



JESUS
The best gift
EVER



Leader and Parent Guide

Christmas can be filled with all sorts of emotions. Some people easily experience the joy of the season and rest in the hope that Jesus brought into the world. But others struggle to find peace due to life's circumstances. Christmas means celebrating Jesus, God's greatest gift, regardless of our circumstances. The truth is, Jesus is the best gift ever! Jesus was proof that God loves us more than anything, and that we can trust God no matter what. Because of Jesus, it is possible for us to have a relationship with God forever. Through focusing on the Christmas story, we can celebrate Jesus and rediscover the joy, hope, and peace that are made possible through the unconditional love of God.

Before Jesus was born, Isaiah, a prophet of the Lord, wrote, "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Although the Israelites broke their promise to love and obey God over and over again, God always gave them hope by staying true to His promises. The Israelites waited a long time, but God finally fulfilled His promise about sending a Savior when He sent Jesus to live on Earth. You can always have hope, even when things don't go your way, when something unexpected happens, or when life seems dark and scary. During those times, you can remember that God will always keep His promises, past, present, and future—like He kept His promise to send Jesus as our Savior. We can have hope because God always keeps His promises.

In God's perfect timing, Mary's entire life was turned upside down when the angel Gabriel told her that she would be Jesus' mother. Yet Mary quickly realized that God had a perfect plan for her life, even if it looked different than what she had imagined. Mary could have been overwhelmed by this startling news, but she chose to respond with a song of joy. God had chosen her to raise the Savior, who would save His people from their sins. There could be no greater plan for her life! Just like Mary, you can have joy because God has a plan for you. Throughout this past year, everyone's plans changed due to Covid. Even when our plans change, we can still have joy because God has a plan for us. Joy isn't always something we feel, but it IS something we can choose. When unexpected things happen, you can find joy in knowing that God is with you and that He is always working toward the plan He has for your life.

As Mary and Joseph travelled to Bethlehem for the census, they experienced many challenges. When they arrived, there was nowhere for them to stay, except for the place where they kept the animals. As unusual as this was, it's just how God planned for Jesus to enter the world. In the most unexpected place at the most unexpected time, God chose to pour out His love toward us. He sent His very own Son, as a baby, to rescue the whole world. We can easily lose sight of the real reason we celebrate Christmas. Even if your Christmas does not go the way you expect this year, there is one truth that won't ever change: God loves us so much that He gave us a Savior. Right from the start, God wanted to have a relationship with us. Even when we messed that up with our sin, God continued to love us and made a way to rescue us. Jesus is proof that God loves us unconditionally, and that's the most amazing gift of all.

After Jesus was born, the first people to find out were some unassuming shepherds. An angel announced Jesus' birth to them and proclaimed God's peace for all people. The shepherds rushed to see the baby for themselves and told everyone about the Good News. Instead of sending His angels to powerful or rich people, God sent the angels to ordinary shepherds because God wanted us to know that Jesus was meant to be the Savior and provide peace for all types of people. When life seems out of our control, peace can be hard to find. Yet Christmas is all about the coming of Jesus, the Savior, who God sent so those who follow Him can have eternal life and peace. The world has an idea of what peace is, but God's peace is much different. With God's peace, you can have peace no matter where you are or what is happening in your life. When you trust Jesus as your Savior, God can give you peace, even in difficult times. Lots of things in life can make you worried or afraid, but the peace of God will help you get through those tough times. Once you have that peace, you can bring it to others because God's peace is for everyone, and He commanded us to share the greatest gift ever with the whole world!



Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the
Messiah, the Lord. - Luke 2:11



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Read Luke 1:26-38, 46-55

1. How did Mary react to the announcement of the angel Gabriel? Initially, she was greatly troubled and wanted to understand how she could be the mother of the promised Savior. She quickly accepted God's plan for her and said that she was, "the servant of the Lord."
2. Although God's plans for Mary were very different than her plans for herself, how did Mary choose to respond? With a song of joy, Mary said that her spirit "rejoices in the Lord," and she describes many amazing things about God. We can see her joy in the praise that she offers to God as she embraces the different plan He has for her life

Read Luke 2:8-20

3. Why did the angels appear to the shepherds, and what did the angels tell them? The angels appeared to the shepherds because God wanted to show that His peace was for all kinds of people, not just for the rich and powerful. The angels told the shepherds about the birth of the Savior, and they praised God and announced God's peace.
4. What did the shepherds do after they went to see Jesus? They told everyone about Jesus and glorified and praised God.

Read Memory Verse

5. In this verse, the angels announced the fulfillment of God's promise for a Savior. What does it mean to you that God kept His promise and sent Jesus to be your Savior? It means that God keeps His promises and can be trusted, and that He loved me so much that He sent his one and only Son, Jesus to be my Savior - to die for my sins, to send His Holy Spirit to live in my heart, and to have a personal relationship with me.

Life Application Questions

6. Why can we have hope, even when things happen in life that are unexpected or different than our plans? We can always have hope because we can trust in God's promises and we know that God has a plan for our lives, even when it's different from our plan.
7. How can you choose joy in every circumstance? You can choose joy by focusing on Jesus and His plan for you, knowing that He's working things out for His Kingdom good and for His glory. You can pray, read Scripture, and have other trusted leaders remind you that God is working in every situation and that He has an overall eternal plan. You can also have joy knowing that God loved you enough to send His Son to die in your place.
8. Where does your peace come from, and how can you give that peace to others? True peace comes from God, and He can give it to you in every circumstance. You can give that peace to others by helping them know Jesus through sharing the gospel. You can also show them God's peace through how you react during tough times, and by serving, loving, and praying for them as Jesus would.



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