

*Trinity UMC*

# AN ADVENT SERIES DAILY DEVOTION



HOPE PEACE LOVE  
Joy





Dear Reader,

The season of Advent is here as we expectantly await the first coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ. This Advent, we will be journeying together through scripture, tradition, reason, and experience as we look at the pillars of the season (hope, peace, joy, and love) through the story of Dr. Seuss' *The Grinch*.

Because Advent is meant to be a time for individual reflection as well as a time with friends and family, this daily devotional has been designed to incorporate everyone. Each day's devotion will have a scripture reading, a reflection, questions, and a closing prayer. For families, child-friendly sections are included in the reflections (in italics and marked by asterisks\*) as well as in the family-discussion questions.

For further individual and family engagement, the beginning of each week includes a listing of optional activities that can be completed as you desire to enhance your devotional time. Christmas Eve and Christmas Day have their own special activities listed with the day's devotion.

However you decide to use this devotional, it is our hope that you will experience the birth of Jesus in a new and fresh way this season. May you encounter the God of all hope, peace, joy, and love this Advent season!

In Christ's Service,  
Ray and Nathan

## **Week One: Hope Family Activities**

*\*Family Light Project:\* Create a simple Advent candle display together. Use battery-operated candles for safety. Have each family member decorate a candle holder with symbols of hope (stars, hearts, crosses). Place these where you'll see them during daily activities. Each evening this week, let a different family member turn on the "hope candle" and share one way they saw God's light that day.*

*\*Hope Hearts:\* Cut out paper hearts and write encouraging messages on them. Hide them around your house for family members to find throughout the day. For younger children, draw pictures of happy faces or use stickers. At dinner time, share about the hearts you found and how they made you feel.*

*\*Sunrise Surprise:\* Create a simple paper sunrise scene together. Cut a large circle from yellow paper for the sun. Each day of Advent, raise the sun a little higher on your wall or window, adding a new ray of hope (paper strips) each day. On each ray, write or draw something you're hopeful for. Younger children can add stickers or drawings.*

*\*Possibility Jar:\* Decorate a jar together as your family "Possibility Jar." Write down "impossible"*

*situations on slips of paper and place them in the jar. Each night before bed, pull out one slip and pray together, remembering that nothing is impossible with God. Younger children can draw pictures of their "impossible" situations instead of writing them.*

*\*Hope Anchor Craft:\* Create an anchor display together using paper, cardboard, or craft materials. Write "Hope in God" on the anchor, then add paper chains coming from it. On each chain link, write or draw something God has done that shows His faithfulness. Display it where you'll see it daily.*

*\*Morning Mercy Calendar:\* Create a simple calendar for the remaining days of Advent. Each morning, have family members take turns drawing a simple sunrise on that day's square and writing or drawing one thing they're thankful for. Younger children can use stickers or simple drawings.*

*\*Growing Hope Garden:\* Plant quick-growing seeds (like grass or beans) in clear containers. As you plant, talk about how living things grow and change. Label the container "Living Hope" and watch it grow throughout Advent. Each time you water it, share one way you've seen God's hope growing in your life.*

**Sunday, November 30th, 2025 (First Sunday of Advent)**

Weekly Theme: HOPE

**Scripture:** Isaiah 9:2 - "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned."

**Reflection:**

Today marks the beginning of Advent, a season of expectant waiting. Just as the Grinch retreated to his cave on Mount Crumpit, we too sometimes find ourselves in places of darkness. Maybe it's the darkness of loneliness during holiday seasons, or the shadow of worry about family members. Perhaps it's concern about changes in our community or church.

*\*Like the Grinch in his cave looking down at Whoville, sometimes we might feel far away from others or from God. But just as a flashlight helps us find our way in the dark, God's light helps us find our way when we feel lost or scared.\**

The beauty of Advent is that it reminds us we're not meant to stay in the darkness. God's promise of hope comes to us exactly where we are, even in our caves of isolation. The light of Christ doesn't wait for us to emerge from our hiding places—it seeks us

out, gently illuminating our darkness with divine hope.

**Adult Discussion Questions:**

1. When have you experienced a "dark season" in your life, and how did God's light break through?
2. How has your understanding of hope changed as you've grown older?
3. In what ways can our church be a light in our community's dark places?

*\*Family Discussion Questions:\**

1. *What makes you feel better when you're scared of the dark?*
2. *If Jesus is the light of the world, how can we help share His light with others?*

**Prayer:**

Loving God, as we begin this Advent journey, help us remember that Your light reaches us even in our darkest places. Like the Grinch, we sometimes retreat to our own Mount Crumpits, but Your hope finds us there. Give us courage to both receive and share Your light with others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

# Monday, December 1st, 2025

Weekly Theme: HOPE

**Scripture:** Romans 15:13 - "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

## **Reflection:**

Remember how Max, the Grinch's dog, remained faithful despite his master's grumpiness? Max saw something in the Grinch that others couldn't see—potential for good. In our daily lives, especially during hectic holiday seasons, it can be challenging to maintain hope when stress, busy schedules, or family tensions rise.

