

*A Christmas Reading Guide for Families*

# GOOD NEWS OF GREAT JOY



*Mountain Creek Baptist Church*

## Merry Christmas!

We put together this reading guide to help your family anticipate and celebrate Christmas through daily family Scripture reading.

There is nothing particularly complicated about it. This guide is designed with the concept of simple faithfulness in mind. Open the Bible, read a passage, talk about it briefly, and pray. Simple, yet powerful.

The first week focuses on the Old Testament promises of the coming Christ. The second week features readings from the life of Christ in the Gospel of Matthew. The third week is focused on our life in Christ as detailed in various New Testament letters. Sunday readings focus on the sermon text.

### How to use this guide?

Don't make it difficult. Simply gather your family and read the daily passage of Scripture (there is an alternate shorter portion of that passage in case you have young children with short attention spans).

*Questions to Discuss*—We've included a few questions to help provoke meaningful discussion in your family. Again, adjust them according to the age of your children.

*Talking Points*—We've also included talking points that highlight some important things about the passage to help you should you choose to elaborate any on what you just read. These are not meant to be read aloud,

but to help parents pick out a few things to point out to their kids. Put them in your own, age-appropriate phrasing.

If you're running short on time or the kids are hyperactive and you do not get to the talking points or questions, that's fine. Just read the passage and pray. Again, simple, yet powerful.

Anytime you gather your family to read the Bible and pray, it's a win. Let's make this Christmas season a season full of wins for our families.

This Christmas season, may your homes be filled with good news of great joy.

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### The Lord's Day: December 1

Sermon Text: John 1:1-5

*Option 1: Prepare your hearts for worship by reading aloud the passage at home prior to gathering with our church.*

*Option 2: Prepare your hearts for obedience by reading the passage after the worship service and discussing how to apply the sermon.*

## The Promise of Christ

### December 2

#### **Today's Reading:** Genesis 1

*Alternate Young Kids Portion: Genesis 1:1-2, 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26-27, 31*

#### **Questions to Discuss:**

- Why does it matter that the world God made was “good”?
- Is the world “good” now?

#### **Talking Points:**

- God has authority because he is the creator. He has “creator rights” to tell us what to do and not to do.
- Notice the importance of God’s Word. Everything that was made was made by the Word of God. How many times does this chapter say, “*and God said*”?
- God’s world is good (v.31).

#### **Prayer**

- Thank God for his good world;
- Pledge commitment to live under his authority.

## December 3

**Today's Reading:** Genesis 3

*Alternate Young Kids Portion: Genesis 3:1-7, 15*

### **Questions to Discuss:**

- Was God's rule against eating from the tree good or bad? Was it for Adam and Eve's good or not?
- Are all of God's rules good or bad? For our good or not?
- Who will crush the head of the serpent?

### **Talking Points:**

- The serpent twisted God's Word.
- Adam did not protect his wife.
- Sin promises life, but it actually leads to death.
- God made a promise to crush the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15). Much of the Bible story is tracing the coming of this Deliverer and how he crushes Satan.

### **Prayer**

- Thank God for his good rules;
- Confess that you have broken them, asking for forgiveness in Christ.

## December 4

**Today's Reading:** 2 Samuel 7:1-17

*Alternate Young Kids Portion: 2 Samuel 7:16-17*

### **Questions to Discuss:**

- What would a faithful and good king be like?
- What would faithful and good subjects owe their faithful and good king?

### **Talking Points:**

- In this passage, God is making a promise to David that a descendent of his will reign forever as king.
- David has many descendants, and many are sinful (v.14) and rule unfaithfully.
- But God promises to make a son of David king forever. The Deliverer of Genesis 3:15 will be a king from the line of David. Unlike David's other sons, he will not be sinful, but perfectly faithful.

### **Prayer**

- Thank God for being a faithful and good king;
- Ask for help in living as his faithful subjects.

## December 5

**Today's Reading:** Isaiah 9:1-7

*Alternate Young Kids Portion: Isaiah 9:6-7*

### **Questions to Discuss:**

- Ultimately (or eventually), what type of world will this coming king make? That is, what will be the result of his rule?
- How does this promise give us hope?

### **Talking Points:**

- In this passage, we see again the promise of a coming king who will rule with righteousness and justice.
- This king will be a son of David.
- The Lord promised this king ("the zeal of the Lord of hosts *will do this.*") God always keeps his promises.

