



CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Experiencing a
Brighter Christmas



STUDY GUIDE
& ADVENT DEVOTIONAL



In the weeks leading up to **CHRISTMAS** things get brighter. Lights twinkle on houses, trees, and shopping centers. But the stress, busyness, and credit card bills can keep our **CHRISTMAS** from truly feeling **BRIGHT**. The shine of new gifts and holiday decorations eventually fades away.

The true light that gives light to everyone was coming to the world (John 1:9). Jesus shines in our darkness and illuminates our lives. We'll experience a brighter **CHRISTMAS** this year by focusing on the **real Christmas light.**



In Him was life, and that life was the **light** of all mankind.
The **light** shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness
to testify concerning that **light**, so that through him all might believe. He
himself was not the **light**; he came only as a witness to the **light**.

The true **light** that gives **light** to everyone was coming into the world.

-John 1:4-9

Week 1: JOY

BRIGHT LIGHT LIFE

*In Him was life, and that life
was the light of all mankind.
John 1:4*

All I Want for Christmas

Fill out the three different Christmas lists below with all you want for Christmas this year. Share one item from each list with your group, family, or a friend.

MATERIAL GIFTS

*Gifts wrapped
under the tree*

RELATIONAL GIFTS

*Gifts of presence or
restored relationships*

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Which spiritual gift of
Advent do you want to
experience most this
year? Why?

☐ Hope

☐ Joy

☐ Love

☐ Peace



See the Light

1. What is your favorite Christmas memory or family tradition?

2. Where do you tend to fall on the stressful to joyful scale during the month of December? Why?

Stressful 1 ----- 5 ----- 10 Joyful

3. When do you experience the most joy during the Christmas season? Why do you think this time or activity brings you the most joy?

4. How do you interpret John 1:4? What is John telling us about Jesus in this verse?

5. Luke 2:10-11 says, "The angel said to the shepherds, '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.'"
Why did this news make the shepherds so joyful? How can this news bring us joy today?

6. In what ways do you personally experience joy through your relationship with Jesus?

7. How do you typically feel on December 26th? (Or whenever your Christmas festivities are over.) Why do you think you feel this way after Christmas?

8. Happiness is often temporary and depends on our situation, while joy is lasting and not affected by our circumstances. How can we still experience joy even when things aren't going well?

9. How can we seek joy this Christmas season that won't fade when the season is over? How can we bring the joy of Christmas with us into January and the rest of the year?

Be the Light

The back of this booklet includes a 25-day Advent Devotional Calendar. Instead of counting down with chocolates, we'll countdown to Christmas Day with Bible readings, prayer practices, and reflections. We'll prepare ourselves spiritually, so we can experience a joy that lasts.

Commit to the Christmas Light Advent Devotional for the month of December. Schedule a time of the day when you will do the devotional.

Who will hold you accountable or do this with you?

"FOR YOU, GOD,
HAVE PUT MY LIFE
BACK TOGETHER"

Prayer:

God,

Use this Advent season to prepare my heart for Jesus. Keep me from chasing the shiny objects of the season and stay focused on the true light.

Help me find ways to make room in my schedule, room in my mind, and room in my heart for You.

I pray that by Christmas Day, I will be prepared to welcome You more fully into my life and experience the hope, joy, peace, and love that You promise me.

Amen.



