

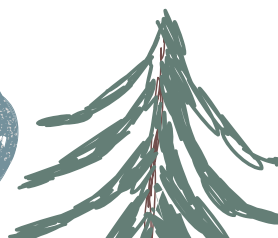
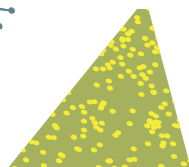


FAMILY ADVENT GUIDE 2021

Hope, love, joy, and peace are a few of the good gifts God has given us. During Advent, we celebrate Jesus coming to earth as a baby, making the way for these gifts to be experienced. Our prayer is that your family can use this guide to remember and celebrate Jesus' birth and the hope and joy He offers.

Each weekly devotion is designed to lead your family to open their Bibles, discuss the Bible passage, pray together, and create special memories that strengthen your hope, joy, love, and peace with God and with others. Make your family's Advent time even more meaningful by using the weekly Family Connection Cards. Go deeper in family conversations and search out additional Scripture verses, or utilize the extra verses throughout the week at daily family prayer times.

Use these devotions, activities, and worship songs to help your family worship Jesus this Christmas. He is the gift we proclaim. Let's celebrate!



Week 3:

LOVE

DISCUSS

Show your family some modern pictures of Bethlehem. Discuss what Bethlehem may have looked like during the time Jesus was born.

Explain that Bethlehem was a small town, but God planned for it to be a very important place in the story of how He showed His love for people. After about 400 years of silence (between the Book of Malachi and the New Testament), Bethlehem was the place God chose to take the next step in showing His unending love to people.

READ

Read Luke 2:1-7.

EXPLAIN

It was in Bethlehem that Mary and Joseph, Jesus' earthly parents, welcomed Jesus into the world. They had traveled to Bethlehem because the law said that Joseph had to go to his hometown to be counted in a census. First John 4:9 says that "God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his one and only Son into the world so that we might live through him." God sent the gift of Jesus into the world to be born in the town of Bethlehem to demonstrate His deep and everlasting love for us.

PRAY

Praise God for sending the gift of love to us through Jesus. Acknowledge that He knows every detail of the story for His people, even the small town where the Savior would be born. Thank Him for this Advent season to reflect and rejoice that love has come to us.

SING OF HOPE

Look up one of the following Christmas carols or choose your favorite song to sing together as a family.

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"

"O Come, All Ye Faithful"

More Bible verses about love:

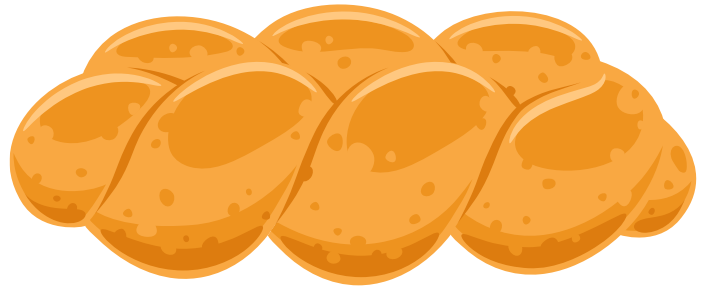
John 3:16-17; John 13:34; Romans 5:8; Romans 8:38-39; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7



BAKE BETHLEHEM BREAD

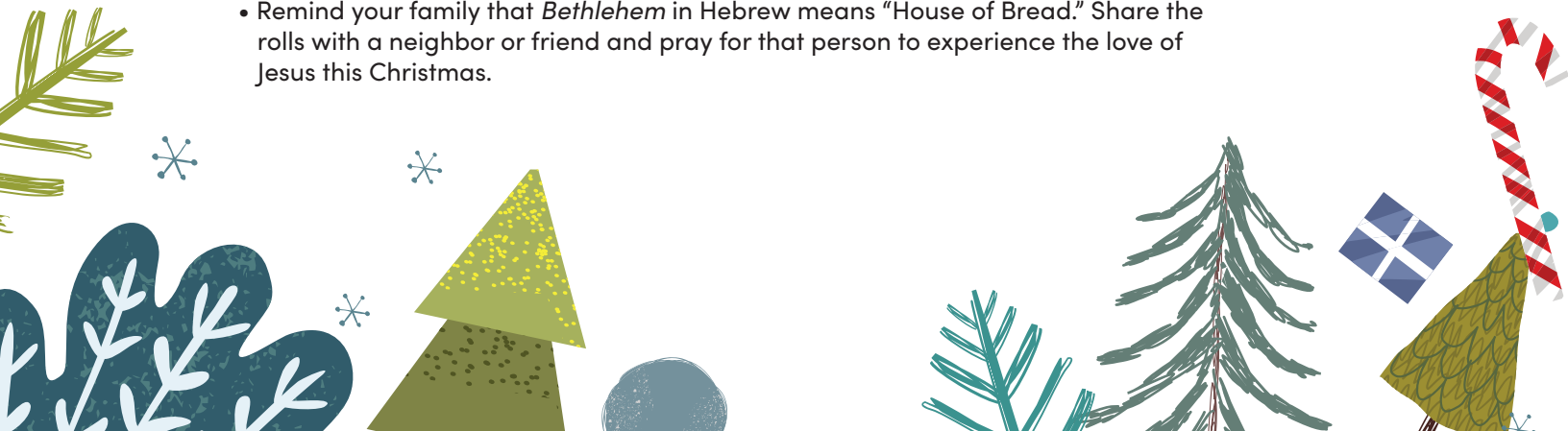
You will need:

