

# What If God Was One of Us?

## Seven Week Advent Devotional





## Hello Faith!

Today I want to talk to y'all about my internship project. Every intern is required to do a project while on internship. The purpose is to initiate and organize a new program for the life of the congregation, as well as for me to do additional studies in areas not required elsewhere in my seminary program.

I'm measuring the success of this project by how y'all are able to build relationships with your family and with God. I will do this through a pre and post assessment survey. The pre and post assessments will help me to gauge the value of doing devotionals as well as how congregations are able to grow spiritually over a church season. The pre and post assessment also helps me to complete the seminary portion of my project.

I would appreciate it if you would fill out the survey online by going to the link: [tinyurl.com/PreDevoSurvey](https://tinyurl.com/PreDevoSurvey) But if you would prefer you can fill it out now and drop it off in the offering box on Sunday.

This devotional is important to the life of the church during this season of Advent. as well as to you and your relationship with others and God.

If you have any questions please come and ask and I look forward to this seven-week Advent Journey with y'all.





## Seven Weeks of Advent: What If God Was One of Us?

**Gifts! Presents! Spending!** In today's world we see this time of Advent as a commercialization of Christmas that focuses on buying and spending to give and receive gifts. This time of year, we focus so much on the burdens of materialism instead of focusing on our relationship with God and with each other.

Advent is Latin for “coming.” This time of year is meant to prepare ourselves for the eagerness of the coming of Christ. During this preparation we are not only looking forward to Jesus in the manger but also for the future hope of Christ's return. Moreover, this time is meant to focus on Christ's presence in our lives as well as through the Word and Sacraments.

This year at Faith the Sermon Series during Advent is called “What If God Was One of Us?” This series will last seven weeks, which includes everyone's favorite Festival of Carols. The heart behind this seven-week devotional is meant to do two things:

1. To intentionally, prepare you for the coming of the Christ Child through the series “What If God Was One of Us?” as opposed to focusing on the overly stressful season that it can be.
2. To build stronger relationships with God and with one another.





# Devotional Guidance

Set aside 30 minutes each week during the seven weeks to work through the devotional. Each devotional is designed to envision you with God's truth and to offer transformation as you build relationship with God; while at the same time engaging the previous week's message.

If you are doing this devotional as an individual during the SHARE portion of the devotional write down your Highs and Lows and then when we meet on Sunday we will spend the first five minutes talking about our Highs and Lows for the week.

If you are doing this as a couple or family please remember to change roles each week. There are seven steps for each devotional which means there are plenty of opportunities to change roles.

For the Bible reading each week become comfortable reading from your own Bible or going online to [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com) or the Bible.com app.

Starting November 17th we will meet after each service to talk about last week's devotional. There will be yummy treats and meaningful conversation.

For any questions please ask Vicar Nick. Email [n.schmidlin@faithce.com](mailto:n.schmidlin@faithce.com)





## Week I: The Product of an Unplanned Pregnancy

Step One: **SHARE** your highs and lows of the week.

Step Two: **PRAY** that the Holy Spirit opens the meaning of the text before you as well as guides you and comforts you through the reading.

Step Three: **READ** Luke 1:26-38 out loud. If with others, take turns reading the verses.

Step Four: **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. Talk about who Jesus is to you in this story. How is Jesus being revealed during this season of Advent?

1. How would you feel if you were Mary in this story?
2. What would it be like if an angel came and spoke to you?
3. Like Mary, how can we strive to faithfully honor God? Especially when things seem impossible?

Step Five: **PRAY**

Almighty God, we know that nothing is impossible for you.  
You chose Mary a poor young woman in a tiny village  
to give birth to your one and only son so that we might  
be saved. We ask the Holy Spirit to fill us with your  
presence and grace so that we, like Mary, can serve and  
be a witness to the glorious promise of your Word;  
through your son Jesus Christ, who is coming to reign.  
At this time, we lift up our highs and lows...Amen

Step Six: **BLESS**

You are blessed and beloved servants of God. Wherever you go may God's grace and love shine upon you. Amen.

Step Seven: **Activities**

For week 1 there is a coloring page, a word search, and a crossword.



