For most people, patience is a difficult character trait to develop. But God commands us to patiently wait on him and to show patience with other people. Not only is patience a virtue; it’s also a fruit of the Spirit (see Galatians 5:22-23).

Unfortunately, patience is often in short supply during the Christmas season. As kids excitedly count down to celebrations, presents, vacations, and special events, frazzled parents are often pushed to the breaking point.

Amid the busyness and stress, it’s easy to forget why we celebrate Christmas: the birth of Jesus, a fulfillment of God’s promise to his people.

As you look forward to celebrating Christmas, help your children see how this time of waiting can not only grow their patience but also prepare their hearts. Jesus’ cousin John the Baptist shouted, “Prepare the way for the Lord’s coming! Clear the road for him!” (Matthew 3:3).

How can you help your children prepare for Jesus’ birth at Christmas—and for his eventual return? What “roadblocks” do you need to clear away from your lives in order to better focus on Jesus and what he offers?

Practicing patience is challenging—especially in December—but Jesus makes the wait worthwhile. Read on for family-friendly ideas about discovering the wonder of waiting.
The Power of Patience

In Psalm 27:14 David writes, “Wait patiently for the Lord.” That sounds like a pretty passive endeavor, right? Actually the Hebrew word for wait means to be bound together by twisting. Waiting is actively bound up in the object of our waiting. During December, go beyond just opening a daily Advent calendar with your kids. Encourage them to be “active waiters” who are filled with expectancy and confidence. As we prepare for Christmas, waiting involves being certain of who Jesus is: a fully human yet fully divine baby who died for our sins, and our heavenly King who’s coming back to take us to heaven. What a powerful message to share with your children as they wait patiently for Christmas—and for Jesus.

Hope-Filled Home At breakfast each morning, talk about your family’s upcoming Christmas plans. Discuss how anticipating this special time is like or unlike what Mary and Joseph hoped for as they awaited Jesus’ birth.

Sweet News The color yellow often represents hope. Tie yellow ribbons around candy canes and deliver them to neighbors. Explain the symbolism of the yellow ribbon and the candy cane. (The “J” is for Jesus, red is for his shed blood, and white means we’re forgiven.)

Go Bananas Buy green bananas and talk about how waiting can have a great outcome. If you peel a banana too soon, it won’t taste good. Share times when you’ve had to be patient but were rewarded. Say: “God has the best plans in mind for us. They just might take time.” Emphasize that God is patient with us and wants us to be patient with other people.

Is It Jesus? Beforehand, wrap several gift boxes that are all empty except for one that has a baby Jesus in it. Begin by going on a search for a “hidden” baby (but don’t actually hide one). Ask family members what they felt like when their search was fruitless. Sum up the account of Simeon and Anna (see Luke 2:25-38). Set out a trail of wrapped boxes, with the last one containing the baby Jesus. Have people follow the trail and open each empty box. Before they open each one, ask, “Is it Jesus?” Celebrate when you get to the gift with baby Jesus inside.

Follow the Star Hold up a large star ornament. Tell family members that wherever you move the star, they should move as far as they can in that direction—up, down, or to the side. Afterward, say: “Following this star takes lots of energy! When Jesus was born, wise men followed a star for weeks and weeks just to meet him and give him gifts. But their patience paid off—and so does ours!”

Waiting to Hatch Read Horton Hatches the Egg by Dr. Seuss. Ask: “Why didn’t Mayzie want to sit on her egg? What was it like for Horton to sit on it for so long? How do you think he felt when it finally hatched? When have you been that patient and faithful?” Read Ecclesiastes 7:8. Ask, “What does this Bible verse say about patience? Which character in the book had patience? Who kept a promise? Who was rewarded in the end?” Say, “Being patient isn’t always easy, but the outcome is worth it.”

“Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.” —Colossians 3:12, NLT
**MOVIE**

**Title:** Sing  
**Genre:** Animation, Comedy, Drama  
**Rating:** PG  
**Cast:** Matthew McConaughey, Reese Witherspoon, Seth MacFarlane  
**Synopsis:** To keep his theater open, a koala named Buster Moon holds a singing competition to raise money. All the celebrity-seeking animals in town audition for a role.  
**Our Take:** The creators of Despicable Me are offering one of the few kid-friendly films this holiday season. With dozens of hit songs, the movie will appeal to children as well as parents. After seeing the movie, discuss why people want to be famous and why God gives people such a wide range of talents.

**TV**

**Title:** Trollhunters  
**Network:** Netflix  
**Synopsis:** This widely anticipated animated series was eight years in the making. Fifteen-year-old Jim is transformed into defender of the good trolls after finding a magical amulet. While Jim wages epic battles against evil in an underground town, he also must fulfill his real-world responsibilities as a son and student.  
**Our Take:** Director Guillermo del Toro is known for dark fantasy, horror, and superhero movies. But his inspiration for Trollhunters was milder ‘80s adventure flicks such as The Goonies. Del Tor wanted to juxtapose “that Jim could be bad at gym class but fantastic at fighting in the troll arena.” If you watch, talk with kids about reality vs. fantasy.

