

BRING THE
CHRISTMAS STORY
TO LIFE!

Good News of Great Joy!



Family Christmas Devotional

Perfect for ages 2-11. No prep and easy to lead!

by Rachel Tiemeyer from Thriving Home

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Thriving Home, LLC





A Note to Families

Why do a family Christmas devotional?

What story will most capture your child's heart this holiday season? Children begin to form their understanding of what Christmas is about from very early on. The only real question is who or what will have the most influence in shaping it.

The biblical story of Christmas can be confusing to kids who are bombarded with our culture's holiday icons and values at every turn. You have an opportunity this December to spend time not only decorating, wrapping gifts, and going to parties...but, most importantly, focusing your family's hearts on whom it's all for.

What is this devotional about?

This simple, once-a-week devotional is intended **to help your family remember and respond in worship that Jesus was sent by God to be the Savior of the world!** We hope as you read and talk about the story each week, your hearts will be captured by the "good news of great joy" this Christmas season.

Each of the four devotionals included are organized in the same way:

Read: Choose one or more of the ways listed to communicate the story.

Pray: Take a moment to pray the written out prayer or say your own to help connect the Bible story to your own lives. This demonstrates to children how we can use God's Word to help us talk to him.

Discuss and Do: To help children further understand and connect to the story, choose one or more of the simple activities. Have fun together and help the Christmas story come alive for your kids!

How should I use this devotional?

A great **first step** for any family wanting to try this devotional is to set aside **one, regular time each week to do it.** Right after dinner works best for our (Rachel's) family, since we're already gathered together at the table. Other families I know use breakfast time, when the kids are fresh, to have a family devotional. Remember, this time doesn't have to be long and it won't be perfect! Do whatever length and format works best for your kids.

A good **next step** for using this family devotional is to read the same story from the different Bible versions we suggest and/or try a different activity more than once a week. Perhaps you'd like to even set aside a brief daily time to read and pray together, like before bedtime. Remember, children learn best through repetition, and it helps to look at the same story several times through different angles.

Sincerely,

Rachel and Polly from [Thriving Home](#)



Devotional 1: The Story of Mary and Joseph

Read

Choose one or more of the ways listed to communicate the story.

For All Ages:

- Luke 1:26-38, 2:1-7, and Matthew 1:18-24 (paraphrase in your own words for younger children)
- “He’s Here” (p. 176) in [The Jesus Storybook Bible](#) or watch it on Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E2y2FJqsv_8.

For Younger Children:

- “The Special Baby” in [The Rhyme Bible Storybook](#)

Pray

Thank you God for loving us so much that you sent your Son, Jesus, to be the Savior of the world. Help us to remember and rejoice over Him, the greatest gift of all, this Christmas season.

Discuss and Do

To help children further understand and connect to the story, choose one or more of these simple activities. Have fun together and help the Christmas story come alive for your kids!

1) Mary and Joseph Nativity Set Drama (For all ages)

Act out the story of Mary and Joseph using a nativity set you have at home. You may want to have one person re-read the story slowly as the other family members act out the story.

Discussion Questions: As you act out the story or afterwards, discuss the questions that are age-appropriate for your child.

- o What did the angel tell Mary about her baby? *(He is God’s own Son; he is our rescuer; he will be a descendent of David; the baby was put there by the Holy Spirit; he will be great; he will be our forever King.)*
- o How did Mary respond to Gabriel? *(She was humbled that God had chosen her; she trusted God and believed his promise.)*
- o In Matthew 1:18-24, how did Joseph respond when he learned that Mary was pregnant and it wasn’t his baby? *(He planned to divorce her quietly.)*
What was his response after learning the truth from Gabriel about his son? *(He believed and responded in obedience to God.)*
- o This Christmas season, how can we respond like Mary and Joseph did to the news that Jesus was sent to be the Savior of the world? *(Ideas: Practice being thankful for all that God has given you; pray together as a family—praising God for who Jesus is; sing Christmas worship songs in the car or at home; share the good news of Christmas with others maybe by making them Christmas cards or inviting them to church.)*

2) "Magnify the Lord" Banner (For all ages)

Read Luke 1:46-55 (or only vs. 46-49 for younger kids), which is Mary's response to being chosen as the mother of Jesus.

Ask: How did Mary respond when she learned that God chose her to be the mother of the Savior of the world? *(She praised God, remembering all the great things he has done for her and His people. She glorified or magnified—made great!—his name in her heart and with her words.)*

Listen to "My Soul Magnifies the Lord" by Chris Tomlin, which is based on Mary's Song. Find this song on Youtube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HHzevDE3xhU>) or on iTunes.

Gather markers and a poster board, a long sheet of newsprint, or just regular sheets of paper to create a banner.

While you listen to the song, magnify ("make great!") the name of the Lord like Mary did, by **making a list of the great things God has done for your family** and/or throughout the Bible. Decorate your banner and put it up as part of your Christmas décor to remind you of whom Christmas is all about.

