

Waiting for Jesus

A Family Study from Today in the Word

This Family Study is a companion to the *Today in the Word* devotional *Hope Is Born: Living Between Two Advents* (December 2024). The whole family can learn from God's Word together. In each of the four lessons, you will:



Read

Read a passage
in the Bible



Understand

Understand the biblical
text in a deeper way



Imagine

Imagine the lesson
with hands-on activities

About This Study

Christmas time brings lots of excitement and anticipation. For kids, it can seem like it takes forever for December 25 to come! But this waiting only lasts for a short time. Imagine if you had to wait for the most amazing thing, but you had to wait for thousands of years! This is how the people of Israel felt. God promised His people He was going to send them a Messiah to save them from their sins, but they waited many years before Jesus was born. In the next few weeks, we will learn how this promise came true. On Christmas, we celebrate how Jesus was born as a humble baby. Now, we wait for the return of our Savior as a powerful King!



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10 Things to Know About Advent

1

Advent means “arrival” or “coming.” We celebrate when Jesus was born as a baby, and now we wait for Him to come again.

2

Advent is the four weeks in the church calendar before Christmas.

3

Many Christians celebrate Advent by lighting four candles which represent hope, joy, faith, and peace.

4

Hundreds of years before Jesus was born, God gave His prophets the message that the Messiah would come to save His people (Isaiah 7:14).

5

God promised Abraham that He would bless all nations through his family, which Jesus fulfilled about 2,000 years later (Genesis 12:1–3).

6

The word *gospel* was typically used to announce good news of a coming King.

7

In the Bible, angels are God’s messengers. An angel named Gabriel told Mary she would have a baby, and He would be named Jesus (Luke 1:31).

8

Jesus was born in Bethlehem when His parents came to their hometown to be counted by the Roman empire (Luke 2:1–6).

9

Herod was king when Jesus was born. He was afraid that Jesus would be a stronger king, so he tried to get rid of Him (Matthew 2:13–15).

10

Today, we are waiting for Jesus to come again in His Second Advent, not as a baby this time, but as a powerful King (Revelation 17:14).

Waiting for the Promised Messiah

Memory Verse

“She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”—Matthew 1:21



Read Luke 1:26–38

For thousands of years, the people of Israel were waiting for God to send a Messiah. They thought the Messiah would be a king to save them from cruel and powerful rulers. In the Gospel of Luke, we read how God sent a King to save people, but not in the way they expected. Mary was one of those people waiting for the Messiah. One day, God sent an angel to tell Mary she was going to have a baby, but not just *any* baby (Luke 1:28)! The angel said this child would be the Son of God and be named Jesus (Luke 1:31–32). He would save people from their sin and have a kingdom that would last forever! The long wait was finally over; King Jesus was coming!



Understand

1. What does the word “Messiah” mean? (Answer: promised deliverer, leader, Savior)
2. To whom did the angel Gabriel appear?
3. How did Mary feel when the angel appeared?
4. What did the angel tell her? (Reread Luke 1:31–33)
5. How would you feel if an angel talked to you the way Gabriel talked to Mary?



Imagine

For many years, people had waited for the Messiah, Jesus, to arrive. In this story Mary was willing to wait for God’s promise to come true. Let’s make a paper chain that will help your children wait for Christmas day. For this activity you will need some paper, scissors, coloring materials, and staples or glue. Count how many days are left until Christmas. Have your children cut enough strips to represent that many days. Next, have them decorate each piece of paper with Bible verses, things they are thankful for, or Christmas drawings. Once this is done, help the children glue or staple each part of the chain together to finish the craft. Take off one part of the chain each day as Christmas comes closer. It will remind your children that people waited for Jesus for a long time!



Prayer

Father, thank You for being faithful and trustworthy with Your promises. Help us trust You when we wait for Your promises to come true or when they are hard to understand. We love you! Amen.

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King Jesus Is Born!

Memory Verse

“Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah the Lord.”—Luke 2:11



Read Luke 2:1-20

Before Jesus was born, Mary and Joseph made a very long journey. They walked and rode on a donkey for about 80 miles to the town of Bethlehem so they would be counted in the census (a census is when a ruler counted how many people lived in the land). Can you imagine walking for four whole days? Even though it was a hard journey, God had planned long ago that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). God was getting everything ready! His promise was coming true. The long wait for the promised Messiah was almost over. When they arrived in Bethlehem, it was time for King Jesus to be born (Luke 2:6)!



