



Invited to the Stable

A 6-Day Family Advent Devotional

Does your family have a nativity set?

In many Christian homes, children grow up playing with plastic figures of Mary and Joseph around Christmas time. But nativities aren't just toys or decorations—they can be object lessons to teach our children about the people God invited to join heaven in celebrating Jesus' birth. And seeing who got a heavenly invitation can teach us a lot about God.

We hope you'll join us for this six-day Advent plan for families. Each day will focus on a key person at the nativity and a key truth we learn about God from them. We'll also be sharing some beautiful illustrations and devotional content from the *CSB One Big Story Bible*.

The People of Christmas

JESUS

Bible Reading: Genesis 1:1-31

Takeaway:

When we look at Jesus, we see that God loves us so much he stepped into our world to save us. Jesus is God. That means that he has been around since before the world was created.

In the beginning, there was only God. Then God created the heavens and the earth and everything that fills them. With just a word, he built up mountains and carved out seas. He placed the sun, the moon, and each star in the heavens. At his command, fish filled the seas, birds flew into the air, and animals sprang up to roam the earth.¹

When God first created the world, everything was good and beautiful. But then Adam and Eve, the first people God created, disobeyed God. They sinned against God. And since Adam and Eve, everyone has sinned against God. Our sin separates us from God. God promised that one of Eve's descendants would put an end to sin and death. God sent his Son, Jesus, to live as Adam didn't—perfectly sinless.²

That's why we celebrate Christmas. Every Christmas, we remember how Jesus came into the world to rescue people from sin and bring them back to God.³

Questions:

- *There's a line that is repeated a lot in this chapter—can you finish it? "And God saw that ..."*
- *What are some of your favorite things that God created?*
- *Do you have any questions about what it means that Jesus is God?*

¹ Sections from the Seeing the Big Picture section "God Created the World" on Genesis 1:1-25

² Sections from the Christ Connection section "Sin Entered the World" on Genesis 3:1-24

³ Sections from "Sin Entered the World"



The People of Christmas

MARY

Bible Reading: Luke 1:26-33, 1:46-55

Takeaway:

Jesus is the most important part of the story of Christmas. In fact, Christmas is a celebration of Jesus' birthday. Who do you invite to your birthday parties?

The people we invite to our birthday parties shows something about us. It shows if we are compassionate and welcoming or if we just want to look cool. It shows who we want to be friends with and what is important to us. This week, we are going to look at who Jesus invited to his birthday party—and what those invitations show us about Jesus.

When we read Mary's story, we see that God uses our obedience to bless other people, and that's a very happy thing. Mary was a very young woman—probably only a teenager—when God asked her to be Jesus' mom. It wasn't going to be easy to say yes to God, but Mary believed God and said yes to his plan. And through Mary's obedience, God blessed Mary and many, many other people around the world.

Questions:

- *How do you think Mary felt at first when God asked her to be Jesus' mom?*
- *What are some things that God asks you to do that are difficult or scary?*
- *Why is Mary so happy in her song of praise?*



The People of Christmas

JOSEPH

Bible Reading: 1 Chronicles 17:11-14, Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah 9:6-7, Isaiah 11:1-2, Luke 2:1-7

Takeaway:

When we look at Joseph, we see evidence of how God keeps his promises. Both Mary and Joseph were distant descendants of David. That means that Jesus was a descendent of David and is an answer to God's promise of a better, forever king.

Hundreds of years before Jesus was born, God was promising to send a Savior for his people. God knew his people would need a way to be forgiven of their sins. And he had planned from the very beginning of creation to send his Son to be their Savior.

The prophet Isaiah said that a virgin would have a son, and he would be named Immanuel (which means "God is with us"; Isaiah 7:14). Jesus would be born from the family of Jesse, who was the father of King David (Isaiah 11:1). Jesus would reign on David's throne, and his kingdom would last forever (Isaiah 9:7). And it was the prophet Micah who told of how Jesus would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2).

