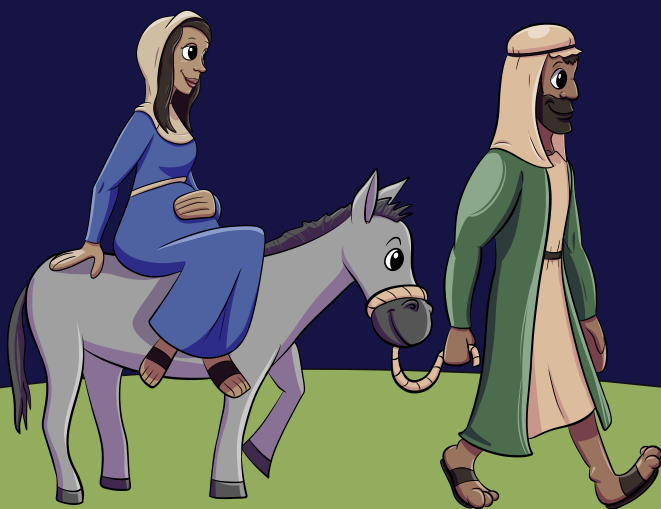


RADIANT

 **KIDS**



A Family Advent Devotional

WELCOME TO CHRISTMAS

AT WOODSIDE!

This Advent season, we're excited to help guide your family as you lead them to reflect on the true reason for the season—Jesus!

Through this four-week Advent devotional, our hope is to create space for meaningful conversations and memorable moments as your family learns and grows together. Each week highlights a passage of scripture and ends with questions to reflect on as a family. At the end of each devotional segment, you'll find an activity that you can do together.

We hope this holiday season reflects the warmth of Christ's love within your family. We'd love for you to join us on Christmas Eve at one of our 14 campuses, where we'll celebrate the birth of our Savior and the fulfillment of God's promise to us. Visit woodsidebible.org/christmas to learn more about locations and service times.

From all of us here at Woodside — Merry Christmas!

The Woodside Kids Team

DECEMBER AT A GLANCE

The Big Ideas and passages of Scripture below will tie in every week to our December message series at Woodside. As your family reads through this devotional, we hope to see you on Sundays at one of our 14 church campuses! To find a Woodside campus near you, visit woodsidebible.org/locations.

DECEMBER 1

The Light of Hope – Isaiah 9:1-2

Big Idea: The coming of Christ is the light of hope.

Page 03

DECEMBER 8

The Light of Joy – Isaiah 9:3

Big Idea: The coming of Christ fills us with joy.

Page 05

DECEMBER 15

The Light of Liberty – Isaiah 9:4

Big Idea: The coming of Christ brings liberty to enslaved sinners.

Page 07

DECEMBER 22

The Light of Peace – Isaiah 9:5

Big Idea: The coming of Christ brings peace.

Page 09

DECEMBER 24

The Light of Christ – Isaiah 9:6-7

Big Idea: The coming of Christ meets our deepest desires and needs.

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WORD OF THE WEEK: HOPE

Week 1 | December 1-7

Read: Luke 1:26-39

A long time ago in the country of Israel, a very special birth happened in a village called Bethlehem. It happened during a hard time for the people who were Jews because Romans had taken over their land. But wait — I'm jumping ahead. Let's go back to the beginning of this true story.

Maybe you haven't heard a donkey narrate a story before, so let me introduce myself. My humans named me Clopper — probably because that's what I sound like when I walk along the road. I'm a boy donkey and we're called jacks, but girl donkeys are called jennies. My human's name was Mary, and we lived in a very small village called Nazareth. Mary was engaged to a man named Joseph, and this story is about how God worked through her in an amazing way.

One day, Mary wanted some fresh air after her chores were done, so we went out to enjoy the sunshine. I was munching on some green grass when, suddenly, a strange man appeared. He looked very different, and I let out a loud HEEE-HAWW! Mary was startled, but somehow she knew this man was an angel.

The angel's name was Gabriel, and he told Mary that she was going to have a baby. This baby would be the Son of God! Can you believe that? Mary's people, the Jews, had been waiting for a long time for this. Her baby was going to be the Messiah, their Savior.

When the angel told her all this, Mary answered just like I thought she would. She said, "I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be to me according to your word." Many Jewish girls hoped they'd be chosen as the Messiah's mother. I would have been hee-hawing all the way home to let everyone know that Mary was the one chosen by God, but she kept it to herself.

