



HOPE IS BORN

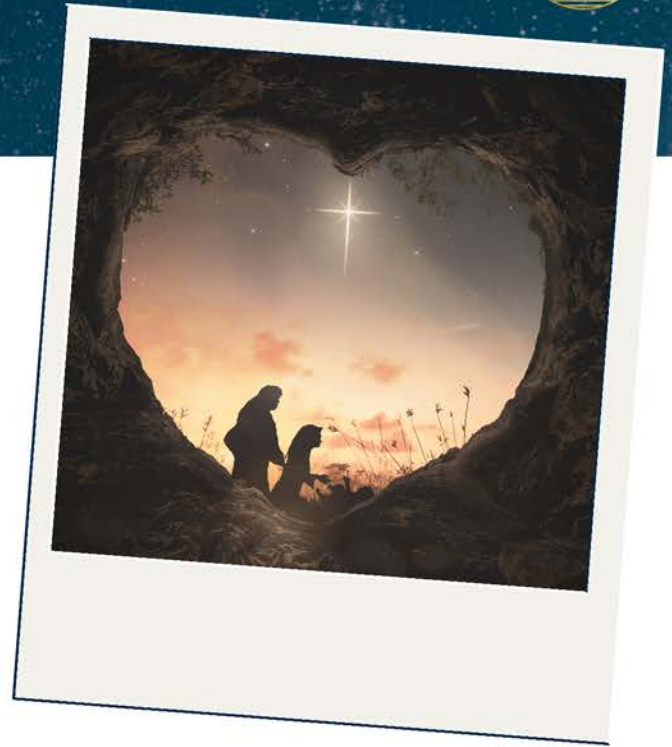
**A Devotional
Advent Guide**
FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY





What is Advent?

Traditionally, Advent is a four-week season on the Christian calendar dedicated to preparing our hearts for Christmas Day and the celebration of the birth of Jesus! Advent means “coming.” Similar to those who awaited the arrival of the Messiah over 2,000 years ago, in this Advent season we await the celebration of Jesus' birth and anticipate His coming again one day. The Advent Season is a wonderful time to intentionally connect with your family.



How to use this guide:

Each week provides a focus Bible passage to read, a discussion guide & questions for each domain, a prayer and an activity. Use the calendar on the next page to intentionally plan your rhythm.

1. Find Your Rhythm

ONCE A WEEK

Find the best time that works for you/your family. Ex: Maybe you listen to the Bible passages during drive time & discuss at meal time.



MORNING TIME



MEAL TIME



DRIVE TIME



BED TIME

STARTING DECEMBER 1ST

2. Follow The Steps



STEP 1 - READ THE PASSAGE



STEP 2 - TALK ABOUT IT



STEP 3 - PRAY



STEP 4 - ACTIVITY

The discussion time for this Advent guide includes looking through four domains of the Christian life. These domains are a great way to build intentional discipleship in your home. Read about the domains on the next page before you begin your Advent journey.

Domains of the Christian Life



LIFE BEYOND

THE GO BEYOND DOMAIN

WE **GO!** WE WANT TO FOLLOW JESUS' EXAMPLE OF MOVING IN THE DIRECTION OF PEOPLE IN NEED.



LIFE TOGETHER

THE GATHER DOMAIN

WE MAKE **GATHERING** WITH OTHER BELIEVERS A PRIORITY FOR OUR FAMILY AS WE SHARPEN, EQUIP, LOVE, AND SERVE ONE ANOTHER.

LIFE IN CHRIST

THE HEART DOMAIN

THROUGH DEVOTION TO PRAYER AND THE STUDY OF SCRIPTURE, WE **REST** IN THE TRUTH OF GOD'S LOVE.



LIFE AT HOME

THE HOME DOMAIN

WE **BLESS** OUR FAMILY BY ASCRIBING GOD'S PROMISE OF UNCONDITIONAL LOVE AND ACCEPTANCE TO THEM.

About the Domains:

There are endless ways to use this discipleship guide but the hope is that you would use it to continue to seek true fulfillment in Jesus Christ, starting in your own heart and home this Christmas season. The guide can be used individually or with your family to spark gospel centered family discipleship.

The four domains of the Christian life are designed to help believers experience true fulfillment in Jesus Christ. We "START WITH THE HEART" - our personal relationship with Jesus. If we are experiencing true fulfillment in our heart domain we see the habit of RESTING in the truth of God's love. Next, the Home Domain reflects true fulfillment in Jesus through BLESSING those in our home and family. Then, if we are experiencing true fulfillment in Jesus in the Gather Domain, we prioritize GATHERING with a community of believers. Lastly, the Go Beyond Domain expresses true fulfillment in Jesus through the GOING OUT and sharing His love with others. The focus of the next four weeks will be to examine the Hope of Advent through the domains of our lives.

