



Nativity

THE CHRISTMAS STORY

NATIVITY 03/03: **THE AUTHENTIC MEANING OF CHRISTMAS**

poverty. I don't know about you, but heaven sounds so much better than ancient Palestine. Jesus made the move for you. While preparing for His journey, you were on His mind. That's the amazing thing about Christmas. God came to earth to be with us. Jesus didn't just move into his ancient home; He also wants to move into your heart. That's the miracle of Christmas. God stepped down from heaven to walk into your life. There is no greater gift.



BIG IDEA:

Jesus moved into your neighborhood.



SMALL GROUP OBJECTIVE:

We will commit to sharing the gift of Jesus by introducing people to the love and compassion of Christ.



SCRIPTURE USED:

Luke 2:8-12

TEACHING OUTLINE

OPENING:

ILLUSTRATION: Share a story that shows our society moving away from the true meaning of Christmas.

- When you visit a shopping mall, online store, or Instagram feed, you will see something strange and staggering.
 - Christmas has become a very commercialized holiday. - It's big business.
 - Starting on Thanksgiving, every company eagerly awaits the holiday hustle. Because they make a lot of money.
 - On average, an American consumer will nearly triple their shopping budgets during December.
 - When we examine our culture, Christmas seems to be about presents.

— TRANSITION —

- While there is nothing wrong with a brightly colored box with a big bow, presents should not be the primary focus of Christmas.
- Let's continue to the next section of Luke 2.
- This passage gives us an authentic glimpse at the true reason for the season.

BIBLE STUDY:

[Luke 2:8-12](#)

8 And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. 10 And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."

- A small group of shepherds were hanging out in their fields late that night.
 - They were likely gathered around a campfire, swapping shepherd stories to pass the time.
 - Their jobs were tedious. They spent all night surveying hillsides spotted with little white balls of wool.
 - Sheep don't really do anything, they just watched meander from one spot to another. The most exciting thing to happen to them would be rescuing a stuck sheep or fighting off a coyote.
- Their boredom was about to be interrupted by a legion of angels filling the sky.
 - The heavenly host announced, "Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you."
 - The Angels filled the sky to deliver a message -- and a gift.

APPLICATION

- **Jesus is God's gift to you.**
 - Look at the angelic word choice. Jesus wasn't just born; he was born "to you."
 - This single preposition is packed with importance.
 - Jesus wasn't just born. He was born FOR YOU. God sent Jesus as a gift for His people.
 - Baby Jesus was swaddled in cloth, but he may as well have been wrapped in Christmas paper. Jesus is the perfect gift for the shepherds, for you, and for me.
 - Jesus is a gift because He embodies our God to get intimate with us.
 - Jesus represents grace you don't deserve, mercy you didn't earn, love you cannot fathom, and power you cannot comprehend.
 - This is the gift that God gives.
 - Do you know anyone who doesn't know Jesus?
 - Share the gift with them, just like the angels did to the shepherds.
 - "Jesus was born for you!" Tell them how much God loves them and offer them the greatest gift of all.

- **Jesus is a sign.**
 - The angels say something a little strange to the shepherds. It certainly made me scratch my head. They say that Jesus "will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger" (Luke 2:12).
 - Casually calling something a sign is not common today, but it certainly made Jewish ears perk up.
 - Signs were a pivotal part of their religious tradition.
 - People prayed for signs.
 - Miracles were signs.
 - Manifestations were signs.
 - Prophetic words were signs.
 - So what is a sign? What does one do? - It points you to something.
 - They say things like "Danger Ahead," "State Line 114 Miles," and "Deer Crossing."
 - **So how was Jesus a sign?**
 - His arrival pointed to God like a flashing memo on the side of the road.
 - "Good Things Are Coming" is the message.
 - You won't believe what's ahead of you. - That's the sign.
 - Jesus signaled great things coming.
 - This filled the shepherds with hope, and it should do the same for you.
 - Look at Christ's birth for what it is: a sign that things can get better.
 - What's next is best.
 - God's providence is just a few exits ahead.
 - God's providence started with God's presence — Jesus stepped down to earth.

- **Jesus is right here.**
 - We've said it before, but it's worth repeating. Christmas is not about presents. It's about God's presence.
 - Really wrap your mind around it (no pun intended).
 - The God of the universe packed a Holy U-Haul and moved into your neighborhood.
 - Imagine the scene. You peer across the street to see Him carrying boxes labeled grace, then love, then mercy, then salvation, then comfort.
 - He's not taking them to His house, though.
 - He's crossing the street, ringing your doorbell, and giving them to you.
 - Being a good neighbor, of course Jesus brings gifts with him.
 - While love, grace, and mercy are amazing, the greatest gift is standing right in front of you.
 - His name is Jesus.
 - Aren't you thankful Jesus came to earth?
 - He left streets of gold for dusty roads.
 - He left heaven to live in poverty.
 - He left His Father to move into a house with some guy named Joseph who expected him to hammer nails all day.
 - Compared to heaven, earth was rugged — especially where he landed.
 - Christ dealt with splinters, snakes, scorpions, and road rage.
 - I don't know about you, but heaven sounds so much better than ancient Palestine.
 - Jesus made the move for you.
 - While preparing for His journey, you were on His mind.
- **Landing:**
- With a smile on His face, Jesus moved into your neighborhood.
 - That's the amazing thing about Christmas. - God came to earth to be with us.
 - Jesus didn't just move into his ancient home; He also wants to move into your heart.
 - That's the miracle of Christmas.
 - God stepped down from heaven to walk into your life.
 - There is no greater gift.
 - What have or will you do in response to that gift?

[John 1:10- 13](#)

10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. 11 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. 12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

— Break for Small Groups —

TALK IT OUT

Go through these questions with your circle. Be honest. Be open. Talk through the tough stuff.

Ice Breaker: Go around your circle and share this week's highs and lows. What was the best part of your week and what was the lowest part of your week?

Q1: What's one thing that stood out to you from today's message?

Q2: Looking at our culture, what seems to be the most important thing around the holiday season?

Q3: Jesus is "God's gift **to you.**" What do you think this means?

Q4: Jesus moved out of heaven and into your neighborhood. How can this give us hope?

Q5: How has Jesus made an impact on your life? Not everyone will have answer to this question, but for those that do, please share.

Q6: How might Jesus have an impact on your life today, in the near future, and the rest of your life?

Q7: Gifts are made to be given, How can you share the gift of Jesus with others?

Application:

- What have you done with the gift of Jesus? Have you accepted? Why or why not?
- If you have accepted it, share the gift of Jesus this week. Who is one person you can introduce to the love and compassion of Christ?

