

to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!” After announcing that the promised Christ is born the angel chorus resounds with a two-part hymn. They sing of Glory to God, reminding us that all that has been accomplished is ultimately for God’s glory. Secondly, they sing of peace on earth. Jesus’ coming heralds the war between God and man is finally coming to an end. Jesus died for our sins so that we could be reconciled to God.

Discussion Questions

- What are common ways people misunderstand the meaning of Christmas?
- Think of some opportunities you have to share about the true meaning of Christmas.

Day 5 – Recite memory verse

When there is a party, we often want to know who will be there. Will family come? Will any of our friends be there? How about our crazy neighbor? Nativity sets indicate the importance of who was there for Jesus’ birth. These sets include figures of Mary, Joseph, a baby in a manger, animals, and shepherds. Often another set of figures is composed of some camels with 3 wise men bearing gifts. The wise men were not likely present during the night of Jesus’ birth, but rather a year or two after. While they do arrive later than the other characters, their presence is very significant. Matthew 2:1-2 *Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”* These wise men from the east weren’t Jews. They weren’t locals and they didn’t have an immediately obvious connection to a baby born in the obscure country of the Jews. Yet, by some revelation of God (or perhaps prophecy passed down by the wise-man Daniel many years before) these men learned that this baby was special. He was special to the Jewish nation. He was also special to them, and the rest of the world. Jesus came as the savior and king of the whole world. We all, like the wise men, are called on to believe and worship him.

Discussion Questions

- How do you think the wise men knew about Jesus being born?
- What is your favorite part of the wise men story? In what ways could you use to respond to Jesus more like the wise men did?

A d v e n t

Family Worship Guide



West Oaks Baptist Church

(in preparation for Sunday, December 29th, 2024)

Advent Devotional #3

Suggested Memory Verse

Luke 2:10-11 And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”

Day 1 – Recite memory verse

Throughout the Old Testament we have seen how God gives a growing revelation of the coming savior. Now, as the time to celebrate Jesus' birth draws near, we turn our attention to the fulfillment of these promises in the New Testament. A memorable announcement is made to the young virgin Mary by the Angel Gabriel. Luke 1:30-33 And the angel said to her, *“Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”* What amazing news! Jesus will soon be born, the promised son of David. All those years of waiting by so many of God's people will finally be completed. The miracle is compounded with the news that this baby to be born *will be called Son of the Most High*. This is not the title of a man, but the title of God himself. The second Person of the Trinity, God the Son, will be the one who takes on human flesh. Gabriel tells Mary she has found favor with God. Surely she has! Yet, with this announcement we too find that we have found favor with God! He came for us!

Discussion Questions

- Have you ever waited eagerly for a special day, like Christmas, to finally come? How can that excitement help us anticipate Jesus coming again?
- Have you found favor with God? How can you know?

Day 2 – Recite memory verse

The Angel Gabriel isn't the only one letting people know that the time for Jesus has come. Zechariah, joyful at the birth of his son John, begins prophesying about the one John came to prepare the way for. Luke 1:68-70 *“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old.”* Zechariah praises God for finally sending the promised redeemer, the descendent of David. He uses an interesting figure of speech, calling Jesus a horn of salvation. Horns were commonly used in ancient times during military maneuvers to communicate on the battlefield. This is just like the Cavalry of the 1800s used bugles to direct their charges across the field. To understand a *horn of salvation*, imagine yourself part of a beleaguered group of soldiers besieged by an overwhelming enemy force. At the moment when defeat seems sure you hear a horn sound in the distance. Desperately you look to the horizon, and there it is! A line of friendly troops comes flooding into view. They come destroying the enemy and bringing salvation. Isn't that how you felt when you heard the Good News of Jesus. We were beleaguered by our enemies. Satan was our master. Sin was our chain. Death was our destination. Yet, when hope seemed lost, a horn sounded. Jesus had come!

Discussion Questions

- How is the Gospel like a horn trumpeting in the life of a sinner. Do you remember hearing that call?
- How can you keep that trumpet call going?

Day 3 – Christmas Day - Recite memory verse

Paul speaks of the birth of Jesus in this way. Galatians 4:4 *But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son*. Think about those words, *the fullness of time*. So many years passed since the fall of Adam and Eve in the garden. So many years had come and gone since God first promised a redeemer would come, the seed of the woman to crush the serpent's head. While men may have wondered, God was never confounded in His plans. He was slowly and faithfully bringing about all He had promised. As the New Testament opens, the time has come and Jesus is finally born. Luke 2:6-7 *And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn*. What is sometimes surprising, is to see how such a universe-shattering event, the birth of Jesus Christ, could appear so common. A poor man with his poor wife, forced by political circumstance, travel during her pregnancy. Arriving in a small town they find nowhere to stay and the King of Kings is born amongst animals and has to sleep in a feeding trough. The contrast between the identity of this baby and his appearance help us to understand what Jesus did for us. He was God, deserving of all worship, glory, and honor. Yet Jesus humbled himself by becoming one of us.

Discussion Questions

- What do you think the fullness of time means? How does it help us understand what is really important?
- Spend some time discussing the humility that the incarnation required. Thank God for the humility of Jesus.

Day 4 – Recite memory verse

It would be difficult to miss the celebration of Christmas in our culture. Decorations start going up before Thanksgiving is over. Lights decorate houses. Stores are filled with Christmas colors and Christmas merchandise. People are bingeing their favorite Christmas movies and planning holiday parties. Everyone knows it is Christmas time. But how many know what Christmas time means? Some may realize that Christmas is the celebration of Jesus' birth. Yet, do they know who it is that was born so many years ago? Do they know why his birth was so significant? In the Gospel of Luke we find a chorus of angels announcing the true meaning of Christmas. Luke 2:10-11,13-14 And the angel said to them, *“Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord... And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory*