



Christmas Compass

Pointing the things of the season to the Reason for the season.

Family Devotions

Use one of these devotions each week in December to point you and your family to Jesus this Christmas!

Devotion 1 – Jesus, The Best Gift Ever



As ours and our kids' Christmas wishlists grow, this devotion encourages you and your family to reflect on the greatest gift ever given: Jesus, God's Son. The Magi's worship of Jesus in Matthew 2 reminds us to keep Him at the center, as the reason for our Christmas celebration. With the true meaning of Christmas in mind, we want to ensure that others understand what the excitement of the season is truly about. To share the reason for Christmas with others, you and your family can pack a shoebox to help them hear about the greatest gift ever given: Jesus! The remaining devotions will help you understand more about why Jesus is the greatest gift ever and use the things of the season to point us to Him, the reason for the season, with hearts of worship.

Devotion 2 – Jesus Lights up Our Need and Way to God

During the Jewish celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, a feast that celebrated God's provision for the Israelites during the wilderness journey and the present, Jesus stated that He was the light of the world. Using Christmas lights, you and your family will explore what it means for Jesus to be the world's light. Jesus, being the light, shows us our sin and our need for Him, as well as what God is like.



Devotion 3 – God's Everlasting Love and the Christmas Tree



As the light of the world, Jesus shows us what God is like and what a life perfectly lived according to God's perfection is like. Jesus's sinlessness reminds us that we can't keep God's laws perfectly all the time! Jesus illuminates God's holiness but also His love for those who break His laws, for sinners like you and me. The Bible tells us that God demonstrated His great love for us in this way: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Using one of the more popular things of the season, the Christmas tree, this devotion aims to help you and your family see the evergreen addition to your home this time of year as a towering reminder of God's love for you and them, as the baby born in the stable was born to die for sinners.

Devotion 4 – Our Forever Home

Building gingerbread houses together is a great way to spend time with friends and family. Drawing on a popular tradition of many, this devotion reminds us that Jesus demonstrated His love for us by dying on a cross, but that His death and burial were not the end of His story. He rose from the dead, appeared to His disciples - even 500 of them at one time - and ascended into heaven. One of the things that He is doing for all those who trust in Him while in heaven is building us a place to live with Him for all eternity! This devotion reminds us of the wonderful truth that because He made His home among us, we can make our forever home with Him!



Devotion 5 – Jesus, our Good Shepherd and His Love for Everyone



As we wrap up our Christmas season, we explore the story behind the candy cane. From the candy cane, we learn that Jesus is our Good Shepherd. As our Good Shepherd, Jesus cares for us, protects us, and guides us. This family devotion will remind you and your family that because Jesus is our Good Shepherd, He is always with us and that we can trust Him to lead us well.



Jesus the Best Gift Ever

Based on Matthew 2:1-12 & John 1:1-3, 10-14

Bible Passage:

Adjust the amount of Scripture you need to read or focus on according to your family's dynamic (ages, attention spans, maturity, etc.). The selection below may be enough for younger kids, while older ones may enjoy the full passage.

Matthew 2:11

“On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.”

John 1:10-14

He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize him. ¹¹ He came to his own people. Even they rejected him. ¹² But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. ¹³ They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God. ¹⁴ So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.

Main Idea:

The Wise Men gave gifts to Jesus, recognizing Him as the King of Kings—the reason for the Christmas season. These men understood that the baby in the manger was special; they knew He was the Messiah the Jewish Scriptures had been pointing towards. The Hebrew Scriptures, our Old Testament, spoke about the coming Christ being God and man. The Wisemen, also known as Magi, made men kings in their land, and these kingmakers realized that Jesus was the God-man, the King of kings, and worshipped Him. Jesus, God becoming man, is what Christmas is all about! Without Jesus' birth, He wouldn't have been able to die for our sins, and we would have no hope of being forgiven and becoming God's friends. King Jesus gave *us* the greatest gift of all: eternal life through His life!

