



**Lutheran Social Services**  
of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, Inc.  
647 W. Virginia St.  
Milwaukee, WI 53204  
800-488-5181  
414-281-4400

**Rev. James Holmberg**

Director of Church Relations  
LSS Foundation  
414-325-3069  
james.holmberg@lsswis.org

**Appleton**

3003-A North  
Richmond St.  
Appleton, WI 54911  
920-730-1326

**Beaver Dam**

809 Park Ave.  
Beaver Dam, WI 53916  
920-887-3172

**Eau Claire**

1320 W. Clairemont Ave.  
Suite 200  
Eau Claire, WI 54701  
715-834-2046

**Homme-Wittenberg**

W18105 Hemlock Road  
Wittenberg, WI 54499  
715-253-2116

**Janesville**

612 North Randall Ave.  
Janesville, WI 53545  
608-752-7660

**La Crosse**

2307 South Ave.  
La Crosse, WI 54601  
608-788-5090

**Madison**

6314 Odana Rd.  
Madison, WI 53719  
608-277-0610

**Marquette, MI**

1029 N. Third St.  
Marquette, MI 49855  
906-226-7410

**Superior**

33 N. 25th Street East  
Superior, WI 54880  
715-394-2054

**Wausau**

115 N. Sixth St.  
Wausau, WI 54403  
715-849-3344

COME,  
LORD  
JESUS

Devotions, Prayer Journal  
and Prayerful Coloring  
for Advent and Christmas

## You Make a Life-Changing Difference for Neighbors in Wisconsin and Upper Michigan

Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan (LSS) relies on gifts from donors like you to serve the most vulnerable people in our communities. Along with the annual benevolence and special gifts from ELCA (Lutheran) congregations, current, planned and legacy gifts provide sustaining support for the critical work of LSS today and for generations to come. **Thank you!**

### 3 Simple Ways to Give

1. Mail a check to  
**LSS Foundation**  
**647 W. Virginia St.**  
**Milwaukee, WI 53204**
2. Give online at [lssfoundation.org](http://lssfoundation.org)
3. Include LSS in your will, trust or beneficiary designation. This language can help when working with an attorney: "I give, bequeath and devise \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ % of my estate/trust to the LSS Foundation, 647 W. Virginia St., Suite 200, Milwaukee, WI. 53204."

Inside, find **devotions** for the Sunday before Advent (Gratitude), the four Sundays of Advent (Remember, Hope, Tears, Emmanuel), Christmas Eve (Joy) and the Christmas season (Wisdom). Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas Day.

The **prayer journal** in the center of the booklet offers a daily opportunity to note your petitions of thanks and concern between November 25 and January 5.

The line art on these pages invites **prayerful coloring**. As you color, you might reflect on the word in the title, hum a hymn, focus on one prayer concern, or repeat, "Come, Lord Jesus" until your mind is quiet your heart is open to hear God's Word for you.

Visit [www.lsswis.org/advent.htm](http://www.lsswis.org/advent.htm) for more ideas and to download all or portions of the booklet to share with others.

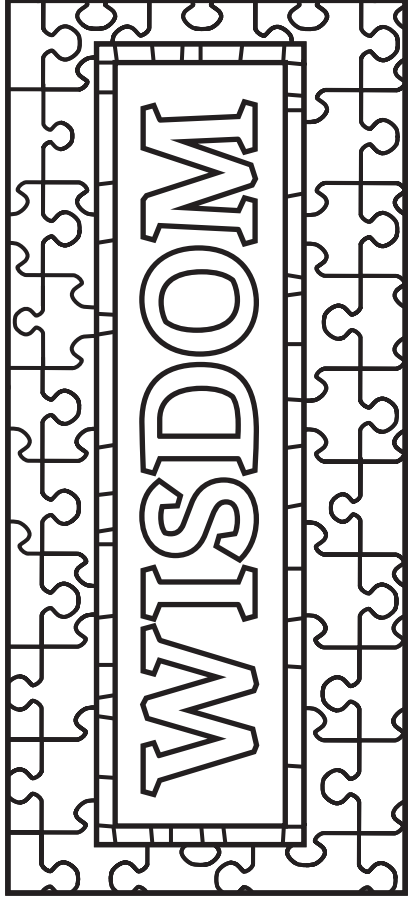
©2015 Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, Inc. Some rights reserved. Permission is granted to reprint for local use the complete booklet or unaltered full pages.

