



On the way to

BETHLEHEM

ADVENT DAILY DEVOTIONS FOR FAMILIES

EMILY
JAMINET

The greatest invitation you will ever receive is to accept the call to follow Jesus. This begins with the opportunity to celebrate the true meaning of Christmas. In a culture that is full of sparkle and entertainment, we are invited to quiet our hearts and hear the voice of God calling us to meet the Savior. The word Advent is Latin for “a coming” or “an arrival.” We are preparing to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. Allow your family to experience this Advent with Jesus, his mother, Mary, and his earthly father, Joseph, like that first Christmas many years ago.

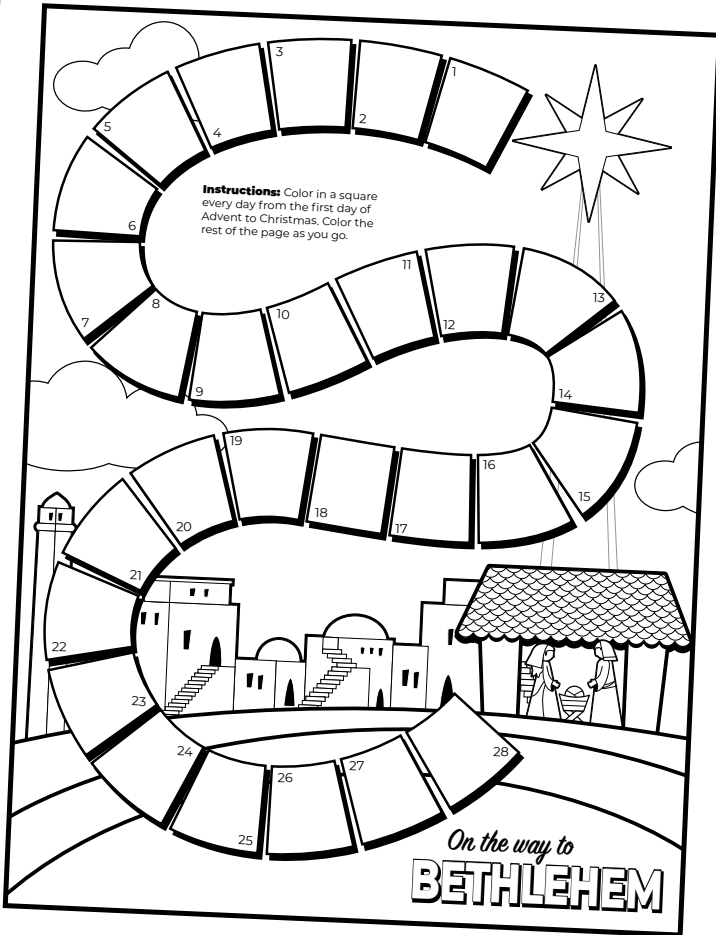
For the next 28 days, we will focus on the four major themes of Advent: Hope, Love, Joy and Peace. When we pray and reflect on these gifts from God, we can see Jesus in our life. At the beginning of each week, on Sunday, we will present that week’s theme and the events leading up to, and including, the birth of Christ. Each day will have its own Scripture verse, a reflection and a prayer, as well as an optional deed for the day to put your faith in “action.” These are designed to help your family grow in faith and love for God and care for others.

We encourage you to read the Scripture of the day and to include spontaneous prayer, telling God the prayer intentions that rest on your heart. When a family gathers to pray, hearts are softened and lives are changed, for prayer changes us.

This resource offers many suggestions for family members—especially children—to draw and color. We’ve included a QR code on the opposite page that links to all the downloadable pages related to this booklet. Simply print out those pages if you choose to do so, but feel free to encourage children to try to create their own designs!



Draw a pathway with 28 squares that lead to the manger of Jesus or scan the QR code to download the coloring page below.



For mortals it is impossible, but not for God;
for God all things are possible.

Mark 10:27

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Theme of the Week: Hope

The Word (The Birth of John the Baptist): But the angel [Gabriel] said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord.” *Luke 1:13-15*

This week we focus on the importance of having hope in our hearts. We are not talking about hope in the sense of wishful thinking, but rather the hope Jesus offers us. As Christians, we are called by Jesus to have “expectant faith” to someday be with the Lord in heaven.

The Jewish people waited many years for the Savior to be born. They had “clues” to his first coming, and yet, they were uncertain about how God’s plan would unfold. Zechariah’s prayer was answered in a way that he least expected. His son, John the Baptist, announced the coming of the Messiah, and the preparation was to confess our sins. The preparation was not to build an army to overthrow Rome, which many were expecting, but rather to usher in the Kingdom. Jesus came to die for our sins that we might have the hope of heaven.

Deeds of Hope: How can we be better at waiting in hope? Can we be more patient? Can we decide to put ourselves last in line for getting our dinner or waiting on a meal? This is not only good manners but a way to grow your ability to wait in hope. May we show Jesus we love him and have hope in him by being patient.

Action: If you have an Advent wreath in your home, be sure to light the first candle on it today. Or draw an Advent wreath with four candles to color or use the image included in the downloadable pages. Next, color or cross off the first square leading to the manger as we track our days to Christmas.

