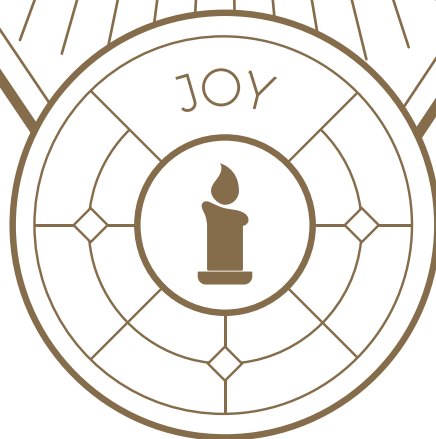
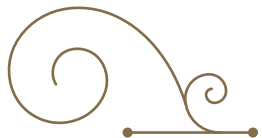


**O COME
EMMANUEL**



Introduction

We are waiting. We are waiting for things to be made right—for the world to be as it ought to be. This anticipation is often layered and complex, running the full range from anxious to joyful anticipation. When we experience the brokenness of the world, we cry out, “Oh come, Lord Jesus!” And when we feel God’s hand of grace upon us, we rejoice—looking forward to the full and promised reality of God’s glorious presence when Jesus returns. So, what does it look like for us to embrace this anticipation during the Christmas season?

We invite you to enter into a time of prayer and worship alongside four key figures who anticipated Jesus’ arrival. As we reflect on these prayers, may we have the same waiting faith that looks towards Jesus’ second arrival with confident hope.

Note to parents: Reflection questions have been provided to help you discuss the importance of Jesus’ birth with your children. Feel free to pause the companion video as needed, or discuss the concepts with your children after you have completed the study yourself.



Luke 1:67-79

Then his father, Zechariah, was filled with the Holy Spirit and gave this prophecy:

“Praise the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has visited and redeemed his people. He has sent us a mighty Savior from the royal line of his servant David, just as he promised through his holy prophets long ago. Now we will be saved from our enemies and from all who hate us. He has been merciful to our ancestors by remembering his sacred covenant- the covenant he swore with an oath to our ancestor Abraham. We have been rescued from our enemies so we can serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness for as long as we live.

And you my little son, will be called the prophet of the Most High, because you will prepare the way for the Lord. You will tell his people how to find salvation through forgiveness of their sins. Because of God’s tender mercy, the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace.”

GUIDED PRAYER & RESPONSE

Zechariah—father of John the Baptist—announces the significance of Jesus’ birth and foretells the role of his son in preparing the way for Christ. As he recounts the dark history of the Israelites, often fraught with enemies, Zechariah sees Jesus’ birth as a light after a long night—hope in the morning.

The primary darkness we battle is the sin within our own hearts. But, we can rejoice that God in his mercy sent Jesus to save us from our sin. **Take a moment to worship Jesus for his salvation in your life.** Focus on the hope we have in Christ as he frees us from the enslaving power of sin and fear.

Zechariah notes that God has rescued us to live “without fear” and “in holiness.” **What fears may be hampering your worship (health, finances, relationships, etc)? Invite Jesus to shine a light on your sin—repent and rejoice in his forgiveness and the hope that it brings.**

Reflection questions for parents:

What makes you afraid? Why can we trust God with these things? How can you give your fears to God?



Luke 2:4-14

And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David’s ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. He took with him Mary, to whom he was engaged, who was now expecting a child. And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.

That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord’s glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. “Don’t be afraid!” he said. “I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger.”

Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying,
“Glory to God in highest heaven,
and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.”

GUIDED PRAYER & RESPONSE

At long last—the Messiah has arrived, prompting worship and proclamations of peace from his heavenly armies! The spiritual and physical battles we face often threaten the peace that God intends for us, but Emmanuel, God with us, promises victory. **How has God’s presence provided peace for you this year? Pray that he would extend the peace of Christ in you, through you, and towards those around you.**

In the greatest act of humility and love ever displayed, the Creator and ruler of the universe took on flesh so that he could dwell among us, and ultimately, rescue us from our brokenness. Jesus knows the pain and suffering we experience—he knows our longing for rescue and redemption. **Take a moment to tell God about your deepest joys and sorrows, and your longing for the day that there will truly be “peace on earth.”**

Reflection questions for parents:

What do you think of when you hear the word “peace”?

What is something that makes you sad? What is something that makes you happy? Let’s talk to God about these things and ask for his peace in our hearts.



Luke 2:25-32

At that time there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon. He was righteous and devout and was eagerly waiting for the Messiah to come and rescue Israel. The Holy Spirit was upon him and had revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Messiah. That day the Spirit led him to the Temple. So when Mary and Joseph came to present the baby Jesus to the Lord as the law required, Simeon was there. He took the child in his arms and praised God, saying,

“Sovereign Lord, now let your servant die in peace,
as you have promised.

I have seen your salvation,

which you have prepared for all people.

He is a light to reveal God to the nations,

and he is the glory of your people Israel!”

GUIDED PRAYER & RESPONSE

Some of us may be able to relate to Simeon, who was in a weary season of life. Yet, he was still eagerly waiting for the comfort of God's rescue. Even if you are in a difficult season, Jesus cannot be taken from you. **Take some time now to express any grief, worry, pain, or anxiety that may be stealing your peace during this time. Ask God to provide comfort through his Word.**

After a long season of waiting, Simeon saw the fulfillment of God's promise—Jesus would bring salvation to both current and future nations. Simeon took comfort in the knowledge that God's salvation extended beyond his lifetime. **Take a moment to pray for future generations of believers. Pray that Christians coming after us would be faithful to God's mission.**

Reflection questions for parents:

Simeon was comforted about the arrival of Jesus. Why can we also find comfort knowing that Jesus “became flesh”?

Simeon was also very happy about the birth of Jesus. What does Jesus' birth mean to you?

INTERESTED IN USING THESE RESOURCES?

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