

A Family Christmas



by Jake Petzold



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December 1

The Christmas Tree

An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them. Luke 2:9

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

People have been decorating trees in their homes for a long, long time. Even before we celebrated Christmas, people were doing it. It is fun to display all our Christmas bulbs and pictures of our families on our Christmas trees. We put a star or angel on top to remind us of the angels in the Bible and the star above Bethlehem. We put the star or angel on top of the tree because remembering Jesus being born is the most important thing about Christmas. We put the important things up high, where everyone can see.

Dear heavenly Father, thank You for the joy of family and friends. Help us to see what's really important in our lives and not get distracted with earthly things. In Your name we pray. Amen.





December 2

Christmas Decorations

Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. Luke 2:11

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

We all put up Christmas lights and all sorts of decorations at Christmas. But why do we put them up only during Christmas? It's because Christmas is a special time, and we're celebrating. It's just like when you put up decorations for your birthday, except we're putting up decorations for someone else's birthday. Do you know whose birthday we're celebrating during Christmas? That's right; we're celebrating the birth of baby Jesus!

Dear Lord, while we enjoy all the fun and beauty of the Christmas season, help us to also remember that You sent Your Son to earth for a purpose, and that purpose was to save us all. In Your name we pray. Amen.





December 3

Bells

*Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth:
break forth into joyous song and sing praises!
Sing praises to the LORD with the lyre,
with the lyre and the sound of melody!* Psalm 98:4-5

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

Have you ever wondered why we hang up bells at Christmas? What do you do with bells? That's right; you ring them! We have two reasons to ring bells during Christmas. The first reason is because baby Jesus is born, and we want to tell the whole world about it! The second reason, like it says in the Bible verse, is to "make a joyful noise." We're so happy about Jesus being born that we want to make Him happy by ringing bells or singing or even dancing!

Father in heaven, let us joyfully celebrate Your Son's birth everywhere we go. Give us the courage and the chance to share our faith with others.
In Your name we pray. Amen.





December 4

Candles

As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. John 9:5

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

What do you think Jesus means when He says, “I am the light of the world”? Have you ever been in a really dark room? It can be scary because you can’t see what’s around you or where to go! When Jesus was born, He was just like the candles we light at Christmas. He was so bright that all the darkness was gone! He makes us feel safe and shows us where to go! He shows us how to get to heaven, just by following His light!

Dear Lord, You are the light of the world, and that light shines through us. As we live our lives, we want to be like You. Help us to let Your light shine in our actions, as they show the love You have taught us.
In Your name we pray. Amen.





December 5

Candy Cane

I am the good shepherd. I know My own and My own know Me.

John 10:14

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

Did you know that candy canes used to be straight? That's right; they used to be just another type of candy. Then, one day, a candy maker bent them to look like a staff that a shepherd uses to herd sheep. Why a shepherd's staff? Shepherds take care of their sheep, just like Jesus came to earth to take care of us and protect us. Thanks to that candy maker, whenever we see a candy cane, we'll be reminded that Jesus is watching over us!

Heavenly Father, we know that everything good comes from You. Thank You for candy, snow, family, and all the great things that come to mind with Christmas. As we enjoy them, help us to know that they are gifts from You, and everything good in the world shows Your love for mankind. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.





December 6

Snow

For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. Hebrews 7:26

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

Do you like to look at your house and yard after a snowstorm? I sure do. It looks so perfect and pure white—unstained. Do you like looking at a puddle with snow melting in it, or a pile of snow after it gets plowed? Probably not. The dirty snow isn't nice to look at. In fact, it's kind of yucky. Even the best, nicest, greatest person in the world would look like dirty snow compared to Jesus. That's because He was absolutely 100 percent perfect. He never did anything wrong (sinned), not in His whole life! Whenever we see that perfect snow outside, it reminds us of Jesus and how perfect He is.

Lord, when we are reminded of our mistakes, help us to be sorry and to remember the gift of Your Son, who saved us from the consequences of our mistakes. In Your name we pray. Amen.





