

Church at Home Pack –

21st November 2021

Join us in church for our 10:30am service on Sunday or watch live at home on

<https://ccwsm.org.uk/service-type/sunday-service-online/>

If you like, join in with the discussion on Facebook with our church family (@ccwsm)!

In some sections we make several suggestions of ideas. Some may be more appropriate to you or the different people in your family or life group than others. We're not expecting you to do all of them (although you are very welcome to!) Choose the ones which best suit you.

Our verse for the year is the same as last year's verse as we think about the difference being with Jesus makes to our lives

When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.

Acts 4:13

GATHER TOGETHER

A prayer to start –

Father God,

We come to you, just as we are

Recognising our faults and mistakes

Asking forgiveness and guidance

Amen

Action reminder –

From the top of my head

(Touch head)

to the tips of my toes;

(Touch toes)

from the lobes of my ears

(Touch ear lobes)

to the end of my nose;

(Touch nose)

from my back, to my front

(Turn round)

to my wiggly fingers,

(stretch out arms and wiggle fingers)

God loves me!

(jump up and down)

READ TOGETHER

Nehemiah 9: 1-6, 32-35



International Children's Bible (ICB)

9 It was on the twenty-fourth day of that same month. The people of Israel gathered together. They did not eat. And they put on rough cloth and put dust on their heads. This was to show their sadness. ² Those people whose ancestors were from Israel had separated themselves from all foreigners. They stood and confessed their sins and their ancestors' sins. ³ For a fourth of the day they stood where they were. And they read from the Book of the Teachings of the Lord their God. Then they spent another fourth of the day confessing their sins. And they worshipped the Lord their God. ⁴ These Levites were standing on the stairs: Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani and Kanani. They called out to the Lord their God with loud voices. ⁵ And these Levites spoke: Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah and Pethahiah. They said, "Stand up and praise the Lord your God. He lives forever and ever.

"Blessed be your wonderful name.

It is more wonderful than all blessing and praise.

⁶ You are the only Lord.

You made the heavens, even the highest heavens.

You made all the stars.

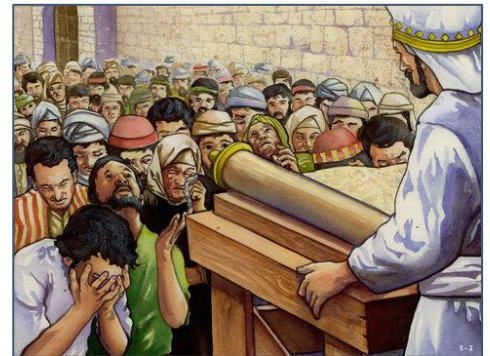
You made the earth and everything that is on it.

You made the seas and everything that is in them.

You give life to everything.

The heavenly army worships you.

~



³² "And so, our God, you are the great and mighty and wonderful God.

You keep your agreement of love.

Do not let all our trouble seem unimportant in your eyes.

This trouble has come to us, to our kings and to our leaders.

It has come to our priests and prophets.

It has come to our ancestors and all your people.

This trouble has come to us since the days of the kings of Assyria.

And it has lasted until today.

³³ You have been fair in everything that has happened to us.

You have been loyal, but we have been wicked.

³⁴ Our kings, leaders, priests and ancestors did not obey your teachings.

They did not pay attention to the commands and warnings you gave them.

³⁵ Even when our ancestors were living in their kingdom,

they did not serve you.

They were enjoying all the good things you had given them.

They were enjoying the land that was fertile and full of room.

But they did not stop their evil ways.

New International Version (NIV)

9 On the twenty-fourth day of the same month, the Israelites gathered together, fasting and wearing sackcloth and putting dust on their heads. ² Those of Israelite descent had separated themselves from all foreigners. They stood in their places and confessed their sins and the sins of their ancestors. ³ They stood where they were and read from the Book of the Law of the LORD their God for a quarter of the day, and spent another quarter in confession and in worshiping the LORD their God. ⁴ Standing on the stairs of the Levites were Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani and Kenani. They cried out with loud voices to the LORD their God. ⁵ And the Levites—Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah and Pethahiah—said: “Stand up and praise the LORD your God, who is from everlasting to everlasting.^[a]”

“Blessed be your glorious name, and may it be exalted above all blessing and praise. ⁶ You alone are the LORD. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you.