Week 2: HOPE

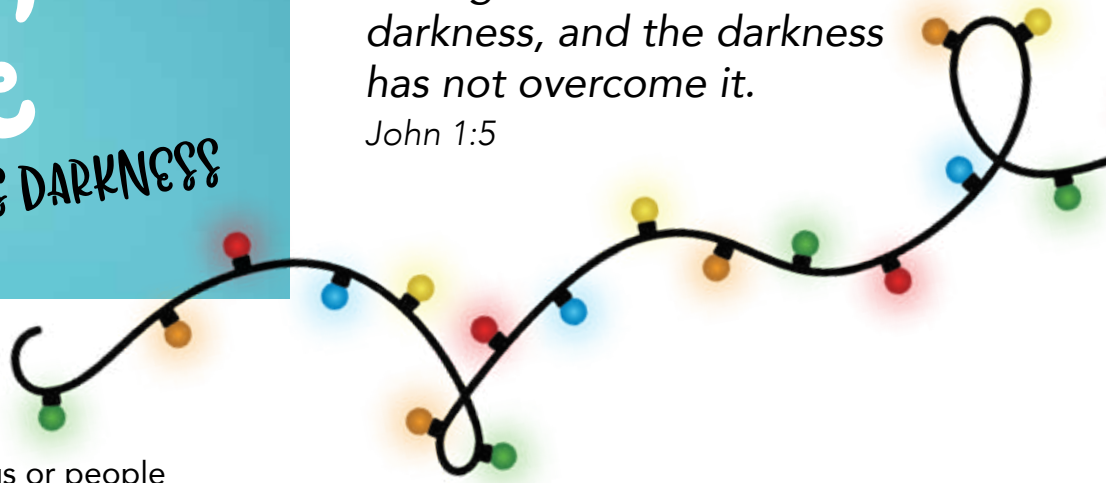
A LIGHT THAT OVERCOMES DARKNESS

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

John 1:5

Bright Lights

Write on each light the things or people that are bright lights in your life right now. Share one of your lights with your group, family, or friend.



See the Light

1. What are your favorite kinds of Christmas lights?
2. What was one present you really hoped for in the past? Did you get it?
3. Share an example of when you experienced God's light shining in a dark time.
4. Where do you see God's light shining in your life today?
5. John 1:5 says, *"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."* Even a small glimmer of light can overcome complete darkness. How have you experienced this to be true?
6. Psalm 119:105 says, *"Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path"*. How has God's Word been a light to you? How does it light your path?
7. When times feel dark, how can we draw closer to the light of Jesus?
8. How can we maintain hope when a situation feels hopeless?
9. Who is someone in your life that could use hope this Christmas season? How can you share hope and light to them this week?

Be the Light:

Make plans to attend The Longest Night worship service on Friday, December 20 at 6:30 pm. Invite a friend to attend with you.

the
Longest Night
a service of
healing & hope



December 20
6:30 pm

Prayer:

Jesus,

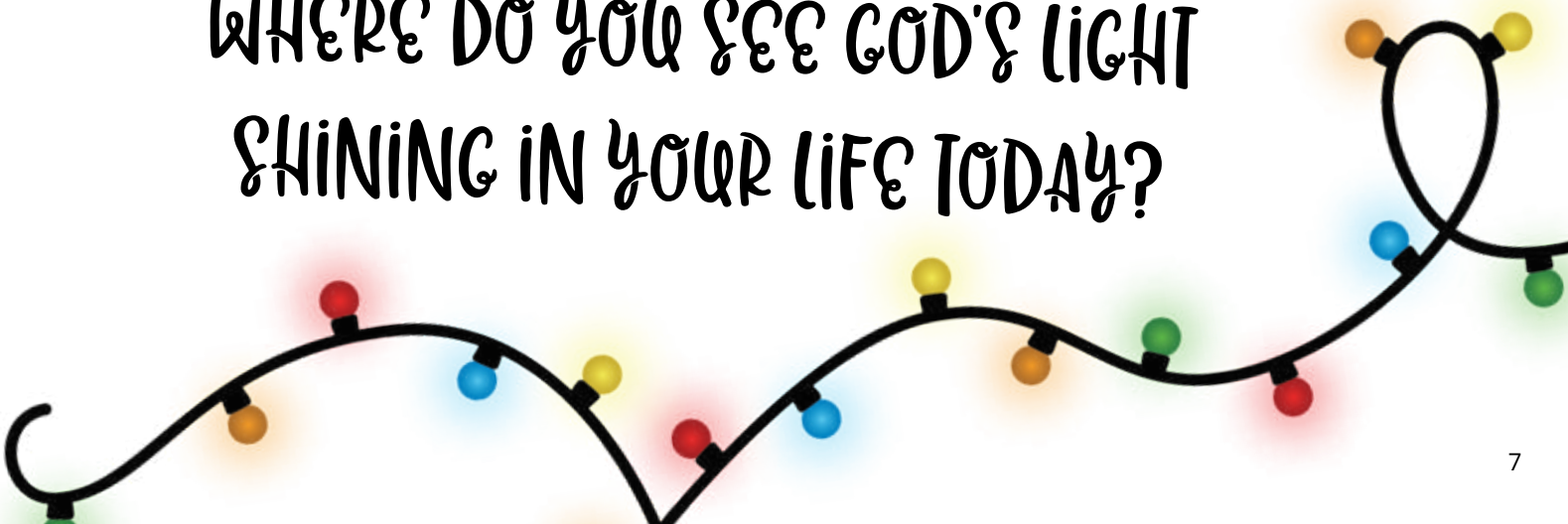
*You are the light of the world.
Thank You for bringing us Your light.*

*I pray You will shine into the dark places in my life.
Help me trust that Your light always defeats the
darkness and let me live with hope in You.*

*When I feel surrounded by darkness, help me
focus on Your light. I pray Your light shines brighter
and brighter in my life.*

Amen.

