



LIFE THIS SIDE OF HEAVEN  
Devotions for Real Life

# Advent Paper Chain 2023

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## Monday, December 4

If you look carefully around the church, as you worship with your family, you may spot this interesting little symbol that looks like a bunch of squiggles. See if you can find it with your parents. The squiggles are actually the first two letters and the last letter of the name *Jesus* in Greek: Ἰησοῦς. This ancient short form became a popular symbol in the Christian church many centuries ago. Joseph and Mary knew Jesus' name even before He was born. The angel told Joseph, "You are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21 NIV).

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## Saturday, December 9

Enjoy the Emmy Award-Winning TV Christmas Special, "The Stableboy's Christmas." On Christmas Eve, ten-year old Tammy doesn't want to wrap up a doll which is to be given to her cousin. She wants the doll for herself. As she throws herself down in front of the Christmas tree the figures in her nativity scene come to life and tell her about God's greatest gift to us – a Savior! You can see it on our website at: [www.LifeThisSideOfHeaven.org/classic-christmas-specials](http://www.LifeThisSideOfHeaven.org/classic-christmas-specials)

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## Thursday, December 14

"I'm dreaming of a white Christmas!" Are you dreaming of a white Christmas with lots of snow? A favorite old singer named Bing Crosby sang a very popular Christmas song with that theme. Snow can be a useful reminder of God's forgiveness, and the reason Jesus came. In Isaiah 1:18 God says, "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow."

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## Tuesday, December 19

The Hebrew word "Messiah," and the Greek word "Christ," both mean the same thing - "the anointed." Prophets, priests and kings were anointed as they were placed into office. Jesus said, "The Spirit of the Lord is on Me, because He has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18-19 NIV). The composer George Frideric Handel wrote a beautiful piece of music celebrating God's love called "The Messiah," often heard at Christmas.

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## Christmas Eve, Sunday, December 24

Tonight, one of the hymns we will sing is "Silent Night." The text of the hymn was written in December of 1818 by Joseph Mohr for his congregation in Oberndorf, Austria. The music was written by the church organist, Franz Gruber. Although it was originally prepared to be played on the organ, the organ was discovered to be broken. It was first sung accompanied by a guitar. "While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn" (Luke 2:6-7 NIV).

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