



Dec. 1

"God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary." – Luke 1:26b-27

Discuss

Why do you think God sent an angel to deliver His message to Mary?

Go Deeper

How does God communicate with us today?

Prayer

Father, help us to pay attention to your messages even when they are whispered.
Give us wisdom and discernment to know and follow your will for our lives. Amen.



Dec. 2

"The angel went to her and said, 'Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.' Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be." – Luke 1:28-29

Discuss

Being told the Lord highly favors you seems like a good thing. Why do you think it troubled Mary? Do you ever feel extra pressure because of the high expectations someone has of you?

Go Deeper

Have you had a time where you failed because you were overwhelmed? Have you worried about meeting the expectations of others? Share the details.

God is always with us and never expects more from us than He knows we can handle with His help!

Prayer

Father, thank you that you are always with us and ever faithful. Thank you for knowing who we are and what we can handle even more than we do. Continue to work in and through our lives. Amen.



Dec. 3

"But the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.'" – Luke 1:30-31

Discuss

When you get chosen to do something big or important, how do you feel? Are you calm or nervous? Excited or overwhelmed? How do your feelings change when you think about God choosing you and calling you favored?

Go Deeper

We all like to hear that someone is proud of us or happy with us. Take turns telling your family members what makes you proud of them.

Prayer

Father, give us strength to follow-through on the tasks you have designed us to complete in our lives. Help us to not be afraid and remember that you are with us every step of the way. Amen.



Dec. 4

Gabriel still talking to Mary:

"He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end." – Luke 1:32-33

Discuss

With these words of Gabriel's God reveals to Mary that the plan for sending His Son has been thousands of years in the making and will last for thousands more. Knowing even just that, do you feel like you can trust your plans to God? How hard or easy is it to let God be in control of your future?

Go Deeper

Have you ever felt God leading you to do something specific? If so, how did you respond?

Prayer

Father, thank you for your constant presence. Thank you for your promises and plans for our lives. Help us to hear your voice during our quiet time, worship time and in the midst of daily life. Amen.



Dec. 5

"'How will this be,' Mary asked the angel, 'since I am a virgin?' The angel answered, 'The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.'" - Luke 1:34-35

Discuss

Mary doesn't say that what the angel told her is impossible. Instead, she asks how God will do the impossible. She completely trusts God can do anything. How do you think Mary got to that point? How can we do the same?

Go Deeper

How do you think you'd have reacted if you would have been Mary? Would you have trusted God to do the impossible? Why or why not?

Trusting God in even small ways helps us grow in our relationship with Him and learn more about His faithfulness. Then we are more prepared when bigger challenges come our way.

Prayer

Father, help us to trust you completely. Give us eyes to see what you can do in our lives and in the lives of those around us. Thank you for your faithfulness and presence. Amen.



Dec. 6

"'I am the Lord's servant,' Mary answered. 'May your word to me be fulfilled.' Then the angel left her." - Luke 1:38

Discuss

Why do you think Mary so readily agreed to God's will knowing that she had a difficult journey ahead of her? Do you find it surprising that doing God's will might be a hard route to take? Why or why not?

Go Deeper

Mary had to know that people around her would judge her poorly if she was pregnant before she was married, yet she didn't hesitate to say yes to God.

Share about time(s) when you held back from doing something for God because you worried about what others would think and/or when you did something for God without caring what anyone else thought.

Prayer

Father, thank you for always being with us. Thank you for remaining faithful to us always. Give us courage, strength and wisdom to follow you and your will for us always. Forgive us for the times our pride gets in the way. Amen.



Dec. 7

"Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly." – Matthew 1:19

Discuss

From Joseph's perspective, Mary messed up. She made a mistake. But he was willing to quietly divorce her and save her shame. He was willing to give her grace. How can we identify when someone needs grace from us more than anger? How difficult is it to extend grace at those times?

Go Deeper

Share a time when someone gave you grace you didn't deserve, and you were relieved. Discuss ways we can all work to give grace to those we encounter, especially those we love.

Prayer

Father, help us to show grace to one another and not go out of our way to make anyone else feel bad. Thank you so much for the grace You show for us. Thank you for the times we have received grace even when we didn't deserve it. Amen.



