



## ▶ DAILY DEVOTIONAL.

**Saturday/Sunday, 12/1-2/18**

**“Drab to Color”**

**Luke 2:1-8**

*In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register.*

*So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.*

*And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night.*

**Family Activity:** The end of fall and the beginning of winter can start to look pretty drab outside with the leaves all gone and the grass turning brown. That is, until all of the Christmas lights and decorations arrive! Jesus came to be Immanuel, God with us, bringing light and life to the earth. As we begin our countdown to Christmas, take time this week to make an advent wreath. You will need five candles for Hope (Purple), Love (Purple), Joy (Pink), Peace (Purple) and the Christ Candle (White). You can make your wreath as simple or as fancy as you would like.



Light one Purple Candle this week and Discuss:

- How is Jesus the Light of the World?
- How does Jesus bring us hope?
- How can we bring the light of Christ to the world?

**Monday, 12/3/18**

**“Faithful”**

**Matthew 1:18-21**

*This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.*

*But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."*

- Joseph is described as being "faithful to the law" and as such, he had the choice to quietly divorce Mary or could publicly have her stoned to death. As shocking as the latter option may be, it was considered "faithfulness" when it came to the law. God intervened to give Joseph a new definition of faithfulness. When have you needed to be faithful to God despite what may have been acceptable according to rules or laws?
- As we learn with Joseph, being faithful to rules and being faithful to God may in fact be different. Where have you found this to be true in your life? How about in the world?

**Prayer:** Holy God, we thank you for your faithfulness to us. Help us to know and discern what it means to live a life that is faithful to you. Give us the courage to follow your direction, even when it may mean overturning "the rules." We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

**Tuesday, 12/4/18**

**"Immanuel"**

**Matthew 1:22-25**

*All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").*

*When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.*

- What does it mean to you for Jesus to be "God with us"?
- What experiences have you had that show that God has been with you?

**Prayer:** Good and gracious God, we give you glory and thanks for the wonderful birth of Jesus. We thank you for loving us so much that you came to be Immanuel, God with us. May your promises be ever on our lips and in our hearts. Amen.

**Wednesday, 12/5/18**

**"Do not be afraid ... "**

**Luke 1:26-31**

*In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."*

*Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.*

- Have you noticed that angels in the Bible have a catchphrase? It is "Do not be afraid." Getting a message from God can be overwhelming, terrifying even. When have you been afraid to hear a message from God? What message is God trying to reveal to you today?

- While on our honeymoon, my husband Brian and I went ziplining. At each station as we stepped off of the platform and seemingly into thin air, we had a moment of panic. Would we fall? Is the line strong enough to catch us? The guide always assured us that we didn't need to worry, they had already gone ahead of us to be sure we were OK. God's message to us is to not be afraid because God has already gone before us. What fear are you ready to let go of, knowing that God is already there to support you?

**Prayer:** Dear God, we thank you for your message of Good News. Give us the strength to be able to fully trust and rely on you. God, we confess that we have fear that is hanging over us. We name those things today and give them to you so that we may fully experience you. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

## Thursday, 12/6/18

**"He will be called ..."**

### Luke 1:32-35

*"He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."*

*"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"*

*The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God."*

- In Mark 8:29 Jesus asks Peter the question, "But who do you say I am?" Reading through the Bible we hear many descriptions of Jesus including: Immanuel, Son of the Most High, the Son of God. If you were asked that question by Jesus today, what would your answer be?
- We recently adopted a puppy and we noticed one day that we have many different nicknames for him. Each one can describe small parts of his relationship with us, but none fully encompasses his true personality. The same can be said for Jesus. While we have many names for him, we still cannot fully capture all that Jesus is to us. What names, images or descriptions do you use most often for Jesus? Why?

**Prayer:** Good and gracious God, we thank you for the gift of Jesus Christ. We ask today that you give us the ability to see you in new ways and the words to proclaim all of the work you are doing in our lives. May you be Immanuel, God with us, today. Amen.

## Friday, 12/7/18

**"Nothing will be impossible ... "**

### Luke 1:36-38

*"And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.*

- Throughout the story of Jesus' birth we hear a series of things that seem completely impossible. Yet, we are told that nothing will be impossible with God. What is an impossible prayer that God has asked you to pray? When is a time you have seen God respond in a seemingly impossible way?

- Mary's reply to God's plan is a very powerful one and sometimes a difficult response. To be fair though, we don't exactly know how long Mary may have sat with her mouth gaping open before she was able to respond. What is something that God has asked you to do that you could answer "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word"?

**Prayer:** Holy God, we thank you for your gift of Jesus Christ who came to be God, with us. We thank you for always making a way, even when things seem impossible. We ask for you to pour out your Holy Spirit on us, so that we too may overcome impossibilities. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

***This week's devotional was written by  
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