All Scripture quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright ©1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.



LSS Foundation staff work with individuals, families and congregations to facilitate gifts designated for LSS ministries and programs. For help, email [lssfoundation@lsswis.org](mailto:lssfoundation@lsswis.org) or call 414-325-3019.

[www.lssfoundation.org](http://www.lssfoundation.org)



*The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.* — Luke 2:40; see Luke 2:22-52.

Two wise and devout elders, Anna and Simeon, feature prominently in the birth-story of Jesus (Luke 2:22-40).

Simeon goes to the temple when Mary, Joseph and Jesus are there. He holds the baby, praises God and announces Jesus is the Messiah. Anna, a prophet who lived in the temple, sees the baby, praises God and proclaims Jesus will redeem Israel. Wise with age and the Holy Spirit, Anna and Simeon have the insight to see in a baby their long-awaited Savior. Mary and Joseph are amazed (v. 33).

In one sentence, Luke then advances the story 12 years (v. 40). Back in the temple, the wisdom of young Jesus amazes all who hear him (v. 47).

**Reflection:** Give thanks for your mentors in life and faith. Find ways to listen to the stories and wisdom of elders.

**Prayer:** *O God, open me to the Spirit-filled wisdom of all ages so I might grow in faith and understanding. In the name of Jesus who is and is to come.*



Supporting the Ministries of Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan

## *Advent and Christmas Greetings!*

### **Come, Lord Jesus.**

These words remind me of my childhood table prayer when my family gathered around the dinner table and invited Jesus to be with us and to bless us as we shared in God's gifts. So it is in this season. We invite, we plead, we pray for God's presence in our lives. Through God's grace, mercy and love, we are nourished and blessed to be a blessing.

Reflecting Jesus' own concern for the least, the last and the lost, this devotional encourages us to pray, Come, Lord Jesus, inviting Jesus, Emmanuel—God with us—to accompany us in our hope, tears and joy.

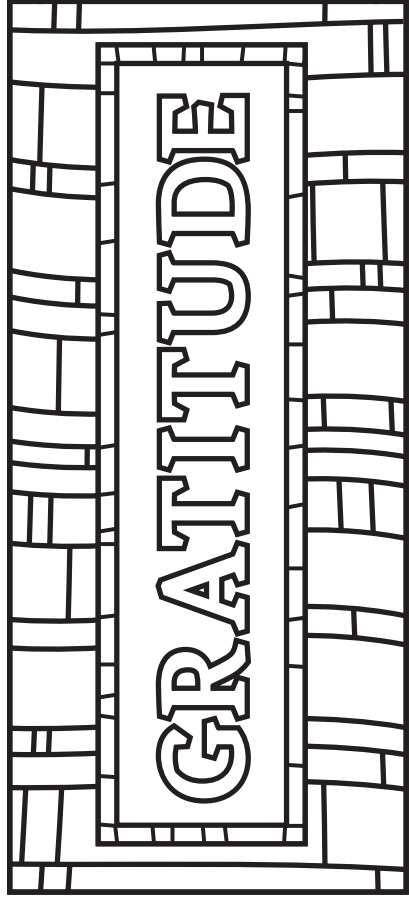
This Advent and Christmas, make room in your heart for Jesus. Enjoy a few minutes each day to read Scripture, reflect on a brief meditation, color and pray, preparing for the Savior who is and who is to come.

In peace,

Cynthia Halverson, President  
LSS Foundation

---

THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS



*I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you.*

—Philippians 1:3 (see Philippians 1:3-11 and Psalm 100)

“Pastor Homme, thank you. I don’t know what I would do without this place and the people who care about me.”

Jessica, who found a refuge at the LSS residential youth program in Wittenberg, Wisconsin, offered this prayer at the graveside of Pastor E.J. Homme. Considered the founder of LSS of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, Homme opened a home for orphaned children in Wittenberg in 1882.

