

CHAMPION FOREST BAPTIST CHURCH

Countdown to Christmas

A FAMILY DEVOTIONAL



CFBC Kids Ministry
2017

making sense out of life!

15555 Stuebner-Airline Rd. | Houston, TX 77069 | 281.440.3800 | www.championforest.org

Parents,

Take your family on a wonderful journey from December 1 to Christmas Day with "Countdown to Christmas." Every day read a Bible verse, talk about what you read, and choose a fun activity to do together.

Skim through the entire book before beginning and determine supplies needed and what events your family can commit to. The prayer of CFBC Kids Ministry is for you to redeem precious time with your family. Stay focused on the true story of Christmas, adore the precious One in the manger and write His Name (Immanuel...God with us) on the hearts of your children. During the Christmas season make church a priority! The December curriculum for Kids Life groups centers on the birth of Jesus. The foundational, doctrinal Bible lessons are on your child's level of understanding. You don't want to miss one precious week!

Joyfully,
Becky and Stephanie



**We must tell the future generation the praises of the LORD,
His might, and the wonderful works He has performed.**

Psalm 78:4

December 1

{24 Days until Christmas}

Read Together

"For to us, a child is born. To us, a son is given." Isaiah 9:6

Discuss Together

Waiting. Long ago, God promised through the prophet Isaiah that a child would be born who would be a mighty king. The people of Israel began to wait and hope for the coming of this promised baby. They knew God would send them a great King, whose kingdom would last forever.

Do Together

It's hard to wait, isn't it? What are some things you have to wait for – report cards, birthday parties, summer vacation, grandparents coming to visit, etc.? How does waiting make you feel? Here are some ideas to help you wait for Christmas:

- Hang a clothesline on your fireplace hearth. Clip 24 colorful socks to the line with clothespins. Take down one sock each day, beginning tomorrow morning, to count the days left until Christmas. (For fun, put special inexpensive treats in the socks – like a pack of gum, a memo pad, a small toy, or a bookmark) OR
- Make a chain with 24 links. Tear off one link each morning, beginning tomorrow, to help you countdown the days to Christmas OR
- Make an Advent Prayer Jar. Kids decorate the jar with paint pens or stickers. Fill with 24 strips of paper. Print the name of a family member, teacher, friend, etc on each paper strip. Draw out a name every day to pray for during this Christmas season! When the jar is empty...it's Christmas!
- Watch "A Charlie Brown Christmas" at 8:00pm tonight.

Pray Together

We pray we will see how very much the Father loves us and calls us His children. Philippians 4:12b

December 2

{23 Days until Christmas}

Read Together

For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son. John 3:16

Discuss Together

God had a wonderful plan for the world. Before we ever knew Him, before we ever heard of Him, even before we were born – He loved us and had a plan to show us His love and bring us into a relationship with Him. God planned for Jesus to come into the world to show us how much He loves us. That is what Christmas is really all about.

Do Together

- Christmas is a busy season. Help your family plan for the most important moments together by planning your month in advance. Get a blank calendar. Pencil in all your family's activities for the month. Together, prioritize your family's time, deleting activities you can live without, and making time for non-negotiables! Don't forget to add favorite Christmas television shows, school programs, Christmas Spectacular, church and family activities. Decorate the calendar and post it on the refrigerator.
- Display a kid-friendly, non-breakable nativity for the children to arrange and rearrange as they think about God's wonderful plan.
- Jesse Jones Park and Nature Center's annual Old-Fashioned Christmas is tonight from 4:00 – 7:00 p.m. Visitors are taken back in time for an evening of food and festive entertainment, enjoying holiday traditions of 19th century America as the RedbudHill Homestead comes to life with caroling, tree lighting, and other activities for the children. Free, but advanced reservations are required by calling 281-446-8588.

Pray Together

I pray ____ will learn the secret of contentment in every situation.
Philippians 4:12b.

December 3

{22 Days until Christmas}

Read Together

God sent the angel Gabriel to a town in Galilee named Nazareth. He had a message for a girl promised in marriage to a man named, Joseph, who was a descendant of King David. The girl's name was Mary.

Luke 1:26-27

Discuss Together

Nazareth was a quiet little town. Nothing very important ever happened there...until one important day, when God sent Gabriel to visit Mary in Nazareth. The angel had an important message from God. His happy news would change the world.

Do Together

- Attend church together. Make and take Christmas cookies to your child's life group teacher.
- During mealtime, let each family member share happy news from their day at church...perhaps a Bible verse they read, a new friend, an art activity.
- Christmas ADVENTure! 5:30 – 7:30pm tonight at CFBC in the FLC Worship Center. An interactive, family-friendly worship service, followed by a mission project, refreshments, walk-in nativity, and Christmas family craft.
- Provide a kid –friendly Christmas tree for your children to decorate all by themselves, any way they want, using their own handmade ornaments, bows, paper chains, or ribbons.

