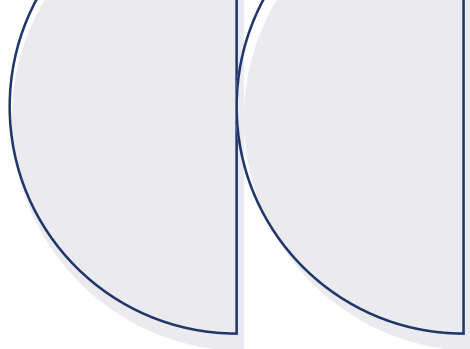


DAY 6

**Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer
Romans 12:12 NIV**

Staying faithful to God in hard times is one of the most difficult things to do. It's hard to be joyful and have hope when your dad loses his job. It's hard to be patient when you're in the middle of a fight with a friend. And it's hard to be faithful in prayer when you don't see God answering your requests. In times when faith is hard to find, remember that you can still find joy, hope, patience, and faith when you cling to God. When you turn to God, you'll find the gifts of joy, hope, patience, and more waiting for you no matter what!

What's causing you to struggle this season? Share that with God in prayer, asking God to help you grow in things like joy, hope, and faith no matter what you're going through.



DAY 7

**Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”
Luke 2:14 NIV**

Memorizing Scripture is a great way to get to know more about Jesus and the gift of His life that we celebrate at Christmas each year. When we read about that first Christmas when Jesus arrived to shake up the world, we're focusing our attention on the real meaning of the holiday season—a meaning that brings more joy than we can possibly imagine!

To share that joy with someone else, ask a friend to memorize this verse with you this week. Text it to each other daily, working each time to write more of it from memory. And when you've both got it down, celebrate by making Christmas cookies or another Christmas dessert together!

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

FOR AN
everyday faith.

SHAKE IT UP / WEEK 3

MIDDLE SCHOOL

DAY 1

**The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.
John 1:14 NIV**

We run into people we don't know every single day. At school, at church, in the mall, at the grocery store—every day, we pass by people who are basically strangers to us. And often, that's all we do! Well, Jesus walked among people He didn't know every day, too. But He took time to stop, make eye contact, and pay attention to the people who crossed His path. Jesus took time to really see the people in His life, and that made all the difference.

As you go through life this week, pray that God would give you eyes to see the people around you. You never know when you'll get the chance to share the joy of Jesus with someone you encounter this Christmas.

DAY 2

**While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her first-born, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.
Luke 2:6-7 NIV**

Do you have the perfect holiday planned? In your mind, it's all about sleeping in, hot chocolate, time off from school, and cool presents. While that all sounds good, in reality, we all know things don't always go the way we planned! Mary's life is the perfect example of that. She didn't plan to be pregnant with the Savior of the world, and she definitely didn't plan to give birth to Him in a barn. The way her life unfolded that first Christmas probably wasn't her perfect plan, but instead of giving up or getting frustrated when plans changed, she chose to trust in God's perfect plan for her life. And we can do the same!

This week, talk to someone older and wiser in your life and ask them how they trust God's plan for their lives.

DAY 3

For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Jeremiah 29:11 NIV

Christmas has a way of making us focus on need. Maybe we see the needs of those around us and struggle to figure out how we can help. Or maybe we see our own needs and wonder who will help us meet them. No matter what kinds of needs are on your mind this season, remember that God has promised to provide for and meet every single one. God has plans to not only take care of us, but to give us hope and a future. That is certainly a reason to find joy this Christmas!

Is there a need you see around you this holiday season? This week, take one small step to do what you can to meet that need by giving, serving, or bringing God’s love to that circumstance.

DAY 4

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed.
Matthew 2:9-10 NIV

Have you ever heard a great story? Something you want to share with others? After all, it brought us joy, so wouldn’t it bring joy to others, too? One of the best stories we can share is the story of God’s love for us. The gift God gave us in Jesus is the greatest gift of all; it’s the greatest story ever told! If celebrating that story this Christmas brings you joy, think about how much joy it might bring others to hear it, too

Look for ways to be generous with the Good News of Jesus by sharing it with others this holiday season. Who can you share the joy of Jesus with this Christmas?

DAY 5

The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!
Luke 2:10 NLT

Written by Beatriz, age 18, from Alpharetta, Georgia, USA

What we celebrate at Christmas was the most exciting thing to happen for a lot of people. A lot of people had been waiting for a lot of time for a Savior to come. Jesus was exactly who they’d been waiting for! This was the greatest news in the world—the birth of Jesus! The son of God who came to Earth as a human to live among us and show us the love of God. His birth is the reason for Christmas.

Now trust me, sometimes I also get more excited about the gifts, a break from school, fun festivities, and all the food during Christmas time. But that’s not what the author of this verse, Luke, cared about on the first Christmas. All the focus and excitement were about the arrival of Jesus, and not anything else. What if our focus and excitement was also on celebrating Jesus this Christmas, just like Luke’s was?

So today, choose to stop and think about how the birth of Jesus changes your life and brings you joy. And then, thank God for such awesome news of a Savior that is Jesus.