### **Prayer**

- Thank God for the hope of a world filled with righteousness and justice;
- Thank God that he always keeps his promises.

## December 6

**Today's Reading:** Isaiah 52:13-53:12

*Alternate Young Kids Portion: Isaiah 53:4-5*

### **Questions to Discuss:**

- Why did Jesus have to die?
- How does God deal with our sins, transgressions, and iniquities?

### **Talking Points:**

- 800 years before Jesus lived and died Isaiah gave us a prophecy of his death.
- Jesus is here pictured as the Suffering Servant.
- Notice the Gospel in 53:5—Jesus was pierced for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities, bringing us peace with God.

### **Prayer**

- Thank God for Jesus' death in our place;
- Ask for forgiveness of our sins.

## December 7

### **Today's Reading:** Psalm 2

*Alternate Young Kids Portion: Psalm 2:8*

### **Questions to Discuss:**

- Who is *really* king over America?
- Will God really punish those who do not submit to King Jesus? Is this good?

### **Talking Points:**

- God has made Jesus king of all nations.
- Yet, the nations rebel against him. People want to rule for themselves (like Adam and Eve in Genesis 3) instead of having God rule over them.
- But everyone is commanded to bow to King Jesus, the rightful king of the earth. There is life for those who submit to King Jesus and judgment for those who do not.

### **Prayer**

- Thank God for the kingship of Jesus.
- Pray that we will always live in submission to him.
- Pray for all the people groups of the earth; that they, too, would come and worship Jesus as God and obey him as king.

## **The Lord's Day: December 8**

Sermon Text: John 1:6-13

*Option 1: Prepare your hearts for worship by reading aloud the passage at home prior to gathering with our church.*

*Option 2: Prepare your hearts for obedience by reading the passage after the worship service and discussing how to apply the sermon.*

## The Life of Christ

### December 9

**Today's Reading:** Matthew 1

*Alternate Young Kids Portion: Matthew 1:18-25*

#### **Questions to Discuss:**

- Why was Joseph to give his son the name Jesus? (v.21).
- What does the name Immanuel mean?
- What do these names tell us about who Jesus is?

#### **Talking Points:**

- Notice how the genealogy traces Jesus' lineage to David. Connect to 2 Samuel 7 and God's promise to raise up a king forever from the line of David.
- Notice that Jesus is born of the woman, but not of the man. Connect to Genesis 3:15 and the promise that the Deliverer that would crush the serpent's head would be the "seed of the woman."
- Define the Incarnation: God the Son, who is eternal (i.e. he has always been) took on human flesh and became a man.

#### **Prayer**

- Thank God for the birth and incarnation of Jesus.
- Why did Jesus become a man?

## December 10

### **Today's Reading:** Matthew 2

*Alternate Young Kids Portion: Matthew 2:1-12*

#### **Questions to Discuss:**

- What is the significance of the wise men coming to Jesus?
- Why did Joseph, Mary, and Jesus flee to Egypt?
- How does it comfort you to know God always keeps his word?

#### **Talking Points:**

- Remember Psalm 2 and how Jesus was given the nations as an inheritance. Here, we see kings from eastern nations coming to worship him and bring him kingly gifts.
- Notice how Jesus retraces the life of Israel by going down into Egypt and coming out.
- Going to Egypt was to fulfill prophecy (v.15). Remember, God always keeps his word.

#### **Prayer**

- Thank God that he always keeps his word;
- Praise Jesus for being king.

## December 11

**Today's Reading:** Matthew 3

*Alternate Young Kids Portion: Matthew 3:13-17*

### **Questions to Discuss:**

- What does it mean to repent?
- Why was Jesus baptized?

### **Talking Points:**

- In this passage, we see the beginning of Jesus' public ministry.
- John fulfills Old Testament prophecies, preparing the way for Jesus by calling the people to repent and prepare for the coming Messiah.
- Jesus is baptized to fulfill all righteousness, and to identify with his people whom he will save through his substitutionary life and death.
- God the Father delights in and is very pleased with his Son. If we are united to Christ, that means God is pleased with us as well.

### **Prayer**

- Thank God for his kindness that leads to repentance;
- Thank God for Jesus who fulfilled all righteousness in our place.

## December 12

**Today's Reading:** Matthew 4:1-11

*Alternate Young Kids Portion: Matthew 4:1-11*

### **Questions to Discuss:**

- How can you fight against sin like Jesus?
- How can you prepare to fight like that?