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**Games, Sites & Apps**

**Steep**  
In this new game set in the Alps, players compete in extreme winter sports: skiing, snowboarding, wingsuit flying, and paragliding. Online multi-person play is encouraged. Some play styles reward precision, while others reward stunts and crashes. (Rating pending)

**GamerDad.com/blog**  
Video-game expert Andrew Bub offers insights about new games and apps, as well as how they affect children. His detailed reviews include pros and cons of new titles, as well as specifics about violence, foul language, and other objectionable content.

**Woody: Endless Summer**  
Kids who miss warm weather will get a kick out of this wakeboarding dog. Players collect coins by helping Woody avoid obstacles. The app is free to download and play, but ads and in-game purchases are offered. Violence is minimal and cartoonish.

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**CULTURE & TRENDS**

**Hamilton Fever** The Broadway smash hit Hamilton, which injects diversity and rap music into history, has enthralled many young Americans. Kids are having Hamilton-themed birthday parties, dressing in Revolutionary-era garb, and singing the play’s soundtrack along with their parents. (time.com)

**Middle Schoolers and Marijuana**  
The TV sitcom Mom addresses a junior higher using pot. In an ongoing storyline, mom Christy must deal with the marijuana use of her 12-year-old son, Roscoe. Pot is now the most popular drug among middle schoolers—and easier for them to get than alcohol. (Entertainment Weekly)

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**QUICK STATS**

**Happiest Place on Earth?** Half of 800 people surveyed say they've canceled or reconsidered trips to Florida's Walt Disney World due to fears of the Zika virus. (Bloomberg News)

**Mindful Students** Fourth- and fifth-graders in a mindfulness program scored 15% higher than their peers on math tests. Some parents have voiced complaints about religious influences (mindfulness has roots in Buddhism), but teachers say kids are simply learning to pay attention. (Time)

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This page is designed to help educate parents and isn’t meant to endorse any movie, music, or product. Our prayer is that you’ll make informed decisions about what your children watch, read, listen to, and play.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUNDAY</th>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>TUESDAY</th>
<th>WEDNESDAY</th>
<th>THURSDAY</th>
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<td>There will be a Children’s Moment in our 10:50am Worship services this month.</td>
<td>Please bring canned food items to donate to as you attend the Living Christmas Tree.</td>
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<td>4th @ 1st Lunch</td>
<td>6:30pm Family Christmas Program featuring Children’s Choirs Grades 1-5</td>
<td>6:00pm Younger Children’s Choir Program</td>
<td>(No other Wednesday Night Activities)</td>
<td>7:30pm Living Christmas Tree</td>
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<td>4:30pm Living Christmas Tree</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Deadline to Register for Children’s Ministry Christmas Party</td>
<td>No Wednesday Night Activities</td>
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<td>5:30-8:30 Christmas Pajama Party in the Banquet Hall</td>
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<td>Christmas Day Worship Only at 10:30am</td>
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New Year's Eve
A child is born to us.
(Isaiah 9:6)

Donations Requested

For VBS:
We anticipate needing the following items to help with decorations this year:
- Empty soup cans
- Paint cans
- Spray paint
- Peg boards
- Paint brushes
Please keep the church in mind as you recycle this winter.

For Local Needs:
Kara has recently learned of a need for used Women’s Clothing – specifically shoes size 11 and pants size 12/14.

There is also an organization collecting gently used children’s coats and jackets sizes 3-14 through Sunday, December 11.

You can give these items to Kara and she will distribute them.

Class Parties
We need a parent representative or two from each grade level to help coordinate and host a class party with church friends for this school year. If this is something you could help with, please contact Kara.

Sports Schedules
Please share with Kara so she can try to make a game. It’s fun to see your child in their element!

What We’re Learning this Month

In Sunday School & Worship Workshop

December 4: Mary’s Story
(Luke 1:26-38, 46-47)

December 11: Joseph’s Story
(Matthew 1:18-24)

December 18: Jesus’ Story
(Luke 2:1-7)

December 25: No Sunday School

10:50 Worship Children’s Moment

December 4: PEACE
The Shepherds

December 11: JOY
Mary

December 18: LOVE
Joseph

December 25: The Christ Child & Angels

“A child is born to us.”
(Isaiah 9:6)

Christmas Pajama Party
Friday, Dec 16th 5:30pm-8:30pm

Games, Crafts, Snacks, & a Movie
The Preschool Ministry will watch The Very First Noel and enjoy age-appropriate snacks while the Children’s Ministry will watch The Nuttiest Nutcracker and enjoy chocolate chip pancakes, popcorn, and hot chocolate.

Register with Jenny or Kara by December 14 - Cost is $5/child

Save the Date

March 10 & 11: Birds & the Bees - Parenting Seminar
April 30: 5th Grade Recognition Breakfast
June 12-16: Vacation Bible School – Maker Fun Factory
July 9-12: Passportkids! Camp (register by February 1)
(Cost is $250 & open to completed 3rd-5th graders)