

WE CELEBRATE THE BIRTH OF THE SAVIOR

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

MESSIAH CHRIST

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Luke 2:1-20

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help students recognize that the birth of Jesus was a crucial event in God's plan to save the world from its sins, and that they rejoice and receive the gift of salvation by understanding what God really did for us

MEMORY VERSE

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14, NIV*).

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

Preadolescents generally enjoy the gifts they receive at Christmas, especially if it is what they asked for. They usually rejoice with the fun of giving and receiving gifts. And they're often quite creative when choosing them. A young man wrote a poem about each of his family members (10 in total), expressing what each of them meant for his life. Then he wrote it on the computer, searched for the right photos, attached them, and sent them to his family. For the recipients, it was a gift that was priceless, and that will be kept as a treasure forever.

In this lesson, the preadolescents will remember the greatest of all gifts: salvation, which is possible through Jesus Christ, our Savior. They'll hear the story of his birth and the wonderful message that the angels gave to the shepherds. And they'll understand that the same message has value for them today: "Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord" (Luke 2:11).

Salvation is the most important present anyone could ever receive. Ask for the guidance of the Holy Spirit to find who in your group is prepared to receive that gift. Those who are already Christians may want to reaffirm their decision and strengthen their commitment to Christ. Some may not be ready to receive the Savior, but they need to hear God's plan of salvation. This lesson will

provide that opportunity.

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

A decree of a foreign emperor, the collection of taxes, and a woman giving birth in a stable is not how one would relate to the happiest event in history. However, these facts are familiar to those of us who know the story of Christmas.

Perhaps that what we know allows us to see the incredible irony of the situation. Rome was oppressing Israel. Tax collectors overcharged and cheated people. There was no decent room where Joseph and Mary could stay after that long and painful journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem. But in the midst of pain and suffering, God was at work. Jesus, the Savior of the world, was born.

Such an important event required a spectacular announcement. It was a custom in the Roman Empire that poets and speakers declared peace and prosperity before the birth of someone who would become emperor. When Jesus was born, the angels proclaimed Good News of joy and peace, not because of the arrival of an emperor, but because of the birth of the Savior, Christ the Lord.

However, we can again notice the irony. Who received the message? Neither rich men, nor royal people in large palaces, nor the politicians, but humble country shepherds. These men belonged to one of the lowest classes of Jewish society. The shepherds rarely attended religious ceremonies because they could not leave their flocks alone. People saw them as very dirty people. They were social outcasts. Even so, they were the first people to whom God chose to give the wonderful news.

What was the angel's message? It was the greatest message humanity had ever received. A message of great joy for all the people, even for the humble shepherds. The long-awaited Savior had arrived! A multitude of angels praised God and announced peace to mankind.

The coming of Christ meant peace. Peace with God for those who believe and receive the Savior. That peace comes into our lives when we establish a proper relationship with the Lord and live in harmony with each other.

What did the shepherds do? They hurried to Bethlehem to look for the baby Jesus. The word "Christ" comes from a Greek word that means "Messiah." In Hebrew, Messiah means "the Anointed One." Christians believe that Jesus is the Christ. Thus, he is often called Jesus Christ."

After finding the Christ child, the shepherds went to tell people what they had seen and heard. They told them everything with such enthusiasm that the people who listened to them could not reject the message: "all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them" (Luke 2:18). When the shepherds returned to their flocks, they could never be the same again. Nor could the rest of the world be. The Savior had arrived!

Reflection for you, teacher: reflect on what the Savior's arrival in your life meant. Then imagine for a moment that you're part of that angelic choir. Write words of joy and praise to the Savior.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

It is more blessed to give than to receive!

Hand out Student Activity Sheet #416-A (It is more blessed to give than to receive!). Give the students time to write the names of people they want to give something to this Christmas inside the ornaments. On the packages, draw a picture or write a description of the gifts that they would like to give to the people whose names they wrote in the ornaments. When finished, ask for volunteers to share what they wrote.

Say: "Giving gifts is an important part of the Christmas celebration. And although many times you can remove the true celebration from the center, let's not forget that giving a gift was an important part of the first Christmas. What was that gift? (The birth of Jesus, our Savior.) In our Bible story today, we'll learn more about this special gift."

Pass out Student Activity Sheets #416-B and #416-C to use with the lesson.

TEACH THE LESSON

Rejoice, your Savior is born!

Prepare for the lesson by studying Luke 2:1-20. Tell the Bible story in your own words.

Conclude the Bible study by asking:

“What was the news that the angels gave to the shepherds?” (That Jesus, the Savior, was born; that this news was for all the people; that through Jesus, God had brought peace.)

Ask: “As said by the angels, what was the purpose of the birth and life of Christ?” (To be the Savior of all people.)

