

God's Good Gifts:
An Advent Devotional Guide

Trinitas Classical School
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Advent is a season of waiting.
A good gift is coming—the *best* gift.
But before we sing the glorias of Christmas,
we'll spend time together in the Psalms
as a way to “prepare Him room.”

Your student has helped to prepare an Advent box for your family to use for family devotions. This gold box will hold five envelopes that will be sent home throughout Advent. Each envelope holds a verse from a Psalm or John 1 illustrated by your child. Please find a place to display each week's card, then think and talk about how the words of that passage reveal God's goodness and his good gifts to us. You are encouraged to “hide God's word in your hearts” by memorizing each week's verse together.

We hope you will engage with this project in even more ways. This booklet provides the four Psalms in full along with passages from Luke 2 and John 1. You'll also find additional Scripture passages, discussion questions, and activity ideas. At the end of the booklet, you will find a list of resources generated from suggestions by Trinitas community members. In these various resources, we hope you will enjoy some of the beautiful diversity within the Church.

The readings in this booklet are from our upcoming Lessons and Carols program. We hope that you will be blessed this Advent by engaging with them together and that our beloved Lessons and Carols tradition will be even more meaningful to you.

Ideas for daily devotions

(Before beginning, we recommend an introduction to the Psalms for all ages: [Psalms Part 1 the Overview](#).)

-Read together: Take turns reading and talking about what you hear. Pick a verse (or verses) to memorize during the week.

-Listen (and sing) together: Listen to a spoken and/or sung recording of the Psalm. Some examples are provided.

-Pray together: Write your own family prayer using the language of each Psalm.

-Talk together: Use the questions/prompts for each Psalm.

-Create together: Draw, paint, or sculpt an image the Psalm brings to mind. Make a card with an encouraging note and a verse from the Psalm and send to a loved one.

-Walk together: Take a walk in your neighborhood, in a park, at the beach, or your backyard and read the Psalm there. God's creation is the perfect backdrop to read and hear the Psalms.

-Play together: Find a way to make abstract ideas concrete through active playtime—build with Lego, play a game that involves waiting, act out parts of the passage.

-Repeat together: Develop a daily routine each week using any of the above (or add your own idea).

There are additional resources at the end of this booklet as well.

Advent Week One – Psalm 130

Out of the depths I have cried to You, O LORD;

2 Lord, hear my voice!

Let Your ears be attentive

To the voice of my supplications.

³If You, LORD, should mark iniquities,

O Lord, who could stand?

4 But there is forgiveness with You,

That You may be feared.

⁵I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,

And in His word I do hope.

6 My soul waits for the Lord

More than those who watch for the morning—

Yes, more than those who watch for the morning.

⁷O Israel, hope in the LORD;

For with the LORD there is mercy,

And with Him is abundant redemption.

8 And He shall redeem Israel

From all his iniquities.

Memory Verse

I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,

And in His word I do hope. (130:5)

Songs/Readings:

[Choir of Westminster Abbey Psalm 130](#) (Anglican chant)

[Psalm 130 ESV: Word-for-Word Scripture Song](#) (singing/guitar)

Additional Scripture:

Joseph in Egypt (Genesis 37-50); Hannah waiting for a child (I Samuel 1); Jonah waiting in the belly of the fish (Jonah 2)

For discussion/reflection:

When does time seem to go slow?

What's something you have waited for/are waiting for?

Talk about what these words mean: iniquities, forgiveness, mercy, redemption. How do they fit into the story of God's great Christmas gift?

What does *active* waiting look like? In other words, what things can we do to prepare a celebration of Christ's coming?

Advent Week Two – Psalm 46

God is our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble.

2 Therefore we will not fear,
Even though the earth be removed,
And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

3 Though its waters roar and be troubled,
Though the mountains shake with its swelling. Selah

4 There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God,
The holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High.

5 God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved;
God shall help her, just at the break of dawn.

6 The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved;
He uttered His voice, the earth melted.

7 The LORD of hosts is with us;
The God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah

8 Come, behold the works of the LORD,
Who has made desolations in the earth.

9 He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two;
He burns the chariot in the fire.

10 Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth!

