

Christmas Morning with Your Family

Before the gifts, gather everyone together and read **Luke 2:4-19** along with the devotion found below. Add any thoughts you might have, then close in prayer. Many families have made this time a Christmas morning tradition which helps remind everyone what this day is truly about.



Luke 2: 4-19 (NIV)

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them,

“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. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

*“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”*

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

Devotion

Christmas Day is here! Our journey through Advent together has come to an end. The expectation is finally culminating and the whirlwind of the Season is coming to a close. Perhaps you’re about to open Christmas presents. Perhaps you’ve already torn into the brightly colored packages, taken it all in and someone has inevitably uttered the question, “Is that all?” Maybe someone uttered the familiar, “Now if you don’t like it, I have the receipt!” Or my favorite from *The Christmas Story*, “Didn’t I get a tie this year?” Someone will eventually grab a garbage bag and start picking up the wrapping paper. Someone will collect and sort the ribbon and bows to be saved and just like that, Christmas is

over. All the anticipation that has been building up for the last month is finally exhausted, we take a deep breath and maybe, just maybe, we relax just a little. Advent is complete. Christ has come.

As we reflect on our journey, we find something very interesting in our passage from the Gospel of Luke. It contains something that might be easily overlooked, but in many ways contains the very essence of what Advent is all about. As we read the familiar story of the birth of Jesus Christ, we come to a small detour. For 18 verses we read Luke's eloquent account with the emphasis being almost solely on the birth of a baby. And then suddenly, almost completely out of place, we get a glimpse of mom's perspective. Just a brief snapshot in verse 19, and then back to the "story" in verse 20: *"Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart."* Despite the magnitude of what was going on, and how the world was about to change, Mary took a few moments in time, paused and reflected on the moment. Imagine what she might have said. *"Joseph, I love you so much, but just give me a few seconds to take all this in. I want to remember every detail. I want to treasure this moment forever."*

Yes, Christmas is here. Advent has come to a close. But before we start making plans to take down the tree and clean the house up for New Years Eve, let's commit to one another to take some time this day and just rest and reflect. Let us look back over the last month and meditate on the journey we've taken together. Let us remember the *hope* that we have in God; the *hope* that came to fruition and was revealed in His Son, Jesus Christ. Let us cling to the *joy* that each of us have in the salvation He so freely gives and the eternal life that we possess through our faith in Him. Let us rest in the *love* that God revealed in the birth of His Son; the same love that would lead him to the cross 33 years later. And let us rest; rest in the *peace* that comes from knowing that we are not alone in this world. We believe in a God that is not far off. He's not distant or difficult to access. He shares in our laughter, rejoices in our victories and mourns in our losses. God is here. Let us rejoice! Emmanuel, God with us!

Closing Prayer

Lord, Prince of Peace, Savior of the World, You have come as You promised. As we celebrate today, let us take time to reflect on what this journey has meant to each of us. Let us just for a moment, hold this time in our hearts and remember Your great love for us; a love so great that You sent Your only Son into this world to live among us. Today we rejoice in You, we thank You and we sing with hearts of praise: Emmanuel, God with us.

Amen

Benediction

Let us go about our day looking forward with hope, reflecting in joy, acting in love and encouraging peace. May the peace of Jesus Christ be with each and every one of us.

Amen