

In the Beginning . . .

This is a series of bulletin messages describing the fetal development of “Chris.” Traditionally, Christmas is celebrated on December 25. Therefore, nine months prior would have been the conception of Jesus by the Holy Spirit in Mary’s womb. These messages will parallel the development of “Chris” in the womb from Mar. 25 to Dec. 25.

These are titled, *“In the beginning...”* Each week we will highlight the development of the child in the womb and the changes the mother is facing. We also include an appropriate biblical passage.

These messages may be changed to fit into the space in your church bulletin.

For the bulletin on March 18

March 25 is exactly nine months before December 25 – the traditional birth of Jesus Christ. Therefore, Jesus was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit on March 25. Next week will begin a series of bulletin messages about the development of the child in the womb – just like the development of Jesus in Mary’s womb.

Together, we will learn of the miracle of our earliest days of life.

For the bulletin on March 25 (week 1)

March 25 commemorates the angel Gabriel's announcement to the Virgin Mary that she would conceive Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit. Traditionally, nine months later, Jesus is born.

We are going to follow the development of a child in the womb from now till Christmas.

The Holy Spirit, *“the Lord, the Giver of Life,”* cooperates with man and woman in creating a new human being.

At conception, when we are just one cell, our DNA is completed.

Everything physical about us was determined then. The color of our hair, the color of our eyes, how tall we will be, whether we will have diabetes later in life, whether we will need to wear glasses, everything physical is determined by our DNA in the beginning.

“I am the handmaid of the Lord, said Mary!” Luke 1:38

For the bulletin on April 1 (week 2) Easter Sunday

The Miracle of Life. At conception the sex of the child is determined by the father's sperm. We are going to name this tiny new human being, Chris. Chris has not implanted into the wall of the uterus yet, so no one but God knows of Chris's existence. God has known of Chris's existence before He created the universe.

God said, *"Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you."* Jer. 1-5

For the bulletin on April 8 (week 3)

Chris has implanted in the wall of the uterus, which usually takes place 10-14 days after conception. Immediately, physical changes start taking place with the mother. The placenta starts to form. The placenta protects the child and provides nutrients to the new baby. The mother's uterus will increase its capacity by 1000 times during pregnancy!

Luke's Gospel says that Mary went in "haste" to visit her cousin Elizabeth who was six months pregnant with John the Baptist. Jesus, an embryo, was greeted by a fetus (John) who leaped with joy at the presence of his Savior.

"For nothing is impossible with God." Luke 1:37

For the bulletin on April 15 (week 4)

Chris's heart started beating 18 days after conception. Chris may have a different blood type than the mother's. Chris's neural tubes are forming and will develop into the nervous system. Already, Chris has the foundation for thought, senses, feeling, and more. The amniotic sac, which will house Chris, is formed and the amniotic fluid will cushion Chris throughout pregnancy. Chris now has a yolk sac which supplies blood and nutrients until the placenta has developed and is ready to take over.

"Your own hands shaped me, modeled me." Job 10:8

For the bulletin on April 22 (week 5)

Chris's heart is now pumping blood. All four chambers of the heart are working. The umbilical cord forms like a lifeline for the baby in the "space" of the womb. The lungs start to appear along with the brain. Arm and leg buds start to appear. Soon Chris will be doing somersaults and back flips in the spacious world of the womb.

Mother also is undergoing some major changes. She is probably tired and may experience morning sickness as her body adjusts to a baby.

"It was you who created my inmost self, and put me together in my mother's womb, for all these mysteries I thank you." PS 139:13

For the bulletin on April 29 (week 6)

Chris is now 10,000 times larger than the original fertilized egg – and developing rapidly. The heart is pumping increasing quantities of blood through the baby. The placenta forms a unique barrier between the mother and her baby. The baby likely has a different blood type, different DNA, and is not part of the mother's body. Five fingers can now be seen on the hand.

“Just as you do not know the way of the wind or the mysteries of a woman with child, no more can you know the work of God who is behind it all.”