Dec. 8

"But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.'" – Matthew 1:20

Discuss

The Christmas story is filled with people hearing messages from angels. Have you ever wished God would send an angel to tell you what was going on? Share any experiences you have heard God speaking to you in a still, small voice.

Go Deeper

Because God doesn't usually use angels to dramatically talk to us, we have to find ways to be quiet and listen for His voice. We can hear Him through a song, during prayer or even just random times. What ideas do you have for intentionally having quiet time to spend time with God and listen to what He might have to say to you?

Prayer

Father, thank you for loving us enough to talk with us and have a relationship with us. Open our eyes, ears and heart to hear your voice even during busy seasons like this one. Help us to see more of you. Amen.



Dec. 9

The angel still talking to Joseph:

"'She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.'" – Matthew 1:21

Discuss

"Jesus" means savior or salvation. From the very beginning of His creation, Jesus was to be our salvation. His purpose was to save us from our sins. While we rejoice in that, it also reminds us that God has a purpose for each one of us from the moment we are created. He has a plan. Share with your family what ways you have seen God working in and through their lives.

Go Deeper

If you don't know the meaning of your names, look it up. Does the meaning of your name fit your personality? Why or why not?

Prayer

Father, thank you for having a purpose for all of us. Thank you for sending your Son to die for our sins. Lord, help us to know the purposes and plans you have for our lives. Amen.



Dec. 10

"When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife." – Matthew 1:24

Discuss

God spoke to Joseph through the angel. Joseph woke up and got right to doing what God told him to do. He didn't wait and think about it. He didn't argue with God. He didn't ask his friends or family for advice. He just did what God told him to do. What is your response to doing the things God asks you to do – even just how He tells us to live in His Word?

Go Deeper

Have you ever had a dream that prompted you to do something the next day? Maybe it's as simple as a dream about a deadline you'd almost forgotten. Share a recent dream you had – even if it didn't prompt you to action.

Prayer

Father, thank you for guiding and leading us. Help us to hear your instructions and give us the faith and strength we need to follow them always. Amen.



Dec. 11

"And Mary said: 'My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.'"
– Luke 1:46-47

Discuss

Mary says these words after visiting her cousin and sharing the news of her pregnancy. This was immediately after the angel visited her. She surely must have been overwhelmed, but she praised God. Why do you think praise is an important part of our relationship with God? Is it for His benefit or for ours?

Go Deeper

Sometimes we can go through overwhelming or hard times that make it difficult to feel like praising God. Share about times that were difficult for you to praise God. Discuss how you felt when you began praising Him again. What is your favorite praise song right now?

Prayer

Father, we praise you for who you are. We thank you for your faithfulness to us. We ask that you help us always see you at work in our lives, even when we go through difficult times. Amen.



Dec. 12

Mary still talking to God:

"He has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name." – Luke 1:48-49

Discuss

Mary continues praising God. She acknowledges how he looked down and saw the little she had and called it enough. She also recognized that the job he had given her is one that she'd be recognized for long after she was gone. When you think about the mark you want to leave on the world, does God factor into that? How?

Go Deeper

Share stories about people you know who have impacted the world around them. Talk about their characteristics. Were they humble? Did they always put God first? How can they be examples for our own lives?

Prayer

Father, thank you for the plans you have for each of us. Thank you for the examples you've given us in the Bible and in the world around us. Lord, help us to live out the plan you have for our lives. Help others to see more of you and less of us. Amen.



Dec. 13

"In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world... And everyone went to their own town to register."

- Luke 2:1 & 3

Discuss

Whether Mary and Joseph realized it or not, this census got them exactly where they needed to be. Prophets had said the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem and the census got them there. They might have been irritated or unhappy about having to travel, but God's timing was perfect. Have you had an inconvenience that ended up being God at work?

Go Deeper

God's plans don't always make sense to us because we don't see the whole picture. But his timing is perfect, even when we feel like maybe he's late or wrong. How can we remind ourselves that God is at work and has a plan when we feel like he's not answering our prayers?

Prayer

Father, thank you that your timing is always perfect. We praise you for your wisdom and faithfulness. We ask that you help us to always trust you and remember that you are always in control and at work. Amen.



