

# ADVENT WEEK 1: NOVEMBER 29-DECEMBER 5

**BIBLE VERSES: GENESIS 1:1-5, JOHN 1:1-5**

Light is always connected to God. It is the first thing that He created. Light gives warmth, sight, and energy. Think of that cloudless, 75-degree, spring day that finally comes after what seemed like months of cloudy, cold, bleak days. It gives life, hope, and joy after that darkness. God, even more so, gives us life and joy as well.

Darkness, however, represents all that is not good. There is fear, loneliness, sin, and wrongdoing wherever darkness is involved. Darkness can paralyze us, or worse lead us to a life away from God and His light. Darkness means our own sin, death, and the power of the devil in our lives. Darkness is a part of who we are. Fear and doubt surround us. We want to hide the wrongs that we have done. We easily get overpowered by the darkness and lose that hope and joy of that perfect warm, cloudless day.

John 1 tells us that Jesus does not leave us in our darkness. In Advent, we celebrate Jesus coming to this earth to save us from the darkness around us and in us. No darkness can stand up to light, and even more so evil, fear, and pain cannot stand up to Jesus. He defeated sin, death, and the devil by His own death on the cross. As we look at Jesus being our Light this Advent season, know that the darkness does not overcome Him. We are secure in the sunny warmth of Jesus' love and salvation.

## Questions:

1. What are all the benefits of light?
2. What do you think of when you think of darkness?
3. How can God's light be a part of your life every day?

## Activity: Light Shines

Find a way to bring light to a dark place. You can put up Christmas lights and turn them on at night. If you have a fireplace or fire pit, make a fire there. Go outside at night with a lantern. Or simply turn out all the lights in a room and turn on a flashlight.

Recognize the light's ability to cut through the darkness and be seen. Jesus cuts through the darkness of this world. That is something we can always hold onto and proclaim.

## Prayer:

O Lord, source of all light, bring Your Light into our darkness, that we may know your truth, and be comforted by the joy only You can give to us. Defend us from the darkness that surrounds us. May your light always shine brightly through us as well. Thank you for this Advent season, during which we look forward to the Light of this world coming to us. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

# ADVENT WEEK 2: DECEMBER 6 - DECEMBER 12

**BIBLE VERSES: ISAIAH 9:2, JOHN 8:12**

It can be pretty nice to sit in darkness sometimes. Well, when you are really tired, or sick, or maybe sad or annoyed, pretty much any time you don't want to deal with the world. But, walking in darkness is a completely different thing. No good thoughts come up when you are walking through a dark home, an abandoned building, the wilderness at night, or a street without lights. As we talked about last week, darkness represents fear, sadness, sin, and pain. When you walk in darkness, you allow those things to be around you and ultimately control your life. This kind of walk in darkness isn't a temporary, relaxing activity. This is an overwhelming, all-encompassing way of life. This darkness can look different in people's lives. It could be a darkness of isolation from others, or sadness and depression, or confusion and doubt, or even anger and rage. Whatever the darkness, it is all separated from God, not experiencing His joy and grace.

But, like the bright array of the angels in the night above the shepherds, God's light comes to us. He calls us out of the darkness of this world into a light full of joy, love, peace, and forgiveness. His light makes us realize that walk in darkness isn't such a great idea. We see the pain and destruction of our wrongs and know we need Someone to take us out of it. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross brings light to us that truly takes us out of the darkness.

In Advent, God reminds us of what that walk in darkness really looks like, so we are ready and excited for that Light to come to us. Jesus is the light of the world. Yet, He came to this earth into that darkness to free us and give us that precious light.

## Questions:

1. How might people "walk in darkness" today? How do they go against God?
2. How can you reach out to someone who may be walking in darkness?
3. Why would Jesus call Himself the light of the world? How can you share that light?

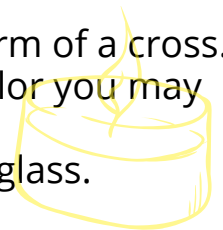
## Activity: Light of the World

### Supplies:

- Glass jar
- Yellow paint
- Paint brush/sponge
- Masking/Painters' tape
- Tea candle (electric)

### Instructions:

1. Put two pieces of tape on the jar in the form of a cross.
2. Paint the sides of the jar yellow, or any color you may have.
3. Let dry and take off the tape for the bare glass.
4. Put tea light inside.



