

BEST  
*Advent*  
EVER

STUDY GUIDE 2018



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**STUDY GUIDE 2018**

 **Dynamic Catholic**

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# INTRODUCTION

Have you ever met Jesus?

It's easy to think of God as some distant force. As the Great Creator who formed the universe, then left it to fend for itself. But that's not even close to the truth. God created you to have a relationship with him. How? Through Jesus.

Jesus came into this world to change your life—you personally. Yes. YOU! He wants you to tell him where it hurts. He wants you to tell him what gives you joy. He wants more for you than you could ever want for yourself. But you have to meet him first. You have to *know* him. More than 2,000 years ago, Jesus entered the world through Mary. This Advent, like each Advent before it, he wants to enter your life. He is waiting for your invitation. He is ready.

Are you ready? In just a few weeks, it'll be Christmas. The time will fly by; it always does. As you're preparing for Christmas—decorating, baking, buying gifts—we want to help you prepare for Jesus, too. Not just the baby in the manger. But God himself. The Word made flesh.

This study guide is designed to accompany Dynamic Catholic's 2018 BEST ADVENT EVER program. Daily videos from Allen Hunt, Matthew Kelly, and members of the Dynamic Catholic team give personal reflections on the topics discussed in several carefully selected clips from *The Turning Point: Eight Encounters with Jesus That Will Change Your Life* (now available). If you haven't done so already, you and members of your group can sign up at [BestAdventEver.com/AdventSignUp](https://www.bestadventever.com/adventsignup) to get emails sent straight to your inboxes every day during Advent.

This Advent Season, we invite you to meet and experience Jesus like never before.

Are you ready?

May God bless you and bring you closer to him each day this Advent.

**The Dynamic Catholic Team**

# STUDY GUIDE PURPOSE AND FORMAT

This year, the content draws from Dr. Allen Hunt's Bible study *The Turning Point: Eight Encounters with Jesus That Will Change Your Life*. The discussion questions will be based on the daily video reflections and the prompt that a group member can read at the start of each session.

It is important to note that you do not need *The Turning Point* in order to follow the BEST ADVENT EVER program or to use this study guide.

The purpose of this study guide is to help participants better experience the 2018 BEST ADVENT EVER program by helping them apply selected ideas from *The Turning Point* to their everyday lives, specifically in light of the Advent and Christmas seasons. While it has been created primarily for use in small faith groups, it can also be used by individuals for personal reflections.

Visit [DynamicCatholic.com/TurningPoint](http://DynamicCatholic.com/TurningPoint) to learn more about *The Turning Point*.

This study guide consists of six sessions. With Advent being just over three weeks long, we recommend that you meet twice a week. You can also meet once a week and go through two sessions at a time, or you can continue to meet after Christmas Day.

Each session follows the same format:

- **OPENING PRAYER**
- **DISCUSSION PROMPT**
- **WATCH VIDEO(S)**
- **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**
- **CLOSING PRAYER**
- **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

We recommend that groups meet for about sixty minutes. If your group does not get through all the discussion questions during that time, that's okay. Spend the time on the questions that are most relevant to your group.

It's important that participants sign up for BEST ADVENT EVER to watch the daily videos throughout Advent. They can do so at [BestAdventEver.com/AdventSignUp](http://BestAdventEver.com/AdventSignUp).

**Note:** We recommend that you meet later in the week if possible so more videos are available to watch and discuss. However, you can always watch and discuss videos from the previous weeks. Depending on the day you meet, different videos will be available. A new video will be posted each day during Advent. You can access the videos at [BestAdventEver.com/ViewVideos](https://BestAdventEver.com/ViewVideos) starting December 2, or you can sign up at [BestAdventEver.com/AdventSignUp](https://BestAdventEver.com/AdventSignUp) to receive them in your inbox daily.

# SESSION ONE: THE TURNING POINT

## OPENING PRAYER

Loving Father,  
Open our hearts and minds  
and allow us to see the beauty of our faith.  
Show us what is possible and fill us with the grace, strength,  
and wisdom to live all the good things  
we explore here together.  
Send your Spirit upon us so that we can discover your dream  
for us to become the-best-version-of-ourselves,  
and have the courage to defend and celebrate this true self  
in every moment of our days.  
We ask you to bless in a special way the hungry, the lonely,  
the sick, and the discouraged. Remind us of our duty toward  
them and inspire us to be filled with a profound gratitude.  
We ask all this through your Son, Jesus.