11 The LORD of hosts is with us;
The God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah

Memory Verse:

*God is our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble. (46:1)*

Songs/Readings:

[Calvin Institute of Christian Worship Psalm 46](#) (reading with refrain sung by Wendell Kimbrough)

[The Psalms Project Psalm 46](#) (contemporary praise song)

[Day 7: Psalm 46](#) (read by Kristyn Getty)

[Moody Women's Chamber Choir Be Still and Know that I Am God](#) (can be sung before reading/praying any Scripture)

Additional Scripture:

Noah and the ark (Genesis 6-8:22); Israelites cross the Red Sea (Exodus 13:30-15:21); David and Saul (I Samuel 18-20); Book of Esther

Advent Week Two continued

For discussion/reflection:

What are some ways that people show they are afraid of something?

What are some ways that people show they feel strong?

Can people be afraid and strong at the same time?

How is God's strength different than our strength?

What does it mean to be exalted?

What does it look like to be still? How does it help us to know God? How and when can we be still during Advent?

Advent Week Three – Psalm 24

The earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness,
The world and those who dwell therein.

² For He has founded it upon the seas,
And established it upon the waters.

³ Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD?
Or who may stand in His holy place?

⁴ He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol,
Nor sworn deceitfully.

⁵ He shall receive blessing from the LORD,
And righteousness from the God of his salvation.

⁶ This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him,
Who seek Your face. Selah

⁷ Lift up your heads, O you gates!
And be lifted up, you everlasting doors!
And the King of glory shall come in.

⁸ Who is this King of glory?
The LORD strong and mighty,
The LORD mighty in battle.

⁹ Lift up your heads, O you gates!
Lift up, you everlasting doors!
And the King of glory shall come in.

¹⁰ Who is this King of glory?
The LORD of hosts,
He is the King of glory.

Memory Verse:

Lift up your heads, O you gates!

Lift up, you everlasting doors!

And the King of glory shall come in. (24:9)

Listen:

[Wendell Kimbrough Psalm 24](#) (singing/guitar)

[King's College Choir Psalm 24](#) (Anglican chant)

Additional Scripture:

Moses and the burning bush (Exodus 3-4); Ten Commandments (Exodus 19-24; 34); Walls of Jericho (Joshua 5:13-6:27); Elijah on Mount Carmel (I Kings 18:17-40)

Advent Week Three continued

For discussion/reflection:

What does holiness mean? What does it mean that God is holy? How are we to be holy?

What is an idol? What idols do we have?

If the earth is the Lord's, then how should we treat both nature and our fellow human beings?

What images come to mind when you hear the word king or queen? How is a king of "glory" special?

What do you think it means to seek God's face? In what ways can we seek God more during Advent?

Advent Week Four – Psalm 146

Praise the LORD!

Praise the LORD, O my soul!

² While I live I will praise the LORD;

I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

³ Do not put your trust in princes,

Nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help.

⁴ His spirit departs, he returns to his earth;

In that very day his plans perish.

⁵ Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help,

Whose hope is in the LORD his God,

⁶ Who made heaven and earth,

The sea, and all that is in them;

Who keeps truth forever,

⁷ Who executes justice for the oppressed,

Who gives food to the hungry.

The LORD gives freedom to the prisoners.

⁸ The LORD opens the eyes of the blind;

The LORD raises those who are bowed down;

The LORD loves the righteous.

⁹ The LORD watches over the strangers;

He relieves the fatherless and widow;

But the way of the wicked He turns upside down.

¹⁰ The LORD shall reign forever—

Your God, O Zion, to all generations.

Praise the LORD!

Memory Verse:

The LORD gives freedom to the prisoners.

The LORD opens the eyes of the blind;

The LORD raises those who are bowed down;

The LORD loves the righteous. (146:7b-8)

Songs/Readings:

[Chichester Cathedral Choir Psalm 146](#)

[The Corner Room Psalm 146](#)

[Wendell Kimbrough Put Not Your Hope in the Nation](#)

[Calvin CRC Morning Worship November 20, 2022](#) (“Amazing Grace, My Chains Are Gone” begins at 16:30 and includes four Trinitas alumni singing)

Advent Week Four continued

Additional Scripture:

God's creation of the world (Genesis 1); Story of Ruth (Ruth 1-4); Elijah and the widow (I Kings 17:10-24); Mary's Song (Luke 1:46-55)

For discussion/reflection:

In what/whom do you trust? Are they actually trustworthy?