*\*Just like Max wore his antler even when the Grinch was grumpy, we can choose to keep hope in our hearts even when things aren't perfect. Sometimes the smallest acts of kindness can show others that we believe in them, just like Max believed in the Grinch.\**

The Scripture tells us that hope isn't something we have to create on our own—it's a gift from God that can actually overflow in our lives. Think of it like a cup under a running faucet; eventually, the water spills over, blessing everything around it.

### Adult Discussion Questions:

1. When has someone believed in you when you didn't believe in yourself?
2. How does believing in God's promises help you maintain hope during difficult times?
3. Where do you see hope needed most in our community right now?

### *\*Family Discussion Questions:\**

1. *What makes you feel hopeful when you're having a bad day?*
2. *Like Max helped the Grinch, how can you help someone who seems sad?*

### **Prayer:**

God of endless hope, fill us until we overflow with Your hope today. Help us be like Max—faithful and kind even when others are difficult. Thank You for believing in us and giving us the power to believe in others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

**Tuesday, December 2nd, 2025**

Weekly Theme: HOPE

**Scripture:** Psalm 130:5-6 - "I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope. I wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning."

**Reflection:**

In our world of instant everything—instant messages, instant meals, instant deliveries—waiting can feel like punishment. The night watchman in ancient times couldn't speed up the sunrise; they simply had to wait, trusting it would come. Many in our congregation remember times when waiting was more normal—waiting for letters, waiting for long-distance calls, waiting for family visits.

*\*Waiting can feel like forever, especially when we're waiting for something exciting like Christmas! It's like when the Grinch watched Whoville, counting down the days until Christmas, but for a very different reason. Our waiting isn't grumpy waiting—it's hope-filled waiting!\**

This psalm reminds us that waiting with hope isn't passive; it's active trust in God's faithfulness. Just as surely as the sun rises each morning, God's promises prove true in His perfect timing.

### Adult Discussion Questions:

1. What's the hardest part about waiting in today's fast-paced world?
2. How has your experience with waiting shaped your faith journey?
3. What spiritual practices help you maintain hope during long periods of waiting?

### *\*Family Discussion Questions:\**

1. *What's the hardest thing you've had to wait for?*
2. *How can we help each other wait with hope instead of complaining?*

### **Prayer:**

Patient Lord, teach us to wait with hope, not despair. When darkness feels long, remind us that Your light always comes. Help us trust Your timing and Your promises. Give us the persistence of the watchman, knowing Your dawn will break through. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## Wednesday, December 3rd, 2025

Weekly Theme: HOPE

**Scripture:** Luke 1:26-38 - 35 "The angel answered, 'The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you... 37 For no word from God will ever fail.'"

### **Reflection:**

Like Mary receiving unexpected news that would change everything, we often face situations that seem impossible. Perhaps it's a family reconciliation that seems hopeless, a health challenge that appears insurmountable, or a dream that feels too big to achieve. Our community has seen its share of "impossible" situations—church projects that seemed too costly, programs that appeared too ambitious, needs that looked too great.

*\*Imagine being Mary and having an angel tell you something that sounds completely impossible! It's like being told you could fly or breathe underwater. But with God, impossible things become possible—just like how the Grinch's small heart grew three sizes bigger!\**

The angel's promise that "no word from God will ever fail" remains true today. Our hope isn't based on what seems possible, but on who God is and what He promises.

Adult Discussion Questions:

1. When have you seen God make the "impossible" possible in your life?
2. How do you hold onto hope when circumstances suggest otherwise?
3. What "impossible" situation in your life needs to be surrendered to God's possibilities?

*\*Family Discussion Questions:\**

1. *What's something that seemed impossible but God helped make it happen?*
2. *If you could ask God to do any impossible thing to help others, what would it be?*

**Prayer:**

God of the Impossible, strengthen our faith to believe Your promises, even when circumstances suggest otherwise. Like Mary, help us trust Your word and Your timing. Thank You that nothing is too hard for You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## Thursday, December 4th, 2025

Weekly Theme: HOPE

**Scripture:** Psalm 33:20-22 - "We wait in hope for the Lord; he is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. May your unfailing love be with us, Lord, even as we put our hope in you."

### **Reflection:**

Think about the various things we put our hope in—retirement accounts, medical advances, political solutions, family relationships. While these aren't bad things, they're all subject to change. Many of us have experienced the disappointment of misplaced hope, whether in institutions, people, or our own capabilities.

*\*The Grinch thought stealing all the presents would steal Christmas joy. But he learned that true joy comes from something deeper than presents or decorations. In the same way, real hope comes from something deeper than the things we can see or touch.\**

Like an anchor holding a ship steady in a storm, our hope in God keeps us stable when life gets rocky. This hope isn't just wishful thinking—it's confident trust in God's unfailing love and faithfulness.

Adult Discussion Questions:

1. What worldly things do you sometimes put your hope in instead of God?
2. How has disappointment in earthly hopes led you to deeper trust in God?
3. What does it mean to make God our "shield" in today's world?