Amen.

## SESSION ONE DISCUSSION PROMPT

*(Have someone in your group read this out loud.)*

This year, BEST ADVENT EVER is all about meeting Jesus: how it happens, when it happens, how you respond, and how meeting Jesus affects your life and the world. God could have granted our salvation in any way he wanted—but he chose to send us Jesus, his only son. Why? Because God wants to have a deep and personal relationship with us. With YOU. God comes close to us through Jesus. And when Jesus entered the world, he changed everything. When he enters your life, when you meet him, he changes everything. Do you want to change? Are you ready to change? When you meet Jesus, he changes everything.

### WATCH VIDEO(S)

**Day 1:** The Turning Point

**Day 2:** Getting to Know Jesus

**Day 3:** Change Is Coming

(Visit [BestAdventEver.com/ViewVideos](https://BestAdventEver.com/ViewVideos) to see which videos are available at your group's meeting time.)

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What are you hoping to get out of BEST ADVENT EVER?
2. Have you ever met Jesus?
3. If/when you met Jesus, did you realize it in the moment or only in hindsight?
4. What has Jesus changed in your life?
5. What do you want Jesus to change in your life?
6. How do you handle change?
7. As a group, discuss how you can go out of your way to meet Jesus this week.  
(Tip: For ideas, read the Focus/Act/Pray found below each video reflection.)



## CLOSING PRAYER

The Dynamic Catholic Prayer

Loving Father,

I invite you into my life today  
and make myself available to you.

Help me to become the-best-version-of-myself  
by seeking your will and becoming a living example  
of your love in the world.

Open my heart to the areas of my life that need to change  
in order for me to carry out the mission  
and experience the joy you have imagined for my life.

Inspire me to live the Catholic faith in ways that are  
dynamic and engaging.

Show me how to best get involved in the life of my parish.  
Make our community hungry for best practices  
and continuous learning.

Give me courage when I am afraid,  
hope when I am discouraged,  
and clarity in times of decision.

Teach me to enjoy uncertainty and lead your Church  
to become all you imagined it would be  
for the people of our times.

Amen.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Remember to sign up for BEST ADVENT EVER if you haven't already!
- Go to **[BestAdventEver.com/AdventSignUp](https://BestAdventEver.com/AdventSignUp)** to get daily emails with inspiring videos from Allen Hunt, Matthew Kelly, and the Dynamic Catholic team.
- After you watch the video reflections, we encourage you to also check out the **Focus, Act, and Pray section** below the video.
- Our next gathering will be . . . (date, place, and time).

# SESSION TWO: NEXT-DOOR SAVIOR

## OPENING PRAYER

Loving Father,  
Open our hearts and minds  
and allow us to see the beauty of our faith.  
Show us what is possible and fill us with the grace, strength,  
and wisdom to live all the good things  
we explore here together.  
Send your Spirit upon us so that we can discover your dream  
for us to become the-best-version-of-ourselves,  
and have the courage to defend and celebrate this true self  
in every moment of our days.  
We ask you to bless in a special way the hungry, the lonely,  
the sick, and the discouraged. Remind us of our duty toward  
them and inspire us to be filled with a profound gratitude.  
We ask all this through your Son, Jesus.

Amen.

## SESSION TWO DISCUSSION PROMPT

*(Have someone in your group read this out loud.)*

How many people alive during the time of Jesus—people who could hear him speak and see him perform miracles—how many do you think realized they were hearing and seeing God, the Great I Am? What a game-changer! And all because a young Jewish girl from nowhere had the courage to say yes! It's easy to think about all this as ancient, dusty history. But God comes to us through Jesus, especially at Christmas, even now, every day. Think about this for a moment: If Jesus moved in next door tomorrow, what would you change? How would *you* change?

