

Advent 2020

JOY • PEACE • LOVE • HOPE

<p>A young couple, Mary and Joseph, got engaged.</p> <p>DEFINE JOY. Have each person in your family share their definition of joy. 1</p>	<p>One day, God sends the angel Gabriel to Mary. He has some very special news!</p> <p>LOOK FOR JOY. Discuss as a family: how can we be joyful when we feel unhappy? Share with each other some times that were hard but you still found ways to have joy. 2</p>	<p>Mary is greatly troubled when she hears the angel's greeting.</p> <p>SWAP COMPLAINING FOR JOY; complaining is the opposite of joy. This week, every time you complain, follow it up by saying one thing you're thankful for. 3</p>	<p>Gabriel responds to Mary: "Don't be afraid; God is very happy with you!"</p> <p>MAKE J-O-Y PERSONAL. Name some things that start with the letters J, O & Y that bring you joy. Write your acronym on a piece of paper and encourage your kids to illustrate the things that bring them joy. 4</p>	<p>Gabriel tells Mary the special news: she will have a baby boy, and he will be named Jesus.</p> <p>HAVE A DANCE PARTY. Create some family joy by turning on your favorite Christmas music and having a dance party. 5</p>
<p>Gabriel shares more details of God's plan with Mary: "Jesus will be great and will be called God's very own son!"</p> <p>PEACE. Have each person in your family share what makes them feel peaceful. Encourage everyone in your family to try at least one new peace-bringing activity this week. 6</p>	<p>Mary doesn't understand how she can have a baby without being married, but the angel Gabriel assures her of a great truth: nothing is impossible with God.</p> <p>POWER DOWN. Turn technology off for an undistracted evening together. Bake Christmas cookies, talk about favorite Christmas memories or plan a Christmas surprise for another family. 7</p>	<p>"I serve God with my life and want all that you have said to happen," Mary tells the angel, and he leaves.</p> <p>HAVE A MOVIE NIGHT. Snuggle up and watch your favorite Christmas movie together. Have popcorn, dim the lights, get a blanket and make the room feel especially peaceful. 8</p>	<p>Mary visits her cousin Elizabeth and is so overwhelmed with God's goodness that she sings a song of praise.</p> <p>FIND PEACEFUL PEOPLE. Have everyone finish this sentence: "The most peaceful person I know is ____." Discuss why you picked that person. 9</p>	<p>Caesar Augustus wants to know how many people are in his empire, so he tells all the people to go back to their hometown to be registered and counted.</p> <p>ENJOY THE PEACEFUL CHRISTMAS LIGHTS. Take a drive as a family around your community and enjoy the bright, beautiful colors. 10</p>
<p>Joseph takes Mary, who is pregnant, to his hometown of Bethlehem to be counted.</p> <p>BEING THANKFUL MAKES US FEEL MORE AT PEACE. Write a note or card thanking someone who has blessed your life recently. 11</p>	<p>While Joseph and Mary are in Bethlehem, the time comes for the baby to be born.</p> <p>TAKE A BREATHER. Declare today as an "off day" as much as is possible. Stay in pjs, leave the dishes in the sink, relax and enjoy that 'extra' time together. 12</p>	<p>Mary gives birth to Jesus, wraps him in swaddling cloths and lays him in a manger because there is no room for them anywhere else.</p> <p>SMILING LETS YOUR LOVE SHINE THROUGH! Take your smile with you today. Even a simple smile can bring joy to someone having a rough day. 13</p>	<p>At night in a nearby field, shepherds are watching their flocks.</p> <p>SHOW LOVE THIS SEASON by adopting another family to give gifts. It could be someone you know or through a local organization like the "Angel Tree". 14</p>	<p>The sky lights up - God has sent an angel to the shepherds to tell them the good news.</p> <p>SHOW SOMEONE YOU CARE by leaving them a SURPRISE love package on their doorstep or in their mailbox. Make sure to leave an encouraging note! 15</p>
<p>When the shepherds see the angel, they're afraid!</p> <p>SERVING TOGETHER. It not only shows love to others, but is also life-giving to your family. Choose one way you can volunteer your time as a family this month. 16</p>	<p>The angel tries to calm the shepherds: "Don't be afraid - I bring wonderful news that will bring joy to all of the world!"</p> <p>SHOW LOVE WITH YOUR WORDS. See how many compliments you can give to brighten someone else's day today. 17</p>	<p>"A Savior - the Rescuer you have been waiting for is born today!" the angel proclaims to the shepherds.</p> <p>SPEND TIME WITH PEOPLE YOU LOVE. Invite a few of your favorite people over for dessert or a game night. 18</p>	<p>The angel explains that the shepherds will find the baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.</p> <p>SHOW LOVE BY DECLUTTERING. Organize and declutter your home. (This may be an ongoing project!) Then give away no longer used items. 19</p>	<p>More angels come to celebrate the good news - they arrive at the shepherd's field and begin praising God!</p> <p>HOPE. Have each person share something that they hope to receive for Christmas. Discuss how hoping for a gift is different from the hope that we have in Jesus. 20</p>
<p>The shepherds leave their flocks and hurry to find Mary, Joseph and the baby, who is lying in a manger.</p> <p>GOOGLE THE WORD HOPE. Compare and contrast what hope looks like to the world and how it is described in the Bible. How are earthly and heavenly hope similar and different? 21</p>	<p>After they see the baby, the shepherds excitedly go and tell everyone they run into the good news!</p> <p>BE A WITNESS. Take the time this week to share the hope of Jesus with someone you know. Invite them to come to church with you or watch online and discuss after. 22</p>	<p>The shepherds return to their flocks, praising God for all they had seen and heard.</p> <p>MAKE A PRAYER WALL. Life can get really busy - especially during the holidays. Write down different things that you are praying and hoping for as a family. This can help us focus on where we place our hope. 23</p>	<p>Mary names the baby Jesus just as the angel had told her to do.</p> <p>GO DOWN MEMORY LANE. Pull out old family photo albums or scroll through old Christmas pictures. Tell stories of your favorite Christmas memories. 24</p>	<p>God sent his Son to rescue us because he loves us so very much!</p> <p>JESUS IS BORN! Read the story of Jesus' birth from Luke 1:26-2:21 and remember the greatest joy of all - hope in our Savior, Jesus! 25</p>