*\*Family Discussion Questions:\**

1. *What makes God different from other things we might put our hope in?*
2. *How can we remember God's faithfulness when we feel worried or scared?*

**Prayer:**

Faithful God, thank You for being our unchanging hope in a changing world. Help us anchor our trust in You rather than in things that can fail us. May Your unfailing love give us confidence to face whatever comes our way. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## Friday, December 5th, 2025

Weekly Theme: HOPE

**Scripture:** Lamentations 3:21-23 - "Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."

### **Reflection:**

Many of us can recall difficult seasons in our lives—times of loss, change, or uncertainty. Perhaps you've experienced the loss of a loved one during the holidays, or face challenges with family relationships. Like the Grinch's years of isolation, these experiences can leave us feeling consumed by circumstances.

*\*Think about waking up to fresh snow that makes everything look new and clean. God's love is like that—each morning is a fresh start with new opportunities to experience His love and share it with others.\**

The beauty of this Scripture is its reminder that hope isn't based on our situation improving, but on God's character remaining constant. His compassion never runs out, never takes a day off, and never fails to show up.

**Adult Discussion Questions:**

1. How does remembering God's past faithfulness help you face current challenges?
2. What daily reminders help you recognize God's "new morning" mercies?
3. Where do you need to experience God's compassion in a fresh way today?

*\*Family Discussion Questions:\**

1. *What makes mornings special to you?*
2. *How can we help each other remember God's love each new day?*

**Prayer:**

God of New Beginnings, thank You that Your love and mercy are fresh every morning. Help us release yesterday's worries and embrace today's hope. Thank You for Your faithfulness that never fails, even when we struggle to see it. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## Saturday, December 6th, 2025

Weekly Theme: HOPE

**Scripture:** 1 Peter 1:3 - "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

### **Reflection:**

As we conclude our first week of Advent, we focus on hope that's alive and active. Many of us have experienced the difference between passive optimism and living hope. Whether through answered prayers, unexpected blessings, or strength to endure difficulties, we've seen how God's hope actively works in our lives.

*\*Just like the Grinch's heart came alive with love, our hope in Jesus is alive too! It's not like a toy that needs batteries or a plant that might die—it's always alive because Jesus is alive!\**

This "living hope" grows, moves, and changes us. Like a seed that sprouts and produces fruit, our hope in Christ should be visible and life-giving to others.

### Adult Discussion Questions:

1. How has your hope in Christ grown or changed over the years?

2. What difference does it make that our hope is "living" rather than static?
3. How can we nurture this living hope in our daily lives?

*\*Family Discussion Questions:\**

1. *What makes something "alive" versus "not alive"?*
2. *How can we show others that our hope in Jesus is alive?*

**Prayer:**

Living God, thank You for giving us hope that's alive and active through Jesus. Help us nurture this living hope and share it with others. May our lives demonstrate the difference between worldly optimism and Christ-centered hope. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## **Week Two: Peace Family Activities**

*\*Peace Corner Creation:\* Together, create a small "peace corner" in your home. Let each family member contribute something peaceful—a soft pillow, a battery-operated candle, a favorite Bible verse, or peaceful pictures. Use this space throughout Advent when anyone needs a quiet moment with God.*

*\*Worry-to-Prayer Box:\* Decorate a box together. Throughout the week, write down worries on slips of paper and place them in the box. Each evening, pull out one slip and turn that worry into a prayer together. For younger children, drawing pictures of their worries is perfect too.*

*\*Peace Bridge Building:\* Using building blocks, Legos, or paper, work together to build a bridge. On one side, write situations that need peace; on the other side, write ways to help create peace. Talk about how we can be "bridge builders" in our relationships.*

*\*Peace Ripples:\* Fill a large bowl with water. Take turns dropping small pebbles in and watching the peaceful ripples spread. Talk about how our peaceful actions can spread to others. For younger children, use this time to practice taking deep, peaceful breaths as they watch the ripples.*

*\*Peace Light Game:\** Create a simple "traffic light" using colored paper or drawings. Throughout the day, use it as a family tool—red for "stop and pray," yellow for "wait and think," green for "go ahead with peace." Practice using it when making decisions or handling conflicts.

*\*Peace Maker Badges:\** Create simple badges or certificates for family members to award each other when they spot someone being a peacemaker. Decorate them together and keep them handy to give out when you catch someone actively making peace this week.

*\*Peace Pledge Chains:\** Create a paper chain together, with each link containing one way your family pledges to promote peace this week. Younger children can draw peaceful actions. Hang it where everyone can see it and remove one link each day, practicing that peaceful action.

## Sunday, December 7th, 2025

Weekly Theme: PEACE

**Scripture:** Luke 1:76-79 - "And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High... to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace."

### **Reflection:**

In our world of constant notifications, 24-hour news cycles, and endless social media updates, many of us long for quiet. Like the Grinch disturbed by Whoville's noise, we might feel overwhelmed by life's constant commotion. Some of us remember simpler times—before smartphones and internet, when quiet seemed easier to find.

*\*Imagine having a really noisy day at school or with friends, and then finding a quiet place to rest. Peace isn't just about everything being quiet outside—it's about feeling quiet and calm inside, even when things around us are noisy.\**

The beautiful promise in this Scripture is that Jesus doesn't just offer us moments of peace—He guides our feet onto a path of peace. This means learning to walk in peace even amid life's noise.

## Adult Discussion Questions:

1. What "noise" in your life most often disturbs your peace?
2. How do you find inner peace when external circumstances are chaotic?
3. In what ways can our church be a source of peace in our noisy world?

