot wait to share news about a new baby. It's an announcement that everyone gets excited about and enjoys celebrating together. A new baby brings wonderful changes to an entire family—brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, cousins, grandparents, and especially moms and dads.

God makes announcements in amazing and surprising ways, and all of His announcements are big ones! When it was time to tell Mary she was going to be the mother of Jesus, God sent an angel named Gabriel to deliver the news. Can you imagine what it would be like sitting by yourself one moment and having an angel in the same room with you the next? The message Gabriel gave to Mary was certainly important, and it was one that was life-changing not just for her, but for everyone.

The Christmas song, "Gabriel's Message," reflects this event we read about in Luke 1. When Gabriel came to her with this very special news, Mary probably had lots of questions. We know one was trying to figure out how God had chosen her. There were things she wouldn't know about Jesus until He started growing and doing the work His Father had for Him to do on Earth. But at this moment, when Gabriel shared God's message with her, she knew her life was never going to be the same again.



"In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!' But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.'" - [Luke 1:26-31]

# Reflection Questions

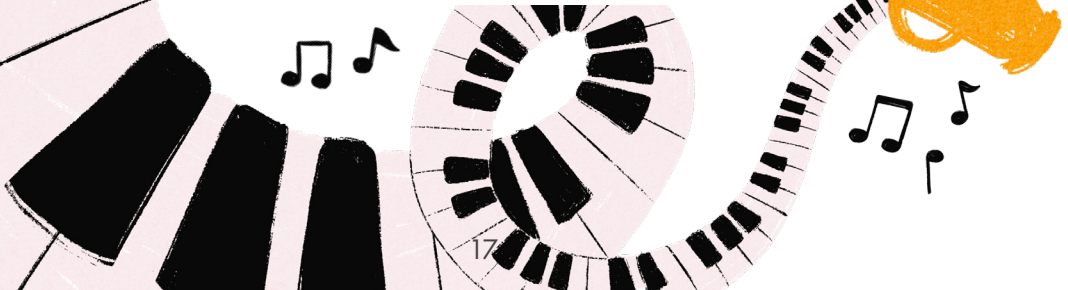
1. What's the most exciting announcement you've ever heard?
2. How do you think Mary felt when she found out God chose her to be the mother of Jesus?

# Activity

When a new baby is coming, parents often like to come up with fun ways to share the news with family and friends. Ask your parents to tell you the story about when they found out they were expecting you. Find out how they felt about the news, how they told other people, and what they did to get ready for you.

## “Gabriel’s Message (The Angel Gabriel From Heaven Came)”

The angel Gabriel from heaven came  
His wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame,  
“All hail,” said he, “thou lowly maiden Mary,  
Most highly favored lady,” Gloria!  
“For know a blessed mother thou shalt be,  
All generations laud and honor thee,  
Thy Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,  
Most highly favored lady,” Gloria!



# DAY 7



## Joseph's Reassurance of Hope

Read Matthew 1:18-21




Our brains make up stories in our minds at night called dreams. It's almost like having a movie playing while we sleep that only we can see. Dreams can appear very much like real life with familiar people, places, and situations that all seem very normal. Some dreams can be funny or silly, having no similarities to real life at all, like dogs and cats being able to walk and talk like humans or people living underwater while all the fish live on land.

Did you know God can communicate through dreams? The Bible talks about people like Jacob, Solomon, and Daniel, who heard from God in their dreams. Today, God speaks to us through the Bible, but He could still do it through a dream if He wanted.

When Joseph found out Mary was going to have a child, he probably felt confused and maybe even upset. This wasn't the way he and Mary planned to become parents. He decided the best thing to do was to end their engagement quietly so it wouldn't embarrass Mary. What Joseph didn't know was that God had a different plan in mind. While Joseph was sleeping, God sent an angel in a dream to tell him not to leave Mary. The angel told Joseph that Mary's baby was created miraculously by the Holy Spirit, and God wanted him to go ahead and marry her. It was all part of the plan that God had to send Jesus to our world as the promised Savior.

As we listen to the song "What Child Is This?" we hear the wonder this infant stirred up in people. Everything we read in the Bible about Jesus's birth, including this passage from Matthew 1, speaks of the hope that fills every heart that knows what Jesus came to do. Although he was a tiny newborn, He was not at all like any other baby the world had ever known. Jesus was the Savior God promised to send to forgive our sins and restore our relationship as a child in God's family.



"Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.'" - Matthew 1:18-21


# Reflection Questions

1. How do you think Joseph felt after God spoke to him about the baby Mary was going to have?
2. Why do you think our hearts are filled with hope when we read God's words?

# Activity

A line in today's Christmas carol says, "haste, haste to bring Him laud." Haste means to do something quickly and with urgency. Laud is another word for praise. So, the song encourages all of us to be quick to give praise to Jesus, not just at Christmas time, but all year long. As a family, get a large piece of paper or poster board and some markers and crayons. Work together to fill the paper with as many things you can think of to praise Jesus for. You could include things you've already read about Him in the Bible verses and songs in this devotional, along with anything else you can think of! Display your finished project somewhere in your home and use it as a reminder to praise Jesus.

## "What Child Is This?"



What Child is this who, laid to rest  
On Mary's lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,  
While shepherds watch are keeping?  
This, this is Christ the King,  
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:  
Haste, haste, to bring Him laud,  
The Babe, the Son of Mary!



A decorative header featuring musical notes and a red flute. The text 'DAY 8' is in green, 'Mary's Song of Hope' is in red, and 'Read Luke 1:46-49' is in green.

# DAY 8

## Mary's Song of Hope

Read Luke 1:46-49

From the very first note that was ever sung or played on an instrument, music has been impacting people's lives throughout time. Experts who study the effects of music have found many ways it benefits our lives. If you're feeling sad, upbeat music can help boost your mood. As you sing and dance along, your brain produces something called endorphins, which are naturally occurring chemicals that help you feel happier. When you feel anxious or stressed, listening to gentle music can help you feel calmer and more peaceful. Music can make exercise more productive by motivating you to work out longer and harder. It can improve memory and mental focus. It may even help people sleep better and lessen the feeling of pain after surgery or injury. Music is amazing. Music fills our hearts with many emotions, including hope.

Here's the best part: God created music and gave people the ability to sing, play instruments, and compose songs. The Bible mentions music over 400 times, and the longest book of the Bible, Psalms, is an entire collection of songs. God talks about making music with instruments, singing, and dancing, all as special ways to worship Him. There are many verses in God's Word that tell us to sing songs of praise.

In addition to the book of Psalms, there are additional special songs of worship written down in other books of the Bible. One of them is found in Luke 1:46-55. After Gabriel told Mary about Jesus, she went to visit her relative, Elizabeth. During this visit, Mary shares a song from her heart and praises God, who she trusts and obeys.

The lyrics of Mary's song found in this passage of Scripture have been recited and also set to music and sung in churches for hundreds of years, especially at Christmas time. This ancient hymn encourages us to reflect on how wondrous God is as He fulfills His promise of a Savior in sending Jesus to bring the hope of salvation to the world.



