Celebrating a Christ-Centered Christmas

25 DAYS OF FAMILY DAILY DEVOTIONS & ACTIVITIES

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INTRODUCTION

The Christmas season is fast approaching and our desire is to have a Christ-centered CHRISTmas. For many people, this is a joyful yet stressful time and the pandemic makes it a challenge to celebrate. However, we still find time to go shopping,decorating, baking etc. One person said that Xmas means eXpenses, eXhaustion and eXtravagance. We know that Christmas is a celebration of Christ's birth yet often times, we forget Him, the very center of our celebration, the One whose birthday it is.

The following devotions have been designed to take the X out of Xmas and put Christ back in it. Each day you will find a portion for discussion with your kids, a Scripture reading, an activity to do as a family and a prayer suggestion. Try to adapt the devotional to your needs. There are also a few simple materials you need to prepare in advance. An Appendix is included for the nativity figures and other patterns.

I hope you will have fun doing this together as a family. More importantly, I pray it will bring you closer to the Lord as you focus more on the real reason for the season inspite of the pandemic. Let's celebrate a Christ-filled Christmas!

Praying for life change,
SUZETTE T. PEÑA

December 1

DISCUSS: What special events in your life did you have to wait a long time for? How did you feel?

READ: Hebrews 1:1-2, Galatians 4:4

The prophets foretold the coming of the Messiah in the Old Testament hundreds of years before Jesus was born. Isn't God amazing? In His perfect plan and time, He revealed the Saviour to this world. God is all wise and all knowing. He also has a great plan for you.

DO: Scatter and hide 6 paper stars (See Appendix) around the room with the following verses on each star: Isaiah 7:14, Jeremiah 23:5, Micah 5:2, Isaiah 35:4-5,cPsalm 72:10 and Isaiah 9:6. Hunt for them then look up and read each verse. Discuss how each prophecy was fulfilled in the life of Christ

PRAY: Pray that the Lord will prepare your hearts as a family as you anticipate the Lord's birth.

December 2

DISCUSS: How would you describe a poor person? What about a rich person? How do you feel knowing Jesus gave up His kingly stature as Son of God in heaven to live on earth? What ways was Jesus poor on earth?

READ: Philippians 2:6-8, 2 Corinthians 8:9

Jesus came to earth as a helpless baby, was born in a poor family and grew up as a carpenter. This shows His humility. He gave up everything in heaven to be one of us and live as a human person, subject to all this world's suffering and pain. But the Lord Jesus endured all this until He died on the cross for you and me. Indeed, Jesus' future was known even before He was born. He was born, and soon after came to die. What great love He has for us!

DO: Think of a poor person or family living near you. Talk about ways you can bless that person this Christmas.

PRAY: Thank the Lord for His humility in coming down to earth. Pray that we will live humbly before Him and before others.

December 3

DISCUSS: What is your favourite Christmas decoration? Is there something that is particular to your country of origin? How do these decorations symbolize the true meaning of Christmas?

READ: Isaiah 7:14

You must have started to decorate your home for Christmas. Christmas symbols and decorations are a way of reminding us of the joy and meaning of this season. We have plenty of visual signs to point out to us that Christ came as the Saviour of the world. The Christmas tree reminds us of the Trinity, with its triangular shape. The balls can refer to the eternal love of God, like a circle with no end, while twinkling lights point to Christ, the Light of the World. In God's plan during Old Testament times, the prophet was given a sign of the Messiah- a virgin will give birth to a Son. This is the true sign of Christmas.

DO: Make a Christmas ornament from scrap materials at home to show the true meaning of Christmas (some suggestions: manger, Bible, Baby Jesus). Hang it on your Christmas tree or display it in the home.

PRAY: Praise God for the beautiful decorations you see around you. Ask Him to let you focus on the real meaning of Christmas in the coming days.