~

³² “Now therefore, our God, the great God, mighty and awesome, who keeps his covenant of love, do not let all this hardship seem trifling in your eyes—the hardship that has come on us, on our kings and leaders, on our priests and prophets, on our ancestors and all your people, from the days of the kings of Assyria until today. ³³ In all that has happened to us, you have remained righteous; you have acted faithfully, while we acted wickedly. ³⁴ Our kings, our leaders, our priests and our ancestors did not follow your law; they did not pay attention to your commands or the statutes you warned them to keep. ³⁵ Even while they were in their kingdom, enjoying your great goodness to them in the spacious and fertile land you gave them, they did not serve you or turn from their evil ways.

WATCH TOGETHER



Take a minute – Repentance – Crossroads Kids Club:

<https://youtu.be/JVvsFNXp4yY>



How can we be more thankful to God? – CQ Kids:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nKrYQ-z0nZw&ab_channel=ChristianQuestions



Kid President's 25 reasons to be thankful! – Kid President / Participant:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yA5Qpt1JRE4&ab_channel=Participant

TALK TOGETHER

- How good are you at learning from past mistakes?
- Do you think this is something people in the world are generally good at or not?

STUDY TOGETHER

Read Neh.9:1-3

- Why do you think the people wore sackcloth and put dust on their heads (*see v.1*)?
- What did all the people do in v.3?
- How do you think reading the Bible, confession and worship are linked?

Following this introduction, we read that several Levites (with names we struggle to pronounce!) led the people in prayer. They begin with praise and then go back through the history of their people.

If you're reading out loud, you may like to start reading part way through v.5

Read Neh.9:5-8

- What do they praise God for (*v.5-6*)?
- What character from Israel's history do they mention first and what did God do for him (*v.7-8*)?
- Why do you think they start with him?

Read Neh.9:9-12

- They move on to the Israelites being rescued from slavery in Egypt. What did God do for them?

Read Neh.9:13-15

- What good things did God give his people after he had saved them?

Read Neh.9:19-21

- How did the Israelites respond to God's goodness and salvation (*v.16-17*)?
- How does the prayer describe the character of God (*v.17*)?
- How did God show his character (*v.17-21*)?

We have not included questions on v.22-27 as it follows the themes of the rest of this section but please read it if you have time

Read Neh.9:28-30

- The prayer now summarises the Israelites' history during the times of the Judges and Kings. How did the people behave?
- What did God do?

Read Neh.9:31-33

- What is the truth about God that the people keep coming back to?

What has this chapter taught or reminded you about the faithfulness and mercy of God?

How is it encouraging to think that the last word is always God's graciousness, mercy and love?

PLAY TOGETHER

Who thanks God for this?

On separate pieces of paper everyone should draw things that they are thankful for. Fold each piece of paper up and put them in a bowl. Take it in turns to pull one out. Open it carefully and look at it so no-one else can see the picture. If you drew the picture, fold it up, put it back in the bowl and pick another one. If you didn't draw the picture, try and guess what the picture is and who drew it. Show it to everyone and tell them who you think drew it.



MAKE TOGETHER

Thanks Jar



Thankfulness is powerful! It can change how we see our lives and encourage us when things are tricky. This activity is a way of identifying, focusing on and being thankful for the good things in our lives.

You will need a large, empty, clean jar. Decorate it in any way you like – you could use paper, pens and pencils, paint, wrapping paper, ribbon, glitter, stickers...whatever you have.

Make a label for your jar and write some instructions on the back, for example:

Put your jar somewhere where everyone in your house can use it. Have lots of small pieces of paper and a pen nearby. Use the jar to collect notes about the good things in our lives. This will help us remember them and thank God for them.



Why not keep adding thanks into your jar until the end of the year, then you can open the jar on 1st January 2022, read the notes and start the new year full of thanks!



SING TOGETHER

Repentance – Margaret Becker (written by Stuart Townend & Keith Getty):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOQxOyPj1k&ab_channel=MargaretBecker-Topic

Song of repentance – New Wine Worship:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iE4YYHr2SF8&ab_channel=WeAreWorshipLyrics%26Chords

God forgave – Lifetree Kids:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XZw6gQby24A&ab_channel=LifetreeKids

All the heavens – Hillsong Worship:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KoQj7Q2UiJE&ab_channel=HillsongWorship

Thank you Lord – Chris Tomlin ft. Thomas Rhett & Florida Georgia Line:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xOqAmQvOUM0&ab_channel=ChrisTomlinVEVO

Thankful – Lifetree Kids:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U_ewLEvA8_o&t=29s&ab_channel=LifetreeKids

REFLECT TOGETHER

Looking back – thank you!