DECEMBER



Sun **Mon** **Tue** **Wed** **Thu** **Fri** **Sat**

week 1 1	2	3	4	5	6	7
week 2 8	9	10	11	12	13	14
week 3 15	16	17	18	19	20	21
week 4 22	23	24	25 	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Week 1: Hope for the Lonely



STEP 1: READ THE BIBLE PASSAGES

UNDERLINE WORDS YOU DON'T KNOW & HIGHLIGHT WHAT STANDS OUT

Matthew 1:18-25

18 The birth of Jesus Christ came about this way: After his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, it was discovered before they came together that she was pregnant from the Holy Spirit. 19 So her husband, Joseph, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her publicly, decided to divorce her secretly. 20 But after he had considered these things, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, **don’t be afraid to take Mary as your wife**, because what has been conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” 22 Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 23 See, the virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they will name him Immanuel, which is translated “God is with us.” 24 When Joseph woke up, he did as the Lord’s angel had commanded him. He married her 25 but did not have sexual relations with her until she gave birth to a son. And he named him Jesus.

© Christian Standard Bible (Westville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020), MT 1:18-25

Luke 1:28-38

26 In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, 27 to a virgin engaged, to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. 28 And the angel came to her and said, “Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you.” 29 But she was deeply troubled by this statement, wondering what kind of greeting this could be. 30 Then the angel told her, “**Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.** 31 Now listen: You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. 33 He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will have no end.” 34 Mary asked the angel, “How can this be, since I have not had sexual relations with a man?” 35 The angel replied to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. 36 And consider your relative Elizabeth—even she has conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called childless. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God.” 38 “See, I am the Lord’s servant,” said Mary. “May it happen to me as you have said.” Then the angel left her.

© Christian Standard Bible (Westville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020), LK 1:28-38



STEP 2: TALK ABOUT IT

BE SURE EVERYONE HAS A CHANCE TO SHARE



heart

Mary & Joseph both heard from an angel (a messenger from God) about the coming of Jesus. They both heard that Mary would *give birth to a son and shall call his name Jesus*. They trusted and treasured the news in their hearts but their call to obey was not without difficulty. They may have wrestled with feeling isolated and misunderstood by others. Have you ever felt alone or misunderstood for being a follower of Jesus? What do you think it means to treasure God's word in your heart and how does that help you believe God's love for us?



home

Joseph and Mary began their family in Bethlehem, in a stable. They were away from home, all alone and at times were probably afraid. They may have needed to remind each other that the angel told them both "Do not be afraid." How can we remind our family to not be afraid when we face difficult or lonely times? How does the birth of Jesus give us hope from fear and loneliness?



gather

God built the church on the foundation of Jesus coming to earth, living and dying as a perfect sacrifice. Jesus came so we would not be alone and separated from God. When we are afraid and lonely, oftentimes it feels difficult or challenging to want to gather in community. Why is it important to have a community of people who can point us to the hope of Jesus?



go beyond

Trusting God and having faith over fear is difficult but it brings us true fulfillment and paves the way for us to go beyond and do things that only God can do through us. Mary and Joseph went beyond their own plans to trust God and were blessed to raise Jesus, God's only son who would save the world from all sin. Is there a part of your life where you are not trusting God? Is it keeping you from going beyond your own plans and dreams? Ask God to help you trust him more.



Week 1: Hope for the Lonely



STEP 3: PRAY ABOUT IT

TAKE TURNS PRAYING OR READ THE PRAYER BELOW.

God, Thank you for sending your son, Jesus, to earth to bring hope to the lonely. When we feel lonely, remind us that we are never alone because you promise to be with us. We pray for others who feel lonely or isolated. God show us the people who need to know your love and give us the opportunity to GO BEYOND individually, or as a family, to love someone who is lonely this Christmas season. Amen.



STEP 4: ACTIVITY

CHALLENGE YOURSELF OR YOUR FAMILY

See the Lonely

Spend a few minutes talking about ways you and/or your family can be more aware of others who are lonely this Christmas season.

Challenge: Pay attention this week and ask God to help you notice someone who may be lonely. How can you show love or include those who may be lonely? Write down some ideas.

A clipboard with a brown cover and a white sheet of paper with horizontal lines for writing.