WHERE DO YOU SEE GOD'S LIGHT
SHINING IN YOUR LIFE TODAY?

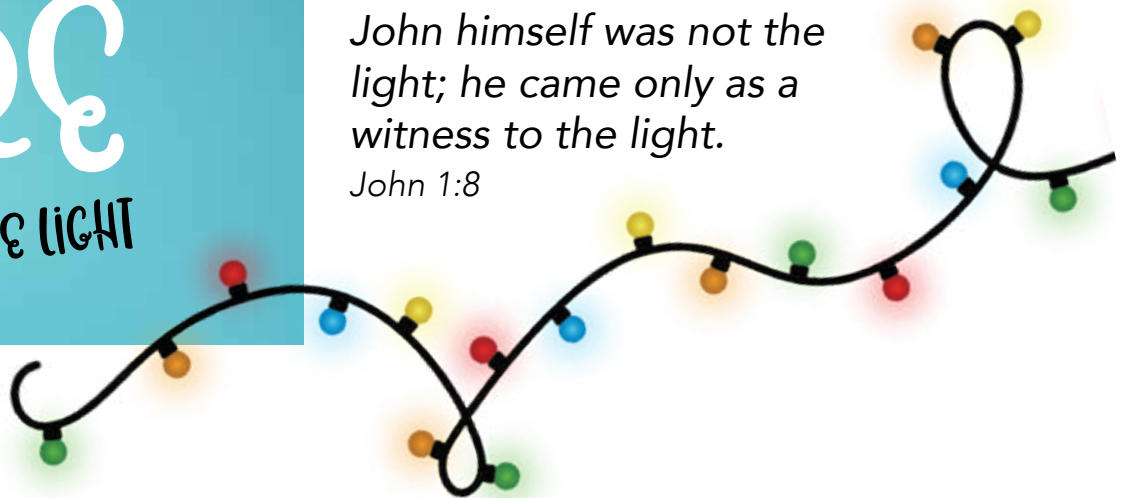


Week 3: SHARE

SHARING THE LIGHT

John himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

John 1:8

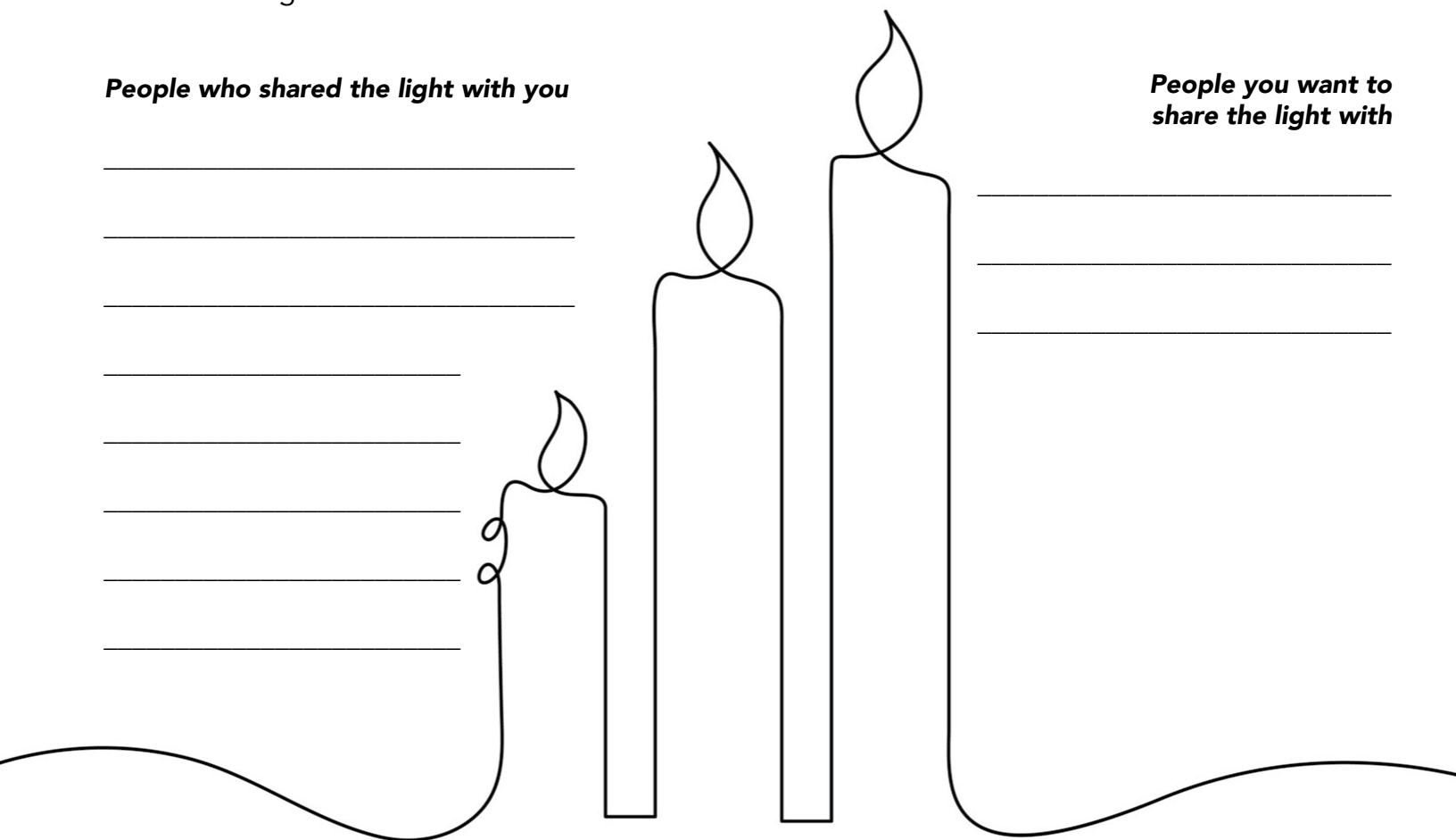


Passing the Light

Reflect on who shared the light of Jesus with you. Who invited you? Who taught you about Jesus? Who mentored you along the way? Write their names on the left. On the right, write down three names of people you want to share the light of Jesus with.

People who shared the light with you

People you want to share the light with



See the Light

1. What is one of the best gifts you've ever given to someone else? What made it such a great gift?
2. The joy of giving is often greater than the joy of receiving. How does giving bring happiness to the giver?
3. Jesus is the greatest gift we can give. When we share the gift of Jesus with others, what blessings do they receive?
4. Tell about a person who shared the light of Jesus with you. How did they do this? What impact did this person have on your faith and life?
5. Share about one of the people you want to share the light of Jesus with. Why did you write this person on your list?
6. John 1:7 says, "He (John) came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe." A witness is someone who shares their experiences as evidence of something. They testify by telling their story. What have you witnessed or experienced in your life that is evidence of Jesus being a light? How can you share this story with others?
7. John 1:8 says, "He (John) himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light." We are not the light; we reflect the light of Jesus to others. What are some practical ways we can reflect the light of Jesus to those around us?
8. What obstacles and fears prevent us from sharing the light of Jesus with those around us? How can we overcome these obstacles or fears?
9. John 1:6 says, "There was a man sent from God whose name was John." We aren't solely responsible for saving people. We **partner** with God in reaching people with the good news of Jesus. Who might God be sending you to reach out to this Christmas season?
10. How could their life change if you introduced them to a meaningful relationship with Jesus?

Be the Light:

Choose one person you want to share the light of Jesus with this Advent season:

Commit to doing these four things for that person before Christmas:

- ☐ Pray for them once a day
- ☐ Have at least one conversation and focus on asking good questions and listening to them well
- ☐ Ask how you can pray for them
- ☐ Find a way to serve them – big or small

Prayer:

God,

I pray for _____
to experience the light of Jesus this Christmas.

Open their eyes to the ways You are seeking
after them and working in their life.