## *\*Family Discussion Questions:\**

1. *What helps you feel peaceful when things are noisy or busy?*
2. *How can we help create peaceful moments in our home?*

## **Prayer:**

Prince of Peace, in this noisy world, help us find our quiet center in You. When external chaos threatens to overwhelm us, guide our feet onto Your path of peace. Help us be peacemakers in our homes and community. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## Monday, December 8th, 2025

Weekly Theme: PEACE

**Scripture:** Philippians 4:6-7 - "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

### **Reflection:**

Anxiety seems to be everyone's unwelcome companion these days. From health concerns to family matters, from church decisions to community changes, worry can consume our thoughts. Like the Grinch pacing in his cave, plotting and planning, we sometimes let anxious thoughts control us.

*\*It's like having a worried tangle in your mind, just like when string gets all knotted up. But God helps us untangle our worried thoughts when we talk to Him about them.\**

This Scripture offers a practical path to peace: turn your worries into prayers and add thanksgiving. It's like having a divine security guard protecting your heart and mind from anxiety's invasion.

## Adult Discussion Questions:

1. What practical steps help you turn worry into prayer?
2. How has gratitude helped you find peace in difficult situations?
3. When have you experienced God's peace in a way that "transcends understanding"?

## *\*Family Discussion Questions:\**

1. *What do you do when you feel worried about something?*
2. *How can we help each other remember to pray instead of worry?*

## **Prayer:**

Loving God, when anxiety threatens to overwhelm us, help us remember to bring our concerns to You. Thank You for Your peace that guards our hearts and minds. Teach us to trust You more fully with our worries. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## Tuesday, December 9th, 2025

Weekly Theme: PEACE

**Scripture:** Isaiah 11:6 - "The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them."

### **Reflection:**

Many of us have experienced broken relationships—in families, neighborhoods, or even church communities. We live in a time of deep divisions, where people who disagree often can't even sit at the same table. The Grinch's story shows us how isolation and misunderstanding can create walls between people.

*\*Imagine a world where dogs and cats become friends instead! God's peace can help people who are different or disagree become friends too.\**

Isaiah's vision isn't just about animals getting along—it's about God's power to bring peace where we least expect it. True peace means former enemies becoming friends, old hurts being healed, and divisions being bridged.

### Adult Discussion Questions:

1. Where do you see the greatest need for peace and reconciliation in our community?

2. What makes it difficult to pursue peace with those who are different from us?
3. How can we model peaceful relationships in a divided world?

*\*Family Discussion Questions:\**

1. *Why is it sometimes hard to be friends with people who are different from us?*
2. *What could we learn from the peaceful animals in this Bible verse?*

**Prayer:**

God of Reconciliation, help us be peacemakers in our divided world. Give us courage to reach across boundaries and heal broken relationships. Show us how to create spaces where different people can come together in harmony. In Jesus' name, Amen.

**Wednesday, December 10th, 2025**

Weekly Theme: PEACE

**Scripture:** John 14:27 - "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

**Reflection:**

When Jesus offered peace, He made it clear this was different from what the world offers. The world's peace often depends on perfect circumstances—everything going right, everyone agreeing, all problems solved. Many of us have discovered how fragile that kind of peace can be.

*\*It's like the difference between a toy that needs batteries to work and the sun that shines on its own. The world's peace needs everything to be "just right" to work, but Jesus's peace works even when things aren't perfect.\**

Jesus offers His own peace—peace that sustained Him through criticism, rejection, and even crucifixion. This peace isn't based on external circumstances but on His constant presence and unchanging love.

Adult Discussion Questions:

1. How is the peace Jesus gives different from what the world offers?
2. When have you experienced Christ's peace during difficult circumstances?
3. What practices help you maintain peace when life feels uncertain?

*\*Family Discussion Questions:\**

1. *What's the difference between feeling happy and feeling peaceful?*
2. *How can we share Jesus's peace with someone who's having a hard time?*

**Prayer:**

Lord Jesus, thank You for offering us Your special kind of peace. Help us trust in Your peace even when life feels chaotic. Teach us to share Your peace with others who are troubled or afraid. In Your name we pray, Amen.

## Thursday, December 11th, 2025

Weekly Theme: PEACE

**Scripture:** Colossians 3:15 - "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful."

### **Reflection:**

The word "rule" in this verse means to act as an umpire or referee. Just as a referee makes calls in a game, peace should make the calls in our hearts. For those of us who've been in church leadership or family decision-making roles, we know how challenging it can be to let peace guide our choices.

*\*Think of peace like a traffic light that helps cars know when to stop, wait, or go. When we let Christ's peace be in charge, it helps us know when to speak up, when to stay quiet, and when to take action.\**

Being "members of one body" reminds us that our peace affects others. When we let Christ's peace guide us, it creates harmony not just within us but in our whole community.

### Adult Discussion Questions:

1. How do you discern whether a decision will bring peace or discord?
2. What makes it challenging to let peace "rule" in difficult situations?

3. How has thankfulness helped you maintain peace during conflicts?

*\*Family Discussion Questions:\**

*1. When you have to make a choice, how do you know what's the peaceful thing to do?*

*2. How can being thankful help us feel more peaceful?*

**Prayer:**

Prince of Peace, help us let Your peace guide our decisions and actions. Thank You for making us part of Your family, where we can practice peace together. Give us wisdom to choose what brings true peace. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## Friday, December 12th, 2025

Weekly Theme: PEACE

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:9 - "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."

