

Calvary Chapel  Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY
TEACHER'S PACKET

4s-2nd grade

Christmas Eve

The Birth of God's Son

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The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verse support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective This lesson will teach the Christmas story emphasizing Jesus as the Son of God and present the Gospel to the kids.

Key Verses

John 1:1-5, 14; Luke 2:1-20—Main Teaching Passage
Matthew 1:20-23

Memory Verse - John 1:14

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Hook

Ask the students what their earliest memory is. Do they remember anything that happened when they were 2? When they were babies? When they were born? Then ask if they remember what they were doing before they were born. Finally, ask what Jesus was doing before He was born.

Every human's life begins at birth, and so it is silly to ask what they were doing before they were born. But Jesus is different. His life didn't start the day He was born. It started much, much earlier.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

Matthew and Luke both start their Gospel with the story of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem. John, however, goes back even further and tells us in John 1:1-5 that Jesus (whom John refers to as "the Word") was there at the very beginning of time. Jesus was with God in the beginning, and not only was He with God, but He also *is* God (vs. 1-2). John explains that Jesus was involved in the creation of everything (vs. 3) and that He gives light and life to all creation (vs. 4-5). But then verse 14 reveals something amazing: this same Word, who is God and was with God at the beginning of time, became a human and lived among the rest of humanity.

Luke 2:1-20 gives us the earthly side of this story. In that time, there was a man named Joseph, a descendant of the great King David. He was betrothed to Mary, but Mary was pregnant. Her Child, they would find out, was the Son of God Himself, the Word we read about in John 1 (Matt 1:20-23). Joseph and Mary journeyed to Bethlehem, the home city of David, where Mary gave birth to Jesus under the most humble of circumstances, even being placed in a manger, an animal feeding trough!

Nearby, some shepherds were watching their flocks at night when an angel appeared to them and told them what had happened: the Savior was born in Bethlehem! The angel told the shepherds where to find Him, and then a great choir of angels sung praises to God. The shepherds then went to Bethlehem, where they found and worshipped the Child. They knew that this was no ordinary baby. He was the Son of God!

LOOK

Many of us here today grew up hearing the Christmas story. It becomes routine every December to talk about the angels, shepherds, wise men, and birth in the manger. Even most unbelievers know about Mary and Joseph and can recognize a nativity scene. We have become so familiar with these events that it's easy to forget that this is more than just a cool baby story. When we talk about the Christmas story, we're talking about the birth of God's Son.

It's amazing to think that God's Son became a baby, but we can't think of baby Jesus as an ordinary baby. The Child who was lying in a manger in Bethlehem all those years ago is the One who created the heavens and the earth in Genesis 1:1. The Baby who was born that night has been around since the beginning of time. The Son of Mary was also God Himself, the same God she had learned about in the Old Testament. That Baby Jesus was the Son of God!

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK (Continued)

It is amazing to think that the Son of God became a Baby, but the reason why He did is even more extraordinary: to save humanity. Jesus grew up and lived a human life just like you and me, but with one big difference: He never once sinned. He always obeyed His parents, spoke the truth, and did exactly what God wanted. He also taught people how to follow God. But instead of listening to Jesus, the people He came to save hated Him and killed Him. God's Son came to save humanity, and we killed Him in return! But the story doesn't end there. On the third day, Jesus rose from the dead. He offered to forgive us of our sins and give us eternal life if we would only ask Him for forgiveness and follow Him.

Jesus came into the world so that He could save us from our sins. If you have never asked Him to forgive your sins and be your Lord and Savior, you can do that today. All you have to do is believe that He died on the cross and rose again to save you and ask Him to forgive your sins and be your Lord (Master) and Savior. When you do that, your life begins the incredible adventure of following God, and you can know that you will spend eternity in heaven with Jesus. What an amazing promise! For the rest of us who are already Christians, let's praise Jesus for coming to earth to save us.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

Present the Gospel to the kids and offer them a chance to respond.

As a class, memorize John 1:14.

Pray: Thank God for sending His Son to save us. Ask Him to help us remember the reason we celebrate Christmas: to remember Jesus!

Parent Question: Where was Jesus before He was born?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on John 1 and Luke 2 by David Guzik

1. ([Jhn 1:1-2](#)) The pre-existence of the **Word** (*Logos*).

