

"In *A Jesus Christmas*, Barbara Reaoch introduces children to the amazing truth that God planned the first Christmas long before Jesus was born. Barbara takes us on a journey through the Scriptures showing us the signposts that point to the coming Savior and their fulfillment on the first Christmas Day. An excellent family Christmas book with a powerful gospel message."

MARTY MACHOWSKI, Pastor; Author, *The Ology*, *The Gospel Story Bible*, and *Long Story Short*

"With every Christmas becoming more commercialized, parents are earnestly seeking new ways to make the true story of Christmas much clearer to their children. One glance through this remarkable book tells me that *A Jesus Christmas* is just what mothers and fathers are looking for. I highly recommend this book as a practical and powerful way to keep Jesus Christ and his word at the very center of your family's Christmas."

JONI EARECKSON TADA, Joni and Friends International Disability Center

"Barbara Reaoch has written a fine series of family devotions for the Christmas season. These daily studies are interactive, instructive, and faithful to Scripture. If you have young children in your home, and you want to make this Christmas more of a 'Jesus Christmas' than last year, try this little book by this experienced children's teacher."

DONALD S. WHITNEY, Professor of Biblical Spirituality and Associate Dean, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY; Author, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, *Praying the Bible*, and *Family Worship*

"Barb Reaoch has provided families with a unique interactive Christmas devotional, starting with God's promise in the garden and continuing in a logical progression to the incarnation. She has intentionally encouraged the development of good Bible-study skills for the whole family, and has provided an opportunity for engaging in application of the truths learned, and for families to make Christ the center of their holiday celebration."

SALLY MICHAEL, Author; Co-Founder, Truth78

"As a pastor and a father of young children, I'm always on the lookout for good devotional materials for children. *A Jesus Christmas* by Barbara Reaoch is an answer to that pursuit. I recommend families everywhere to get it, study it with your kids, and remind one another of the reason for the season."

DAVE FURMAN, Senior Pastor, Redeemer Church of Dubai; Author, *Kiss the Wave: Embracing God in Your Trials*, and *Being There: How to Love Those Who Are Hurting*

"With its focus on the good news of Christ, *A Jesus Christmas* is the perfect gift about the Perfect Gift. This easy-to-use, 25-day Advent devotional will engage children and families with interactive questions and space for creative journaling. Barbara Reaach wisely guides even young readers through the story of redemption, always stopping at signposts along the way that point the heart to Jesus."

CHAMP THORNTON, Pastor; Author, *The Radical Book for Kids*, and *Pass It On: A Proverbs Journal for the Next Generation*

"It is a special joy to commend Barbara Reaach's wonderful devotional book. It's the world's best story of all time—the story of Jesus' love for all of us, including the youngest person on the planet. May the blessing of God accompany this timely work to the honor and glory of his name."

WALTER C. KAISER, JR., President Emeritus, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

"*A Jesus Christmas* is a wonderful book for parents who want to help children see the big picture of the gospel. Full of rich and interactive devotionals, it will open the door into family conversations that celebrate the glory of Christ during Christmastime—and beyond."

SCOTT JAMES, Elder, The Church at Brook Hills; Author, *The Littlest Watchman*, *The Expected One*, and *Mission Accomplished*

"Barbara Reaach's book on Christmas stands out because it helps us see that Old Testament promises are fulfilled in the Christmas story. Christ's birth isn't an isolated event, but fits with the fabric of all of biblical revelation. I predict that *A Jesus Christmas* will be read by many because it is biblically faithful and accessible to all."

TOM SCHREINER, James Buchanan Harrison Professor of New Testament Interpretation and Associate Dean, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

"*A Jesus Christmas* is a beautiful way for whole families to gather together around God's word and discover why Christmas is ultimately a reminder of God's great and loving plans for humanity."

CHRIS CIPOLLONE, Author, *Down, Not Out*; father of four

BARBARA REAOCH



JESUS

CHRISTMAS

EXPLORE GOD'S AMAZING

PLAN FOR CHRISTMAS

the goodbook
COMPANY

*With thanks to Sara, whose support strengthens this work
and whose influence steers my heart Godward.*

A Jesus Christmas

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Tel (US): 866 244 2165

Tel (UK): 0333 123 0880

Email (US): info@thegoodbook.com

Email (UK): info@thegoodbook.co.uk

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BEFORE YOU BEGIN



These devotions are ideal for all ages. They are about faith—trusting Jesus, not your own goodness. They are about repentance—living for Jesus, not yourself. They are for children who already believe and for those who do not yet believe in Jesus. We all need encouragement all the time to believe Jesus’s truth.

Prepare your own heart before you lead your family or others in *A Jesus Christmas*. Ask your heavenly Father to guide you. Ask for insight about what questions to ask and how to promote discussion. Pray for God to give you a daily desire to make Jesus the focus of this Christmas.

THE DAILY PATTERN

Each day has four parts: Explore, Explain, Engage, and Enter in. These are followed by a wonderful true statement about Jesus and some family journaling space.