The Israelites looked back on their history and saw how much they had to thank God for. There are all sorts of things we can thank God for as we look back on our lives – big and small.

If you haven't already done so, you might like to listen to the song "Thank you, Lord" by Chris Tomlin (see above). Then think back over your life and make a list or draw a picture of the things God has done for you. Spend some time thanking him for all he has done.

PRAY TOGETHER

Sackcloth prayer

At the beginning of our Bible reading, God's people show their sadness by wearing rough sackcloth and putting dust on their heads. These were traditional, public signs of sorrow and repentance.

- Find a piece of rough material (like sackcloth) or a piece of sandpaper or rough stone. Hold it in your hand and at each pause, run your hands over the rough material as you reflect in this prayer of confession:

Forgiving God,
hear us as we bring all that we are
and all we have been.
We celebrate when we have shared our lives justly,
and confess when we have not.

(pause)

We celebrate when we have given of ourselves to others,
and confess when we have not.

(pause)

We celebrate when we have spoken kindly and with love,
and confess when we have not.

(pause)

We celebrate that you have heard us confess
and now renew us, redeem us,
and reawaken us to your loving forgiveness.

Amen.



Action confession

(Make a fist)

We are sorry for the times we have got angry with other people.

(Point away from yourself)

We are sorry for the times we have blamed and seen things wrong in others without recognising how much is also wrong in us.

(Close up your hand and hold it close to your chest)

We are sorry for the times we have kept things selfishly to ourselves and not been prepared to give to those who need our help.

(Put your hand over your mouth)

We are sorry for the foolish words we have spoken which have hurt other people.

(Put your hand over your eyes)

We are sorry that we have deliberately chosen not to see the good things we could have done to help other people.

(Put your hand over one ear)

We are sorry for the times we have not listened to the cries of those who are poor or who suffer injustice.

(Hold out your hand with your palm facing upward)

We bring all that we are to you Lord – all our sins and our failures. Thank you that you died for us so that we might be forgiven and start a new life in the power of your Holy Spirit.

(Trace the shape of the cross on your palm with your finger)

Amen.

Washing Prayers

We take time early on in our Sunday services to think about the things we have done, said and thought which have made God sad, and set things right with him. It's important to say sorry and remember that when we confess our sins, God is faithful and will forgive us.

One of the symbols of forgiveness in the Bible is washing. Being washed clean of sin.



Why not take time to set things right with God each day. As you get up and get washed and ready for the day ahead, use that time to talk to God silently or out loud about the things that haven't gone so well and ask his forgiveness.

If you have young children you might like to do this at bath time and then finish with a 'splash of thanks' for God's loving forgiveness!

Fridge magnet thank you prayers

If you have magnetic letters you can write things you are thankful for on your fridge. If not, draw or write things on paper and use fridge magnets to attach them to your fridge. You can be thankful for lots of things, big and small – you might be thankful for a nice cup of tea!



Once a week, perhaps before you have a meal, you can use these words and pictures in a spoken time of prayer.

DO TOGETHER

Be like Kid President!...



See the video in the Watch Together section and make a list of awesome things to be thankful for! You could even make a video to share with your friends and family.

Thanks Doodles

This is a great idea for focusing on thankfulness for a whole month!

Read this blog from Victoria Beech at Godventure:

<https://godventure.co.uk/news/thanks-doodles/>



Daily conversations

As you gather as a family each day, perhaps around the dinner table, take it in turns to say something that hasn't gone so well and then something that has. It's good to acknowledge the things that are wrong in our lives but always finish the day with thanks. We have an amazing and faithful God – even if you cannot think of anything to be thankful for, you can be thankful that God forgives and we get another chance.

If you are a couple or live alone, you might like to do this over the phone or facetime with friends or family.

ADVENT TOGETHER

Advent is almost here, Christmas is coming! During December and early January we won't be producing the Church at Home Pack. Instead, we have a number of suggestions for Bible studies, devotionals and activities that you might like to try to help you get ready for and look at the Christmas story in a different way.