## An Angel Appears to Mary #1

### Coloring Page



An Angel Visits Mary  
Luke 1

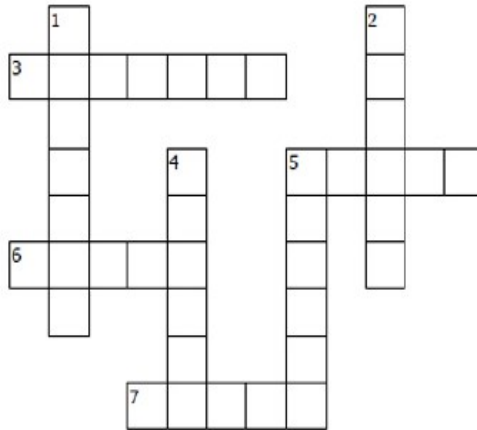
## An Angel Visits Mary

### Crossword

## An Angel Visits Mary

You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. Luke 1:31 (NIV)

Puzzle is based on Luke 1:26-38



#### ACROSS

3. To be joined together as husband and wife
5. A heavenly being; a messenger for God
6. The son who was born to Mary
7. A very young person especially between infancy and youth

#### DOWN

1. The name of the angel who appeared to Mary
2. A young unmarried woman; a maiden
4. The man to whom Mary was engaged to marry
5. To be filled with fear

JOSEPH	MARRIED	AFRAID	VIRGIN
GABRIEL	CHILD	ANGEL	JESUS



### An Angel Visits Mary

You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. Luke 1:31 (NIV)

The puzzle is based on Luke 1:26-38



K V G J E U J H T U Z G T J N  
 X I Y K V V V Z S H N U B K J  
 P D N W U E J N F O R M O O B  
 C J K G L L I O W N N O R S D  
 H B E E D G X E S N R O N Z B  
 I C G S R O F V B E M W D E I  
 H N L I U P M I I B P A V Q B  
 A Q V B I S H L R M W H R L A  
 Z Z J P J P L X T C D Q W Y G  
 D F H H D P F P H N A C I K A  
 A D A F R A I D W N V X K N B  
 E B W Q K U P O V X I J X Y R  
 Q G P L T C T L R X D L F H I  
 E L I Z A B E T H Q B O C Y E  
 Y K C N P O S T D N F E E O L

ELIZABETH	JESUS	JOSEPH	BORN	AFRAID
SON	KINGDOM	DAVID	GABRIEL	BIRTH
MARY	TOWN	ANGEL	THRONE	VIRGIN





## Week II: A Refugee That Became an Outlaw

Step One: **SHARE** the happy points and sad points of the week.

Step Two: **PRAY** that the Holy Spirit opens the meaning of the text before you as well as guides you and comforts you through the reading.

Step Three: **READ** Matthew 2:13-15 out loud. If with others, take turns reading the verses.

Step Four: **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. Talk about who Jesus is to you in this story. How is Jesus being revealed during this season of Advent?

1. What did it mean during the time of Jesus to be a refugee?
2. How can we today see Jesus in the many refugees around the world?
3. When life unexpectedly changes how do you look to God for thanks/support?

Step Five: **PRAY**

Heavenly Lord,

We are glad that you watch over and protect us. We lift up to you our highs and lows... We are thankful that you are with us and ask that you especially be with those refugee families who need your love, care and protection more than ever. Help us to open our hearts to the refugees we encounter in our daily lives. In your name we pray. Amen

Step Six: **BLESS**

May the Lord of love and kindness protect and watch over us and allow God's light to shine upon us for all of our days. Amen.

Step Seven: **Activities**

For week 2 the activity is called Hope For The Holidays. The Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) is collecting Holiday cards for families in immigration detention. By writing and decorating Holiday cards in English and Spanish we are providing holiday joy and hope for these detained families at the border. Please go to week 2 activities to learn more. On Sunday, November 24, we will collect all of the cards and send them in one large package. Help bring Christ's light of hope, love, and joy to these families.





You can bring joy and hope to families in immigration detention, and to children who crossed our borders alone, by writing and decorating holiday cards in English and Spanish.

## Step 1

Write messages of hope and encouragement in English and Spanish on holiday cards (see Spanish messages below for inspiration). Draw a picture or share your favorite poem, quote or Bible verse to personalize the card. Sign the card (first name and city/state). Do NOT put cards in individual envelopes. Please place all cards in one large manila envelope or box.

## Step 2

Download and fill out LIRS's Hope for the Holidays cover sheet, found below. Tuck it into your manila envelope or box. Be sure to share your contact information so we can follow-up with other opportunities to get involved.

