

Merry Christmas from Sugar Hill Church
Family Devotions for Tuesday December 5, 2017

I think we would all agree that the Christmas season can be pretty stressful and chaotic. It is easy to get caught up in the hustle and bustle and lose sight of why we celebrate. That is why it is important for you to be intentional in pointing our kids to Jesus during this Christmas season.

While it can be a challenge, making the effort to dedicate time to worship Jesus as a family is so worth the effort! When families explore the true meaning of Christmas, they are placing the appropriate attention to the very reason that all of our other celebrations happen.

There are a ton of helpful resources for drawing your family's attention to Jesus during Christmas, but no resource is as valuable as God's Word. Consider using this short devotion to lead your family in a time of worship this morning or evening. Consider letting your kiddos take turns reading the Bible story.

READ TODAY'S SCRIPTURE ALOUD WITH YOUR FAMILY: Luke 2:1-20

At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. 2 (This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) 3 All returned to their own ancestral towns to register for this census. 4 And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. 5 He took with him Mary, to whom he was engaged, who was now expecting a child. 6 And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. 7 She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.

8 That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. 9 Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, 10 but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. 11 The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! 12 And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger." 13 Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying,

14 "Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased." 15 When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." 16 They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. 17 After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. 18 All who heard the shepherds' story were astonished, 19 but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often. 20 The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them.

Luke's telling of the story was written from interviews with people that were there and saw all of the things that he records in his gospel story. He probably interview Mary, a few shepherds, maybe a wise man, or possibly even Joseph. Can you imagine how big his eyes must have been when Mary and Joseph talked with him about that rickety stable and how they wrapped Him in swaddling cloths and then lay Him in a feed trough, a manger?

O My! Jesus and His birth changed the entire world. In Old Testament times, a priest or a prophet had to tell the people of the things of God. But now, God came to be with us. That is why Jesus is our Emmanuel, which means, God with us!

Jesus came and fulfilled God's promises that go all the way back to the story of Creation! We can rest on the promises of God because He loves us so much. And, we can trust His promises because He is perfect, in every way!

Take a few minutes to stop, with your family and experience Luke's Christmas Story!

- Ask: "Why do we celebrate Christmas?" Explain that we celebrate Christmas to honor the birth of Jesus.
- Ask: "What makes Jesus' birth different from any other baby's birth?" Remind family members that the Son of God was in Heaven with God but came to earth as a human baby. Pick up a wrapped Christmas gift. Challenge family members to think of what it would be like to try and put the entire world in a gift box. Explain that Jesus is the all-powerful God who created everything but He came to earth as the most tiny and helpless of all human forms.

- Ask the big picture question: "Why was Jesus born?" Say the answer together as a family, "Jesus was born to rescue us (from sin)." Explain that we need a Savior. Jesus kept all of God's laws perfectly while He was on earth. Jesus did not deserve to die, but He took God's punishment we deserved and died on the cross in our place.

- Ask: "What makes Jesus' birth good news?" Explain that because Jesus came to earth, we can be saved from sin. Jesus rose from the dead, and one day, He is coming back to make everything new and right.

Now, Lead your family in a time of prayer.

God, thank You that because of Jesus we can celebrate Christmas. As we do all the fun things that come with Christmas, help us remember Jesus most of all. Thank You for loving us so much that You sent Your very own Son to earth as a baby so that we could be saved from our sin and can spend forever with You. We love You! Amen.