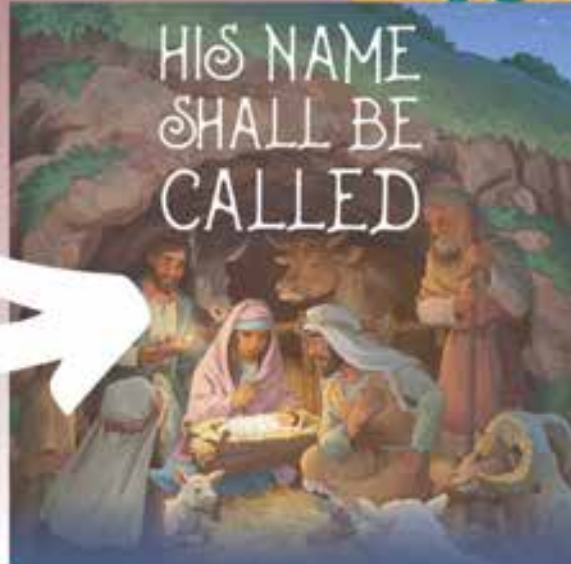


# *A Family* **ADVENT** *Calendar*

**A Companion Guide for  
families to our congregational  
Advent Devotions**



WONDERFUL  
COUNSELOR



MIGHTY  
GOD



EVERLASTING  
FATHER



PRINCE  
OF PEACE



**Starting on the fourth Sunday before Christmas, (That's December 1 this year!) Advent is a season of expectation and preparation leading up to the celebration of Jesus' birth on Christmas Day, so it ends on Christmas Eve. This year during Advent, we will reflect upon 4 names of Jesus as we anticipate His arrival - Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6).**

For a lot of families, it can be hard to keep Jesus at the center of their thoughts and celebrations. The season certainly has a lot going on! Between getting the Christmas tree up, watching our favorite Christmas movies, baking cookies, and Christmas parties, it's easy to get distracted. That's why this family-friendly Advent calendar was created - to help your family have super-doable ways to draw your family's attention to Jesus as you continue to enjoy the festivities.

*And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
Isaiah 9:6b*

*Plan the best time and place for your family to do these activities. Is it at breakfast, in the car, at dinner, or at bedtime? Whenever and wherever it is, put this calendar and a Bible there right now so it's easier to remember!*



WONDERFUL  
COUNSELOR



MIGHTY  
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EVERLASTING  
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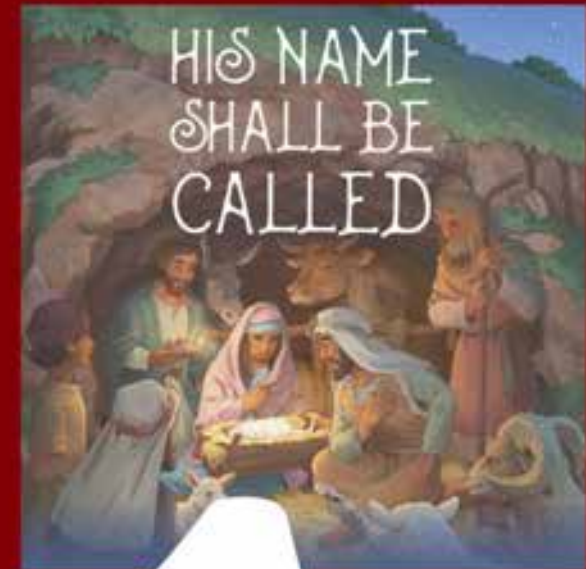


PRINCE  
OF PEACE



### What's in a Name?

During the season of Advent, we prepare to celebrate the birth of God's Son, who was given the name Jesus—a Hebrew name that means "God saves." In addition to His earthly name, Holy Scripture calls Jesus by various titles which describe something about His person or work. In this year's Advent series, we are going to examine four titles given to Jesus in Isaiah 9:6. Those titles are "Wonderful Counselor," "Mighty God," "Everlasting Father," and "Prince of Peace." During the Christmas season, we will focus on Jesus as the "Light of the World". We will learn how each of these titles describes something about who Jesus is and what He did for our salvation.