Help me recognize opportunities to tell them
about Jesus. Let my own story be a testimony of
Your grace. Give me the courage to share my story
authentically and honestly.

Make me a light that shines God's joy and
goodness to all those I encounter.

Amen.

**WE PARTNER WITH GOD IN
REACHING PEOPLE WITH THE
GOOD NEWS OF JESUS.**

Week 4: ACCEPTANCE

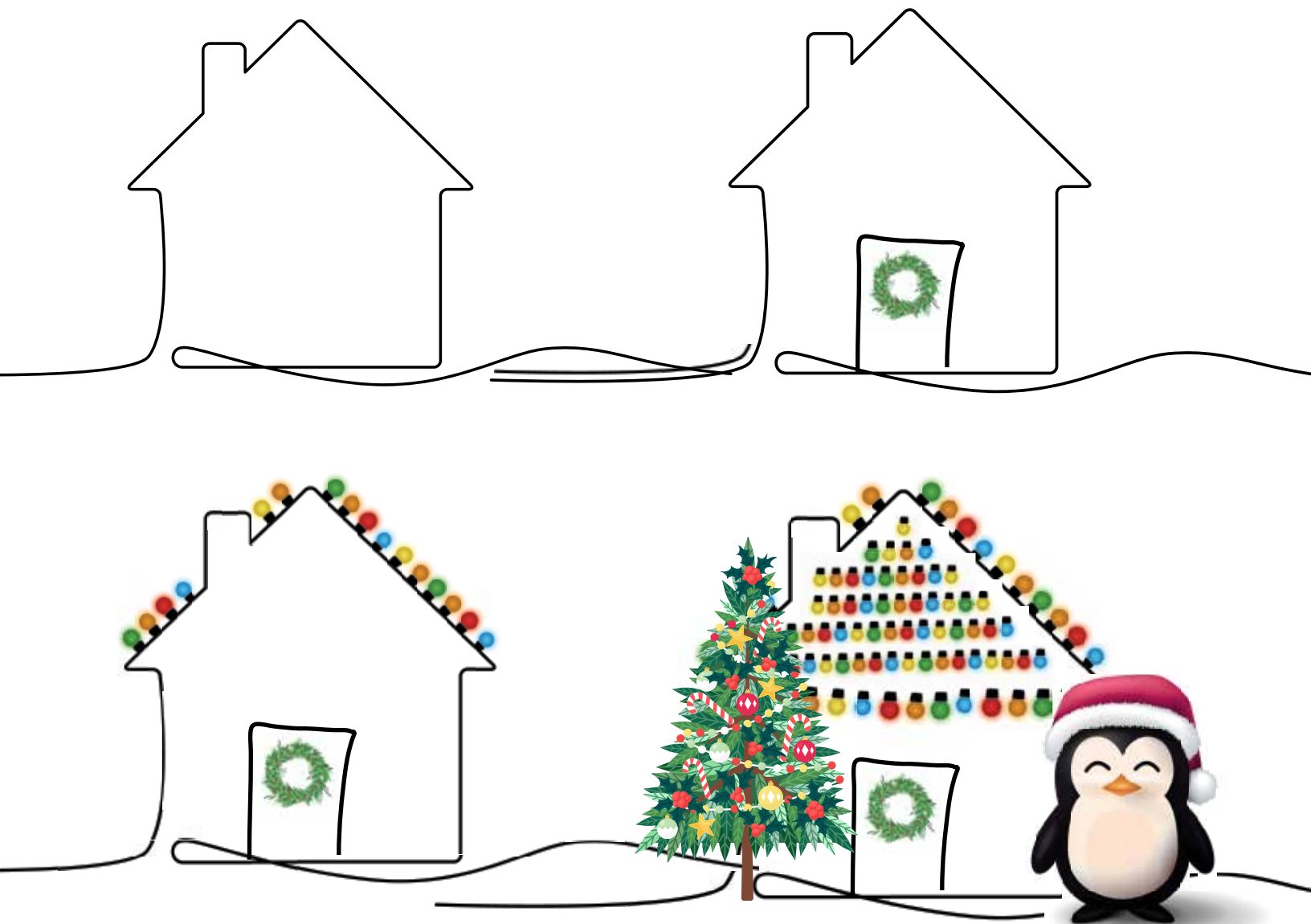
A LIGHT FOR EVERYONE

The true light that gives
light to everyone was
coming into the world.