One by one, each of these prophecies—and the many more found in the Old Testament—came true in Jesus.⁴

Questions:

- *Can you predict what's going to happen tomorrow? How about what's going to happen in next year?*
- *God told Isaiah about Jesus' birth more than 700 years before Jesus was born. What do you think about that?*
- *Can you think of any other promises God makes to us in the Bible?*
- *How does it make you feel to know that God keeps his promises?*

⁴ Sections from the Seeing the Big Picture section "Prophets Told About Jesus's Birth" on Isaiah 7; 9; 11; and Micah 5:2



The People of Christmas

SHEPHERDS

Bible Reading: Luke 2:8-20

Takeaway:

When we read about the shepherds, we see how Jesus came for the people who are poor or excluded. Shepherds were always outside with the sheep, so they were usually dirty and smelly, and they didn't have a lot of money. But those are the people that God invited to Jesus' birthday celebration! God has a special love for the people who are left out or looked down on.

There's another thing we learn from God inviting the shepherds to Jesus' birthday party: God had a plan to rescue people from their sins. These shepherds were raising sheep near Jerusalem, where the temple was. That means they were probably raising sacrificial lambs. In the Old Testament, when you sinned, you would sacrifice a sheep. The sheep would take the punishment for your sins so you could be forgiven. Jesus is like our sacrificial lamb—he willingly died for our sins so that we could be forgiven.

Questions:

- *How do you think it felt to see all those angels in the sky singing?*
- *Can you think of anybody that you look down on sometimes, like people used to look down on shepherds? Do people ever look down at you?*
- *What difference does it make that God's angels specifically sang to the shepherds?*
- *Do you have any questions about the sacrificial lambs?*



The People of Christmas

WISE MEN

Bible Reading: Matthew 2:1-15

Takeaway:

When we read about the wise men, we remember that Jesus is our king who deserves our worship. The wise men lived far away from Jesus, but they saw a star that God had put in the sky to announce Jesus' birth, so they came to see Jesus. They knew that, even though he was born in an animal barn to poor parents, Jesus was a king who deserved worship and gifts.

The wise men came to worship Jesus as King. Jesus is the King who will rule forever, as God promised to King David in 2 Samuel 7. Jesus is the true King who is worthy of all our worship.⁵

Questions:

- *Why did the wise men visit Jesus?*
- *Why do you think they brought presents?*
- *When we go to church on Sundays, how is that similar to what the wise men did when they visited Jesus?*

⁵ Sections from the Christ Connection section "The Wise Men Visited Jesus" on Matthew 2:1-21



The People of Christmas

JESUS (AGAIN)

Bible Reading: Luke 24:50-53, Hebrews 1:1-3
Hebrews 10:10-14

Takeaway:

Jesus shows us that God is still reigning over the world, and one day he'll come back so we can be with him forever. Christmas celebrates the start of something amazing! After Jesus was born, he grew up and lived a perfect life—he was the only human to always love other people and always obey God. Then he died for our sins and rose again from the dead, defeating death forever. He went back to Heaven, and he's there now, hearing our prayers, helping us, and waiting to come back and be with us forever.

On our own, we have a big problem: we disobey God, and that breaks our relationship with God. But if you trust in Jesus, everything bad you've done is paid for in Jesus' punishment and death on the cross, and you get the credit for everything good he did. That fixes our relationship with God, and he adopts us as his children.

Questions:

- *Where is Jesus right now?*
- *What are some words that describe Jesus?*
- *What do you think it means that Jesus is sitting down? In other words, why is it so important that he's sitting down?*



This devotional features excerpts from the *CSB One Big Story Bible*. Designed to be a kid's first Bible, it's packed full of features to make their journey engaging as they discover how God reveals himself through his Word. Features include a Digital Pop-Up™ format using augmented reality on 146 full-page color illustrations, Christ Connection, Big Questions?, 100 Top Memory Verses, and much more!

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