



Advent

GC Guide

Introduction

We designed this guide to be flexible for your GC. You can simply read through it (like a script) during your time together or adapt it to fit the people in your group. However you decide to use it, here are a few things you might need to prepare beforehand:

Necessary

1. You will need a way to watch the first Advent video together.
2. You will need a copy of the [Jesus Story Book Bible](#).
3. You will need communion elements: bread and juice or wine.

Optional

1. You will need a way to play music if you choose to play the suggested songs. You could also print out or display the lyrics and sing the songs together.
2. You will need an [Advent wreath](#) and [candles](#) if you choose to do the wreath reading together. If no one in your GC has a wreath, you can purchase an inexpensive one by clicking the links.

Outline

- 1. Intro & Prayer**
- 2. Story: Get Ready!**
- 3. Advent Wreath**
- 4. Video & Discussion**
- 5. Psalm, Song
& Prayer**

1. Intro & Prayer

Each Sunday of Advent has a theme or a focus. This first Sunday's theme is hope. Hope does not just appear out of thin air. Hope is carried in the stories of history, our embrace of mystery and an imagination that sees the future as livable today.

What took place in the peasant village of Bethlehem began ages before in the family of Abraham. They knew part of their future would be to bring blessing to the entire world. Sadly, they were overcome by the world around them and the love of the world within them.

This family grew into a nation who met their first shepherd king in that same village. They hoped he would be the kind of king who could lead them to fulfill their promised potential. But this king fell into similar traps as those who came before. Yet, hope did not dissipate in the face of national collapse and cultural compromise.

These people of promise began to imagine a day in which the One and Final king would restore their history and fulfill their future, for their sake and the world's.

Listen to how the prophet Isaiah sings of this anticipated hope in his prophetic poem:

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor and afflicted; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor...to comfort all who mourn; to grant to those who mourn in Zion—to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may display his beauty. They shall build up ancient ruins; they shall raise up former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations...

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations. (Isaiah 61:1-4, 10-11)

Pray together: Lord, bless this time of remembrance of your promises and faithfulness. Help us to recognize the story Jesus enters into and the one that he is continuing to unfold among us and around the world. Let your Spirit fill us with hope!

2. Story: Get Ready!

Gather the children in your GC and have someone read the story “Get Ready!” from the Jesus Story Book Bible found on pages 170-175. Then ask the children (and the adults!) the following questions:

- What is something big you’ve had to wait for? (For example: Your birthday, a day with grandparents, trip to Disneyworld, etc.)
- What did you feel when you thought about that day? (Excited, nervous, etc.) Did you do anything to get ready for that day? (Pack, plan, etc.)
- How do you think you would feel if you knew the day was coming, but you did not know how long you would have to wait? Would you be any less excited? Would you do anything differently?
- How would you make sure you did not forget that the special day was going to actually get here?

One thing God’s family has done to not forget and lose hope for the special day Jesus will come back is light the candles of an Advent Wreath!

3. Advent Wreath

With the wreath and candles laid out like the picture, have someone light the first purple candle and read the following:*



Many Christians throughout history and around the world, when there are only four Sundays until Christmas, begin to remind each other of the special day of Jesus' birth and the day of his return. These days are called Advent.

And, on each Sunday, we light a candle to remind us that the light of the world, which is Jesus, though he started out as small as a baby in a manger so long ago, will one day, fill the whole earth with light, overcoming all darkness, sin, pain, and death.

So, today, we light the first candle – the candle of hope – remembering the hope we can have that what God has done already he will do again.

4. Video & Discussion

Have two people read the following Scripture to get some context for the video:

- Genesis 38:6-26
- Matthew 1:1-3, 18-21

Watch the [video](#) together and then discuss these questions for 10-20 minutes:

1. When you think of Jesus changing the world, what do you picture?
2. Hope is carried in remembering history (like the life of Jesus) and imagining a future (like new heavens and new earth) as possible. What does hoping in Jesus' return look like for us as a GC? What might it look like to grow our hope in Jesus as a GC?
3. When, this year, did you choose to live in Jesus' kingdom with compassion and courage? When did you choose to live in your own kingdom of strict justice or self-pity?

5. Psalm & Prayer

Close out your time by passing out the communion elements and having someone read Psalm 42.

As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been food day and night, while they say to me all the day long, 'Where is your God?' These things I remember as I pour out my soul: how I would go with the throng and lead them in procession to the house of God with glad shouts and songs of praise, a multitude keeping festival.

Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.

My soul is cast down within me, there I remember you from the land of Jordan and of Hermon, from Mount Mizar. Deep calls to deep at the roar of your waterfalls; all your breakers and your waves have gone over me. By day the LORD commands his steadfast love, and at night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life.

I say to God, my rock: 'Why have you forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?' As with a deadly wound in my bones, my adversaries taunt me, while they say to me all the day long, 'Where is your God?'

Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.

Give thanks for the hope you have in Jesus' birth, death and life again; sharing in communion together. Play or sing with the song *O Come, O Come Emmanuel* on the [Advent Playlist](#).

O come, O come, Emmanuel And ransom captive Israel that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appears.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free thine own from Satan's tyranny from depths of Hell thy people save and give them victory o'er the grave.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Day-Spring, come and cheer our spirits by thine advent here Disperse the gloomy clouds of night and death's dark shadows put to flight.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Then end your time with this prayer:

Renew in us this day, O Lord, the hope of the new heaven and earth in which you will reign in light, in full view for all to see, and we will live in peace; meanwhile, may your kingdom come and your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven; through Jesus Christ our now and coming King. Amen.