December 7

Christmas Music

Sing praises to the LORD, for He has done gloriously; let this be made known in all the earth. Isaiah 12:5

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

What is your favorite Christmas carol? There are so many to choose from. Why do you think we sing carols at Christmas? Yes, it is a lot of fun. There are really a lot of reasons we sing at Christmas. We do it to tell certain stories about Christmas, or just because we're happy. We even sing carols to get other people in the spirit of Christmas. A lot of these carols are about Jesus being born because that's the whole point of Christmas! On Jesus' birthday, we sing songs about Jesus, just like on our birthdays, everyone sings "Happy Birthday" to us!

Lord, Christmas is a joyful season. Too often we let fun things become too important. Please give us the time we need to spend with family and in Your Word, keeping us from becoming too stressed. We thank You for the gift of patience. In Your name we pray. Amen.





December 8

Wreath

To Him [Jesus] be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen. Ephesians 3:21

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

Do you know what a Christmas wreath is? It's a circle made up of leaves or pine needles that we hang on our doors or walls at Christmas. A Christmas wreath is another decoration we hang up to celebrate Jesus' birthday! It's a circle because a circle never ends, and neither will our celebration of Jesus! People have been celebrating Jesus' birthday for more than two thousand years, and we're never going to stop telling the good news.

Heavenly Father, as time rolls on, it's easy to get caught up worrying about tomorrow, and we neglect to enjoy and live each day. Help us to gain the right view on our lives and to soak up all the blessings that come with Christmas. In Your name we pray. Amen.





December 9

Presents

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. James 1:17

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

One of the most exciting parts about Christmas is opening up all those PRESENTS! It's even more fun to give everyone you love presents! What we need to remember, though, is that everything fun or awesome was made by God. Even the love that we get to share with our families was created by God. Loving one another is the best gift we could ever get or give, and that is what God tells us to do.

Heavenly Father, it can be easy to get caught up in the material things during the holidays. Help us to avoid this temptation and to remember the greatest gift ever given, Jesus, whose birth we celebrate at Christmas.

In Your Son's name we pray. Amen.





December 10

You

It is more blessed to give than to receive. Acts 20:35

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

Around this time of year, it's pretty common to hear, "It's better to give than to receive." This is very true and something we should all try to do all the time, not just during Christmas. Even though it feels good to give other people presents, you can do little things too! Like being nice to one another, helping out, and telling others you love them. All these are things that feel just as good to receive as to do for others. By being kind to one another, we're giving the best gift of the whole year, and that is God's love.

Lord, give us hearts to serve. As Christians, we should love our neighbor and always be willing to be servants. Help us to gain this skill and have the opportunities to show our love to our neighbor.

In Your name we pray. Amen.





December 11

Family

As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD. Joshua 24:15

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

Every family is different. Some have dogs, some have cats, some have lots of people, and others have only a few. Some are even snowman families! What is your family like? Do you like to play games with one another? Do you have any brothers or sisters? Even though every household is different, we all like to spend time together because we love one another. Jesus came because He loves us and wants us to love Him back and to love one another. That's why Christmas is such a neat time, because we take extra time to spend time with one another and to thank God for coming to earth. In fact, we're spending special time together right now! We do that because we love one another, just as Jesus loved us!

Lord, thank You for family. We pray that everyone can be with family this Christmas. In Your name we pray. Amen.





December 12

Bible

It is written. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." Matthew 4:4

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

During Christmas, we read lots of different Bible verses, most of them about the story of Jesus' birth. Why is the Bible different from other books or stories we read or hear during Christmas? The main reason is that the story of Jesus' birth is the most important story we'll ever hear, and it's all true! The Bible was written by the Holy Spirit—it's like a letter from God, written just for us! That makes it a lot more important than any other book, doesn't it?

Heavenly Father, it is easy to avoid Your Word. We find excuses, get busy, and tuck Your Word away on the shelf. Let us find the time to read the Bible and open our hearts to the truth of Your Word.

In Your name we pray. Amen.





December 13

Sheep

Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

John 1:29

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

Was Jesus really a lamb? When He talked, did it just sound like “Bahhh, bahhh”? No, that’s silly! Jesus was a person, and He looked like a person. So why did John call Him a lamb? Jesus was like a spotless lamb because He was perfect. Some lambs’ wool doesn’t have any spots or marks, and Jesus was like that because He never made any mistakes. He was gentle, nice, and perfect. So when John called Him a lamb, he wasn’t making fun of Him; being called a spotless lamb was actually a true thing for Jesus to be called.