## Step 3

Mail the cards to our Hope For The Holidays church partner, First English Evangelical Lutheran Church (address below). LIRS will ensure every family in detention has a card and gift to open on Christmas morning.

## SAMPLE GREETINGS IN SPANISH

Dear friend,	Querido amiga,
Greetings from [city/state]. My name is [first name].	Saludos desde [city/state] Me llamo [first name].
Merry Christmas	Feliz Navidad
Please know that you are not alone or forgotten.	Por favor, sepa que no está sola, ni olvidado.
I am praying for you and your family. I am also fighting for justice for you and your family, and for all our brothers and sisters who leave their countries in search of a better life.	Estoy orando por usted y su familia. Continuo luchando por usted y su familia y por todo nuestro hermanos y hermanas que dejan su país en busca de una vida mejor.
Please know that thousands of people are working to keep you and your family safe. You are not forgotten.	Miles de personas están trabajando para cuidar a usted y su familia.
Never forget that we are praying and fighting for you and your family.	Nunca olvides, estamos orando y luchando por usted y su familia.
God's blessings and peace at Christmas and for the New Year.	Las bendiciones de Dios y la paz en Navidad y para el Año Nuevo.
May God bless you!	¡Que Dios se bendiga!

Mail cards to:

First English Evangelical Lutheran Church • Attn: Hope for the Holidays  
3807 North Charles Street • Baltimore, MD 21218



Thousands of families flee violence and persecution from their home countries across the globe for the protection of America. However, when they arrive at our borders, many find shackles, not safety. The United States holds thousands of mothers and children (including nursing moms and babies) in detention centers – think jails – while their immigration cases are determined by the government. Families may be held in detention for months, sometimes years.

**Right now, thousands of families are being held in three family immigration detention centers:**

Karnes Family Residential Center, Karnes City, TX  
South Texas Residential Center, Dilley, TX  
Berks Family Detention Center, Berks, PA

## Here are some important facts and additional information about family detention:

- Since 2014, family detention has increased by 4,000%. There are more than 2,000 beds in detention centers for mothers and children seeking safety in America.
- Family detention can cost up to nearly \$319.37 per person per day; successful and secure community-based alternatives to detention exist for a mere fraction of that amount.
- An estimated 90% of families in immigration detention seek protection from violence and persecution, which means they should be treated as refugees.
- Poor conditions and lack of adequate medical care continue to be pervasive problems.

**THANK YOU FOR SHINING A  
LIGHT INTO THE DARKNESS OF  
DETENTION.**





## Week III: Someone Who Didn't Have a Nest Egg

Step One: **SHARE** the happy points and sad points of the week.

Step Two: **PRAY** that the Holy Spirit opens the meaning of the text before you as well as guides you and comforts you through the reading.

Step Three: **READ** Matthew 6:25-33 out loud. If with others, take turns reading the verses.

Step Four: **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. Talk about who Jesus is to you in this story. How is Jesus being revealed during this season of Advent?

1. Think about decision making and what it means to make a decision as a Christian?
2. How does Christ's salvation through his death on the cross comfort you?
3. How as a family do you plan for the future? What does that look like during Advent?

Step Five: **PRAY**

Creator of all life,

We thank you for always providing for us. Help us to understand that our future is secured in you Lord. Help us to not worry, but to grow steadfastly in faith. At this time God we offer up our highs and lows... In your unending name we pray. Amen.