EXPLORE

Reading the Bible passage together is the key activity. The Bible will connect these true stories to show us God’s plan for sending Jesus. His big picture will come into view as you start to see these themes emerge:

- God’s plan for sending Jesus started in the Garden of Eden.
- Satan (the devil) was seen in the garden as a serpent/snake. Adam and Eve listened to the serpent’s lie. Their sin broke everything in God’s perfect world.
- Instead of running to God, we all run from him.
- God loves us more than we know. He promised to send his Son, Jesus, to crush the serpent and destroy evil.

- God planned for Jesus to come through the family line of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Ruth, and David.
- The serpent tells many lies but Jesus always tells the truth.
- Jesus lived and died for us to free us from the serpent's lies so that we can come to God as our Father.
- All who receive the gift of Jesus are God's children and will live with him forever.

EXPLAIN

Each day three things are highlighted: God's plan for Jesus, the serpent's lies, and Jesus's truth. Try to answer your child's questions but don't get bogged down in details. Assure everyone that as they learn more about Jesus, the truths will start to connect.

ENGAGE

There are two Engage questions for older children. The first helps children discover how truth intersects with their lives. The second question stimulates deeper discussion.

Each Engage question also has a simpler version after it. This is ideal for younger children or those with less Bible knowledge. The older and younger questions are marked as shown below:



For older children



For younger children

Be prepared to get the conversation going. Ask God for willingness to talk about times when you are tempted to sin. Pray that you will respond to your kids with understanding and not in a judgmental tone. As your family responds honestly to God's word and Spirit, they will begin to treasure the truth of Jesus.

ENTER IN

This short prayer is a springboard for your response to whatever God shows you about himself, Jesus, and yourself. The journal notes you make will continue to remind you of how God has used his Spirit and his word to work eternal miracles in your family.

JESUS IS...

These "Jesus is..." statements will help your family to remember that Christmas is about Jesus. Some have been decorated for you, though your child may want to add extra stars and patterns. Others have letter outlines for your child to color in.

FAMILY JOURNALING SPACE

This is a place to respond to what God has shown you. You might want to write down what you have learned, draw a picture, list things to thank God for, draw how your face looks when you think about Jesus, or use this space for any other way you want to respond to God. There is some extra journaling space at the back of the book for any days when you have an idea that needs more room.

ANSWERS

If you would find it helpful, you can download an answer sheet to all of the Explore and Engage questions from www.thegoodbook.com/ajc-answers.pdf

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Be brief. Be real. Be consistent.

SOME USEFUL BIBLE WORDS



AMEN: This Hebrew word means “I agree.” It is a way of joining in with someone’s prayer.

BIBLE / SCRIPTURE / GOD’S BOOK: Although the Bible was written by about 40 people, God made sure that they wrote exactly what he wanted them to write. God speaks to us through the Bible, and what he says in the Bible is always true.

CHRISTMAS: We don’t know exactly when Jesus was born, but December 25th was chosen as a day to celebrate Christmas—the birth of Jesus Christ.

FULFILLED: When one of God’s promises is fulfilled, it means that he has done exactly what he promised to do. When Jesus was born at the very first Christmas, he fulfilled many of God’s promises.

ISRAEL / ISRAELITES / GOD’S CHILDREN: God promised Abraham that his family would be so huge that counting them would be like trying to count all of the stars. This family were God’s people, often known as the Israelites or simply Israel. God promised that his rescuing King would come from this family.

MERCY: Mercy is when God doesn’t treat us in the way we deserve. Instead God shows us grace, which is his huge kindness to people who don’t deserve it.

MESSIAH / CHRIST: "Messiah" is a Hebrew word. The same word in Greek is "Christ." They both mean "the anointed one." When someone became king, they were anointed with oil. The names Messiah and Christ tell us that Jesus is God's chosen King.

SERPENT: In the Garden of Eden, Satan (the devil) was seen as a serpent/snake.

SIN / SINFUL: When we sin, we do what **we** want instead of what **God** wants. In our hearts we believe the lies of the serpent more than we believe God. Jesus came to rescue us from the problem of sin.

THE CROSS: Jesus's enemies killed him by nailing him to a cross and leaving him there to die. But it was God who had already planned that Jesus would die. As Jesus died on the cross, he took all the punishment for our sin, so that everyone who trusts in Jesus can be forgiven.

❖ DECEMBER 1ST ❖

GOD'S PLAN FOR CHRISTMAS



EXPLORE

Read Genesis 3 v 1-5 and 14-15

What lie did the serpent tell Adam and Eve? (verses 4-5)

What did God tell the serpent? (verses 14-15)

EXPLAIN

God's plan for the first Christmas starts right at the beginning of the Bible. God built a beautiful garden for Adam and Eve's home. He talked with them like best friends talk, and gave them lots of delicious fruit to eat. God loved Adam and Eve so much that he warned them not to eat the fruit of one tree. They would die if they ate that fruit.