Eccl. 11:5

For the bulletin on May 6 (week 7)

Chris's brain waves can now be detected. Wonder what Chris is dreaming? Did you know that over the remaining months, Chris's brain will develop over 100 billion neurons? The brain begins to control movement of muscles and organs. The nose is developing and the eyes darken as pigment is produced.

The mother may have to buy some Clearasil.

“My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit exults in God my savior.” Luke 1:46-47

For the bulletin on May 13 (week 8) Mother's Day

Chris begins to move. Chris's arms are bending and flexing like a child taking a Karate class. Fingers are developing and will soon become Chris's first toy. Chris started swimming and can do a mean backstroke. Chris is also doing back flips – getting ready for the 2018 Olympics. The mother has probably confirmed that she is pregnant.

“Is anything too wonderful for Yahweh?” Gen. 18:14 **Happy Mother's Day!**

For the bulletin on May 20 (week 9) Feast of Pentecost

Chris is a little less than 1 inch long. Chris's name changes from embryo to fetus, which is Latin for “young one”. Everything is now present that will be found in a fully developed adult. If Chris would have kept growing all nine months as fast as this second month, Chris would have been born as big as two overfed elephants. Whew! Thankfully, development slows down.

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you came to birth I consecrated you...” Jer. 1:4-5

For the bulletin on May 27 (week 10) Trinity Sunday

Chris's fingerprints are already evident. The fingers can curve around an object placed in the palm. Now Chris can feel pain but who would want to hurt Chris? Chris is having a wonderful time wriggling, shifting, dancing and playing with the toys in the womb – other fingers, toes, nose, and ears – such fun! If only we had a window to the womb.

The mother is coping with many changes – nurturing a baby is hard work. *"You know me through and through, from having watched my bones take shape when I was being formed in secret..."* Ps 139:15

For the bulletin on June 3 (week 11)

The most critical part of Chris's development is now complete. Now Chris enters into a period of rapid growth. Eyelids fuse closed and won't open again until about 26 weeks. Eye color is already determined and Chris can squint and swallow. Chris is over 1 inch long and is moving quickly about the womb.

Mother's waistline is starting to disappear.

"Did you not...clothe me with skin and flesh, and weave me of bone and sinew?" Job 10:13

For the bulletin on June 10 (week 12)

Chris is almost 2 inches long. Fingers and toes are separated. Chris could easily stand on daddy's little finger nail. Chris's feet are the size of the Precious Feet pins that have become the symbol of the pro-life movement. Fingernails and hair are starting to grow. The placenta is now providing nutrition from the mother. Chris likes pizza, but hold the onion.

"They, no less than I, were created in the womb by the same God who shaped us all within our mothers." Job 31:15

For the bulletin on June 17 (week 13) Father's Day

Chris now sleeps, awakens, and exercises the muscles energetically (we should take some lessons from this). Turning of the head, curling of the toes, making a fist, opening and closing the mouth while "breathing" the amniotic fluid to help develop the respiratory system, Chris is very active in the womb. Chris is still a lightweight – weighing about one ounce – about as much as a letter.

If the doctor uses a Fetal Doppler, it won't be the weather that is seen but the baby's heartbeat is heard which sounds like galloping horses.

"But the angel said to him, 'Zechariah, do not be afraid, your prayer has been heard...'" Luke 1:13 **Happy Father's Day!**

For the bulletin on June 24 (week 14)

Chris now has teeth buds for all 20 teeth. Teething will come later. Chris is almost 3 inches long and weighs one ounce. Chris is still exercising and practicing inhaling and exhaling. All Chris's nourishment is now coming through the placenta. Vocal cords begin to form, and although they may not be ready for a rock band, Chris will use them immediately following birth for that first cry!

Now mother usually feels better and has more energy. She's spreading the good news.

"God blessed them (Adam and Eve), saying to them, 'Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth...'" Gen. 1:28 Gen. 9:1

For the bulletin on July 1 (week 15)

Chris's taste buds are working! I drink more amniotic fluid and it tastes sweet. My skin is transparent and is very sensitive to pain except for my back and the top of my head. I may be small, but I am growing fast! Mother enjoys fireworks and celebrates the birth of our nation, but Chris won't hear anything, yet.