- 4 cups all purpose flour
- 1 cup and 2 T whole milk
- 1 tsp. salt
- ¼ cup sugar
- ¼ cup shortening
- 1 package yeast
- Egg wash
- Coarse sea salt



Directions:

- Line a baking sheet with a baking mat or lightly grease and set aside.
- Warm milk to room temperature. Mix sugar, salt, and yeast with milk. Whisk until all lumps are gone and the liquid is smooth.
- Sift flour and pour into a large mixing bowl. Make a well in the center of the flour and pour the yeast mixture into the well. Begin mixing with a wooden spoon until the dough begins to incorporate. Gradually add shortening until it is thoroughly mixed. Knead dough with your hands until it is smooth and firm.
- Remove the dough from the bowl and place on a prepared baking sheet. Cover with a kitchen towel and allow to rise approximately 45 minutes–1 hour.
- After about an hour, cut dough into lemon-sized portions. You should have about 9–10 small portions of dough. Coat each piece of dough with a small amount of shortening to keep the dough moist.
- Cut each piece of dough into two equal pieces and roll the dough with the palms of your hands into two ropes approximately 6 inches long. Press the ends of the two ropes together and braid one on top of the other.
- Starting at one end of your twist, gently roll the dough into a circle. Tuck the ends into the bottom and press gently to mold.
- Cover baking sheets with kitchen towels and allow dough to rise for 3 hours. Brush each roll with egg wash and sprinkle with coarse sea salt. Bake in a preheated oven at 350 degrees for 15–20 minutes until golden brown.
- Remind your family that *Bethlehem* in Hebrew means “House of Bread.” Share the rolls with a neighbor or friend and pray for that person to experience the love of Jesus this Christmas.



Family Connection Cards:

Week 1: Hope

Rejoice in hope. Romans 12:12a

DISCUSS

Did everything God said about Jesus' birth come true?
How does Jesus give us hope?
What are some reasons it might be hard to trust and hope in God?

More Bible verses about hope:

Romans 5:2-5; 1 Timothy 4:10; Psalm 33:20-22;
Hebrews 10:23; 1 Peter 1:3



Week 3: Love

We love because he first loved us. 1 John 4:19

DISCUSS

Why is it important to think about love at Christmastime?
How have we seen God love our family?
Who is someone we can show love to during Christmas?
How?

More Bible verses about love:

John 3:16-17; John 13:34; Romans 5:8; Romans 8:38-39;
1 Corinthians 13:4-7



Week 4: Joy

Sing for joy to God our strength. Psalm 81:1a

DISCUSS

What is something that brings you joy at Christmastime?
How does joy help us worship God?
What can our family do this Christmas to share the big announcement of Jesus with others, like the shepherds did?

More Bible verses about joy:

Luke 15:1-7; Romans 15:13; Psalm 16:11; John 15:9-11;
1 Peter 1:8-9



Week 2: Peace

Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. John 14:27a

DISCUSS

What does it mean to have peace?
Why is it important to believe that Jesus gives us peace?
What can we remember is true about Jesus when we feel afraid?

More Bible verses about peace:

Isaiah 53:5; Colossians 3:12-15; Philippians 4:4-8;
John 14:27



Christmas Day: Jesus

I am the light of the world. John 8:12b

DISCUSS

Why is it important that we celebrate the birth of Jesus?
Why does the Bible call Jesus "the light of the world?"
How can our family share the good news about Jesus with others?

More Bible verses about Jesus:

Matthew 4:16; John 12:46; 2 Corinthians 4:6;
John 1:1-5