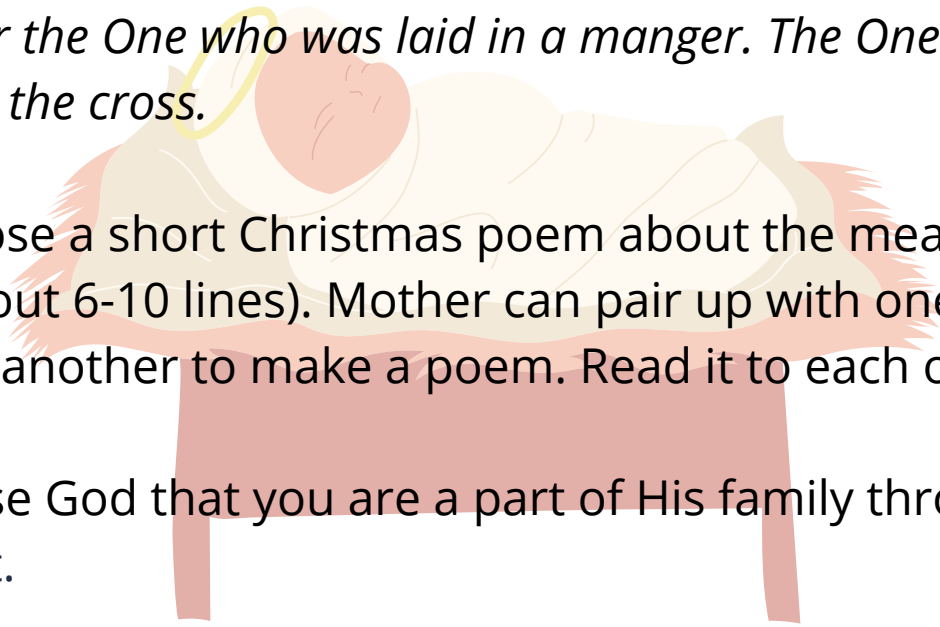
December 4

DISCUSS: What did you look like as a child? (Show a baby photo or ask parents to describe you) What were the special and unique characteristics you had growing up? Why was baby Jesus special?

READ: Ephesians 1:4, 1 Peter 1:20-21

Before God the Father sent Jesus to this earth, He thought about you and chose you to be part of His wonderful family. (Read this poem from "Journey to Bethlehem")

Before time began, there were no furs to wrap a baby in. No milk to nourish him, no one to love him. No baby. Nothing! But before time began there was God. And in His mind was a baby, a special baby-His Son, Jesus. He was born to save His people from their sins. There were no people then, except in the mind of God. No sin yet in their lives, not even a world for them to live in. But God the Father asked His son, "Will You go?" And He said, "Yes." And the covenant of redemption was complete. Someone else was in the mind of God-you and I. And all those who long for the One who was laid in a manger. The One who was destined for the cross.



DO: Compose a short Christmas poem about the meaning of the season (about 6-10 lines). Mother can pair up with one child and father with another to make a poem. Read it to each other.

PRAY: Praise God that you are a part of His family through faith in Jesus Christ.

December 5

DISCUSS: Have you ever wondered what angels look like? What was the role of angels in the Bible? Can you recall some Bible events where angels were involved?

READ: Hebrews 1:7, Luke 1:26-38, Psalm 103:20
To prepare Mary to be the mother of Jesus, God sent an angel named Gabriel to bring that special message to her. Before Gabriel came to earth, he must have felt so privileged as he received instructions from God. Angels have longed to find out about the salvation of mankind (1 Peter 1:12). Gabriel must have known that this was to be the most important message ever to be delivered to earth.

DO: Make an angel craft (See Appendix)

PRAY: Pray for the people you want to witness to and ask God how you will reach out to them as a family.

December 6

DISCUSS: Where is Bethlehem? (Locate it in the map of Israel) What other Bible characters, apart from Christ, were associated with Bethlehem (Look this up in a Bible concordance or the internet). Try to look for pictures of Bethlehem in the internet. What kind of town was it?

READ: Micah 5:2, John 7:42
Bethlehem was an unknown town, just a small shepherd village during Bible times. The prophet Micah prophesied about the Saviour's birth in this place around the same time that Isaiah predicted that a special child would be born. How wonderful to know that all these things prophesied about the Saviour came true. God's Word and promises can always be relied upon. He sees the future and we can always trust in Him.

DO: Sing the Christmas carol "O Little Town of Bethlehem" or listen to it on the internet.

PRAY: Ask the Lord to increase your faith in the promises of His Word.

Appendix

Paper Stars

Angel Craft Sample