### **Talking Points:**

- Notice that Satan uses the same tactic that he used in the Garden of Eden: he twists God's Word.
- But where Adam failed, Jesus did not. He answered Satan's twisted words with the true words of God.
- Like Jesus, we can fight Satan and sin with the Bible.
- Satan promised Jesus all the kingdoms of the world if he would just worship him. But Jesus was going to win the world, not by worshipping Satan, but by obeying His Father, even unto death.

### **Prayer**

- Thank God for his Word, which is profitable for fighting sin;
- Ask God for help in the fight against sin.

## December 13

**Today's Reading:** Matthew 9:1-8

*Alternate Young Kids Portion: Matthew 9:1-8*

### **Questions to Discuss:**

- As a family, who do you need to take to Jesus? Or, maybe better said, to whom do we need to take the Gospel of Jesus?

### **Talking Points:**

- Notice whose faith Jesus saw right before he healed the paralytic (v.2).
- Jesus heals and forgives. The healing gave physical, visible witness to the forgiveness.
- That Jesus has authority to forgive sins shows that he is God, for no one can forgive sins but God alone (cf. Mark 2:7).

### **Prayer**

- Thank God that he has the authority to forgive our sins;
- Ask God for opportunities to share the Gospel with unbelievers, specifically whomever you mentioned above.

## **December 14**

**Today's Reading:** Matthew 27:32-61

*Alternate Young Kids Portion: Matthew 27:45-50*

### **Questions to Discuss:**

- Why did Jesus have to die?
- What does Jesus' death mean for us?

### **Talking Points:**

- Recall Isaiah 53 as your family contemplates the death of Jesus on the cross.
- Notice all the things that happened as Jesus died (vv.51-54).
- The wrath Jesus endured on the cross is what we deserved.
- Remember what we learned in Genesis, that sin brings death. Jesus never sinned, but our sin brought about his death. Either we die for our sin or Jesus dies in our place.

### **Prayer**

- Thank God for his great love expressed in the death of Jesus.

## The Lord's Day: December 15

Matthew 28:1-10, 18-20

*Each Lord's Day is a celebration of the resurrection of Jesus. In the resurrection Jesus is vindicated by the Father. He truly is the Son of God, and he is raised as King over all the earth.*

*Read Matthew's account of the resurrection and the Great Commission together as a family and celebrate our living and reigning King!*

## Life in Christ

### December 16

**Today's Reading:** John 15:1-17

*Alternate Young Kids Portion: John 15:1-5*

#### **Questions to Discuss:**

- How can we stay close to Jesus, abiding in him?
- What happens if we do not abide in Jesus?
- What does God's commandments have to do with abiding in Jesus? (v.10)

#### **Talking Points:**

- Like a grape branch cannot produce a grape if it is cut off from the grape vine, a person cannot live a godly life cut off from Jesus.
- Jesus is the vine, we are the branches, and our lives are the fruit.
- We must stay close to Jesus. We must abide in him.

#### **Prayer**

- Thank God for grace to abide in Jesus;
- Ask God for grace to abide in Jesus by obeying his commands.

## December 17

**Today's Reading:** Romans 8

*Alternate Young Kids Portion: Romans 8:1-11*

### **Questions to Discuss:**

- What is the difference between a life lived according to the flesh from one lived according to the Spirit?
- What does it mean to be an heir with Jesus?

### **Talking Points:**

- God's Spirit sets us free from the practice and condemnation of sin.
- God's Spirit makes us sons of God, adopted into his family.
- God's Spirit helps us in our weaknesses, including when we suffer.
- Nothing can separate us from the love of God for us in Christ Jesus.

### **Prayer**

- Thank God for his Holy Spirit;
- Ask God to help us live according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh;
- Thank God that nothing can separate us from his love for us in Jesus.

## December 18

**Today's Reading:** Galatians 5:16-26

*Alternate Young Kids Portion: Galatians 5:22-26*

### **Questions to Discuss:**

- In our family, what does it look like when we walk by the flesh?
- In our family, what does it look like when we walk by the Spirit?
- Which should we pursue? And how?

### **Talking Points:**

- This passage spells out the difference in a life lived according to the flesh and one lived according to the Spirit (remember Romans 8 yesterday).
- Notice the specifics of each type of life.