"And Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.'" - Luke 1:46-49

# Reflection Questions

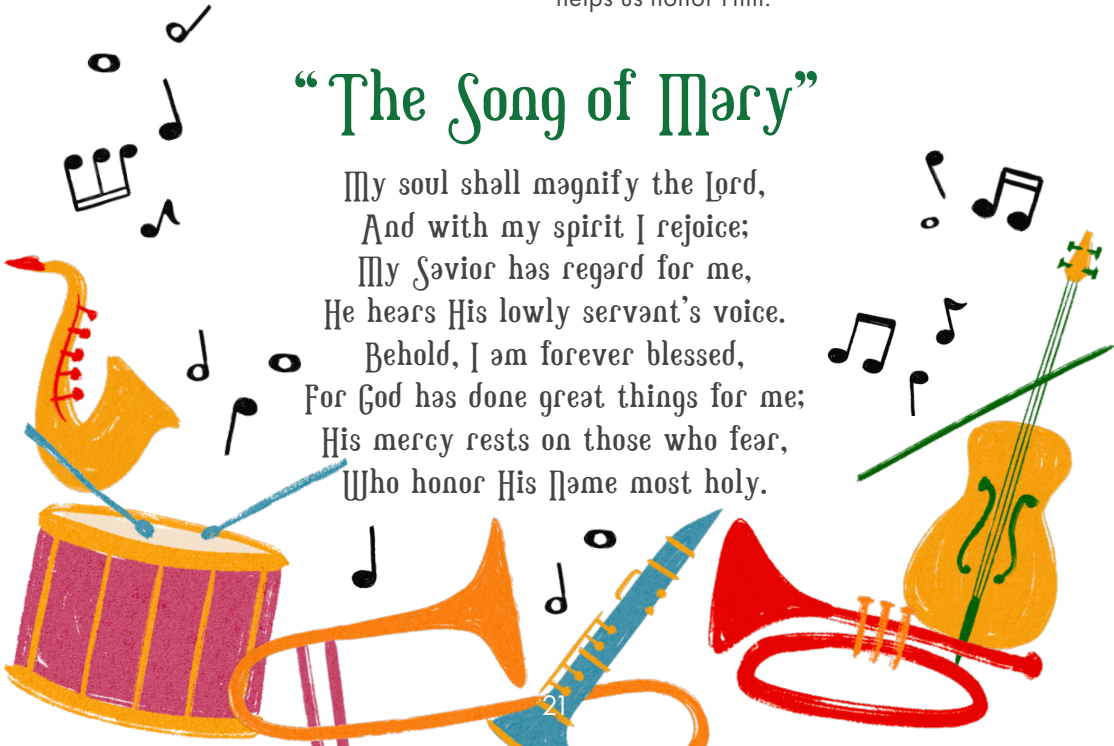
1. Why do you think God created music for us?
  
2. What does Mary's song in Luke 1:46-55 tell us about God's character?

# Activity

God gave you the ability to be creative in order to bring praise and glory to Him. Music is one of the ways you can do that. Today's activity for your family has many different ideas to choose from since each person is unique. Listen to some of the Christmas songs in this book. You can sing along to them or create movements to go with the songs. Gather up craft supplies from around the house and create art based on the songs you hear. You might want to take a favorite Bible verse and write music for it to turn it into a song. Another way you can use your creativity to worship the Lord is to write your own lyrics for a new song of praise. Share what you create as a family, and thank the Lord for His gift of music that helps us honor Him.

## “The Song of Mary”

My soul shall magnify the Lord,  
And with my spirit I rejoice;  
My Savior has regard for me,  
He hears His lowly servant's voice.  
Behold, I am forever blessed,  
For God has done great things for me;  
His mercy rests on those who fear,  
Who honor His name most holy.





# DAY 9

## The Shepherds Hear a Song of Hope

Read Luke 2:10-14



Have you ever hiked in a national park? Most trails today are easy to navigate using maps and printed signs. Before our modern era, people needed a method for marking paths so they could find their way through the wilderness. Hikers would construct unique looking stacks of stones, called cairns, as a kind of trail sign to show the way to go. As others traveled along the same paths, they learned to look for the cairns to guide them.

Every time God talked about sending a rescuer and told people how they would recognize Him, it was almost like He was setting up cairns to guide everyone toward Jesus. God placed signs all along the way, over thousands of years, so we could be certain Jesus was the One who was promised.

Today's Bible verses pick up right after Jesus was born. That night, in the fields around Bethlehem, shepherds were out caring for their sheep. Other than the sound of snoring animals, it was probably pretty quiet and definitely dark. All of a sudden, an angel appeared right next to them, and the Lord's glory surrounded them! It was God's way of placing another sign pointing the way to Jesus.

The shepherds learned that this new baby brought the most joyful news for everyone. He was the promised Savior. There would be no mistake when they saw Him because He'd be sleeping in the strangest bed—a box used to feed animals. Just when it seemed like things couldn't get any more marvelous, a huge choir of angels came, all singing the same song as they worshiped God. It had to have been the most unusual, extraordinary, marvelous night!

"Hark the Herald Angels Sing" was written about this unforgettable moment when the shepherds were the first ones to hear the announcement of Jesus' birth delivered by God's angels. As we listen, we hear the words from Luke 2:14 that they sang together in praise to God. It was a beautiful song of hope for the shepherds all those years ago, and it's still the same for us today.



"And the angel said to them, 'Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!' - [Luke 2:10-14]



# Reflection Questions

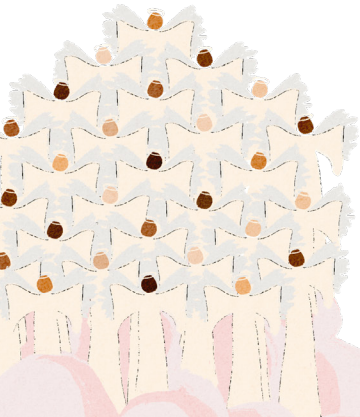
1. What emotions do you think the shepherds felt when the angel appeared and was talking to them?
2. Why do you think God shared so many messages with so many different people about the Savior He promised for thousands of years before He sent Jesus?

# Activity

Many people believe that cairns (a human-made pile or stack of stones) are a form of art. Today's activity is to put together a Christmas cairn as a family so that every time you see it, you are reminded of God's promise to send Jesus. With the help of an adult, look up pictures of cairns online to see the different kinds of structures that have been discovered and to get some ideas for what you'd like to build. You can construct yours indoors or outdoors. It can be as big or as small as you'd like. You can use stones or a different type of material that works for your space, such as air-dry modeling clay. If you want, you can decorate your stones with paint or markers. Be creative!

## “Hark! the Herald Angels Sing”

Hark! the herald angels sing,  
“Glory to the newborn King;  
peace on earth, and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled!”  
Joyful, all ye nations rise,  
join the triumph of the skies;  
with th'angelic host proclaim,  
“Christ is born in Bethlehem!”  
Hark! the herald angels sing,  
“Glory to the newborn King”





# DAY 10

## The Shepherds' Response to Hope

Read Luke 2:15-18

School or church carnivals often have games you can play to win prizes. Some are easy, and every player wins. Others are a little harder, but with some practice, eventually, you figure out how to beat the game. It's a whole lot of fun, but at the same time, it's probably not a big surprise when you walk away with lots of treats.

Now, imagine you are playing a carnival game, and when you win, they hand you a ginormous prize like the latest gaming console, tickets to an amusement park, or a gift card to your favorite store. What an unbelievably unexpected surprise! You'd jump up and down all over the place, cheering like crazy. It would be something you'd never forget.

With the stunning announcement of Jesus' birth and angels praising God all around them, the shepherds must have been overwhelmed with all kinds of emotions—excitement, wonder, anticipation, and awe. They definitely had never heard news like this before, and certainly not in such a fantastic way.

When the angels left, there was no way the shepherds could return to their sheep as if nothing had happened. It was too exciting! They immediately left the fields and their flocks and hurried into Bethlehem to see Jesus for themselves. They found Mary, Joseph, and Jesus exactly as the angel said. The shepherds couldn't keep what they experienced that night to themselves either and went to tell everyone who was willing to listen to what they had seen and heard.

Today's Christmas song, "Rise Up Shepherd and Follow," is written as an invitation to the shepherds to respond to God's message the angel gave to them. They left their flocks, met the baby Jesus, and shared the story with others. The news of the wonderful hope of salvation through Jesus was not something for them to keep quiet about then, and it's not something for us to keep to ourselves today!



*"When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.' And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them." - Luke 2:15-18*

# Reflection Questions

1. Talk about a time when you received really wonderful news. Share how it felt and what you did when you heard it.
2. Why is it important for us to share about Jesus with others?

# Activity

God wants us to share the Good News of Jesus with people who don't know Him. As a family, think of people in your lives who need to hear about Jesus and the hope of salvation He offers to everyone. Make a list with those people's names on it and spend this time leading up to Christmas praying for each one of them. Ask God to give you opportunities to share His love with them. Keep your eyes open and be ready as God answers your prayers and gives you the chance to share the wonderful news of Jesus!

## “Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow”



There's a star in the East on Christmas morn;  
Rise up, shepherd, and follow;  
It will lead to the place where the Savior's born;  
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.  
Follow, follow;  
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.  
Follow the Star of Bethlehem;  
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.