God’s love and faithfulness endures from generation to generation (Psalm 100:5). For more than 130 years, faithful people have shared God’s love through LSS. Because of LSS, grateful people give thanks.

**Reflection:** This week give thanks for God’s gifts and remember in prayer the people who gift your life.

**Prayer:** *O God, thank you. Open my eyes to see your gifts and grace. Open my heart to be grateful. Open my hands to give back with joy and thanksgiving.*

---

LAST SUNDAY BEFORE ADVENT



*But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people.”*

—Luke 2:10 (see Luke 2:1-14)

When angels start a conversation with, “Do not be afraid,” there is good reason to fear. Just think of the shepherds working the night shift suddenly faced with angel who announces “good news of great joy for all.” Wow.

When Heather realized she was pregnant, she had reason to be afraid. She knew she couldn’t parent another child. After waiting six years to become adoptive parents, Jessica and JJ likely had reason to fear, too. Through LSS open adoption, there was good news for Heather, Jessica and JJ. And, there is great joy, all wrapped up in baby Jackson. Find more of this story at <http://bit.ly/1EIS6NM>.

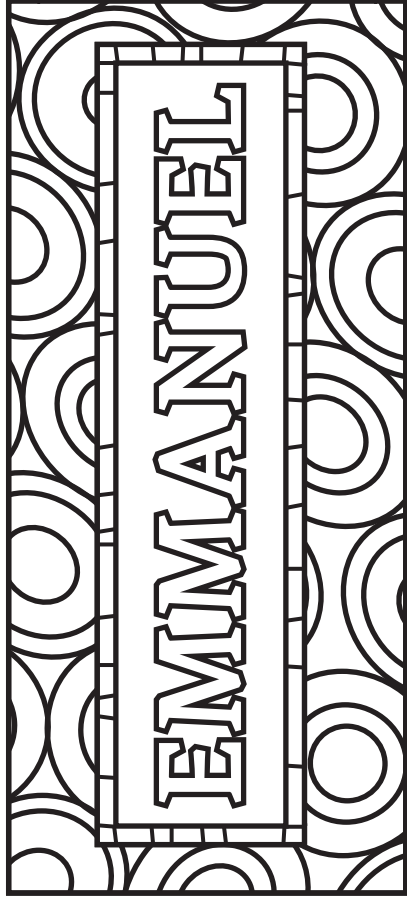
**Reflection:** Pray for those who wait, longing to become parents. Pray for children who wait, longing to join families. And, like the shepherds that first Christmas Eve, give thanks for all who work and serve on this holy night.

**Prayer:** *O God, thank you. The gift of Jesus is good news of great joy. Help me not to fear.*

---

CHRISTMAS EVE





*Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means, "God is with us."*

—Matthew 1:23 (See Matthew 1:18-25)

For our salvation, our all-powerful, eternal God willingly risks entering the world as a vulnerable baby without a crib to call his own. Jesus, true man, experiences the joys and sorrows of human life; he suffers and dies. Jesus, true God, rises again in glory. Such amazing love!

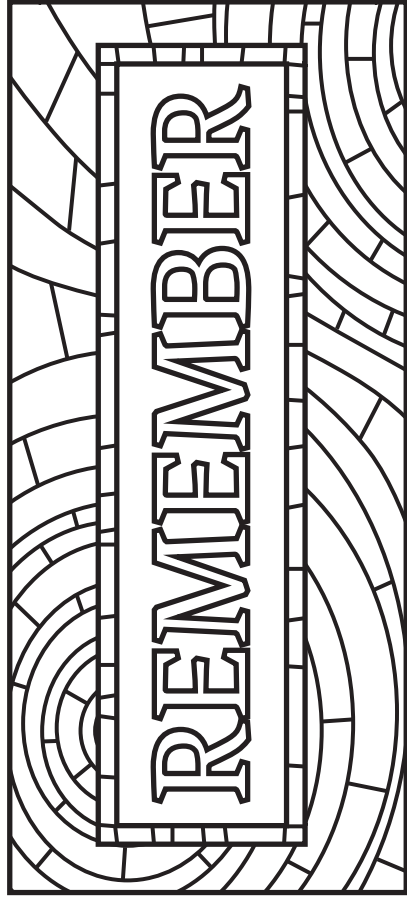
Jesus, Emmanuel, is God-with-us. Not God-far-away. Jesus is with Jane, a woman who has developmental disabilities, as she risks moving to her first apartment. Jesus is with Jane's parents as they risk letting her go. Surrounded by a network of support, they realize independence does not mean being alone.

