

CHRISTMAS EVE

After a season of Advent, preparing our hearts and minds for Christmas, it is now time to celebrate the birth of Jesus through worship.

Tonight we light the final candle of our Advent wreath, the CHRIST candle. Light the first two purple candles which represent, HOPE and LOVE, then the pink JOY candle and finally the last purple candle of PEACE. As you light each candle, invite family members to take turns saying:

I pray for a world where everyone feels hope and I will BE THE LIGHT of hope.

I pray for a world where everyone is loved and I will BE THE LIGHT of love.

I pray for a world where everyone experiences joy and I will BE THE LIGHT of joy.

I pray for a world of peace and I will BE THE LIGHT of peace.

Now we light the white candle which represents CHRIST.

You have now completed the lighting of your Advent wreath when you lit the white CHRIST candle. As you look at your wreath, discuss what it means to have the light of Christ shining in your lives.

Lighting the candle is a reminder that Jesus is the light of the world and he said all people who love him are also the light of the world. Your Advent wreath will be put away soon, but it is important that we don't forget our call to BE THE LIGHT. Talk about what other lights we can use as reminders to BE THE LIGHT throughout the year.

We will now conclude our family worship time with the **Passing of the Light**.

Traditionally, in Christmas Eve worship, we end our service by using the Christ candle to light another candle and then 'pass the light' to all those around us. We invite you to continue this tradition with those worshipping with you. You may choose to blow out the purple and pink candles prior to passing the light. You can use those candles for passing the light if you don't have other candles. If you have young kids, they can participate with battery operated candles. Encourage them to leave their candles off until the light is passed to them and then turn them on.

In John 8:12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Have one adult family member use the CHRIST candle to light their own candle* and say "the light of CHRIST". They will then hold their candle upright while the next person holds their candle over it to accept the light, the person passing the light says "the light of Christ" and the person receiving the light responds "Merry Christmas". Continue passing the light until everyone's candle is lit. As you light your individual candles, sing 'Silent Night'.

When you are finished singing 'Silent Night', count to three and blow out your candles. As soon as your candles are blown out sing "Joy to the World"!

For an extra special experience, take your Christ candle and individual candles outside. Do your candle lighting outside and look at the stars as you sing 'Silent Night' and 'Joy to the World'.

End your Christmas Eve celebration by taking a picture of your family around your Advent wreath as a reminder that tonight you received the light of CHRIST and you will BE THE LIGHT for others.

If your family has not written their notes to include in the stocking for Jesus, now would be a great time to do that.



CHRISTMAS DAY

HAPPY BIRTHDAY JESUS!

After much waiting, lots of Christmas activities, shopping, cooking, wrapping, and prepping, today is the day when we stop to truly celebrate the birth of Jesus!

Even though we normally celebrate Christmas by exchanging gifts with friends and loved ones, the true gift of Christmas is not something that can be bought, it can't be found in stockings hung on the fireplace or in beautifully wrapped gifts under the tree. The true gift of Christmas is, was, and always will be Jesus.

Throughout this Advent season, we have lit the candles for HOPE, LOVE, JOY and PEACE. Yesterday, we relit each of these candles along with the white CHRIST candle.

We have learned what it means to BE THE LIGHT and focused on sharing our light with others.

Today as part of your celebration, take some time to talk about your family's favorite Advent activities. In the space below, write some ideas or draw pictures of what made this Advent season special for your family.

In Isaiah 58:10 it says "if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday." Share what makes you feel like you are truly being the light of Christ. Come up with ideas about how you can continue to shine your light in the upcoming year. Talk about how each of us is part of making the world a better place.

When you have finished reflecting, take out your wood ornament to create a 2020 memory ornament reminding you to "BE THE LIGHT". You can write "BE THE LIGHT" and have each family member sign their name as their commitment to continue glorifying God through your words and actions. You can add your BE THE LIGHT button to the ornament or find another way to decorate your ornament that represents your family and this Advent season.

Our prayer for you on Christmas Day is that you are filled with hope, that you feel the love of family and friends, that you experience the pure joy and peace of Christ today and always.



REFLECTIONS ON ADVENT 2020