Pray Together

We pray our family will always attend church together and encourage one another. Hebrews 10:25

December 4

{21 Days until Christmas}

Read Together

The angel came to her and said, "Peace be with you! The Lord is with you and has greatly blessed you!" Luke 1:28

Discuss Together

In another translation, this verse says, "Hail, favored one!" The angel told Mary she was favored by God, privileged, special, very blessed. But when Mary first saw the angel, she was afraid – she had never seen an angel before! She wondered what he was about to say. But she listened.

Do Together

- Angels are God's messengers. The angel had an important message for Mary. Families have important things to say to each other, too. If you already have your Christmas tree decorated, sit by the tree tonight and have a special family affirmation time. One by one, each family member tells something he loves or appreciates about each of the other family members. Tell what makes the family member special. (You're the best whistler I know! I love the way you make me laugh!) To affirm means to build up.
- Eat a special Christmas dinner of chili and cornbread outside. Let the kids work together to decorate and set the table. Use a red or green tablecloth. Choose a candle, nativity, or flowers for a centerpiece. If your family has a set of Christmas dishes and napkins, use them tonight, or let the children pick out Christmas paper plates/napkins for this special dinner.

Pray Together

We pray the peace of Christ will rule in our hearts. Colossians 3:15a

December 5

{20 Days until Christmas}

Read Together

The angel said to her, "You have found favor with God. You are going to be the mother of a son, and you will call him, Jesus." Luke 1:30-31

Discuss Together

The angel told Mary she would have a little baby! So this was the good news! God saw Mary's pure heart and had chosen Mary to be the mother of baby Jesus. Mary must have been a pretty amazing person!

Do Together

- Make a Christmas card today to send the good news about Jesus' birthday to a friend or relative. Print on the card the words, "and you will call Him, Jesus!" Use construction paper and markers, scrapbooking materials, stamps, crayons, fabric, and other materials you have at home. Be creative! Mail your card or deliver it in person! Card ideas can be found at www.marthastewart.com/276320/christmas-cards-for-kids/
- Sing "Joy to the World" together, to celebrate the happy news of Jesus' birth. Talk about the words, "Let every heart prepare Him room." How can your family prepare Him room this December?
- God is looking for hearts to let Him in, so He can do new things everyday through you. Talk about some new things God can help you do – be a friend to a new kid at school, pay attention to your lessons so you can be a better student, or _____.
- A Night in Bethlehem, 5:00 – 8:00 p.m., is a free interactive, hands on experience that recreates the Christmas story for children and families at Messiah Lutheran, 11522 Telge in Cypress.

Pray Together

Jesus, I pray _____ will believe in you. John 14:1b

December 6

{19 Days until Christmas}

Read Together

He will be great and will be called the Son of God. Luke 1:32

Discuss Together

Remember the words of Isaiah 9:6? God's promise to His people was coming true at last. God kept His promise, and after years and years of waiting, He was sending a child who would be the mighty king.

Do Together

- God made a promise to His people. Make a promise to help someone in your family this Christmas. Promise to bring in the mail for Dad or feed the dog for Mom every day in December. Write or draw a picture of your promise on a piece of paper and give it to the person you would like to help.
- Keep Christmas music playing quietly in your house at all times! If you have a baby, sew a jingle bell on the toe of his sock. When he kicks, the ringing bell will bring smiles. Older children enjoy playing instruments or pots and pans to the music.
- Make outdoor Christmas ornaments for the birds. Collect pinecones, peanut butter, and birdseed. Spread the peanut butter (or soy butter for peanut allergies) on the pinecones, roll in birdseed, tie a string around the top, and hang from the branches of a tree.

Pray Together

I pray _____ will delight in God's word and think about it day and night.
Psalm 1:2

December 7

{18 Days until Christmas}

Read Together

For nothing will be impossible with God. Luke 1:37

Discuss Together

God merely spoke, and the world was created out of nothingness. God placed the sun in the heavens by day and the moon by night. God formed a man out of dust, breathed into his nostrils and the man became alive. God fed manna to His people daily, as they wandered through a wilderness to a new land. God shows time after time that there is nothing too hard, nothing too impossible for Him...even sending His Son to earth, as a baby.

Do Together

- Go to the hospital and look at the babies or visit a friend with an infant. Look at the tiny little fingers and toes. Wonder at the amazing truth that Jesus, the Son of God, was born as a tiny little baby.
- Care for the baby dolls in your home. Give each doll a warm bath, dress, and pretend to feed the baby. Talk about ways Mary cared for baby Jesus.
- See how many possible words you can make out of the letters in the word "impossible." There are over 150!
- Print today's verse on a piece of construction paper. Cut it into several pieces to make a puzzle. Ask the children to put the puzzle together to help you learn the verse for today. Say the verse together and talk about what it means.

