

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO TELLING THE CHRISTMAS STORY

Christmastime is *full*. It's full of surprises, music, family, wrapping paper, shopping malls, and class parties.

But Christmas time is also full of *meaning*. It's full of wonder. It's full of hope. It's full of potential. Christmastime is so full, that when it comes to talking to our children about its true meaning, it can be difficult to know where to start, what to include, and how much our kids can really understand.

That's why we want to partner with you. We want to help you unpack the Christmas story in a way your entire family can understand and enjoy.

After dinner one evening, before bedtime, or over some Christmas cookies and milk, grab your Bible and gather your family. Using the script below as a guide, discuss the story of Jesus' birth together.

For younger kids . . . try paraphrasing the verses in your own words after reading them. Pause every couple of sentences and ask questions to reinforce their comprehension.

For older kids . . . encourage them to read all or parts of the Scripture aloud. Ask them to summarize the excerpts in their own words.

Open your Bible to Luke 2:4-7 and get started!



SAY:

Here's the *true* story of how Jesus was born. Anyone remember who God chose to be Jesus' father and mother on earth? Joseph and Mary. An angel had come to Mary to tell her she was going to have a baby—God's Son. Mary was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph. Together, they traveled to Joseph's hometown just as Jesus was due to be born.

Let's read what happened next.



READ:

So Joseph went also. He went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea. That is where Bethlehem, the town of David, was. Joseph went there because he belonged to the family line of David. He went there with Mary to be listed. Mary was engaged to him. She was expecting a baby. While Joseph and Mary were there, the time came for the child to be born. She gave birth to her first baby. It was a boy. She wrapped him in large strips of cloth. Then she placed him in a manger. There was no room for them in the inn (NIRV).



SAY:

Jesus had to be born in a barn because there wasn't room at a hospital or hotel. How do you think Mary and Joseph felt about that? Do you think it matters that God's Son was born in a barn, surrounded by dirt, hay, and animals?

Let's keep reading.

**READ:**

There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby. It was night, and they were taking care of their sheep. An angel of the Lord appeared to them. And the glory of the Lord shone around them. They were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news. I bring you good news of great joy. It is for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord. Here is how you will know I am telling you the truth. You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger."

*Suddenly a large group of angels from heaven also appeared. They were praising God. They said, "May glory be given to God in the highest heaven!
And may peace be given to those he is pleased with on earth!"*

The angels left and went into heaven. Then the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem. Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about" (Luke 4:8-15 NIV).

**SAY:**

Who did an angel of the Lord appear to? What were they doing? Why do you think the angels "terrified" the shepherds? Would you have reacted the same way? The angels told the shepherds they had "good news." What was that good news? What did the shepherds do when the angels went into heaven?

What do you think the shepherds found when they went to find Jesus? Let's see if you're right!

**READ:**

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and the baby. The baby was lying in the manger. After the shepherds had seen him, they told everyone. They reported what the angel had said about this child. All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary kept all these things like a secret treasure in her heart. She thought about them over and over. The shepherds returned. They gave glory and praise to God. Everything they had seen and heard was just as they had been told (Luke 4:16-20 NIV).

**SAY:**

What did the shepherds find when they went to look for Jesus? What did they do afterward? Why were they so excited? Would you be excited, too?

Jesus' birthday wasn't like anyone else's but Jesus' life wasn't like anyone else's. Jesus was born to give us hope. He was born to give us a chance to be in God's family forever. That's why Christmas is such a big deal. And just like the shepherds, we should thank God for giving us the greatest Christmas gift ever—His Son, Jesus!

(Note: This is an abbreviated version of the Christmas Story. For more details, read Matthew 1:18–2:23 and Luke 1–2:40.)