Gift Giving Activity

Pack an Operation Christmas Child Shoebox

Just like the Wise Men brought gifts to Jesus, we can give gifts that show the love of Jesus to children around the world!

What You'll Need:

- Empty shoebox (or shoebox-sized plastic container)
- Shoebox gift items (see ideas below)
- Optional: wrapping paper (wrap lid & box separately)
- Your Bible
- Hot cocoa, Christmas music, or cookies to make it cozy!
- Labels & drop-off info: samaritanspurse.org/occ


Instructions:

1. **Gather as a family** and read **Matthew 2:1-12** and **Romans 6:23** together.
2. **Talk about** how the Wise Men gave gifts to worship Jesus.
3. **Discuss** how Jesus gives us the best gift ever—eternal life!
4. **Pack your shoebox together**, choosing gifts a child would love.
5. **Pray together** over the box and the child who will receive it.
6. **Deliver your box** to a drop-off center or ship it!

Shoebox Gift Ideas

Choose a gender and age group (2–4, 5–9, or 10–14), then include:

- Toys** – small ball, doll, jump rope, stuffed animal
- School Supplies** – crayons, pencils, notebooks
- Hygiene Items** – toothbrush, soap (in case), washcloth
- Personal Touch** – note, drawing, family photo
- Avoid** – liquids, candy, toothpaste, war toys, or breakables

 Get official instructions and drop-off info at:

 samaritanspurse.org/occ

Discussion Questions:


- Why do you think the Wise Men gave Jesus such special gifts?
- What does Romans 6:23 say God gives us?
- Why is eternal life with Jesus the best gift we could ever receive?
- How can we give gifts that show God's love to others?
- Who do you think might receive the shoebox you packed?


Prayer:

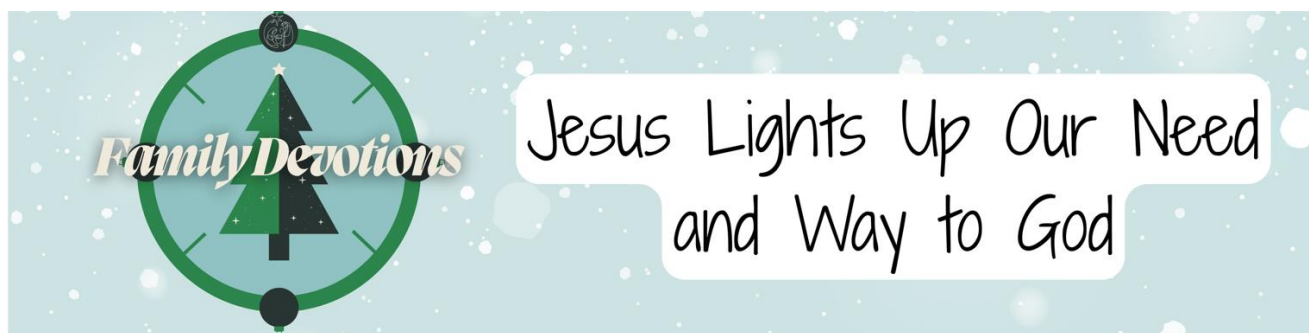
“Dear Jesus, thank You for being the best gift of all. We worship You like the Wise Men did, and we give these gifts to others because of Your love. Please bless the child who receives our shoebox and help them know You. Amen.”

Optional Add-On:

Draw or write your answers to these two prompts:

 My favorite gift I've ever received:

 The best part of Jesus' gift to me:



Based on John 8:12 and Matthew 5:14-16

Bible Passage:

Adjust the amount of Scripture you need to read or focus on according to your family's dynamic (ages, attention spans, maturity, etc.). The selection below may be enough for younger kids, while older ones may enjoy the full passage.

What does it mean that Jesus is the Light of the World? This hands-on Family Devotion and activity will help all involved to know what it means for Jesus to be the Light of the world during a season where lights are on for the course!

Opening Activity: “What’s on the Paper?”

