

HOW TO USE *LITTLE HEARTS* WITH YOUR LITTLE HEARTS

This devotional is intended to grow with your little ones, but we've all been there on the nights when *you just want to get it done*, when two sentences of scripture are simply too much to ask of melting-popsicle children. *Give grace to all. That includes yourself.*

So, here's how to use this devotional:

- * Advent scripture will always be found at the top of the page.
- * Bold words are the highlights of the material for the day.
- * Sentences in shadow are the doctrinal concept defined and explained.
- * Discussion questions are found at the end of the day's material.
- * Further scripture reference suggestions correspond to the end notes.

Have an infant? Read it over their warm wiggles or soft snuggles and remember that He came for you as a babe.

Have a toddler? Just aim for the scripture. High five yourself if you make it through the whole passage.

Have a whiny and manipulative three-year-old? Tell them God loves them and you do too and *turn out the lamp*.

Have a five-year-old? Try reading only the scripture and the words in bold, which are the highlights of the material for the day.

Have a seven-year-old? Try reading the whole thing and even a question or two, but don't be discouraged if it doesn't happen. *Maybe tomorrow; maybe tomorrow.*

Have a nine-year-old? Make it through the whole thing? Hit your knees when *their* questions are too big for you to answer.

Want to include your middle schoolers in a special way? Ask them in advance to look up the day's theology term and join in the explanation to their younger siblings.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

DAY 1	Prophecy (Authority of Scripture)	16
DAY 2	Genealogy (Covenant Childhood)	18
DAY 3	Big News (Illumination)	20
DAY 4	Mary Responds (Sanctification)	22
DAY 5	Joseph Hears (Grace)	24
DAY 6	Joseph Obeys (Special Revelation/General Revelation)	26
DAY 7	Jumping for Joy (Assurance of Salvation)	28
DAY 8	Mary’s Song (Faith)	30
DAY 9	A Decree Goes Out (Sovereignty)	32
DAY 10	A Prophecy Fulfilled (Common Grace/Specific Grace)	34
DAY 11	No Room in the Inn (Effectual Calling)	36
DAY 12	Jesus Is Born (Federal Headship)	38
DAY 13	Shepherds Hear (Adoption)	40
DAY 14	Shepherds Respond (Election)	42
DAY 15	Jesus as a Baby (Limited Atonement)	44
DAY 16	Herod Hears (The Three Offices of Christ)	46
DAY 17	Herod Tries to Trick the Wise Men (Obedience to Authority)	48
DAY 18	Wise Men Find Him (Communion of Saints)	50
DAY 19	Wise Men Don’t Return to Herod (Providence)	52
DAY 20	An Angel Tells Joseph to Flee (Repentance)	54
DAY 21	Herod Realizes He’s Tricked (Confluence)	56
DAY 22	A Plan from Long Ago (Double Imputation)	58
DAY 23	Jesus Fulfills the Promise (Propitiation)	60
DAY 24	Jesus Is Baptized (New Covenant)	62
DAY 25	Now, Go and Tell (Justification)	64
	Appendix (Ornament Ideas and End Notes)	66

DAY 1: PROPHECY

"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

ISAIAH 7:14

But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

ISAIAH 53:5-6

Many, many years before Jesus was born, the prophet Isaiah spoke to God's people, the Israelites. They were conflicted—sometimes they wanted to love God, and sometimes their hearts chose their own way. Sometimes they wanted to submit to God's kingdom, and sometimes they wanted to create a kingdom of their own, where they were in charge. When they didn't want to obey, they crossed their arms and said to God, "We can handle this, just leave us alone."

Isaiah told them about Jesus hundreds of years before Mary would carry Jesus in her belly. Choosing their way instead of God's way made their hearts too hard to hear God's message and kept them from seeing all the good God had for them. Their crossed arms had consequences. God longed to bless them with peace and righteousness and the desire for Him, but they chose their own wisdom, which didn't end up very wise at all.

We can trust God's wisdom which He reveals to us in His Word, the Bible. **But how can we know and trust that every word of the**

Bible is true? We can trust because God tells us in Scripture, over and over again, that He does not lie to us, that He is good, and that He is for us.¹ The safety and rest we find in trusting His Word is the result of believing in the *authority of Scripture* and the strength we are offered in trusting that God's Word is true.

Despite their hard hearts and their lack of trust, God still chose to bless the Israelites, the ones whom He had called to Himself. Many years later, God would send the payment for their hard hearts in the form of the most tender piece of His own heart: Jesus, His only Son.

- DO YOU EVER DECIDE IN YOUR HEART TO CHOOSE YOUR OWN WAY?
- IF YOU DO, WHAT DOES YOUR ACTION SAY TO GOD? DO WE HAVE A RIGHT TO CHOOSE OUR OWN WAY INSTEAD OF GOD'S WAY?
- WHAT IS GOD'S CONSISTENT RESPONSE TO US?