Dec. 14

"So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child." – Luke 2:4-5

Discuss

Joseph came from the family of David. David had many of his own encounters with God. One he is most known for standing up to Goliath because he trusted God would help him. Mary and Joseph trusted God would be with them on this journey as well. Do you find it encouraging to know that God is always faithful and trustworthy? Why or why not?

Go Deeper

What relatives of older generations have you seen living for God? How have they impacted your own relationship with God?

Prayer

Father, thank you for giving us strength when we need it. Thank you for being faithful to always stay by our side. Lord, help us to know your will. Guide and direct us in every way. Amen.



Dec. 15

"While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born." – Luke 2:6

Discuss

While the verse doesn't say much, likely Mary was anxious when she realized the baby was going to be born. She was away from home and away from the women in her family who would have helped her. Joseph was probably nervous because he didn't know what to do. How do you think God calmed their nerves and helped them?

Go Deeper

When we are afraid, God is right there with us. Share a Bible verse or song that comforts you. How can that help you feel closer to God next time you are afraid?

Prayer

Father, thank you for being with us when we are afraid. Sometimes we go through scary things, but you are always with us. Help us to see, hear and feel you the next time we are afraid. Remind us of your faithfulness, goodness and presence. Amen.



Dec. 16

"She gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them." – Luke 2:7

Discuss

Talk about humble beginnings! If God's plan was for Jesus to be born in Bethlehem and he found a way to get Mary and Joseph there, couldn't he have provided them a room? Yes! He could have and he didn't. So, why do you think it is significant that Jesus was born in such a humble place?

Go Deeper

The Bible talks quite a bit about how it is difficult for those who are wealthy to rely on God. Why do you think that is? No matter our financial situation, how can we stay focused on God?

Prayer

Father, thank you for loving us so much that you made yourself accessible to everyone. Thank you for continuing to be a God who loves everyone. Lord, help us to love and care for others like you do. Help us to rely on you more than anything else. Amen.



Dec. 17

"And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified." – Luke 2:8-9

Discuss

We can understand the shepherd's terror of having an angel suddenly appear in a dark night. Sometimes God shows up and works in such bold ways that it can be frightening. Have you had a dramatic experience with God or know someone who has? Share about it.

Go Deeper

These verses show us that God is staying with the humbleness of Jesus' birth. He chose to go to ordinary shepherds and not to leaders of the church or government. What do you think is the significance of God announcing the birth of his Son to shepherds first?

Prayer

Father, thank you for your power and work. We praise you for who you are and all you do. Thank you for sending your Son to be our shepherd to watch over and protect us. Thank you for making yourself available to all of us. Amen.



Dec. 18

"But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.'" – Luke 2:10

Discuss

The shepherds were surely relieved when the angel told them he was coming with good news. The angel appearing to shepherds was, at least in part, a way to show that the good news was for all people. This verse is one we've probably heard a lot. Stop for a moment and really think about the good news that God sent his Son to save us from our sins. It should still bring us great joy!

Go Deeper

If we know this good news that can bring great joy for all people, how can we share it with others? What are specific ways you can share about Jesus with people you encounter?

Prayer

Father, thank you for sending your Son to die for us and be our savior. Help us to never forget the great news of our salvation. And give us the strength, courage and wisdom to know how to best share this news with people we meet. Amen.



Dec. 19

The angel still talking to the shepherds:

"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." – Luke 2:11-12

Discuss

For thousands of years, God's followers had been awaiting the foretold Messiah. Some must surely have gotten discouraged during their lifetime. But God showed up with his Son at exactly the right time. Have you had a time you had to wait for God to do something? Share about how it felt when he stepped in and gave you an answer.

Go Deeper

If we think about why Jesus was born in a manger and why God told shepherds first, then it starts to come together a bit. Part of why Jesus was born in a manger was so that the shepherds could have access to him. And part of why God told the shepherds was because they knew all about mangers and wouldn't have trouble finding Jesus. How does Jesus continue to meet us where we are today?

Prayer

Father, thank you that your timing is always right. Thank you for hearing our prayers and answering us in the right time. And thank you for coming to meet us right where we are. Help us to share that message to others through the way we live our lives. Amen.



Dec. 20

"Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.'" - Luke 2:13-14

Discuss

After one angel delivers the initial message, the shepherds are ready for more to show up. And they're ready to hear praises to God and accept the message that Jesus has come to bring salvation and peace. What is the difference between the peace everyone has during good times and the peace that God offers?