Week 2: Hope for the Lowly



STEP 1: READ THE PASSAGE

UNDERLINE WORDS YOU DON'T KNOW & HIGHLIGHT WHAT STANDS OUT

Matthew 2:1-12

1 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of King Herod, wise men from the east arrived in Jerusalem, 2 saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star at its rising and have come to worship him.” 3 When King Herod heard this, he was deeply disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 So he assembled all the chief priests and scribes of the people and asked them where the Messiah would be born. 5 “In Bethlehem of Judea,” they told him, “because this is what was written by the prophet. 6 And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah: Because out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.”, 7 Then Herod secretly summoned the wise men and asked them the exact time the star appeared. 8 He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. When you find him, report back to me so that I too can go and worship him.”, 9 After hearing the king, they went on their way. And there it was—the star they had seen at its rising. It led them until it came and stopped above the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they were overwhelmed with joy. 11 Entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and falling to their knees, they worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. 12 And being warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their own country by another route.

[1] Christian Standard Bible (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020), Mt 2:1-12.

Luke 2: 8-12

8 In the same region, shepherds were staying out in the fields and keeping watch at night over their flock. 9 Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, “Don’t be afraid, for look, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people: 11 Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you, who is the Messiah, the Lord. 12 This will be the sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped tightly in cloth and lying in a manger.”

Christian Standard Bible (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020), Lk 2:8-12.

“What does lowly mean?”

Definition: Low in status or of little importance.

Wait a minute!?? Jesus, the Son of God, was considered low in status and of little importance? Yes! But only because Jesus is humble and lived to serve & love others first.



STEP 2: TALK ABOUT IT

BE SURE EVERYONE HAS A CHANCE TO SHARE



heart

God is the all-powerful, creator of all things. He formed the earth and filled it with every living thing. He could have easily sent Jesus to the earth as a king, or mighty warrior or popular influencer. But instead, God sent him through an unknown woman, in a small town, in the middle of nowhere. Why did Jesus come through such lowly and humble means? Are there areas of your life where it is difficult to be humble? What choices can you make to live in a humble way like Jesus?



home

Jesus was born by humble means and lived simply with little fame and popularity. How is Jesus' birth and humble life an example for the way our family should live? Does our family reflect Jesus' example and honor his life in the things we say and do? How can we reflect Jesus better in our home?



gather

When Jesus was born the angels rejoiced and the very first people to gather and marvel at his birth were lowly shepherds? He didn't blast it on social media (well there wasn't social media back then) but God could have commanded that the whole earth come and see the birth of his son, but he entrusted the good news to the shepherds. What does that say about the hope the Jesus offers us? What does that teach us about how we should celebrate and worship Jesus? What are some simple ways to gather with others and celebrate this Christmas season?



go beyond

The wise men, followed a star to find Jesus and worship him. These were wealthy, important men who likely had important things to do. However, they left their normal lives to search for a baby. It says they *rejoiced exceedingly with great joy* when they found him! They presented precious gifts and treasures to Jesus. How can we go beyond our own plans and dreams to follow God's call for us? What does God provide when we Go Beyond ourselves? (hint: Exceedingly Great Joy) Are there small ways we can follow God's call to Go Beyond this Christmas Season?



STEP 3: PRAY ABOUT IT

WALK THROUGH THE PRAYER PROMPTS BELOW.

This is a great opportunity to learn the importance of being honest with yourself and with God. If you are a parent, go first and be an example by admitting your need for God's help. It's one of the most powerful things you can do for your kids.

- Ask God to show you where your pride gets in the way of your faith.
- Write down or share anything that God brings to your mind.
- Admit that you need God's help to put away pride and live humbly.
- Thank God that he promises to help us when we run to him.



STEP 4: ACTIVITY

CHALLENGE YOURSELF OR YOUR FAMILY

Look for the Lowly & Humble

The Magi traveled a great distance to find Jesus and they found him in a lowly stable, in a small town, in the middle of nowhere. They knew he was worthy of incredible gifts and worthy of their worship.

Challenge:

Who do you know that lives a humble life and worships Jesus? Write down the names of those people, then commit to telling them that you see and admire the way they live for Jesus. Share how they have impacted your life. Be creative! Spend time together writing notes or drawing pictures to give them.

A graphic of a notepad with a gold-colored cover and a gold-colored clip at the top. The notepad has several horizontal lines for writing.

Week 3: Hope for the Lost



STEP 1: READ THE PASSAGE

UNDERLINE WORDS YOU DON'T KNOW & HIGHLIGHT WHAT STANDS OUT

Matthew 2:13-15

13 After they were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Get up! Take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. For Herod is about to search for the child to kill him." 14 So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night, and escaped to Egypt. 15 He stayed there until Herod's death, so that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled: Out of Egypt I called my Son.

