



ADVENT STORIES  
of  
COURAGEOUS  
FAITHFULNESS



YOUTH FOR CHRIST USA | ADVENT DEVOTIONAL

The page is decorated with several blue stars and dots of varying sizes. A large, multi-pointed star is centered above the text. Other stars are located in the top left, top center, top right, bottom left, and bottom center. Small dots are scattered around the text, including one to the left of the first line, one to the right of the first line, one below the second line, and one below the third line.

# A SEASON OF HOLY EXPECTATION

## AN ADVENT EXPERIENCE

As we enter into this Advent journey together, I invite you to reflect on the Christmas stories of The Shepherds, Mary, and Joseph through a fresh lens - taking note of their remarkable courage and faithfulness.

We'll also consider our own stories of courage and faithfulness in pivotal moments when God disrupted our plans with a life-changing message or divine opportunity that we didn't see coming. How did we respond then? How might He be asking us to respond now?

Advent is the perfect time to look back and look forward. It's a time of remembering and rejoicing, of watching and waiting.

Inspired by the lives of The Shepherds, we too can earnestly seek Jesus in the unlikely spaces and graces of everyday life. And like Mary and Joseph, we can learn to surrender more in trust and awe of God's redemptive purposes for our lives.

We hope you enjoy this Advent journey as a fresh way to celebrate God's faithfulness. Side by side with you, we'll be watching for His divine interruptions of Hope, Peace, Love and Joy ...in the midst of your story, our story, and the stories of thousands of young people we get to serve together.

**Immanuel...Christ with us,**



JAKE BLAND | President/CEO  
YOUTH FOR CHRIST USA



# How To Use This

This is designed to be a timeless  
Advent Devotional.

## IT'S INTENDED FOR USE WITH ALL GENERATIONS.

- ✦ AS PARENTS WITH KIDS OF ALL AGES
- ✦ AS A COUPLE
- ✦ AS EMPTY NESTERS
- ✦ AS AN INDIVIDUAL WITH A FRIEND
- ✦ WITH A SMALL GROUP

It can be enjoyed over dinner, over coffee or tea, or just gathered together wherever you're comfortable. It can take as little as 15 minutes or longer depending on what works best for your group dynamic.

It's divided into four weeks with each week focusing on a major theme of Advent: hope, peace, love and joy.

Each week the questions range in depth in order to facilitate conversation amongst family and friends of all ages.

It's meant to prepare our hearts for Christmas between December 1 and December 25 by exploring the biblical stories of courage and faithfulness in the Christmas Story.

We hope this refreshes your soul  
and restores some of the reason  
for the season.

# Enjoy!



# HOPE

## THE SHEPHERDS' STORY

In the fields near Bethlehem, shepherds were tending their flocks on a night that seemed like any other. These humble and ordinary men, often young and overlooked by society, were chosen by God to receive the most extraordinary news: the birth of Jesus Christ, the hoped-for Messiah.

An angel appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, filling them with fear. Yet, despite their initial fright, the shepherds displayed remarkable courage.

**READ: Luke 2:8-20**

**ASK: (for teens and adults)**

- ✦ What we can learn from The Shepherds about listening and responding to God, even if we're afraid or His message disrupts our plans?
- ✦ What motivated The Shepherds to take the risk of leaving their livelihood behind and going to Bethlehem?
- ✦ What risks do you face in seeking after Jesus? Are there some things you need to leave behind?
- ✦ How did The Shepherds' willingness to share their experience influence others?
- ✦ What challenges did The Shepherds face when spreading the news of Jesus? What challenges do you encounter in sharing God's Story?

**ASK: (for kids)**

- ✦ What do you think The Shepherds felt when they saw and heard the angels? How would you have felt?
- ✦ When The Shepherds left their sheep and went to look for Jesus, how did their actions show HOPE and courage?
- ✦ How can we show courage and HOPE by looking for Jesus in our everyday lives?
- ✦ Share about a time when Jesus gave you HOPE and courage.

**Do:** Inspired by The Shepherds, let's listen for God, seek Him, and share the HOPE of Jesus in relationships with others this week.

**PRAY:** God, grant us The Shepherds' courage to listen for your voice, seek your presence, and share your HOPE with others.



# PEACE

## MARY'S STORY

Mary was an ordinary teen girl of her time until the night the angel Gabriel visited. "Favored by God", the angel reveals she is to be the mother of the Messiah, the hope of her nation. Her life's trajectory changed in an instant.

Mary faces the moment with trust in the Lord. Her courageous faithfulness and PEACE is displayed in her response, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord, let it be to me according to your word."

**READ: Luke 1:26-56**



### ASK: (for teens and adults)

- ✦ How did Mary's response to the angel demonstrate her faith in God's word and purposes?
- ✦ How do you choose to worship God, regardless of your circumstances?
- ✦ How does Mary's song of praise show her understanding of God's character?
- ✦ How does Mary's experience inspire your faith?
- ✦ "Nothing is impossible for God". Share a time that God did something amazing in your life.