The angel told Mary that her older cousin, Elizabeth, was also going to have a baby. I'm not sure what Mary was thinking, but she decided to go and visit Elizabeth right then and there. Of course, that meant I was going with her. I carried everything we needed for the trip because I would do anything to help Mary. The whole time we traveled, I hoped nothing dangerous would happen on the way!



THINK ABOUT IT

Our word for this week is *hope*.

When you hope, it means you want something to happen. Have you ever hoped for something? What was hoped for by the characters in our story today?

Many Jewish girls hoped they'd be chosen as the Messiah's mother. Clopper is hoping that nothing happens on their trip to see Elizabeth. They hoped, but there were no guarantees.

Our hope in Jesus is different. For example, Jesus has promised that He'll be with us when things are happy or when they are sad. That hope is guaranteed! When God promises something, even if it doesn't happen right away, we can hope with confidence because we know it will happen.

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Write out the word hope on a Christmas ornament. Decorate it and put it on your tree to remind you that Jesus is our true hope.



WORD OF THE WEEK: JOY

Week 2 | December 8-14

Read: Luke 1:39-56, Matthew 1:18-25

Our trip to visit Elizabeth and her husband, Zechariah, was a long one. But when we arrived, something amazing happened when Elizabeth heard Mary's voice. Elizabeth's baby jumped inside her womb, and she yelled out, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!" Later, I heard them talking about how Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

They were so excited that they forgot to say hello to me. Usually, they pet my ears. Did you know that donkeys have long ears? Mary broke out into a beautiful song of joy as she praised God and thanked Him for trusting her with the Son of God. I think Mary's song will be remembered for many years to come.

After visiting for about three months, Elizabeth's baby was ready to be born. That's when Mary knew it was time to go home, so we packed her things and started the journey back. Mary was a little nervous — during our visit, she had talked to Elizabeth about the angel and the changes happening in her body now that she was pregnant. I'm glad that Elizabeth was able to comfort and encourage Mary because she would never have understood my HEEE-HAWW!

As we got closer to Nazareth, I could sense that Mary was worried about what Joseph would say. They were engaged, but not yet married. Would Joseph believe her when she told him about the baby she carried?

She shouldn't have worried. God sent an angel to Joseph in a dream and told him that Mary's baby really was God's Son. The angel said to name the baby Jesus because He would save God's people from their sins.

Mary and Joseph got married, and I went to live with them — long ears and all. But my days of traveling weren't over, because Joseph soon learned that he and Mary needed to journey to Bethlehem and be counted in the governor's census. Even though it was a long trip, it was such a joy to carry Mary and her baby! I'm so glad that Mary and Joseph trusted God to take care of them along the way.



THINK ABOUT IT

Our word for this week is *joy*.

When were the characters in today's story joyful?

Elizabeth was full of joy when she heard Mary's voice.

Mary was full of joy when she heard Elizabeth's blessing.

Clopper was full of joy when he got the chance to carry Mary to Bethlehem.

Experiencing joy is different than being happy. When something good happens to us, we feel happy. But even when things get tough, we can still have joy deep down inside. The fact that we can be joyful helps us know, no matter what, that God will take care of us.

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Write or paint the word *joy* on a second Christmas ornament. Hang it on your tree and ask your parents about what brings them joy. Remember that Jesus is our greatest joy!



WORD OF THE WEEK: LIBERTY

Week 3 | December 15-21

Read: Luke 2:1-7

Both Mary's and Joseph's families were originally from Bethlehem, which is why we had to return there for the census. We weren't sure how long we'd need to stay in Bethlehem, so Mary and Joseph packed a lot of supplies for the journey. This meant that I would be fully loaded, but I would also need to carry Mary when she couldn't walk. Donkeys are very strong and can carry a lot of weight.

When we stopped for the night, Joseph made a fire so that we would stay warm. If danger came near us, I was prepared to use my strong back legs to protect my family. We started out again the next morning, and I was looking forward to being free from the load I was carrying. When we finally got to Bethlehem, we were very surprised at the number of people that were there because of the census! Right away, we headed to the inn. Mary was getting uncomfortable, and Joseph was worried that she might have the baby before we got settled.

When we arrived, the innkeeper was frantically running around making sure his guests were taken care of. But when we finally got his attention, he told us there was no room for us there. Joseph begged the innkeeper for a place to stay, and he finally told us that we could sleep in the stable with the animals. There was straw to make a bed, and we would be protected from the weather.