John 1:9

Hanging the Lights

- What type of Christmas light house are you?
Circle the house that best describes your Christmas light decorations.
- Which style of Christmas lights do you wish your neighbors would choose?
Draw a square around that house.



See the Light

1. Share about a time when you gave someone a gift they obviously didn't like. What did it feel like to see your gift rejected?

2. Share about a time when you felt unaccepted or rejected. How did that make you feel?

3. Jesus' love and acceptance are unconditional, unlike some of our human relationships that can be conditional. What are some common conditions that people tend to place on their relationships?

4. John 1:9 says, *"The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world."* A relationship with Jesus is available to everyone, no exceptions. What are some reasons people believe they are excluded or unworthy of a relationship with Jesus?

5. How does believing that Jesus accepts us just as we are change how we view ourselves?

6. John 1:11 says, *"He (Jesus) came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him."* Jesus knew what it felt like not to be accepted. His own hometown rejected Him. We can't be liked by everyone. Not everyone has good taste! How can we respond to rejection in a healthy way?

7. John 1:12 says, *"Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."* What does it mean to be a child of God? What are the benefits or rights we receive as children of God?

8. How is God's love for us similar to a parent's love for their child?

9. What would change in your life if you genuinely believed that Jesus fully loved and accepted you?

10. How can we extend the same unconditional acceptance that Jesus offers us to others?

Be the Light:

Read Psalm 103:8-18. What line of this Psalm is the hardest for you to believe about yourself?

What line of this Psalm do you need to take to heart as you look ahead to Christmas?

Prayer:

God,

*Thank You for loving me unconditionally
and accepting me as a child.*

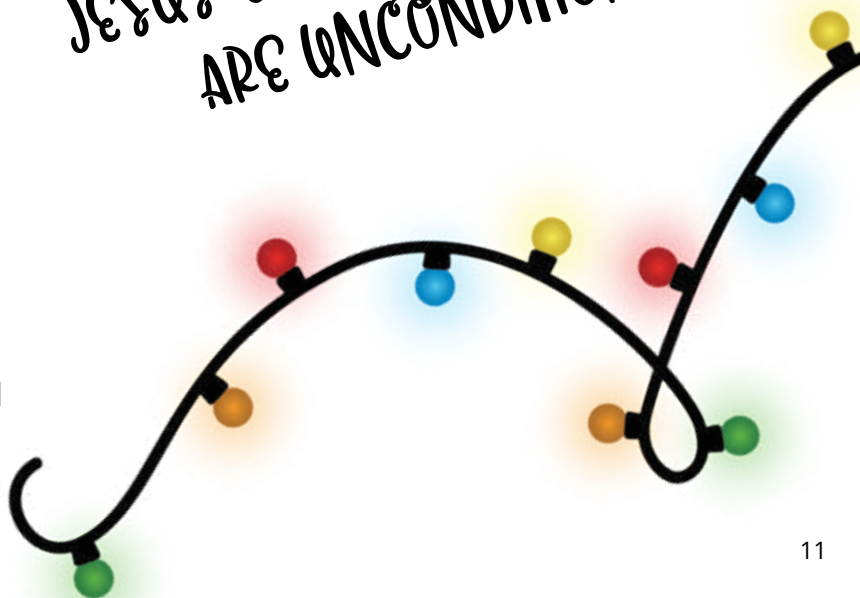
*When I don't feel lovable,
remind me of Your love for me.*

*When I don't feel worthy,
remind me of Your grace.*

*When I experience rejection,
remind me You accept me.*

Amen.

**JESUS' LOVE AND ACCEPTANCE
ARE UNCONDITIONAL.**





ADVENT DEVOTIONAL CALENDAR

25 Devotions for a Brighter Christmas

Throughout this guide, use the colored tea light candle you received at worship or light one of your own to enjoy these devotions.

December 1

Preparing for the Light

Advent is a season of anticipation and preparation. We eagerly await and prepare ourselves for the birth of Jesus, the light of the world. We often prepare for Christmas by shopping, decorating, and scheduling. This devotional is a guide to preparing spiritually.

Light your candle. **Pray** this prayer of preparation.

God,
Use this Advent season to prepare my heart for Jesus.
Keep me from chasing the shiny objects of the season
and stay focused on the true light.