## WATCH VIDEO(S)

**Day 4:** See Jesus, See God

**Day 5:** The Best Yes

**Day 6:** Next-Door Savior

**Day 7:** Best Time of the Year

(Visit [BestAdventEver.com/ViewVideos](https://www.BestAdventEver.com/ViewVideos) to see which videos are available at your group's meeting time.)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do you celebrate at Christmas?
2. Where could you use simplicity in your life?
3. If Jesus moved in next door, what would you change about your life?
4. Are you good at preparing? Do you prepare for the right things?
5. What do you think it means to let God find you?
6. Women, how do you think you would have reacted if you were in Mary's place when the angel delivered God's message? Men, how would you have reacted in Joseph's place?
7. As a group, discuss how you can go out of your way to meet Jesus this week. (Tip: For ideas, read the Focus/Act/Pray found below each video reflection.)

## CLOSING PRAYER

The Dynamic Catholic Prayer

Loving Father,

I invite you into my life today  
and make myself available to you.

Help me to become the-best-version-of-myself  
by seeking your will and becoming a living example  
of your love in the world.

Open my heart to the areas of my life that need to change  
in order for me to carry out the mission  
and experience the joy you have imagined for my life.

Inspire me to live the Catholic faith in ways that are  
dynamic and engaging.

Show me how to best get involved in the life of my parish.  
Make our community hungry for best practices  
and continuous learning.

Give me courage when I am afraid,  
hope when I am discouraged,  
and clarity in times of decision.

Teach me to enjoy uncertainty and lead your Church  
to become all you imagined it would be  
for the people of our times.

Amen.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Remember to sign up for BEST ADVENT EVER if you haven't already!
- Go to **BestAdventEver.com/AdventSignUp** to get daily emails with inspiring videos from Allen Hunt, Matthew Kelly, and the Dynamic Catholic team.
- You can catch up on video reflections at **BestAdventEver.com/ViewVideos**.
- Our next gathering will be . . . (date, place, and time).

# SESSION THREE: SEVEN MIRACLES

## OPENING PRAYER

Loving Father,  
Open our hearts and minds  
and allow us to see the beauty of our faith.  
Show us what is possible and fill us with the grace, strength,  
and wisdom to live all the good things  
we explore here together.  
Send your Spirit upon us so that we can discover your dream  
for us to become the-best-version-of-ourselves,  
and have the courage to defend and celebrate this true self  
in every moment of our days.  
We ask you to bless in a special way the hungry, the lonely,  
the sick, and the discouraged. Remind us of our duty toward  
them and inspire us to be filled with a profound gratitude.  
We ask all this through your Son, Jesus.

Amen.

## SESSION THREE DISCUSSION PROMPT

*(Have someone in your group read this out loud.)*

When do you find yourself praying most intensely? When faced with a big decision or a huge life change or a tragedy? What do you find yourself thanking God for the most? Your husband or wife and your kids, your job, your house, your health? But do you pray for help with the little things? Do you thank God for the little things? The Gospels make it clear: Jesus cares about the whole person—the big things and the little things. Because our God is a God of abundance. He wants to take your shortages and transform them into abundance. Oftentimes, Jesus' greatest miracles are not *what* he does, but *how* he does them, and for whom.

### WATCH VIDEO(S)

**Day 9:** The Little Things

**Day 10:** Seven Miracles

**Day 11:** God of Abundance

(Visit [BestAdventEver.com/ViewVideos](https://www.BestAdventEver.com/ViewVideos) to see which videos are available at your group's meeting time.)

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Which of Jesus' miracles from the Gospels is your favorite? Why?
2. Do you trust God with the little things?
3. Where is there shortage in your life?
4. How has God shown you abundance?
5. Have you ever given up on God?
6. Have you ever felt neglected or left out?
7. As a group, discuss how you can go out of your way to meet Jesus this week.  
(Tip: For ideas, read the Focus/Act/Pray found below each video reflection.)

## CLOSING PRAYER

The Dynamic Catholic Prayer

Loving Father,  
I invite you into my life today  
and make myself available to you.  
Help me to become the-best-version-of-myself  
by seeking your will and becoming a living example  
of your love in the world.  
Open my heart to the areas of my life that need to change  
in order for me to carry out the mission  
and experience the joy you have imagined for my life.  
Inspire me to live the Catholic faith in ways that are  
dynamic and engaging.  
Show me how to best get involved in the life of my parish.  
Make our community hungry for best practices  
and continuous learning.  
Give me courage when I am afraid,  
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Teach me to enjoy uncertainty and lead your Church  
to become all you imagined it would be  
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Amen.