Supplies Needed:

- [>SM's What's On The Paper Printable](#) or a small object, picture, or word written on paper (something simple like “cross,” “heart,” or “Christmas tree”).
- A flashlight, lamp, or strand of Christmas lights. You could also turn your room lights on and off.

Step 1 – In the Dark

1. Gather everyone in a room and turn off the lights.

2. Hold up the paper so no one can clearly see what's on it.
3. Ask: "Can you guess what's on this paper?" (Most won't be able to or will just guess randomly.)

Step 2 – Turn on the Light

1. Switch on the flashlight or lamp so everyone can see the paper clearly.
2. Ask: "Was it easier to know the truth when the light was on?"

Step 3 – Connect to the Lesson

Explain: "Without light, we couldn't see what was there. The Bible says that without Jesus, we live in spiritual darkness. We wouldn't know what God is like, that we need to be rescued from our sin, or that Jesus is the way to know and be with God forever. But when Jesus came, He said, 'I am the Light of the World' (John 8:12). He shines so we can see the truth about God and how to be saved."

Main Point

At Christmas, we celebrate the birth of Jesus. Jesus Himself didn't celebrate Christmas, but He did celebrate other holidays. One of these was the Feast of Tabernacles (also known as the Feast of Booths).

During this festival, people built little shelters (booths) out of tree branches and leaves. They lived in them for seven days to remember how God cared for their ancestors in the wilderness after rescuing them from Egypt (Leviticus 23:33–44). It was a time of joy and thanksgiving for God's provision.

In John 8, Jesus was teaching in the Temple during this feast. In the Court of the Women, four giant golden lampstands stood about 75 feet tall! They were lit on the first night of the feast and shone so brightly that all of Jerusalem could see their glow. These lights reminded the people of how God was with them in the wilderness as a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night.

It was there, in that brilliantly lit courtyard, that Jesus said:

John 8:12

"I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life."

When Jesus spoke these words, He was declaring that He is God. Just as God guided His people in the wilderness, Jesus is God present with us—showing us who God is and how we can be with Him forever.

As the Light of the World, Jesus shows us our sin (the wrong things we do against God). He lived a perfect life, but we know we have not. Yet He not only reveals our sin—He also shows the way to forgiveness and friendship with God for eternity - Himself!

Those who follow Jesus don't walk in darkness anymore. They have His light to guide them and give them life. And amazingly, Jesus also said that His followers are now lights to the world, too!


Matthew 5:14-16

“You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.”

Just as Jesus, our way of living should help others see their need for Him. Our words and actions should shine brightly so that others know only Jesus can rescue them from sin.

✦ Christmas Light Fun Time!

Choose One (or Both!):

 Decorate your house with Christmas lights.

 Take a drive or walk to look at Christmas lights in your neighborhood or town.

What You'll Need:

- Christmas lights (string lights, plug-in, or battery-powered)
- Warm clothes (if outside)
- Hot cocoa or snacks (optional, but a fun addition!)
- A Christmas music playlist
- Bible and this devotion handout

How To Do It:

1. Read John 8:12 together.


2. Turn off the lights for a moment. Sit in the dark and talk about how it feels.
3. Turn on the Christmas lights! Let everyone “ooh” and “aah.”
4. Talk about how Jesus is like the light—He helps us see, gives us joy, and takes away fear.
5. If you’re driving, stop at your favorite display and reread John 8:12.

Talk About It Together

- Why do you think Jesus called Himself the Light of the World?
- What does light do in the dark?
- What happens when we follow Jesus, the Light?
- How can we share His light with others this Christmas?
- What’s one way our family can “shine” for Jesus this week?

My Light-Shining Plan

This week, I will shine Jesus’ light by:

 *I can be a light by being kind, helping someone, or telling them about Jesus!*

Let’s Pray Together

“Jesus, thank You for being the Light of the World. Thank You for coming at Christmas to shine Your love into our hearts. Help our family follow You and shine bright.”



