

## THE START OF AN ADVENT-URE!!

### BIG IDEA

Advent is like an adventure leading us to the amazing events around Jesus birth. These sessions follow through a theme of advent leading up to Christmas. Place your advent wreath in the centre of the table each week so together you can light the candle at the end of the session.

### PREP *(Kids can help!)*

**Buy** four small candles and one large one and create a simple Advent wreath (\*see note at end of this session)

**Find** a pen and paper

**Cut** out the 10 pictiary cards from the appendix, as well as the 21 stars (kids love doing this!)

**Hide** the stars in the garden (or in a room)

**Optional:** Cut out your favourite Advent activities from the appendix. Slip them into the pockets of your Advent Calendar or put them a bowl and do them together as a family in December

**Put everything into the Faith Box before you start**



### INTRO

**HAVE ONE PARENT GATHER EVERYONE TOGETHER** for Faith Box time. Plan for the other parent to arrive late, but in an unusual way! (Perhaps they could climb in the window or hide behind a curtain and appear unexpectedly.) While you are waiting for them to arrive, show impatience – asking where are they? etc.

Now explain that Jesus came in a really unexpected way when he was born as a tiny helpless baby. The people were expecting a king who would come as a powerful leader. The Jews were waiting for a Messiah who would free their nation. The last thing they were expecting was a new born baby!

Advent means 'to come' – so what is coming soon? Yes, Christmas! But more than that, it means Jesus is coming. But we have to wait for Christmas to come – and it can be hard to wait. So we need to use this waiting time to get ready for Jesus, and to remember the important stories of Christmas.

## GAME

### PLAY FOLLOW THE STAR

*Tell the children that there are 21 stars hidden in the garden. Each one is worth one point but there is one large one worth 10 points. Give them 5 minutes to each find as many stars as they can. The child with the highest score is given the set of magnets to arrange on the inside lid of the Faith Box.*

We have been learning about how God always keeps his promises and how from the beginning when the 'terrible lie' entered the world and spoiled it, God promised a future. He promised Abraham that he would bless the world through him and he promised David that he would build a nation and send a saviour through his descendants.

*Use the Table of Contents to check the order of the 'Big Promise' magnets on the lid of your tin. Now see if the children can find the magnet which talks about Jesus being God's answer to the promise (God keeps His greatest promise - the gift of Jesus).*

*"A Christmas candle is a lovely thing: it makes no noise at all, but softly gives itself away"*  
- Eva Logue

## READ

This is what the prophet Isaiah said about Jesus when God was giving his people a glimpse of what Jesus would be like.

“ For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His government and its peace will never end. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David for all eternity. The passionate commitment of the LORD of Heaven's Armies will make this happen! ”

*Isaiah 9: 6-7, The New Living Bible*

## EXPLORE

The Jews had been waiting for the Messiah to be born for hundreds of years because the prophets had told them this was going to happen. Prophets like Isaiah, who wrote the passage we have just read, promised that a new king would come and reign in peace. This king would be even better than King David – a king they knew was the best king they had ever had. And so the people waited for this new king to come and make everything better. But God sent this new king in a way the people never expected.

Pretend to be a detective and see if you can discover a clue that Isaiah gave in his writing (a child is born).

TAKE THE Pictionary CARDS, PEN AND PAPER FROM THE FAITH BOX.

### Advent Pictionary

Let the child whose birthday is nearest today's date pick out a card without anyone else seeing what is written on it. He or she then must draw what it is. Whoever guesses first has the next turn.

NOW SHARE THE CARDS AROUND TO EVERYONE. Ask each person to lay out their card and share what they remember about that word as it relates to the Christmas story. See if you can tell the whole story in the order it happened.

Yes, God chose to come to earth as a tiny baby. Not a grown up king. A baby! It was very different to what happens when a baby is born today.

Let's think about some of the differences:

Think about where you were born... go around the table and ask everyone to name the town or city where they were born, then see who can remember where Jesus was born.

Now think about where you were placed as a new baby – where was Jesus placed?

When you were born, what clothes did you wear? What about baby Jesus?

After you were born, who visited you? Who visited baby Jesus?

Jesus was born in a stable, wrapped in strips of cloth and laid in a manger. (A manger is a feeding trough for animals.) So God was willing for his Son to be born without having all the best things. Jesus became a child just like you.

### QUESTIONS

What does Jesus' coming say about how much God loves us?

We are going to light the first candle of our Advent wreath. It is called the candle of Hope.