3) Create the Stable (For younger children)

Set the scene together: Wrap a baby doll in cloths and lay him in a "manger" (i.e. a box). You might even want to pull some "hay" (i.e. grass) and put it in the manger. Pull out all your stuffed or toy animals around the house and place them around the manger. Kids and parents may even want to pretend to be the different animals in the stable.

If you have the book [*Song of the Stars*](#) by Sally Lloyd-Jones, read together about the animals who waited in eager expectation of their Savior to arrive.

Discussion Points:

- o Explain that a manger was a feeding trough for barn animals.
- o Jesus—God's son—was born as a baby on Christmas Day and placed in a manger in a stable.
- o God sent Jesus to be the Savior of the world! That's why we celebrate Christmas.



Devotional 2: The Story of the Shepherds and Angels

Read

Choose one or more of the ways listed to communicate the story.

For All Ages:

- Luke 2:8-20 (paraphrase in your own words for younger children)
- "The Light of the Whole World" in [The Jesus Storybook Bible](#) (p. 184) or watch it on Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4fqMhLApCmA>.

For Younger Children:

- "Shepherds" in [The Rhyme Bible Storybook](#)

Pray

Father, with the angels we rejoice and say "Glory to God in the highest!" this Christmas. We thank you for sending your own Son into the world to be our Savior. Help us to respond like the shepherds, with hearts that seek you and rejoice over the Good News of Jesus.

Discuss and Do

To help children further understand and connect to the story, choose one or more of these simple activities. Have fun together and help the Christmas story come alive for your kids!

1) "Search for Jesus" Game (For all ages)

Hide "baby Jesus" from your nativity set somewhere in your house. Say, "We are going to race to find Jesus, like the shepherds, for this game. After we find Jesus, we'll talk about a discussion question together."

Now, have your children pretend to be shepherds and race to find Jesus. When one of them finds him, discuss one of the questions below. Then, play a few more rounds and discuss more questions, letting someone else hide Jesus each time.

Discussion Questions:

- o Read what the angels said in Luke 2:10-11 again. Why did Jesus come into the world? Why is this good news for each of us? (*Jesus was born to be God's promised Savior. He came into the world to save us from our sins, set up his everlasting Kingdom and to be our forever King.*)
- o Do you remember what the shepherds did as soon as the angels left? (*Luke 2:15-16 says they hurried to find the Savior.*) How do you think they felt when they saw exactly what the angels had told them about?
- o What did the shepherds do after seeing Jesus? (*Luke 2:17-20 says they spread the word about who Jesus was and glorified and praised God for all the things they had heard and seen.*) How did the people who heard the shepherds respond? (*They were amazed.*)
- o How can we spread the word about who Jesus is this Christmas?

2) Make a Music Video (For all ages)

Listen to one of the songs below and ask your children what the song is about and how it relates to your Bible story.

"Glory Hallelujah!" by Randall Goodgame: This music video/song expresses the excitement of the shepherds through fun animation, wonderful lyrics and upbeat music. Find this on Youtube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W0HoKUPkKRO>) or on Itunes.

"Go Tell It On the Mountain" by Pentatonix: This song tells about the shepherds' reaction after they saw their Savior and what our reaction should be this Christmas too! Find this song on Youtube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rpMGm20xf6Q>) or on Itunes.

Make your own music video using one of these Christmas songs (or your own)! Choreograph motions or a dance and then record your video.

3) Shepherd Dress Up (For younger children)

Help your young child understand what a shepherd's job was. Dress up as shepherds (i.e. a robe and sheet over head). Hide a plush sheep (if you have one) or a picture of one in the house and have your child try to find it.

Discussion Questions:

- o Do you know what a shepherd's job was? He walked over fields, protecting his sheep, day and night.
- o What did the shepherds do when they heard the good news from the angels? *(They praised God and went and told others.)* Act it out together, if you want.
- o Did you know that Jesus is called The Good Shepherd in the Bible and we are his sheep? He is our protector and our rescuer. He came to earth to save us!



Devotional 3: The Wise Men

Read

Choose one or more of the ways listed to communicate the story.

For All Ages:

- Matthew 2:1-12 (paraphrase in your own words for younger children)
- “The King of all kings” (p. 192) in [The Jesus Storybook Bible](#)

For Younger Children:

- “The Wise Men” in [The Rhyme Bible Storybook](#)

Pray

Lord, you are our King and Savior. Help us rejoice over and worship you this Christmas. Give us hearts, like the Wise Men, that are generous with our treasures. In Jesus’ name we pray, amen.

Discuss and Do

To help children further understand and connect to the story, choose one or more of these simple activities. Have fun together and help the Christmas story come alive for your kids!

1) Wise Men Nativity Set Drama (For all ages)

Find three different gifts around your house that the Wise Men can give to King Jesus, as well as a star that they can follow.

Reenact this part of the story using your nativity set.

