

ADVENT 2009

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Our traditional Advent Calendar for 2009 begins Sunday, November 29.

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Dear Friends,

The Bible is a wonderful book full of truths that penetrate our hearts and bring new life to our souls. In Psalm 119:11-14 it says "I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. Blessed are you, O LORD; teach me your principles. I have recited aloud all the laws you have given us. I have rejoiced in your decrees as much as in riches. I will study your commandments and reflect on your ways. I will delight in your principles and not forget your word." Have you found this to be true in your life experience? I have.

But do you also sometimes find it hard to spend time in God's word? Do you wish you had a way to teach your children the word of God, but you are just not sure how or where to start?

As we prepare for Christmas, we often repeat the slogan that says "Jesus is the Reason for the Season," and we probably read the Christmas story with our family either on Christmas Eve, or on Christmas Day, but we know we should be doing more to focus on the real meaning of Christmas. We would really like to get away from all the commercialism of the culture around us, but we just don't know where to begin.

We have a tool for you to use that will help you as a family spend time together around the Christmas Story as it is told in the Bible. There are many wonderful stories available for us to read to our children that tell about people doing special things for each other at this time of the year, but the most wonderful story of all is the story of the birth of Christ.

This book is focused on the theme of "Advent," which means "coming or arrival, especially of something infrequent or unusually important." The Advent Season involves the four Sundays before Christmas. In the Christian Church, this has been used as a time to prepare for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ.

To help us prepare for Christmas we have compiled this book of scriptures of prophecies and events around the birth of Christ. There are simple instructions that can be done together as a family, or as individuals. Every person needs to have their own book to mark the key words, fill in the answers, and color the pictures. At the end of each lesson there are 'Talk Together' suggestions that are designed to help you talk about what you have learned.

This material is designed for anyone who can hold a pencil. Very young children may just color the pictures. Pre-readers can work with a parent or older sibling reading the text out loud, helping them find the key words to mark, and answering the questions together.

Older children and teens can do the lessons on their own and then the family can discuss the 'Talk Together' suggestions at the dinner table. You may want to invite your grandchild, niece or nephew, or neighbor child to do this special Christmas book with you. Please use this as an opportunity to tell others the good news of the birth of our Savior directly from the word of God.

Adults, don't let the coloring pictures lead you to believe these lessons are only for kids. As I was preparing this material God used it to bless me abundantly, and I know He will do the same for you. My prayer is that God will use this book to bring us all closer to Him during this Christmas season and that He will get all the glory for what He will do through the study of His Word.

If you have questions about the use of this material please contact me at 360-413-9416 or e-mail eleanorkz@comcast.net.

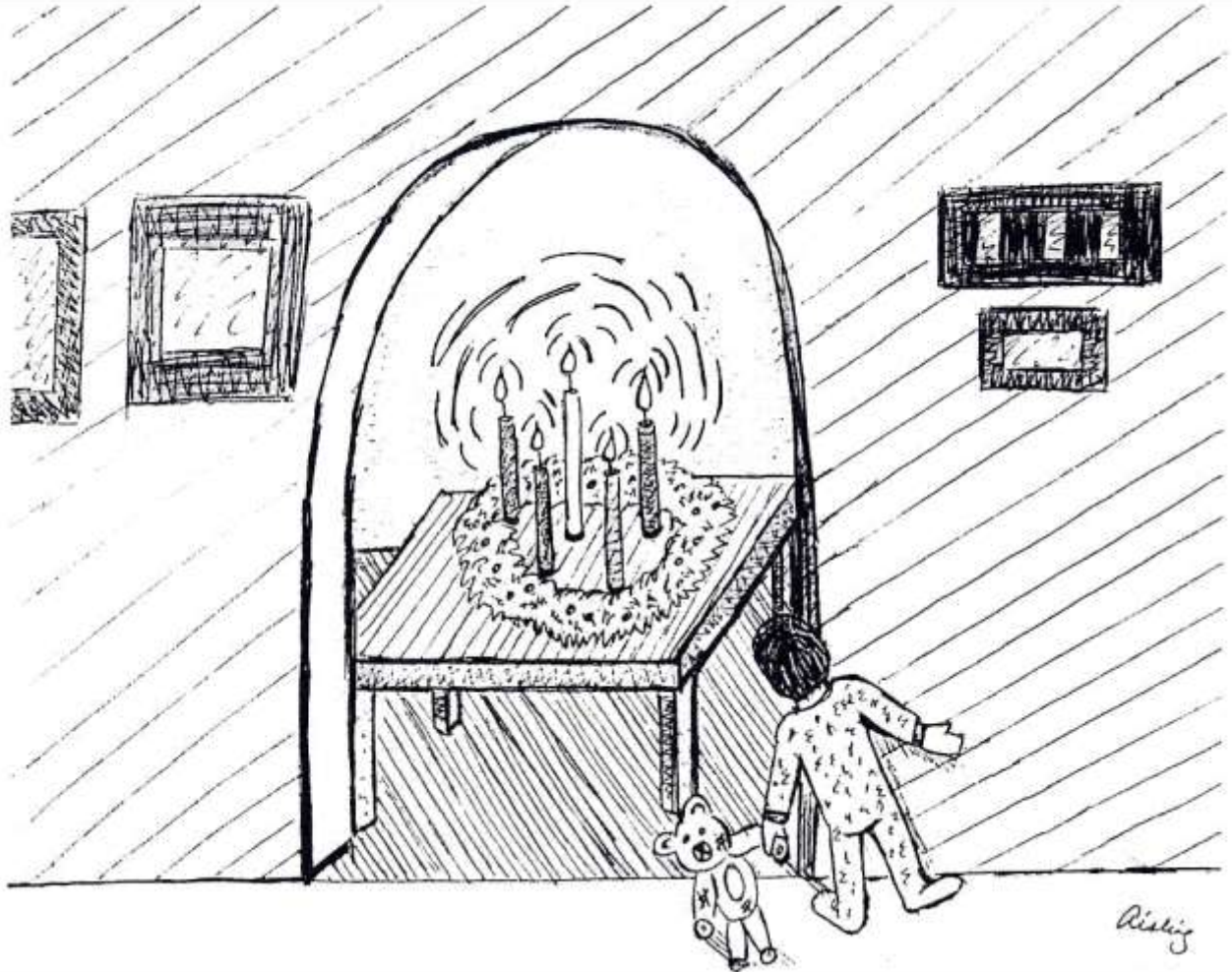
Because of His Grace,
Eleanor Zweigle

**A special message to our Dear Little Ones,
our Precious Smallest Friends**

Do you sometimes feel like this little child who is peeking around the corner at the beautiful Advent wreath with all the pretty candles? Is everything so exciting and wonderful, but do you feel like it is just meant for the bigger kids and the grown-ups? Is everyone always saying 'don't touch, you might break it?' Would you like a turn to light the candles, but you know you are too little?

Well, even if you can't read the words in this book, we hope you have fun coloring the pictures. And we have a special Bible verse just for you. In Luke 18:16 Jesus said:

"Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these."



This book is dedicated to my six very precious grandchildren,
new readers . . . Emmett Meyer and Abram Zweigle,
advancing readers Evan Meyer and Graiden Zweigle,
and fluent readers Kelsey Zweigle and Taylor Zweigle

Making an Advent Wreath

The simplest Advent wreath consists of 5 candles, four in a circle with the fifth one in the middle to represent Christ.

You can use any color candles you like. Some traditions use 3 violet candles, one pink candle, and one white candle. For this book, the violet candles can be used for weeks one, two and four to represent preparation, and the pink candle in week three to represent the joy of the good news. The center white candle can be larger than the others, to represent Christ.

The base of the candles can be decorated with some evergreen sprigs. To stabilize the candles, set them in holders on a sturdy tray, or drill holes into a square piece of wood and place the candles in the holes. Decorate with greenery and some nativity figurines.

What to Do Each Day

Begin each devotional time by lighting the candle for that week and the previous weeks. Week one you will light one candle, week two, two candles, and so on. Each time you light the candles repeat the following verse together:

John 8:12.

Jesus said to the people,

"I am the light of the world.

If you follow me,

you won't be stumbling through the darkness,

because you will have the light that leads to life."

Offer a prayer to God when you light the candles, thanking Him for the gift of salvation, for "The Light," Jesus Christ, who leads us to life.

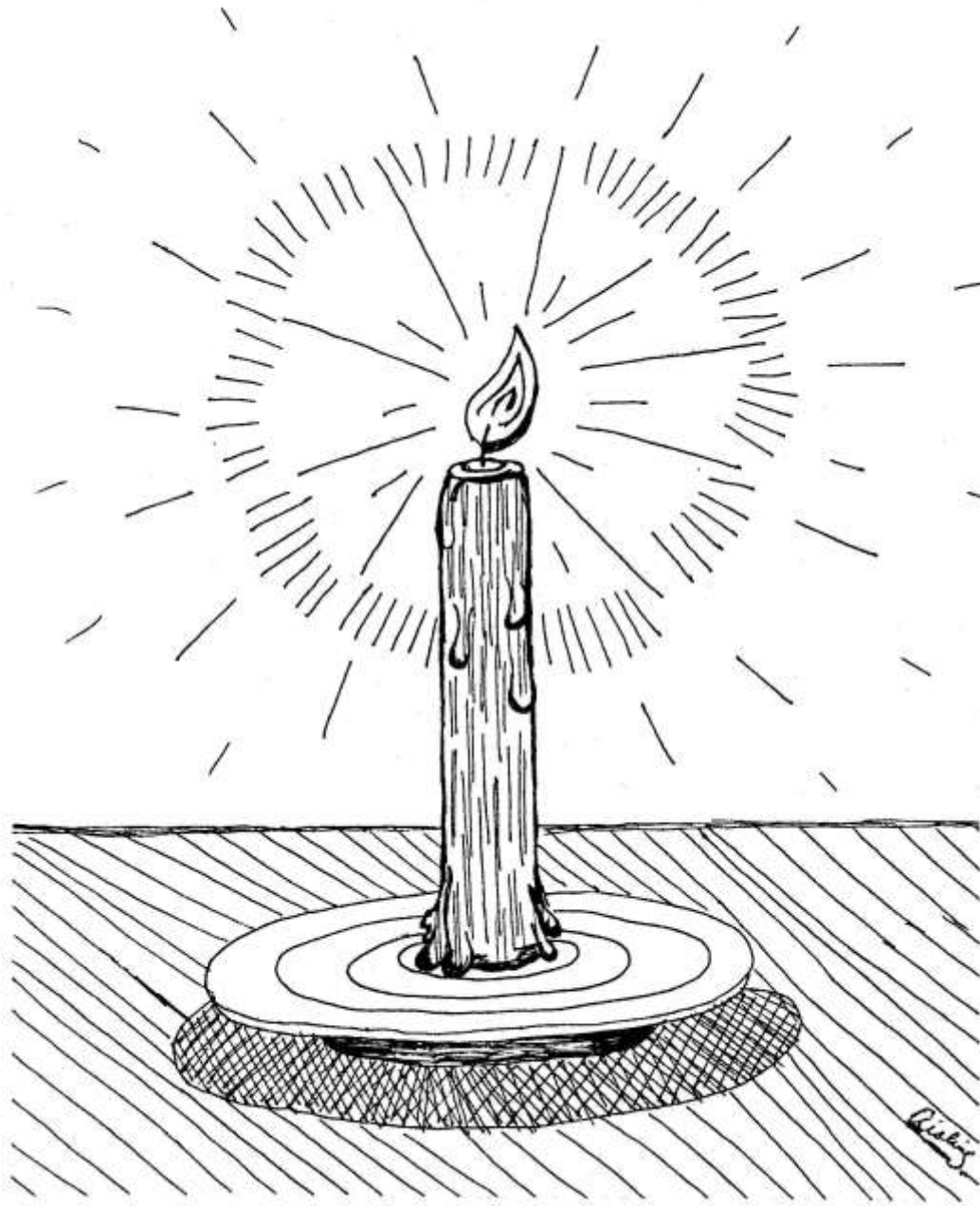
Then either work through the lesson together as a group, or do the lesson individually and come together to discuss what you have studied and talk about the 'Talk Together' suggestions.

Suggestions for Parents

When you do the lessons together with your children, read through the text out loud and pause wherever there is a word to be marked, giving the child a clue that this is the correct word. Then, if they can read, have the children say the word out loud together, and then all mark the word.

Key Verse - John 8:12

Repeat this verse together every day.



Jesus said to the people,
"I am the light of the world.
If you follow me,
you won't be stumbling through the darkness,
because you will have the light that leads to life."