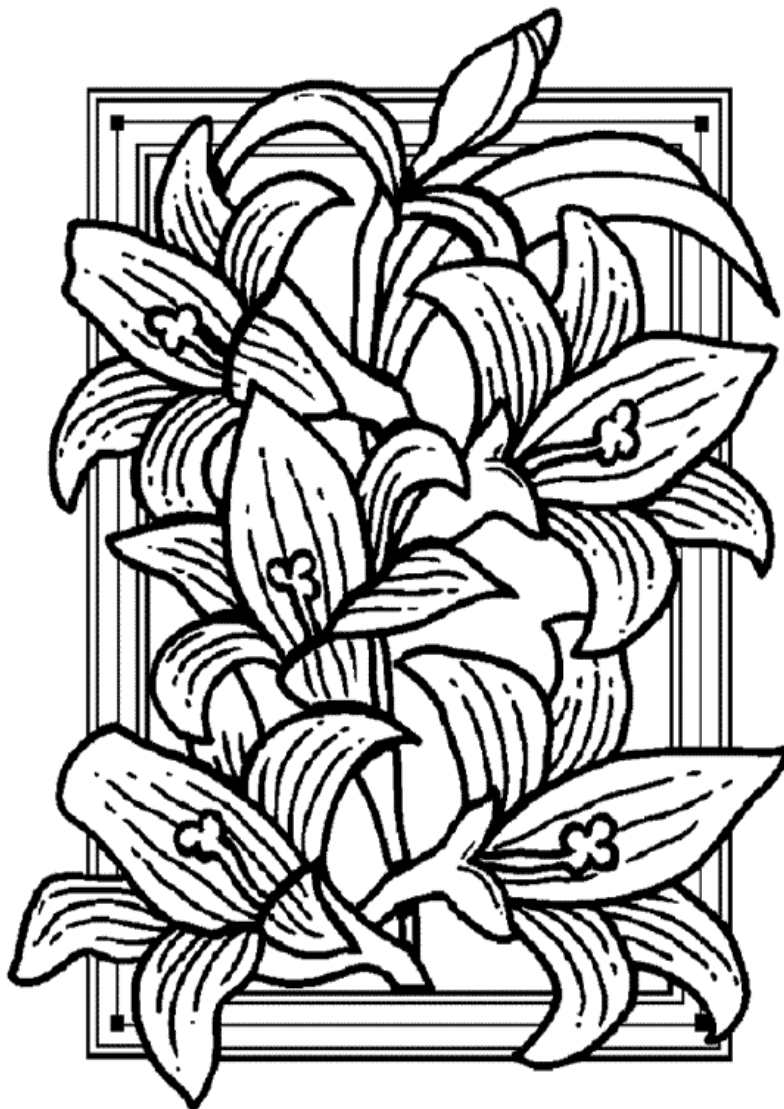
Step Six: **BLESS**

May the Love of God enfold us. May the Light of God surround us. May the Presence of God watch over us and keep us at peace. Amen.

Step Seven: **Activities**

Week 3 Activities include a coloring page, word search, and a word jumble.





"Consider the lilies of the field."

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### Jumble

The Lilies of the Field

Unscramble each word, then use the marked letters to reveal the secret word.



"Therefore I tell you, do not \_\_\_\_\_ about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear."

EAWR   
1

LYIL   
5

BNAR   
3

LBAOR   
2 4

ANSWER:   
1 2 3 4 5

HERE ARE SOME CLUES IN CASE YOU NEED HELP!

1. To have on your body; (clothes, for example).
2. A plant with large, usually bell-shaped flowers on long stems.
3. A large building on a farm in which grain and animals are often kept.
4. Work, especially that which involves physical effort.

**Answer:** To be uneasy or concerned about something; to be troubled.

## Word Search

### The Lilies of the Field

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin. Matthew 6:28 (KJV)

The puzzle is based on Matthew 6:24-34 (NIV).



I C F D U Q B Q K L X F L I H  
 F W D E X D T G F V I S U H S  
 U I O R E A W L R L G L P S I  
 L O E R E D X D H O G D I I R  
 I C T L R S S K Y Q W K R E N  
 F O M B D Y S N Y A F O O D S  
 E T W X I N P E S B I R D S C  
 R S T O R E Y L D B A R N S V  
 B L I F T X S S B W W V X Y W  
 B I B N A H E P F N L R P O X  
 Z C O L D H L A B O R D S I J  
 A S D V T R F L R E A P P R U  
 Q L Y O Y U I T H I F A A Z A  
 F Y L R U R R N M Q O E B J A  
 N C Z I G T U W K D W Y B S T

SPIN	BODY	REAP	LABOR	DRINK
BIRDS	SOW	WEAR	FEEDS	CLOTHES
FIELD	FOOD	LILIES	GROW	BARN
LIFE	DRESSED	STORE	EAT	WORRY





## Week IV: A Nerdy Teen and an Unremarkable Young Adult

Step One: **SHARE** your highs and lows of the week.

Step Two: **PRAY** that the Holy Spirit opens the meaning of the text before you as well as guides you and comforts you through the reading.

Step Three: **READ** Luke 2:46-52 out loud. If with others, take turns reading the verses.

