

FAMILY ACTIVITY GUIDE

WEEK 1 | Prophecy/Hope Candle (Wonderful Counselor)

Advent is a time when Christians prepare to celebrate the coming of Christ as the baby born in Bethlehem at the first Christmas. In Isaiah 9:6, there are four descriptions of Jesus: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. Each of these descriptions has an adjective and a noun. Take time with your kids to look up the definitions of each word. For instance, "wonderful" means: great, awesome, fantastic, and "counselor" means: someone who give advice, helps, or assists. Knowing the meanings of these words will help your children better understand who Jesus is and how His unchanging attributes help us as we face challenges in our lives.

- Create a countdown to Christmas where you can mark off the days as you anticipate (hope for) the celebration of Jesus' birth. It can be as simple or as elaborate as you like.
- Make Jesse Tree Ornaments to trace the hope of God's promise throughout scripture: <https://awellpurposedwoman.com/jesse-tree-tradition-free-printable/>

- **Younger Kids | Helpful Hands**

Ask your kids what "wonderful" means. Have them list things that they think are wonderful. Then talk about what the word "counselor" means. Ask them who they think helps them when they have a problem. Discuss what those people do to make their lives easier or better. Isaiah 9:6 tells us that Jesus is our Wonderful Counselor. He knows exactly what we need and the Bible gives us the right advice on what to do when we have a problem. God helps us as we face challenges and we can help others. With Christmas coming, think of someone that your family could assist. Make a plan to do something for that family (bring them a meal, write them a note, draw them a picture, etc.)

- **Older Kids | What's My Problem? Game**

Write "problems" on 3X5 cards. See list of potential problems below. Choose one person to be your "guesser". The others read the problem card silently making sure not to let the guesser see the card. Then each person offers the guesser a piece of advice. It is the guesser's job to figure out what the problem is based upon the advice given by the group. Once the problem is guessed, choose a new guesser and play again. As a family discuss how it went. Was it hard to figure out what the problem was, based only on the guesses? Were some people better at giving advice than others? Isn't it awesome that God is our Wonderful Counselor? He knows exactly what problems we are facing and exactly what we need to solve them!

Problem Card Ideas:

- You have trouble listening to your teacher
- You keep losing your _____ (favorite toy, car keys, homework)
- You have trouble falling asleep
- You keep spilling your milk
- Your feet stink
- Your room is a mess
- You are lonely
- You are bored

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WEEK 2 | Bethlehem/Love Candle (Everlasting Father)

- Gather around the nativity and read Luke 2:1-7. Make a craft stick nativity ornament for the Christmas tree:



- For the structure, glue 2 craft sticks together to form a roof, 2 craft sticks for the sidewalls and one craft stick for the floor.
- Cut 3 craft sticks different lengths to create Joseph, Mary and baby Jesus. Glue figures to the floor.
- Glue hay or raffia, cut in short pieces, around baby Jesus.
- Cut another craft stick to create an angel to glue on the top of the roof.
- Hang the ornament on the tree!

- As a family, think of someone you know who might be lonely this Christmas and needs to be reminded that Jesus loves them – maybe a single mom or dad or an elderly neighbor. Make a goody bag for them – include whatever you think they would like. Leave the package on their front porch, ring their doorbell, and leave.

• Younger Kids | Find Dad's Tie!

Show the kids a plant that is dead. Talk to them about what a plant needs to live and what happens when it does not get those things. Talk about how they also need things to live as well and how God is our good Father and loves us so much.

Play a hide and seek game. Have someone hide a tie somewhere in the house. (A construction paper tie works well, too.) Let kids search for the tie. Whoever finds the tie becomes the new "Dad" and gets to hide the tie. You can play this game over and over again. (Adapted from <https://ministry-to-children.com/fathers-day-sunday-school-lesson/>)

Finish with the following questions:

- What was the name of Jesus that we spoke about today?
- Why do you think that Isaiah describes the Christ as a Father?
- What does everlasting mean?
- Can the love of Jesus ever run out?
- Will Jesus ever stop loving you? How can we share that love with others?

