



Questions for Conversation and Family Activities

Week #1

December 6 – Do You See Joy?

Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

Questions for Conversation

- Name someone who has had a positive influence in your life. What would you be missing without that person?
- In the movie *It's a Wonderful Life*, what does Harry mean when he calls his brother the richest man in town?
- In the Bible, Galatians 5:22-23 says: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." In the movie, where did you see joy and the other traits mentioned in this Scripture? And where were they missing?

Bring it Home this Christmas: Family Activity

Joy is knowing that the birth of Jesus is imminent. Take some time this week to create a Christmas card with your family. On a blank piece of folded construction paper, write at the top the sentence starter, "My home is a place of **joy** because..." Have the whole family add their thoughts and sign their names. Place the card somewhere visible so it serves as daily reminder of the **joy** that fills your home.



Week #2

December 13 – Do You See Faith?

I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in.

Questions for Conversation

- Have you ever believed something that another person didn't believe? Describe that experience.
- In the movie *Polar Express*, why can the boy and his sister hear the bell while their parents cannot? What do you think the bell represents?
- In the Bible, Matthew 13:15 says: "The hearts of these people have become stubborn. They can barely hear with their ears. They have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes. They might hear with their ears. They might understand with their hearts. They might turn to the Lord, and then he would heal them." How does this verse relate to the movie?

Bring it Home this Christmas: Family Activity

As the season unfolds, we see symbols of Christmas everywhere we look. But which ones are expressions of **faith**? Who do you see in your community and how are they expressing their **faith**? Are people wishing one another a Merry Christmas? For one week, keep a list of all the **faith** symbols you can find. Perhaps you see expressions of other faiths such as the Jewish celebration of Chanukah. Have you seen a menorah, a Dreidel, or a Star of David? End the week by adding to your list the ways your family expresses its **faith** at Christmas. Follow with a discussion about what makes Christmas truly meaningful for your family.

As you are shopping or around town this Christmas, can you find these symbols? Do you know their significance?

Bells

Ring out to guide lost sheep back to the fold, signifying that all are precious in his eyes.

Candles

Candles represent the light that Jesus brought to earth, a mirror of starlight, reflecting our thanks for the star of Bethlehem.

Candy Canes

Made by a Christian confectioner as a reminder of the Shepherd's staff: red for the blood shed by Jesus Christ, white for his purity.

Christmas Seals

A Danish postal clerk sold Christmas stamps (Christmas seals) to show that users had given to a worthy cause.

Christmas Stockings

There is a legend associated with the origin of Christmas stockings. St. Nick, who wanted to remain anonymous and help a poor family, threw gold coins down their chimney. They fell into a stocking that was hanging there to dry.

Gifts

The first Christmas gifts were given by the wise men to Baby Jesus.

Holly

A shrub with spiny leaves and red berries. The leaves remain green throughout the year. Early French and English families hung holly over their doors to symbolize a home in which Christ's birth is celebrated.

Mincemeat Pie

Mincemeat pie is full of spices and fruits. It represents the exotic treasures of the East that the wise men brought to Jesus.

Poinsettia

The poinsettia derived its name in 1825 from America's first ambassador to Mexico, Joel Poinsett. A Mexican legend explains how this flower got associated with Christmas: a flower symbolic of the star in Bethlehem.

Saint Nicholas

Saint Nicholas, the Eastern European name for Santa Claus, was a real person – a kind bishop who brought presents to children and needy people. He tossed pouches with gold coins through the windows of needy people in his town.



Week #3

December 20 – Do You See a Miracle?

But these [miraculous signs] are written down so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. If you believe this, you will have life because you belong to him.

Questions for Conversation

- When it comes to miracles, what do you believe? Can you believe something that common sense tells you not to believe?
- In the movie *Miracle on 34th Street*, people notice something special about Kris Kringle. What makes them believe in him?
- In the Bible, John 20:31 says: “But these [miraculous signs] are written down so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. If you believe this, you will have life because you belong to him.” What are some of the miracles written the Bible? What do the miracles cause you to believe about Christ?

Bring it Home this Christmas: Family Activity

Miracle Walk

What exactly is a **miracle**? Where can we see one? Miracles are all around us; we need simply to look for them. Take your family on a miracle walk or drive this week to discover some of the everyday **miracles** that surround you. Start simple and consider the miracle of the stars, the Rocky Mountains, your neighbors, church and friends... As you spend time together discuss what a **miracle** is and where they can be seen. Consider questions such as: Is snow a burden or a **miracle**? Is that lady across the street just a crank-pot or another one of God’s **miracles**? After the walk/drive, explain that the point was to be open to the unexpected. Then ask the young people to point out some unexpected happenings in the story of Jesus’ conception and birth. Note that God’s plans for us require that we be open to the unexpected, open to **miracles**, at all times, in all places.



Week #4

December 24 - Do You See Christ?

For unto you is born this day a Savior; he is Christ the Lord.

Questions for Conversation

- What do you enjoy most about how your family celebrates Christmas?
- In the movie, what are some of the ways that *Charlie Brown's* friends try to celebrate Christmas? Why are those things frustrating to Charlie Brown?
- In the movie, Linus recites the Christmas story from the Bible, found in Luke 2:8-14. Following is a contemporary version of the story to read together as a family.

"There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby. It was night, and they were looking after their sheep. An angel of the Lord appeared to them. And the glory of the Lord shone around them. They were terrified.

But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy. It is for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord. Here is how you will know I am telling you the truth. You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger.'

Suddenly a large group of angels from heaven also appeared. They were praising God. They said, 'May glory be given to God in the highest heaven! And may peace be given to those he is pleased with on earth!'"

Bring it Home this Christmas: Family Activity

Pictures of Christ

Everyone in the family will need to use the camera, preferably digital, for this activity. The goal is to find **Christ** in the people and events of Christmas, and take a picture of them. Plan a time to create a collage together using the photos. Give each person a chance to explain how his or her photo captures the essence of Jesus **Christ** in the spirit of Christmas.

We would love to hear how these activities went for you and your family.

Please send us an email at familyfeedback@chcc.org.