Christian Standard Bible (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020), Mt 2:13-15

Luke 19:1-10

He entered Jericho and was passing through. 2 There was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. 3 He was trying to see who Jesus was, but he was not able because of the crowd, since he was a short man. 4 So running ahead, he climbed up a sycamore tree to see Jesus, since he was about to pass that way. 5 When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down because today it is necessary for me to stay at your house." 6 So he quickly came down and welcomed him joyfully. 7 All who saw it began to complain, "He's gone to stay with a sinful man." 8 But Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, I'll give half of my possessions to the poor, Lord. And if I have extorted anything from anyone, I'll pay back four times as much." 9 "Today salvation has come to this house," Jesus told him, "because he too is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost."

Christian Standard Bible (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020), Lk 19:1-10

“Jesus was born so he could seek and save the lost.”

Week 3: Hope for the Lost



STEP 2: TALK ABOUT IT

BE SURE EVERYONE HAS A CHANCE TO SHARE



heart

Christmastime is a great time to slow down and examine our own hearts. We don't just celebrate the birth of Jesus but we remember the reason he was born - to bring hope to a broken and lost world. When Jesus agreed to go to Zacchaeus' house many others didn't understand but Zacchaeus was filled with incredible joy understanding that he had been lost - caught up in wrong living. How did Zacchaeus examine his own heart in the presence of Jesus? Today, spend time remembering that once you were lost, but if you believe Jesus came to seek and save the lost through his sacrifice, you have been found and made new in Jesus. Thank God that Hope is Born through Jesus!



home

Jesus wanted to go to the home of Zacchaeus. That is such an incredible picture of Jesus, literally, pursuing our hearts and our homes. As you celebrate and anticipate this Christmas Season, how are you setting aside intentional time to remember that Jesus is the reason for this season? Do your celebrations reflect more of Jesus or more of the culture? How can we let Jesus into our hearts and home more?



gather

Sometimes it can feel scary or difficult to gather with people who are lost or different from us. God set up the church to be a place for his followers to gather, respond in worship and be strengthened to go out into the lost world to reflect his love - to reflect the Hope of Jesus! Do you have a community or group of people who encourage you and point you to the reason Jesus was born? If so, thank God for those people. If not, how can you take steps to lean into community?



go beyond

Jesus went to the hard places to seek and save the lost and he often did it in the face of people who mocked and misunderstood him. His parents believed and trusted God - obediently *going* when God called them to go so that one day their son could save the lost. In what ways has God called you or your family to seek the lost? Are you willing to go to the hard places or be misunderstood in order to tell people that Jesus, OUR HOPE, is born?

Week 3: Hope for the Lost



STEP 3: PRAY ABOUT IT

PRAY EPHESIANS 6:10-20 OVER YOURSELF OR YOUR FAMILY

10 Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and by his vast strength 11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, spiritual forces in the heavens. 13 For this reason take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having prepared everything, to take your stand. 14 Stand, therefore, with truth like a belt around your waist, righteousness like armor on your chest, 15 and your feet sandaled with readiness for the gospel of peace. 16 In every situation take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit—which is the word of God. 18 Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request, and stay alert with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints. 19 Pray also for me, that the message may be given to me when I open my mouth to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel. 20 For this I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I might be bold enough to speak about it as I should.

Christian Standard Bible (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020), Eph 6:11-20.



STEP 4: ACTIVITY

CHALLENGE YOURSELF OR YOUR FAMILY

Love the Lost

God's love for the lost is immeasurable. He sent his son to seek and save the lost and he uses us, those who follow him, to reach people with his love. Where is God leading you or your family to love those who are lost? If you don't know, ask him to show you. Maybe it's someone you already know or maybe God will place someone in your path. Commit to praying Ephesians 6:10-20 every day this week and be strengthened to love the lost! Schedule a time to put God's love into action and seek, serve and love those who need Jesus.

Week 4: Hope for the Suffering



STEP 1: READ THE PASSAGE

UNDERLINE WORDS YOU DON'T KNOW & HIGHLIGHT WHAT STANDS OUT

Matthew 2:16-18

16 Then Herod, when he realized that he had been outwitted by the wise men, flew into a rage. He gave orders to massacre all the boys in and around Bethlehem who were two years old and under, in keeping with the time he had learned from the wise men. 17 Then what was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled:

18 A voice was heard in Ramah,
weeping, and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children;
and she refused to be consoled,
because they are no more.

Christian Standard Bible (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020), Mt 2:16-18.