# DAY 11

## The Manger of Hope

Read Luke 2:4-7

In the United States, a census is conducted every ten years. The census counts the number of people who live in each state, the District of Columbia, and five U.S. territories. It also gathers information about each person, like their ages and jobs. This data helps government leaders make decisions about local, state, and national needs.

In the time leading up to Jesus' birth, the Roman government was in charge of all the people in Israel. Rome's leader announced that a census would be taken. The main purpose of the census back then was to collect taxes. Every person was required to go to the town they were from and have their names and information put on a list. So, Joseph and Mary made the long trip to Joseph's hometown of Bethlehem.

With all the people coming to register, the city was really crowded, and Joseph and Mary weren't able to find a place to stay. They ended up in a place that was most likely used to keep a household's animals. Because this was the best place they could find, Mary and Joseph had to make do with what was available to have a bed for the baby. They used a manger—a feeding trough that was meant to hold food for animals.

The Christmas hymn, "Away in a Manger," is based on these verses in the book of Luke. The lyrics talk about the fact that Jesus, God's own son, who really deserved the finest things money could buy, started life on Earth in a most unusual way. It wasn't what anyone would have expected for the most important baby who was ever born, but it was exactly the way God said it would be. The One who came to offer hope of life without the pain of sin to all people was wrapped up that night in cloths and laid to rest in a simple manger.



"And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn." - Luke 2:4-7

# Reflection Questions

1. When they found out there was no place for them to stay, how do you think Mary and Joseph felt?
2. Why do you think God's plan was for Jesus to be born in such a strange place?

## "Away in a Manger"

Away in a manger  
No crib for a bed  
The little Lord Jesus  
Laid down His sweet head  
The stars in the sky  
Look down where He lay  
The little Lord Jesus  
Asleep on the hay

# Activity

Play "Fill the Manger." You will need a box to be the manger and a pile of thin strips of yellow paper or pieces of yarn or ribbon to use as hay. (For younger children, use a larger box and a small pile of hay. To make it harder for older children, select a smaller box and a larger pile of "hay.")

Each player will need a straw. Clear off the top of a table and set the box on a chair right by the edge of the table. Put the pile of hay on the opposite side of the box. The object of the game is to use the straw to blow one piece of hay at a time across the table and into the box.

To play a cooperative game, set a timer for five minutes and work together to see how many pieces of hay you can get into the manger. If you'd like, you can repeat the game with less time on the clock or play multiple rounds to try to beat your record of the number of pieces of hay in the box. To play a competitive game, set a timer for one minute. Each player takes a turn blowing hay into the box to see how many they can do before the timer beeps. Whoever gets the most in one minute is the winner.





# DAY 12

## Hope in the Humble Birth of a King

Read [Philippians 2:6-8](#)



When Jesus came to our world, He took on human form. In every way, Jesus was like other babies. Although the Bible doesn't go into great detail about it, we can be pretty certain that baby Jesus did all the typical baby things: He slept, ate, spit up, cooed, and cried. But this story also points to the fact that although Jesus was fully human, at the exact same time, He was the Son of God and fully equal with God the Father. Although we can try our best to understand it, Jesus as completely human and completely God at once is really hard for our brains to understand.

As God, Jesus deserved to live like a king when He was here on Earth. It would have made perfect sense for Him to live in a beautiful palace with all the riches in the world. Even though Jesus is the King of Kings, living a life of royalty here was not God's plan. Instead, Jesus came to be a humble servant. He didn't seek earthly power, riches, or importance. Instead, He chose to care for the needs of everyone around Him, including the people no one else liked. Jesus lived His life here to bring glory to His Father in Heaven. He obediently died on the Cross so that we could have our sins forgiven once and for all, bringing us back into a perfect relationship with the Lord.

The words of the song, "O Come, All Ye Faithful," express the wonder and excitement that is available to all people because of the birth of Jesus. The invitation is still open for you and me today—come and behold the promised Savior, the King, the Word of the Father who is now in the flesh! Come and behold the One who came once before and lived like us, but who will return in His full glory as our Redeemer King! Jesus, our Savior, has come, and He has the power and authority to take away the sadness and darkness of our sin. So, come one, come all. Come, let us adore Him!



“... who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” - [Philippians 2:6-8](#)

# Reflection Questions

1. What do you think it means that Jesus took the form of a servant instead of an earthly ruler?
2. Why was it important for Jesus not only to be fully human but also to be fully God?

# Activity

Find a lyric video to watch on YouTube of today's Christmas song, "O Come, All Ye Faithful." Listen to and watch this video together. As you listen to the song, have your child pick out one word or phrase that they want to learn more about. Together, look up everyone's word or phrase, talk about what it means, and how you can remember it this Christmas season.

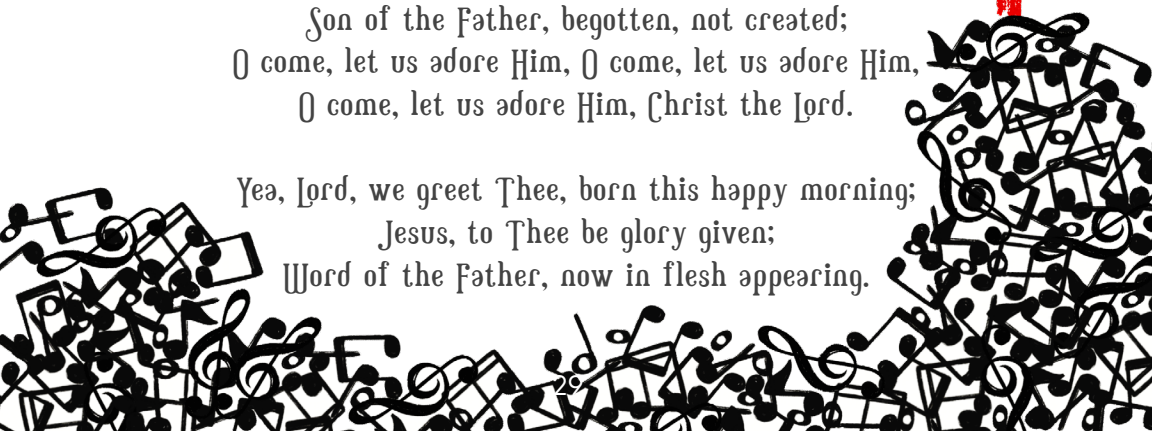
## "O Come, All Ye Faithful"

Verses 1, 2, 7

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,  
O come ye, O come ye, to Bethlehem.  
Come and behold Him, born the King of angels;  
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

True God of true God, Light from Light Eternal,  
Lo, He shuns not the Virgin's womb;  
Son of the Father, begotten, not created;  
O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning;  
Jesus, to Thee be glory given;  
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing.



# DAY 13

## Jesus is the Shining Light of Hope

Read John 1:4-5

What would happen if the sun suddenly stopped shining? About 8 minutes and 20 seconds later, the last bit of sunlight would disappear from Earth. The temperature of the Earth would gradually drop and remain well below freezing. Plants would stop growing and producing oxygen. Without food and oxygen, all living creatures, animals, and people would not exist. Human life is dependent on God's creation, the sun.

The Bible uses the word light over 200 times. Most of the time, light does not refer to what we see with our eyes. Instead, it's used as a symbol. A symbol is something that stands for another thing, especially something that can't be pictured or shown. For example, a lion can represent courage and strength. In the Bible, light often stands for God Himself—His presence, character, truth, and goodness.

Darkness is the absence of light. Darkness is a biblical symbol of sin, evil, and death. In the beginning, all Adam and Eve knew was God's light. His presence and goodness were always with them. Once Adam and Eve chose sin instead of obedience, sadness, pain, death, and separation from God were known by all people.

Just like life on Earth relies on the light of the sun, we were not created to live life in darkness apart from God. After Adam and Eve were sent away from the Garden of Eden, sin was something everyone struggled with. It tempted people to hurt one another with their selfishness, hate, and jealousy. Life was really hard, and it seemed like darkness was winning. People longed for the One who God had promised to come and make everything right again.