Family Devotions

God's Everlasting Love and the Christmas Tree

Based on Luke 2:25–35

Bible Passage

Adjust how much Scripture you need to read or focus on according to your family's dynamic (ages, attention spans, maturity, etc.). The selection below may be enough for younger kids, while older ones may enjoy the full passage.

Luke 2:25–32

At that time there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon. He was righteous and devout and was eagerly waiting for the Messiah to come and rescue Israel. The Holy Spirit was upon him ... 27 That day the Spirit led him to the Temple. So when Mary and Joseph came to present the baby Jesus to the Lord as the law required, 28 Simeon was there. He took the child in his arms and praised God, saying,

29 “Sovereign Lord, now let your servant die in peace,
as you have promised.

30 I have seen your salvation,

31 which you have prepared for all people.

32 He is a light to reveal God to the nations,
and he is the glory of your people Israel!”

You may also like: [Is having a Christmas tree a sin, according to Jeremiah?](#)

- You can find this additional resource on morethansundaymornings.com

Main Idea

Every December, many of us decorate a Christmas tree in our homes. With its twinkling lights and evergreen branches, the tree brings warmth and joy. However, it can also remind us of something even greater—the everlasting love of God, as shown through Jesus Christ.

When Simeon held baby Jesus in his arms, he said that Jesus would be a **light to reveal God to the nations**. As the **Light of the World**, Jesus shows us what God is like: holy, perfect, and full of love. His sinless life reminds us that we could never keep God’s law perfectly. But His light doesn’t just expose our sin—it also shines with hope.

Romans 5:8 tells us:

“But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.”

The Christmas tree, standing tall and evergreen, can remind us of God’s never-ending love. Its lights point us to the One who brings light into our darkness. And just as the tree in your living room is hard to ignore, Jesus came so that God’s love could never be missed.

This Christmas, when you look at your tree, remember: the baby born in the stable came to die for sinners like you and me—so that we could live with Him forever.

Hands-On Activity: Christmas Tree Reminders

Idea: Decorate your Christmas tree with intentional reminders of Jesus.

What You’ll Need:

- A Christmas tree (real or artificial)
- Lights and ornaments
- A star or cross for the top (if available)
- Provided Ornament Craft, OR Index cards, and string

Instructions:

1. Read Luke 2:25–35 together.
2. As you look at your tree, talk about what each part reminds you of:
 - a. **Evergreen branches** → God’s everlasting love.
 - b. **Lights** → Jesus, the Light of the World.

- c. **Ornaments** → The beauty of God’s grace, gifts, and presence in our lives.
 - d. **Star/Cross on top** → Jesus’ birth and His ultimate sacrifice.
3. Make Ornaments
 - a. If your church has provided you with a DIY ornament, make it and hang it on your tree.
 - b. If you are doing this on your own, you can write one way you see God’s love in your life on an index card. Hang it on the tree as a “love ornament.”
4. Step back, look at the tree together, and give thanks to God for sending His Son.

Discussion Questions

- What does it mean that Jesus is the Light of the World?
- How does the Christmas tree remind us of God’s everlasting love?
- Simeon waited his whole life to see Jesus. How do you think he felt when he finally held Him?
- What does Jesus’ perfect, sinless life show us about God?
- How can our family share God’s everlasting love with others this Christmas?
(Perhaps you can make more ornaments to give to family, friends, or neighbors and share the love God has for them?)

Prayer

“Dear God, thank You for sending Jesus to be the Light of the World. Just like the lights on our Christmas tree brighten our home, Jesus brings light and joy into our hearts. Thank You that He lived a perfect life, died for our sins, and rose again to give us everlasting life. Help our family remember Your love every time we look at our tree and help us shine that light to others this Christmas. Amen.”

Other Ideas for this Devotion

- If you and your family go looking for the "perfect tree" each year, maybe do this devotion on the go as you take your annual adventure.
- Purchase and read the book ["The Pine Tree Parable"](#) if you have children between the ages of 3 and 7, as it teaches about God's love for your kids through, you guessed it, an evergreen tree. I also personally love ["The Pumpkin Patch Parable"](#), which is an excellent read near and around Halloween, as it describes what God does for us when we follow Jesus by looking at the process of carving a pumpkin.
- If you plan to use this devotion in a ministry setting, you may want to check out [these](#) easy and cost-effective [DIY Crafts that incorporate the Manger and the Cross](#) and provide them for each family unit.