"I set before you life and death, blessing or curse. Choose life, then, so that you and your descendants may live." Det. 30:19

OR

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Declaration of Independence

For the bulletin on July 8 (week 16)

"Soon I will be able to grasp with my hands. What will I grasp? My other hand! Did you know that I have my own unique fingerprints now? My fingernails and toenails are growing. I also have taste buds. My eyebrows and hair on my head are sprouting. But it will probably change color and texture after birth. I'm kicking, twisting, and flailing really hard."

But, mother can't feel Chris moving in the womb, yet.

"Did you not . . . clothe me with skin and flesh, and weave me of bone and sinew?" Job 10:13

For the bulletin on July 15 (week 17)

“I’m getting a little baby fat under my skin. My heart is pumping as much as 6 gallons a day at a rate about double my mom’s. I can swim and kick and do somersaults! I’m the same size as my placenta now. I’m not a lightweight anymore – I weigh almost 6 ounces and I am about 5 inches long.” Chris will keep growing until about 23 years of age.

The mother might be able to hear tiny thumps of Chris’s heartbeat with an external monitor now.

“They, no less than I, were created in the womb by the one same God who shaped us all within our mothers.” Job 31:15

For the bulletin on July 22 (week 18)

“When I am sleeping, I have REM (rapid eye movements) which means I am dreaming, but I can’t remember my dreams. My vocal cords have formed but I don’t make a sound – must be because there is no air in here. Isn’t it amazing that I’m able to breathe ‘underwater,’ inhaling and exhaling small amounts of amniotic fluid?” Chris is working on developing great lungs.

Mother may start to feel Chris as a flutter in her lower abdomen.

“Is there anything too wonderful for Yahweh? At the same time next year I shall visit you again and Sarah will have a son.” Gen. 18:13-14

For the bulletin on July 29 (week 19)

“I like sucking my thumb. I can hear my mother’s heartbeat and some other funny noises she makes. I’m beginning to know her voice. My umbilical cord (that’s where I get my food) is really awesome – an engineering marvel.” Chris’s umbilical cord transports 300 quarts of fluid per day and completes a round-trip of fluids every 30 seconds. Wow! Mother is probably starting to “show” now.

“Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was barren. The LORD answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant.” Gen. 25:21

For the bulletin on August 5 (week 20)

“If you were to shine a very bright light on my mother’s abdomen, I may slowly move my hand in front of my eyes. If you make a very loud noise, I may cover my ears with my hands. But I can also hear my mom’s voice, and when she sings a lullaby, it soothes me, and helps me sleep.” Chris’s private parts are clearly visible now, but no peeking, after all Chris is naked. Doesn’t Chris have a right to privacy?

Mom may be able to feel kicks now. Don’t forget those prenatal vitamins.

“Faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen.” Heb. 11:1

For the bulletin on August 12 (week 21)

“Hair is starting to grow on my head. I wonder what color it is. I am 20 weeks old now, and in another 20 weeks I will be born! My legs are getting stronger, so soon mom will really feel my kicks. I like sleeping in the same position now. I’m over 6 inches tall when I stretch out, and I weigh over 10 ounces.”

Mom can distinguish two heartbeats if she lies quietly and flat on her back, locates her own heartbeat by finding her pulse, then lays her hand on her belly. Chris’s heart pumps about six gallons of blood every day.

For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.” Luke 1:44-45

For the bulletin on August 19 (week 22)

“My tongue is fully formed now. I’m practicing giving people a raspberry! I can hear noises from the outside. Some loud ones scare me. I know mom’s voice and like the music she listens to. I now have fingernails and fingerprints. I’m not as little as I used to be just a few weeks ago. Now I am about 10 inches long if I could stand up straight!”

Mom is waiting to find out if Chris is a boy or girl.

“And every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Philippians 2:11

For the bulletin on August 26 (week 23)

“I can hear mom’s conversations more clearly now. I can hear her sing and talk. I like to kick back, suck my thumb, and listen to her read to me. My eyelids and eyebrows are fully formed. My fingernails have grown to the end of my fingers. My brain is growing really fast so I’m going to be very smart.” Chris weighs nearly a pound now. Dads, did you know: The male voice penetrates the abdomen and uterine wall better than the higher frequencies of the female voice?

