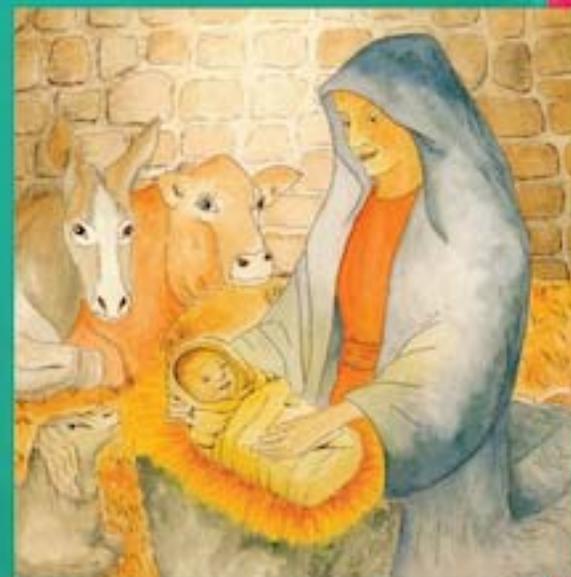


WHY CHRISTMAS?



Barbara Reaoch illustrated by carol MCCarty

WHY Christmas?



Barbara Reaoch

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Shepherd Press



Start reading *Why Christmas?* at any time of the year. However, to prepare your family for a meaningful celebration of Christmas, start reading twenty-four days before Christmas day. Stick with a daily plan for family devotions—it will be worth it. Using this devotion before Christmas could be the start of a significant tradition for your family.

How to use this devotional

Pray God wants us to know Him and His plan for us through Jesus Christ so He has given us His Word. Start by asking God to help everyone listen and understand what you are about to read.

Read This is the vital part of your devotional time. Engaging with God's Word every day is key for God's children. Read the Scripture references from the Bible to emphasize to your child that God speaks to us through His Word. Shorten or lengthen the Bible reading according to your child's attention span, but do not leave this part out. Even when you have limited time for devotions, read God's Word.

Listen These short comments will help you explain God's Word to your child.

Truth Stating the truth will help your child know what the Scripture teaches about God and His plan.

Discuss Asking good questions stimulates the mind and heart. Engage your child in discussion and encourage application of God's Word to everyday life.

Memorize Children have a great capacity for memorization. Read and memorize one verse (printed in color) each day so that the entire passage is memorized at the end of the week.

Sing The carols were chosen to reinforce the truths of Christ's incarnation. The words for the carols are in the back of this book. Use a Hymnal web site to become familiar with the music. Discussing some of the words and phrases will help to make the carol a meaningful lifelong favorite for your children.

Read: LUKE 2:8-16

Listen: Why do we celebrate Christmas? Christmas is fun. Opening gifts is fun. Visiting family and friends is fun. Eating cookies and candy is fun. Is this why we celebrate Christmas? On the first Christmas, the shepherds did not have gifts, friends, and candy. They were tired and hungry from working hard all day. At night there was more work to do. They took turns staying awake to watch the sheep. Were the shepherds excited when they saw the angel? No. The shepherds were afraid. They wondered why the sky was so bright and why God had sent an angel to them. Had they done something wrong? The shepherds were so afraid and there was no place to hide. But when the angel said that Jesus had been born, the shepherds knew this was the best news they had ever heard. God had promised to send the Messiah-King and now He was here. When the angel invited the shepherds to come and meet Jesus, they knew this was an invitation from God. God wanted them to know Jesus.

God wants us to know Jesus, too. This is why He tells us all about Jesus in His Word. The Bible tells us about God's love. It tells us of God's plan to send Jesus into the world. God wants us to know why Jesus was born. At Christmas God invites us to meet Jesus. There is so much to look forward to as Christmas gets closer. Opening gifts, visiting family and eating candy is fun. But Christmas is the celebration of Jesus' birth and Jesus is the greatest gift of all. Christmas is coming. Christmas is the celebration of Jesus' birth.

WEEK 1 • DAY 1

Truth: Christmas is the celebration of Jesus' birth.

Discuss:

1. What news did the angel give to the shepherds?
2. What do we celebrate at Christmas?
3. What time will you set aside each day to read what the Bible tells us about Christmas?

Memorize: Week 1—Luke 2:1-6

Day 1—Memorize Luke 2:1

'In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.

Discuss: "Caesar Augustus"

Sing: "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" (p.56)

Discuss: "hark" and "herald"

What does "Glory to the newborn king" mean?



Read: John 1:1-5

Week 1 • Day 2

Listen: Who is Jesus? Read John 1:1-5 again and this time read "Jesus" instead of "the Word." Jesus is with God and, at the same time, Jesus is God. There is God the Father, and God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. There is One God who is three Persons. Jesus is not only a man: He is God. In God's power, Jesus created the earth and everything that is in it. Jesus created every star in the sky as well as the mountains and seas. God's Word is powerful and always does whatever God wants (Isa. 55:10-11). Jesus is the Word. He is with God and He is God.

When was Jesus born? Your birthday is the celebration of the first day of your life. Jesus' birthday was the first day of His life on earth, but it was not the first day of His life. Jesus has always been alive (John 8:58). Long before Jesus created the stars, sun, moon, and earth, He was alive. Jesus has always been alive and will be alive forever.

Why did Jesus come to live on earth? The Bible says that Jesus came to bring us life and light. That means Jesus came to show us the way to God so that we can live with Him forever. Walking at night by yourself you might get lost if you don't have a flashlight. If you can't see the path you won't know where to go. But you will see the path if a friend, who knows the way and has a flashlight, comes to help. Jesus shows us the way to God. He came to take us out of the darkness of our sin. We celebrate Jesus' birthday because He gives us a gift, which no one else can give - forgiveness of sin and life forever with God.

Truth: Jesus is God.

Discuss:

1. Who is Jesus?
2. When was Jesus born?
3. Why did Jesus come to live on earth?

Memorize: Week 1—Luke 2:1-6

Day 2—Memorize Luke 2:2; say verses 1-2

¹ *In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.*

² ***This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria.***

Discuss: "registration"

Sing: "Angels from the Realms of Glory" (p. 57)

Discuss: "To the eternal Three in One"

Who are the three Persons in One?