*This Family Advent Calendar is designed to be utilized alongside the "His Name Shall Be Called" devotions provided at church.*



If you are using an Advent wreath, light one purple or blue candle this week.



# FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

## Jesus - Wonderful Counselor

1

**Pick someone to read Isaiah 9:6.**

In this verse, Jesus is described as a counselor. Counselors give wisdom to help us in our day to day lives.

What is some wisdom that you have been given? Allow each person in the family to share.

2

**Print out a copy of the "Wonderful Counselor" coloring sheet (included on page 9) for each person in your family.**

Sit around the table and talk about the parts of the Advent/Christmas season that remind us of Jesus. How does a Christmas tree point to Christ? What about gifts?

Hang your creations where you can be reminded that Jesus is your counselor - the one who gives true wisdom.

3

**Pick someone new to read Exodus 20:1-2.**

Is it easier to listen to someone's advice before, or after they have done something kind for you?

Sometimes, it is said that "people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." Before giving them the 10 commandments, God reminds his people of what he has done for them by delivering them from their slavery.

What has God done for you? Does this make it easier, or harder to listen to his Word and Commandments?

4

**Choose a Bible verse to memorize as a family.**

It may be Isaiah 9:6b, a verse from your Advent church bulletin tonight, or Deuteronomy 6:6 (from your advent devotion book tonight)

Have each person (who can read) read the verse out loud. Then recite the whole verse as a family 3 times. Let anyone who wants to say it on their own do their best to do so! Encourage each other and help out when needed!

5

**Turn out all of the lights in your house, or gather in a dark room with no windows.**

How does it feel when you are in complete darkness?

Light a single candle or match in the dark room. Such little light can help us see so clearly in the darkness. Jesus is the light of the world, and his counsel and wisdom lights our path every day!

6

**Play Simon Says, taking turns to let different people be "Simon."**

How is playing this game a little like being a "Slave" to Simon? What might it be like to be in slavery to someone else?

How is the message that Jesus died for our sins a message of freedom?

7

**Read the devotion for today. (Page 9 in "His Name Shall Be Called")**

Sing a song about Jesus and his word today in order to fill your mind with good things.

Suggestions may include a "O Come O Come Emmanuel" (see below) or "Thy Word." If you don't feel as comfortable singing acapella, use a Youtube video to help!

### Hymn of Advent - O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
And ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear. *Refrain*

**Refrain:**  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

2 O come, Thou Wisdom from on high,  
Who ord'rest all things mightily;  
To us the path of knowledge show,  
And teach us in her ways to go. *Refrain*

# Wonderful



ROOMS

If you are using an Advent wreath, light two purple or blue candles this week.



# SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT

## Jesus - Mighty God

8

**Pick someone to read Isaiah 9:6.**

This week we focus on the reality that Jesus is "Mighty God." What is the strongest thing in this world that you can think of, other than God?

The devotion today reminds us that Jesus was not only a man, but also fully God. What did Jesus do during his life to show that he was true God? Sing together verses 1 and 3 of "O Come O Come Emmanuel" or look up a video of the song online.

9

**Print out a copy of the "Mighty God" coloring sheet (included on page 7) for each person in your family.**

Sit around the table and talk about how strong God is. What makes you feel weak? What seems to be strong in this world? God is Mightier than all of our burdens, worries, and our sin. Listen to Christmas music and color as you sing.

Hang your creations where you can be reminded that Jesus is your mighty God.

10

**Pick two people to read Exodus 3:14 and John 8:57-58.**

Go around the circle and let everyone complete the sentence "Today, I am..." Fill it in with an emotion or something about who you are.

Discuss what it means that God simply says one of his names is "I AM" without finishing the sentence.

11

**Have everyone share...**

God puts his mighty name upon us in Baptism. Share something that you know or remember about your baptism day or the baptism of someone else in your family. If you have a baptism candle, light it today. Conclude by praying for baptism sponsors or godchildren.