Lord, the example set by Christ seems impossible to follow. We know we can never be perfect, but help us to be sorry, always looking to You for help and support. Please forgive us all our sins, and be with us every day.
In Your name we pray. Amen.





December 14

Angel Star

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!" Luke 2:13-14

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

God used angels to bring messages to earth and tell people about really important things. And when Jesus was born, God sent hundreds and hundreds of them to earth to sing and praise Him. Even though these angels are a lot stronger and more powerful than us, they worship Jesus because He's so much more important than them. Could you imagine a couple hundred angels showing up to sing you "Happy Birthday"?! That would be pretty cool.

Lord, open our eyes to the very real spiritual world around us. Help us to see the powerful work You do in our lives every day.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.





December 15

Shepherds

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." Luke 2:15

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

What would you do if someone said, "You've just won a free trip to Disney World!"? I bet you'd drop everything, get in the car, and go to Disney World. That's what the shepherds did when they heard that Jesus was born. They were out in the field, taking care of their sheep, when an angel showed up and told them about Jesus. They just dropped everything and started going to Bethlehem. They did that because they had been waiting for Jesus for many years, and He was finally there! It was a big, BIG deal, and they were excited to go see Jesus!

Just as the shepherds were excited to see baby Jesus, help us to be excited to tell others about Him. In Your name we pray. Amen.





December 16

Bethlehem

The star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. Matthew 2:9

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

Bethlehem is the name of the town where Jesus was born. Like a lot of towns, it can be hard to find. When the Wise Men were trying to find baby Jesus, it was hard because they didn't know where to look. But God helped them out. He moved a star over the place where Jesus was born so they could go see Him! Isn't that neat, that God moved a star? He did that because Jesus' birth was THAT important!

Lord, help us to know how important Christmas is. You moved a star to guide the Wise Men to Bethlehem so they could worship Your Son, Jesus. Help us to know the importance of You sending Your Son to earth just for us. In Your name we pray. Amen.





December 17

Innkeeper

*She . . . wrapped Him in swaddling cloths and laid Him in a manger,
because there was no place for them in the inn. Luke 2:7*

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

Have you ever been on a really long car ride? I bet you were really tired. Mary had to ride a donkey for a couple days, and when she got to Bethlehem, all the inns were full! There was no place to stay, so Mary and Joseph had to try to find a place. They were in a hurry because it was probably cold outside, and Mary was about ready to have a baby, Jesus! I bet if that innkeeper knew who was about to be born, he would have found a place for them.

Lord, we sometimes find ourselves in situations that don't make us feel good. Help us to understand and to be glad for all our blessings. Please be with us during the bad things in life. In Your name we pray. Amen.





December 18

Barn

And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. Luke 2:16

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

A manger is something we use to feed animals. Why was Jesus lying in a manger? Because Mary and Joseph were in a barn! Since there was no room in the inn, they had to find a place where Mary could have baby Jesus. They had to use a barn, and that's where Jesus was born! Probably right next to cows and sheep and other kinds of animals. That doesn't seem like a very nice place for God's Son to be born, does it? What would have been a better place for Jesus? Probably about anywhere!

Lord, thank You for a warm place to sleep tonight. Thank You for all the comforts we enjoy, including the blessings of friends and family. Help us to grow closer to You every day, and keep us always in Your care. In Your name we pray. Amen.





December 19

Manger

And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. Luke 2:16

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

Do you remember what a manger is used for? It's not for holding babies. Like you learned yesterday, a manger is actually a trough that farmers use to feed their animals. If you've ever seen a feed trough, you know that it's not a place you'd want to lie down. But Mary and Joseph didn't have anywhere else to put baby Jesus. Remember, they were staying in a barn because there was no room in the inn. We should remember to be happy that we have a nice warm place to be this Christmas, and that we don't have to be in a cold barn, lying in an animal's trough.

Make up your own prayer tonight and be sure to pray for each person's individual needs.