Discussion Points:

- o The Wise Men traveled a long time and were perhaps in danger at times as they searched for the promised King. They longed to find the Savior and did whatever it took to find him. We can ask God for hearts like that too—ones that want to love and follow Him.
- o The Wise Men wanted to worship and show their love for King Jesus by giving him wonderful gifts.
- o Ask: How can you show Jesus your love this Christmas?

2) Salvation Army Road Trip (For all ages)

Explain that when we give gifts to others like the Wise Men did to Jesus, we are worshiping and showing our love for Jesus. One fun way to help your child learn to give to those in need this Christmas is to go on a Salvation Army Road Trip.

Fill your pockets with lots of loose change from around the house. Then, load up the family and/or invite some friends along for a road trip around town. Play Christmas music while you stop and the kids jump out to give at various Salvation Army buckets to make donations to those in need.

3) Pass the Present Game (For all ages)

Parents, prepare a simple surprise treasure to pass out to each child at the end of the game. Ideas from around the house: coins, candy, or a special dessert.

Wrap up the treasure items in a gift, which will be used as part of the game.

Have everyone sit in a circle and turn on Christmas music. Pass the present to one another while the music plays, like "hot potato". When you pause the music, ask the person holding the present one of the following questions.

When you get to Question #5, have that person open up the gift and pass out the "treasure" as you talk about it.

Game Questions and Answers

1. **Read Matthew 2:1-2.** How did the Wise Men respond when they saw the star?
(They left to find their true King, travelling very far from home, and came to worship him.)
2. **Read Matthew 2:7-8 and 12.** Did the Wise Men obey Herod? Why or why not?
(Herod intended to hurt Jesus. The Wise Men feared God more than Herod, because they knew he was the true King. They obeyed the true King.)
3. **Read Matthew 2:9-11.** Act out what the three Wise Men did when they finally reached Jesus. *(They were filled with joy. They fell down and worshiped him. They offered him treasures to honor him as their true King.)*
4. Like the Wise Men, what are some ways you can worship Jesus this Christmas, knowing that He is your King and Savior? *(Application ideas: Celebrate with your family by reading the Christmas story, singing Christmas worship songs, and praying throughout the Christmas season; have a birthday party for your Savior Jesus on Christmas Day; be generous toward others this Christmas—sharing your things or giving your money to those who are in need; share the Good News of Jesus' birth or invite others to church who may not know him.)*
5. Hand each child a "treasure." What do you think this "treasure" (i.e. coins for each child, candy, a special dessert) can remind us of? *(That Jesus is our true Treasure—our King and Savior. And that we can honor him with our worship and treasures this Christmas!)*



Devotional 4: The Christmas Celebration!

Read

This week, start at the beginning and review the entire Christmas narrative from beginning to end. Choose one or more of the ways listed to communicate the story.

- Re-read all the parts of the Christmas story listed in the previous weeks in order. You may want to divide up the stories and read on separate days.
 - *Mary and Joseph*—Luke 1:26-38 and 2:1-7; Matthew 1:18-24
 - *The Shepherds and Angels*—Luke 2:8-20
 - *The Wise Men*—Matthew 2:1-12
- “Angel Promises” (pp. 526-529) and “Birth of a Savior” (pp. 532-537) in [The Action Bible](#)

Pray

Jesus, thank you for coming to earth to be with us and rescue us from our sin. We love you and rejoice in you this Christmas! We look forward to the day when you will return and dwell with us forever. Amen.

Discuss and Do

To help children further understand and connect to the story, choose one or more of these simple activities. Have fun together and help the Christmas story come alive for your kids!

1) Birthday Party for Jesus (For all ages)

This is our favorite way to end Christmas Day each year! Tell the kids you’re going to celebrate Jesus’ birthday with a party.

Have the kids help blow up balloons, hang streamers, and/or make decorations.

Make and decorate a birthday cake for Jesus with the kids. Here was ours a few years ago.



Light a candle(s) and sing "Happy Birthday" to Jesus and enjoy cake together as you delight in our Savior.

Other ideas:

- o Read the Christmas story together (*from selections above*).
- o Play Christmas Character Charades. Write all the people from the Christmas story on slips of paper. Take turns drawing a name, acting like that character (no words!), and letting your family guess who you are.
- o Use your nativity set to act out the whole Christmas story.
- o Read a Christmas story book, like [*Song of the Stars*](#) by Sally Lloyd-Jones.
- o Watch the short film "The Christmas Story" (see below in #2) or a favorite Christmas movie together.

2) Christmas Play (For all ages)

Watch "The Christmas Story" film on Youtube as inspiration
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kWq60oyrHVQ>)

Then, make a video of your own Christmas reenactment! You can set up a "stage" and dress up as different characters from the story using sheets over your head and robes as you act out the story together. One adult or older child could be the narrator, reading the story, while the other family members play all the different roles. See how creative you can get, even with special effects like "a star floating in the sky".

Be sure to make a video of it. Kids love to watch themselves over and over. You can make some fun memories with this one!