

Introduction

Activities & Discussion

Invitations

“The Christ Child” is a new 18-minute dramatic short film depicting the events of the Nativity. As you watch it with friends and family, consider using this outline for a home evening lesson. You can follow this outline closely, or you can use elements of it to craft a lesson that fits your needs.

Opening hymn and video

- See 201-214 in the Church hymnbook for a selection of Christmas hymns.
- Watch “The Christ Child.” Go to LightTheWorld.org to stream or download the video.

Potential activities

- Before watching the video, assign everyone a specific character to watch (examples include Mary, Joseph, the wise men, and the shepherds). After watching “The Christ Child,” discuss how each character may have felt in the situations portrayed.
- “The Christ Child” depicts events detailed in both Luke and Matthew. Read and discuss the Christmas story among yourselves (Luke 2:1-18 and Matthew 1:18-25, 2:1-11). What aspects of the Nativity story did this video help bring to light? Discuss the purpose of Christmas and the importance of Jesus Christ in our lives.
- What does Jesus’s birth mean to you? Hand out pieces of paper and invite everyone to write a few thoughts (or draw a picture) about the meaning of Christmas. Hang them up somewhere in your house as a reminder of the true reason for celebrating Christmas.

Things to discuss

- How do you think Mary felt through these experiences? Read Luke 1:26-38 and discuss how Mary might have felt when she learned she would be the mother of the promised Messiah.
- In Jesus’s time, shepherds were often overlooked as those of lower social status. Why do you think angels chose to appear to the shepherds in the field? Review Jesus’s teachings in Matthew 5:1-12. When else did Jesus visit those who might be considered lower class or otherwise separate from society?
- What feelings did you have as you watched the wise man’s reaction to the Christ child? What do you think he thought and felt after journeying for so long to worship the Messiah?

Make this Christmas meaningful

- Jesus knows all of us. During His ministry, He served people one by one, aware of their individual needs. Use the service calendar from LightTheWorld.org to plan how you and your family will serve “one by one” during the month of December. You can also sign up to have daily service reminders sent to your mobile phone.
- Invite friends and family of other faiths to join in worshipping Jesus, the Light of the World, and attend a special Christmas worship service on Sunday, December 22nd.
- Share your experiences online using #LightTheWorld.
- Consider sharing with friends some of the church invitation videos found on LightTheWorld.org.

Thoughts & Notes

“The Christ Child” follows the scriptural account of the events of the Nativity and is intended to accurately reflect the social customs of that day. Film production was informed by research from leading Biblical scholars and archaeologists. This film shows likely possibilities for the circumstances surrounding Jesus’s birth, although specific historical and social context is still up to interpretation. Some of the following questions may arise while watching “The Christ Child.”

Make sure to record any additional thoughts, notes, or other questions you may have to discuss with the group. We encourage everyone to search the scriptural accounts to better understand these inspiring events and to be taught by the Spirit.

What language are they speaking?

- Aramaic. It is most likely that Aramaic was used as the common language in Israel at the time of Jesus’s birth. Mary and Joseph and their families probably all spoke Aramaic. However, the lullaby Mary sings is in Hebrew.

What song does Mary sing to baby Jesus?

- The song Mary sings in this portrayal is taken from Psalm 27:1. The footnotes in Luke 1:46 suggest that Mary would have been familiar with the Old Testament, and it was common for religious observers to sing verses of scripture. The lullaby’s melody is based on traditional Hebrew musical forms.

Where did Mary and Joseph stay in Bethlehem?

- The same Greek word used for “inn” when detailing Jesus’s birth in the book of Luke (kataluma) is also used in a passage about the location of the Last Supper. In that passage, “kataluma” refers to an upper room or guest room that Jesus and His disciples used. It’s possible that instead of searching for an inn or a hotel, Joseph may have sought out a private space in a someone’s home in Bethlehem.

Why was the stable set inside of a home?

- In 1st-century Jerusalem, animals were usually kept inside the house. The stable where Jesus was born may actually have been an interior courtyard or even a cave adjacent to the living quarters.

What tool did the wise men use to look at the stars?

- In this depiction, the wise men use a type of ancient sextant in order to navigate. A sextant works by measuring the angle between two objects. In this case, the sextant measures the angle between the horizon and the new star.

Why were there children with the shepherds?

- Scholars believe that during this time period, shepherd groups included a mix of family members who all helped with responsibilities. In this depiction, young male and female family members are shown within the group of shepherds who heard angels announce the Savior’s birth.