Pray Together

I pray _____ will know that nothing is impossible for God. Luke 1:37

December 8

{17 Days until Christmas}

Read Together

An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for it is he who will save His people from their sins." Matthew 1:20-21

Discuss Together

Here is another angel, bringing another message from God. This angel gave Joseph specific instructions about Mary and the baby. Joseph was obedient to God. The Bible says that when he woke up, he took Mary as his wife.

Do Together

- God chose a family for Jesus. Talk about families and thank God for your family! Ask what your child loves and enjoys about your family. Cuddle at bedtime and tell your child what you love about him or her.
- The angel told Joseph to name the baby, Jesus. Explore baby name books together. Find the meaning of the name, Jesus. Find the meaning of your own names. Use craft supplies around your home and create name banners with each family members name. Include the meaning. Display in your home throughout the Christmas season.
- Put a picture of Mary, Joseph and Jesus at kids eye level on the refrigerator. Pray, thanking God for Jesus.
- Magical Winter Lights is a spectacular festival presenting a multicultural take on traditional holiday light shows at the Gulf Greyhound Park. Open through Jan 2 from 5pm-10pm/11pm. Purchase tickets at www.magicalwinterlights.com/houston.

Pray Together

Lord, we pray we will be strong and courageous! May we not be afraid or discouraged because God is with us wherever we go. Joshua 1:9

December 9

{16 Days until Christmas}

Read Together

At that time, Emperor Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the Roman Empire. And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own hometown. Luke 2:1, 3

Discuss Together

A census is a way to count people. The United States is required by the Constitution to perform a census every ten years. The government uses the data for many reasons to help them govern well. Emperor Augustus was the king of the Roman Empire. He probably wanted to count his people for taxation purposes. So, Joseph had to travel to his hometown.

Do Together

- A hometown is where you were born and grew up. Where is your hometown? Where is your parents' hometown? Your grandparents'? Find a map and look at the locations.
- Have your own "silent night"! Turn off the television tonight, read Christmas books, and enjoy hot chocolate. Some families purchase a new children's Christmas book every year and start a special Christmas collection.
- A cool place in our hometown of Houston is the Houston Zoo. It closes at 5:00 p.m. but reopens from 6:00 – 10:00 P.M. for ZOO LIGHTS just about every night in December. Millions of sparkling lights, some set to Christmas music, greet you as you stroll around a path at the zoo and even have the opportunity to see some of the animals in the evening. Check out the website for days, times, and prices. www.zoolights.houstonzoo.org

Pray Together

We pray we will number our days so we will have a heart of wisdom.
Psalm 90:12

December 10

{15 Days until Christmas}

Read Together

And Joseph went from the town of Nazareth to the town of Bethlehem in Judea, the birthplace of King David. Joseph went there because he was a descendant of David. He went to be counted, with Mary. Luke 2:4-5

Discuss Together

It is about 70 miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem. It is about 70 miles from Champion Forest Baptist Church to Galveston. Can you imagine walking all the way to Galveston? How long do you think it would take? Joseph and Mary probably traveled in a caravan. They may have walked, or Mary may have ridden a donkey. (Remember, she was going to have a baby!) They probably traveled between 4 and 7 days to get to Bethlehem.

Do Together

- Attend church together! Make a Christmas card or homemade gift to take to a pastor or teacher at church.
- A census was being taken at the time Jesus was born. What was a significant news event the year you were born? If children don't know, allow them to research by asking grandparents or parents or researching on the internet. Talk about it together.
- Practice counting. Provide sets of Christmas items for young children to sort or count, such as unbreakable miniature ornaments, small wooden stars, Christmas bows, or presents under the tree. Have fun counting doorknobs, beds, cabinet doors, mirrors, and other home fixtures.
- Enjoy the Kinderfest (Kids Area) at the German Christmas Market and Festival in Old Downtown Tomball from 10 a.m. – 10 p.m. Free hayride! For more information:
www.tomballgermanchristmasmarket.org

Pray Together

We pray we will know that you, God, are with us wherever we go.
Joshua 1:9b

December 11

{14 Days until Christmas}

Read Together

While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her first son, wrapped him in soft cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them to stay in the inn. Luke 2:7

Discuss Together

Bethlehem was hometown for many people. It was crowded with people arriving to be counted for the census. Everyone was searching for a place to spend the night, exhausted from the journey. It was so crowded that all the available rooms were taken, and there was no place for Joseph and Mary to stay. What could they do? Joseph had no family or friends with whom they could stay. Mary's baby was coming soon and she needed a place to rest. The best place Joseph could find was a stable. But Bethlehem was the birthplace of Jesus Christ, the King of Kings! The world had waited thousands of years for this moment.