DIY Advent Candle Wreaths

Here are several suggestions of how to make an easy but attractive advent candle wreath:

<https://mariebostwick.com/diy-advent-wreath/>



Church of England resources for Advent and Christmas

**At the heart
of Christmas**



<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/advent-and-christmas-2021-resources-heart-christmas>

Here you can sign up to daily emails or click on the link to **Church House Publishing** to buy printed booklets: <https://www.chpublishing.co.uk/christmas>

Books to buy:

For each suggestion we have included a link to a website where you can buy the book but please do consider visiting our local Christian bookshop –

Life

Open Monday - Saturday 10 am - 1 pm

13 The Centre

Weston-super-Mare

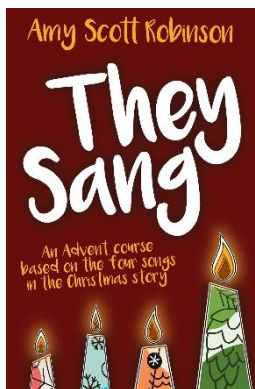
Somerset

BS23 1UW

Tel: 01934 418 109 | Mobile: 07717 323 890

<https://www.life-wsm.org/>

They Sang (by Amy Scott Robinson)



Have you ever wished the world was more like a musical, with characters bursting into song at the slightest provocation?

In the nativity story, there are four sudden, Spirit-filled songs from the heart, and they're all still used in the rhythm of liturgy: Zechariah's song (the Benedictus) Mary's song (Magnificat) the song of the angels (Gloria in Excelsis) and Simeon's song (Nunc Dimittis).

In 'They Sang', Amy Scott Robinson uses four Advent studies to guide small groups to explore these ancient poems of praise and prophecy, and a fifth invites you to discover your own song. <https://www.kevinmayhew.com/products/they-sang>

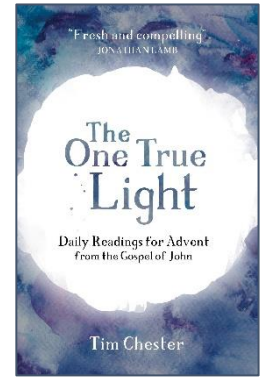
Here you can watch a video from the author: <https://youtu.be/qjyvwyKR4g>

One True Light – Daily readings for Advent from the Gospel of John (by Tim Chester)

We may be familiar with the baby in the manger, but have you met the Word who was in the beginning with God? Have you met the One True Light who is full of grace and truth? Or the Cosmic Lord who won the right for people to become Children of God? They are one and the same person.

With ideas for reflection, prayer and application, these short, meditative readings will excite you about Jesus in the busyness of the run up to Christmas Day.

<https://www.eden.co.uk/christian-books/christmas-and-advent-books/advent-books/advent-studies/the-one-true-light/>



Reviving Advent, Reclaiming Christmas. (by Ruth Grayson)



As Christians, how can we prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ without succumbing to the frenzy of consumerism that is the hallmark of a 'happy' Christmas for many people?

This radical booklet argues that the answer lies in the way we approach Advent. Intended for personal or small-group use, it makes a series of practical suggestions to help Christians—and churches as a whole—reclaim the traditional season of waiting for not just Christ's birth, but also for his coming again.

https://grovebooks.co.uk/products/s-134-reviving-advent-reclaiming-christmas?omnisendContactID=56d8de76002daed7b0ce030d&utm_campaign=campaign%3A+Advent+and+Reflections+on+Seasons%3A+Titles+from+Grove+Books+%28618c14f91f02cf001d9c464d%29&utm_medium=email&utm_source=omnisend

The adventure of Christmas (by Ed Drew)

Simple 10-minute family devotions for Advent, with graphic-novel-style illustrations, explore the Gospel accounts of the first Christmas in an engaging way, and will help families keep Christ at the heart of their celebrations. With all the Bible passages and questions already laid out, you can lead these devotions without needing any extra time to prepare, making family devotional time an achievable joy, not an unrealistic burden. There are different sets of questions for 3-4s, 5-7s, 7-12s, teens and even parents, so the whole family can enjoy looking at the Bible together.

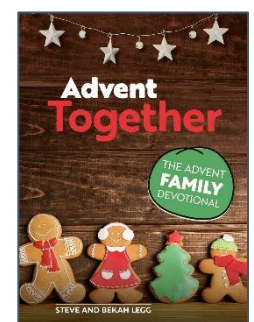
https://www.eden.co.uk/christian-books/christmas-and-advent-books/advent-books/advent-devotionals/the-adventure-of-christmas/?site_id=162595&adtype=pla&device=c&product_id=5537096&gclid=CjwKCAiAs92MBhAXEiwAXTi25x2XxdgHds_mdPLIi2fmQMytSh5I-d5xyv9dEXffHETrTHC9ayF5YBoCw6cQAvD_BwE



Advent Together (by Steve and Bekah Legg)

Journey through Advent together as a family with daily readings, prayers, thoughts and activities for all ages.