If someone in your family has not been baptized, make plans to speak to a pastor or Christian friend about the gift of Baptism.

12

**Pick someone to read Psalm 46:1.**

What things are dangerous in our world? What protects us from those things?

Sin is the most dangerous thing for our eternal lives. It separates us from God. As you are willing, take time as a family today to reflect on things you have done wrong - ways you have hurt each other or failed to care for the people around you. Pray and ask God for forgiveness - He always is ready to forgive!

13

**Have everyone share what kind of food puts a smile on their faces.**

Even with all of his might, Jesus came as a servant to serve others - fully God and fully man.

Plan to make Christmas cookies or some other "sharable" food as a family this weekend!

Put a smile on someone else's face by giving some away!

14

**Pick someone new to read John 1:1-3.**

God has revealed himself as "Trinity" or Three in One. God the Father made the world. God the Son is Jesus who died for our sins, and God the Holy Spirit gives us faith to believe in Him. And yet, there are not three Gods, but one God.

How does this concept confuse you? Who can you talk to when you have difficult questions about your faith?

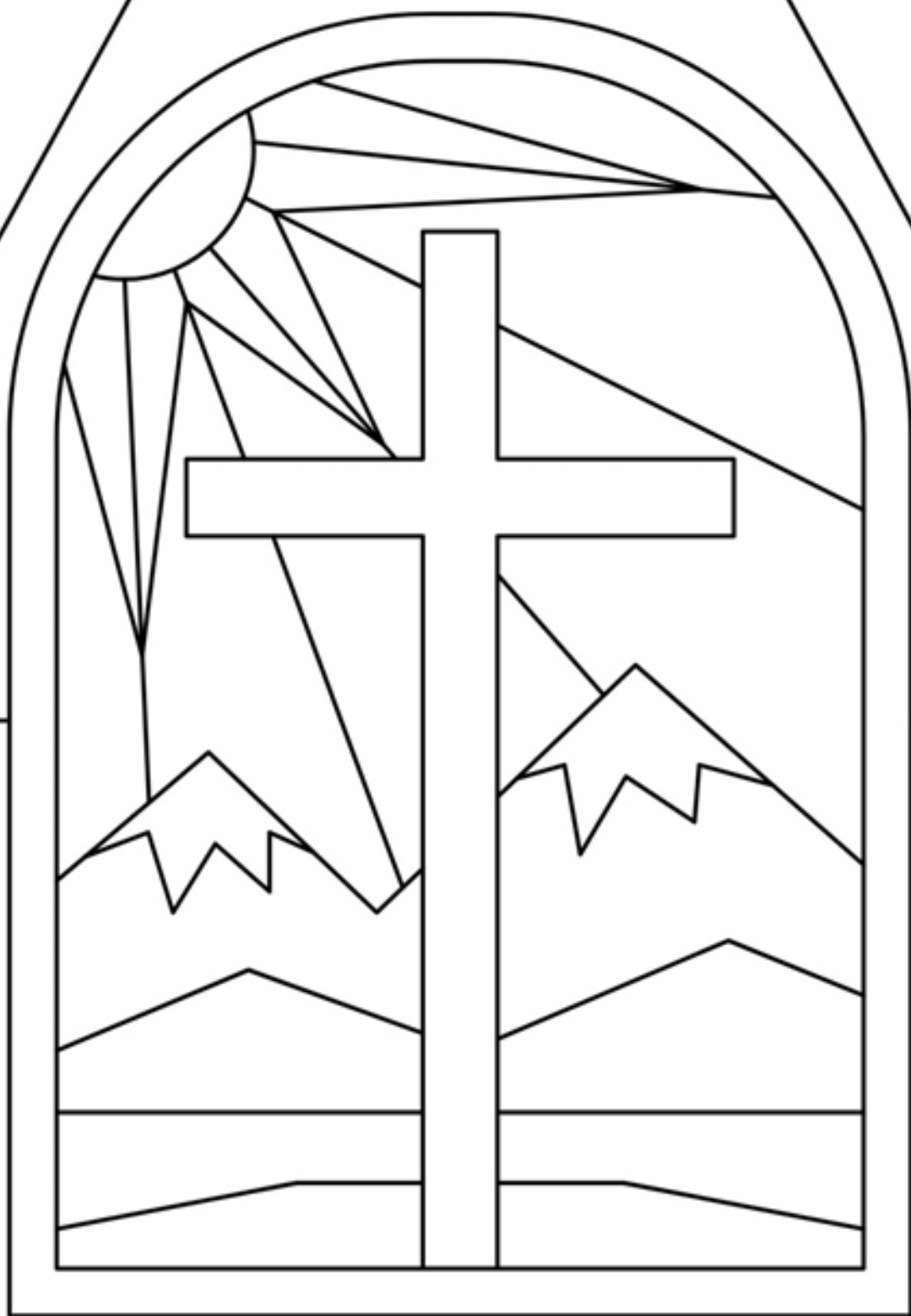
### Hymn of Advent - O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
And ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear. *Refrain*