WEEK 2 | Continued

- Older Kids | The Everlasting Gift

For this activity you will need Saran Wrap, small individually wrapped candy, small toys, and the following poem.

Poem:

This game has been fun and full of surprises,
With candy and toys of all shapes and sizes
Although it was long, this game had an end
It was not eternal, though time it did spend
God is everlasting, our Father for always
He will take care of us for all of our days.

Directions: Start with the poem and wrap Saran Wrap around it making a ball. At intervals along the way add a piece of candy and keep adding to the Saran Wrap ball. Then a toy, more candy, etc. until you have used up the container of Saran Wrap. Have kids sit in a circle. One person holds the ball of Saran Wrap while the person to their left holds a die. When you say, "Go" the person with the Saran Wrap ball begins to unwrap the ball, while the person with the die, starts rolling trying to get the number 1. When a 1 is rolled, the person with the die, hands the die to the person to the left and he/she takes the Saran Wrap ball from the person unwrapping and they have a turn to unwrap. They continue to unwrap until the number 1 is rolled again. Continue play until the ball is completely unwrapped. Note: If you want to make the game more challenging, have the person unwrapping the Saran Wrap ball wear oven mitts while unwrapping.

When finished, discuss that this game took a while but it was not everlasting. God is everlasting. He is our good Father and He loves us perfectly and for always.



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WEEK 3 | Angel/Peace Candle (Prince of Peace)

- Spend time as a family talking about things that are bothering you right now. Write them down on sheets of paper. Then spend time praying together -- praise God for who He is and tell Him about your troubles. When you are finished, crumple up your "troubles" and throw them in the trash (or in the fire if you have a fireplace and it is cold enough to have a fire).
- Color these "Names of Jesus" ornaments and hang them on the tree to remind you who Jesus is and how much He loves you: https://biblestoryprintables.com/themed-bible-printables/christmas-bible-printables/names-of-jesus-advent-ornaments/?utm_source=pinterest&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=social-pug

- **Younger Kids | Peace be Still**

Turn on Christmas carols and have your kids get their wiggles out and dance to the music. After a while, stop the music and say, "Peace be still". Everyone needs to freeze in place until the music starts again.

Additional Resources

- Prophecy Game Cards: Print the cards. Have kids match the prophecy found in Isaiah 9:6 with the fulfillment found in the New Testament. https://resourcewell.s3.amazonaws.com/children/prophetsandpromises/PP.U10.L48-Ages6-12_ProveThatProphecyGameCards.pdf
- <https://resourceforkidsministry.com/2018/10/10/isaiah-9-advent-series/>
- <https://ministry-to-children.com/jesus-is-coming-isaiah-9-lesson/>
- <https://carolgarborg.com/prince-of-peace/>

Activity ideas continued on next page

WEEK 3 | Continued

- **Older Kids | Peaceful Hearts**

Who did God promise to send? (His Son Jesus) How did Jesus come to earth? (As a baby) Let's see why Jesus came to earth.

Directions:

1. Children sit in a circle.
2. Cut the heart into puzzle pieces, one for each member of your family.
3. Have each child write his or her name on a different puzzle piece.
4. Mix up the pieces on the floor.
5. One at a time, each family member picks up a puzzle piece and reads the name on the piece.
6. The person who selected the puzzle piece says to the person whose name is on the piece, "____, Jesus came to earth for you!"
7. The person whose name was read, picks the next puzzle piece and repeats steps 5-6.
8. Continue playing until all the puzzle pieces are collected.
9. Then put the pieces together.

What did we make? (A heart) Just like the broken heart puzzle pieces, sin makes our hearts feel broken and separated from God. Jesus is the Prince of Peace who came to earth for each of you. He came to take your sins away so you would be at peace with God and close with Him forever. Jesus gives your heart peace and joy!