What is true happiness? How does hope make us happy?

What does our Savior save us/free us from?

How is the kingdom of God an "upside down" kingdom? (One example might be the shepherds in Luke 2.)

List all the ways the Lord is described in this Psalm—who He is and what He does. How does the great gift of Christmas reveal these things even more?

Christmas Eve – Luke 2:1-14

² And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. ³ So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.

⁴ Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵ to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. ⁶ So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. ⁷ And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

⁸ Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. ¹⁰ Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. ¹¹ For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.”

¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”

On a piece of paper, write some of the words or phrases that highlight the goodness of God’s gift to us, the gift of Jesus.

Or sketch a picture of the manger scene or of angels proclaiming the good news to the shepherds.

Or write a family prayer of thanksgiving for this wonderful—and true!—Christmas story that forever changed the world.

Christmas – John 1:1-14

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. ⁴In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. ⁸He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. ⁹That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

¹⁰He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. ¹¹He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. ¹²But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: ¹³who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

At Trinitas, upper-grade students learn and talk about “Ultimate Questions. This Scripture passage gives us answers to some big questions!

What does this passage say about God and what He has done—and is still doing?

What does this passage say about humanity? Why do people need God?

One well-known Christmas carol says “Light and life to all He brings.” How did Jesus bring light and life to the world? How can you share His light with others?

On a piece of paper or a card, write a Christmas blessing using words and phrases from John 1:1-14. Share this blessing with a friend.

Resources

The Psalms are sometimes referred to as the Church's hymn book or prayer book, and while they may at first seem abstract, they are filled with images and ideas that can be meaningful to even young children. There are many books, devotionals, songs, and other resources—from all traditions and expressions of the Christian faith—to help you spend time in the Psalms throughout the year, not just Advent. Here are a few favorites from Trinitas community members.

(* indicates a book specifically for children)

Psalm books/Hymnbooks

The Abbey Psalms & Canticles – US Conference of Catholic Bishops

ESV Psalms, Photography Edition

The Pocket Psalter – Holy Transfiguration Monastery

Psalms for All Seasons – John D. Witvliet, Martin Tel, et al.

Books and Daily Devotionals

Dietrich Bonhoeffer – *Psalms: The Prayer Book of the Bible*

Walter Brueggemann – *Praying the Psalms*

Malcolm Guite – *David's Crown*

C.S. Lewis – *Reflections on the Psalms*

Tim Keller – *The Songs of Jesus*

*Marty Machowski – *WonderFull: Ancient Psalms, Ever New*

Dane C. Ortlund – *In the Lord I Take Refuge*

Eugene Peterson – *Praying with the Psalms*

Spurgeon and the Psalms (NKJV, Nelson)

Patrick Henry Reardon – *Christ in the Psalms*

Warren W. Wiersbe – *Prayer, Praise & Promises*

N.T. Wright – *The Case for the Psalms*

Contemporary Paraphrases/Interpretations

Leslie Brandt – *Psalms Now*

*Marie-Hélène Delval – *Psalms for Young Children*

*Dandi Daley Mackall – *Psalms for Little Hearts*

Ryan Whitaker Smith and Dan Wilt – *Sheltering Mercy: Prayers Inspired by the Psalms*

Journals/Coloring Books

ESV Illuminated Scripture Journal: Psalms

Inspire: Psalms

*80 *Psalms Verses for Kids to Memorize*

Music

everypsalm.com – Poor Bishop Hooper

Wendell Kimbrough – *Come To Me; Psalms We Sing Together*

Sandra McCracken – *Psalms*

Kings Choir of Kings College – *Psalms of David*

Psalm Project (Netherlands) – *Psalms Unplugged*

thepsalmsproject.com (US)

Audiobooks/Recordings of Scripture

Ancient Faith Psalter - monks of the Orthodox Church

Psalms (ESV) read by Kristyn Getty

Psalms (NIV) read by David Suchet

The Bible Experience Audio Bible

Websites

BibleProject videos (YouTube)

“Let My Prayer Arise” (podcast at ancientfaith.com)

“TMC Youth Channel Psalms: Part 1 - The Overview” there are five parts (YouTube)