Step Four: **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. Talk about who Jesus is to you in this story. How is Jesus being revealed during this season of Advent?

1. Do we only look for Jesus where we want Jesus to be?
2. What are the different ways we imagine Jesus? Is a nerdy teen one of them?
3. How can we find Christ's light in those we don't think of?

Step Five: **PRAY**

Unsuspecting God,

Help us to see Christ's light lived out in our daily lives. Help us to see your son in everything that you have created, Lord. Help us to see Christ's light in our highs and lows that we now lift up to you... We ask that you help us to remember, especially during this time of Advent that there is no better place for a child of God to be in than in a house of worship. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Step Six: **BLESS**

(insert name) you are a child of God, you are loved and forgiven always. You are marked with the cross of Christ forever.

Step Seven: **Activities**

For week 4 there is a coloring page, a decoder, and an alphabet soup puzzle.



# Jesus In the Temple

## Coloring Page



After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

Luke 2:46

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Standard Publishing, [www.standardpub.com](http://www.standardpub.com), 1-800-323-7543.

## Jesus In Temple

### Alphabet Soup

#### The Boy Jesus in the Temple

"Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" Luke 2:49 (NIV)

Each line of the puzzle has one word hidden in a list of random letters. The blank space is a missing letter that belongs to that word. Fill in the missing letter.

1.	L	R	E	L	A	T	I	V		S	A	N	R	D	H	H	W
2.	S	I	E	A	G	P	Q	H		U	S	E	G	O	K	X	V
3.	E	M	R	V	L	B	B	T		M	P	L	E	U	E	Z	K
4.	G	F	D	N	L	Z	H	O		E	P	R	P	O	B	Q	V
5.	Q	X	B	O	F	R	I	E		D	S	V	D	E	K	O	J
6.	Y	H	P	I	A	G	E	F		A	S	T	D	S	Z	X	A
7.	D	E	G	O	S	E	A	R		H	I	N	G	J	C	Q	W
8.	O	V	Y	I	U	P	A	R		N	T	S	B	J	W	S	Y
9.	X	Q	T	E	A	C	H	E		S	T	E	H	P	X	L	L
10.	W	L	B	H	D	K	C	M		T	H	E	R	D	G	E	V

parents	home	friends	teachers	searching
feast	relatives	temple	mother	house

## Jesus in the Temple

### Decoder

### The Boy Jesus in the Temple

After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Luke 2:46 (NIV)

Each number represents a letter of the alphabet. Substitute the correct letter for the numbers to reveal the coded words.

D	U	X	I	B	C	Y	A	V	H	G	F	J	L	S	Z	R	Q	O	P	W	T	E	K	M	N
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

- 20-8-17-23-26-22-15 \_\_\_\_\_
- 12-23-8-15-22 \_\_\_\_\_
- 10-19-25-23 \_\_\_\_\_
- 17-23-14-8-22-4-9-23-15 \_\_\_\_\_
- 12-17-4-23-26-1-15 \_\_\_\_\_
- 22-23-25-20-14-23 \_\_\_\_\_
- 22-23-8-6-10-23-17-15 \_\_\_\_\_
- 25-19-22-10-23-17 \_\_\_\_\_
- 15-23-8-17-6-10-4-26-11 \_\_\_\_\_
- 10-19-2-15-23 \_\_\_\_\_

FRIENDS	RELATIVES	PARENTS	FEAST	SEARCHING
HOUSE	TEMPLE	MOTHER	HOME	TEACHERS



## Week V: Someone Who Didn't Agree with You

Step One: **SHARE** your highs and lows of the week.

Step Two: **PRAY** that the Holy Spirit opens the meaning of the text before you as well as guides you and comforts you through the reading.

Step Three: **READ** Mark 8:31-33 out loud. If with others, take turns reading the verses.

Step Four: **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. Talk about who Jesus is to you in this story. How is Jesus being revealed during this season of Advent?

1. What are examples of ways we disagree with God?
2. In our Christian life does God always let us have it our way?
3. How can conflict be good?

Step Five: **PRAY**

Christ the Redeemer,

Help us to be willing to take up our own cross and follow Jesus. Help us to remember that it will not be easy just as in this week we present to you our lows of the week... We know that at times it will be hard. Ultimately, Lord, we know that you are worth it and we lift up our highs for the week... It is in your risen name that we pray. Amen.