Why do you think that Jesus' birth gave hope to the people who heard about it?

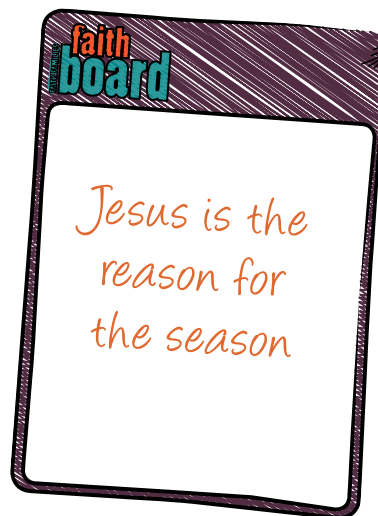
### PRAY

LIGHT THE FIRST CANDLE ON YOUR ADVENT WREATH. (It is traditionally the purple one and is the candle of Hope.) Let everyone share a hope they have for others, and ask God for those hopes to become a reality.

### GAME (OPTIONAL)

Go to your bowl (or calendar) of Advent activities and choose one to do together as a family/group.

### FAITH BOARD



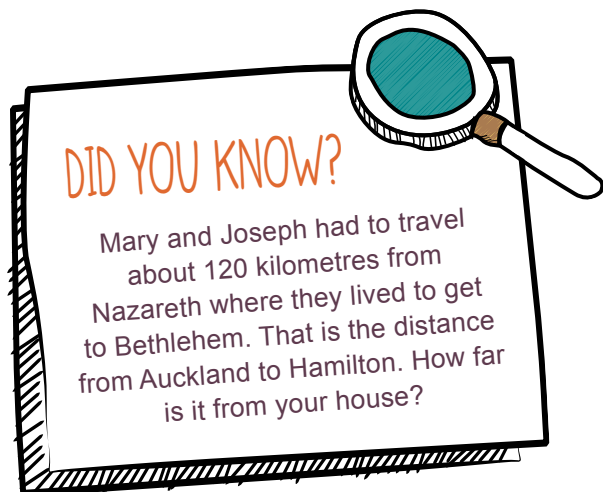
### **\*ADVENT WREATH**

All you need is four candles of similar size placed in a circle around a larger one. (Traditionally the four candles are 3 purple and 1 pink and the larger Christ candle is white.) You can place them on a green paper wreath or on a plate with greenery from the garden.

### **NOTE FOR PARENTS**

December is a really special opportunity to have a family focus on Jesus.

**AN ADVENT CALENDAR** can be a helpful tool for this - it can be so much more than just daily chocolates! Choose the activities from the appendix that you like, slip them into the pockets of your calendar and rediscover the wonder of Christmas.



## **OTHER IDEAS**

**1** Make Christmas salt dough ornaments – Mix together 4 cups flour, 1 cup salt, 1 ½ cups hot water to form a dough. Roll it out and cut shapes with Christmas cookie cutters. Put on a plate and microwave on high for about 2 minutes. Paint and decorate to use as gifts

**2** **Make a Jesse Tree**  
The Jesse Tree is named from Isaiah 11:1 “A shoot will spring forth from the stump of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots.” Find a leafless tree branch and decorate it each day of Advent with a with an ornament that represents events from Creation to the birth of Jesus. The branch is a biblical sign of newness out of discouragement, and connects the coming Messiah with the story of God’s faithfulness across 4,000 years of history. Each ornament represents part of the story e.g. an apple or snake for the garden of Eden; a rainbow or dove for Noah’s Ark etc. The whole family can pick symbols for their own favourite stories.

**3** **For the month of December read some special Christmas books**  
Put them under your Christmas tree and each night after the children are in their pyjamas let them pick one to read before bed. A favourite is Papa Papanov, Tolstoy’s traditional tale.