### **Prayer**

- Thank God for his Holy Spirit, which produces in us good fruit.
- Ask God to grow your family in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

## December 19

**Today's Reading:** Ephesians 2

*Alternate Young Kids Portion: Ephesians 2:1-10*

### **Questions to Discuss:**

- When God saves someone, is it because of anything that person did to deserve it?
- If you are trusting Christ, what is your status right now?
- What does our oneness with Christ and our oneness with others in Christ mean for those people who are different from us?

### **Talking Points:**

- This passage describes our situation before knowing Christ (vv.1-3) and God's mercy and love in saving us (vv.4-9).
- This passage also tells us about our life in Christ: alive, seated with Christ, united with Christ, and to be shown the immeasurable riches of his grace.
- We also see how diverse peoples are united in Christ. He has made us a new man in himself, making peace, and building us together into a dwelling place for God by his Spirit.

### **Prayer**

- Thank God for making us one with Jesus;
- Ask God to opportunities to live out our oneness with other believers, even those different from us.

## December 20

**Today's Reading:** Colossians 3:1-17

*Alternate Young Kids Portion: Colossians 3:12-17*

### **Questions to Discuss:**

- What sins do we need to put off?
- What corresponding virtues do we need to put on?

### **Talking Points:**

- Notice the pattern of putting off and putting on in this passage. Put off sin; put on Christ.
- In your fight against sin, remember the principle: you can't beat something with nothing. That is, you need to not only stop the sin, but to actively pursue the virtue.
- Love ties all the other virtues together.

### **Prayer**

- Thank God making sin and virtue clear in the Bible;
- Ask God to help us put off sin and put on virtue.

## December 21

**Today's Reading:** 1 Peter 1

*Alternate Young Kids Portion: 1 Peter 1:13-16*

### **Questions to Discuss:**

- Why are we to rejoice in trials?
- What does it mean to be holy?

### **Talking Points:**

- We are born again according to God's mercy.
- We are called to rejoice in trials. (yes, life in Christ will include trials)
- We are called to live holy because God is holy.
- Therefore, do not live like the rest of the world who does not know Jesus.

### **Prayer**

- Thank God for his great salvation;
- Ask God for help in living rightly in light of such a great salvation, even when times are hard.

## **The Lord's Day: December 22**

Sermon Text: John 1:14-18

*Option 1: Prepare your hearts for worship by reading aloud the passage at home prior to gathering with our church.*

*Option 2: Prepare your hearts for obedience by reading the passage after the worship service and discussing how to apply the sermon.*

## December 23

**Today's Reading:** Luke 1:26-45

*Alternate Young Kids Portion: Luke 1:26-33*

### **Questions to Discuss:**

- What do you think it would have been like for Mary to receive this news?
- Why is it important that Jesus did not have an earthly father? (so he would not have a sin nature, thus able to perfectly obey God in our place)

### **Talking Points:**

- Remember 2 Samuel 7 when you read vv.32-33.
- Jesus is truly God and truly man.
- Mary, though frightened at first, submits to God's plan (v.38).

### **Prayer**

- Thank God for the miracle of the incarnation: God becoming man!
- Ask God to help us to, like Mary, submit to his plans.

## December 24

**Today's Reading:** Luke 1:46-56

*Alternate Young Kids Portion: Luke 1:46-56*

### **Question to Discuss:**

- How can we magnify the Lord? (v.46)

### **Talking Points:**

- This is a song Mary sang in praise to God.
- God opposes the proud and lifts up the humble.

### **Prayer**

- Praise God for who he is; for his great salvation; for lifting up the humble

**Merry Christmas!**

**Christmas Day: December 25**

**Today's Reading:** Luke 2:1-21

*Alternate Young Kids Portion: Luke 2:8-14*

**Questions to Discuss:**

- Why is Christmas a season of good news of great joy?

**Talking Points:**

- The king is born! (and in the city of David, no less)
- An army of angels announce good news of great joy: A savior is born!
- The shepherds response to Jesus: glorifying and praising God.

**Prayer**

- Thank God for Christmas—for God become a man; for the good news of forgiven sins; for the righteous and just kingship of Jesus.

*Remember what we saw in Genesis 1: God's world is good. That means fudge and fruitcake and cinnamon rolls and Christmas dinner and presents are all good. Go enjoy. The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. Merry Christmas!*

