



LESSON 4 FOR LEADERS

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Invites People to Meet Jesus

SCRIPTURE: Luke 2

WORD OF WONDER: From Isaiah 9:6

When our son was born, we couldn't wait to share the news, to send out the first pictures, to let friends and family know his name. His birth was important to us. A new life had arrived, and our world was changed.

Read Luke 2:1–20. When Jesus was born, God didn't wait long to let people know. He sent a host of angels to a group of shepherds. The Savior had come. The Messiah. The Lord. A real flesh and blood person who could know people and be known by them. Immanuel. God with us.

"Let's go to Bethlehem. Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about" (Luke 2:15). That's how the shepherds responded. How will you respond?

God invites people to meet Jesus—to know Him and be known by Him. Jesus isn't hiding from us. He isn't distant. He's available. He has time for us. How will you meet Him this week? Through prayer? Through His Word? Through worship and participation in the life of the church?

Jesus has come, and the world is changed. He isn't far off. God invites you to meet Him, day by day, and to know the depths of His love and power.

—**Michael Rade**

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DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

An angel announced Jesus' birth to a group of shepherds. Shepherds were part of the lower class in Israel, sometimes despised by others. They lived outside during much of the year, sleeping among their flocks in order to protect their sheep from thieves or predators.

WHAT?

Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem because of the Roman census. After Jesus was born, an angel announced Jesus' birth to a group shepherds, who came to meet Jesus. The shepherds spread the news of Jesus' birth and identity to everyone they met.

WHERE?

Mary and Joseph traveled from Nazareth in the northern region of Galilee to Bethlehem in the southern region of Judea. Bethlehem is about five miles south of Jerusalem. The shepherds were tending their flocks in the fields near Bethlehem.

WHEN?

Caesar Augustus reigned between 31 BC and AD 14. Jesus was born shortly before the death of Herod, king of Judea in 4 BC, which means the census must have taken place toward the end of Herod's life.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

Jesus' birth fulfilled expectations that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem and would be a descendant of David. These prophecies point to the fact that the Messiah is royalty. Jesus, the everlasting King, would go on to proclaim God's kingdom, establishing it through power greater than death itself.



Curiosity

Belief

Faith

Identity

LESSON 4 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Play Stations

SUPPLIES: toy nativity set

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Jesus' Birth Coloring Sheet (1 per kid)

Greet kids warmly as they arrive and briefly explain the play stations. Invite them to play at any of the play stations.

Welcome to church! While we're getting ready to start, you can play at any of these stations to help get ready for our lesson today. Do you have any ideas of what we'll be learning about today?

Play Station: Nativity Exploration

Set-up: Set out the toy nativity set.

Play: Show kids the toy nativity set and encourage them to pick up the individual pieces and play with them. Ask kids if they know who or what the specific pieces are. Tell kids that today they're going to hear about Jesus' birth, and the nativity set reminds us of that story!

Play Station: Jesus' Birth Coloring Sheet

Set-up: Print one copy per kid of the Jesus' Birth Coloring Sheet. Set out the Coloring Sheets and coloring utensils.

Play: Let the kids color. The kids can also turn the sheet over and draw a picture of something that reminds them of Jesus' birth.



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LESSON 4 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words: **Dear God, thank You for being with us today. We are so grateful for Your Son, Jesus. Please help us listen closely to Your story and what You want to say to us today. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

God's Big Story

Pull out the Bible

Ask: What is this called? *The Bible*

Ask: Why is the Bible important? *Because it is God's word. Everything in it is true. It really happened.*

Tell the Bible Story

The Beginner's Bible, pages 271-281
Baby Jesus is Born & Shepherds Visit

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Who did God invite to meet Jesus first? (*shepherds*)
- Who told the shepherds about Jesus? (*angels*)
- Where was baby Jesus born? (*in a manger, in Bethlehem*)
- Who did the shepherds tell about baby Jesus after they met Him? (*everyone*)
- How can you invite others to meet Jesus?
- What would you have done or said if you would have gotten to meet Jesus as a baby?

Jesus came for everyone, and that's how we know that we can come to Jesus now! We can spend time reading God's Word, the Bible, learning more about Him and talking to Him every day.

Word of Wonder

WORD OF WONDER

**A child will be born to us. A son will be given to us.
He will be called the Prince of Peace.**

—from Isaiah 9:6

Our verse tells us that a child will be born who will be the Prince of Peace. God made this promise hundreds of years before Jesus was born. God's people waited and waited, and Jesus was finally born! He came as the King who would bring peace to the world, just like God promised.

Encourage the kids to do the motions and say the verse with you. Repeat this several times.

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

- Why do you think God chose shepherds to be the first to meet the promised King?
- Why is it important that Jesus was born?



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Craft: Jesus in the Manger

SUPPLIES: construction paper (1 per kid), smaller piece of brown construction paper, paper plate, yellow and brown crayons, Jesus template, glue, Bible verse sticker

Mary and Joseph had traveled to a town called Bethlehem, which was where Joseph was from. When they arrived in Bethlehem, it was so crowded, but it was also time for baby Jesus to be born. There was no room available, so Mary and Joseph had to stay with the animals, and that's where baby Jesus was born. Can you imagine what it might have looked like? Have you ever been in a barn? What do you think it might have smelled like? Allow kids to respond.

The Bible tells us that Mary wrapped up baby Jesus and placed Him in a manger, which is what some animals eat from. This was not what you might have expected for the place the forever King would be born but we know that God had everything in His plan. This is where the shepherds met Jesus for the first time. Let's create the space where Jesus was born.

Give each kid a full sheet of construction paper and have them glue the brown paper to make the manger. Give each kid a paper plate and yellow and brown crayons. Color the paper plate to look like hay. If kids are able, they can cut around the edges of the plate. Have them color the baby and glue everything down. Add the Bible verse sticker at the end.

