

# Our Celebration of Advent

Week 1

November 30 to December 6



# The Advent Tree

# How to Use this Advent Devotional Guide

1. Set aside 15 minutes of your day to walk through each lesson with your family.
2. Have your family help in preparing for the devotional thought each day (involvement is key in all parts of the day's devotional).
3. Keep the time or occasion consistent each day (before or after supper, at bedtime, before they leave for school, be creative, but be consistent).
4. If you miss a day that's okay. The devotionals are stand alone, in other words they don't build upon each other. You won't miss something important if you miss one day.
5. Make sure you come to church each Sunday to get the overview and enjoy the sermon that goes with each week's theme.
6. Get involved in your child(ren)'s spiritual lives (that's what these devotionals are designed to do).
7. Have fun, fun, fun!! Don't make this a drudgery or something horrible that the kids won't want to do. I have done my best to make them enjoyable, entertaining and yet thought provoking. So make this a highlight of the day not a drudgery.



## Sunday, November 30, 2014 Day 1 of Advent

**Objects to prepare:** Find a location to display your Advent Tree. Take some time to "fluff" up the branches and make it look just right. Make sure to have the kids help in picking the spot and preparing the look of the tree.

**Scripture Verse:**

"He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end." (Ecc. 3: 11 )

**Thought:** The evergreen tree became a traditional symbol for Christmas because it stays green when all other trees lose their fall leaves. So unlike the trees of fall which turn various shades of brown, orange, and yellow, the pine tree stays "ever green." In symbolism, while most trees go through the death of winter, the pine tree stays ever green or eternally alive, so the evergreen is a great reminder of Jesus Christ coming into our world because that which was immortal (evergreen) became mortal.

**Thoughts to Ponder:**

1. What is your favorite Christmas tree memory?
2. Share what it was like putting up your Christmas tree when you were a child.
3. What do you think it would be like to live forever?

**Monday, December 1, 2014**  
**Day 2 of Advent**



**Objects to prepare:** Prepare a cup of hot cocoa for everyone and also get out one ice cube per person. On the count of three, see who can melt an ice cube the fastest. After melting the ice cube have everyone take a look at the steam coming off of their hot cocoa.

**Scripture Verse:**

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made." (John 1:1-3)

**Thought:** What happened to the ice cube as you melted it? What is the steam rising off your hot cocoa? It is all water in different forms. Water can be solid, like ice, or it can be liquid, or it can be vapor, like steam or a big puffy cloud. Jesus is the only human who existed before he was a man. In fact the Bible tells us that He was with God when God created the world and even helped in the world's creation. Jesus who was eternal (he always was and always will be) became part of mortal creation. In other words Jesus, who always was and always will be, came into our world which has a beginning and an end.

**Thoughts to Ponder:**

1. When did you begin?
2. What are some of your very first memories?
3. How does it make you feel knowing that Jesus is still alive  
in heaven waiting for us?



## Tuesday, December 2 ,2014 Day 3 of Advent

**Objects to prepare:** Have a pine needle ready to use. When it is time for our Advent devotions. Take the pine needle and allow everyone to softly poke themselves with the needle. Be careful, the needle is sharp and can hurt you.

**Scripture Verse:**

"When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (I Corinthians 15 :54-57)

**Thought:** Have you ever put your hand in an old dry Christmas tree? It stings you as the needles prick and poke your skin. Today's verse tells us that sin (doing things which displease God) actually hurts us. In fact, it says that sin causes death. But God's great gift to us is that he took the "sting" of sin away. Sin can no longer hurt us if we seek God's forgiveness. We also learn from God's word that the gift of Jesus we celebrate at Christmas was God's way of taking the sting of sin and death away.

**Thoughts to Ponder:**

1. Describe a time you were poked by a pine needle.
2. How badly did it hurt?
3. What is sin? (describe it in your own words)
4. How does sin hurt us?