John 1:4-5 is all about Jesus. He came to bring spiritual life to the world. He is the only light that can defeat darkness. In His presence, evil has no power. The words in the Christmas hymn "O Holy Night" tell of the incredible gift God gave the world when Jesus came, bringing hope to people who were exhausted by the heaviness of sin's consequences. In response to this glorious hope, let's bow before the Lord in worship and rejoice in the Light of the World!



"In him was life, and the life was the light of men.  
The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness  
has not overcome it." = John 1:4-5



# Reflection Questions

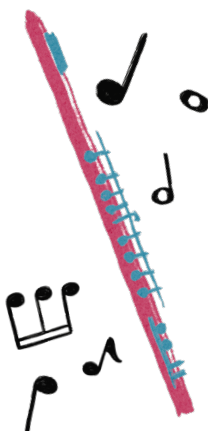
1. Describe what it would be like to live in darkness with no lights of any kind.
2. Why do you think the Bible uses darkness as a symbol of sin?

# Activity

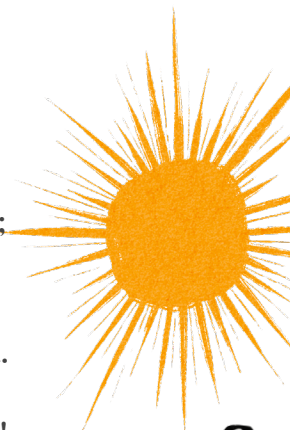
For this activity, you will need some light sources of different sizes. For example, a match, a battery-operated tea light, a flashlight, a lantern, and a lamp. (Safety note: Do not use matches without a grown-up.) Gather in the evening in a room that gets pretty dark. Sit together for a few minutes with the light off. Then, from smallest to largest, turn on each source of light one at a time. Pay attention to what happens with each light you use. Finally, turn on the main light in the room. If you'd like to, turn the lights off again and play "O Holy Night." When it gets to the lyric, "A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices, for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!" turn the light on. Talk about how the lyrics and the sudden light represent the way Jesus' birth makes us rejoice.

## "O Holy Night"

### Verse 1



O holy night! the stars are brightly shining;  
It is the night of the dear Savior's birth.  
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,  
Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth.  
A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices,  
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!  
Fall on your knees, O hear the angel voices!  
O night divine, O night when Christ was born!  
O night, O holy night, O night divine!



The header features several musical notes in black and green, a green violin with an orange body, and a green bow. The text is arranged as follows:

# DAY 14

## Hope in the Word Became Flesh

Read John 1:14


Have you ever played the game “20 Questions?” Someone secretly chooses a person, place, or thing, and everyone else has to ask “yes” or “no” questions to try to figure out what it is. If the person picked “dog,” the questions, “Is it an animal?” and “Does it have fur?” and “Does it have four legs?” and “Is it a pet?” would lead you to the correct answer pretty quickly. The more familiar you become with the game, the better you get at asking the right kinds of questions.

Reading the Bible is one of the best ways to get to know more about who God is, but not everything we read is always easy to understand. If we get stuck on something that doesn’t make sense, asking good questions is really helpful. One of the best questions you can ask as you read God’s Word is, “What does this word mean?” This is where dictionaries that are specifically written to define words in the Bible come in handy.

John 1:14 is one of those verses that can be a little tricky. Let’s look at part of it with these questions in mind: “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” Word is capitalized because it’s a name for Jesus. Flesh is another way to describe the physical body of a person. Dwelt is a fancy way of saying lived. So, this part of the verse tells us Jesus became human and came to live with people. This is why He’s also called “Immanuel,” which means “God with us.”

Do you wonder how Jesus can be called God with us? God exists as both one and three at the same time! It’s what we refer to as the Trinity. While God is indeed one, He is also God the Father, God the Son (Jesus), and God the Holy Spirit. Pretty amazing, isn’t it?

Listening to the second verse of “Hark the Herald Angels Sing,” we find references to John 1:14. The wonder of Jesus’ birth is that, while He came to live life on Earth with us, He showed us God in all His glory at the same time.

A white treble clef is positioned on the left side of a white musical staff with five lines. The text is written across the staff in a green, serif font.

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” - John 1:14

# Reflection Questions

1. Jesus has many names to help describe His character. What do you learn about Him through the names Immanuel and the Word?

2. Sometimes, finding the answers to questions makes us think of more questions. What do you still want to find out about Jesus' birth?

# Activity

You found out more about the first part of John 1:14 in today's reading. What about the second part? Together, spend some time investigating the rest of this verse.

*"and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth."*

Use Bible reference materials online or resources you have at home to help you learn more. Write the verse at the top of a large piece of paper or poster board and illustrate or write down what you've learned.

## "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

### Verse 2

Christ, by highest Heav'n adored,  
Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
late in time behold him come,  
offspring of a Virgin's womb:  
veiled in flesh the Godhead see;  
hail th'incarnate Deity,  
pleased with us in flesh to dwell,  
Jesus, our Emmanuel.  
Hark! the herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn King"



Son

Holy Spirit

Father





# DAY 15

## A Long-Awaited Hope Recognized



Read Luke 2:25-32

We spend a lot of time waiting for things to happen. And while having to wait is part of life, it can be really difficult. It's easy to become impatient when everyday things take too long. We can start feeling grumpy or frustrated or angry. When we're waiting a long time for something wonderful to happen, we might start to think it won't really happen at all.

God's people had to wait a very long time for the Savior to come. Thousands of years passed. People got impatient and believed God had forgotten about them. They grumbled and complained...a lot. Every so often, God would remind them of the promise He made, and it strengthened their patience for a little while. But not everyone complained. Some people were very patient and had faith that God would do what He said He was going to do at just the right time. They didn't lose hope.

Luke 2:25-32 tells us the story of Simeon, a man who followed and obeyed God. The Holy Spirit had told him that before he died, he would see the promised Savior. Simeon trusted God and waited patiently for this to happen. One day, Mary and Joseph, in obedience to the laws God gave His people, brought Jesus to the temple, the place where they gathered to worship God. Simeon saw Jesus and knew immediately that He was the One God promised—the hope of salvation for the entire world!

Today's Christmas hymn, "Joy to the World," is a perfect way to celebrate the coming of Jesus. The waiting was over; the Savior had finally arrived. The overwhelming joy Simeon must have felt can also be ours when we accept God's wonderful gift of forgiveness.



"Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, 'Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.'" - Luke 2:25-32

# Reflection Questions

1. Why is it so difficult to wait patiently?
2. How do you feel when the thing you've waited a long time for finally happens?

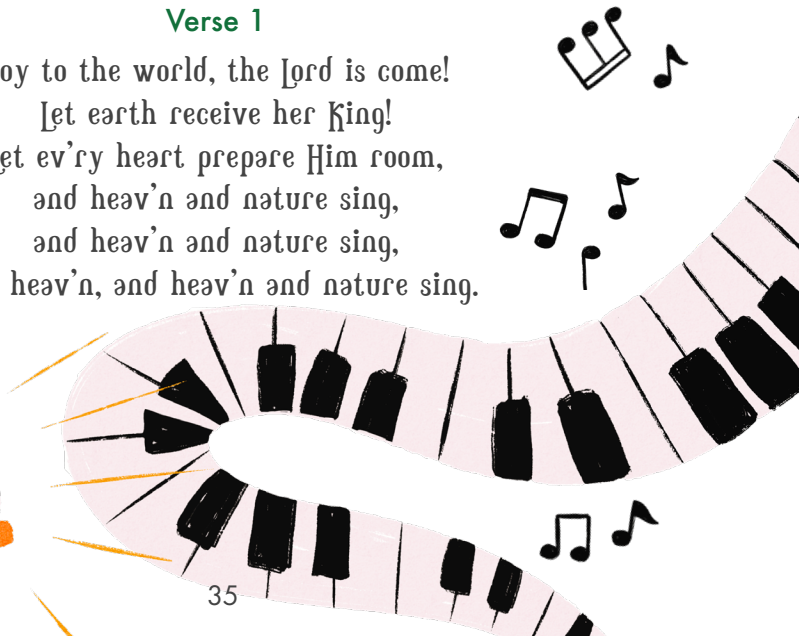
# Activity

Create "Joy to the World" ornaments. You'll need clear glass or plastic ball ornaments that you can remove the tops from, green and blue acrylic paint, disposable plastic cups that you can set the ornaments on top of, and permanent markers or paint pens. Open up the ornaments, then squeeze a small amount of green and blue paint inside. Roll the ornament around just long enough to get the paint to swirl together and cover the inside of it. Add more paint if needed. Place the ornaments on top of the plastic cups with the open tops pointing down into the cups, then place them in a safe spot to let them dry. This may take a couple of days. When they're dry, write "Joy" or "Joy to the World" on the outside of the ornaments. Finally, replace the tops and hang them on your Christmas tree!

