

PREPARE HIM ROOM

An Advent Tradition with Food for the Hungry

Weekly Resources to Help
Your Family Celebrate



**FOOD FOR
THE HUNGRY**



Introduction

Christmas is up there on everyone's list of favorite holidays. The whole season is special. It welcomes love, sharing, family and giving, but sometimes we can get caught up. Sometimes we can start to feel the pressure to overspend, overcommit and lose the entire reason we celebrate Christmas all together. It can happen to any of us unless we're intentional with our time and the space in our hearts.

We want to help! In celebration of the Advent season and the deep joy that comes with celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ, we've created this eBook to help you celebrate Christmas with your family in a way that goes deeper than bright lights and fancy presents.

This eBook gives you great resources that you can share with your family to invite dialogue and conversation around the good news of our Savior Jesus Christ each week leading up to Christmas. You'll find weekly themes, messages, scripture readings and projects that help you reflect on the season in a tangible way

As you begin thinking about how you'll celebrate the season with your family, we hope you'll consider making Food for the Hungry a part of your traditions. We can't wait to see how you'll be blessed through this project! Merry Christmas!

WEEK ONE



HOPE

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people."

Luke 2:10

We're reflecting on the joy of good news and how fear can be caused by confusion! When an angel of the Lord visited the shepherds, they were in the field tending to their flock like they would have done many other times before. This was different. They were shocked beyond belief at what they were seeing. The angel had to remind them not to be afraid because she was bringing them good news and was not there to harm them.

Sometimes fear can be an immediate reaction to something we don't understand. Think about a time that you were scared. Were you frightened because you were confused by someone or by a situation? Did your fear go away or maybe even manifest into excitement or joy when you came to understand? How can you seek to understand what you're afraid of? How can eliminating confusion allow you to experience a greater joy that God has for you?



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ACTIVITY

In our reflection about seeking to understand others, we're sharing some beautiful marble stationary that you can use to let others know that you're thinking of them.

Cost: About \$15

Time: About an hour

Difficulty Level: Easy

Here's what you'll need:

- A can of plain white shaving cream
- A tin pan or tray
- Food coloring in your choice of colors (red and green were used in this project)
- Painter's tape
- A spatula
- A ruler
- Paper towels or an old bath towel
- Cardstock and envelopes



Here's what to do:

Step One: Fill your tin tray with the shaving cream

Step Two: Drop in the first color of food coloring into the shaving cream evenly around the pan.

Step Three: Use the spatula to fold the food coloring. Be sure not to over mix. Repeat steps two and three with the second color.

Step Four: Tape the edges of the paper that you don't want to be colored. Ideally, you'd tape off the parts of the envelope that are needed to seal the letter closed.

Step Five: Firmly press the paper straight down into the shaving cream mix. Gently pull up the paper from one of the corners. Firmly run the ruler down the entire paper scraping off the excess shaving cream. Use the towels to clean the edges and extra that is sure to be on your hands.

Step Six: Repeat step five until all your papers are complete. Remember there are no mistakes. Each time yields a different pattern!

Step Seven: Allow the papers to dry and then place under heavy books to flatten out.

Step Eight: Use the cards and envelopes to mail some thoughtful Christmas greetings to those you love.





PEACE

*Do not be afraid,
Mary, for you have
found favor with
God. 31 And
behold, you will
conceive in your
womb and bear a
son, and you shall
call his name Jesus.
Luke 1:30*

We're reflecting on the angel's visit to Mary to inform her about her coming child. Since Mary knew that she was a virgin, she was of course confused, but the angel assured her that The Holy Spirit of the Lord would create the child in her womb. We can only imagine how terrifying this message would be as Mary knew what societal repercussions would come from her being an unwed mother and yet she was full of faith.

Sometimes God asks us to have faith in his plan. Even though Mary was afraid, she believed so much in the Lord's plan for her life that she responded with words of praise and servitude. Has there ever been a time when God asked you to do something that seemed so impossible? Did he ask you to move or quit your job? Did he ask you to end a relationship? Were you able to move forward in faith? How did that work out and were you able to see God's faithfulness afterwards? How can we be intentional about following God's plan for our lives this Christmas and into the New Year? How will our submission impact the lives of others as well as ours?



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ACTIVITY

In our reflection about the angel visiting Mary, we're going to create a clay angel ornament for you to hang in your home or on your tree.

Cost: About \$10

Time: About an hour

Difficulty Level: Easy

Here's what you'll need:

- Polymer moldable clay
- Rolling pin
- Angel cookie cutter
- Star cookie cutter
- Straw
- Twine
- Ribbon
- Hot glue gun

Here's what to do:

Step One: Using the rolling pin, flatten the clay until you have a good smooth surface that's about $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch thick.

Step Two: Using the cookie cutters, cut out 1 angel and 3 stars. Using the straw, cut a small hole in the tops of each piece.

Step Three: Bake the pieces according to package directions

Step Four: Once the pieces are cooled, use the ribbon or twine to create a loop at the top of the angel for hanging. Cut additional pieces of twine at 3 various lengths and loop each one through a star and knot in the front.

Step Five: Hot glue the opposite ends to the back of the angel and allow them to dry.



WEEKTHREE



JOY

*She wrapped him
in cloths and
placed him in a
manger, because
there was no guest
room available for
them.*

Luke 2:7

We're continuing our reflection on God's love for people at every end of the world. At Food for the Hungry, we're honored to work with and serve the people of Latin America. We so inspired by their culture that we wanted to share some of the meaningful ways that they celebrate Christmas. We hope that they will inspire you and remind you that God's people are all over the globe can celebrate with one another across all the continents.

In Guatemala, Christmas is a time where family and friends gather. Families decorate their home with many colorful lights and a Christmas tree. On December 24th, all families stay awake until midnight to celebrate the early hours of Christmas Day with firecrackers and fireworks. Then they have a family dinner, which typically includes tamales, stuffed turkey or baked pork leg, and punch. They end with an exchange of gifts.

How does the Christmas celebrations of Latin America and specifically the Guatemalan people resemble your own family's celebrations? How do they differ? How can we use the cultures of other parts of the world to teach our children that God loves all his people? How can understanding and appreciating the customs of Latin America lead us to be more Christ-like this Christmas?



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ACTIVITY

In our reflection about God's children in Latin America, we're going to make some Ponche, which is a Christmas punch that is often served in Guatemalan homes as a part of their celebrations.

Cost: About \$20

Time: About an hour

Difficulty Level: Expert

Here's what you'll need:

- 2 1/2 to 3 quarts water
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 10 tejocotes, left whole
- 6 guavas, peeled, seeded and chopped
- 2 apples, peeled, cored and cut into bite-size pieces
- 2 four-inch pieces of sugar cane, peeled and cut into thin strips
- 1/2 cup pitted prunes, halved lengthwise
- 1/2 cup dark raisins
- 5 long tamarind pods, peeled and seeded, or three tablespoons of tamarind pulp without seeds
- One piloncillo cone or dark brown sugar

Here's what to do:

Step One: Bring water and cinnamon sticks to a boil in a large pot. Add the tejocotes and lower the flame. Cook over a slow, rolling boil until the tejocotes are soft, about five minutes.

Step Two: Remove the fruit from the pot; let cool and then peel the skin off. Cut the tejocotes in half, and remove the seeds.

Step Three: Place the tejocotes back into the pot of cinnamon-water and add the remaining ingredients. Stir and let simmer for at least 30 minutes.

Step Four: To serve, remove the cinnamon sticks and ladle directly into mugs, making sure to include the chunks of cooked fruit.



WEEKFOUR



LOVE

And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

Luke 2:16

We're reflecting on the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The one simple verse (Luke 2:16) that we're looking at today has so much meaning and truth packed into such few words. We're given such a profound picture of a mother giving birth to her firstborn son. Having never birthed a child before, Mary was left on her own to figure out how to do it. Many women are accompanied by a midwife, a nurse, or a doctor while delivering, but Mary was only with Joseph. She wrapped him in cloths as is a standard practice of a new baby, but placing him in a manger wasn't so. It was obvious that Mary didn't have access to a crib or other appropriate bed for her new baby, so the manger it was. This manger is now a huge symbol of Jesus in the flesh and his coming to Earth as a helpless baby in the poorest of conditions. There wasn't room for them at the inn and so they were left outside. These words should humble us in every way.

How does the birth of Jesus seem contradictory to the birth we'd expect of a King? How does his birth perfectly foreshadow his life on Earth and the humble path he walked for our sake? What does this teach us about our own position, expectations, and materialism this Christmas? How can we be reminded of the King who became nothing for our sake?



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ACTIVITY

In our reflection about Jesus as the living word of God, we're creating a very special wreath with scriptures from the Bible.

Cost: About \$20

Time: About two hours

Difficulty Level: Intermediate

Here's what you'll need:

- A foam wreath
- Wide ribbon of your choice
- Two colors of green scrapbook paper
- One piece of red scrapbook paper
- Scripture printouts of the birth story [Download Birth Story](#)
- Hot glue
- Scissors



Here's what to do:

Step One: Use the scissors to cut the scripture printouts into one style of leaf. The amount you'll need will depend on the size of wreath you'd like to create.

Step Two: Cut two different types of leaves from the two shades of green paper. Cut berries from the red paper.

Step Three: Using the hot glue, wrap the entire foam wreath in the wide ribbon. Be sure to glue the ribbon down every few inches or so.

Step Four: Begin by gluing down 3 of the scripture leaves to the wreath and then with a slight overlap, glue down 3 of the first shade of green leaf. Repeat with the second shade of green leaf.

Step Five: Repeat step 4 until the entire wreath is covered.

Step Six: Tuck in and glue a few of the berries in various places to your liking.

Step Seven: If you like, use the remaining leaves to create a flower embellishment starting with the scripture leaves and working your way inward with the green leaves. Attach a few pieces of the remaining ribbon to the back and attach to the corner of the wreath.



CHRISTMAS



LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

John 8:12

When God's people were anticipating the arrival of Jesus, they had great expectations. They knew that Jesus would be the one to save them so they could one day live forever with God and bathed in his eternal light. There were many titles placed on him before He was born—such as Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6). God's people were living in hard times and heavily relied on the promises of the prophets about the coming Messiah.

Think about a time when you were in a desperate or hard situation and how tightly you would cling to the promise of someone to come and remove all your suffering. While we know that Jesus doesn't work like a magician, His promises are true, and we can stand in the freedom of knowing that the God of the universe loves us.

What does it feel like to live in darkness? Imagine how you feel at night when all the lights are off, and imagine you couldn't turn the lights on to see. How would you move about your home? Would you see the world differently if it were always dark? If you also had a promise of light to come and guide you, how would that change how you live? Would it give you hope? How does the presence of light change everything in a dark place? Even a little light can change how we interact with darkness. Jesus is the promised light.



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