## Prayer:

Destroyer of Evil, be with us in the midst of the darkness of this world. So often it can feel overwhelming and never ending. But we know that Your Son Jesus broke through that darkness to be with us. Thank you for your reconciliation through Him that our relationship with You is restored and we are Your Children of the Light. In Jesus' name. Amen.

# ADVENT WEEK 3: DECEMBER 13 - DECEMBER 19

**BIBLE VERSES: PSALM 119:105, 1 JOHN 1:7**

Night lights are a beautiful thing. They are so simple yet extremely helpful. They are a signal in the night to show where you should go and help to reveal any dangers along the way. They are a security for letting you know that everything is where it should be, even as you are lying in bed. Light can give us a peace of mind.

Last week we talked about what it meant to walk in darkness, to live in fear, sadness, and anger. Our Bible readings today show us that walking in the light means believing in God and following His Word. Like the wise men following the star to Jesus, God's Word shows us how we should live our lives, and that means trusting in God above everything else. We put our hope and trust in God, because we know that He keeps His promises. He continues to love us, provide for us, and forgive us when we do wrong. That is what it means to live and walk in the light. We turn to God for guidance and strength to face whatever may come our way. Whether it is the spooky, dark house we have to walk through, or an illness of a family member, or pain and sorrow of the past, God's light shines on a path through those things to His eternal glory.

As we walk that path, we get to share it with others who are following His light too. God's Word not only points us in the right direction, but it connects people together to an everlasting truth. Advent reminds us of the time that Light physically came to this earth as a man in Jesus Christ, but also that Light shining in our darkness, and pointing us to His great love.

## Questions:

1. What does God's path look like? How does that compare to other paths?
2. How does the Holy Spirit guide you on this path?
3. Who is someone you can support you know on their faith walk?

## Activity: Living Word

Take time this week to be in the Bible. Either as a family or as an individual, read a section of the Bible without any distractions. Highlight some key words and phrases that stick out to you, and read them again. Scripture is "living and active" (Hebrews 4:12), which means that it always has something to say to you. Here are some places you can get started:

Luke 1-2



1 John 1



Romans 5

## Prayer:

Creator of Wisdom, often we fall into darkness instead of following Your light. Please forgive us and set us on your path that we may walk in light, even with darkness around us. Thank you for the joy and peace your light brings. Allow us to share that light and have fellowship with other Christians that we may always know of your saving love. In Jesus' name. Amen.



# ADVENT WEEK 4: DECEMBER 20 - DECEMBER 25

## BIBLE VERSES: PSALM 27:1, LUKE 2

Fear is a pretty crippling thing. Anxiety builds; worst-case scenarios swirl around your head; knowing the right thing to do seems just out of reach. Overactive fear changes our perception of what is really going on. A baby gets afraid of a popping balloon. A kindergartener is afraid to start school for the first time. A teenager is afraid of what her classmates are going to say about her new outfit. A young couple is afraid of making that mortgage payment. The elderly man is afraid of dying alone. Are those real fears? Are those real dangers? Of course, but to let that fear rule your thoughts and actions go against our walk in the Light.

Psalm 27:1 was also far from the minds of the shepherds when a shiny, glorious angel suddenly appeared next to them in the middle of the night. They were not thinking of God's stronghold, but of their own mortality. Yet, the angel and the multitude brought them Good News of a savior who was going to conquer all fear. Their light and glory was just a fraction of what God was bringing to the earth through Jesus Christ. He is the light in the darkness and the salvation over sin and death. With victory over those things, what else is left to fear?

As Christmas approaches, we remember Jesus came to defeat our fears and give you a hope that never ends. Like the shepherds, what starts as fear and trembling ends in joy and praise for the God of light and salvation.

### Questions:

1. How do you react to the fear that comes up in your life?
2. Would you describe God as a stronghold? How so, or why not?
3. This year, how can you celebrate Christmas that highlights Jesus' victory over fear?

### Activity: Light One Candle

Take some time in the dark, but instead of telling ghost stories, list some ways that God conquers over wrong or evil in the world. Turn on a light or light a candle each time you do.

### Prayer:

Glorious Father, We pray that you would shatter the fear that takes us from You and distorts our knowledge that You have conquered sin and death. Give us strength to face the fears and dangers of our lives, that we can praise You above everything else. Bless us this Christmas time and keep us focused on You. Thank you for Your Son, our Savior. In His name we pray. Amen.