**Wednesday, December 3, 2014**  
**Day 4 of Advent**



**Objects to prepare:** Get out a band-aid and allow everyone to put one band-aid on themselves. Each person can be as goofy as he/she wants to be with his/her band-aid. (A little experiment you can do all week is if someone accidentally cuts themselves in the house, bandage only part of the cut and then watch which part heals faster and has less scarring.)

**Scripture Verse:**

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 6:23

**Thought:** If we cut ourselves we put a band-aid on to bring healing and protection to the wound. A protected and covered wound always heals faster and with less scarring than does an unprotected wound. Yesterday we learned that sin causes wounds in our lives. Just like pine needles can prick us and poke us, so sin does cause hurts and irritations in our lives. In olden days, people would use tree sap to help heal their wounds because it would become a balm to protect it. Pine trees are full of sap oozing all over the place. Advent is a celebration of God's healing sap oozing all over us in the form of Jesus Christ. As our verse shows us, God's gift to us at Christmas is Jesus' healing or forgiving of our sin.

**Thoughts to Ponder:**

1. How is Jesus better than a band-aid?
2. Is there a sin in your heart you need Jesus to heal?
3. Stop and thank God for sending Jesus to heal our sin.



## Thursday, December 4, 2014 Day 5 of Advent

**Objects to prepare:** Gather around your Advent Tree and have the kids take five minutes or so and see if they can count the number of needles on the tree? It would take them a long time to count them all so stop them and see how far they have gotten.

**Scripture Verse:**

"Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.  
(Matthew 10:28-30)

**Thought:** It would be pretty difficult to count the pine needles on a pine tree. Likewise it would be almost impossible to count the number of hairs on your head. Do you realize that God knows exactly how many hairs are on your head and how many pine needles are on every pine tree. Not that these numbers are important but they show us something about God. He cares about the details. If God cares enough to know the number of pine needles or hairs, he definitely cares about every detail of your life as well.

**Thoughts to Ponder:**

1. How does it make you feel to know that God cares about every detail of your life?
2. What are some areas of your life that you need to be reminded that God cares about?
3. Does it bring you comfort knowing God cares about the details?
4. You are so important to God (much more important than any branch on a pine tree) that He cares about every detail of your life!

## Friday, December 5, 2014

### Day 6 of Advent



**Objects to prepare:** Take a look at your Advent Tree and ask yourself (& family) where the tree points? The tree almost looks like a big arrow pointing upward. Ask your children to point to heaven (we have been taught that heaven is up). Look where all Christmas trees point? They point to heaven.

#### **Scripture Verse:**

"God did not spare his own Son. He gave him up for us all. Then won't he also freely give us everything else? Who can bring any charge against God's chosen ones? God makes us right with himself. Who can sentence us to death? Christ Jesus is at the right hand of God and is also praying for us. He died. More than that, he was raised to life. Who can separate us from Christ's love? Can trouble or hard times or harm or hunger? Can nakedness or danger or war? (Romans 8:32-35 NIRV)

**Thought:** Every time we see a Christmas tree we can be reminded that it is pointing to heaven. This is significant because heaven is where Jesus was from and heaven is where he is right now. In fact our verse today tells us that Jesus is right next to God listening to each of our prayers. This verse also tells us that with Jesus in heaven watching over us, we should not fear anything on earth because nothing can separate us from his love.

#### **Thoughts to Ponder:**

1. Why is Jesus being in heaven so significant?
2. How does it make you feel that Jesus hears your prayers?
3. What prayers have you prayed to Jesus lately?
4. Stop and thank God for sending Jesus.





## Saturday, December 6, 2014

### Day 7 of Advent

**Objects to prepare:** Take a look at the pine needles on the tree. What color are they?

**Scripture Verse:**

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3: 16

**Thought:** The green pine needles on every Christmas tree is a beautiful reminder of life. Things that are green are alive. Our final thought about our advent tree is a wonderful reminder of the eternal life that Jesus brings to each of us because of his willingness to become a baby and live as a man on this earth.

**Thoughts to Ponder:**

1. What do you think heaven is going to be like?
2. What do you think living for ever will be like?
3. Have you believed in Jesus so that you will not perish but have eternal life?