### **Reflection:**

Being a peacemaker is different from being a peace-keeper. Many of us try to keep peace by avoiding conflict or pretending problems don't exist. But like the Grinch, who eventually had to face the Whos directly to find true peace, sometimes making peace requires courage to address difficult situations.

*\*It's like the difference between sweeping dirt under a rug (peace-keeping) and actually cleaning the floor (peace-making). Real peace takes more work, but it lasts longer!\**

Jesus calls us "blessed" when we actively make peace, not just wish for it. As children of God, we're called to follow His example of bringing reconciliation and healing to broken situations.

### **Adult Discussion Questions:**

1. What's the difference between keeping peace and making peace?

2. When have you seen someone be an effective peacemaker?
3. Where in your life is God calling you to be more than a peace-keeper?

*\*Family Discussion Questions:\**

1. *What are some ways you could help make peace when friends or siblings are fighting?*
2. *How does Jesus help us become better peacemakers?*

**Prayer:**

Father God, thank You for making peace with us through Jesus. Give us courage to be true peacemakers, not just peace-keepers. Show us how to build bridges instead of walls. Help us reflect Your heart for reconciliation. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## Saturday, December 13th, 2025

Weekly Theme: PEACE

**Scripture:** Romans 12:18 - "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."

### **Reflection:**

Notice the realistic tone of this verse—"if it is possible" and "as far as it depends on you." Like the Whos who remained peaceful despite the Grinch's actions, we're responsible for our part in peaceful relationships, even when we can't control others' responses. Many of us have learned the hard way that we can't force others to choose peace.

*\*It's like playing on a team—you can't control how other players act, but you can control how YOU play and how YOU treat others. God asks us to do our best to be peaceful, even when others aren't.\**

This Scripture gives us both a challenge and a relief: do everything you can to live peacefully, but recognize that sometimes peace depends on both parties being willing.

### Adult Discussion Questions:

1. What helps you maintain a peaceful attitude when others are hostile?
2. How do you balance seeking peace with standing firm for what's right?

3. Where might God be calling you to make an extra effort for peace?

*\*Family Discussion Questions:\**

*1. What can you do to stay peaceful even when someone is unkind?*

*2. How does knowing Jesus help us be peaceful with difficult people?*

**Prayer:**

God of Peace, give us wisdom to know how to live peacefully with others. Help us do our part while trusting You with what we can't control. Thank You for showing us perfect peace through Jesus. Guide us in being peaceful even in difficult relationships. Amen.

## Week Three: Joy Family Activities

*\*Joy Journey Map:\** Create a family map showing places where you've experienced God's joy. Use a large paper and let everyone draw or write their "joy spots"—both expected and unexpected places. Add to it throughout the week.

*\*Yet Jar:\** Decorate a jar labeled "YET I will rejoice!" Each family member writes or draws daily challenges on slips of paper, then writes "YET" and a reason to rejoice despite that challenge. Share these during dinner time.

*\*Joy Garden:\** Create a family "joy garden" using paper flowers. Each day, add a new flower with something joyful written on it—even small joys count! For younger children, drawing pictures of their joys on the flowers works great. Watch your joy garden grow throughout the week.

*\*Joy Strength Builders:\** Create simple "strength cards" together. On each card, write or draw something that reminds you of God's joy and strength (like Bible verses, songs, or memories of God's faithfulness). Keep these cards handy for times when you need a joy-strength boost.

*\*Joy Overflow Game:\** Using paper cups, create a "joy overflow" demonstration. Fill one cup (labeled "Jesus's Joy") with water and let family members take turns pouring it into their own cups, talking about how His joy fills us and can be shared with others. For safety with younger children, use dry items like rice instead of water.

*\*Growth Chart Joy:\** Create a special family growth chart. Instead of measuring physical height, mark spiritual growth moments—times when challenges helped strengthen your faith. Let children decorate it with stickers or drawings representing joy in tough times.

*\*Presence Prompts:\** Create simple joy reminders to place around your house—sticky notes, small cards, or drawings that remind family members of God's presence. Let children design some of these reminders. Throughout the day, when someone spots a reminder, they can share a quick prayer of thanks for God's joy-giving presence.

## Sunday, December 14th, 2025

Weekly Theme: JOY

**Scripture:** Luke 2:10-11 - "But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.'"

### **Reflection:**

The shepherds received news of "great joy" while working the night shift, probably tired and cold. Similarly, the Whos' joy shone brightest when all their decorations were gone. Many of us have experienced moments when joy broke through unlikely circumstances—perhaps during hospital visits, through financial struggles, or in times of loss.

*\*Imagine getting the best news ever while doing something ordinary, like the shepherds watching their sheep. God often brings joy in surprising ways and unexpected places!\**

This joy wasn't just for special people—it was "for all the people." Whether we feel worthy or not, whether we're ready or not, Jesus brings joy that transcends our circumstances.

**Adult Discussion Questions:**

1. When have you experienced unexpected joy in a difficult situation?
2. How is Christian joy different from general happiness?
3. What makes it challenging to maintain joy during hard times?