**Refrain:**  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

3 O come, O come, Thou Lord of might,  
Who to Thy tribes on Sinai's height  
In ancient times didst give the Law  
In cloud and majesty and awe. *Refrain*

MIGHTY



GOOD

If you are using an Advent wreath, light two purple or blue candles, and the pink candle this week.



# THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT

## Jesus - Everlasting Father

15

Pick someone to read Isaiah 9:6.

This week we focus on the reality that Jesus is "Everlasting Father." Christians have been celebrating Christmas for over 1500 years! What do you think Christmas celebrations were like 500 years ago? Look it up if you don't know. What do you think they will be like 500 years in the future?

Sing together verses 1 and 6 of "O Come O Come Emmanuel" or look up a video of the song online.

16

Print out a copy of the "Everlasting Father" coloring sheet (included on page 9) for each person in your family.

As you color today, list some of your favorite Christmas traditions! Can traditions be old and new at the same time?

Micah says Jesus is both the "Ancient of Days" and yet still going to be born in the future. How can this be true? Talk about it as a family.

17

Look up online who ruled in different parts of the world 1000 years ago.

Are any of those people still ruling today? Why not?

Jesus is the Eternal King. He has been in charge of the world from the beginning, and he will rule over it forever.

18

The Christmas season can be extremely fast paced. Here's a quick way to release some pressure.

Jesus is Lord in the fast times and the slow ones. We are called to rest in him. Find one thing you can eliminate from your calendar that will give you more space and time to relax. Decide as a family what you will do to enjoy that time instead.

19

Recall the Story of Moses together - you could find a summary video of the story online. ("God's Story, Moses" is a good one.)

Compare and contrast, as a family, Jesus and Moses. What were their similarities and differences? How was Jesus even greater than Moses?

20

Discuss this as a family today:

Jesus is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. Where do you see Jesus in your preparations for Christmas? How can you stay focused on him this Christmas season?

21

Choose someone different to read Colossians 1:15-16.

As Christmas gets closer, share something that you are worried about.

Then pray together for strength to believe and know that Jesus is more powerful than anything in this world - that He would melt those worries away.

### Hymn of Advent - O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
And ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear. *Refrain*

**Refrain:**  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

6 O come, Thou Dayspring from on high,  
And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
And death's dark shadows put to flight. *Refrain*



Everlasting



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If you are using an Advent wreath, light all 4 candles in the circle this week.



# FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT

## Jesus - Prince of Peace

22

Pick someone to read Isaiah 9:6.

This week we focus on the reality that Jesus is "Prince of Peace." **Have everyone grab their pillows and head to the family room.** Sing together verses 1 and 7 of "O Come O Come Emmanuel" or look up a video of the song online. Listen to other peaceful Christmas music.

**Pick someone else to read Philippians 4:6-7.** As the peaceful music plays, tell everyone to close their eyes and focus on telling God what they need.