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.

a. **In the beginning:** This refers to the timeless eternity of [Genesis 1:19](#) (*In the beginning, God created the heavens and earth*). John essentially wrote, “When the **beginning** began, **the Word** was already there.” The idea is that **the Word** existed before creation or even time.

i. John makes it clear that **the Word** is not just the beginning, but it is the beginning of the beginning. He was there **in the beginning**, before anything was.

ii. **Was the Word:** “Had the Word a beginning? John says, ‘No: for if we reach back to any beginning, there already was in existence the Word.’ At once it is evident to John’s vision ‘The Word’ is no other than God the self-existent.” (Trench)

iii. “This description is given in order that we may at once grasp a continuous history which runs out of an unmeasured past, and the identity of the person who is subject of that history.” (Dods)

b. **In the beginning was the Word:** **Word** translates the ancient Greek word *Logos*. The idea of the *logos* had deep and rich roots in both Jewish and Greek thinking.

i. Jewish rabbis often referred to God (especially in His more personal aspects) in terms of His word. They spoke of God Himself as “the word of God.” For example, ancient Hebrew editions of the Old Testament change [Exodus 19:17](#) (*Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God*) to “Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet the word of God.” In the mind of the ancient Jews, the phrase “the word of God” could be used to refer to God Himself.

ii. The Greek philosophers saw the *logos* as the power that puts sense into the world, making the world orderly instead of chaotic. The *logos* was the power that set the world in perfect order and kept it going in perfect order. They saw the *logos* as the “Ultimate Reason” that controlled all things. (Dods, Morris, Barclay, Bruce, and others)

iii. Therefore in this opening John said to both Jews and Greeks: “For centuries you’ve been talking, thinking, and writing about **the Word** (the *logos*). Now I will tell you who He is.” John met both Jews and Greeks where they were at, and explained Jesus in terms they already understood.

iv. “John was using a term which, with various shades of meaning, was in common use everywhere. He could reckon on all men catching his essential meaning.” (Morris)

v. “The word being thus already in use and aiding thoughtful men in their efforts to conceive God’s connection with the world, John takes it and uses it to denote the Revealer of the incomprehensible and invisible God.” (Dods)

c. **And the Word was with God, and the Word was God:** With this brilliant statement, [John 1:1](#) sets forth one of the most basic foundations of our faith – the Trinity. We can follow John’s logic:

- There is a Being known as **the Word**.
- This Being is God, because He is eternal (**In the beginning**)
- This Being is God, because He is plainly called God (**the Word was God**).

· At the same time, this Being does not encompass all that God is. God the Father is a distinct Person from **the Word (the Word was with God)**.

i. So, the Father and the Son (the Son is known here as **the Word**) are equally God, yet distinct in their Person. The Father is not the Son, and the Son is not the Father. Yet they are equally God, with God the Holy Spirit making one God in three Persons.

ii. **The Word was with God**: “This preposition implies intercourse and therefore separate personality. As Chrysostom says: ‘Not in God but with God, as person with person, eternally.’” (Dods)

iii. **And the Word was God**: “This is the true form of the sentence; not ‘*God was the Word.*’ This is absolutely required by the usage of the Greek language.” (Alford)

iv. “Luther says ‘the Word was God’ is against Arius: ‘the Word was with God’ against Sabellius.” (Dods)

v. **And the Word was God**: “Everything that can be said about God the Father can be said about God the Son. In Jesus dwells all the wisdom, glory, power, love, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth of the Father. In Him, God the Father is known.” (Boice)

e. **He was in the beginning with God**: This again makes the point that the Father is distinct from the Son, and the Son distinct from the Father. They are equally God, yet they are separate Persons.

2. ([Jhn 1:3-5](#)) The work and nature of the Word.