*\*Family Discussion Questions:\**

1. *What makes you feel joyful even when things aren't going your way?*
2. *How can we help others find joy when they're sad?*

**Prayer:**

God of Surprising Joy, thank You for bringing good news that changes everything. Help us recognize Your joy even in unlikely places. Make us bearers of Your joy to others who need it. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## Monday, December 15th, 2025

Weekly Theme: JOY

**Scripture:** Habakkuk 3:17-18 - "Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior."

### **Reflection:**

Like the Whos who sang even when their presents were gone, Habakkuk describes choosing joy when everything seems lost. Many of us have faced our own empty "stalls and pens"—perhaps through job losses, health challenges, or family difficulties. The power of this verse lies in that small word "yet."

*\*Think about having a really bad day—maybe your favorite toy broke, or you got a bad grade, or your best friend couldn't play. But then remember that God still loves you and is with you. That's what "yet I will rejoice" means!\**

This isn't about pretending everything is fine; it's about finding joy in God's presence even when nothing else is going right.

### Adult Discussion Questions:

1. What does it mean to you to choose joy in difficult times?
2. How has your understanding of joy deepened through hardships?
3. Where do you need to practice saying "yet I will rejoice" in your life right now?

### *\*Family Discussion Questions:\**

1. *What helps you feel joyful even when you're having a bad day?*
2. *How can we help each other remember to be joyful when things go wrong?*

### **Prayer:**

Faithful God, when life feels empty, help us remember that You are enough. Thank You that our joy doesn't depend on perfect circumstances but on Your perfect love. Give us strength to choose joy today, especially in difficult moments. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

**Tuesday, December 16th, 2025**

Weekly Theme: JOY

**Scripture:** Isaiah 35:1-2a - "The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy."

**Reflection:**

Many of us have walked through spiritual deserts—times when faith feels dry, when prayers seem to bounce off the ceiling, when church feels routine. Like watching the first spring flower push through winter soil, this verse promises that joy can bloom in the most unlikely places.

*\*Have you ever seen a flower growing through a crack in the sidewalk? That's what God's joy is like—it can grow and bloom even in places that don't seem very joyful!\**

The promise isn't just that the desert will survive—it will "burst into bloom" and "shout for joy." God doesn't just get us through hard times; He brings unexpected beauty from them.

**Adult Discussion Questions:**

1. Where have you seen joy "bloom" in an unexpected situation?

2. How has God brought beauty from difficult seasons in your life?

3. What "desert places" in your life need God's refreshing joy?

*\*Family Discussion Questions:\**

1. *What's the most surprising place you've ever seen a flower growing?*

2. *How can we help joy grow in places that seem sad or hard?*

**Prayer:**

Lord of New Life, thank You for bringing joy even in life's desert places. Help us trust Your promise that beauty can bloom anywhere. Give us eyes to see Your joy sprouting in unexpected places. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## Wednesday, December 17th, 2025

Weekly Theme: JOY

**Scripture:** Nehemiah 8:10b - "...Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

### **Reflection:**

When Nehemiah spoke these words, the people were mourning after hearing God's law and realizing how far they had strayed. Many of us have experienced similar moments—times when awareness of our shortcomings brings sadness. Like the Grinch discovering the error of his ways, recognition of our failures can initially bring grief.

*\*It's like having a really strong friend who helps you up when you fall down. God's joy isn't just a happy feeling—it's strength that helps us get back up when we're feeling down!\**

But notice where strength comes from—not from our own determination or effort, but from "the joy of the Lord." This joy becomes spiritual muscle, enabling us to rise above our circumstances and failures.

### **Adult Discussion Questions:**

1. How has God's joy given you strength in difficult times?

2. What's the difference between finding strength in our own efforts versus in God's joy?
3. Where do you need to experience God's strengthening joy right now?

*\*Family Discussion Questions:\**

1. *When have you felt God helping you be strong when you were sad?*
2. *How can we help each other remember that God's joy makes us strong?*

**Prayer:**

Strong and Joyful God, thank You that Your joy isn't just a feeling but a source of strength. When we feel weak or discouraged, fill us with Your strengthening joy. Help us share this strength with others who are struggling. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## Thursday, December 18th, 2025

Weekly Theme: JOY

**Scripture:** John 15:11 - "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."

### **Reflection:**

Jesus offers us His own joy—not a temporary happiness, but His personal, divine joy. For those of us who've walked with Christ for years, we understand that this joy grows deeper even as life grows more challenging. Like the Whos' joy that couldn't be stolen, Christ's joy in us can't be taken away.

*\*Imagine having a special cup that never runs empty—that's what Jesus's joy is like! No matter how much we need, there's always more available.\**

This isn't about forcing happiness or pretending everything is fine. It's about experiencing the deep, lasting joy that comes from being connected to Jesus, the source of all joy.

### Adult Discussion Questions:

1. What's the difference between having your own joy and having Christ's joy in you?
2. How has your experience of Christian joy deepened over the years?

3. What practices help you stay connected to Christ's joy?

*\*Family Discussion Questions:\**

*1. What makes Jesus's joy different from regular happiness?*

*2. How can we share Jesus's joy with others?*

**Prayer:**

Lord Jesus, thank You for offering us Your own joy. Help us understand and experience the completeness of joy that comes only from You. Fill us until Your joy overflows from our lives to others. In Your name we pray, Amen.