Do Together

- After Jesus was born, Mary wrapped him in long strips of cloth and laid Him in a manger. Cut strips of muslin or soft cloth. Let your child wrap a baby doll. Provide a box of hay to lay the baby doll. Or let the kids get in the box themselves, to see how it feels.
- Make a birth announcement for Jesus. Use construction paper, colored paper, ribbon, and scrapbooking materials.
- Sing your prayer at dinner tonight. As a family, make up a song about Jesus' birth, or sing together the chorus of "O Come, All ye Faithful".
- Experience Christmas in the Park, tonight from 5:30 – 7:30. Free. Spring Valley Village Park, 1025 Campbell Road.
<http://christmasintheparkhouston.com>

Pray Together

God you created us. May we know we are fearfully and wonderfully made. Psalm 139:14

December 12

{13 Days until Christmas}

Read Together

That night some shepherds were in the fields outside the village, guarding their flocks of sheep. Luke 2:8

Discuss Together

The sheep are resting quietly on the hillside outside of Bethlehem. It was a normal day, a normal night. The flock of woolly sheep huddled together, sleeping. The sky was dark. Stars twinkled overhead. Tending sheep was both a responsible and dangerous job in Palestine – it involved living outside with the flock, protecting them at night from thieves and wild animals, and keeping them safe from wandering off and injuring themselves. The shepherds were going about their everyday life, working, minding their own business, doing what they did every single day, totally unaware that the most amazing event had just occurred and that God wanted them to be a part of it. Until....

Do Together

- Plan a special event for a normal regular day! Prepare a candlelight dinner, using your fine china or special Christmas dishes. Dress up, just to celebrate!
- Make cinnamon ornaments! Stir together 1 cup cinnamon, 4 tablespoons of white glue, and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of water. The dough should look like thick cookie dough. Refrigerate for 2 hours. Sprinkle more cinnamon on your work surface, knead the dough, and then roll to about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick. Cut out shapes with cookie cutters. Poke a hole for a hanger by using a straw. Let dry on waxed paper for a few days, turning occasionally (or speed dry by baking in warm oven for 2 hours.) When dry, hang with ribbon and enjoy your ornaments!
- Wrap presents. Set up a center with empty boxes, wrapping paper, and tape. Let the children “do it themselves” just for the joy of doing it! Older kids can assist the younger ones by tearing off strips of tape, cutting ribbon lengths, measuring paper, etc.

Pray Together

I pray whatever we do, we work at it with all our heart to please you.
Colossians 3:23

December 13

{12 Days until Christmas}

Read Together

An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone over them. They were terribly afraid. Luke 2:9

Discuss Together

One minute the shepherds were still and talking quietly, under the blackness of the sky. The next moment, the hillside is ablaze with light, overwhelmingly bright, and booming with an angel's voice. The shepherds looked up. They had never seen an angel before, either. They were terrified! They did not know what to think or do!

Do Together

- The angel came to the shepherds at night. Take a walk tonight with your family. Look at the Christmas lights around your neighborhood. As you walk, talk about the angel and the shepherds. Talk about things your family most enjoys about Christmas.
- Send a Christmas message to someone serving our country away from their family. Make cards or thank you notes for troops actively serving. Contact the CFBC Military Ministry for names and addresses of members of our church who are active duty, <http://www.championforest.org/guide/military>.
- CFBC Christmas Spectacular performances at 3:00pm English / 7:00pm Spanish.

Pray Together

We pray we will be still and know He is God. Psalm 46:10

December 14

{11 Days until Christmas}

Read Together

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid! Listen, I bring you glorious news of great joy which is for all the people. Luke 2:10

Discuss Together

Today we hear news in many ways. Every day we find out the latest news. Sometimes we hear good news and sometimes we hear bad news. Sometimes we hear news from a friend; sometimes we hear it on the radio, or the television, or even read it on the internet. On that night in Bethlehem, the shepherds heard the best news the world will ever hear, and they heard it in a wonderful and very surprising way. The angel moved first to calm the shepherds' fears. Then he announces the good news that results in joy...not just for Mary and Joseph, but for all the people on earth.

Do Together

- One way we share the glorious news of Christmas is by telling others! One way we can tell others is by giving to The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions. View more information on www.imb.org under the Give tab. Make your own bank by gluing tissue paper in a stained glass design to a Ball (canning) jar. Add the lid, add some coins, and watch your offering add up.
- It is wonderful to hear the good news about Jesus. Special people in your life have helped you know more about His love. Write a short Christmas thank you note to one of these friends – your KidLife group teacher, a pastor, or another friend. Put a stamp on it and take it to the mailbox.
- Bake and decorate Christmas sugar cookies together! Kids can help cut out and decorate the cookies. (This should only be done on a day Mom has an overabundance of Christmas Cheer.)
- CFBC Christmas Spectacular performances at 7:00 p.m. English.