## "Joy to the World"

### Verse 1

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her King!  
Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room,  
and heav'n and nature sing,  
and heav'n and nature sing,  
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.





# DAY 16

## The Wise Men Seek Hope



Read Matthew 2:1-2

There's a game show on TV called "Jeopardy." During the game, the players are given trivia clues written in the form of an answer, and they have to come up with the correct questions to go with each answer. Even though the people who get picked to play "Jeopardy" study a lot and are super smart, none of them can solve every clue.

Unlike "Jeopardy," where players are given the answers to help them figure out the questions, we have lots of questions about the wise men in Matthew 2:1-2, but not a lot of answers. Matthew doesn't give us many details about these men who traveled to visit Jesus, and people have been curious about them for years. Really smart Bible scholars and history experts who have spent years studying have tried to figure out more about the wise men.

Matthew tells us they came from the "east." Based on the information they have, scholars believe the wise men could have been from Persia, which was hundreds of miles away from Jerusalem.

The wise men had to have studied ancient Jewish writings (now called the Old Testament) and read the prophecies from Isaiah and Micah to learn about the coming king God promised. As they investigated more, they would have read Micah's words about the king coming from David's birthplace, which was Bethlehem. Another clue about the wise men is found in Matthew 2:2, when they say they saw His star. These men probably spent time learning about the stars and the sky to have noticed this new star when it appeared.

Even though the wise men were from a foreign country that followed other gods, they came to believe what the one true God had promised. Something inside of them really wanted to follow the star so they could worship this King.

This Christmas song, "The First Noel, includes the story of the wise men found in Matthew 2. It takes us along on their journey from a far-off country to find the King who was born in Bethlehem, the One whose coming offered hope to the world.



"Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, 'Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.'" - Matthew 2:1-2

# Reflection Questions

1. What do you think made the wise men want to find the King that God promised?
2. When the star appeared in the sky, what do you think the wise men said to one another?



# Activity

Let's make a "stained glass" star! For this project, you'll need scissors, wax paper, a couple of sheets of cardstock or thin cardboard, old crayons, a crayon sharpener, iron, ironing board, a star pattern, and a permanent marker. On the ironing board, put down a sheet of cardstock or cardboard with a piece of wax paper about the same size on top of it. Using a few colors of crayons and a sharpener, make shavings of crayons and sprinkle them on top of the wax paper. Hint: You only need a very thin layer of shavings. Put another piece of wax paper down on top of the shavings, and a sheet of cardstock or thin cardboard on top of that. With the help of an adult, take an iron on a low setting and press it back and forth over the top of your layers to melt the crayon shavings. Carefully pull back the cardstock to make sure all the crayon is melted. Let it cool. Trace the star pattern onto the wax paper using the marker and cut it out. Finally, tape your star in a sunny window.



## "The First Noel"

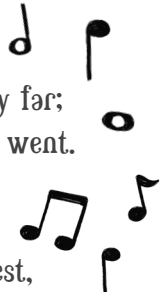
Verse 2 & 3

And by the light of that same star three wise men came from country far;  
To seek for a King was their intent, and to follow the star wherever it went.

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, Born is the King of Israel.

This star drew nigh to the northwest, o'er Bethlehem it took its rest,  
And there it did both stop and stay right over the place where Jesus lay.

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, Born is the King of Israel.





# DAY 17

## Hope When Afraid

Read Matthew 2:3-8




Have you ever done something nice for someone, but only because you wanted to benefit from it in some way? This is what happened in the verses we read today!

When the wise men arrived in Jerusalem, King Herod heard they were asking, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?" (Matthew 2:2.) Herod had been the king of Judea (the land where Jesus was born) for quite a while. The idea that a new king had been born was very upsetting to him. Herod was afraid that his throne was going to be taken away by this new king of the Jews who had been born.

When King Herod talked to the wise men and told them to come back to let him know where they found this new king, he said it was because he wanted to worship him just like they did. But Herod was lying. While the wise men wanted to honor the infant King who brought the hope of salvation to the world, Herod was focused on doing whatever he had to do to make sure no one could take his power away. The wise men and King Herod all said they wanted to find the baby, but their motives were very different. When they finally came face-to-face with Jesus, the wise men would find hope in the new King, but Herod was too focused on his throne to see anything but his own jealousy.

"God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen" is a song of celebration. It tells the story of Jesus' birth and the joyful announcement the angel brought to the shepherds. The message of the song reminds us that we don't have to be dismayed (discouraged or afraid) because we have comfort and hope in Jesus' gift of salvation.



"When Herod the King heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judaea, for so it is written by the prophet: "And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.'" Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.'" - Matthew 2:3-8



# Reflection Questions

1. What can you learn from the difference between the wise men's response and Herod's response about the news of Jesus' birth?
2. When you feel discouraged or afraid, how can the Christmas story give you comfort and joy?

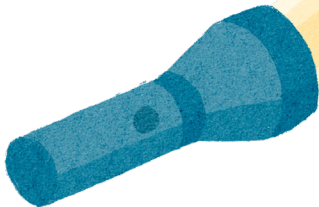
# Activity

There are many people in our communities who need to feel the comfort and joy of Jesus in their lives. Meeting practical needs is a hands-on way to share Jesus' love with others. Find a way to serve together as a family this season. You could invite a lonely neighbor over for dinner, shovel snow for a single mom, or assemble care packages for those who are homeless. Contact your church or a local charity to learn about other opportunities to serve.

## “God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen”

### Verse 1

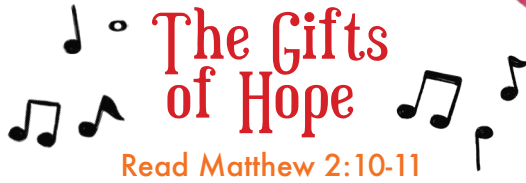
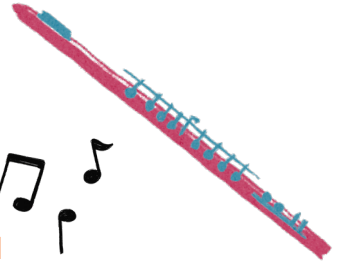
God rest ye merry, gentlemen,  
let nothing you dismay,  
remember Christ our Savior  
was born on Christmas Day  
to save us all from Satan's pow'r  
when we were gone astray.  
O tidings of comfort and joy,  
comfort and joy;  
O tidings of comfort and joy.



# DAY 18

## The Gifts of Hope

Read Matthew 2:10-11



Before attending a friend's birthday party, you go shopping to choose a gift for them. Picking out just the right present is a big deal. Would it make sense to close your eyes, walk around the store, and grab random things off the shelves? Of course not. It would be really weird to give your friend a bag of dog kibbles, a jug of laundry detergent, and a box of paper clips! Instead, you would take your time wandering up and down the aisles, looking at a lot of different items so you can be sure to choose a gift they'll really love.

After the wise men left King Herod, they continued on to Bethlehem. They found the house where Mary, Joseph, and Jesus lived and went inside. The Bible says they "fell down and worshiped him." Bowing down before Jesus showed honor and respect. It indicated that the wise men were submissive to the authority of this new king.

It was a custom for people to take gifts when they visited a king, so of course the wise men came with packages. They presented Jesus with gold, frankincense, and myrrh. (Both frankincense and myrrh are aromatic substances that come from trees and were used in perfume and incense at the time.) Those sound like really odd presents for a baby, don't they? But they weren't strange at all back then. They were extremely valuable and rare items given to important kings.