## Friday, December 19th, 2025

Weekly Theme: JOY

**Scripture:** James 1:2-3 - "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance."

### **Reflection:**

This seems like an impossible command—finding joy in trials. Many of us have faced trials that felt anything but joyful: health scares, family conflicts, loss of loved ones. Yet James isn't telling us to pretend trials are fun; he's inviting us to look beyond the trial to see God's work in us.

*\*It's like being an athlete in training—the practice might be hard, but knowing it makes you stronger helps you find joy even in the tough parts. God uses our difficult times to help us grow stronger in faith!\**

The key is in the word "consider"—it's a choice to view our challenges through the lens of what God is accomplishing in us through them.

### Adult Discussion Questions:

1. How has a past trial strengthened your faith?
2. What helps you maintain perspective during difficult times?

3. How can we support others in finding joy during their trials?

*\*Family Discussion Questions:\**

*1. When has something hard helped you become stronger?*

*2. How can we help each other find joy even when things are difficult?*

**Prayer:**

Father God, give us wisdom to see our trials through Your eyes. Help us trust that You are working in our difficulties to strengthen our faith. Thank You for the joy that comes from knowing You are with us in every challenge. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## Saturday, December 20th, 2025

Weekly Theme: JOY

**Scripture:** Psalm 16:11 - "You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand."

### **Reflection:**

As we conclude our week focusing on joy, we're reminded that lasting joy is found in God's presence. Many of us have discovered that material pleasures fade, but the joy of being with God remains constant. Like the Whos who found joy in simply being together, our deepest joy comes from communion with God and each other.

*\*Think about your happiest moments with people you love—that warm, happy feeling of just being together. God's presence gives us an even better feeling than that! It's joy that lasts forever.\**

The psalm writer speaks of "eternal pleasures"—joy that doesn't depend on changing circumstances but on our unchanging God. This joy becomes more precious as we learn to recognize and rest in God's presence.

### Adult Discussion Questions:

1. How do you experience joy in God's presence during daily life?

2. What's the difference between temporary happiness and eternal joy?

3. What practices help you stay aware of God's presence throughout the day?

*\*Family Discussion Questions:\**

*1. What makes you feel closest to God?*

*2. How can we help each other remember God is with us all the time?*

**Prayer:**

Lord of Joy, thank You for the gift of Your presence. Help us find our deepest joy in being with You. As we prepare for Christmas, remind us that Your presence is the greatest gift of all. May our lives reflect the joy of knowing You are always with us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## **Week Four: Love Family Activities**

*\*Growing Heart Display:\* Create three heart shapes of increasing sizes. On the smallest, write "God loved us first." On the middle one, write ways you've experienced God's love. On the largest, write names of people you can share God's love with. Let children decorate the hearts and display them where everyone can see.*

*\*Love in Action Cards:\* Create simple cards with acts of love that family members can do for others, especially when it's challenging. Include both easy acts (smile at someone who seems grumpy) and more challenging ones (help someone who hasn't been kind to you). Draw one card each day this week and put that love into action.*

*\*Love Quality Chain:\* Create a paper chain with each link featuring one quality of love from this passage. Let children decorate each link. Remove one link each day and focus as a family on practicing that specific quality of love.*



## Sunday, December 21st, 2025

Weekly Theme: LOVE

**Scripture:** 1 John 4:9-10 - "This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."

### **Reflection:**

The transformation of the Grinch's heart—growing three sizes—reminds us of how God's love changes us. Many of us can look back and see how God's love has expanded our own capacity to love others, even those we once found difficult to love. Like the Grinch, we learn that love isn't something we generate on our own—it's a response to being loved first.

*\*It's like getting a gift so wonderful that you just have to share it with others. God's love is like that—when we really understand how much He loves us, we can't help but share that love with other people!\**

The beauty of God's love is that it came to us first—before we cleaned up our act, before we got everything right, before we even knew we needed it.

**Adult Discussion Questions:**

1. How has experiencing God's love changed how you love others?
2. When has God's love helped you love someone you found difficult to love?
3. What barriers sometimes prevent us from fully accepting God's love?

*\*Family Discussion Questions:\**

1. *How do you know God loves you?*
2. *What makes it easier to love others when we remember God loves us?*

**Prayer:**

Loving Father, thank You for loving us first and showing us what real love looks like through Jesus. Help us grasp more fully the depth of Your love, and let that love overflow from our lives to others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## Monday, December 22nd, 2025

Weekly Theme: LOVE

**Scripture:** Romans 5:8 - "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

### **Reflection:**

Like the Whos who showed love to the Grinch while he was actively trying to hurt them, God's love reaches us at our worst moments. Many in our congregation can recall times when God's love found us even when we were running in the opposite direction. This isn't a love based on our worthiness—it's a love that creates worth in its recipient.

*\*Imagine someone being nice to you even when you're having your grumpiest day ever. God's love is even bigger than that—He loves us even when we're not being lovable at all!\**

The word "demonstrates" is active—God doesn't just talk about love; He shows it through actions. The ultimate demonstration was sending Jesus, proving that God's love is more than words.

