

Christmas Day

Luke 2.1-20

Mary and Joseph set out for Bethlehem, where the time came for Jesus to be born. Everywhere was so busy that Mary had nowhere to lay him but in a manger. Shepherds were told by an angel of the birth of a saviour, and they went to see for themselves. They were amazed at what they found, as were those with whom the shepherd shared their story.

Now read Luke 2.1-20 see p.2 for text.

A note on the passage

Most of the familiar events of the day on which Jesus was born are recorded only in Luke, where we are told that Mary treasured what happened and pondered about its meaning. Perhaps it was she who shared these details with the Gospel writer. This would make it a truly personal story and one to cherish. Can we do that without being absorbed by the distractions and tinsel of a commercialised Western Christmas? It is worth a try!

#CHRISTMAS

Throughout Advent we have looked at one of the names given to Jesus, what it means and how it might connect with your daily life. It is now Christmas! You will need the Advent tree you prepared in the first week of Advent and have added to since. Take a gift tag and write on it 'Saviour'. Attach the tag to the tree. Research this name (e.g. on the internet, using books, or by talking with others) – what does saviour mean? What does it mean for us as Jesus' followers today? How might that connect with your own life? How does it feel to know Jesus is your saviour?

And now we are at the end, which of the five names do you connect with the most? And there are other names, with other meanings and implications – you could continue this activity throughout the Christmas season. Start by doing an internet search for 'Biblical names for Jesus'.



WORD MAKER

How many words of three letters or more can you make from 'Happy Birthday Jesus'? Play this as a game with others, or work together to make as many words as you possibly can.



Using items from your Christmas Day events – boxes, wrapping paper, crackers and their contents, any other household items – to build a shelter that represents where Jesus was born. Read the verses of Jesus birth in Luke 2.11-14. The angels appeared to the shepherds to tell them of Jesus' birth. If you were a shepherd, what would you have wanted to ask the angels?

Summertime



In some countries such as New Zealand, it is summer on Christmas Day. Can you design a Christmas card with a summer feel to it? What would you choose to eat for a summer Christmas dinner? How else might Christmas Day be different?

IT'S MY NAME!

The name Jesus means saviour. Look at the names you have selected for decoration each week during Advent and today. Which name do you connect with most right now? Can you say why? What about your own name; do you know its origins or what it means? Jesus knows everyone by name. Thank God that you are known and called by name.



How might it feel to touch the place where people think Jesus was born?

Happy CHRISTMAS

Christmas is celebrated in different ways across the world. Can you say Happy Christmas in the following languages? Feliz Navidad (Spanish). Joyeux Noël (French). Buon Natale (Italian). God jul (Swedish). Nakutakia Krismasi njema (Swahili). Can you find other ways to say Happy Christmas? Use what you find to play a game: say 'Happy Christmas' to each other in another language; can the recipient guess which language it is?

Choose a version of the passage to read. The first is the ROOTS version for children, the second is the NRSV text which may be suitable for older children, young people and adults.

The Emperor, Caesar Augustus, sent out a ruling that everyone in the Roman Empire should be counted. Everyone had to go back to their home town to be registered. So Joseph set out for Nazareth, in an area called Galilee, (pause for someone to select the map) with Mary, to whom he was engaged, and who was pregnant.

While they were there, the time came for the child to be born. Mary gave birth to her first-born son. She wrapped him tightly in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, in a stable, because there was no room for them at the inn.

In the countryside nearby there were shepherds, watching over their sheep. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of God shone around them. They were terrified, but the angel said, ‘Don’t be afraid. I bring you news of great joy – joy to be shared with everyone. Today, a Saviour has been born. He is the Messiah that you’ve waited for. You will find him wrapped in bands of cloth, lying in a manger.’

Suddenly the skies were filled with God’s angels singing, ‘Glory to God in the highest; and peace to God’s people on earth.’ The shepherds hurried to Bethlehem, where they found Mary, Joseph and the baby, lying in the manger. Giving praise and glory to God, the shepherds told everyone what they had seen and heard, and everyone was amazed. As for Mary, she thought deeply about all these words and treasured them in her heart.

Luke 2.1-20



Luke 2.1-20 (NRSV)

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good

news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.’ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!’

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.’ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.