The song "We Three Kings" tells the story of the magi who came to find Jesus and the gifts they offered to the new king. More than just priceless presents, each represented something unique. Gold showed that Jesus was the King of Kings. Frankincense honored Him as the Son of God. Myrrh pointed to His death on the cross. Jesus is so much more than any earthly king. He is the only one who deserves our worship.



"When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh." - Matthew 2:10-11

# Reflection Questions

1. Why does Jesus deserve to be honored and worshiped?
2. What lesson can we learn from the wise men?

# Activity

Sometimes, we think worship is singing songs to God, but it's not just that. Worship can be anything we do to show Jesus we love Him. Brainstorm ideas for ways you can worship Him in the days leading up to Christmas. Write each one on a piece of paper. Find a box that looks like a gift and put the papers inside. Each day, choose one of the things you wrote down and do that together as a family.

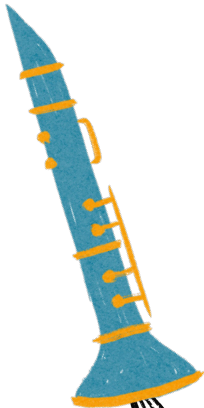
## “We Three Kings”

Verses 2, 3, & 4

Born a King on Bethlehem plain  
Gold I bring to crown Him again  
King forever, ceasing never  
Over us all to reign

Frankincense to offer have I  
Incense owns a Deity nigh  
Prayer and praising, all men raising  
Worship Him, God on high

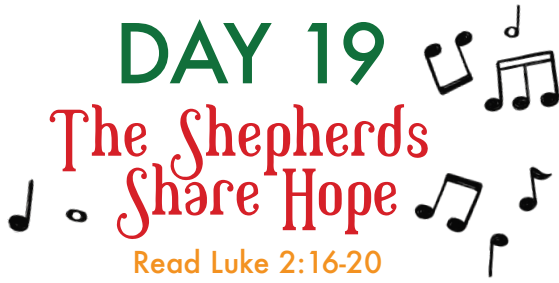
Myrrh is mine  
Its bitter perfume  
Breathes a life of gathering gloom  
Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying  
Sealed in the stone-cold tomb



# DAY 19

## The Shepherds Share Hope

Read Luke 2:16-20



Who would you want to tell you about climbing Mt. Everest: someone who just watches movies about it or someone who has actually done it? There's no question that the mountain climber would have the best information to share because that person has experienced it for themselves!

The shepherds in the fields near the town of Bethlehem, where Jesus was born, had an unbelievably exciting firsthand experience. An angel came to them and told them the Messiah, the Savior, had been born. Those shepherds saw and heard an entire choir of angels praising God together.

Before we jump ahead, you should know something about shepherds during this time in history. They were constantly around dirty, smelly sheep and sheep droppings. Even though it was a job the community relied on, people looked down on shepherds because they thought they were as dirty as the sheep themselves.

The shepherds, smelly and looked down on as they were, didn't let any of that slow them down as they raced off to see Jesus just as soon as the angels disappeared. Suddenly, there they were—Mary, Joseph, and the baby Savior and King of Kings—exactly as the angel said. God's wonderful promise was right there in the manger! They couldn't help but run to tell everyone around what they had heard and seen. The shepherds praised God for all of it.

Knowing that they weren't very well thought of by others, they might have wondered if the angel's message was really for them. But the news was too good, the experience too amazing, not to go find Jesus and then tell everyone they passed about the magnificent Messiah (promised Savior)!

When you listen to "Go, Tell It on the Mountain," try to picture the shepherds shouting the news far and wide that the Savior had come. What a perfect response to meeting Jesus! When we know the gift of salvation and forgiveness firsthand, we need to share it.



"And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them." - Luke 2:16-20

# Reflection Questions

1. Why do you think God chose to deliver the message of Jesus' birth to the shepherds first?
2. What things might keep you from telling others about Jesus?

# Activity

The shepherds responded to the Good News of Jesus' birth by praising God. One of the ways we can worship is through song. Listen to the Christmas songs in this book and spend some time in awe of Jesus. You might want to stand, kneel, or lay face down on the ground to honor and show your love for Him. You can pray out loud or silently, sing along with the music or listen to it, or simply tell Jesus how you feel about Him quietly in your heart.

## “Go, Tell It on the Mountain”

Verses 1 & 2

Go tell it on the mountain,  
over the hills, and ev'rywhere;  
go tell it on the mountain  
that Jesus Christ is born.

While shepherds kept their watching  
o'er silent flocks by night,  
behold, thruout the heavens  
there shone a holy light.

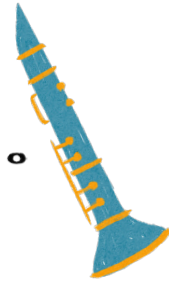
The shepherds feared and trembled  
when lo, above the earth  
rang out the angel chorus  
that hailed our Savior's birth.



# DAY 20

## The Hope in the Temple

Read Luke 2:22-24



If you traveled to France but couldn't speak French, what would you do? You could try using hand gestures to communicate, but it would probably be frustrating. The best solution would be to find an interpreter who could speak French and English. They would listen to what you say, repeat it in French for the other person, and tell you what was said in English. Easy peasy!

Reading the Bible can sometimes feel like reading a foreign language. Today's verses and song lyrics are a little tricky and might be easier to understand with some interpretation.

In the Old Testament, God gave Moses a list of rules, or laws, for the Israelites to follow. These rules, over 600 in all, had to do with everything from food to clothing to worship and more! These rules showed the people God's holiness, reminded them of how sinful they were, and how much they needed a Savior. They also helped keep the Israelites separate and unique because, from their nation, generations later, the Messiah (promised one) would be born. God wanted them to focus on serving Him, and through the offerings and sacrifices God taught them, they would continually be made clean before Him.

What John 2:22-24 says is that Mary and Joseph were obedient to God's laws by bringing Jesus to the temple to present Him to the Lord and offering the sacrifices that were required after a baby was born. Jesus's presence in the temple that day was really special because one day, He would be the perfect sacrifice to cleanse people from their sins.

Today's hymn celebrates this: that Jesus is the One God promised to do great things that people had been hoping for! To crush the head of the serpent that deceived Adam and Eve in the garden. To break the curse of sin. To give us hope. And to restore our broken relationship with God forever!



"And when the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord') and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, 'a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.'" - Luke 2:22-24

# Reflection Questions

1. How would you feel if you had to try following over 600 rules?
2. How do you think the rules God gave to the Israelites showed them how holy God was?

# Activity

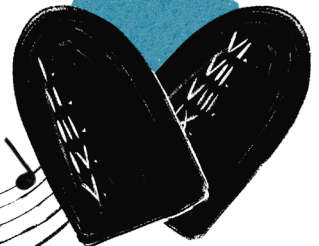
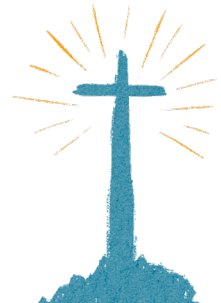
You will need twice as many inflated balloons as the number of people in your family to play this game. Try to keep all of the balloons from touching the ground using only your hands and feet. See how long you can go before one balloon hits the ground. Repeat the game using only one balloon for your entire family.

Which was easier? Keeping all of the balloons in the air is a small example of what it was like for the Israelites to try to follow all of God's laws. Playing with the single balloon represents the peace we feel when we rely on Jesus to forgive our sins.

## “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

### Verse 4

Come, Desire of nations, come,  
Fix in us Thy humble home;  
Rise, the woman's conqu'ring seed,  
Bruise in us the serpent's head.  
Adam's likeness, Lord, efface,  
Stamp Thine image in its place:  
Second Adam from above,  
Reinstate us in Thy love.  
Hark! the herald angels sing,  
“Glory to the newborn King”





# DAY 21

## Our Hope is Jesus, the Lamb of God

Read John 1:29

Every superhero has an origin story. An origin story usually gives you important background about the character. If you'd never heard of Spider-Man and picked up a recent comic book, it would be interesting, but you'd be missing out on a major part of the story—how he became Spider-Man in the first place.