**Reflection:** How might you share the courage and comfort of Jesus—God with us—with someone who feels alone? Pray for Connections, an LSS consulting service helping people with disabilities and their families plan and direct long-term services and supports.

**Prayer:** *O God, thank you for being with me. Bless me with the courage and comfort to risk change.*

---

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT



*Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for your goodness' sake, O LORD!* —Psalm 25:7 (see Psalm 25:1-10)

It was a shock when Jim first realized Frances, his mother who has dementia, could not remember his name. "It was my mother who named me, called me to supper, and tenderly tucked me into bed," said Jim. "Even as her memory fades and recognition seems gone, though, the connection remains—distant but still present and strong."

Our God does remember us and knows us by name, choosing to forget our mistakes, and guiding us with steadfast love.

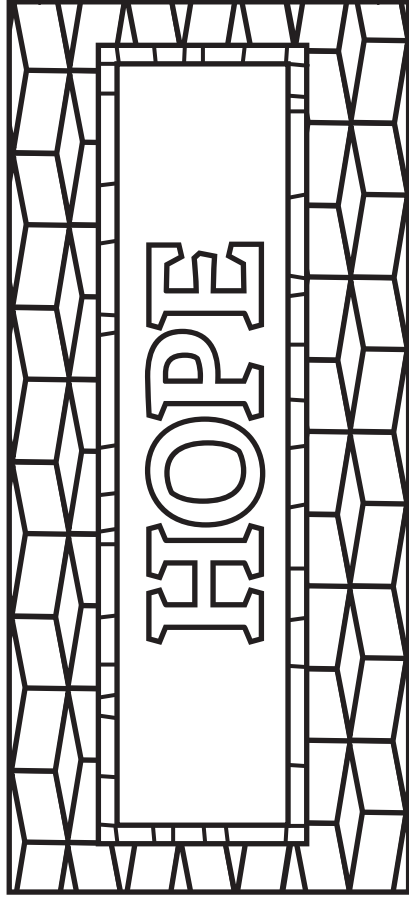
Instead of pushing to prepare for Christmas celebrations, the season of Advent exhorts us to pause, remember and repent, and prepare for Christ. We do so confident in God's forgiveness and grace.

**Reflection:** This week, remember by name anyone you know who lives with dementia. Pray also for the LSS Mindworks program that supports people in the early stages of dementia.

**Prayer:** *O God, you who remember me by name, forgive and forget my sins, in the name of Jesus who is and is to come.*

---

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT



*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

—Romans 15:13 (see Romans 15:4-13)

Donna was living in her car and cutting herself to release stress. Her fiancé had died six months earlier. A return to her childhood home brought only further rejection and hurt. It seemed foolish, at best, to hope.

After a referral to Wellspring, an LSS drop-in center for women in Green Bay, Wisconsin, the staff connected Donna to grief support, Al-Anon, housing options, and financial counseling classes. She began training for work as a certified nursing assistant. Now working full time, Donna lives in her own apartment.