Step Six: **BLESS**

As beloved children of God we ask that God grant us perseverance and protection as we carry our own cross and as we strive to follow Jesus. Amen.

Step Seven: **Activities**

For week 5 there is a coloring page and a take up your cross maze.



# Activities for week V



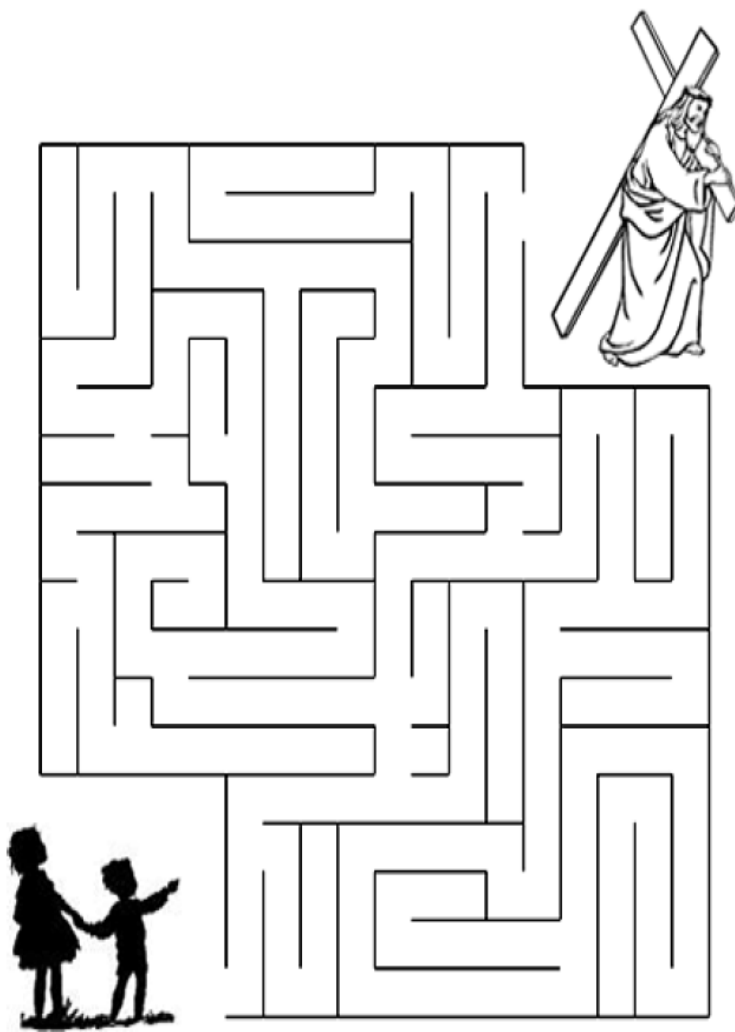
I will follow Jesus, God's Son.

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# Take Up Your Cross

## Maze



Can you find the path to Jesus?





## Week VI: Festival of Carols

Step One: **SHARE** your highs and lows of the week.

Step Two: **PRAY** that the Holy Spirit opens the meaning of the text before you as well as guides you and comforts you through the reading.

Step Three: **READ** Isaiah 9:6 out loud. If with others, take turns reading the verses.

Step Four: **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. Talk about who Jesus is to you in this story. How is Jesus being revealed during this season of Advent?

1. What are the different ways in which you worship God?
2. How do you use your talents to worship God?
3. How does the Festival of Carols connect you to the theme of preparing for the Christ child?

Step Five: **PRAY**

Almighty God,

With all the choirs of angels we lift up your heavenly name. As we draw closer to the coming of Christ, we ask that you help us to continue to prepare and imagine what your coming means to us. Let us offer our highs and lows... Dear God we ask for you to help all those involved with Festival of Carols and ask that you help us all to be awakened by the beautiful music we will hear this Sunday. In your name we pray. Amen.

Step Six: **BLESS**

We thank you for all the gifts you give to your Church, especially the gift of music and song. We ask you to bless our church. Bless all those who participate in Festival of Carols and give joy to your people and lead them in praising you more fully. Amen.

Step Seven: **Activities**

For week 6 spend the activity time listening to your favorite holiday music and connect it to our season of Advent.





## Week VII: Be There in Five

Step One: **SHARE** your highs and lows of the week.

Step Two: **PRAY** that the Holy Spirit opens the meaning of the text before you as well as guides you and comforts you through the reading.