Pray Together

Jesus, I pray _____ will believe and see the glory of God. John 11:40

December 15

{10 Days until Christmas}

Read Together

This very day, in the City of David, a Savior has been born for you. He is Christ, the Lord. Luke 2:11

Discuss Together

It was night. Almost everyone in Bethlehem was sleeping. But Mary and Joseph were not sleeping. A baby, Jesus, God's Son, had just been born. And the shepherds were not sleeping. They were watching over their sheep, keeping them safe. Suddenly, an angel of God appeared and told the shepherds that a Savior had been born, the promised Messiah they had been waiting for! The angel said something very interesting: The baby had been born for them. He wasn't just Mary and Joseph's – what a gift!

Do Together

- Drive around and look at Christmas lights. Identify which ones remind you of the birth of Jesus.
- Purchase a Christmas jigsaw puzzle. Put it on a table in a corner, where you can leave it out and work on it together during the holidays.
- Remember, it's Jesus' birthday, not yours! Think of a birthday gift your family can give to Jesus.
- Festival of Trees, 6 – 8 p.m. Stroll through woods to see the story of Jesus' birth. Woodlands Community Church. 5401 Rush Haven Drive, The Woodlands, Texas. Free. www.wccnaz.org
- CFBC Christmas Spectacular performances at 7:00 p.m. English.

Pray Together

Thank you God for sending your son, Jesus, to save _____. I pray _____ will accept you as his/her Savior and Lord. John 3:16

December 16

{9 Days until Christmas}

Read Together

Suddenly a great army of heaven's angels appeared with the angel, singing praises to God: "Glory to God in the highest." Luke 2:13

Discuss Together

While one angel did all the talking at first, soon and suddenly he was joined by a great army of angels, singing praises to God for this baby, the Savior who has been born! The heavens exploded with music everywhere! The angels spilled over heaven's edge and filled up the air like a great army! They sang for joy at last! Some Bibles call the angels, "a multitude of the heavenly host". A multitude is a large indefinite number. Can you even imagine how many angels were there that night?!

Do Together

- Learn a Christmas song about angels and sing it together! "Angels We Have Heard on High" is a great one because of all the "Glorias"!
- Organize a "Musical Christmas card".
 1. For Neighbors
 - Pick three Christmas songs for your family to practice singing together.
 - Make three simple cards to hand out that say, "This musical Christmas card is brought to you by the Smith family to celebrate the birth of Jesus, and wish you a very merry Christmas!"
 - Visit three neighbors or friends' houses, ring the bell, hand the Christmas card, and sing away!
 - A nice variation is to add musical instruments, trumpet, flute, rain stick, instead of singing.
 2. For Faraway friends and relatives.
 - Facetime friends and family in other areas. Have fun singing the songs for them.
 - If faraway friends are not available for facetime, video your family singing the three songs on your phone. Send the video to friends and family to say Merry Christmas.
- CFBC Christmas Spectacular performances at 11:00 am English, 3:00 pm English, 7:00 pm Spanish

Pray Together

I pray ___ will know that you, God, are wise and powerful and ___ will praise you forever and ever. *Daniel 2:20*

December 17

{8 Days until Christmas}

Read Together

The shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened." Luke 2:15

Discuss Together

Once again, the night became dark and still. As suddenly as the angels had come, they disappeared back to heaven. The shepherds were amazed at what they had just seen and heard! God had chosen them, simple shepherds, to be the first to hear His good news about Jesus! They didn't waste any time discussing the angel's words, or wondering if the story was true or not – they just went straight away to Bethlehem to find the promised one, the newborn Son of God. Where should they start looking for the baby? The angel told them they would find the baby wrapped up in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

Do Together

- Attend church together! The Bible story in Kid's Life group classes today, is the most important lesson of all: Jesus is born! Kids' classes will be celebrating with Happy Birthday Jesus parties! Be on time. Don't miss it!
- Swaddling an infant was a common practice, to keep an infant secure, comfortable, snugly, and warm. The shepherds, as they searched, likely would find many babies who were swaddled. However, they might not find many lying in a manger, or a feeding trough. Where would you start looking? Do you suppose there were a lot of stables and barns in Bethlehem? If you have a Nativity Scene on display in your home, examine the manger together. As you pass it around, let everyone pray, thanking God for sending Jesus!
- "Away in a Manger" is a favorite Christmas carol for many people. Sing it together.
- Spend some time looking at your child's baby book. For fun, make a baby book that Mary might have kept for Jesus.
- Bethlehem means "house of bread." Let the children help you bake some small loaves of quick bread and deliver them to neighbors.
- CFBC Christmas Spectacular performances at 3:00 p.m. Spanish, 7:00 p.m. English.

Pray Together

God, I pray we will obey all that you tell us to do. Deuteronomy 5:33.