Today's Bible verse moves ahead to Jesus's adult life. John the Baptist told others about the coming Messiah (promised Savior) that God had promised. He taught people about repentance (turning away from their sin) and baptized them. When John saw Jesus, He knew it was the Lamb of God who had come to take away our sins. This is a good place to pause and back up, so we don't miss something really important.

Remember how Adam and Eve's disobedience brought sin into the world? Every single person who lived after them was infected by that sin and absolutely could not fix things on their own.

When God gave the Israelites all of the rules they had to follow, He also told them what to do to make things right when they sinned. This gets us to the part that's hard to think about, but it does paint a picture of how truly serious and awful sin is. The Bible says the cost of sin is death (Romans 6:23), so to "pay for" their sins, people were required to kill a spotless animal in their place. The animals were often lambs. This kind of sacrifice was a temporary solution for sin that God allowed; it was not His permanent solution.

John's declaration that Jesus was the Lamb of God revealed the reason for the Cross and the source of our hope. Where previous animal sacrifices were temporary, Jesus, as the completely perfect spotless lamb, was the one who could take the place of all people. His death would forgive sins permanently. No more animal sacrifices would need to be made. Jesus would exchange His perfect life for our not-perfect lives on the Cross and cover our sins now and forever.

Enjoy today's Christmas hymn as it tells of the gentleness of a lamb, and the baby who came in the same gentleness to be the Lamb of God.



"The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!'" - John 1:29



# Reflection Questions

1. Why do you think the sacrifices people made were temporary?
2. How does Jesus, the Lamb of God, give us hope?



# Activity

For this activity, you will need a whiteboard, a black permanent marker, a red dry-erase marker, a cloth for erasing and whiteboard cleaning spray (optional). To demonstrate the permanence of sin, draw a line down the center of the whiteboard with the permanent marker. This line represents sin. Using the cloth, try to erase the line. Add whiteboard spray if you have it. No matter how hard you try, there's nothing you can do to erase the line, just like you can't erase sin from your life. Now, take the dry-erase marker and color over the black line completely. Be generous with the dry-erase marker! This represents the sacrifice Jesus made when he died for our sins. You'll be able to erase the line now. Only Jesus, the Lamb of God, is able to take away our sin once and for all!

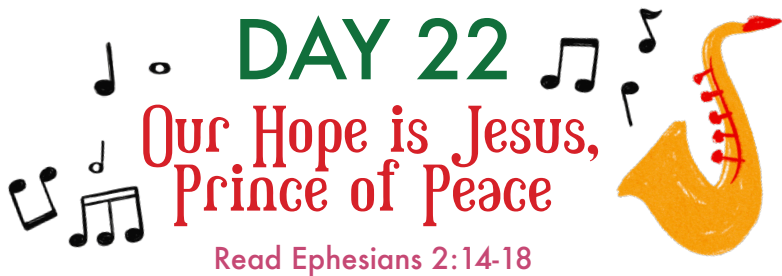
## “Little Lamb, Who Made Thee”

Little lamb who made thee? Dost thou know who made thee?  
Gave thee life and bade thee feed by the streams and o'er the mead;  
Gave thee clothing of delight, softest clothing wooly white;  
Gave thee such a tender voice, making all the vales rejoice:  
Little lamb who made thee? Dost thou know who made thee?

Little lamb I'll tell thee, Little lamb I'll tell thee:  
He is called by thy name, for he calls himself a lamb:  
He is meek and he is mild, he became a little child:  
I a child and thou a lamb, we are called by his name:  
Little lamb God bless thee. Little lamb God bless thee.

# DAY 22

## Our Hope is Jesus, Prince of Peace

A yellow saxophone is positioned on the right side of the header. To its left, several black musical notes of various shapes and sizes are scattered across the top of the page.


Read Ephesians 2:14-18

In *The Sneetches*, by Dr. Seuss, there are two different groups of Sneetches—the ones who have stars on their bellies and the ones who don't. The Sneetches with stars looked down on the ones without them. When a man comes to town and offers stars and star removals, the two groups spend all their money trying to be better than each other. In the end, the sneetches discover that whether or not they have stars, they are all equally valuable and are finally able to become friends.

In the Bible, people were classified into different groups: Jews and Gentiles. God had promised to make a great nation out of all of Abraham's descendants. God's presence and blessing would be with them, and He said the Messiah (promised Savior) would be part of their family tree. These people were known first as Israelites and later as Jews. Gentiles was the name used for all of the people who were not Jews. Because Jews followed the one true God and looked at Gentiles, who worshiped other gods, as outsiders, anger built up between them, and the two groups did not get along. There was a lot of fighting and not a lot of peace.

Paul writes about Jesus being the one to bring peace to all people, both Jews and Gentiles. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus removed the sin that kept people separated from God and from each other. There would no longer be a difference between Jews and Gentiles because everyone could enjoy equal access to God's presence. The anger that kept Jews and Gentiles from having peace with God and one another no longer existed.

Today's song lyrics follow this idea of peace and reconciliation (making things right). Jesus came bringing the hope of peace and new life to all who believed, both Jew and Gentile, that He was the Son of God and that He died and rose again to offer forgiveness and eternal life to all who chose to follow Him.



“For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.” - Ephesians 2:14-18

# Reflection Questions

1. Has there ever been a time when you felt like you were better than someone else, and it kept you from being friends with that person?
2. Why was it important for Jesus to come to offer everyone peace with God and with each other?

# Activity

For this activity, you will need a piece of yarn that is 2-3 feet long and a pair of scissors. Sit across from one another, with one person holding one end of the string and another holding the opposite end. This represents the relationship people had with God before sin. We could be connected directly to Him. Now, cut the string in the middle. This is a picture of what happened between people and God because of sin. He was still there, but the relationship was broken, and there was space between us. Tie the two ends together in the middle. This repaired connection between both ends of the string shows us the peace and reconciliation we can have with God and others because of Jesus.

## “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

### Verse 3

Hail the heav'nly Prince of Peace!  
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all he brings,  
Ris'n with healing in his wings.

Mild he lays his glory by,  
born that mæn no more may die,  
born to raise the sons of earth,  
born to give them second birth.

Hark! the herald angels sing,  
“Glory to the newborn King”





# DAY 23

## Our Hope is Jesus, Our Salvation

Read Psalm 98:1-3

In 2009, a plane took off at an airport in New York. Shortly after takeoff, the plane hit a flock of geese, causing the loss of engine power. The pilots radioed air traffic control to let them know what happened and that they needed to make an emergency landing. They would have to do something they had never done before—land the plane in water. No one else on that plane could do anything to save themselves; they had to rely on the two pilots to save them.

The pilots were focused on the safety of each person on board. They handled the emergency calmly and successfully landed on the Hudson River. There were 155 passengers on that plane, and all 155 made it safely to shore due to the quick-thinking and bravery of the pilots. This rescue story is known as the “Miracle on the Hudson.”

As amazing as that rescue story is, the biggest true rescue story of all time is actually found in pages of your Bible. It’s the story of our need for a Savior and God meeting that need. It’s the story of the Creator coming to rescue His creation. It’s the story of hope for the hopeless. That’s what makes this divine story of Jesus coming into the world so wonderful and amazing. The trees, lights, and presents are all great, but the reason why we celebrate Christmas is so much greater.

The prophecies in Isaiah and Micah about Jesus’ coming aren’t the only verses in the Bible that point to Jesus. The Psalms were written hundreds of years before Jesus’ birth, and some passages also prophetically speak about Jesus as the one who came to offer salvation to the nations.

Psalm 98 celebrates God’s righteousness and love found in Jesus. Singing is a natural expression of our gratitude for all He has done. The fourth verse of “Joy to the World” prompts us to think about the gift of salvation and the way Jesus leads in truth, justice, and love. Responding in song, whether through the Psalms or the Christmas hymns the Bible inspired, is a wonderful way to thank Him for salvation.



“Oh sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things!  
His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.  
The Lord has made known his salvation; he has revealed his  
righteousness in the sight of the nations. He has remembered his  
steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel. All the ends  
of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.” - Psalm 98:1-3

# Reflection Questions

1. What do you think “the Lord has made known his salvation” means?
2. Why do the Psalms encourage us to sing to the Lord?

# Activity

There are a lot of phrases in Psalm 98 that use imagery (descriptive words that paint a picture in your mind). Creating a book to go with this Psalm is a creative way to help bring the words to life. Read all of Psalm 98. Write each verse on a separate piece of paper, leaving space for illustrations. Work together to design artwork to go with the verses. Be as creative as you want in the style and art supplies you use. When you’re finished, staple the pages together to complete your Psalm 98 book.

## “Joy to the World”

### Verse 4


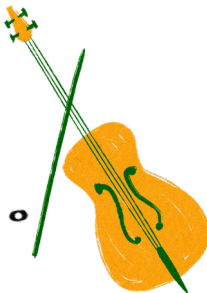
He rules the world with truth and grace,  
and makes the nations prove  
the glories of His righteousness  
and wonders of His love,  
and wonders of His love,  
and wonders, wonders of His love.



# DAY 24

## Our Hope is Jesus' Return

Read Revelation 19:11-16



It's almost time! Before you know it, it will be Christmas Day. The feeling you have right now as you wait for Christmas to arrive is called anticipation. It's excitement, expectation, hope, and joy all rolled up together.

The promise of the coming Messiah (promised Savior) filled people with anticipation. Throughout history, the Israelites often experienced hardship. They looked forward to the day when someone would come to rescue them from the troubles they faced. Jesus came as that Messiah long ago, and He paid the price of our sin once and for all on the cross. Forgiveness and a restored relationship with God were finally possible. But the best part is the story doesn't end there! When Jesus returned to heaven after His resurrection, He promised to come back again.

The book of Revelation tells us a lot about Jesus' return and what it'll be like, using a lot of symbolism. Some of it makes sense and sounds really exciting; other parts can be strange and confusing. Today's verses are a little of both! Many people have tried to figure it all out, but the only one who knows exactly what it means is God. The most important thing for us to understand is Jesus will return as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. On that day, evil will be completely destroyed, and creation will be made perfectly new! Then, everyone who believes in God and has been forgiven of their sins through Jesus' sacrifice will be with Him forever!

Until then, we wait with anticipation for that marvelous day! It's going to be even better than Christmas!



“Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations; and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of Kings and Lord of lords.” - Revelation 19:11-16

# Reflection Questions

1. What have you learned about God through the story of Christmas?
2. What are you looking forward to when Jesus returns?

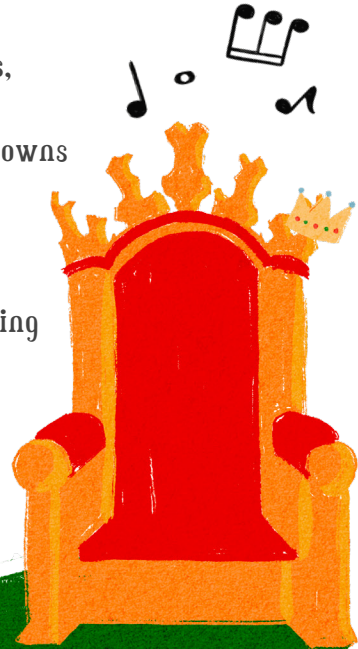
# Activity

Today's hymn is all about worshiping and honoring Jesus, the Lamb of God and King of Kings. It's a connection between what He did when He came the first time and what He will do when He returns. Gather whatever craft supplies you have and work together to make a crown for Jesus. Pray together as a family and thank God for sending Jesus as our Savior and King. Place the crown under the tree to remind you in the morning of the greatest gift we could ever receive.

## “Crown Him with Many Crowns”

### Verse 1

Crown him with many crowns,  
the Lamb upon his throne.  
Hark! how the heav'nly anthem drowns  
all music but its own.  
Awake, my soul, and sing  
of him who died for thee,  
and hail him as thy matchless king  
through all eternity.





# DAY 25

## Jesus is Our Greatest Hope

Read John 3:16



Merry Christmas! Today, we celebrate the most amazing gift of hope that anyone has ever given—Jesus! Because God loves you and everyone in the whole world so much, He sent His one and only Son (Jesus) to live among us, rescue us, and offer us hope for our sin problem. On this day, we sing praises in celebration of the arrival of this long-awaited Savior who was born in a little town called Bethlehem, and we recognize that His birth was part of God’s perfect plan to save us.

You’ve probably heard the song “Silent Night” played hundreds of times leading up to Christmas. It tells the story of that night when Jesus was born. The song starts with the words, “Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright.” Imagine that peaceful night when God’s love came down to Earth in the form of a baby! That baby, Jesus, wasn’t just any baby—He was the Savior of the world whom God had promised would come! Even though it was quiet and calm, what happened that night changed everything for everyone.

Whenever you hear or sing this song, let it remind you that God’s love for us is so big that He sent Jesus on that silent night to be the light and the hope of the world. The world can sometimes feel dark or scary, but when it does, remember that Jesus came to bring peace and hope to our hearts. His birth shows us that nothing can separate us from the love of God, that God keeps His promises, and that because of Jesus, we can live forever with God.

Today, as you celebrate Christmas with family and friends, remember that Jesus’ birth is the greatest gift of hope for all of us. That is what today is all about. And that is something worth celebrating today and always!



“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son,  
that whoever believes in him should not perish but  
have eternal life.” - John 3:16



# Reflection Questions

1. How does God's gift of Jesus show how much He loves us?

2. What's one way you will celebrate the gift of Jesus today?

# Activity

Together as a family, pick one time today to sit together. Listen to and sing "Silent Night," and thank God for the wonderful gift of hope that He gave us in Jesus.

## "Silent Night"

Silent night, holy night!  
All is calm, all is bright.  
Round yon Virgin, Mother and Child,  
Holy infant so tender and mild,  
Sleep in heavenly peace,  
Sleep in heavenly peace  
Silent night, holy night  
Shepherds quake at the sight  
Glories stream from heaven afar  
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia  
Christ the Savior is born  
Christ the Savior is born  
Silent night, holy night  
Son of God, love's pure light  
Radiant beams from Thy holy face  
With the dawn of redeeming grace  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth





# HOW TO KNOW JESUS

Whether you're reading this and have never started a relationship with Jesus, or you do have a relationship with Him and want to know how you can tell your friends about Him, this page is for you!

## In the Beginning

First, God is the Creator (Genesis 1:1). He created everything, even you. Second, God is perfect in all His ways (Psalm 18:30). So, combined, that makes God the Perfect Creator of all things. He is in charge of everything, and He is 100% right.

## Our Sin Problem

God is the perfect King, and when we think, do, or say something that goes against His ways, it's called sin. And because God is who He is, all sin is purposely disobeying Him (Psalm 51:3-4). The consequence of our disobedience is death (Romans 6:23). Our physical bodies get sick and die, and the spiritual part of us, our inside beliefs and feelings, dies, too. We can't take care of our sin problem by ourselves, no matter how hard we try.

## Jesus is the Best Gift Ever

Jesus is God's Son, sent to earth to live a perfect life. He was God's gift to us. He never sinned, which meant He was the only one who could fix our sin problem once and for all (Matthew 1:18-21). Jesus died on the cross and then came back to life to save everyone who believes in Him from their sins (John 3:16). Only Jesus could do this.

If you want to have your sins forgiven and become part of God's family, there are some things you need to do:

# ADMIT

First, you need to admit that you sin and that you cannot fix your relationship with God on your own.

# BELIEVE

Next, believe that Jesus is who He says He is – God's Son who died on the cross and was raised back to life again in order to take care of our sin problem.

# CONFESS

Finally, talk to Jesus and say that you are a sinner and need Him to take away your sins, which is forgiveness (1 John 1:9).

After you've done these things, you are a part of God's family forever. You're a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17)! God loves you and wants to teach you more about Him, how to love Him, and how to be more like Him. You can get to know Him better by reading your Bible, praying, listening to Him, and learning together with your family and others at church.



# RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

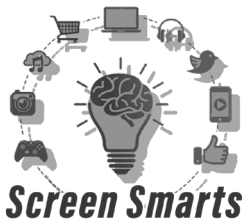
EQUIPPING YOU TO LEAD YOUR FAMILY NEAR TO JESUS



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