Ask: “In your opinion, what made this news the Good News?” (Accept what the students respond: that Jesus came to save all people; that we can have peace in our lives if we accept Jesus as Savior.)

CONNECT THE LESSON

Use these activities to help the students connect the biblical truth with their lives.

The angels celebrate

Choose a Christmas carol or Christmas song. Ask a musician to accompany you with an instrument, or play recorded music with that theme. Encourage the preadolescents to sing it if they know it. After singing, distribute paper and markers. Ask them to draw pictures illustrating what the carol says. They can portray the angels full of joy, giving the news to the shepherds, or another of the scenes mentioned in the song. Encourage them to show their work to everyone and tell what they drew. If you wish, they can place the figures on the mural.

It cannot clean itself

Before the session, prepare the following: a stained garment (clothes) and other clean ones. Be sure that the stains you made do not come out using only water, but requires the cleaning product that you'll bring.

In the group, show the students the stained clothes.

Ask: “Can this garment clean itself? Let's imagine that this garment could think and speak. What would happen if it said to itself: 'I want to clean myself. I will do my best to make myself as clean as possible.' Could it do it?” Wait for the answer. “What would happen if I put this garment next to others that are clean?” Allow them to look when you put them next to clean clothes. “Can the clean clothes being around the dirty one clean the stains?” Let them respond. “And what would happen if I put the dirty garment in this bucket of clean water? What would happen?” Let them watch the garment soak in the water for a few moments, and ask them to respond. Then put a cleaning product (soap powder or liquid) on the garment and start rubbing it. Show the group the process by which the dirt of the garment begins to be removed and is finally cleaned.

Tell them: “This garment represents our life, and dirt represents our sin. We cannot take away our sins just by thinking good things or by trying to be better. We cannot take away our sins simply by getting together with good people (like when I put the dirty garment next to the clean ones) or by going to church (when I put it in a bucket with clean water). The soap that I used represents Christ. Christ's purpose in coming to earth was to save us from sin and to present ourselves clean and pure before God. There is no other way by which we can receive forgiveness for our sins and restore our relationship with God except through Jesus. Through his birth, life, death and resurrection, he made it possible for us to be free from all sin, as soap did with the dirty garment (show it).”

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

[Download Suggestions for Bible Memorization PDF](#)

Today we'll work with some parts of the memory verse (John 1:14). Have the preadolescents form a standing semicircle. Throw a ball or a soft object (bean bag, rolled up cloth, etc.) to one and say the first part of the verse. That person must repeat it and then throw the ball back to you. Continue like this by throwing the ball to the rest of the students, but changing the instructions for each one. For example, tell one person: “Say the part I told you and add a few more words. Tell another person: “Say fewer words than before.” Then tell another person: “Say the next sentence after the one I said before.” Next, tell another person: “Say only the reference.” Then tell another person: “Say only the important words of the verse.” Continue this until everyone manages to say the whole verse.

Hand out Student Activity Sheet #416-D.

WRAP-UP

Pray

Before the session, carefully prepare the manner in which you'll make the invitation or the call to the students to give their life to Christ. Before the session, ask some of the students who have already given their lives to Jesus to have their testimony prepared to tell the group. Think of a quiet place where you can pray with the students who respond to the call or invitation. If possible, have another person to stay with the other students while you pray with them.

Say: "Today we talked about the Good News that the angels gave to the shepherds. What was the Good News? (That Jesus, the promised Savior, was born.) The angels emphasized that this Good News was for 'all the people.' Who did 'everyone' include? (The elderly, adults, children, people of all races, countries and languages.) All people in the world can have peace with God and a good relationship with him if they accept Jesus as their personal Savior. Maybe some of you have already taken that step. And maybe others have not yet. Let's see how each of us can receive the best Christmas gift of all time.

Read these ABC steps of salvation. It is as easy as A-B-C!

A: Admit that I have sinned and I need God to forgive me and to help me change.

B: Believe that God loves me and sent his only Son, Jesus, so I can be forgiven.

C: Claim a new identity as a child of God by receiving Jesus as my Savior.

Ask those you had designated to read the scripture passages that correspond to each step. After reading each step, ask if everyone understood or if they have doubts or questions.

Then ask the volunteers you prepared to tell what Jesus did in their lives.

Say: "If anyone has never asked Jesus to be their Savior, this is a good opportunity to do so."

Mention that you're happy to pray with them.

Pray with those who answer the invitation. Ask the other group members to pray silently at that time. Or tell your assistant to keep the rest of the students doing another activity (such as making Christmas cards). If no one wants to pray the prayer of surrender, ask a volunteer to pray, thanking God for sending Jesus as our Savior.

Encourage

Salvation is the best Christmas gift. You may end by singing the Christmas carol they sang at the beginning.

Invite

Encourage the students to attend the next session by telling them something interesting about it. Remind them to welcome visitors.