All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

a. **All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made**: The Word created *all* things that were created. Therefore He Himself is an uncreated Being, as the Apostle Paul wrote in [Colossians 1:16](#).

i. “In [Genesis 1:1](#), GOD is said to have created all things: in this verse, *Christ* is said to have created all things: the same unerring Spirit spoke in *Moses* and in the *evangelists*: therefore *Christ* and the *Father* are ONE.” (Clarke)

6. ([Jhn 1:14](#)) The Word became flesh.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

a. **And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us**: This is John’s most startling statement so far. It would have amazed both thinkers in both the Jewish and the Greek world to hear that **the Word became flesh**.

i. “The most general expression of the great truth He became *man*. He became that, of which man is in the body compounded...The simplicity of this expression is no doubt directed against the Docetae of the Apostle’s time, who maintained that the Word *only apparently* took human nature.” (Alford)

ii. The Greeks generally thought of God *too low*. To them John wrote: **the Word became flesh**. To ancient people, gods such as Zeus and Hermes were simply super-men; they were not equal to the order and reason of the Logos. John told the Greek thinkers, “The Logos you know made and ordered the universe actually **became flesh**.”

iii. The Jews generally thought of God *too high*. To them John wrote: **the Word became flesh and dwelt among us**. Ancient Jews had a hard time accepting that the great God revealed in the Old Testament could take on human form. John told the Jewish thinkers, “The Word of God **became flesh**.”

iv. God has come close to you in Jesus Christ. You don’t have to struggle to find Him; *He came to you*. Some think they go from place to place to try and find God, and continue their search. More commonly they stay at a place until God draws close to them – then they quickly move on.

v. “Christ entered into a new dimension of existence through the gateway of human birth and took up his residence among men.” (Tenney)

vi. “Augustine afterwards said that in his pre-Christian days he had read and studied the great pagan philosophers and had read many things, but he had never read that the word became flesh.” (Barclay)

b. **And dwelt among us:** The idea behind this phrase is more literally, *dwelt as in a tent among us*. From the sense and the context, John connected the coming of Jesus to humanity with God’s coming to and living with Israel in the tent of the tabernacle. It could be stated, *and tabernacled among us*.

c. **We beheld His glory:** John testified to this as an eyewitness, even as John the Baptist testified. John could say, “I saw His glory, the glory belonging to the **only begotten of the Father.**”

i. The word **beheld** is stronger than the words “saw” or “looked.” John tells us that he and the other disciples *carefully studied* the glory of the Word made flesh.

ii. “The verb ‘beheld’ is invariably used in John (as, for that matter, in the whole New Testament) of seeing with the bodily eye. It is not used of visions. John is speaking of that glory that was seen in the literal, physical Jesus of Nazareth.” (Morris)

d. **Full of grace and truth:** The glory of Jesus wasn’t primarily an adrenaline rush and certainly not a side-show. It was **full of grace and truth**.

i. “Beloved, notice here that both these qualities in our Lord are *at the full*. He is ‘full of grace.’ Who could be more so? In the person of Jesus Christ the immeasurable grace of God is treasured up.” (Spurgeon)

ii. “These two ideas should hold our minds and direct our lives. God is grace, and truth. Not one without the other. Not the other apart from the one. In His government there can be no lowering of the simple and severe standard of Truth; and there is no departure from the purpose and passion of Grace.” (Morgan)

JESUS’ BIRTH AND BOYHOOD

A. The world Jesus was born into.

1. ([Luk 2:1](#)) A decree from Rome reaches the whole Mediterranean world.

And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.

a. **It came to pass in those days:** Luke clearly tells us that he recorded *actual history* and *real events*. This is not “once upon a time.” These are not fanciful stories of Zeus and Apollo on Mount Olympus. This is *real*.

b. **A decree went out from Caesar Augustus:** The story of Jesus’ birth began during the reign of one of the most remarkable men of ancient history.

2. ([Luk 2:2](#)) The governor of the Roman administrative region near Galilee.

This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria.

a. **This census:** The registration and **census** described wasn’t for simple record-keeping or statistics. It was to efficiently and effectively tax everyone in the Roman Empire.

i. According to Leon Morris, Justin Martyr, writing in the middle of the second century, said that in his own day (more than a hundred years after the time of Jesus) you could look up the record of the same **census** Luke mentioned.

c. **While Quirinius was governing Syria:** This is another historical anchor, securing Luke’s account with the reign of known, verifiable historical people.

3. ([Luk 2:3](#)) The world responds to the command of Caesar Augustus.