23

Print out a copy of the "Prince of Peace" coloring sheet (included on page 11) for each person in your family.

Sit around the table and talk about how worry makes you feel as you color - talk about what all still needs to be done before Christmas.

Jesus came to bring peace to the world. Worry steals our joy and our peace. Hang your creations where you can be reminded that Jesus is your peace - the one who gives true wisdom.

24

Today is Christmas Eve and the last day of Advent. Go to worship at your church and rejoice that Peace has come to earth in Christ Jesus!

Gather around your Christmas tree or a lit candle and read the Christmas story from Luke 2:1-20.

## DAYS 1 - 4 OF CHRISTMAS

25

Today is Christmas Day, or the First Day of Christmas. Give each other gifts today to be reminded of the greatest gift, Jesus.

There may have been many things today that were the opposite of peaceful. Did anything not go as planned today? Talk about it as a family.

The gift of Jesus on Christmas does not always bring harmony or peace in our families - but He does bring the greater gift - peace with God through forgiveness of our sin.

26

Select someone different to read Romans 5:1.

Sometimes the peace of Christmas can disappear the day after Christmas. Make plans as a family today for ways you can continue to be reminded of the peace Jesus brings. How will you prioritize worship this year? How can you bring peace to others?

27

Think of people you know who may not know Jesus.

In Matthew chapter 10, Jesus says that even though he is the Prince of Peace, we are divided from those who do not know him. Pray for family members or people you know who do not know Jesus, that they would one day repent and trust in the Prince of Peace.

28

Give each other a blessing of peace today.

Take time today to look each other in the eye and say, "Peace be with you." Try greeting each other this way throughout the day, and see if it brightens everything you do. Before bed, pray that "the peace of God would guard our hearts and minds" as we rest in the peace that only Christ Jesus brings.

### Hymn of Advent - O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
And ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear. *Refrain*

*Refrain:*  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

7 O come, Desire of nations, bind  
In one the hearts of all mankind;  
Bid Thou our sad divisions cease,  
And be Thyself our King of Peace. *Refrain*

# Prince of



If you are using an Advent wreath, light the center white candle during the Christmas Season.



# DAYS 5 - 12 OF CHRISTMAS

## Jesus - Light of the World

29

**Pick someone to read John 8:12.**

This week we focus on the reality that Jesus is the "Light of the World." Talk about why light is so important to our everyday lives. What can and can't you do with or without light?

30

**Print out a copy of the "Light of the World" coloring sheet (included on Page 13) for each person in your family.**

For a few minutes, try to color your creations in the darkness, with very little light. Talk about why it is so hard to color. Then, turn on the lights and finish your creations.

Hang your creations where you can be reminded that Jesus is the light of the world.

31

**Pick someone different to read Micah 7:8.**

The verse talks about enemies. How does life feel "dark" when people use their words to hurt us? How can a compliment brighten your day?

Sit in a circle and have everyone give the person to their left a compliment. Then, think of other people you could give compliments to in order to brighten their days.

1

**Talk about your plans for this new year.**

Even though all of your plans seem bright and hopeful now, we know many of them will not end up working out the way we hope. That's ok - we can be sure of one shining light in this new year - God's perfect love for us in Christ Jesus.

2

**Discuss some "darknesses" that have bothered you lately.**

Has anything been sad, worrisome, or scary? Has anything not gone as you expected. What can you do when you are feeling like your life is sitting in darkness?

3

**Complete the sentences:**

When I hear the word "darkness," I feel...

When I hear the word "light" it makes me feel...

God sees everything we do. Nothing is hidden from him. How does that make you feel? God loves you, no matter what you have done. Rejoice in His forgiveness today!

4

**Get out a flashlight or laser pointer. Take turns chasing the light around the room trying to touch the light before the person holding the flashlight moves the light. Give everyone a turn.**

God wants us to walk in the light. What does he mean by that? (See 1 John 1:5-7)

5

**Pick someone different to read Philippians 2:15-16.**

How can you shine Jesus' light today in your everyday life?

