**Announcements for Winter 2023-2024**

These faith-building ideas for families are ready to be shared via email, on a social media platform such as Facebook, or in a weekly bulletin or newsletter. Each week’s suggestions coordinate with the Shine curriculum that children and junior youth use during Christian education time. Announcements for this quarter run from Sunday, December 3, through February 25. Modify the dates as needed to match your church’s schedule.

**Add this explanation the first week you send out or post the announcements:**

Today we are beginning a weekly announcement for families of children and junior youth. Each Sunday you will find faith nurture ideas that coordinate with the weekly session plans from the Shine curriculum your child’s group uses. The Bible story can be read from *The Peace Table: A Storybook Bible,* which is available for purchase from www.ShineCurriculum.com/shop. Or simply read it from a translation of your choice. Each week includes the prayer practice that your child(ren) was introduced to during Sunday school. Continue that practice each day.

*****Session 1*

**December 3, 2023**

**A Different Kind of Kingdom**

**Read** page 110 in *The Peace Table: A Storybook Bible* or Isaiah 11:1–9. Imagine together what a peaceful world might look like. Draw or create images of a peaceful world using a variety of art materials.

**Pray** a prayer of blessing. Pass a peace candle around the circle with each family member saying “the peace of Christ be with you” to the next person.

**Watch** a read aloud of the book *The Winter Train* by Susanna Isern on YouTube. Talk about the ways the animals work together.

*****Session 2*

**December 10, 2023**

**Zechariah and Elizabeth**

**Read** page 162 and 166 in *The Peace Table: A Storybook Bible* or Luke 1:5–25; 57–80. Talk about what it might have been like for Zechariah as he waited for the baby to be born. What is it like for you to wait for something exciting to happen?

**Pray** a prayer of blessing. Pass candle around the circle with each family member saying “the hope of Christ be with you” to the next person.

**Celebrate** with Zechariah and Elizabeth with a party. Have a snack together as a family and talk about what things babies need that might be brought to help Elizabeth with the new baby.

*****Session 3*

**December 17, 2023**

**Mary Shares Her Joy**

**Read** page 164 in *The Peace Table: A Storybook Bible* or Luke 1:26–56**.** Talk about who you share exciting news with.

**Pray** a prayer of blessing. Pass a candle around the circle with each family member saying “the joy of Christ be with you” to the next person.

**Listen** to a version of the song “There Was a Little Baby” (YouTube). Have a Christmas sing-a-long with each family member requesting their favorite.

*****Session 4*

**December 24, 2023**

**Jesus Is Born**

**Read** pages 170 and 172 in *The Peace Table: A Storybook Bible* or Luke 2:1–20**.** Talk about the ways your family will celebrate Jesus’ birth.

**Pray** a prayer of blessing. Pass a candle around the circle with each family member saying “the love of Christ be with you” to the next person.

**Go** on a scavenger hunt! Take turns hiding a baby doll or a baby Jesus from a nativity set. The person who finds the baby gets to hide it for the next round.

*****Session 5*

**December 31, 2023**

**Magi Come to Worship**

**Read** page 176 in *The Peace Table: A Storybook Bible* or Matthew 2:1–2. Take turns sharing about a time when you’ve received a special gift.

**Pray** a prayer of blessing. Pass a candle around the circle with each family member saying “the light of Christ be with you” to the next person.

**Explore** a variety of spices, oils, and fragrances that you have around the house like nutmeg, cinnamon, cloves, vanilla, or essential oils such as lavender, peppermint, or pine. Place fragrances on cotton balls to smell. Take turns sharing your favorites.

*****Session 6*

**January 7, 2024**

**Jesus Is Baptized**

**Read** page 182 in *The Peace Table: A Storybook Bible* or Mark 1:1–10. Share this blessing with one another: (*name*), you are my beloved (*child, parent, brother, sister, etc*.), I am proud of you for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Pray** “listening” prayers this week. Help each family member find a quiet place to pray. Draw, write, or move as you pray.