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- We invite you to join the conversation for each daily video in the comments section below the video. Answer the question, discuss the topics, and get to know other people experiencing BEST ADVENT EVER.
- Our next gathering will be . . . (date, place, and time).

# SESSION FOUR: HOPE AND GREAT JOY

## OPENING PRAYER

Loving Father,  
Open our hearts and minds  
and allow us to see the beauty of our faith.  
Show us what is possible and fill us with the grace, strength,  
and wisdom to live all the good things  
we explore here together.  
Send your Spirit upon us so that we can discover your dream  
for us to become the-best-version-of-ourselves,  
and have the courage to defend and celebrate this true self  
in every moment of our days.  
We ask you to bless in a special way the hungry, the lonely,  
the sick, and the discouraged. Remind us of our duty toward  
them and inspire us to be filled with a profound gratitude.  
We ask all this through your Son, Jesus.

Amen.

## SESSION FOUR DISCUSSION PROMPT

*(Have someone in your group read this out loud.)*

At times in life, it can feel like God has forgotten about you. Or that you aren't worthy of God's love or attention. Especially at Christmas, feelings of loneliness and hurt can hide beneath the facade of joy and mirth. But God doesn't write anyone off. No matter what you've done, who you are, where you live, or how much money you make, God will never forget about you. Ever. He wants you to invite him into your life—through your personal relationship with Jesus—to give you healing, to give you abundance, and to give you hope. You are never alone. You are never forgotten. Put your hope in Jesus.

### WATCH VIDEO(S)

**Day 12:** Too Far Gone?

**Day 13:** Written Off . . .

**Day 14:** Hope and Great Joy

(Visit [BestAdventEver.com/ViewVideos](https://BestAdventEver.com/ViewVideos) to see which videos are available at your group's meeting time.)



## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Is it hard to let God love you?
2. Have you ever felt unworthy of God's love? What did you do in those times?
3. What would it look like to let God love you?
4. How has Jesus brought you hope?
5. Do you ever try to earn love?
6. Have you ever felt hopeless? What did you do?
7. As a group, discuss how you can go out of your way to meet Jesus this week.  
(Tip: For ideas, read the Focus/Act/Pray found below each video reflection.)

## CLOSING PRAYER

The Dynamic Catholic Prayer

Loving Father,

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Amen.

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- Looking for last-minute gift ideas? Dynamic Catholic has great books for kids and adults: **[DynamicCatholic.com/BrowseBooks](https://DynamicCatholic.com/BrowseBooks)**.
- Our next gathering will be . . . (date, place, and time).

# SESSION FIVE: NIGHT & DAY

## OPENING PRAYER

Loving Father,  
Open our hearts and minds  
and allow us to see the beauty of our faith.  
Show us what is possible and fill us with the grace, strength,  
and wisdom to live all the good things  
we explore here together.  
Send your Spirit upon us so that we can discover your dream  
for us to become the-best-version-of-ourselves,  
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We ask you to bless in a special way the hungry, the lonely,  
the sick, and the discouraged. Remind us of our duty toward  
them and inspire us to be filled with a profound gratitude.  
We ask all this through your Son, Jesus.

Amen.

## SESSION FIVE DISCUSSION PROMPT

*(Have someone in your group read this out loud.)*

When you encounter Jesus, you don't just encounter the truth about God . . . you encounter the truth about yourself. In John's Gospel, Nicodemus, a pharisee, comes to Jesus by night, just to check out this Jesus guy everyone is talking about. Why by night? He was afraid and ashamed. By the end of the Gospel, Nicodemus is helping with Jesus' burial—social and political suicide for a man of his stature—in broad daylight. He learned about Jesus, sure, but he learned more about himself: who he was and what God had planned for him. God has plans for you, too. Do you go to God quietly by night, or do you go to God boldly in the light of day?

### WATCH VIDEO(S)

**Day 16:** Who Are You?

**Day 17:** Night & Day

**Day 18:** Big Plans

(Visit [BestAdventEver.com/ViewVideos](https://www.BestAdventEver.com/ViewVideos) to see which videos are available at your group's meeting time.)