Step Three: **READ** John 11:17-21 out loud. If with others, take turns reading the verses.

Step Four: **TALK** about how the Bible reading might relate to your highs and lows. Talk about who Jesus is to you in this story. How is Jesus being revealed during this season of Advent?

1. Is God not always there when we need God?
2. What does it mean for God to be there on time in your life?
3. How does our faith in Jesus help to see that it is never too late?

Step Five: **PRAY**

Dear God,

As our seven-week Advent devotional comes to an end, we lift up to you our highs and lows for the week... Dear Lord we pray today to help us continue to focus on your coming. Help us to understand that there are no time restrictions or schedules that will ever hold you back from being there for us when we need you. We know that you are the first and the last, the beginning and the end. Almighty and merciful God, thank you for the past seven weeks and for the opportunity for us to build a stronger relationship with others and with God.

As beloved children of God we say Amen.

Step Six: **BLESS**

May the Lord bless you and keep you; may the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace. Amen

Step Seven: **Activities**

For week 7 there is a coloring page and a maze. You can also spend the activity time in reflection. Think about the ways in which this devotional has helped bring you closer to God and to your family. Reflect on how you have discovered that God is one of us. Think about ways to continue a spiritual practice.

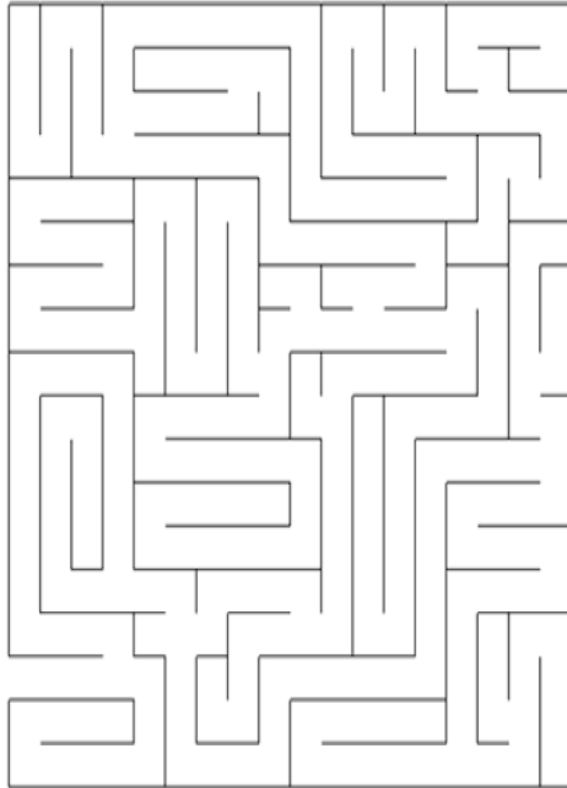




Jesus raises Lazarus.

Luke 10 John 11

Help Lazarus find the way to Jesus.



Then Jesus shouted, "Lazarus, come out!" And Lazarus came out, bound in graveclothes, his face wrapped in a headcloth.

John 11:43-44a (NLT)

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## Seven Weeks of Advent: What If God Was One of Us?

### Special Thanks

I am very proud to have been able to be a part of such a wonderful Advent journey with you all. I thank you for helping me to grow and learn in new areas of parish ministry. It is my humble hope that this devotional was not only important to you during this time but also helped you to focus on the coming of Christ and to genuinely build meaningful relationships with others and with God.

If this style of devotional was effective for your family please visit [www.faith5.org](http://www.faith5.org) for more family friendly devotionals.

My final request is for you to fill out the post assessment survey online at [tinyurl.com/PostDevoSurvey](http://tinyurl.com/PostDevoSurvey) or you can fill out a hard copy at the Welcome Center and drop it off in the offering box.

I wish you all a very Merry and Holy Christmas.

Very Respectfully,  
Vicar Nicholas Schmidlin





As you move into the next season of your life, I ask that you think about ways to continue to incorporate a spiritual practice into your life, as well as ways in which we as a church community can be more intentional about growing spiritually outside of church.

A popular method is to grow in your prayer life by talking about your highs and lows for each day and then praying to God about them.

It is my desire that as a church we are able to strengthen relationships with God and with those in our community.

If you have any questions or want to learn about different spiritual practices, please contact Vicar Nick.