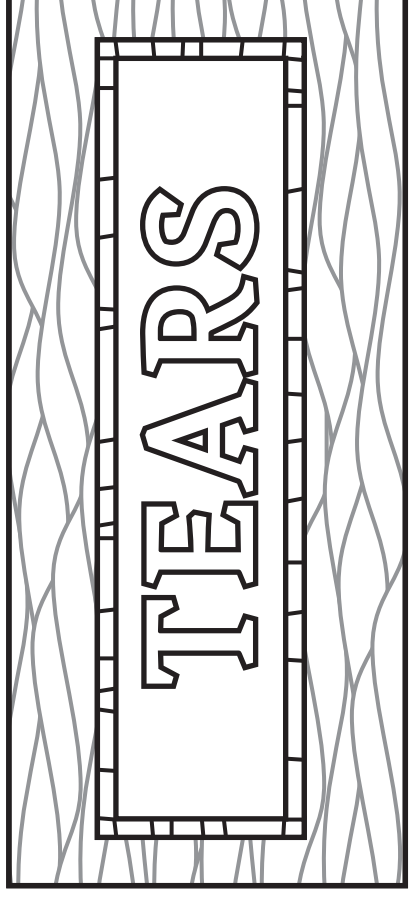
Understanding we are worthy of God's hope because we are God's own, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we can dare to hope. We can abound—be filled—in hope.

**Reflection:** Pray for people who struggle to hope, and for people and programs, like Wellspring, that encourage hope.

**Prayer:** *O God, I pray for hopefulness for myself and others. Come, Lord Jesus. Our hope rests in you.*

---

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT



*May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy.*

—Psalm 126:5 (see Psalm 126:1-6)

Sometimes the packaged happiness of Christmastime is hard to take. All the merry seems to magnify sorrow and distress. Is it OK for Christians to be sad at Christmas?

Yes, indeed. In the Bible, there are more psalms of lament than psalms of praise. The book of Psalms is a model for bringing every human emotion and need before our merciful God. Psalm 34:18 reassures us, “The LORD is near to the brokenhearted, and saves the crushed in spirit.”

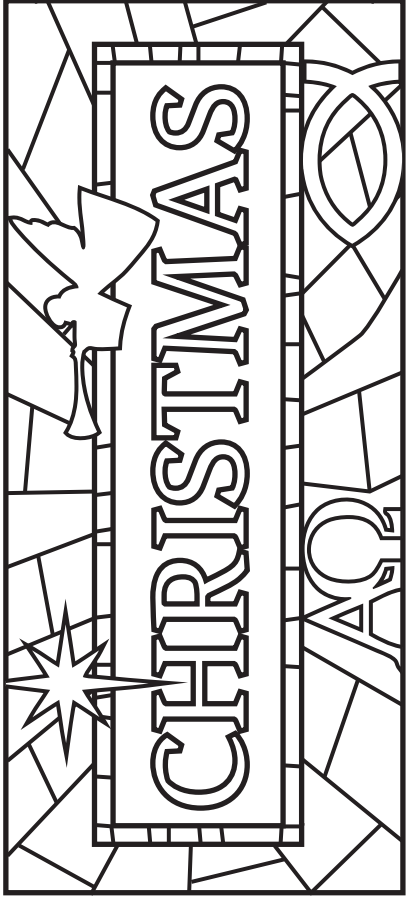
Joy, faith-filled joy, is different than happiness; it is deeper, wiser. Because of God's grace, we can know joy even, and perhaps especially, through our tears.

**Reflection:** Find out if a nearby congregation is offering a Blue Christmas or Longest Night service and invite someone to attend with you. Seek help if you or someone you know is struggling with depression.

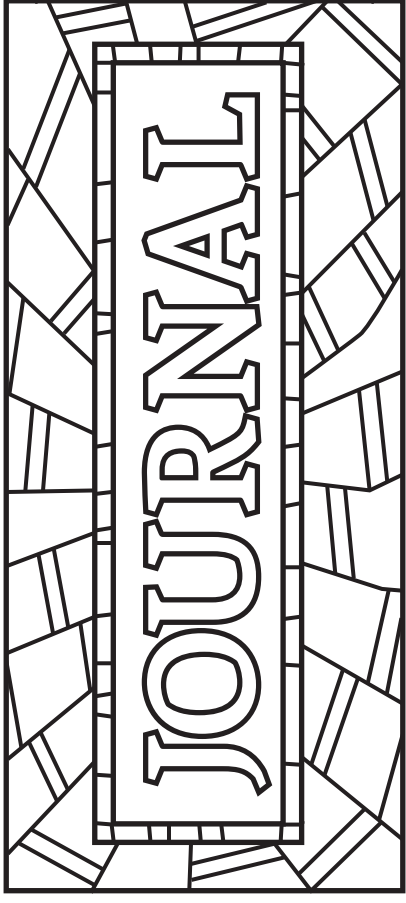
**Prayer:** *O God, you lift up the lowly and save the crushed in spirit. Help me experience your joy even through tears.*