<https://www.eden.co.uk/advent-together/>





Bake through the Bible at Christmas.

For those of you who love to bake, and also for those families who have a copy of the Beginners Bible this book gives a brilliant way to explore the Christmas story.

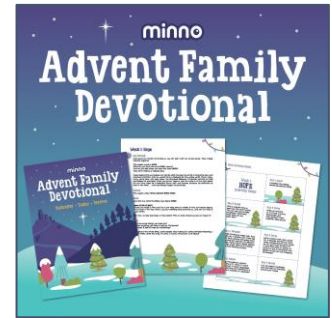
<https://www.eden.co.uk/bake-through-the-bible-at-christmas/>

Online resources:

Minno Advent Family Devotional

Advent is a tradition that brings a weekly rhythm of connection by gathering together and lighting a candle for the four Sundays before Christmas and on Christmas Eve or Day. This simple act of pausing to reflect on the hope, peace, joy, and love of Jesus throughout the season will keep Him right at the centre of it all.

[https://www.gominno.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Minno-Advent-Family-Devotional %C6%92.pdf?utm_source=braze&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=christmas&utm_term=cta-button&utm_content=advent-announcement](https://www.gominno.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Minno-Advent-Family-Devotional-%C6%92.pdf?utm_source=braze&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=christmas&utm_term=cta-button&utm_content=advent-announcement)



Advent at Home

WONDER

The tradition of the Advent Wreath dates back to the Middle Ages. The four candles of the wreath symbolize the four weeks of Advent and our growing hope as we near the day of Christ's birth. There are many ways to create an Advent wreath using what you already have at home. It can be as simple as four candles on a plate. Some use a fifth candle in the middle of the wreath, representing the light of Christ. If you have birthday candles, tea lights, or electric candles, use those. If you feel inspired to decorate it further, you might gather greens, pinecones, or sticks from outside, or use other items that remind you of waiting, hope, and the dawning of a new year. Each Sunday of Advent, light a candle on the wreath; first one, then two, three, and finally four. Hold silence. Name a hope. Offer a prayer. Even if you don't create a wreath, you might honor silence and a time of prayer each Sunday. The fifth candle is lit on Christmas Eve, welcoming and celebrating the light of Christ.

The four Sundays in Advent invite us on a journey. As the days grow shorter each week, we are invited to draw closer and closer to the light of Christ. We are invited to open our hearts a little wider each week to God With Us.

Use this resource to Read, Wonder and Pray together as a family as you go through Advent.

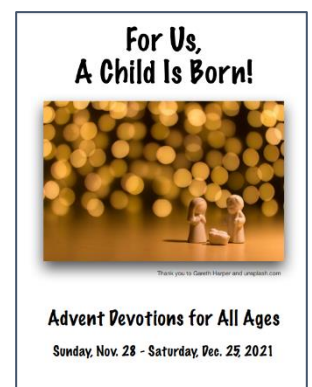
<https://buildfaith.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Advent-At-Home-2020.pdf>

For us, a child is born! – Advent devotions for all ages

Advent is the first season of the Christian year and begins four Sundays before Christmas Day. Sunday, November 28, 2021 is the first day of Advent for us this year, and on that day we are invited to set off on a journey of anticipation and preparation.

There are many ways to prepare for Jesus' coming into our lives. One important way is to set aside time to be quiet, offer prayers, hear the stories of God's plan for Jesus' birth, and think about what this all means for us, the church and our world. In this little booklet you will find a weekly Advent candle lighting litany, daily Bible readings, accompanying stories from excellent children's Bible story books, questions to ponder with journaling pages to record your thoughts and doodles, and quiet moments of prayer for this special season.

<https://www.cnob.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Advent-Devotional-Booklet-2021.pdf>



Advent Calendars:



The Real Advent Calendar

<https://thechristiangiftcompany.co.uk/occasion/advent/Real-Advent-Calendar>

The Kitchen Table Project – DIY Advent Calendar

This is an Advent calendar you can make yourself!

1. Attach little buckets, bags or envelopes to some twine or string.
2. Add a number on each holder and put a treat and an act of kindness challenge inside.

This is a great way of encouraging our children to think of others and be generous!



family.ministry@ccwsm.org.uk

Action Reminder, Sackcloth Prayer taken or adapted from

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