“Teach them (God’s ordinances) to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.” Deut.6:7



For the bulletin on September 2 (week 24)

"I have fine hair all over my body that is there to protect my skin. I'm a little thin at this point but am putting on more baby fat. My eyes are formed, but the iris does not have color – I'd like brown eyes!" Chris will lose all this body hair before birth. Chris now weighs over a pound and is about a foot long. Fifty years ago, if the baby was born at this age, the child could not survive. But today, with modern technology, babies born at this age have a fighting chance of survival (about 50%).

"Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows." Matthew 10:30-31

For the bulletin on September 9 (week 25)

"I'm really beginning to bulk up. I gained 6 ounces this week! I think most of it was muscle but also some bone mass and some organ development. My taste buds allow me to distinguish bitter, sweet and sour. My lungs have developed so well, I'm now officially considered viable." Chris could live outside the womb. Each parent contributed 15,000 genes that determined not only what Chris looks like but how Chris interprets tastes, Chris's athletic abilities, allergies, health, and much more.

"Yet you brought me out of the womb; you made me trust in you even at my mother's breast." Psalm 22:9

For the bulletin on September 16 (week 26)

Thousands and thousands of brain cells are growing in Chris's head every day! Soon Chris will have billions of brain cells. "I can make a fist and grasp things. My spine is beginning to form to protect my spinal cord. I'm covered by a white cheesy substance that protects my skin. Don't worry; it will come off right after birth."

Mom can tell if her baby gets the hiccups.

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you came to birth I consecrated you; I have appointed you as a prophet to the nations." Jer. 1:4-5



For the bulletin on September 23 (week 27)

Chris's taste buds continue to form. "I can taste sweet things now. My mom likes chocolate and so do I. A bright light can be seen by me through my mommy's tummy. I have eyelashes and eyebrows now. My fingerprints are fully formed. My toenails and fingernails are growing and may need to be clipped when I'm born."

Mom may be feeling like a "Soccer Mom" now that her uterus is the size of a soccer ball.

"How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"

Psalm 119:102

"The Lord gives sight to the blind..." Psalm 146:8

For the bulletin on September 30 (week 28)

"I'm going to be in my first Life Chain today. The cars may not notice me but my mom will. Not much room to wave in here. I'm moving around quite a bit. Whoa! I'm having a little trouble with my balance, but it is getting better. You could hear my heartbeat if you put your ear on my mother's tummy. My eyes are opening so I will practice blinking." Mom's talking about different names for me. How about Chris?

"Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord; let us acclaim the Rock of our salvation."

Psalm 95:1

For the bulletin on October 7 (week 29)

"I am about 14 inches tall now, weigh about two pounds, and am growing really fast. I try to stretch out and mom can feel me move about." If Chris were born now, Chris would have an 85% chance of survival because Chris's lungs have been getting stronger. On another note, sometimes moms have cravings. Pickles and ice cream make a good snack.

"Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

For the bulletin on October 14 (week 30)

Chris has doubled in size over the last 4 weeks and is getting cramped in the womb. "I don't have as much room to do my exercises. My muscle tone is getting much better and my body is filling out with baby fat. Hair is growing on my head – nice fine hair. I can recognize my mom's voice." The third trimester is filled with aches and pains and general discomfort for mother but she knows that soon she will see her baby.

"Behold, children are a gift of the Lord; the fruit of the womb is a reward." Psalm

127:3

For the bulletin on October 21 (week 31)

"I must be getting younger. The wrinkles I had everywhere are slowly disappearing as I gain more and more weight. I used to have a big head, but now my body is catching up. I can move my eyes but it is still pretty dark in here. I can hear my mom. I can't wait to see her."

The baby takes mom's breath away as Chris kicks her lungs and ribs. Fatigue is her constant companion.

"I was a stranger and you made me welcome . . . in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me." Mt. 25:35, 40

For the bulletin on October 28 (week 32)

"I weigh three pounds now and will gain about a half pound each week until birth. I can see but I don't have 20/20 vision and I won't have 20/20 until I'm 7-9 years old – hopefully." It's really cramped now, so Chris has assumed the fetal position. Mom is pretty uncomfortable. Sleeping on her left side may help as it will remove some pressure on the nerves and blood vessels in her back.

"For you love all things that are and loathe nothing that you have made..."

Wisdom 11:22

For the bulletin on November 4 (week 33)

Chris weighs over three pounds and may weigh about seven pounds at birth. "My brain is growing very fast. I'm starting to have regular sleep and awake time. I have dreams but I keep them secret between God and me. I'm using my four senses of vision, hearing, taste and touch. I try to stretch out but there is not enough room. Mom's friends are planning a baby shower, I don't know why; it's already wet in here."

"Listen to my words: 'When a prophet of the LORD is among you, I reveal myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams.'" Numbers 12:5-7

For the bulletin on November 11 (week 34)

"I'm almost 17 inches long but I'm all curled up so it is hard to see how tall I am. I like to look around when I'm awake but it is hard to see anything – it's all fuzzy. Ouch! I scratched myself with my long fingernails." Chris has started to move head down because 96% of babies are born that way. Mom's uterus is stretching and is pushing her organs every which way causing heartburn, constipation, indigestion and breathlessness.

"And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me." Mt. 18:5

For the bulletin on November 18 (week 35)

Chris's immune system is really beefing up. Chris will be ready to fight infections and illnesses right after birth. The amniotic fluid has reached its peak so Chris has lots of padding. Chris's skull is pliable and soft, ready for delivery. "I'm going to decide when I will be born."

Mom feels she has to go to the restroom frequently – the pressure is on. *"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ...all things were created through him and for him."* Colossians 1:15, 16

For the bulletin on November 25 (week 36)

Chris weighs about five and a half pounds now. Chris is really putting on baby fat which will help keep Chris warm after birth. "I'm still eating leftovers from Thanksgiving." The lungs are almost complete. You may be able to see Chris's body parts as the uterine wall gets thinner – feet, head, and hands.

Mom is looking for a pediatrician to examine the baby after birth. She's getting ready in case Chris is ready.

"So stay awake, because you do not know the day when your master is coming." Mt. 24:42

For the bulletin on December 2 (week 37)

Chris is absorbing about a gallon of amniotic fluid per day. Chris is now receiving valuable antibodies from mom to fight off infections. Fat is deposited in Chris's cheeks this week and the muscles that help Chris suck are helping to fill Chris's little face. Chris is about six pounds and over 20 inches in length. "I'm a little plump but I'm ready for my first picture."

Mom is probably seeing the doctor every week and should take a Group B Strep test.

"Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God." Romans 15:7

For the bulletin on December 9 (week 38)

Chris is now considered full-term but continues to gain and grow every day. Lungs are days from completion. "I'm practicing breathing with my amniotic fluid." It is easy to grasp things with Chris's little fingers.

Typically, boys will weigh more than girls at birth. Only 4% of babies are actually born on their due date.

Mom, pack your bags and don't forget the camera for those all-important pictures of the baby.

"They will see the glory of the LORD, the splendor of our God." Isaiah 35:2

For the bulletin on December 16 (week 39)

Chris now weighs between five and nine pounds. The average size baby is seven pounds. "It's really crowded in here and it's very hard to move." The umbilical cord is approximately 20 inches long and about ½ inch thick and doesn't have any nerve endings (this means that neither mom nor Chris will feel any pain when it is cut). The good news for mom is it's easier to breathe because the baby is moving down. The bad news is mom may be running to the bathroom every two minutes.

"Then God, who had specially chosen me while I was still in my mother's womb..." Gal. 1:15

For the bulletin on December 23 (week 40)

Celebrate! Don't be surprised at how Chris looks after birth. Chris's head may be misshapen and the skin may be discolored with patchy looking rashes. Chris, like all babies, is made in the image and likeness of God. Even though childbirth is frightening, mom will be helped by keeping positive support people around her.

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace to men who enjoy His favour."
Luke 2:14

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For additional copies of this booklet; write to:

Kansans 
for Life

3301 W. 13th St.
Wichita, KS 67203
1-800-928-5433

www.kfl.org

kfl@kfl.org

