

Bible Passage: Matthew 1; Luke 2

STORY POINT: God came to earth as a human baby to be with us.

Key Passage: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Big Picture Question: Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.

Jesus Was Born

Joseph found out Mary was going to have a baby, but Joseph knew it was not his baby—Mary and Joseph were not married yet! Joseph decided to quietly break his engagement with Mary so she would not be publicly disgraced. Soon after Joseph thought these things, **an angel appeared to him in a dream.**

The angel said, “Don’t be afraid to take Mary as your wife. Her baby was put there by the Holy Spirit. Mary is going to have a son; name Him Jesus because He is going to save His people from their sins!”

This happened just like the prophet said it would: “See, the virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they will name Him Immanuel,” which is translated “God is with us.” When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel commanded.

During the time Mary was pregnant, the Roman emperor, Caesar Augustus, announced that everyone needed to be registered for a census. Since **Joseph** was a descendant of King David, he **and Mary traveled to Bethlehem,** the city of David.

While they were there, the time came for Mary to have her baby. Mary and Joseph looked for a safe place to stay, but every place was full. So Mary and Joseph found a place where animals were kept, and that is where Mary had her baby. Joseph named the baby Jesus. Mary wrapped Him tightly in cloth and laid Him in a feeding trough.

In the same region, some shepherds were out in the fields watching over their sheep. All of a sudden, an angel of the Lord stood before them. A bright light shone around them, and they were terrified! But **the angel said, “Don’t be afraid! I have very good news for you: Today a Savior, who is Messiah the Lord, was born for you in the city of David.”** Then the angel said, “You will find a baby wrapped tightly in cloth and lying in a feeding trough.”

Suddenly, a whole army of angels appeared, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to people He favors!”

So the shepherds went to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby who was lying in the feeding trough. The shepherds went and told others about the baby Jesus. Everyone who heard about Jesus was surprised and amazed. Mary thought about everything that was

happening and tried to understand it. **The shepherds returned to their fields, praising God** because everything had happened just as the angel had said.

Christ Connection: Jesus' birth fulfilled the Old Testament prophecy. God the Son came into the world as Immanuel. Jesus was born to be "God with us" and to save people from sin.

Discussion & Bible skills (Ask 3 to 4 questions from the list)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. Why did Mary and Joseph have to go to Bethlehem?

(Caesar ordered a census to be taken, Luke 2:1)

2. To whom did the angels appear?

(shepherds keeping watch over their flocks, Luke 2:8)

3. What message did the angels give the shepherds?

(Jesus, the Savior, had been born and was lying in a manger; Luke 2:11)

4. Why was Jesus born?

Guide kids to see that Jesus was born to bring glory to God and to be the perfect sacrifice for our sins. Because of Jesus' birth, life, death, and resurrection we can have peace with God and peace with one another. Through Jesus—Immanuel, "God With Us"—we can be united to God forever.

5. How can we respond to God's gift of Jesus?

Help kids understand that we can praise and thank God for His gift. We can confess our sin and ask Jesus to be Lord of our lives. Then we can joyfully tell others about Jesus.

6. Does focusing on Jesus change which parts of Christmas are most exciting to you?

Challenge kids to think deeper about the gifts, decorations, or other traditions they participate in with their families. Help them see that without Jesus, Christmas loses meaning. Remind that that His coming to be with us is, and should be, the most exciting part of Christmas.

Say • God came to earth as a human baby to be with us because He loves us. Jesus' birth should bring us great joy because we now have a way to be part of God's kingdom forever!