December 18

{7 Days until Christmas}

Read Together

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and saw the baby lying in a manger. Luke 2:16

Discuss Together

Shhh....There is the baby, lying in a manger. Tiny little fingers, tiny little toes. Fast asleep in a bed of hay. God led the shepherds to the stable in Bethlehem where Jesus was born. They saw His mother, Mary. She seemed very tired. They saw Joseph, taking care of his sweet, young family. They told Mary and Joseph about the angels. They told Mary and Joseph that they wanted to see for themselves the little one that the angels sang about. They were happy that Jesus was born.

Do Together

- As a family, look at some of the Christmas cards you have received. Take turns choosing a card. Read the message and the name of the person who sent the card. Talk about the person and how they are a part of your life. Let each person pray and thank God for the special friend whose card they chose. Send a Merry Christmas text to the friend.
- Purchase a gingerbread house kit and work on it together. Or if you are really adventuresome, make your own! A simple version uses graham crackers.

simplyrecipes.com/recipes/how_to_make_a_gingerbread_house

- Plan a family RACK day (Random Acts of Christmas Kindness) to make the Christmas season about loving others and sharing God's love. Make up several cards that say "You've been RACKed – Random Acts of Christmas Kindness" and print a Bible verse or Christmas blessing on them. Tape a \$5 Starbucks gift card to it and leave it in your grocery buggy for the next shopper; tape a quarter to the card and tape it on a vending machine; "feed" a parking meter and leave a card to explain; etc. Think about creative ideas to bless people around you!

tsjphotography.com/blog/random-acts-of-christmas-kindness-summary

Pray Together

I pray that ____ will know Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. John 14:6

December 19

{6 Days until Christmas}

Read Together

They told everyone what had been said to them about the little child. And all who heard it were amazed (wondered) at the things told them by the shepherds. The shepherds went back to work, glorifying and praising God for everything that they had heard and seen. Luke 2:17-18, 20

Discuss Together

When you see something amazing, you want to tell others all about it! Maybe you saw a beautiful sunset of orange and pink, or maybe it started to snow and you wanted to call a friend and tell him. When something wonderful happens to you, you want to tell others the good news! Maybe you got a new puppy or made a new friend at school. That is how the shepherds felt after they saw Baby Jesus. The men were so happy. They had heard the angels singing, they had just seen a wonderful baby, lying in a manger in a stable, just as the angels had told them. The shepherds were thankful to God for everything they had seen and heard. They were thankful to be a part of this wonderful night. As they went back to work, they told everyone they saw the good news that Baby Jesus was born.

Do Together

- What does it mean to be amazed? Ask each person to list things that he or she finds amazing. Share your ideas with each other.
- As a family, write a short psalm of praise to the Lord! Be sure and use the word “amazed”.
- Plan a trip with friends to Santa’s Wonderland outside of College Station. Billed as a Texas Christmas experience, it showcases over 2.5 million lights on 40 acres. A hayride option and lots of other activities are available—please check their website for details and prices.
www.santas-wonderland.com

Pray Together

I pray that _____ will tell everyone the good news about Jesus.
Matthew 28:19-20

December 20

{5 Days until Christmas}

Read Together

But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.
Luke 2:19

Discuss Together

Treasure means to keep and value something, to store it away for future use. Ponder, to think about and reflect on. Treasuring and pondering are things we don't do enough of. They give us time to think about things and let God, the Father, sprinkle His understanding over us. Even in a barn with a newborn baby, and shepherds popping in unexpectedly to interrupt the evening with their tales of armies of angels, Mary took some quiet time to treasure and ponder the day's events.

Do Together

- Declare a free evening. Sit by the fire (hopefully) or light a candle, turn out the lights, play some Christmas music, pop some corn, snuggle, and talk by the light of the Christmas tree. Think about Christmas. Are you focusing on Jesus? Are you adoring Him? Ponder together. Write down memorable family conversations about this Christmas, keep and store for future use.
- Talk about Christmas memories. What is your favorite Christmas memory?
- Take a 2017 family Christmas picture. Be creative! Remember, pictures don't always have to show your faces!

Pray Together

I pray the words of our mouths and the meditations of our heart will be pleasing to you. Psalm 19:14

December 21

{4 Days until Christmas}

Read Together

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying "Where is He who has been born king of the Jews?" For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him. Matthew 2:1-2

Discuss Together

People were glad that Jesus was born. Mary and Joseph loved their little baby. Happy shepherds came to see him the very night he was born. And in the sky, a bright star was leading other people on a journey from a faraway land, to see Jesus, too. The star was one of the biggest and brightest stars ever seen before! For many years, Wise Men had studied stars in the sky. When they saw this star, they knew that it was a sign from God to them that a king had been born. "Let us go to see this new king", the Wise Men said. So they began a long journey and followed the star day after day, until the star finally led them to Bethlehem.