During Advent, I often find myself distracted by...

Help me find ways to make room in my schedule,
room in my mind, and room in my heart for You.
I will create space for You by...

I pray that by Christmas Day, I will be prepared to
welcome You more fully into my life and experience
the hope, joy, peace, and love that You promise me.
Amen.

December 3

John's Christmas Story

Light your candle. **Read** John 1:1-18. **Write** down
the verse or phrase that stands out to you today.

Why does John refer to Jesus as light?

December 2

Bright Light Life

Jesus makes our lives brighter by giving us joy. **Light**
your candle. **Write** down all the ways Jesus has made
your life brighter and more joyful. **Pray** over your list
and thank Jesus for the gift of joy.

December 4

Light of the World

Light your candle. **Listen** to
the song Light of the World
by We The Kingdom.



Hallelujah means to express praise,
joy, and thanks. What do you need
to sing hallelujah for today?

SING HALLELUJAH FOR THE
THINGS HE HAS DONE

December 5

Radiating Joy

In the same way a flame radiates heat, Jesus radiates joy. The closer we get to Him, the more joy we experience. **Light** your candle. Feel the heat radiating from the flame.

Read Psalm 16 – a Psalm of joy. **Write** down the verse or phrase that stands out to you today.

December 6

Mary's Song

Light your candle. Mary sang a song of joy in anticipation of the birth of Jesus. **Read** her song in Luke 1:46-56. **Write** a prayer of your hopes for this season as you anticipate the birth of Jesus.

December 7

Emmanuel - God with Us

Light your candle. The flame is a symbol of Jesus' presence. It reflects the light and warmth that Jesus gives us.



Listen to "Emmanuel God with Us" as you reflect on God's presence.

How is God with you today?

December 8

Luke's Christmas Story

Light your candle. **Read** Luke 2:1-20.

Select one verse from Luke's Christmas story that gives you hope and write it here.

Look at your lit candle and read your hope verse again.

EVERY GOOD THING I HAVE COMES FROM YOU.



December 9

Hope from the Sky

Light your candle.

God provides hope many times in the Bible. God used a rainbow in the sky as a symbol of hope to Noah in Genesis 9:11-17.

What has been a symbol of hope from God in your life?

God sustained the Israelites in the wilderness by raining down manna from the sky in Exodus 16:3-10.

How has God sustained you through a wilderness time in your life?

December 11

Focus on the Light

Light your candle and watch the flame for several moments.

"I have come into the world as light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness."
-John 12:46

Too often, we let the negative consume our attention and drive our emotions. When we focus on the dark, the dark feels overwhelming. But when we focus on the light, we see more light. God doesn't want us to stay in darkness.

Pray this prayer as you focus on your candle for a few more moments.

God,

*Help me to focus on the light.
Bring more light into my life.*

Amen

December 10

Light at the End of the Tunnel

An area of darkness, uncertainty, or fear in my life right now is...

Light your candle as a reminder that Jesus can bring light to this darkness.

Pray that Jesus' light will continue to shine brighter in this area of your life.

December 12

A Light on My Path

Light your candle.



Schedule a time to walk the Prayer Path using the Advent Devotional

YOUR WORD IS A LAMP
FOR MY FEET, A LIGHT
ON MY PATH

-Psalm 119:105

December 13

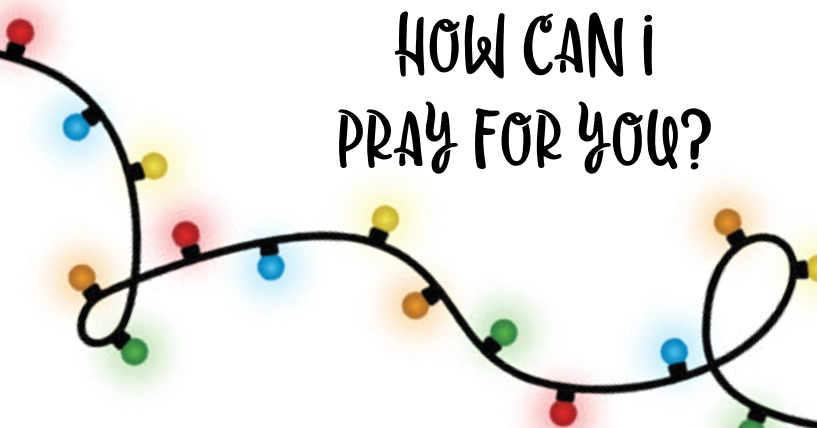
Overflowing Hope

Light your candle. **Read** Romans 15:13 as a prayer:

*Now may the God of hope fill me
with all joy and peace as I trust in Him,
so that I may overflow with hope by the power
of the Holy Spirit.*

When we overflow with hope, it provides hope to others too.