Based on John 14:1-3

 **Bible Passage:**

Adjust the amount of Scripture you need to read or focus on according to your family's dynamic (ages, attention spans, maturity, etc.). The selection below may be enough for younger kids, while older ones may enjoy the full passage.

John 14:1-3

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”

Main Idea:

Jesus left His home in heaven to make His home with us, so He could return to heaven and prepare a forever home for us to be with Him.


At Christmas, we celebrate that Jesus came to earth, leaving the glory of heaven, to live among us. But this is just the beginning of the story. He came to make God known to us and to die in our place so that we could be made friends of God and one day live with Him forever in heaven. Jesus spoke the words we read to His disciples right before He was handed over to die on the cross for our sins.

He told His disciples that He would return to heaven after coming back to life, and once there, build them a place to live for all eternity. The amazing thing about Jesus' promise of a heavenly home for His disciples is that He prepares a place for all those who follow Him, including you and me! Just like we build gingerbread homes, Jesus is preparing an even better home for us—a perfect place where we'll be with Him always.

Gingerbread House Activity

Supplies Needed (for each gingerbread house):

- Graham crackers (or gingerbread cookies)
- Royal icing or store-bought white frosting (as “glue”)
- Small candy decorations (gumdrops, peppermints, sprinkles, etc.)
- Plastic knives or piping bags for frosting
- Paper plates or small cardboard bases
- Optional: mini marshmallows, shredded coconut (for snow), cereal squares (for shingles)

 *Instead of gathering the supplies listed above you can buy a Gingerbread House Kit for each person.*

Instructions:

Prepare the base: Give each family member a paper plate or cardboard base.

Construct the house:

Use graham crackers or gingerbread cookies to form walls and a roof.

Use royal icing to glue pieces together. Hold pieces in place for a few seconds until stable.

Decorate:

Add candies, cereal, marshmallows, and frosting to make the house festive.

Be creative—no two houses need to be alike!

As you build, talk about what makes a house feel like “home.” Is it the walls? The decorations? Or the people inside?

Discussion Questions:

What do you think heaven is like?

Why do you think Jesus came from His home in heaven to live with us on earth?

How does it feel to know Jesus is preparing a home for us in heaven?

What makes your house feel like a home? How can we make room for Jesus in our home this Christmas?

What does it mean to be with Jesus forever? How does that change how we live now?

Prayer:

"Jesus, thank You for coming from heaven to be with us. Thank You for preparing a forever home where we can live with You. Help us remember that the best gift isn't found under the tree but in You. Help our family to make You the center of our home and hearts this Christmas. Amen."

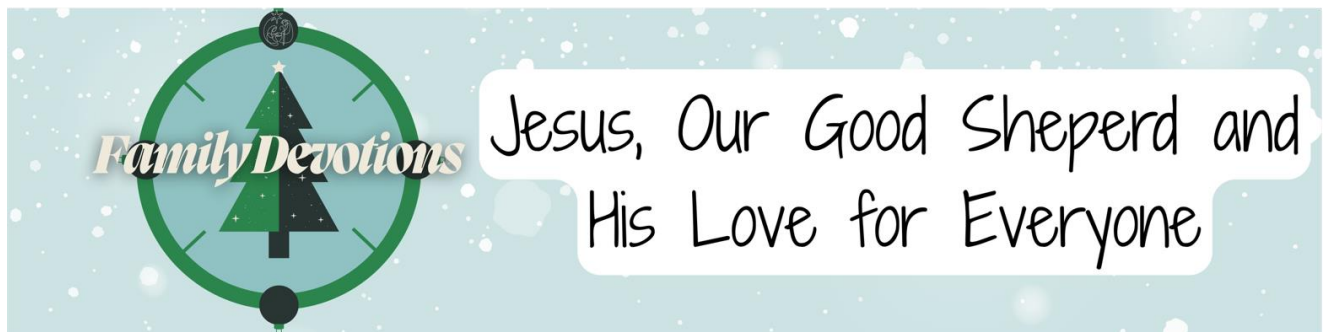
❄️ Optional Add-On:

Have everyone write a small card or note and place it inside or near their gingerbread house with a sentence like:

“My home belongs to Jesus.”

