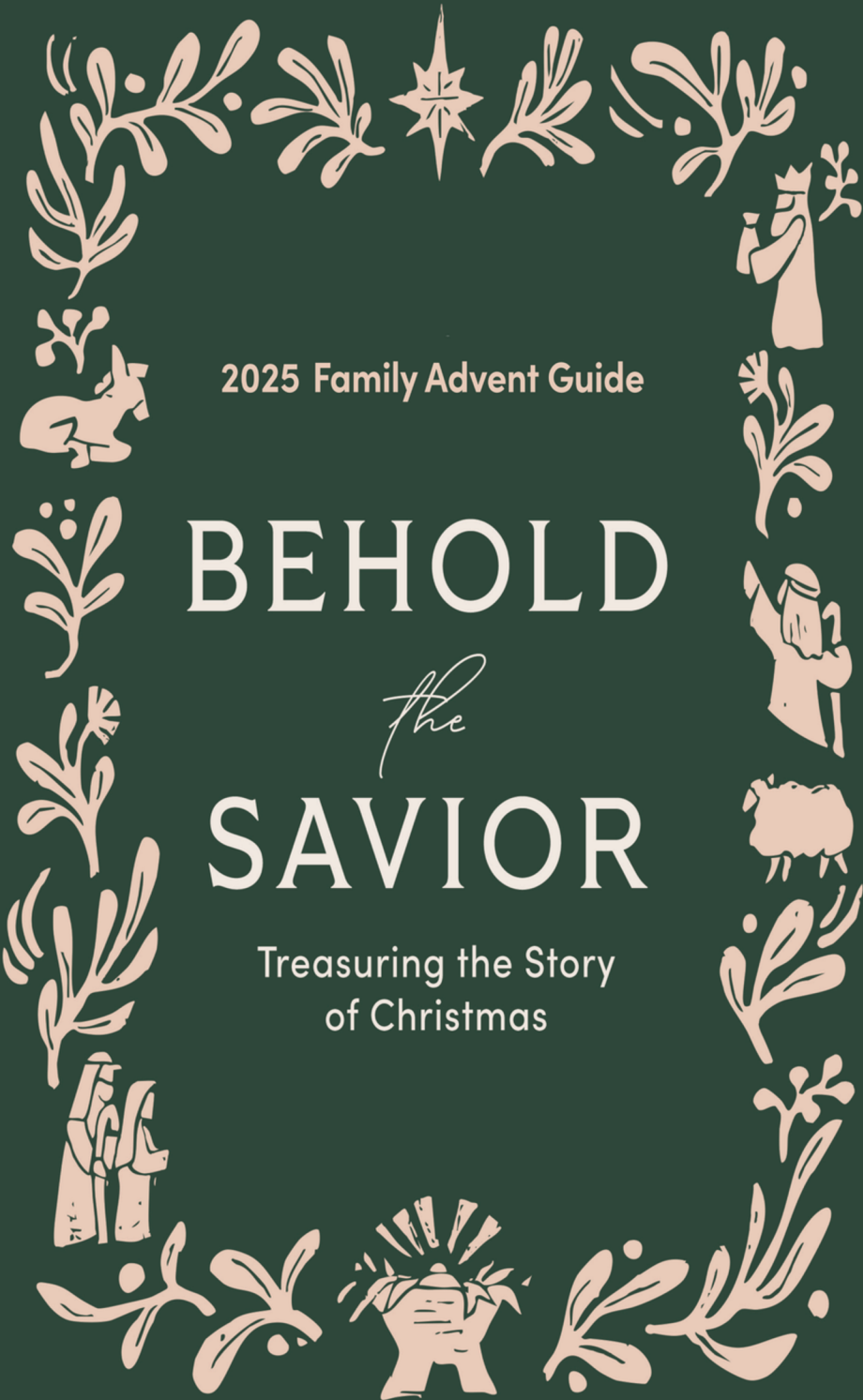




2025 Family Advent Guide

BEHOLD *the* SAVIOR

Treasuring the Story
of Christmas

BEHOLD THE SAVIOR

The *Behold the Savior Family Devotional Guide* is based on the 4-session *Behold the Savior* Bible study books for women and for men available for purchase just in time to welcome the season. You'll spend the weeks of Advent reading and studying the first two chapters of Luke verse by verse. In doing so, you'll have the opportunity to behold and treasure the good news of great joy for all people.



Learn more about the
Behold the Savior Bible study books
at lifeway.com/beholdthesavior

To prepare your families' hearts this holiday season, spend four weeks reading in Scripture the true, captivating story of the first Advent of the Savior. Over the next four weeks, families will walk through the Gospel of Luke and read about Jesus' first Advent and His promise to come again. Families will make memories as they spend time reading God's Word, praying, and even getting crafty together. With this family devotional guide, we've made it easy for you to bring your family along with you on this Bible study journey. As Christmas approaches, kids will also get to see how the birth of Jesus is a great joy for all people.

HOW TO USE

Spending time as a family reading about the first Advent will be a highlight for everyone. Before the Bible study journey begins, check out the "DO IT" section for supplies you may need to gather. For each week of the study, we've highlighted a key Bible passage of the Christmas story from the Gospel of Luke. Read that passage aloud or assign the passage to the older kids to read each week. Begin each week with "ASK IT", "READ IT", and "TALK ABOUT IT." After you've talked, prayed, and read the Bible together, spend some time worshipping, singing Christmas hymns together. As Christmas approaches, kids of all ages will get to see how the birth of Jesus is a great joy for all people.

Heralds of Christ



GATHER IT:

- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Construction paper or cardstock
- ☐ Crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- ☐ Store-bought Christmas cookies or the ingredients to make homemade cookies

ASK IT: Is it harder to wait a long time to open Christmas presents or to wait a long time to eat Christmas cookies?

READ IT: Open your Bibles and summarize or read Luke 1:1-25, 57-66—the story of Zechariah, Elizabeth, and John.

When the right time came, God began to fulfill His promise to send the Messiah. But before Jesus came, God sent a special messenger to prepare the way. A herald is someone who brings an important message, and that is what John, Zechariah and Elizabeth's son, would be. He would grow up to be a prophet who told people the Savior was coming.

Throughout the years, Zechariah and Elizabeth continued to be obedient to God. The angel Gabriel appeared to Zechariah and told him that God had heard his prayers. God had not forgotten them. Look back in Luke 1 to see how Zechariah and Elizabeth trusted God and waited patiently for His perfect timing to answer their prayers



Heralds of Christ



TALK ABOUT IT: Even though Zechariah and Elizabeth waited many years for a child, God was working behind the scenes to prepare the way for Jesus' birth. He sent a messenger to announce the good news and fulfilled every promise He made. In His perfect timing, even in their old age, Zechariah and Elizabeth were blessed with a son—John, who would prepare the way for the Lord.

Can you think of a time when you had to wait for something important? Reflect on how we can remain faithful and obedient to God each day, even when we don't immediately see His hand at work or hear His voice?

Younger Kids: How does it feel to wait on something? How do you feel when what you're waiting for finally happens? God keeps His promises, and He promises good for those who follow Him!

Older Kids: We saw how Zechariah, Elizabeth, and then John prepared the way for Jesus to be born. How can we help prepare the way for Jesus' second coming? What do we need to do while we wait? How does the truth that God keeps His promises encourage you?

Teens: What can you learn about who God is from these verses? How does that change the way you pray? How does it change your attitude toward waiting? How does the truth that God keeps His promises encourage you?

DO IT:

Like John, we are called to herald the good news about Jesus to those around us. Talk about ways you might do that together as a family. Here is an idea to get you started:

Make cards, writing a note about the good news of great joy for all people inside—that Jesus was born for us to have life! Add the card to some Christmas cookies you bake as a family or pick up from the bakery. Share your cards and cookies with a neighbor or the firefighters at a local fire station. Contact your church office and ask for a suggestion of a homebound member that your family could deliver your cards and cookies to. There are many people around us who need to be reminded of the good news of Jesus Christ.

PRAY:

Thank You, God, for Your perfect timing. Help us to obey You while we wait.



Family of God



GATHER IT:

- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Groceries, a meal, or a gift card
- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Pencils or pens

ASK IT: What kind of facial expression would you have if an angel of the Lord appeared before your family?

READ IT: Open your Bibles and summarize or read Luke 1:26-56, 67-80—the angel appears to Mary.

TALK ABOUT IT: When Elizabeth was pregnant, her cousin Mary also received a visit from an angel of the Lord. The angel told Mary she had been chosen to give birth to a special child. Mary praised God for the things He had done for His people (see verses 46-55). Compare Mary's praise to Zechariah's prophecy in verses 67-79. Both Mary and Zechariah praised God for His goodness and keeping His promise to the people of Israel. They were thankful for the role God allowed them to play in His rescue plan. Mary and Zechariah both shared the good news: God was sending Jesus to save the world!

Younger Kids: Take a look out the window. What do you see? Trees, clouds, birds, sunshine? Now, just like Mary sang a song to praise God, make your own song about the things you see that God made. Sing to God and thank Him for all the amazing things He created.

Older Kids: What has God done for you or for our family? Write out a prayer together, like Mary did, to thank Him.

Teens: How have you seen God at work in your life or in the lives of your friends or family? What does it tell you about God that He works through people like us to carry out His plan? How does that encourage you? Write it in your Bible, in Luke chapter 1, as a reminder of how God has worked in your life.





Family of God



DO IT:

This week we read about Jesus' earthly family—His cousins, mother, father, and extended family. Because of Jesus, we have the opportunity to be a part of a much larger family—the family of God! This week, consider sharing the joy of Jesus' birth with your church family.

Invite your kids to think about people in your church who may be lonely or need extra help during this season. Contact your church and ask about widows or widowers. Reach out to them to see if you can help by bringing a meal, groceries, or a gift card.

Have a karaoke contest! Each member of the family can write their own song of praise, just like Mary did in the Bible! Then choose your favorite worship or upbeat song and sing your new lyrics to that tune. Celebrate each person's creativity, and thank God through music!

Take your family on a drive to look at Christmas lights. As you drive, pray for the people in the homes you pass.

Pray for your family, your church, and for people who don't know Jesus. Ask God to help your family share the good news of Jesus with them this Christmas.

PRAY:

God, thank You for everything You have done and continue to do for us. Thank You for our church family. Help us be bright lights pointing others to You.

Good News for All



GATHER IT:

- ☐ Bible
- ☐ 2 cups flour, plus extra to dust surface
- ☐ ½ cup butter
- ☐ 1 tablespoon cream
- ☐ 1 heaping cup of sugar
- ☐ Needed cooking supplies
- ☐ 1 well-beaten egg

ASK IT: Would you rather sleep in a stable with animals or camp outside under the stars?

READ IT: Open your Bibles and summarize or read Luke 2:1-20—Jesus is born, and the shepherds visit.

TALK ABOUT IT: Jesus wasn't born to rich people in a palace or even in a comfortable room. He was laid in a manger, a feeding trough for animals. God gave Jesus this common birth, so even the poorest people ... such as the shepherds, could see that He came to bring salvation to everyone. Jesus' birth was "good news of great joy" for the shepherds and is still good news for us today. (See Luke 2:10.) Explain that Jesus' birthday is the most important birthday in history. Jesus, the Savior of the world, had been born! Remind kids that this is good news for everyone because Jesus came to rescue us from sin and bring us into a relationship with God. Today, we get to celebrate His birth and share this amazing news with others. Just like the shepherds ran to tell what they had seen, we are also called to go and tell others all about Him!

Younger Kids: What did the shepherds see and hear? How do you think the shepherds felt after seeing the angels? This week, who is someone you can tell about what the shepherds saw and heard?

Older Kids: If you were one of the shepherds, what would you have done after seeing Jesus? How can we be like shepherds and share the good news about Jesus in our everyday lives?

Teens: The shepherds recognized and celebrated God's message to them. What distractions in your life might keep you from recognizing God's message? What part of the Christmas story has the biggest impact on you personally and why?

WEEK

3

Good News for All



DO IT:

Lottie Moon was a missionary in China. Lottie turned baking Christmas cookies into a way to reach kids and their moms in her community. Through Christmas cookies, Lottie was able to share the good news about Jesus. Consider using the recipe below to bake cookies and reach out to the families around you this week.

INGREDIENTS:

- ☐ ½ cup butter
- ☐ 1 heaping cup of sugar
- ☐ 1 well-beaten egg
- ☐ 2 cups flour, plus extra to dust surface
- ☐ 1 tablespoon cream

BAKING INSTRUCTIONS:

- Cream the butter and sugar together in a large bowl.
- Add the egg and mix well until fully combined.
- Add the flour and cream to the mixture and stir until the dough forms.
- Lightly dust a clean surface with flour.
- Roll out the dough very thinly.
- Cut out cookies using a round cookie cutter.
- Place cookies on a buttered or nonstick cookie sheet, spacing them slightly apart.
- Bake at 475° Fahrenheit for about 5 minutes or until the edges just begin to turn golden.
- Let cool slightly before removing from the tray.

PRAY:

God, thank You for sending Jesus for us! Help us to go and tell others about You.



For more information on other missionaries to pray for, visit imb.org/pray.



