

Strategic Dads

Advent Week 1



DEC 1-7

Making Your Christmas Matter

This week, we are looking at how Christmas fits into the story of redemption—a story that stretched from creation into eternity. When we zoom out and see the whole story, we see the real reason that Christmas is so wonderful: it's when God himself stepped into our broken world to bring forgiveness, healing, and reconciliation.

DEC
1

The Creation

Genesis 1:26-31

When God created the world, it was amazing. He made so many unique and complicated and beautiful things. But the most wonderful part of his creation was his plan for people. God gives people a special role and a special relationship with him.

- In whose image are humans (men and women) created?
- What do these verses tell us that God is like?

Challenge: Go outside and enjoy God's creation. Talk with your family about what you saw, heard, smelled, or felt outside today that was beautiful, surprising, or interesting.

DEC
2

The Fall

Genesis 3:1-13

Even though God had created them and given them such a wonderful garden to live in, Adam and Eve disobeyed him. They rejected God's plan for them, and that broke their relationship with God. But notice that God didn't give up on people. He went looking for Adam and Eve in the garden, and he's been seeking out and saving disobedient humanity ever since.

- What did Adam and Eve do wrong?
- How did their disobedience change their relationship with God?

Challenge: Just like Adam and Eve's sin hurt their relationship with God, our sin hurts our relationship with God and with others. If you hurt a friendship recently—or if you mess up today—apologize to that person, and apologize to God. Praise God he hears our prayers and forgives us over and over and over!

DEC
3

The Promise

Micah 5:2-5a

Even after sin came into the world, God didn't abandon humans. He chose a special group of people, and he guided them through many leaders. But because people's hearts were still sinful, they kept rebelling against God. Today's reading is a promise that God would send a better leader: his own Son, Jesus, who would change people's hearts and be the sacrifice for their sins.

- Yesterday, we talked about how people's disobedience broke their relationship with God. What do you think it means that Jesus will be our peace?

Challenge: At the start of December, it can feel like a long wait until Christmas. But after Jesus' birth was prophesied, the Israelites had to wait hundreds of years before everything was ready for Jesus to be born. Do something to get ready for Christmas, like making cookies, wrapping a present, or practicing Christmas songs.

DEC
4

The Baby

Luke 2:1-7

After centuries of waiting, God the Son became a human so he could save humans from their sin and bring them into God's family. Jesus was finally born! But he didn't come as a king in a palace, a general with an army, or a superhero landing with a flash of lightning ...

- Imagine you were one of the Jews living in Jesus' time, waiting for the Savior promised in Micah 5 (yesterday's verses). What would surprise you about where or how Jesus was born?
- Verse 4 says that Joseph was of the house of David. Who was David? Can you think of why it matters that Jesus came from David's family?

Challenge: With your family, map out a simple tree. Talk about how people in your family met God, and thank God for how he's worked in your family. It doesn't matter if your whole family tree loved Jesus or if your family is just getting to know Jesus—both of these stories show God loving us and changing our lives.

(Want to go further? Look at the family tree in Matthew 1:1-17 and count the generations between David and Jesus. Notice the amazing names and history. Praise God he hears our prayers and forgives us over and over and over!)

DEC
5

The Cross

Romans 5:6-11

God is just—he doesn't let bad things go unpunished. But God is also forgiving. How does that work? By God sacrificing himself on the cross and taking our punishment so that we can be forgiven.

- What do you think it means that Christ died for sinners? Are you a sinner?
- What is the good news in these verses?

Challenge: Talk to God today and thank him for his love and his sacrifice on the cross

DEC
6

The Empty Tomb

Matthew 28:1-10, 1 Corinthians 15:20-22

Sin twisted the world with a lot of horrible things—like crying, hunger, sickness, and even death. But when Jesus died and took the punishment for our sin, he conquered sin and death! We can know for sure that he conquered them because he overcame death and rose again. That means that, if you trust in Jesus for forgiveness, you will be raised again after you die, and you'll live with Jesus forever.

- Because of sin, our world is hurting, and people suffer and even die. Where have you seen hard or difficult things in your life?
 - (Parents, explain to your children that, because Jesus died and rose again, he destroyed the power of sin and death. Those who trust in him will rise again and live forever with Jesus, and he will end every bad thing, like hunger and sadness and darkness.)
- Matthew 28:8 says that the women felt “fear and great joy”—why do you think they felt those two things?
 - When have you felt these things?

Challenge: Go outside and look at the trees or the plants. Talk about how they look now and how you think they will look in the spring.

DEC
7

The Restoration

John 14:1-7

It's been about 2000 years since Jesus went back up to Heaven—but he is still at work! He's getting a place ready for us to come and live with him forever some day.

- What parts of Heaven are you looking forward to?
- What do you think Jesus means when he says he is the way there?

Challenge: This Saturday, help your family prepare the house for Christmas—and remember that Jesus is preparing a place for you!