“Thank You, Jesus, for making a place for me.”

“I want to be with Jesus forever.”



Based on Luke 2:8-20

📖 Bible Passage:

Adjust the amount of Scripture you need to read or focus on according to your family's dynamic (ages, attention spans, maturity, etc.). The selection below may be enough for younger kids, while older ones may enjoy the full passage.

Luke 2:8-12

That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. ⁹Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, ¹⁰but the angel reassured them. “Don't be afraid!” he said. “I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. ¹¹The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! ¹²And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger.”

Luke 2:16-17

They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. ¹⁷After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child.

Main Idea:

Christmas time usually means decorating our homes with lights, trees, and wreaths. Somewhere in the midst of it all, you'll often find a Nativity Scene—baby Jesus surrounded by Mary, Joseph, shepherds, Magi, and angels. The Nativity reminds us of the true reason for Christmas. But there's another simple item that can also point us back to the quiet manger scene: the candy cane.

Candy canes now come in many shapes, colors, and flavors, but the most recognizable is the red-and-white striped peppermint cane. Its curved shape lets us hang it on a tree, but it also resembles a shepherd's staff—the very kind of staff the shepherds may have carried on the night of Jesus's birth. These shepherds were ordinary men—uneducated, poor, even a little weary from their work. Yet God chose them as the first to hear the good news that His Son had been born. Why? To show us that Jesus came for everyone.

This Christmas, when you see a candy cane, remember the shepherds' message. Just as God welcomed them to the manger, He welcomes us too. And in turn, we are called to welcome others, inviting them to meet our Savior. Let's thank God for sending Jesus for *all people*, and let's open our hearts to share that invitation with everyone around us.

[You may also like this post on Psalm 23 concerning God as our Shepherd](#)

- This additional resource can be found at morethansundaymornings.com

Hands-On Activity: Homemade Candy Canes

Make a melted candy cane ornament:

“J” reminds you of Jesus or the shepherd's hook

Red reminds us of the blood he shed for us

White reminds us that he lived a pure life and has washed our sins away.

What You'll Need:

Peppermints
Cookie Cutter
String
Parchment Paper

Instructions:

Read Luke 2:8-20 and the devotional

Talk about all the ways that the candy cane can remind us of Jesus this Christmas season.

Turn the oven on to 350

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper - don't skip this step, otherwise, they will stick to the baking sheet.

Place peppermint candies in a single layer in the cookie cutter- If they are too big, you can break them up. * Make sure it is a single layer, or it won't melt evenly

Place the baking sheet in the oven for 5-10 minutes. Pull them out as soon as all the candy has melted. ** You don't want it to bubble, so make sure you watch it closely. Let the candy ornaments cool for about 2 minutes.

Use a toothpick or skewer dipped in cooking oil to make a small hole at the top of the ornament for the ribbon. ** Make sure to wait the 2 minutes or your hole will fill in with melted peppermint.

Allow to cool for an additional 5 minutes before trying to remove it from the cookie cutter.

Discussion Questions:

When you see a candy cane, what comes to mind?

How does the shape of the candy cane remind us of the shepherds at Jesus's birth?

Why do you think God chose to invite shepherds to see baby Jesus first?

What does their story teach us about who Jesus came for?

How can we "welcome others to the manger" this Christmas season?

 **Prayer:**

"Dear God, thank You for sending Jesus to be our Savior. Thank You that He came for everyone, just like You showed the shepherds. Help us remember, when we see a candy cane, that we are all welcome at the manger. Show us how to share Jesus with others this Christmas."