### Christmas Hymn - O Come, All Ye Faithful

1 O come, all ye faithful,  
Joyful and triumphant!  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.  
Come and behold Him  
Born the King of angels; *Refrain*

**Refrain:**  
O Come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
Christ the Lord!

2 Highest, most holy,  
Light of Light eternal,  
Born of a virgin, a mortal He comes;  
Son of the Father  
Now in flesh appearing! *Refrain*

*Light*



OF  
THE  
WORLD

# THE SEASON OF EPIPHANY - HOME BLESSING

For use by the Family

Epiphany is celebrated each year in the Church on January 6th, marking the conclusion of the 12 days of Christmas and the arrival of the Magi who brought gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to the Christ child.

As the season of Epiphany celebrates God visiting His people in their places of dwelling, one historical practice during this season is that of a house blessing.

Bless your home with the presence of Christ this Epiphany, using the guide on the next page. Although Epiphany is celebrated on January 6th, the Epiphany season last for several weeks. Make plans to do this blessing at any time during the month of January as you begin the new year. This blessing may take a little longer than most of your family discussions, so be intentional about planning a time to do it together as a family.

*When the wise men saw the star, they were filled with joy. They came to the house where the child was and saw him with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. They opened their gifts and gave him treasures of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.*

*Matthew 2:10-11*

You may consider straightening up your home, or giving certain rooms a deep clean before doing this blessing - but don't let a messy house keep you from doing it!



*Instead of doing this blessing all at one time, you may choose to do one room blessing per night, and spread the blessing out over a week.*



# BLESSING OF THE HOME

## Led by the Head of Household



### Gather at the Entrance to the Home

**Read:** Romans 15:7

**Do:** Mark the entrance of your home with the words "May Christ bless this House" using chalk on the house or sidewalk. Decorate with a cross and the year as well.

**Pray:** Lord God, protect and guide those who live here as they come and go. Let them show hospitality to all who visit this home, so that those who enter here may find peace.



### Gather in a Bedroom (use multiple times as needed)

**Read:** Psalm 4:8

**Do:** Lay down on the bed together, or sit on the floor. Have everyone share a compliment with the person/people who sleep in that room.

**Pray:** For each new morning and its light, for rest and shelter of the night, for health and food, for love and friends, for every gift your goodness sends, we thank you, gracious Lord.



### Gather in the Study or Office

**Read:** Proverbs 9:9

**Do:** Share something you appreciate about this room. How is it helpful to you or your family?

**Pray:** O Lord, you desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach us to know wisdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.



### Gather in the Living Room

**Read:** Ephesians 4:32

**Do:** Have you ever said words in this room that were hurtful to a member of your family? As we have been forgiven much in Jesus, so we are called to forgive one another.

**Pray:** Father of all mercy, look with lovingkindness on us as your servants, and grant us a peace that passes all understanding, to guard our hearts and minds by your word; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.



### Gather in the Family Room

**Read:** Philippians 4:8

**Do:** Can you see the outside from this room? What is beautiful in this space? Are there any Christian symbols? If not - consider adding a cross or some other reminder of Christ to this room in the near future.

**Pray:** Lord of all creation, give us a right judgment in all things, that we may rejoice in all that is good, and be defended against all that is evil; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.



### Gather in the Kitchen or Dining Room

**Read:** Joel 2:26a

**Do:** What is your favorite food that is cooked in this kitchen or served at this table? How could you share that meal with someone outside of your family this year?

**Pray:** Give us ever grateful hearts for daily bread, O Lord, and keep us ever mindful of the needs of others; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

To conclude the blessing, try singing this hymn together. Remember, if you don't know the song, you could look up a video online:

Now Thank We All our God, LSB 895:1

Now thank we all our God With hearts and hands and voices,  
Who wondrous things has done, In whom His world rejoices;  
Who from our mothers' arms Has blest us on our way  
With countless gifts of love And still is ours today.