December 20

The Three Kings

And going into the house, they [the Magi] saw the child with Mary His mother, and they fell down and worshiped Him. Matthew 2:11

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

Magi is another name for a king. The Magi, or Wise Men, mentioned in the Bible were probably kings from somewhere far away from Bethlehem. They traveled a long way to see baby Jesus. When the kings found Jesus, they bowed down and worshiped Him! Usually, people worship kings, not the other way around. Jesus was probably the only person in their whole lives that they worshiped. They did that because they knew who Jesus was and how important He really was. Do you know who Jesus really is? He is the Son of God! Even though Joseph was His earthly father, Jesus' real dad is God in heaven. Wouldn't you say He's definitely someone worth bowing to if you met Him? I would!

Lord, forgive us for times we've put our ways before Yours. You sent kings to worship Your Son, because He was worthy of praise. Help us to be thankful for—and make time to worship—You, Lord.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.





December 21

Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh

Then, opening their treasures, they [the Magi] offered Him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. Matthew 2:11

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

Okay, so you know what gold is, right? It's that shiny metal that is on jewelry. That's an easy one, but what is frankincense and myrrh? Well, they are both really valuable types of perfume. The Magi gave these gifts to Jesus because they are the most valuable things that they owned. They were so excited that Jesus was born that they wanted to give Him the best gifts they had. What is your most favorite thing in the whole world? That's like the gold, frankincense, and myrrh to the Magi, who wanted to give Jesus the very best! That's how special Jesus is!

Lord, You are worth so much more than gold and perfumes. Thank You for all You do in our lives. Help us to see and rely on Your strength.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.





December 22

Swaddling Cloths

She . . . wrapped Him in swaddling cloths and laid Him in a manger.

Luke 2:7

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

Do you know what swaddling cloths are? They're like blankets that parents wrap their babies up in tightly. Do you know why parents do that? Because babies like it, and it's important to keep babies warm. If they get cold, they might get sick, and we don't want that. Jesus had to be wrapped up like that because it was probably kind of cold where they were. In fact, Jesus wasn't born in a hospital, or even in a nice warm house. He was born in a barn! Is that a good place for a baby? Nope, and that's why Mary had Jesus wrapped up tight!

Say a prayer of thankfulness tonight. Give everyone a chance to share what they are thankful for.





December 23

Mary

But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.

Luke 2:19

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

Mary was a very blessed lady, although things weren't always easy for her. Of every woman who has ever been born, she was chosen to be Jesus' mom. That's quite an honor, and no one else has ever had the same honor since. But it was also hard, because Mary had to ride a donkey for days to get to Bethlehem. That's a long time to be sitting on a donkey! But she didn't mind because she was blessed enough to be Jesus' mom.

Dear heavenly Father, as You blessed Jesus with loving parents to look after Him, You've also blessed our family as we all take care of and love one another. Give us the strength to love unconditionally and forgive one another whenever it's needed. In Your name we pray. Amen.





December 24 Christmas Eve

Joseph

She [Mary] will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins. Matthew 1:21

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

Jesus had two dads: God in heaven and Joseph on earth. God wanted to make sure that someone would look after Jesus on earth, and that's what Joseph got to do. He was the one who named Him Jesus, but God told Joseph what name to give Him. They named Him Jesus because He came to earth to save us from our sins.

Lord, Joseph had very strong faith and trust in You while his wife was pregnant with Jesus. Give us, too, a strong faith so that we would not question You but trust You to take care of us. In Your name we pray.

Amen.





December 25 Christmas Day

Jesus

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. Luke 2:11

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

“Jesus is the reason for the season!” This is something you hear a lot during the Christmas season, but it’s also something a lot of people ignore. Christ came to earth as a baby, and we celebrate His birth today because we know how much that means. Even though we use this time of year to highlight Christ’s birth, we should keep Christ in mind every day to truly appreciate the greatest gift of all!

Dear heavenly Father, thank You for sending Your Son, that we may gain eternal life. Thank You for everything You bless us with. Help us to remember You at all times, not just at Christmas. And as we head into the new year, during this time of reflection, help us to reevaluate our lives and grow closer to You. In Your Son’s holy and precious name we pray. Amen.





*Jesus said to him, "I am the way,
and the truth, and the life.
No one comes to the Father except
through Me."* John 14:6



Thank you so much for going on this journey with us! We appreciate that Christmas is an extremely stressful and busy time of year.

We hope you became closer as a family, had some fun, and gained some new traditions too.

God bless you and your family in the upcoming year!

In Christ,
The CPH Family



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