



CHRISTMAS FAMILY DEVOTION



THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST

Devotion

Read the following with your family.

Christmas is a time to celebrate the good news of the birth of Jesus. As an act of God's love towards us, he sent his own son into our world so that we might know and experience real joy and everlasting peace. Of all the gifts we will give or be given on Christmas, there is no greater gift we will receive than the gift of Jesus. His birth means that everlasting joy and peace is available to all who will receive him as Lord and King. The news was so great that thousands of angels from heaven appeared to announce the birth of Jesus. They glorified God saying "Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."

Read the following stories from the Bible as a family.

(You may choose to read it before opening gifts, after opening gifts, in the morning, at night, before a meal, etc. Pick the time that works best with your family. Depending on the ages of your kids, you may have different family members read different parts of the story.)

Luke 2:1-11: At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. (This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) All returned to their own ancestral towns to register for this census. And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. He took with him Mary, his fiancée, who was now obviously pregnant.

And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. She gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.

That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger."

Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, "Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."

When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. All who heard the shepherds' story were astonished, but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often. The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them.

Read John 3:16 - For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

Discuss the following as a family.

1. Share how and when you received the gift of Jesus into your life and the difference he has made in your life. Invite other family members if they would like to share how and when they received Jesus. *(Remember not to pressure children or other family members that may not have made this decision.)*
2. The angels and the shepherds both responded to the birth of Jesus by glorifying God. Ask your family, "How could you give glory to God today for the gift of Jesus?"

Pray as a family.

Take time to pray and thank God for Jesus. You may ask or invite different family members to pray during your prayer time.

If God opens the door and gives you the opportunity, you may invite any family members that have never received Jesus into their life to do so at this time. You can use this as a guide for your prayer.

"God thank you for sending your son Jesus. I open the door of my life to receive Jesus as Savior and Lord. I admit that I have sinned and have fallen short of your glory. I turn from my sin and turn toward you. Thank you for forgiving me of my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of my life and make me the kind of person you want me to be. Amen."

Choose one or more of the following to do today as a family

- As you open your gifts and as others open the gifts you have given them, let that person know how valuable they are to you.
- Before opening each present, have family members share one person they are thankful for and why.
- Giving doesn't always mean actual gifts that you buy. You can give people your time by hanging out with them, helping them with a chore, or by doing something fun that they enjoy. Take time to give people your full attention and your time today.
- Share the message of the gift of Jesus with someone who needs to hear it today.
- Go to a place where people have to work on Christmas and give them an extra tip or small gift.
- Offer the gift of forgiveness to someone who you have been holding a grudge against.
- Pick a favorite Christmas movie and watch it as a family.
- Watch family Christmas home movies from previous years.
- Give hugs to all your family members today and tell them you love them.
- Call or comfort someone today who has lost a family member over the past year(s).