Isaiah 25:8-9

8 When he has swallowed up death once and for all,
**the Lord GOD will wipe away the tears
from every face
and remove his people's disgrace
from the whole earth,
for the LORD has spoken.**

9 On that day it will be said,
“Look, this is our God;
we have waited for him, and he has saved us.
This is the LORD; we have waited for him.
Let's rejoice and be glad in his salvation.”

Christian Standard Bible (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020), Is 25:8-9.

Revelation 21:3-4

3 Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look, God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God. 4 **He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away.**

Christian Standard Bible (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020), Re 21:3-4.



STEP 2: TALK ABOUT IT

BE SURE EVERYONE HAS A CHANCE TO SHARE



heart

After Jesus was born, Herod, the terribly awful King of Judea, searched for Jesus & ordered all the baby boys in Bethlehem to be killed. While the angels, shepherds and Magi were all rejoicing at his birth, several families were weeping and mourning. Experiencing joy and excitement during the holidays is something many of us desire but that may not be the reality for everyone. You may find yourself in a season of grief or suffering right now, and if not, the reality is that you will one day experience suffering. No one goes through life without suffering and no one knew that more than Jesus. He was and is acquainted (familiar) with our grief. Do you find yourself in a season of suffering or sadness? Do you find it difficult to experience joy in this season? Bring your heart to Jesus and be honest about where you are at. (Allow everyone in your family to voice any sadness, grief or hard things your family may have walked through this year.)



home

The passage in Revelation says; *Look, God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God.* What do you think this means for your own home? If your family is currently in a season of suffering, how does God dwelling with humanity bring hope here on earth? How does your family process suffering? Is everyone able to ask questions and process their feelings?



gather

Suffering and grief may cause us to withdraw from community. While having space to process and sort through the tough things in life can be necessary, God created his church to share in all things, joy and suffering. How can you continue to trust God's goodness in this difficult season? Don't be afraid to cry through a Christmas Eve church service or tell someone you are having a hard time. Or maybe you need to invite someone, who is in a season of suffering, to church so they can experience God's love and peace that surpasses all understanding.



go beyond

At times, the chaos of the world around us and our own suffering can be disorienting. It may cause us, or those around us to have big questions or doubts about who God is. When Jesus was born, the world was in similar chaos. He came to bring hope, peace, love and light to this world. Do you ever have questions about why there is suffering in world? We all do. A part of building faith, going beyond and walking with God is learning to trust him. Asking him our big questions and searching his word to know him. He is faithful to show us and care for our hearts.

Week 4: Hope for the Suffering



STEP 3: PRAY ABOUT IT

PRAY FOR THE PEACE OF JESUS BELOW:

Finding hope in suffering can be a challenge. But Jesus himself said, “You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world.” That is why Jesus came into this world in the first place to live with us and be our hope in the lost and broken world. And having *HOPE* means *we expect something in confidence*.

Prayer: Ask God to show you HIS hope in the midst of suffering and expect him to give you a joy only he can give this season.

2 Consider it a great joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you experience various trials,

3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance.

**4 And let endurance have its full effect, so that you may
be mature and complete, lacking nothing.**

Christian Standard Bible (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020), Jas 1:2-4.



STEP 4: ACTIVITY

Graham Cracker Nativity Fun

Graham Cracker Nativity Fun: Gather with friends and/or family to build a nativity scene using graham crackers, animal crackers, chocolate and other candy. Need some ideas on how to build them? Use google and search for Graham Cracker Nativity activity for how-to tutorials online.



A Christmas Day Prayer



Holy Jesus, by being born one of us, and lying humbly in a manger,
you show how much God loves the world.

Let the light of your love always shine in our hearts,
until we reach our home in heaven,
and see you on your throne of glory. Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, your birth at Bethlehem
draws us to kneel in wonder at heaven touching earth:
accept our heartfelt praise as we worship you,
our Saviour and our eternal God. Amen.

Loving Jesus, you were born in a stable but worshipped by the angels.
Be with all who are lonely, and with all who feel distant from celebrations.
Be for us a living hope that lightens their hearts. Amen.

Jesus, as you healed the sick,
bring healing to those in our families.
Jesus, Lord of love, in your mercy, hear us.
Christ born for us, Son of God, given for us,
help us to know you, to worship and to serve you. Amen.

The wise men, Lord, brought myrrh, frankincense, and gold.
Lord, we have nothing of our own to bring;
we bring you what you have given:
our lives for your life. Amen.

Jesus, Saviour, you know us and love us,
you care for our lives and hear our prayer.
Glory to you for ever. Amen.

May God, who has called us out of darkness
into his marvelous light,
bless us and fill us with peace. Amen.



EmpoweredHomes.org



HOPE IS BORN