But a serpent in the garden (who was really Satan) told them God had lied. The serpent said they couldn't trust what God said. Was the serpent telling the truth? No! God *always* speaks what is true. Sadly, Adam and Eve believed the serpent

and ate the fruit. Now weeds grow and God's creatures die. Worse yet, the terrible lie of the serpent lives on in every human heart. Instead of running to God, we run from him.

God loved Adam and Eve so much more than they thought. Adam's and Eve's sin broke everything. But God made the best-ever promise! **God promised to send someone to crush the serpent and destroy evil.** That someone is Jesus.

ENGAGE



Why do we run away from God instead of to him?



Ever since Adam and Eve believed the serpent, what lives in our hearts?



What makes God's promise of Jesus the very best promise ever?



What promise did God give to Adam and Eve and us all?

ENTER IN

God, you are our good Father. Thank you for your promise to send Jesus. We want to learn what it means to run to you and stop running from you. Help us know you and love you more this Christmas and always. Amen.



JESUS IS GOD'S PROMISE



FAMILY
JOURNALING
SPACE

IDEAS: Write "JESUS" in big letters and color in;
or write your own prayer; or something else...





LIKE THE STARS IN THE SKY



EXPLORE

Read Genesis 15 v 1-6

What did God promise Abram? (verses 4-5)

How did Abram respond to God's promise? (verse 6)

EXPLAIN

Christmas is God's answer to our biggest problem. God promised to send Jesus to rescue us from the serpent's terrible lie in our hearts. But *how* would God send Jesus?

God told a man named Abram, "Do not be afraid. I am your great reward." God promised him a son. Did Abram hear this right? He and his wife, Sarai, were too old to have a baby. Then God told him something even more amazing: "Look up into the night sky and count the stars." Abram would have as many children as there are stars. And from Abram's son's son's son's ... son the Rescuer would come.

A JESUS CHRISTMAS

Abram believed God. He did not listen to the serpent's lie that says, "You have to see it *before* you can believe it." The truth is, we see the truth when we believe in Jesus. God gives us hearts that can see. Jesus is the Rescuer—who lived all his perfect life for us. And Jesus died for every wrong thing we do. **Jesus rescues everyone who believes in him.**

ENGAGE



Why is believing the truth about Jesus a good thing?
What does this mean for you?



Why do we need Jesus to rescue us?



What would you say to someone who asked, "Why do we need Jesus?"



Who does Jesus rescue?

ENTER IN

Father God, you are powerful. Thank you for making it possible for Abram to believe you and your promise to him. Please take away our unbelief. Give us new hearts to believe you and your promise of Jesus. Amen.

DID YOU KNOW? *God gave new names to Abram and Sarai. When we read about them tomorrow, they will be called Abraham and Sarah.*

☆ ☆ ☆
⇒ JESUS IS OUR ⇒
☆ RESCUER ☆



IDEAS: Draw lots and lots of stars; or write why Jesus is the greatest Rescuer of all; or something else...



❖ DECEMBER 3RD ❖

A PROMISED CHILD



EXPLORE

Read Genesis 21 v 1-6

What did God give to Abraham and Sarah, just as he promised? (verses 1-2)

How did Sarah react to having a son? (verse 6)

EXPLAIN

Christmas is God's way of saying, "I always keep my promises." God promised to make Abraham the father of many children. Best of all, one of his son's son's son's ... sons would be Jesus! But when no son was born, the terrible lie of the serpent made him wonder, "How can I be sure God will keep his promise?"

When Sarah heard God's promise to give her a child, she laughed (Genesis 18 v 12). After all, what does a pregnant 90-year-old look like?! But, nine months later, Sarah gave birth to a baby boy. They named him *Isaac*, which means "son of laughter." Sarah laughed again, this time from a heart of joy.

Christmas tells us that Jesus is God's "YES" to all of his promises. When God came out of heaven, in Jesus, he proved that all of his promises are true. Jesus's joy fills our hearts when we believe in him. The joy of a Christmas gift lasts only a short time. But the joy Jesus puts in our hearts lasts forever. **Jesus is real joy!**

ENGAGE



For every day to seem like Christmas, we would need gifts and special treats every day. Why does the joy from a Christmas gift last only a short time?



How do we know God always keeps his promises?



The lasting joy we all really want comes from Jesus. Have you told him, "Jesus, I trust you as my Rescuer; you alone can give me a new heart and a new life with you forever"?

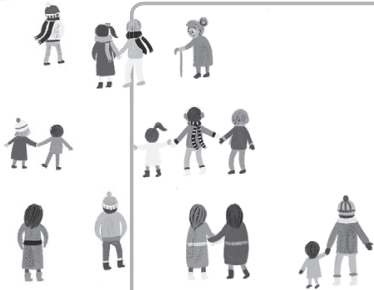


How long does the joy that Jesus gives us last?

ENTER IN

God, you are the Promise-Keeper. You have the power to keep all your promises. Please give us the forever joy of trusting Jesus as our Rescuer. Amen.

JESUS IS JOY!



FAMILY
JOURNALING
SPACE

IDEAS: Draw Abraham and Sarah with baby Isaac; or list gifts from God that make you happy; or something else...