Text a friend and ask them how you can pray for them as a way of extending hope this season.



HOW CAN I
PRAY FOR YOU?

December 15

The Fire Triangle

Light your candle.

Three things have to be present for any fire to burn – fuel, heat, and oxygen. If any one of these things is removed, the fire will go out. Your candle has wax as fuel, a spark as a heat source, and oxygen in the air.

Reflect on the flame.

What fuels you to shine God's light?

Who is a heat source or spark in your life that helps you shine God's light?

We need the Holy Spirit like a flame needs oxygen.

Pray for the Holy Spirit to help you shine bright this Advent.

December 14

The Hope of Christmas

Light your candle.

Listen to "The Hope of Christmas"
by Matthew West.

Reflect on how Jesus is "still the hope of Christmas".



December 16

Sunrises and Sunsets

Light your candle twice today. Once in the morning and once at night.

*From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of
the Lord is to be praised!*
-Psalm 113:3

Write a prayer of gratitude to start your day.
God, Thank You for a new day...

Write a prayer of gratitude to end your day.
God, Thank You for today...

December 17

Hidden Light

Light your candle as a reminder that you are a light in the world.

You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. -Matthew 5:14-16

Reflect on the ways you've hidden your light under a bowl. **Pray** a prayer of confession and ask for forgiveness.

God,
Forgive me for the ways I've hidden my light...

Give me the courage to let my light shine before others. Amen.

December 19

Jesus Nicknames

Light your candle. **Read** Isaiah 9:6, where the prophet lists names for Jesus.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

-Isaiah 9:6

As you look at your candle flame, which name for Jesus resonates with you? Why?

December 18

Mark's Christmas Story

Light your candle. **Read** Mark 1:1-8. **Write** down the verse or phrase that stands out to you today.

How can we live like John and "Prepare the way for the Lord and make straight paths for him"?

December 20

Sharing the Light

Light your candle for someone you hope experiences Jesus this Christmas. **Pray** this prayer for them.

God,

I pray for _____
to experience the light of Jesus this Christmas.

Open their eyes to the ways You are seeking
after them and working in their life.

Help me recognize opportunities to tell them about Jesus. Let my own story be a testimony of Your grace. Give me the courage to share my story authentically and honestly.

Make me a light that shines the joy and goodness of God to all those I encounter.

Amen.

December 21

Bring Your Gifts

Light your candle. When the Magi heard of Jesus' birth, they brought Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Write down three gifts you want to give Jesus this Christmas.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____



WHAT THREE GIFTS
CAN YOU
GIVE JESUS?

December 23

For God So Loved the World

Light your candle.

For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

-John 3:16

Write a list of all the ways you could end this phrase:
For God so loved me that He...

December 22

Christmas Light Ornament

We handed out Christmas Light ornaments today in worship. If you did not receive one, you can pick it up at the church building this week.

Light your candle.

Pick a Bible verse or phrase from this series that you want to keep with you as a light for years to come.

Write it on your ornament and get creative!

Hang this on your tree as a reminder of the true light of Christmas.



December 24

Matthew's Christmas Story

Light your candle. **Read** Matthew 1:18-25. **Write** down the verse or phrase that stands out to you today.

Tomorrow is Christmas Day. Jesus comes to dwell with us on earth. Emmanuel, God with us. How will you remember and celebrate that God is with you tomorrow?





December 25

Christmas Day Prayer

Light your candle. Read John's Christmas story (John 1:1-18).

Write down the verse or phrase that stands out to you on Christmas Day.

Pray this Christmas Day prayer:

God,
I have experienced Your light this Advent in these ways...

Give me opportunities to share Your light.
Help me reflect Your light by...

This Christmas Day, I am grateful for Your light because...

I pray Your light continues to shine brighter in my life.

Amen.



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