



## A Child Will Be Born

(based on Isaiah 9:2-7)

The Israelites were afraid. They lived in a time when there was war and fighting all around them.

“What will happen to us?” they worried. “Will the fighting ever end?”

Then someone came along who gave the people hope. It was the prophet Isaiah. A prophet is a messenger with important news from God. Isaiah knew that God had a special message for the people.

It was an amazing message.

It was a message filled with hope.

“I know you are afraid,” Isaiah proclaimed. “It seems very dark and difficult when war is all around. But God’s light is coming. Do not be afraid.”

The people stopped to listen. “Tell us more,” they begged.

“God will send a sign,” Isaiah continued.

“A child will be born for us. A baby boy will come to live with us. He will rule over the whole world.”

“Tell us more about this baby boy,” the people exclaimed.

“He will be called the Prince of Peace,” Isaiah explained.

The people liked the sound of that. “Tell us more about the Prince of Peace,” they demanded.

“His kingdom will be filled with kindness,” said Isaiah. “He will rule with goodness and fairness. The God of heaven loves us and will do this for us.”

The people liked the sound of that. “We will wait for this child,” they cried. So they began to wait and watch for the child who would bring God’s peace to the land.

God’s message brought hope at a difficult time. While they were waiting, the people gave thanks for God’s promise of a child who would bring peace to the land.

The people remembered God’s message. They reminded each other about God’s promise when they heard reports of war in the news. They looked forward to the day when God’s peace would come to everyone.



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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

### Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your children—imagine and wonder.
- Advent wreath—Assemble a simple Advent wreath. The basics are four purple candles and a white candle for the Christ candle. When your family is together for a meal this week, read the Bible story and light the first candle of the wreath.
- Nativity scene—If you have a child-friendly nativity set, put out the angel(s) for the first week of Advent, to remind us that an angel told Mary ahead of time about the birth of Jesus. We'll add more figures each week.
- Christmas symbols guessing game: Can you guess which popular Christmas decoration reminds us of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)? Answer: The triangular shape of the Christmas tree is a reminder of the three persons of the Trinity.



### Responding to God's Grace

- Experiment with light in a darkened room. Turn on one flashlight. Point it down. Point it up. See how the light illumines the darkness. Where do we see the light of Jesus shining in dark places?
- Start a box to make a reverse Advent calendar. Add a nonperishable food item to your family's box every day. Before Christmas, deliver the box to a service agency for families in need.
- Challenge everyone in the family to complete the prompts with words or pictures:
  - Peace smells like . . .
  - Peace looks like . . .
  - Peace sounds like . . .
  - Peace tastes like . . .
  - Peace feels like . . .
- Read *What Does Peace Feel Like* by Vladimir Radunsky (Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2003) or watch the YouTube video "What Does Peace Feel Like" ([bit.ly/2IA5UY4](http://bit.ly/2IA5UY4)) and see what children around the world think about peace.

### Celebrating in Gratitude

- Sing "Come, Thou Long-expected Jesus." Find the tune using an internet search.
- Bake round sugar cookies. Use store-bought cookie dough or make your own. Cut circles. After baking, decorate the cookies as peace signs with sugars, sprinkles, or frosting. Share these signs of peace with others.
- Pray this prayer:
 

*Thank you, God, for sending Jesus to bring your peace to us. Help us to spread peace where we are. Amen.*

Note: [bit.ly](http://bit.ly) web addresses are case sensitive.