**Retell** the story of Jesus’ baptism. If you have been baptized, share your experience with your family.

*****Session 7*

**January 14, 2024**

**Follow Me**

**Read** pages 188 and 202 in *The Peace Table: A Storybook Bible* or Mark 1:16–20; 2:13–17; 3:13–19 as you eat a meal together. Imagine Jesus being at your table. What would you talk about with Jesus?

**Pray** “listening” prayers this week. Step outside together and listen to winter sounds in your yard or neighborhood. Back inside, share your favorite sound and any unusual sounds you noticed.

**Play** a game of Follow the Leader. Talk about whether you like being a leader or a follower best. What makes a good leader? A good follower?

*****Session 8*

**January 21, 2024**

**Jesus Begins His Ministry**

**Read** page 198 in *The Peace Table: A Storybook Bible* or Mark 1:29–45. Jesus taught in a way that caught people’s attention. Talk about amazing teachers you have known.

**Pray** “listening” prayers this week. Practice listening without interrupting by taking turns telling something happy and something sad that happened this week. Close your sharing time by praying for each family member.

**Color** and cut out Flat Jesus, found on the [Extras page](http://www.ShineCurriculum.com/Extras) of the Shine website. Take Jesus with you wherever you go this week. Take a picture of you and Flat Jesus and share it with your friends and family.

*****Session 9*

**January 28, 2024**

**Five Friends**

**Read** page 200 in *The Peace Table: A Storybook Bible* or Mark 2:1–12. Talk about why you think these friends were so determined to get the man to Jesus.

**Pray** “help others” prayers this week. Jesus listened to the people who came to him for healing. Write the names of people you know who are sick on a paper chain. As you pray, listen for ways God may inspire you to help them.

**Celebrate** helpful friends by sending a thank you note, cookies or a snack, or sharing a game or book over video chat.

*****Session 10*

**February 4, 2024**

**Parable of the Sower**

**Read** page 210 in *The Peace Table: A Storybook Bible* or Mark 4:1–20. Plant seeds. Talk about what you will need to do to help them grow.

**Pray** “help others” prayers this week. Think about people you know who may be having a hard time or struggling to learn something new. Have each person light a candle as a sign of Jesus’ light and love for the person they are praying for.

**Search** online for artwork related to today’s story. One painting to look for is *The Sower* by Vincent van Gogh. What do you notice about the sower?

*****Session**11*

**February 11, 2024**

**Jesus Feeds 5,000 People**

**Read** page 224 in *The Peace Table: A Storybook Bible* or Mark 6:30–44 as you eat a meal together. Create your own mealtime prayer. Write it as a poem or set it to the tune of a simple song. Repeat it every day this week.

**Pray** “help others” prayers this week. Search online for organizations in your area that assist people who do not have enough food. Ask God to show you ways your family can help.

**Host** a bread tasting party. Try naan, tortilla, pita, and baguette. Talk about your favorites.

*****Session 12*

**February 18, 2024**

**Jesus and the Children**

**Read** page 252 in *The Peace Table: A Storybook Bible* or Mark 10:13–16. Have the grownups and older children tell what family traditions they enjoyed as young children.

**Pray** a blessing for one another. When we bless someone, we ask God to provide good things for that person, such as protection, healing, or comfort. Offer a blessing to each other such as this one: *May God bless you with joy and love.*

**Sing** “Jesus Loves Me” putting the names of your family members in place of the word “me.”

*****Session 13*

**February 25, 2024**

**Jesus Heals Bartimaeus**

**Read** page 254 in *The Peace Table: A Storybook Bible* or Mark 10:46–52. Imagine being Bartimaeus. Talk about what you would want to see first after receiving your sight.

**Pray,** thanking God for helpers in your community—first responders, doctors and nurses, pastors, teachers, and so on.

**Explore** “seeing” with your hands. Put ordinary objects in paper bags, one per bag. Have everyone close their eyes and take turns feeling the object in each bag. Share your guesses.