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Have you ever come to Jesus “by night” like Nicodemus, afraid of your reputation or what others might think?
2. When have you preferred darkness in your life?
3. Do you ever forget that you are part of God’s plan for the world?
4. When has it been difficult to see God’s plans for you?
5. When have you trusted your own plan above God’s plan?
6. What makes you forget who you really are?
7. As a group, discuss how you can go out of your way to meet Jesus this week. (Tip: For ideas, read the Focus/Act/Pray found below each video reflection.)

## CLOSING PRAYER

The Dynamic Catholic Prayer

Loving Father,  
I invite you into my life today  
and make myself available to you.  
Help me to become the-best-version-of-myself  
by seeking your will and becoming a living example  
of your love in the world.  
Open my heart to the areas of my life that need to change  
in order for me to carry out the mission  
and experience the joy you have imagined for my life.  
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Amen.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

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- Go to **BestAdventEver.com/AdventSignUp** to get daily emails with inspiring videos from Allen Hunt, Matthew Kelly, and the Dynamic Catholic team.
- Have you enjoyed this year's BEST ADVENT EVER program so far? Keep the discussion going with your small group and experience The Turning Point together. Visit **DynamicCatholic.com/TurningPoint** to learn more.
- Our next gathering will be . . . (date, place, and time).

# SESSION SIX: WHAT'S NEXT?

## OPENING PRAYER

Loving Father,  
Open our hearts and minds  
and allow us to see the beauty of our faith.  
Show us what is possible and fill us with the grace, strength,  
and wisdom to live all the good things  
we explore here together.  
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for us to become the-best-version-of-ourselves,  
and have the courage to defend and celebrate this true self  
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We ask you to bless in a special way the hungry, the lonely,  
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them and inspire us to be filled with a profound gratitude.  
We ask all this through your Son, Jesus.

Amen.

## SESSION SIX DISCUSSION PROMPT

*(Have someone in your group read this out loud.)*

One of the great traps you can fall into is thinking that your spiritual life is stationary. And that it's binary. You are either holy or you aren't. The truth is, your spiritual life is constantly moving; ebbing and flowing. You are always moving toward God or away from God with every decision you make throughout each day. God came to us at Christmas in Bethlehem, but he wants us to come to him now. If we all took just one step closer to God, what would the world look like? Imagine the problems we could solve! You are either moving toward God or away from God. With Advent coming to a close, what is your next step? It doesn't have to be a huge step, it just has to be a forward step, toward the light, toward God. What's your next step?

### WATCH VIDEO(S)

**Day 19:** Moving Forward

**Day 20:** Changing the World

**Day 21:** What's Next?

(Visit [BestAdventEver.com/ViewVideos](https://BestAdventEver.com/ViewVideos) to see which videos are available at your group's meeting time.)

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. If you could change one thing about the world right now, what would it be?
2. Do you believe Jesus is always the answer? Do you live like you believe Jesus is always the answer?
3. Do you only look to Jesus for the answer when things are going badly?
4. What has been your favorite moment of this year's BEST ADVENT EVER?
5. Are you moving toward God or away from God?
6. What do you want to do now? Where do you go from here? What is your next step?
7. As a group, discuss how you can go out of your way to meet Jesus this week. (Tip: For ideas, read the Focus/Act/Pray found below each video reflection.)

## CLOSING PRAYER

The Dynamic Catholic Prayer

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Give me courage when I am afraid,  
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and clarity in times of decision.

Teach me to enjoy uncertainty and lead your Church  
to become all you imagined it would be  
for the people of our times.

Amen.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- If you enjoyed this year's BEST ADVENT EVER program, we recommend you try going through The Turning Point, a Bible study that focuses on the Gospel of John. Visit [DynamicCatholic.com/TurningPoint](https://www.dynamiccatholic.com/turningpoint) to find out how John's Gospel can help you and your small group to continue encountering Jesus every day.
- If you participated in BEST ADVENT EVER and want to continue getting daily inspiration in your inbox, you can visit [DynamicCatholic.com/QuoteADay](https://www.dynamiccatholic.com/quoteaday) to sign up for Dynamic Catholic's Daily Reflections.
- On behalf of everyone here at Dynamic Catholic, we want to thank you for taking this journey through Advent. We pray that you and your loved ones have a very merry and blessed Christmas!





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**DynamicCatholic.com**

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