### ASK: (for kids)

- ✦ How would you feel if an angel came to visit you? Why do you think some of the angel's first words were, "Do not be afraid"?
- ✦ How can you reach out to God when you are afraid?
- ✦ If you wrote a song to God, what would you say?
- ✦ "Nothing is impossible for God". Share a time that God did something amazing in your life.

**DO:** This week, inspired by Mary's courageous faith and PEACE, look for ways God demonstrates His faithfulness to you and gives you PEACE even in uncertainty.

**PRAY:** God, we are your servants. Please use us as instruments of your PEACE in a world full of challenges and turmoil.



# LOVE

## JOSEPH'S STORY

Joseph is in a difficult situation and even before he gets a message from God, he displays his character of LOVE and kindness. Then an angel came to him in a dream, sharing how he would take Mary as his wife and name the Son she would bear Jesus. He accepts the Lord's direction with obedience. Joseph was an incredible man of faith and was willing to be used by God to accomplish His purposes. Joseph responded with confidence in God's plan and LOVE for those around him.

**READ: Matthew 1:18-25**

### **ASK: (for teens and adults)**

- ✦ What did the angel tell Joseph? What was his response?
- ✦ How is Joseph described in verse 19? What does this reveal about Joseph's character?
- ✦ When life gets hard, what reminds you that you are a part of God's greater purposes?
- ✦ What motivates you to be obedient to God, even when it might be unpopular?

### **ASK: (for kids)**

- ✦ Have you ever done something loving for someone else, even if it was hard?
- ✦ How can you show LOVE to other people?
- ✦ Is it ever hard to be obedient to God?

**DO:** Our willingness and faithfulness are the traits God uses to reach others with His message of LOVE and hope. Look for ways to show God's LOVE to others this week, even when it is hard or uncomfortable.

**PRAY:** Lord, thank you for your unfailing love. Help us love others as you have loved us. May we keep our hearts ready for what you will call us to do this week.



## JOY

### YOUR STORY

As we journey through Advent, we often reflect on the courage of those who played pivotal roles in the Christmas story. But today, let's consider our own stories of courage.

Each of us faces pivotal moments that require bravery, faith, and trust in God's greater plan.

**READ: Joshua 1:1-9**

**ASK: (for teens and adults)**

- ✦ What are some challenges or difficult decisions you have faced recently?
- ✦ When you face difficulties, what difference does it make when you turn to God for guidance, JOY, and courage?
- ✦ What role does prayer or seeking God's wisdom play in your decision-making process to ensure your choices align with your faith, values and God's design for you?
- ✦ What is the most important thing about your relationship with God that you want others to know for themselves?
- ✦ How can your personal encounters with God inspire and encourage those around you?
- ✦ How might you share your faith in a way that is respectful, relational and reflects your JOY of knowing Jesus?

**ASK: (for kids)**

- ✦ What is something brave you did recently?
- ✦ How has God helped you when you were scared?
- ✦ Have you had to make a tough choice lately? What was it?
- ✦ How might you ask God for help with hard decisions?
- ✦ What makes you happy and JOYFUL about knowing Jesus?

**DO:** How did you seek God's word and His presence, or share His JOY with others last week? This week, look for ways to encourage others with the grace, strength and JOY God has provided for you.

**PRAY:** God, thank You for giving me courage and guidance; help me trust and find JOY in all circumstances because you are with me.

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

ISAIAH 9:6 (NIV)

If this guide was meaningful to you and your family, our team would love to hear from you. Your YFC family is praying that Christ's hope, peace, love and joy is very near to you this season.

**Merry Christmas!**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'JBland'.

JAKE BLAND  
jbland@yfc.net





Youth For Christ engages young people ages 11-19 to share God's story of hope, sometimes in unlikely places. Over 112 YFC Chapters across the nation collectively host 1,260+ ministry sites.

We go to kids wherever they are...and pursue authentic Christ-centered relationships through our six Ministry Models:

**Campus Life®** serves middle school and high school students on campuses throughout the United States. Campus Life is our largest ministry model.

**Campus Life Military®** ministry reaches military-connected youth on and off military installations across the US and beyond.

**City Life™** is a relational, holistically based ministry that desires to see deep change in under-resourced neighborhoods by mentoring and raising up leaders from within that community.

**Juvenile Justice Ministry®** strives to respond to the needs of justice-involved youth and offers a hopeful future that is rooted in Christ.

**Parent Life™** connects pregnant and parenting young people with leaders that help them see God's Story in the middle of their story.

**Deaf Teen Quest™** seeks to break down language barriers by building relationships with deaf and hard of hearing young people.



## MISSION STATEMENT

YFC reaches young people everywhere, working together with the local church and other like-minded partners to raise up lifelong followers of Jesus who lead by their godliness in lifestyle, devotion to prayer and the Word of God, passion for sharing the love of Christ and commitment to social involvement.

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