So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.

a. **So all went to be registered:** It is an impressive thought; one man, in the ivory palaces of Rome, gave a command – and the whole world responded. It may well be that up to that point there had never been a man with power over more lives than Caesar Augustus.

b. **Everyone to his own city:** There is no record in secular history that Augustus decreed this census and

commanded it be performed in this manner, but it was consistent with what we do know of him from history. Augustus was known to be very sensitive to the nationalistic feelings of his subjects, and so he commanded them to return to their cities of family origin for the census.

i. Barclay and others cite a government edict from a Roman census commanded in Egypt in the same era, that each person had to go to their own city for the census enrollment.

ii. In this way, Augustus softened the blow for many. They had to travel, they had to pay taxes – but they would also gather together with family, and see relatives that they perhaps had not seen for a long time.

B. The birth of Jesus.

1. ([Luk 2:4-7](#)) Joseph and Mary come to Bethlehem; Jesus is born.

Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

a. **Joseph also went up from Galilee:** The trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem (just outside of Jerusalem) is about 80 miles. This was not a short distance in those days. It was a significant undertaking, costing time and money.

b. **With Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child:** We often think that Mary was close to delivery when they made this journey, but this may not have been the case at all. Joseph may have been anxious to get her out of Nazareth to avoid the pressure of scandal. Luke tells us that it was while they were in Bethlehem, **that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered.**

i. According to the Roman law, Mary didn't have to go with Joseph for the tax census; but it made sense for her to go with Joseph, especially because she was in the latter stages of a controversial pregnancy – surely the subject of much gossip in Nazareth.

ii. "It is possible that he used the emperor's order as a means of removing Mary from possible gossip and emotional stress in her own village. He had already accepted her as his wife ([Matthew 1:24](#)), but apparently continued in betrothal ([Luke 2:5](#)), pledged to be married, till after the birth." (Liefeld)

c. **And she brought forth her firstborn Son:** One of the striking things about Luke's narrative is how simple it is in contrast to how great the events are. In our modern age, small events are often inflated with over-description and presented as more important than they actually are. Yet under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Luke presented this most amazing event in an understated manner.

d. **She brought forth:** This phrase is filled with wonder. We are not told that anyone assisted Mary in the birth, though someone may have. One way or another, this young woman was completely separated from all her family and supporting friends, who lived back in Nazareth.

i. "The narrative runs as if Mary did these things herself, whence the patristic inference of a painless birth." (Bruce) "That Mary wrapped the child herself points to a lonely birth." (Morris)

ii. When did this happen? The date of December 25 is improbable but not impossible; this date was first popularized in the church the fourth century.

iii. Where did this happen? In a.d. 150, Justin Martyr said that the place Jesus was born was a cave in Bethlehem. Later (330) under Constantine the Great a church was built over the cave, which many believe is still the most probable place where Jesus was born.

e. **Her firstborn son:** This invites the logical conclusion that Mary had other children as well, despite the Roman Catholic dogma of the perpetual virginity of Mary.

f. **Wrapped Him in swaddling cloths:** These are snugly wrapped strips of cloth. More remarkable than the **swaddling cloths** is the fact that He was laid in a **manger** – a feeding trough for animals.

i. Trapp points out that the word translated *swaddling cloths* comes from the ancient Greek word meaning “to tear,” meaning they were torn strips of cloth wrapped around Jesus.

g. **There was no room for them in the inn:** This happened in a public place, with other travelers and residents. “Men were trafficking, and little children playing, and woman gossiping beside the well – and lo! The kingdom of heaven was among them.” (Morrison)

i. “That there was no room in the inn was symbolic of what was to happen to Jesus. The only place where there was room for him was on a cross.” (Barclay)

2. ([Luk 2:8](#)) Shepherds watch over their flocks.

Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.

a. **Now there were in the same country shepherds:** Bethlehem’s shepherds were known to care for the temple flock. These men may have also protected and cared for the lambs used in temple sacrifice.

b. **Living out in the fields:** Many have said that a late December date is impossible, because shepherds would not have been out at night at that time of year. Nevertheless, warm winters are not unknown in Judea, which has a climate remarkably similar to Southern California.

3. ([Luk 2:9-14](#)) The angelic announcement.