---

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT



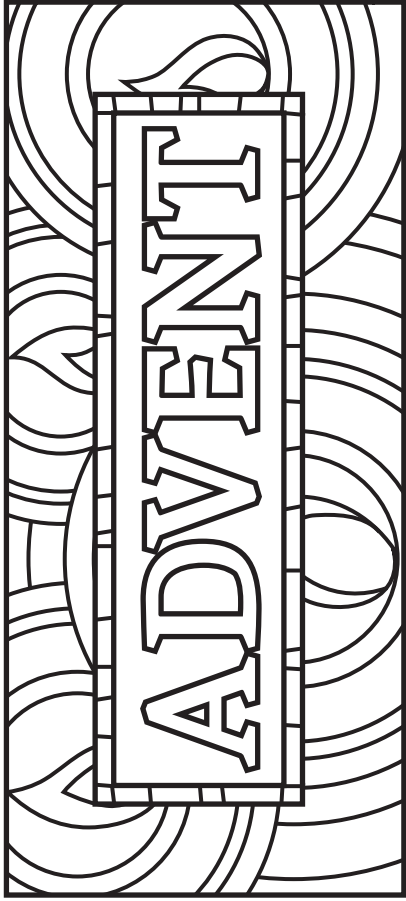
|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| 12-25 | 12-31 |
| 12-26 | 1-1   |
| 12-27 | 1-2   |
| 12-28 | 1-3   |
| 12-29 | 1-4   |
| 12-30 | 1-5   |



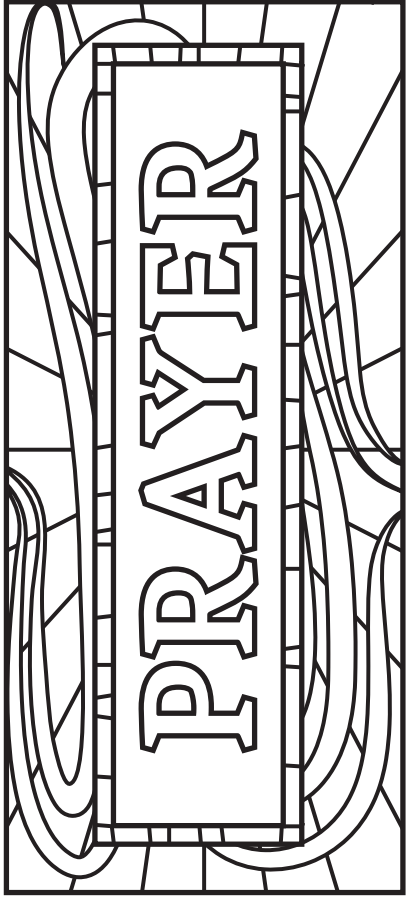
Use these four pages as a prayer journal, listing one or more prayer prompts each day between November 25 and January 5. Some examples: *K's recovery*, *Courage tomorrow*, *Lee's baptism!* To coordinate with the devotions, label the dated boxes for the Sundays of Advent.

You might want to pre-place names in some of the 42 boxes. Children can help create this "God bless" list of people to remember each day in prayer. For other ideas and to print out additional copies of this prayer journal, go to [www.lsswis.org/advent.htm](http://www.lsswis.org/advent.htm).

|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| 11-25 | 11-28 |
| 11-26 | 11-29 |
| 11-27 | 11-30 |



|      |       |
|------|-------|
| 12-1 | 12-7  |
| 12-2 | 12-8  |
| 12-3 | 12-9  |
| 12-4 | 12-10 |
| 12-5 | 12-11 |
| 12-6 | 12-12 |



|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| 12-13 | 12-19 |
| 12-14 | 12-20 |
| 12-15 | 12-21 |
| 12-16 | 12-22 |
| 12-17 | 12-23 |
| 12-18 | 12-24 |