Adapted from https://www.resourcewell.org/children-ministry/lesson/2lesson_48_advent_1isaiah_and_the_prince_of_peace_6-12 **Other Resources**



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WEEK 4 | Shepherd/Joy Candle (Mighty God)

Younger Kids | Who is Stronger?

Before you start, print out the [Animal cards pdf](#). Explain to the kids how you will play the game: You'll show them two animal pictures and they'll take turns to choose which of the two animals they think is stronger. Start off with two images of smaller creatures like an ant and a spider. If the child chooses the spider then set the ant aside and show them spider versus wasp ... Keep it going until you get to the strongest animal.

Say: "Wow, what could be stronger than an elephant!?" Allow the kids a few responses and then say: "What about the person who made the elephant?" Jesus is Stronger!

One of the most dangerous animals that the Bible talks about is the behemoth. We don't really know exactly what kind of animal it is. Maybe a hippo, maybe an elephant (hold up the picture of the elephant). Listen carefully to what God says about this animal in Job 40:15-19!

"Look at Behemoth, which I made along with you and which feeds on grass like an ox. What strength it has in its loins, what power in the muscles of its belly! Its tail sways like a cedar; the sinews of its thighs are close-knit. Its bones are tubes of bronze, its limbs like rods of iron. It ranks first among the works of God, yet its Maker can approach it with his sword.

Wow, that sounds like a big, strong, scary creature but God says that He made even the strongest animals, and even the strongest things in this world are not as strong as Him! Nothing is stronger than God!!! Remember that, long before Jesus was born, Isaiah said that the Messiah would be Mighty God! When Jesus was born in a stable in Bethlehem He was just a little baby (hold up the baby picture). How could that little baby be mightier than a whale, or an elephant, or a rhino? Listen carefully to this verse from Colossians 1:16 about Jesus: "For in him (Jesus) all things were created: things in heaven and on earth ... all things have been created through him and for him."

That means that Jesus existed before He was born, and He was even there before the world was created! He is God, because everything was created through Him! The Bible says that Jesus saves us from our sins. Because Jesus is Mighty God we can trust that He really does have the power to save us and to forgive our sins! Jesus is powerful enough to conquer death and give us life forever. It also means that Jesus is our strength when we are weak. Sometimes you might feel weak or overcome with sadness. We can come to Jesus and be reminded that true strength comes from Him.

Additional directions continued on next page

WEEK 4 | Continued

The Mighty God coming as a little baby is also a wonderful reminder that things are not always as they seem. Sometimes life seems unfair, and we might see people in this world abusing their power and doing wrong things. It doesn't mean that they are really the strong ones, or are really in charge. Jesus is the Mighty God, and he is really in charge, even when it might not seem like it. (Adapted from <https://resourceforkidsministry.com/2017/12/04/mighty-god/>)

- **Older Kids | Who is Stronger?**

This activity is designed to get everyone in the family moving! Have each family member see how strong they are. Set a timer and see how many push ups they can do in a minute. Then try other challenges: sit ups, wall sits, planks, etc. Discuss with your kids how they think they did. Who was the strongest? What do they think were the reasons that person was stronger than others? (they are older, bigger, exercise more regularly, etc.)

Additional Ideas:

- As a family, go caroling in your neighborhood. Knock on doors and when someone answers sing songs that share the joy of Jesus' birth.
- Make and decorate a birthday cake for Jesus and eat it on Christmas Day as we celebrate the joy of His birth: <https://littleshootsdeeproots.com/kids-ideas-blog/creating-advent-birthday-party-jesus/>
- Create a candy cane ornament to hang on your tree using beads: <https://athriftymom.com/candy-cane-ornament-great-kid-craft-diy-christmas/> or edible ingredients: <https://www.tipsfromatypicalmomblog.com/2013/12/candy-cane-hearts-edible-christmas.html>

