

Advent 2: The Gift of Peace



SAMPLE
FOR PREVIEW ONLY

Read Luke 2: 8–12

Nearby shepherds were living in the fields, guarding their sheep at night. The Lord's angel stood before them, the Lord's glory shone around them, and they were terrified.

The angel said, "Don't be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people. Your savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord. This is a sign for you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly and lying in a manger."

The shepherds were not expecting angels to appear on that ordinary, quiet night, no wonder they were afraid! Perhaps you have heard good news about a new house, school, or baby that was a little surprising or scary at first. With the words, "Do not be afraid," the angels brought the gift of peace to the frightened shepherds. God's gift of peace is never far away, even when the news is not good. God's peace can be found in a warm hug, kind words, and our deep breaths.

Move your meandering magi closer to the manger.

Open the Gift of Peace

In it you will find a breath prayer. Breath prayers are a way to find the gift of peace wherever you go. Practice breathing in and out with the words three times. Pay attention to the peace that your body finds as you breathe deeply and pray. Place the prayer in a place that reminds you God's gift of peace is with you wherever you go.

Make a gift of peace: Reuse the box to hold reminders or objects that help your family find peace and calm. You might write down mindfulness practices you have learned. You might have an object, like a rock, that makes you feel calmer when you hold it. Keep this box in a place where family members can reach it and find a bit of peace anytime.

Pray

Use the breath prayer before you pray out loud: peace be in our hearts (breathe in), peace be in our homes (breathe out)

Holy God, in you we find comfort when we are afraid. Thank you for the gift of peace. Let it spread to everyone, in every place. Amen.

Advent Gifts Family Devotional

By Christine V. Hides

Introduction:

Advent is the four-week church season of preparing for Christmas. Using this devotional guide, we will practice giving and receiving God's gifts of hope, peace, joy, and love.

The magi, or wisemen, brought gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to the Christ child. For some this has inspired a tradition of moving their nativity set figures of the magi closer to the manger each week. In keeping with this practice, we will create our own "meandering magi" to guide us all the way through Advent and Christmastide to Epiphany on January 6th.

Each weekly devotional includes a short Bible reading, reflection, activity, and prayer. Each activity is presented as a gift to open related to the weekly Advent theme. The gift box is then repurposed to share a gift of hope, peace, joy, and love with others. It is my hope that these devotions offer a moment of family faith time in a full season. May they be an opportunity to reflect on the practice of giving and receiving God's gifts of this season.

In faith,
The Rev. Christine V. Hides
Author

Directions:

Before Advent, an adult should prepare the four weekly gift boxes with the items below and one epiphany gift to open. Also wrap the printable Christmas prayer to be opened when you open presents. I've tried to use common, inexpensive items that create engaging and meaningful experiences for families to do together.

You will need four 4x4 inch or similar sized gift boxes labeled hope, peace, joy, and love. Glue, crayons and scissors will be used for several activities.

Suggested Supplies:

Hope:

- wiseman printable figures & a block to glue the figures on, or wrap your own nativity set figures to use
- shredded paper for the manger straw

Peace:

- printed breath prayer cards

Joy:

- materials to make joy ornament (can be wood, paper, or whatever you have on hand. Use the provided printable or make your own pattern)

Love:

- a rock large enough to draw on

Christmas:

- wrap the printable prayer as a gift to open at the end of your gift giving. Use any box you like.

Epiphany:

- gold stars, a piece of chalk.