And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, 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, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”

a. **An angel of the Lord stood before them:** Interrupting this quiet, dark night was the shining presence of an angel and **the glory of the Lord**. This first angel brought **good tidings** (literally it means that they preached the gospel) to these shepherds, who were regarded as social outcasts.

i. “As a class shepherds had a bad reputation...More regrettable was their habit of confusing ‘mine’ with ‘thine’ as they moved about the country. They were considered unreliable and were not allowed to give testimony in the law courts.” (Morris)

ii. “The first preacher of the gospel was an angel. God hath now taken this honour from the angels, and put it upon the ministers, who in Scripture are called angels, [Revelation 2:1](#).” (Trapp)

b. **For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior:** They announced the birth of a **Savior**, which was (and is) exactly the need of mankind. We don’t need another advisor, a reformer, or a committee, but a **Savior**.

c. **Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God:** After the single angel’s announcement, a whole group of angels appeared. This was a **heavenly host** (a band of soldiers) that proclaimed peace. The world needed then and needs now **peace**.

i. Even the pagans of the first century world sensed this need for peace and a savior. Epictetus, a first century pagan writer, expressed this: “While the emperor may give peace from war on land and sea, he is unable to give peace from passion, grief, and envy; he cannot give peace of heart, for which man yearn for more than even outward peace.”

ii. The contrast between the angelic glory and the humble Jesus must have seemed extreme. God loves to put His glory in unlikely packages so His glory is more clearly displayed ([2 Corinthians 4:7](#)).

iii. “Let God have all the glory, so we may have the peace.” (Trapp)

4. ([Luk 2:15-16](#)) The shepherds come and see the child Jesus.

So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one an-

other, “Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.” And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.

a. **Let us now go:** This shows a genuine urgency. They didn’t hesitate at all.

b. **And see this thing that has come to pass:** The angel told them to look for *a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger* ([Luke 2:12](#)). It wasn’t an unusual *sign* to see a baby *wrapped in swaddling cloths*, but it was strange to see a baby *lying in a manger* – a feeding trough. If the angel had not told them to look for such a specific sign, they would never have believed it.

c. **And found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger:** This was a strange sight, and the specific sign they were told to look for. They no longer heard or saw angels, but they had the abiding encounter with Jesus. Angels may go, but Jesus remains.

i. “This was a revolting sight, and was sufficient of itself to produce an aversion to Christ. For what could be more improbable than to believe that he was the King of the whole people, who was deemed unworthy to be ranked with the lowest of the multitude?” (Calvin)

ii. “It is a lovely thought that the shepherds who looked after the Temple lambs were the first to see the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” (Barclay)

5. ([Luk 2:17-20](#)) The shepherds spread the news of Jesus’ birth.

Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.

a. **They made widely know the saying which was told them concerning this Child:** The combination of the angelic announcement and the sign of a child in a feeding trough inspired the shepherds to tell as many as they could of what they heard and experienced.

b. **All those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds:** The shepherd’s good news amazed all who heard it. Even if they didn’t really understand it, they recognized that something significant had happened.

i. “God, to show that he respected not persons, revealed this grand mystery to the shepherds and the wise men; the one poor, the other rich; the one learned, the other unlearned; the one Jews, the other Gentiles; the one near, the other far off.” (Trapp)

c. **Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart:** Mary’s reaction was different than either the shepherds or those who heard them. She calmly took it all in and meditated over it **in her heart**, seeking to understand the deep meaning of it all.

i. “The wonder of the many was a transient emotion (aorist), this recollecting and brooding of Mary was an abiding habit (imperfect).” (Bruce)

ii. Mary had good reason to meditate. What brought her to Bethlehem? A Roman emperor’s great decree and perhaps gossiping tongues in Nazareth. God works through all kinds of people and all kinds of events to accomplish His plan.

d. **The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, as it was told them:** The shepherds had such happiness and praise to God because *the word was fulfilled just as it was told them*.

i. “Their zeal in *glorifying and praising God* is an implied reproof of our indolence, or rather of our ingratitude. If the cradle of Christ had such an effect upon them, as to make them rise from the stable and the manger to heaven, how much more powerful ought the death and resurrection of Christ to be in raising us to God?” (Calvin)