



# With Us

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL

JOY:  
*With Us*  
IN HIS GLORY

| WEEK THREE |

# Scripture

*Open your Bible and read today's verse with your family.*

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## **John 1:14-15**

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'")

## **John 14:23**

Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

# Content

*Read today's devotion aloud with your family, Small Group, or simply during your personal time with the Lord.*

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What does it mean to be “with” someone? “With” is a powerful word. When you are “with” someone, you cannot be unaware of them. You cannot forget them. You cannot be far off from them. You are with them.

So often we forget the miracle of Jesus being Immanuel, God with us. For all of the Old Testament, we see God and His people seeking to solve the problem of distance. God could be near them, in a tent or speaking through a prophet, but He wasn't walking, talking, or sharing meals with them. Their sin, and His complete holiness, kept them apart.

When John opens his book in John chapter 1, he is breaking into hundreds of years of silence from God—decades of God seeming unaware, forgetful, and far off. Yet here, John tells us that all of that is about to change. God is about to be with them. And, not only is God going to dwell with them, but He is going to dwell with them as one of them. God, the Creator of the Universe, is about to put on flesh and bone and be with His people. Think about how crazy, how powerful, how miraculous that is! That, after centuries of silence, God is coming to them not as a distant voice on a mountain, but as a walking, talking, meal-sharing man. And yet in all of His humanity, Jesus maintains His glory. He will be like one of us, feeling, sleeping, sweating, and weeping, but He is still fully God, full of glory.

During Christmas, we can feel so much pressure to “feel” the glorious joy of the season. We ought to feel constant gratitude, contentment, and happiness, right? It's Christmas, after all. But so often we feel just the opposite: we feel like something is missing, discontentment is everywhere, and a cloud of disappointment hangs over our heads that we aren't “getting

it” like everyone else does. This is where the good news of Jesus’s presence comes in. The things that the world tells us to celebrate during the Christmas season—the gifts, the food, even friends and family—are all fleeting and impermanent. If our hope and our joy are set on those things, even those very good things, our hope will fail.

If thankfulness in this season feels out of reach, then remember this: Jesus’s presence must be our source of joy. Many things will go wrong; grief will lay heavy on many hearts; and many of us still wait for the fulfillment of God’s promises to us. That’s the reality of living in a broken world. But think about the miracle and the joy of God’s dwelling presence with us. In Jesus Christ, we see the light of God’s glory. The joy of every believer is that God is not unaware, forgetful, or far off—He is Immanuel, **God with us.**

## Conversation Starters

*Use these questions to start conversation with your family, small group, or simply to further your own understanding and application of today’s scripture and devotion.*

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How do your mind and heart feel going into Christmas this year? Do you feel ready to celebrate, or does celebrating feel hard this year?

Personally or as a group, take a few moments to go to God with these feelings. Be honest about your disappointments, griefs, or joys, resting in the fact that He already knows them all!

If you are finding it difficult to feel thankful or joyful, what are some characteristics of God that give you comfort or joy? How could we replace these thoughts of discontentment or ungratefulness Jesus for his presence?

# Connections

*Use the following activities and ideas throughout the coming week to further connect the lessons from today's scripture and devotion as well as deepen connections with family, friends, and community.*

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1. Begin a gratitude jar or journal to keep during the Christmas season. When you struggle to celebrate or feel gratitude, it helps to write down things to thank God for. Each day, write down something that you are thankful for and/or that brings you joy. If younger family members can't write yet, have a parent write it or have younger children can draw what they are thankful for. Talk with family and friends about these things each day at meal times, riding in the car together, or on your group text thread.
2. Have a wrapping party! If you are giving gifts to others, wrap the presents together as a family. Set the atmosphere by focusing on the joy of giving. Make it a Facetime party if you have family and/or friends who are out of town. Take time to thank Jesus for being willing to be wrapped in flesh and dwell among us so that we could receive the gift of salvation.
3. Take a walk, being mindful of God's creation and His gifts to you. Let even the little things you see and experience be sources of joy! Create a playlist that brings you joy to listen to while you walk and share it with your family and friends.

# Memory Verse

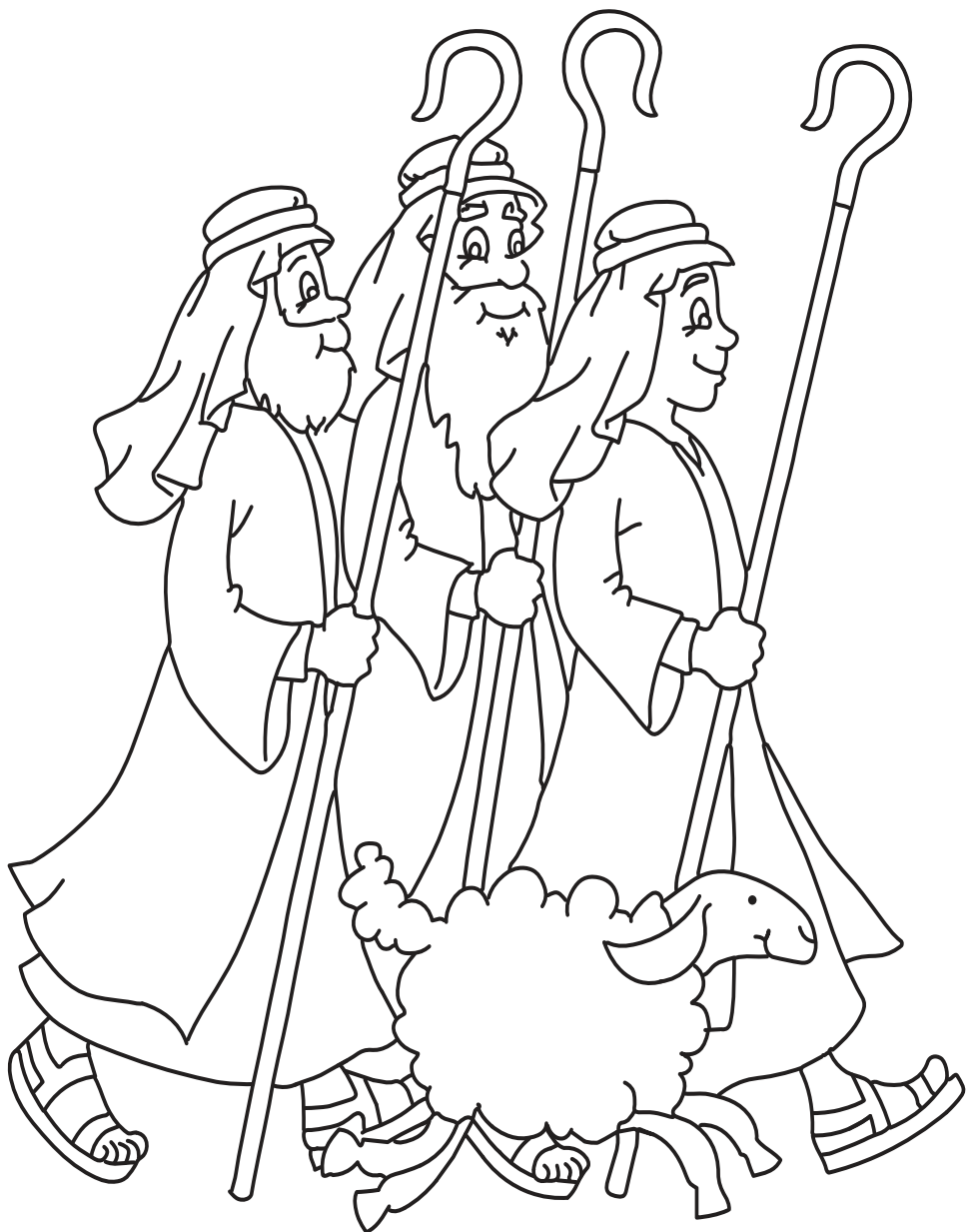
*Use the memory verse to lock in the biblical truth of today's lesson throughout the week.*

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**“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”  
- John 1:14**

*Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news  
of great joy that will be for all the people.*

Luke 2:10





CHURCH AT THE MILL