

Christmas Message

Meaningful Christmas

Checklist:

- Handout and pencil for each group for small group time (see below)

Opening

Show of Hands: Who here's looking forward to Christmas?

Ask: What are some of the things you're planning to do this Christmas?
(Allow 2 or so minutes for kids to share about this)

Say: Right now, let's look at some of the meaningful things that happened around the first Christmas...

Meaningful First Christmas

Small Groups look at Matthew 2 & Luke 2

Divide the class into small groups of 3-5 and give each group a handout and pencil. Have half the small groups do the Matthew 2:1-12 handout and the other half do Luke 2:1-20 handout. Each group should write down all the things that happened that they think are meaningful and why. Give them 5 or so minutes.

Then allow volunteers to share meaningful things they saw.

Have a Meaningful Christmas

Say:

- We talked a little about what was meaningful about the first Christmas.
 - Let's talk for just a few minutes about how we can help make our Christmas meaningful...
1. One thing we can do to have a meaningful Christmas is trusting in Jesus personally for our salvation...
 - To trust Jesus came, as the Son of God, to be born and then die to pay for sin... and rise again.
 - The angel told the shepherds: "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." *(Luke 2:10-11)*
 - Jesus came to bring salvation from sin and the punishment we deserve for it so we can have a relationship with God and have eternal life with Him.

- That is good news!
 - If you believe for the first time today in what Jesus did to save us from sin, then receive Him as your savior today!
 - If you have done that - or have questions about that - please talk to me or another Christian!
2. Another thing we can do to make our Christmas meaningful is thank, praise and worship God
- What Jesus did is something we can celebrate as believers!
 - Like the angel said it was good news of great joy.
 - We can thank Jesus for coming to bring salvation.
 - And we can praise God for it!
 - The angels said “glory to God in the highest”
 - The shepherds glorified and praised God for all they had seen and heard.
 - And, like the wise men worshipped Jesus - we can worship Him - at Christmas and all through the year as our savior and master!
3. Another thing we can do to have a meaningful Christmas is share the good news with others.
- It is not clear who all the shepherds told - if it was just those who were where Mary and Joseph were or if they told others also. But it says: “they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them.” *(Luke 2:17-18)*
- Ask:** What are ways we could help share the good news about Jesus with others at Christmas time - without being “obnoxious” and with a good chance of it being received well?
(Invite people to Christmas activities or services where they can hear the good news. Share what we’re thankful to God about. Share what is meaningful to you about Christmas and why you have hope in Jesus - in a non-pushy way.)
4. And, we can help have a meaningful Christmas by following Jesus’ example of being loving...
- You can think of something loving you could do to help someone - like babysitting, making dinner for them, helping with holiday chores around the house.
 - You can think of something to do to help those in need - like giving a gift to families in need in other parts of the world through a place like Compassion International, or visiting at a nursing home, or helping at a soup kitchen or food pantry - These could be done with family or friends.
 - And do those loving things as a way to follow Jesus’ example and to give glory to God.

Closing

Say:

- Christmas is meaningful because of Jesus coming in love to make it possible to have a relationship with God and dying on the cross for our sins.
- Help make your Christmas meaningful by trusting in what He did, praising and thanking Him, sharing the good news, and following His example - for God’s glory.

Closing Prayer

Unless noted otherwise, Scriptures are quoted from English Standard Version.

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Matthew 2:1-12

What to do:

- Have someone read the Matthew 2:1-12 aloud for your group.
- As a group, write down what you think are meaningful things that happened and why.

Matthew 2:1-12 (ESV)

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men^[fn] from the east came to Jerusalem, 2 saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” 3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; 4 and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. 5 They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:

6 “‘And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel.’”

7 Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. 8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.” 9 After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. 11 And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. 12 And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

What was meaningful and why:

Luke 2:1-20

What to do:

- Have someone read the Luke 2:1-20 aloud for your group.
- As a group, write down what you think are meaningful things that happened and why.

Luke 2:1-20 (ESV)

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2 This was the first registration when^[fn] Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 And all went to be registered, each to his own town. 4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, 5 to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. 6 And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. 7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

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.” 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

14 “Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

15 When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” 16 And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. 17 And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. 18 And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. 19 But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. 20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

What was meaningful and why: