

Early Childhood Devotions

FOR CHILDREN AGES 3 TO 7



REAL. PRESENT. GOD.

FOCUS: Jesus Is Real. Jesus Is Present. Jesus is God.

The Promise and Birth of Jesus

LUKE 1:26–38, 2:1–7

Before You Teach

Of the four Gospel writers, only Matthew and Luke tell of Jesus' birth. These somewhat sparse scriptural accounts leave plenty of room for our imaginations. Our need to elaborate signals the importance of the narrative, yet the message remains simple: Jesus is God, part of the Triune God's eternal plan for the salvation of the world. "Advent" means "coming." Jesus, God's Son, came as a baby, the promised Savior for all. Through the work of the Holy Spirit and in the Means of Grace, Jesus is still present with us.

Greeting

Welcome each child upon entry, "*Good morning (afternoon), child of God. God sent Jesus for you!*"

Gathering

You will need: Advent Wreath, three dark blue candles, one pink candle and one large white candle. Place the blue and the pink (third week in Advent) candles around the wreath and the white Christ candle in the center (usually lit on Christmas day).

Introduce the Advent wreath. "*The circle wreath reminds us of God's never-ending love. The candles remind us of the light of Jesus.*" Light and add one candle each week in Advent. Light the Christ candle during



your Christmas party, celebrating Jesus' birthday. Sing the corresponding verse(s) of "Light One Candle" (LOSP, P. 78–79). Speak the following:

Week 1: *Come Lord Jesus! Bring to us Your promised HOPE.*

Week 2: *Come Lord Jesus! Bring to us Your promised HOPE and caring PEACE.*

Week 3: *Come Lord Jesus! Bring to us Your promised HOPE, caring PEACE and unending JOY.*

Week 4: *Come Lord Jesus! Bring to us Your promised HOPE, caring PEACE, unending JOY and gracious LOVE!*

Tell the Story

JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM

You will need: Seven volunteer staff and/or other adults, crèche figures.

Distribute crèche figures and related texts to volunteer adults as indicated. Station them around the building.



Following number order, lead children from person to person.

PERSON 1 Angel: God sent the angel Gabriel to Mary. The angel said, “Do not be afraid, Mary, God has chosen you to have a baby boy. You are to name the baby, ‘Jesus.’ He will be great and will be called ‘Son of God.’”

PERSON 2 Ruler: The ruler of the country where Joseph lived ordered all to travel to the town where they were born to be counted.

PERSON 3 Joseph: Joseph and Mary traveled to the town of Bethlehem. There, they slept in a stable because there was nowhere else for them to stay.

PERSON 4 Mary: While in Bethlehem, baby Jesus was born. Mary wrapped Him in cloths and laid Him in a manger.



PERSON 5 Shepherds: Shepherds were watching sheep in a nearby field. An angel of the Lord appeared to them saying, “Today in Bethlehem a Savior has been born; He is Christ the Lord.”



PERSON 6 Baby Jesus: The Shepherds found Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus, who was lying in the manger. Praising God, they worshiped Jesus, then told others all they had seen and been told.

PERSON 7 All God’s People: God kept the promise to send our Savior, Jesus. We celebrate Jesus’ birthday on Christmas.

Remember the Story

BIBLE WORDS TO REMEMBER

Pre-K & K: “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (LUKE 2:11).

Gr. 1 & 2: “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” (LUKE 2:10-11).

ACTIVITIES

Create: Jingle Bell Shakers. You will need: Toilet paper tubes (one per child), Christmas wrap cut into 5½-inch squares, red and green pipe cleaners, jingle bells (five per child), ¼-inch ribbon for streamers.

Directions: Guide children to spread glue on wrapping paper squares and to place toilet paper tube on top. Roll to adhere paper to tube. Tuck excess paper into tube ends. Twist a red and a green pipe cleaner together for 2 inches. Slide a bell onto one pipe cleaner and then twist to hold in place. Repeat, adding bells at equal distances. Fold and tape pipe cleaner ends inside the tube. Add ribbon streamers. Use when chanting/singing. *Helpful Hint:* Enlist adult helpers.

Do: Together chant:

*Jesus came from heaven above.
God’s promise kept, a gift of love.
My Savior, Jesus, rescued me.
And praises now I sing to Thee.*

Sing: “Mary Had a Baby” (LOSP, P. 90); “Happy Birthday, Jesus” (LOSP, P. 88).



Live the Story

Children’s routines tend to be disrupted by holiday preparations and resulting adult anxiety. Be the place of calm for children. Maintain the daily schedule! Plan events and celebrations that benefit and serve the needs of children. Encourage families to do likewise!

Sending

Gather children in a “Sending Circle.” Pass a Christmas angel, inviting each child to offer a brief prayer as the angel is received. Children may silently pass the angel along. As children depart say to each, “*Jesus was born for you!*”

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NOTE: You will need the songbook: *Little Ones Sing Praise (LOSP)*, copyright © 1989 Concordia Publishing House (CPH), St. Louis, Mo.

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