Christ (Light the candles from previous weeks at this point.)

Read Luke 2:1-20.

Merry Christmas! We have been preparing our hearts and minds over the last few weeks to celebrate this day rightly, and it is finally here. Today, we celebrate the coming of hope, peace, love, and joy.

We've spent time meditating on the hope that came with His arrival—hope for the Israelites, after waiting hundreds of years for their promised Savior, and hope for us now. We talked about peace—the reminders given to Mary and the shepherds not to be afraid. The good news of Jesus has brought a peace to the world that was previously unimaginable. He also brought with Him love. In fact, He didn't just bring love, He embodied it. He has given us a new example of love—one we can now receive and then imitate through prayer and hospitality. And this week, we've moved toward this day of celebration by talking about joy. Oh, what joy we have in Christ Jesus! Joy that outlasts worldly happiness, and instead roots us in deep and assured gladness.

We have much to celebrate today, but what's next? Though the festivities will end and the decorations will be put away, He should continue to be the focal point of our attention. During these last 25 days, we have marked Christ's first advent—His first coming. But now, we shift our focus to His second advent—when He fulfills His promise to one day come again!

"I am going to show you a secret, John," Jesus said, "about when I come back. Write down what you see so God's children can read it, and wait with happy excitement. I'm on my way...I'll be there soon."

Jesus is coming back. We don't know when, but He is coming. Soon we will worship our King forever in the ways He deserves. And so we pray—come, Lord Jesus, come!

Family Time (Light the white, center CHRIST candle at this point.)

Talk about these questions with your family or group.

KIDS

1. What is one thing you learned during the last month?

2. How can we remember the joy we have in Jesus today? How can we look forward to the exciting day when Jesus returns?

TEENS AND ADULTS

3. What is one thing you can do to tell or show others about the things you've learned during Advent?

4. How can you "wait well" for Jesus' return?

5. How can you, your family, or group stay focused on hope, peace, love, and joy throughout the entire year?

Pray

Thank God that He sent His Son to be born as a baby, live a perfect life, die for our sins, and be resurrected. Pray that today would not only be a memorable celebration with friends and family, but a day to remember how Jesus' birth changed the world forever. Pray that you would not lose focus, and you would wait well for His return.