Go Deeper

Maybe if the shepherds wouldn't have been receptive to the news from the one angel, the others wouldn't have shown up and they'd have missed the blessing of seeing a group of angels together sharing good news. Sometimes we have to be willing to accept God's message and will in order for even more blessings and goodness to come our way!

Prayer

Lord, thank you for the peace you offer us that really does go beyond our understanding. We praise you for your faithfulness in blessing us. Father, we ask that you fill us with your peace and love as we head into these final days of the Christmas season. Help us to show that peace and love to all of those around us. Amen.



Dec. 21

" When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.'" - Luke 2:15

Discuss

Yet again, we see people jumping right to action after hearing from God. They were excited about this good news. They left their jobs to go see the Messiah. Have you known anyone who has left all they know behind to follow Jesus? How do missionaries, for example, demonstrate what being faithful to God looks like?

Go Deeper

While some people are called to travel far to be part of God's ministry, others are like the shepherds. They aren't called to go a long distance physically, but they are still entrusted to follow God's leading in their hometown. What are some ways you can participate in ministry now where you are?

Prayer

Father, help us to always be excited to run to you, even when we get busy with life. Thank you for the people who are serving as missionaries throughout the world. Be with them and meet their needs as they minister. Lord, help us to see ways we can minister to others right where we are. Amen.



Dec. 22

"So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them." – Luke 2:16-18

Discuss

When you have good news, you can't help but want to share it. Sometimes we even want to tell everyone we see about our good news. The shepherds were the same way. What has God done in your life that has excited you? How can you share what God does for you with others?

Go Deeper

Besides sharing the good news with others, the shepherds also told Mary and Joseph. They explained how the angels appeared and the words they shared. That had to help Mary and Joseph feel reassured that they were doing God's will. Talk about how God can use other people to reassure us of his presence and encourage us. How can we encourage others?

Prayer

Father, thank you for being at work in and through our lives. Help us to share with others what you do for us. And work through our lives to encourage others. Help us stay out of the way so your message can come through our lives. Amen.



Dec. 23

"But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told." – Luke 2:19-20

Discuss

While Mary is quietly reflecting on what has happened, the shepherds are loudly doing so. Our worship can be quiet and loud. There is no wrong way to worship God or reflect on who he is. How do you incorporate worship into your life each week? Do you tend to be quiet or loud or a mix of both?

Go Deeper

Have you ever felt judged for how you worshiped or didn't worship? Have you ever wondered if you're worshiping correctly? Share about those times. And remember there is no right or wrong way to worship God!

Prayer

Father, we worship you and praise you for who you are and all you have done. Thank you for taking care of us. Thank you for saving us. Lord, help our praise to reach You in both our loud and quiet moments. Remind us always of your greatness. Amen.



Dec. 24

"After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, 'Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.'" – Matthew 2:1-2

Discuss

By the time the Magi got to Jesus, he was a toddler. Though God could have revealed the birth of Jesus to the Magi the night he was born, God waited and let them follow the star as it had been foretold. Why do you think God had the Magi arrive a couple of years after Jesus was born?

Go Deeper

While the Bible doesn't say this, one speculation could be that Mary and Joseph were settled into parenthood and life by the time the Magi arrived. Maybe they were getting bogged down in daily living and needed a reminder from God that the work they were doing was important. Sometimes we, too, need reminders that whatever we are doing is important.

Prayer

Father, thank you for meeting our needs always – sometimes before we even know that we have them. Thank you for reminding us that whatever we do, we should do like we're doing it for you. Lord, help us to remember you throughout our celebrations today and tomorrow. Amen.



Dec. 25

"On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh." – Matthew 2:11

Discuss

The Magi start out by giving Jesus the best gift of all: praise. Then they move on to the other things. Theirs is an example we model. We can approach God first with praise and then move on from there. What do you want to praise God for today?

Go Deeper

Spend time as a family talking about the blessings of God and praising him together.

Prayer

Father, thank you that your son was born more than 2,000 years ago to pay the price for our sins. We thank you and praise you for your gifts and for your mercy.
Help us to continue to honor and praise You all year long. Amen.