I'm used to sleeping in a stable, but Mary and Joseph weren't. I couldn't imagine Mary having her baby in a place like that. She was giving birth to the Son of God — why weren't we going to a fancy house? If this baby was going to set people free, shouldn't He be born where important people lived? But Joseph trusted God and was thankful to just have someplace safe for Mary to stay. It wasn't long before everyone was sleeping.



THINK ABOUT IT

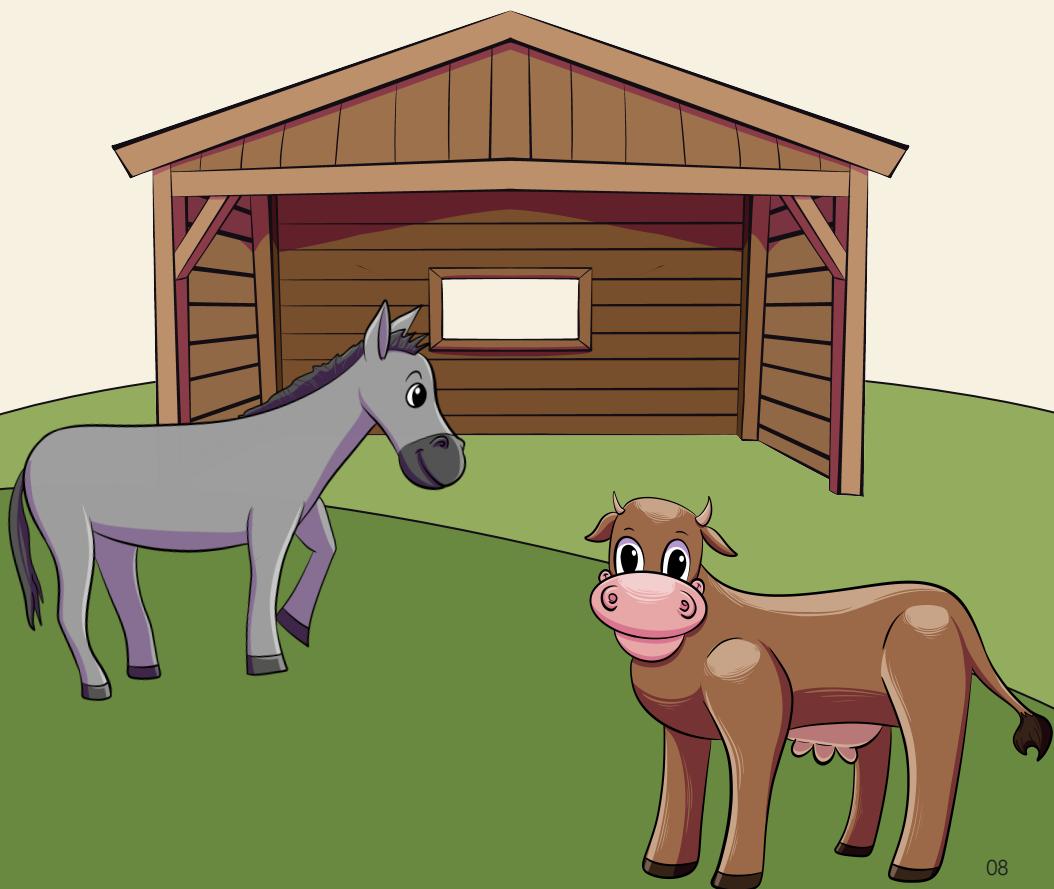
Our word for this week is *liberty*.

When we have liberty, it means that we're free. It means that we're not slaves to anything! Can you think of places in our story that talked about freedom?

Clopper was glad to finally be free from his heavy load, and he also knew that Mary's baby was going to set people free. Clopper was right: just a few decades later, Jesus freed us from our sins so that we could live in the fullness of God's love.

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Write or paint the word *liberty* on a third ornament. Hang it on your tree to remind you that Jesus gives us true freedom.



WORD OF THE WEEK: PEACE

Week 4 | December 22-23

Read: Luke 2:6-20

In the middle of the night, Mary called for Joseph in a voice that I hadn't heard before. Joseph immediately got up and went to help Mary. It wasn't too long before I heard another loud noise — this time, the cry of a baby. Mary's baby was a boy, just like the angel had said.

Once Mary laid down to rest with baby Jesus, my hearing was startled again. I heard someone shouting that Jesus had been born in a manger. How could this be? How would anyone know that Jesus had been born?

I hee-hawed quietly, but Joseph didn't know what I was trying to say. I kept hearing voices from outside the stable praising God. Then it got really quiet and I felt an overwhelming peace. It was all so unusual that I had no idea what had just happened.

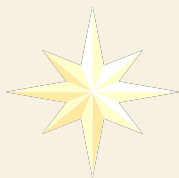
Some time later, a group of shepherds came to the stable with an amazing story about how an angel told them about a Savior, Christ the Lord, being born in a manger. Then they saw thousands of angels appear, praising God and proclaiming peace on earth. The shepherds left their sheep and found baby Jesus right where the angel had said.

While the shepherds were delighting in baby Jesus, I watched Mary get a certain look on her face. I had seen it before: after the angel Gabriel came to visit her, and again when Elizabeth's baby jumped in her womb. Now, I watched Mary get the same look again as she took in her surroundings and treasured everything in her heart. I knew I had just watched something very special.

Once the shepherds left, a special peace again filled the stable. As I looked around at everyone quietly resting, I knew that they were part of a story much bigger than they could ever imagine. This was a night I would never forget.



THINK ABOUT IT



Our word for this week is *peace*.

Where did you notice peace in our story? Clopper experienced peace in the stable after the birth of Jesus, and then again after the shepherds came. The angels told the shepherds that the earth would experience peace because of Jesus' birth.

Peace is the certainty that Jesus gives us even when things in life are difficult. Have you ever felt the peace of Jesus in your heart? If so, when?

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Write or paint the word *peace* on a fourth Christmas ornament. Hang it on your tree to remind you about the peace that Jesus gives us.



WORD OF THE WEEK: ETERNAL LIFE

Christmas Eve | December 24

Read: Luke 2:22-40

I stayed with Mary for many years after that special night when Jesus was born. I carried Mary and Jesus to the temple when we all went to present Him to the Lord. I was excited when I heard the prophecies of Simeon and Anna, telling those at the temple that Jesus was the Messiah. I too wanted to shout out that Jesus was the Messiah, but I could only hee-haw.

I was there when the wise men brought special gifts for Jesus. I was there when Joseph and Mary fled to Egypt because King Herod wanted to kill baby Jesus. I brought Mary, Joseph, and Jesus back to Nazareth when an angel told Joseph it was safe to return to Israel.

I got to watch Jesus grew up, and He never did anything wrong or sinful. I loved it when He petted my long ears and brought me special treats to eat!

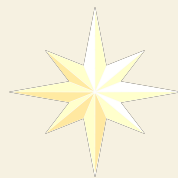
When Jesus began His ministry, I took Mary to hear Him teach. He taught people to first love God, and then to also love each other. He taught people that they needed to put Him first if they wanted to follow Him. He told people that He came to save them from their sins.

I also took Mary to the cross where Jesus died. I knew that Jesus had never done anything wrong, but He told us that He came to die so that humans might have eternal life.

I was very sad when Jesus died, but just a few days later, He rose from the grave! Can you believe it? Jesus is alive today in heaven, and He wants to be your Lord and Savior. When you ask Jesus to be in charge of you and to save you from your sins, He sends His Holy Spirit to live inside of you and to help you live like God asks us to in His Word. Then, when we die, we will go to heaven to live with Jesus for eternity.

There are so many stories to tell about Jesus and Mary, but I don't have the room to tell you all of them here. You can learn more about the life of Jesus by reading your Bible! Merry Christmas.

THINK ABOUT IT



Our word for this week is *eternal life*.

Eternal life is the gift that God gives to those who believe that Jesus is one with God, was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, died on the cross to save us, and then rose again. There is nothing that we can do on our own to get eternal life. It is a gift that we must accept from God.

FAMILY ACTIVITY

For your final activity, make a cross or paint an empty tomb on an ornament, then write eternal life on your masterpiece and hang it on your tree. If you aren't sure what eternal life is, take time to ask a parent or an adult that you trust. Following Jesus is the most important decision you will ever make in your life.



USE THIS SPACE TO DRAW A CHRISTMAS SCENE



At Woodside, we believe that every child is a gift from the Lord and worthy of investment and care. That's why we're so passionate about walking with the next generation as they learn about the ways that God treasures each of them individually.

We're committed to providing your kids with secure environments where they can learn and grow in their faith. Every weekend, we provide a safe space for your child to flourish in the love of Jesus while you gather with your church family for worship.

Scan below to learn more about Woodside Kids, or visit woodsidebible.org/kids-min.





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