Dear Jesus, please expand our ability to trust you and always have hope in our hearts that you hear our prayer, though it may not be answered in a way we expect. Jesus, lead our family that we may be filled with **hope**.

Amen.



MONDAY, THE FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

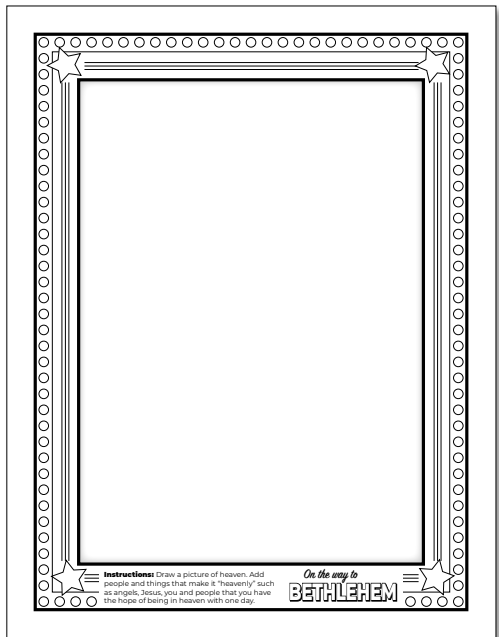
Heaven Is Beyond What We Can Imagine

What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him. *1 Corinthians 2:9*

We have no idea what God has prepared for us in heaven. We do know that heaven isn't boring! Heaven is a place prepared for those who hope in him. Since our eye has not seen, we must trust that Jesus has a wonderful place waiting for us and all those who follow him.

Deeds of Hope: Have the kids draw a picture of heaven on your own paper or in the frame included in the downloadable pages.

Ask them to place a few items that make it "heavenly" for them such as angels, Jesus, themselves, parents or grandparents that they have the hope of being in heaven with. Jesus wants to lead us to heaven, and yet we need to step out in faith and know that God has a plan for our life, with heaven as our final goal. Spend a few minutes discussing this great plan that God has for us and how heaven is a wonderful place the Lord is preparing for us.



Action: Color in the second square leading to the manger.

Dear Jesus, help our family to become a family of Christian hope and allow you to shine forth from us. Please bless those in most need and strengthen them with the grace of your hope. Build us up to become a family of **hope**. In your name.
Amen.

TUESDAY, THE FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

Hope Is Our Anchor

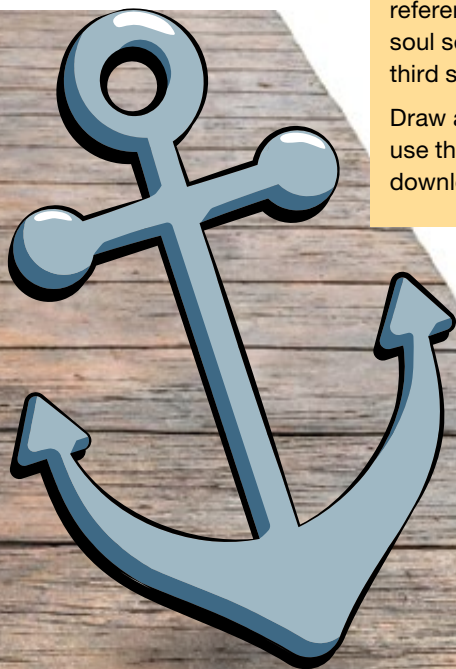
We have this hope, a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus, a forerunner on our behalf, has entered... *Hebrews 6:19-20*

Hope is like an anchor for the soul; it keeps us where we want to be and prevents us from drifting away. It is also our lighthouse that points the way and prevents us from being dashed upon the jagged rocks when the storms of life inevitably arise. What do you think of when you hear the word *hope*?

Deeds of Hope: Who needs hope in your life? Is there someone struggling to whom you can reach out and text this Scripture from Hebrews, or send it in a card, or call and share it with them? When we take the time to encourage others, we can make a difference.

Action: Before bed, when the lights are low or almost off, use your phone or find a flashlight to show your family how well it lights up the dark. It is like having hope in your heart, which is a light or a firm reference point for the soul. Hope keeps the soul secure and firm in faith. Color in the third square leading to the manger.

Draw and color a picture of an anchor or use the image of an anchor included in the downloadable pages.




Dear Jesus, please give us renewed hope in our hearts and teach us to trust in your ways! Strengthen us to become a family of **hope. Amen.**

WEDNESDAY, THE FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

Hope Renews Our Strength

But those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint. *Isaiah 40:31*



Action: Get to know the Scripture of the day better by reciting it aloud a few times. Color the fourth square to the manger. Draw and color an eagle flying or use the image of an eagle included in the downloadable pages.

Let us think of the Israelites waiting for generations upon generations for the Savior to be born. Hope renews waiting and allows us to trust in the will of God. We know that God desires to strengthen our spirit when we turn to him in prayer. At what time in your life have you been renewed in your strength by God?