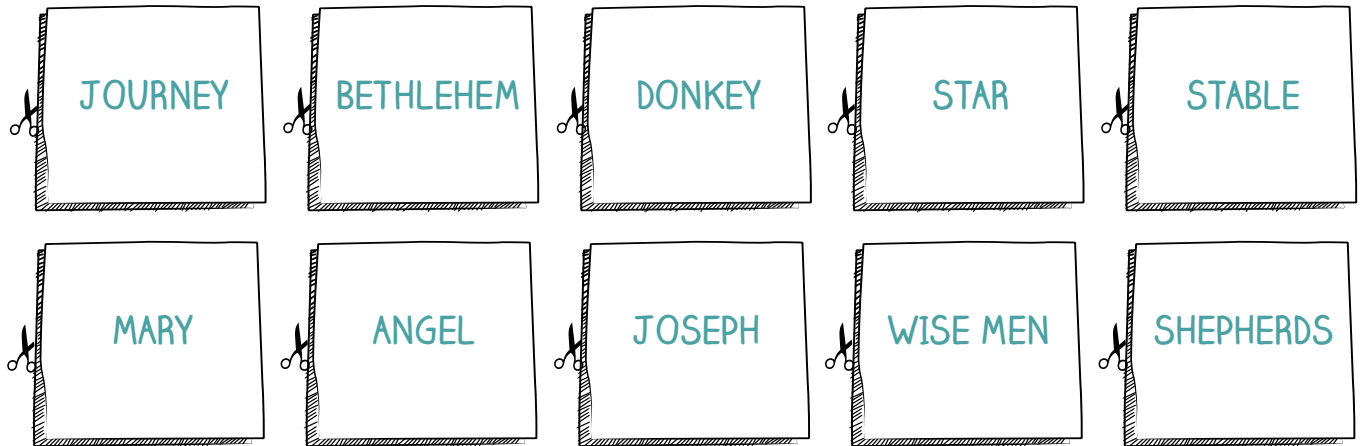
### **BUY FOR NEXT SESSION**

- A nativity set (for a printable one, see note in Prep of the next session)

# APPENDIX

## SESSION ONE

### 10 PICTURENARY CARDS



STARS  
CUT-OUT AND HIDE  
IN THE GARDEN  
(OR A ROOM OF  
THE HOUSE)



## SESSION ONE

### CUT OUT AND USE THE IDEAS THAT APPEAL TO YOU - GREAT FOR PUTTING IN THE POCKETS/ DOORS OF AN ADVENT CALENDAR.

Go to a Christmas church service	Make some edible gifts	Visit some Christmas light displays
Sing a Christmas carol with everyone in the house (e.g. Away in the Manger, Silent Night, Hark the Herald Angels Sing, Joy to the World, O Little Town of Bethlehem)	On Christmas Eve put a box with hay/ newspaper strips under the tree. Put a doll in the manger before morning. Say together "Jesus is born!"	Watch a Christmas movie as a family (e.g. It's a Wonderful Life, Miracle on 34th Street, A Christmas Story, Christmas Carol, Polar Express)
See if you can think of a Christmas word for every letter of the alphabet	What did the angel say to Mary in Luke 1:26-38?	Go to a carols by candlelight service or carols in the park event
Have a 'sleep over' around the Christmas tree	Put up some Christmas decorations	Pray for children who won't have much this Christmas
Make a gift for someone special	Do some Christmas baking	
Buy a toy for someone who won't get much this Christmas	Sort thru your clothes/toys to give away to charity	Write a Christmas poem
Buy some gifts to give to charity	Go and visit Santa	Get the kids to put on a Christmas play or pageant
Go for a walk and try to find a pohutukawa tree	Find out how to say Happy Christmas in another language	Take a Christmas family photo
Make Christmas cards	Roast chestnuts on a fire	Try to be a secret angel and do a something kind in secret today
Find out what gifts the wise men gave Jesus	Make an ornament to hang on the tree	Make the nativity set on next page
What is peace? Pray for peace in our world	Attend a local Christmas show or play	Where was Jesus born? Find it on a map
Read the Christmas story from the Bible as a family (Luke 1:26-38 & Luke 2:1-20 or Matthew 1:18 - 2:2)	Read a Christmas story (e.g. Twas the Night Before Christmas)	Bake cookies and share them with your neighbours
Work out how far Mary and Joseph travelled from Nazareth to Bethlehem – how far would that be from your home?	Bake some treats to take to hospital staff/police/firemen who are working (not everyone gets a holiday!)	Have paper and pens at dinner and everyone to write why they love the person next to them
	Cut out snowflakes and decorate some windows	Watch kids acting out The Christmas Story by St Paul's church on: <a href="http://youtu.be/kWq60oyrHVQ">http://youtu.be/kWq60oyrHVQ</a> & <a href="http://youtu.be/TM1XusYVqNY">http://youtu.be/TM1XusYVqNY</a> & <a href="http://youtu.be/JSGNjNAGCOc">http://youtu.be/JSGNjNAGCOc</a>
Ring up someone and wish them a Merry Christmas	Search up "kids Christmas crafts" on the internet and pick one to do!	