Do Together

- The wise men followed a bright star in the sky to Jesus' house. Go on a star search. Hide construction paper stars around the house and let the kids search for them for five minutes. Then count the stars. Whoever finds the most gets to hide them the next time.
- Learn the American Sign Language sign for "star" (Google it). As you listen to Christmas music today, every time you hear the word "star", do the sign!
- Go on a journey together. Drive to the country and take turns picking which roads you take. Continue for an hour or so, until everyone has a chance to "map out" the journey, and see where you end up. Find a café, eat a piece of homemade pie, and then head home. Discuss going on a journey and not knowing where you were going. How do you think the Wise Men felt, following a star that was leading them to a new King, but really not knowing where it was leading them at all?
- Have a family slumber party by the tree.

Pray Together

I pray that our mouths are filled with your praise, talking about how good you are all day long. Psalm 71:8

December 22

{3 Days until Christmas}

Read Together

And the star, which they had seen in the east, went in front of them until at last it shone immediately above the place where the little child lay. Matthew 2:9

Discuss Together

It's easy to get lost when you are visiting in a different town. You don't know the names of streets, you don't know the landmarks, and everything is new to you. You really need a map, or a GPS, to help you find your way. The Wise Men lived far away in the East, miles and miles and miles away from Baby Jesus. They did not know the best way to go to find him. So God sent a special star to help them find their way. The star was like the first GPS! Without the star, they might have lost their way. But they followed the star, which went ahead of them and finally stopped right above the house where Mary and Joseph were living at the time!

Do Together

- Star paint, using a star shaped cookie cutter. Add today's Bible verse to the picture.
- Make luminaries to line your sidewalk tonight. Supplies: lunch sacks, sand, votive candles or tea lights. Do not leave luminaries unattended!
- Talk about your favorite person or character in the Christmas story, and tell everyone why! Is it Joseph, Mary, the angel, the shepherds, the wise men, the baby, the star? Or dress up and act out the story while someone reads Luke 2.
- Have family Christmas game night. Play Charades using animals, people, and places from the Christmas story (angel, sheep, baby Jesus). Create Nativity Christmas Bingo Cards at myfreebingocards.com. Include words or pictures from the Christmas story on the card.
- Go ice skating together. There are several rinks around town – The Ice at Discovery Green (713-434-7465) and The Woodlands Ice Rink (281-419-5630). Call ahead for prices and hours of operation. The Woodlands Winter Wonderland surrounds the perimeter of the Woodlands Ice Rink, Lake Robbins @ Six Pines. Enjoy a walk along lighted toy soldiers, doves, musical angels and snowmen for free, from dusk until 11 p.m.

Pray Together

I pray that ____ will follow you, Jesus. Matthew 16:24

December 23

{2 Days until Christmas}

Read Together

They went into the house, and when they saw the child with his mother, Mary, they knelt down and worshipped him. They brought out their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, and presented them to him.

Matthew 2:11

Discuss Together

The Wise Men followed the star. They came to Bethlehem. They found Mary and her young son, Jesus. They were happy to find him, at last! The first thing they did was to fall to their knees and worship him. They knew he was a special child. The next thing they did was to give gifts to him, to show their love. The Wise Men brought gold and two good-smelling spices, frankincense and myrrh, as gifts to Jesus.

Do Together

- Make Christmas potpourri. Just about any mix of spices will do. Let the kids mix spices together, then scoop a tablespoon into a square of fabric. Tie it up with a Christmas ribbon.
- Or make mulling spices. Mix equal parts of crushed cinnamon sticks, whole allspice, chopped dried citrus peel, and whole cloves in small bowl. Package in a ziploc bag to give away. Print these directions on a Christmas card: Simmer on stove 30 minutes before guests arrive.
- The wise men brought gifts to Jesus. Talk about gifts you have received that are too big to be wrapped! Finish up by wrapping presents together.
- Kneel and pray together at bedtime.

Pray Together

I pray that ____ will be a generous giver. Proverbs 22:9

December 24

{1 Day until Christmas}

Read Together

And His Name will be called, Immanuel, God with us. Isaiah 7:14

Discuss Together

Isaiah, writing about the promised child many years before His birth, said that His Name will be called Immanuel, Hebrew for “God with us.” The Bible also says that God became flesh and lived (as a resident) among us, in our own neighborhood. Joy Williams is a songwriter who wrote a song called, “Here With Us.” Some of the words are: “It’s still a mystery to me that the hands of God could be so small. How tiny fingers reaching in the night were the very hands that measured the sky. Hallelujah, hallelujah, Heaven’s love reaching down to save the world! Hallelujah, hallelujah, Son of God, Servant King, You’re here with us. You’re here with us.”