Deeds of Hope: Pick a chore at home that you do not like and always try to avoid. This week do the chore without being asked, and ask the Lord to give you the strength to do it cheerfully.

Dear Jesus, please renew our hope for you; renew our spirit when we feel burdened, anxious or overwhelmed. Help our family to keep the true meaning of Christmas alive in our hearts! May we become a family of **hope. Amen.**



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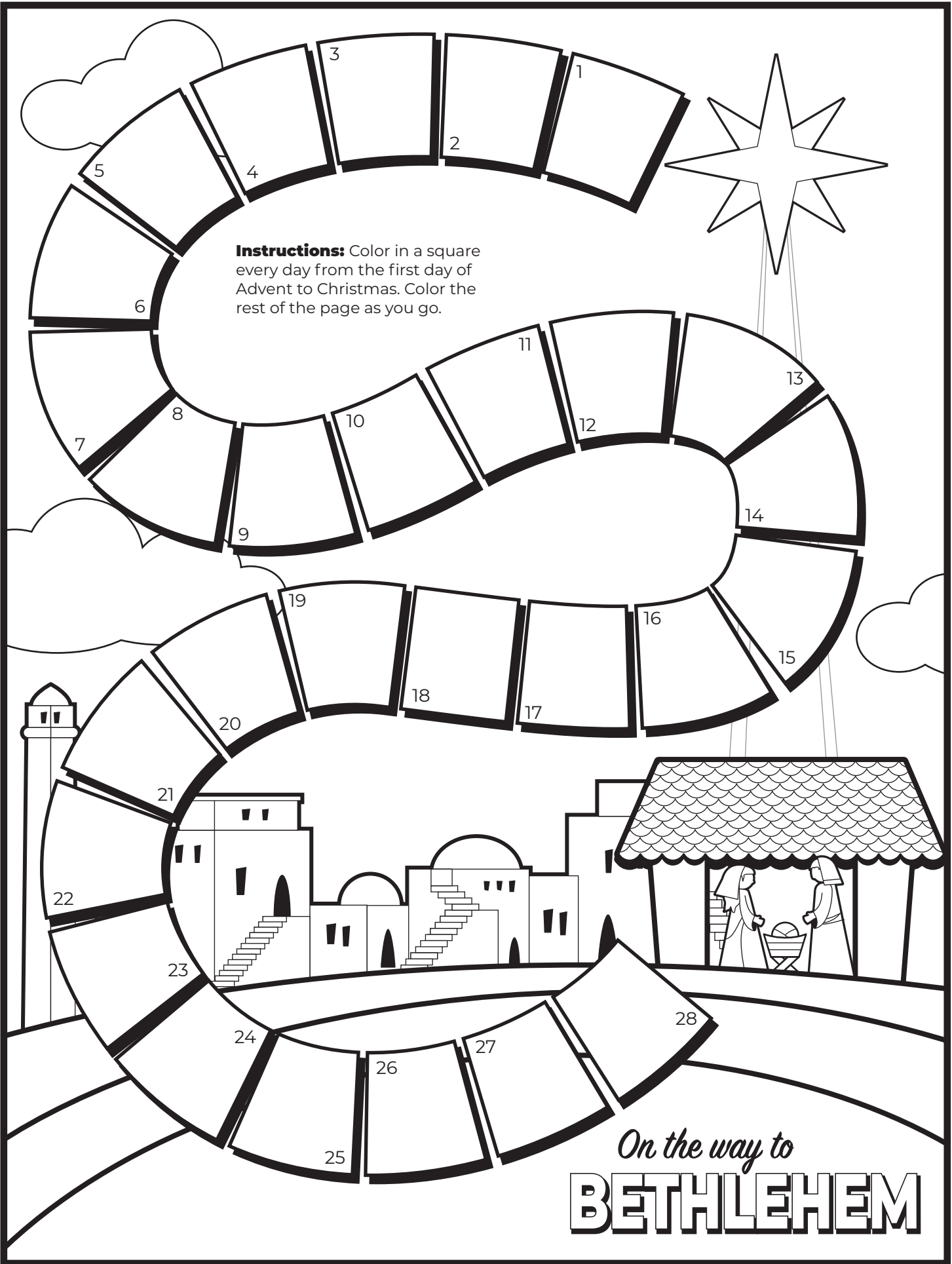
This daily family devotional and activity booklet is written by author Emily Jaminet especially for the Advent season. This booklet suggests themes, activities and prayers for the whole family to experience. The devotional encourages creativity and even offers free downloadable coloring pages that families may print out and use at home.

This booklet includes children's activities that can be downloaded and printed by following this link. The downloads are not required but may make the activities easier for busy families.



By Emily Jaminet. Design by Jamie Wyatt. Cover and interior images: Shutterstock. © 2021 Creative Communications for the Parish, a division of Bayard, Inc., 1564 Fencorp Dr., Fenton, MO 63026. www.creativecommunications.com. 800-325-9414. All rights reserved. Printed in the USA.

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Instructions: Color in a square every day from the first day of Advent to Christmas. Color the rest of the page as you go.

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