

# God's Story™ Our Story

December 24, 2016



Birth of Jesus

**Devotion:** Use this resource at home to guide your household's daily devotions. You can do this alone or with others; in the morning, during the day, or at night. Find a routine that works best for you.

**Pray:** Light a candle and open your devotion time with a prayer.

This is the most holy of nights, O Lord. Gather us around our newborn savior, in awe and wonder at what you have done, and continue to do for us. For the sake of Jesus Christ, Amen.

**Reflect:** Reflect on the key verses from Sunday's reading.

*While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. Luke 2:6-7*

**Study:** Study the reading and consider the background.

Away from home, and without proper lodging, a woman delivers a baby. Has this odd story of unconventional family, inconvenient birth, and unexpected rural visitors been so repeated that it loses some of its wonderful strangeness? Listen again—for the first time.

**Consider:** Consider this theme for the week's text.

Jesus came for the whole human community.

**Read:** Read the following daily readings to deepen your understanding of Sunday's text. After the reading, ask the follow-up questions.

Saturday: *Birth of Jesus (Christmas Eve)*, Luke 2:1-14, [15-20]

Sunday: *Shepherds Visit (Christmas Day)*, Luke 2:8-20

Monday: *Isaiah Brings an Answer to Hezekiah's Prayer*, 2 Kings 19:20-34

Tuesday: *The Sign of Immanuel*, Isaiah 7:10-25

Wednesday: *Compassion for the Repentant*, Isaiah 57:14-21

Thursday: *The Prayer for Renewal*, Psalm 89:48

Friday: *Exultant Response of the Captives*, Isaiah 52:7-12

Saturday: *Messiah's Call and Commission*, Isaiah 49:1-7

**How is Jesus' birth a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies?**

**Connect:** Connect in conversation with others in your household. Discuss the following questions, or simply check in with "Highs" and "Lows."

What was a high point of your day? What was a low point?

What is it about babies that brings out the best in us? How do babies evoke faith, hope, and love?

What are you waiting for? What might you do while you wait to make the waiting less agonizing?

**Do:** By acting on what we learn we make God's word come alive. Do the following activity this week.

Before you open gifts in the morning, share with your friends or family the story of Jesus' birth as you know it. Listen to the telling as others share it. What are the similarities? What are the differences? What does the telling of Jesus' birth story say about the person sharing it?

**Bless:** Close your devotion with a blessing.

May God bless you with abundant gifts, both tangible and intangible. Amen.