

REFLECTIONS

SIMPLY Christmas



This December, we want to take a step back from the usual hustle and bustle of the season and focus on the most important part of Christmas - how God sent joy to the world with the gift of His Son, Jesus. We encourage everyone to take a few minutes and use the notes below to reflect on a different part of the story each day, and while you're at it, spread some joy of your own!

DECEMBER 1

A young couple, Mary and Joseph, get engaged. (Luke 1:27b)

What does the word joy mean to you?

Families can have each family member share their definition of the word joy.

DECEMBER 2

One day, God sends the angel Gabriel to Mary. He has some very special News! (Luke 1:26-27a, 28)

Think of something that starts with a J, O, then Y that brings you joy.

Family members can share their JOY words with each other.

DECEMBER 3

Mary is greatly troubled when she hears the angel's greeting. (Luke 1:29)

Use your talents to create something that represents the story of the birth of Jesus - like a Christmas ornament, a painting, etc..

DECEMBER 4

Gabriel responds to Mary: "Don't be afraid; God is very happy with you! (Luke 1:30)

Serving not only helps others but is life-giving to yourself. Choose one way you can volunteer your time this month.

Volunteering is a great thing family members can do together.

DECEMBER 5

Gabriel tells Mary the special news: She will have a baby boy, and He will be named Jesus. (Luke 1:30-31)

Too much technology can steal your joy. So turn off all your devices for an undistracted evening.

Families can bake cookies, talk about your favorite memory, or plan a Christmas surprise for another family.

DECEMBER 6

Gabriel shares more details of God's plan with Mary: "Jesus will be great and will be called God's very own son!" (Luke 1:32-33)

Create some joy by turning on your favorite Christmas music & singing as loud as you can.

Families can have a dance party to their favorite Christmas song.

DECEMBER 7

Mary doesn't understand how she can have a baby without being married, but the angel Gabriel assures her of a great truth: Nothing is impossible with God. (Luke 1:34-37)

Bring joy to a family in need by gathering your gently used coats and gloves to drop off at a charity.

DECEMBER 8

"I serve God with my life and want all that you have said to happen," Mary tells the angel, and he leaves. (Luke 1:38)

Share your favorite jokes or hilarious YouTube videos with a friend.

Family members can share jokes and videos with one another.

DECEMBER 9

Mary visits her cousin Elizabeth and is so overwhelmed with God's goodness that she sings a song of praise. (Luke 1:39-56)

Snuggle up and watch your favorite Christmas movie.

Families can pick a movie to watch together.

DECEMBER 10

Caesar Augustus wants to know how many people are in his empire, so he tells all the people to go back to their hometown to be registered and counted. (Luke 2:1-3)

Declutter and give away no longer used items, like clothes that don't fit or toys that are no longer played with, to a local charity.

DECEMBER 11

Joseph takes Mary, who is pregnant, to his hometown of Bethlehem to be counted. (Luke 2:4-5)

Google search Christmas traditions around the world and start a new tradition this year. Families can vote on a new tradition to adopt.

DECEMBER 12

While Joseph and Mary are in Bethlehem, the time comes for the baby to be born. (Luke 2:6)

Invite a few of your favorite people over for desert or a game night. Families can invite another family with kids around the same ages.

DECEMBER 13

Mary gives birth to Jesus, wraps Him in swaddling cloths, and lays Him in a manger because there is no room for them anywhere else. (Luke 2:7)

Give the joy of reading by collecting gently used books and dropping them off at your local Salvation Army or public Library.

DECEMBER 14

At night in a nearby field, shepherds are watching their flocks. (Luke 2:8)

Complaining is the opposite of joy. This week, every time you complain, follow it up by saying one thing you're thankful for.

Family members can help one another remember to be thankful.

DECEMBER 15

The sky lights up – God has sent an angel to the shepherds to tell them the good news. (Luke 2:9a)

Think about this: The most joyful person I know is _____.

Family members can each pick someone and explain why you think so.

DECEMBER 16

When the shepherds see the angel, they're afraid! (Luke 2:9b)

Take your smile everywhere you go today. Even a simple smile can bring joy to someone having a rough day.

DECEMBER 17

The angel tries to calm the shepherds: "Don't be afraid – I bring wonderful news that will bring joy to all the world!" Luke 2:10)

Bring joy to your neighbors by leaving a small, gift or goody on a few doorsteps with an encouraging note.

DECEMBER 18

"A Savior – the Rescuer you have been waiting for is born today!" the angel proclaims to the shepherds. (Luke 2:11)

See how many compliments you can give to brighten someone else's day today. Family members can also compliment one another.

DECEMBER 19

The angel explains that the shepherds will find the baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger. (Luke 2:12)

Think about this: "How can we be joyful when we feel unhappy?" Family members can discuss this with one another.

DECEMBER 20

More angels come to celebrate the good news – they arrive at the shepherd's field and begin praising God! (Luke 2:13-14)

Think about or write about the most joyful part of your day today. Families can discuss their joyful moments together.

DECEMBER 21

The shepherds leave their flocks and hurry to find Mary, Joseph, and the baby, who is lying in a manger. (Luke 2:15-16)

Declare today (as much as possible) an "off day". Stay in pajamas; leave the dishes in the sink; and put off the present wrapping one more evening.

DECEMBER 22

After they see the baby, the shepherds excitedly go and tell everyone they run into the good news! (Luke 2:17-19)

Write a note or card thanking someone who has brought you joy recently.

DECEMBER 23

The shepherds return to their flocks, praising God for all they had seen and heard. (Luke 2:20)

Christmas decorations bring holiday joy! Take a drive or walk around your community and enjoy the bright, beautiful colors.

DECEMBER 24

Mary names the baby Jesus just as the angel had told her to do. (Luke 2:21)

Pull out old family albums or scroll through old Christmas pictures. Tell stories of your favorite Christmases and memories.

DECEMBER 25

God has sent His Son to rescue us because He loves us so very much!

Read the story of Jesus' birth from Luke 1:26-2:21 and remember the greatest joy of all – hope in our Savior, Jesus!