Understand

1. Why did Mary and Joseph go to Bethlehem?
2. Where was Jesus born? Why there?
3. Whom did the angels tell about Jesus' birth?
4. What did the host of angels say? (Hint! Luke 2:14)
5. How would you feel if you had been a shepherd that night?



Imagine

One group of people who were excited about Jesus being born were the shepherds. After the angels' announcement, they had to go on a journey to find Jesus. Let's role play their journey. First, have your children pretend to be shepherds. They can create an outfit using a blanket and something to represent a shepherd crook. Set up a small pathway with obstacles. You can use indoor items like, pillows, blankets, toys. Or go outside if weather allows. This course will represent the journey the shepherds took. Finally, wrap up a small prize that the "shepherds" can find at the end of the course. After your children do the activity, talk about the joy those shepherds must have felt when they met baby Jesus!



Prayer

Father, thank You for making Your promise of sending a new King come true! We thank You for Jesus who was able to save Your people and is able to save us from our sins. Amen.

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Promise of a Coming King

Memory Verse

"I have seen your salvation, which you have prepared for all people."—Luke 2:30–31



Read Luke 2:25–40

Mary and Joseph had to bring baby Jesus to the city of Jerusalem (Luke 2:22), and they met two people who had been waiting for Jesus for many years. The first person, a man named Simeon, loved and obeyed God. God loved Simeon too and promised that he would get to see Jesus before he died (Luke 2:25–26). The second person who was waiting for Jesus was 84 years old! Her name was Anna; she also loved God, praying to Him and worshiping Him every day and night (Luke 2:36–38). Both Simeon and Anna had been waiting for King Jesus for a very long time. Imagine waiting all your life for Jesus! Even though it took a long time, God kept His promise!



Understand

1. What were Simeon and Anna waiting for?
2. What did the Holy Spirit show Simeon?
3. What did Simeon tell Mary and Joseph that Jesus would do? (Hint! Luke 2:34–35)
4. Who was Anna? (Hint! Luke 2:36–37)
5. How would you feel if you were Simeon or Anna?



Imagine

The story of Simeon and Anna shows the joy of seeing something happen that was long awaited. This activity will focus on the wait they experienced. For this activity all you will need is some paper and coloring materials. Help your children think of something they are waiting for. It might be an activity or vacation or something else. On the top half of the paper, have them draw a picture of what they are waiting for. On the bottom half of the paper, have them write out a prayer about waiting for that thing. When this is done find a place somewhere in the house for them to put their picture. This will help them remember that God hears our prayers and helps us to wait!



Prayer

Father, thank You for the joy of knowing Jesus! Just like Simeon and Anna, we are excited to celebrate His birth. Help us to be patient like them as we wait, and help us to give all our worries to You. Amen.

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Waiting for King Jesus to Return

Memory Verse

“This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”—Acts 1:11



Read Acts 1:1–11

Jesus did many amazing things while he was on earth. He performed miracles (John 20:30), healed people’s sickness (Mark 8:22–26). Of course, the best thing Jesus did was to take the punishment for our sin by dying on the cross and coming back to life three days later! (Luke 23–24). The book of Acts begins right before Jesus went back to heaven (Acts 1:1–11). After Jesus went back to heaven, two messengers told His followers that Jesus would come back again (Acts 1:11). What good news! Remember how people in the Bible waited for Jesus to come to earth the first time? Now we wait for Him to return and set up His kingdom that will never end.



Understand

1. How many days did Jesus stay on earth after he rose from the dead? (Hint! Acts 1:3)
2. What did Jesus say His disciples would receive after He was gone?
3. Does anyone know when Jesus will return? (Hint! Acts 1:7)
4. What should we do while we wait for Jesus?
5. How did the angel say that Jesus would come back? (Hint! Acts 1:11)



Imagine

After He rose from the dead, Jesus left to go to heaven. The Bible tells us that He promised to return. The activity for this story is simple but important. All you will need is paper, coloring materials, and an envelope to mail a letter. For this activity help your children think of someone they miss who is far away right now. After your children know who they want to write to, have them write that person a letter. Ask them why they miss this person? The letter can say why they miss the person, how they are excited to see them again, or things they want to do when they are reunited. Once the letter is done, mail it (and tell them they can wait for a reply!). Remind your children that even though Jesus went to Heaven, He has promised to return. As we wait, we can know for sure that He will keep that promise!



Prayer

Father, thank you for giving us the Holy Spirit when we trust in You. We pray that we will listen to Him as we wait for Jesus to come back. Help us trust in You and obey what You have told us to do while we wait. Amen.

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