### Adult Discussion Questions:

1. When have you experienced God's love during your "unlovable" moments?

2. How does God's unconditional love change how you view yourself and others?
3. What helps you remember and trust God's love during difficult times?

*\*Family Discussion Questions:\**

1. *How can we show love to someone even when they're not being very nice?*
2. *What makes God's love different from how people sometimes love?*

**Prayer:**

Gracious God, thank You for loving us even when we were far from You. Help us grasp the depth of a love that doesn't wait for worthiness but creates worth through its giving. Make us channels of this same unconditional love to others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## Tuesday, December 23rd, 2025

Weekly Theme: LOVE

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 - "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres."

### **Reflection:**

As Christmas draws near, this familiar passage takes on new meaning when we see it through the Grinch's transformation. Before his change, he was impatient, unkind, and kept detailed records of perceived wrongs. After experiencing love, he learned patience, kindness, and how to rejoice in others' joy. Many of us have experienced similar transformations as God's love works in our lives.

*\*It's like having a checklist of how to show love to others. When we're not sure how to act, we can look at this list and think, "Am I being patient? Am I being kind?" It helps us know how to love like Jesus loves!\**

Each characteristic mentioned is a choice we can make—love isn't just what we feel; it's what we do.

**Adult Discussion Questions:**

1. Which aspect of love in this passage do you find most challenging to practice?
2. How has your understanding of love grown deeper over your faith journey?
3. Where do you see opportunities to practice these qualities of love this week?

*\*Family Discussion Questions:\**

1. *Which part of this description of love is easiest for you? Which is hardest?*
2. *How can we help each other practice loving this way?*

**Prayer:**

Lord of Perfect Love, thank You for showing us what real love looks like through Jesus. Help us practice these qualities of love—patience, kindness, humility, and perseverance. Transform our hearts so that Your kind of love flows naturally from us to others. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

**Wednesday, December 24th, 2025 (Christmas  
Eve)**

Weekly Theme: LOVE

**Scripture:** John 1:14 - "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."

**Reflection:**

On this Christmas Eve, we remember love's greatest demonstration—God becoming human to dwell among us. Like the Grinch who finally came down from Mount Crumpit to join the Whos' celebration, God didn't stay distant but chose to come near. Many of us have experienced the power of presence—knowing someone cared enough to be with us in difficult times.

*\*It's like having your very best friend come to stay at your house—but even better! God loved us so much that He came to live right here with us by sending His son Jesus, to share our happy times and our hard times.\**

The phrase "made his dwelling" literally means "pitched his tent"—God moved into our neighborhood, experienced our joys and sorrows, shared our lives completely.

## Adult Discussion Questions:

1. How does it affect you to know that God chose to experience human life firsthand?
2. What does it mean to you that Jesus was both fully God and fully human?
3. How can we better reflect God's "with us" love to others in our community?

## *\*Family Discussion Questions:\**

1. *Why do you think God wanted to come live with us as Jesus?*
2. *How can we show others that God is with them too?*

## **Prayer:**

Emmanuel, God-with-us, thank You for coming to dwell among us. As we prepare to celebrate Your birth, help us understand the magnitude of Your love shown in becoming human. Make us more aware of Your presence, and help us be more present with others who need Your love. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## *Action Step:*

*\*Welcome Home Jesus:\** Create a special welcome space in your home for Jesus tonight. Let each family member contribute something meaningful to the space—a drawing, a note, a small gift, or a prayer. Talk about how you can make room in your hearts for Jesus just as you're making room in your home.

## Thursday, December 25th, 2025 (Christmas Day)

Weekly Theme: LOVE

**Scripture:** Luke 2:10-14 - "But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord... Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.'"

### **Reflection:**

The Grinch's story ends with a feast where former enemies become family. Today, we celebrate an even greater feast—the arrival of God's love in human form. Many of us have gathered with family and friends, exchanging gifts and sharing meals. But the greatest gift we celebrate isn't wrapped in paper—it's wrapped in swaddling clothes.

*\*Just like how the Grinch discovered that Christmas wasn't about presents but about love and being together, we remember today that Jesus is God's greatest gift of love to us!\**

This good news isn't just for some people—it's for "all the people." God's love, shown in Jesus, crosses every boundary and reaches every heart willing to receive it.

## Adult Discussion Questions:

1. How has God's gift of Jesus changed your life?
2. What new understanding of God's love has this Advent season brought you?
3. How can we keep this Christmas love alive throughout the coming year?

## *\*Family Discussion Questions:\**

1. *What makes Jesus the best Christmas gift ever?*
2. *How can we share God's love with others even after Christmas?*

## **Prayer:**

Loving God, on this Christmas Day, we celebrate Your greatest gift—Jesus. Thank You for loving us so much that You gave Him to us. Help us receive Your love fully and share it freely. May the joy of this day remind us that Your love has the power to transform every heart, just as it transformed the Grinch's, and just as it transforms ours. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## *Action Step:*

*\*Love Gift Exchange:\** Before opening presents, gather as a family. Each person shares one way they've experienced God's love during Advent and one way they want to share that love in the coming year. Create paper hearts with these commitments and hang them on your Christmas tree as a reminder that God's love continues beyond Christmas Day.