Do Together

- Attend CFBC Christmas Eve Service at 9:30 a.m. English, 11:15 a.m. Spanish, 5:00 p.m. English
- Think about the words, “God with Us.” What do you think that means? What does that mean to you?
- Design your own Christmas Eve service. Include opportunities for both children and parents to pray, thanking God for Jesus. Include candle lighting, scripture and song.
- Use your senses today to enjoy Christmas. Smell the potpourri simmering in your home all day, see the lights on the tree, hear the music playing, feel the warmth of family, and taste the goodies that make life Christmasy.

Pray Together

Thank you, God, that you are always with us. You are God with us.
Revelation 21:3

December 25

{Christmas Day}

Read Together

Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift! 2 Corinthians 9:15

I have always loved you. Jeremiah 31:3

Discuss Together

Today is Christmas! Twenty-five days have passed since we began Countdown to Christmas. We have seen how God kept his promise to send his Son to earth. We will learn that Baby Jesus grew, and He became great. He showed God's love to all people. When people ask you what gifts you got at Christmas, you may think of many things. But toys and clothes are not the most important gifts. The best gift at Christmas is Jesus! God sent Jesus for YOU!

When Mary held Jesus in her arms, she knew he was wonderful. When we read about Jesus in the Bible, we know that he is wonderful. When we hear about Jesus at church, we know that he is wonderful. We know that Jesus loves us. And that is wonderful!

Do Together

- Celebrate Jesus' birthday with a special breakfast or a birthday cake.
- Before you open Christmas presents, read Luke 2:1-20 with your family.
- Mary held Jesus in her arms. For a child to flourish he needs 12 loving touches per day. Spend some time today just holding your kids and thanking God for having them to celebrate Christmas with!

Pray Together

Thank you, God, for sending your only son. I pray that ____ will believe in you and have eternal life. John 3:16

Congratulations!

This Christmas, you have started a new spiritual discipline with your family. You're putting Deuteronomy 6:5-9 into action. As you move into the New Year, commit to leading your family in devotion time. The following resources are great tools to get started:

- **Daily Bible Reading**

Daily Bible Reading Plans are for your family to do together and prepare children for what they will learn in Life Groups on Sunday. *Set a goal to spend time daily reading the Bible and praying with your child.* Sheets are emailed weekly, sent home after Life Group or Kids Worship, and posted on Facebook (facebook.com/ChampionForestKids).

- **WOW Kid's Devotionals**

www.championforest.org/guide/worship/kidsworship

- **Purchase a family devotional for Christmas**

“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” Deuteronomy 6:5-9

2018 Kid's Ministry Events

{Champions Campus}

January 24	Parent Commitment Class English*
January 28	3rd Grade Family Lunch Bunch
February 11	5th Grade Mission Trip Meeting/Signup
February 14	Parent Commitment Service English
February 25	4th Grade Family Lunch Bunch
February 25	Parent Commitment Class Spanish*
March 4	5th Grade Family Lunch Bunch
March 21	Parent Commitment Service Spanish
April 11	Parent Commitment Class English*
April 21	Serve Saturday
April 29	RA / GA Banquet
May 2	Parent Commitment Service English
May 4	5th Grade Crossover
May 6	Parent Commitment Class Spanish*
May 23	WOW Musical
May 30	Parent Commitment Service Spanish
June 3-9	5th Grade Mission Trip**
June 25-29	Vacation Bible School (VBS)
July 15	Parent Commitment Class (English)*
July 15-21	Preteen Camp** www.championforest.org/preteencamp
September 12	Parent Commitment Class English*
September 30	Parent Commitment Class Spanish*
October 3	Parent Commitment Service English
October 17	Parent Commitment Service Spanish
October 31	Light the Night
December 2	Christmas ADVENTure

For more information, visit www.championforest.org/kidsevents

**Must register by the Sunday prior to this date to participate. www.championforest.org/parentcommittment*

***Kids will not attend the whole week. Dates for identical sessions are selected when registering.*

Sundays at CFBC

{Champions Campus}

9:30am

Kid Life Groups | Babies-Kinder, 1st & 2nd Grade | Kids Building

Extreme Kids Worship | 3rd-5th Grade | Kids Building

Element | Middle School, High School, College | Student Building

Adult Worship Services | English | Worship Center

Adult Worship Service | Spanish | Chapel

10:55am

Kid Life Groups | Babies-Kinder, 3rd-5th Grade | Kids Building

Elevate Kids Worship | 1st & 2nd Grade | Kids Building

Student Life Groups | Middle, High School, College | Student Bldg

Adult Worship Service | English | Chapel

Adult Worship Service | Spanish | Worship Center

Stay Connected



ChampionForestKids



cfbckidsmin



kids@cfbc.org



www.championforest.org/kids



281.885.6736



Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these."

Matthew 19:14