Treasuring the Savior



GATHER IT:

- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Mason jar
- ☐ Index cards or small slips of paper
- ☐ Pens
- ☐ Label or tag that says:
We Treasure Jesus

ASK IT: Would you rather see Jesus as a baby in the temple or talk to 12-year-old Jesus in the temple?

READ IT: Open your Bible and summarize or read Luke 2:21-52—Jesus in the temple.

TALK ABOUT IT: Simeon and Anna were obedient to God and loved Him dearly. Even when Jesus was very young, it was clear to them that He was the Savior the Jewish people had been waiting and hoping for. They faithfully worshiped and waited in the temple, trusting God's promises even if they had to wait a long time. Joseph and Mary followed God's instructions by taking Jesus to the temple to be dedicated and to offer the proper sacrifices.

This reminds us why going to church matters. At church we worship God, pray, read the Bible, and spend time with other believers who help us grow in our faith. Church is a place where we can learn about God, serve others, and be reminded of His love.

Younger Kids: What do you do when we go to church? What is your favorite thing about going to church? Do you have a teacher that you really like?

Older Kids: Why is it important to go to church regularly? Name a teacher that has helped you grow in your faith. How can we serve at church as a family?

Teens: In what ways does the faithfulness of Mary, Joseph, Anna, and Simeon challenge and encourage you? Name a teacher that encourages you to serve at church.



Treasuring the Savior



DO IT:

“Treasure Jesus” Jar

Throughout the next year, write a note on an index card or slip of paper each time a prayer is answered, a family member learns a new verse, a family member serves someone in His name, or the family serves together at church. Drop the note into a mason jar. At the end of the year, empty the jar and read the slips together. Celebrate all the ways your family treasured Jesus throughout the year!



PRAY:

*God, thank You for the Christmas story! Thank You for our church.
Help us to treasure You all year long.*

Behold the Savior



ASK IT: What is your favorite Christmas gift you ever received? (Parents don't forget to share too.)

READ IT: Luke 2:8-11 and Luke 2:16-20

TALK ABOUT IT: It's Christmas Day!

Angels of the Lord appeared to the shepherds and announced the good news of great joy: Jesus had been born! The shepherds hurried to find Jesus and then shared the message the angels had given them. Meanwhile, Mary treasured these things in her heart and reflected on all that God was doing.

As your family celebrates the birth of Jesus through your meaningful traditions, take a moment to pause and thank God for the greatest gift of all—His Son, Jesus.

God sent Jesus as part of His rescue plan to save us from our sin. Remind your children that everyone sins—we all fall short (Romans 3:23). But even in our sin, God still loves us deeply.

Ask your family: "What do you think the punishment should be when we sin?"

Then, gently remind them that Jesus came to earth knowing He would one day die on the cross to take the punishment we deserve. That's how much He loves us.

Today, celebrate not only His birth—but the reason He came. Jesus is our Savior!



Behold the Savior



FAMILY REFLECTION AND PRAYER: As a family, take time to reflect on the past year. Have each person share something he is thankful for or a way she saw God work in her life this year.

Then, invite everyone to share one prayer request or hope they have for the year ahead.

Before you pray together, take a quiet moment to listen and be sensitive to how the Holy Spirit may be working in your family. Ask if anyone has questions about accepting God's free gift of forgiveness or what it means to make Jesus your Savior. Be ready to have a gentle and honest conversation if a child expresses curiosity or interest.

Let this time be a meaningful moment of gratitude, hope, and openness to the gospel.



PRAY:

God, thank You for sending Jesus. Thank You for the ways You've been faithful to our family this past year. We are grateful for Your love, grace, and mercy in every season. As we look ahead to a new year, help us to trust You more, follow You closely, and love others like You love us.

If anyone in our family is ready to take a step toward You, give him the courage to ask questions and open his heart. We know that Your gift of salvation is the best gift of all. Thank You for Jesus, our Savior. Amen.



**Purchase *Behold the Savior*
Bible study books for women and
for men and behold Jesus as a
family all season!**

- ✦ Enjoy four weeks of personal study and guided reflection to prepare your heart and mind for Christmas.
- ✦ Study Luke 1–2 verse by verse.
- ✦ Experience community and fellowship through group activities and discussion guides.
- ✦ Be reminded of the beautiful truths nestled in the Christmas story.
- ✦ Celebrate the first Advent of a Savior for all people as you anticipate His return.

**Order your copy of
Behold the Savior Bible study at
lifeway.com/beholdthesavior.**

