

# We Are the Reason

## Lesson 2—Merry Christmas!

Bible Passages: Luke 2:1-20; Matthew 2:13-16

Key Verse: John 1:12-13—“But to all who did receive Him, He gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood, or of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man, but of God.”

### BEFORE CLASS

**Preparation:** *Your preparation will determine the direction your class will go.*

- Consider the greatest gift of all, the salvation that comes through Jesus Christ.
- Study and prepare your lesson so that you are familiar with the teaching outline.
- Pray for each student by name.
- Use the Contact 1-2-3 system to the right to follow up on students who have recently missed on Sunday morning.
- Use labels and postcards that our church provides to reach out to your class. The church will even mail the cards for you. Just give them to Kolby or turn them in at the front office. You may also want to send Christmas cards to your students.

### CONTACT 1-2-3 SYSTEM

*CONTACT 1--The first time a student is absent, give him a call.*

*CONTACT 2--Following the second absence, send him a postcard.*

*CONTACT 3-- The third week they are absent, pay him a visit.*

*THINK ABOUT IT: What does it say to a student when they miss multiple weeks in a row and are never contacted? It says, “It really doesn’t matter if you’re here or not.” Small things communicate great messages. Let the three “small” things above communicate that you care and miss your students when they are absent.*

### OPENING ACTIVITY

#### Discussion

Go around the room and let each student answer the following question:

- *What do you want for Christmas this year?*

Take volunteers for the following questions:

- *Do you think you’ll get what you’ve asked for?*
- *How would you respond if you received a gift you didn’t want?*

- *When you receive a gift you really want, how do you respond?*
- *What do you think is the appropriate response when someone gives you an incredibly expensive gift?*

*SAY:* Today we're going to look at how some people responded when they heard about the greatest gift of all but first let's play a game.

### Activity: The White Elephant Game

*Play the typical White Elephant gift game using the gifts that you or your student ministry provides from a Dollar Store. Buy items like a coloring book, a Barbie doll, an army figure, etc. Allow students to select and unwrap one gift one person at a time, allowing trading or the "stealing" of gifts, etc.*

- *Who do you think did or didn't like their gift?*

*SAY:* Today we're going to take a look at how some people responded when they found out that Jesus, the greatest gift of all, had come but first I have a **Christmas Trivia Question:** *Who were the first people God told that the Savior was born?* (The shepherds.)

*(NOTE: If you think these gift items will be a distraction, instruct your students to put them under their chairs.)*

## BIBLE LESSON—part 1

### Choose a volunteer to read—Read Luke 2:1-14

*SAY:* In Jesus' day shepherds were considered lower class citizens. People viewed them with contempt because their work made them ceremonially unclean and prevented their participation in religious activities. They also lived rough lives and were considered "dirty." Shepherds were outcasts among their own people.

- *Why do you think God told the good news to the shepherds first and not people society would consider more "worthy"? (The Bible doesn't say. Perhaps because they were the most receptive group to hear the news.)*
- *Who do you think the angels might have told if Jesus were to be born in our city today? (If they say church leaders, remind them that the angels didn't tell the religious leaders back then. Of course, this was because they were the least receptive of all people to Jesus' coming because He threatened the way they had twisted the truth into hypocrisy.)*
- *What did the angel say they brought? (Good News.)*

- *Have you ever been given some really good news? What did you want to do? (If no one shares that they've ever had really good news, then you can share a time you did [i.e., We're going to have a baby!] or you can ask, What is the best Christmas gift you've ever been given? Did you want to wait to tell or show someone? )*

SAY: The point is that when you get good news you want to share it with others. You want to enjoy it and experience it. Let's take a look at what the shepherds did.

Choose a volunteer to read—Read Luke 2:15-20

- *What are some excuses the shepherds could have made not to go see the Savior?*
  - Someone has to stay back to watch the sheep. This is a bad time.
  - It's the middle of the night! They might be asleep.
  - We're dirty and need to get cleaned up first.
  - Why would we go see Jesus? We don't even go to church.
  - What if the angels are wrong? What if they sent us the wrong way?
- *What are some excuses people make today for not coming to Christ?*
  - This is a bad time—I'll do it later.
  - I'm spiritually dirty and need to get myself "cleaned up" first.
  - Why would we go to Jesus? We don't even go to church.
  - What if the message is wrong? What if I do this and I look like a fool?

SAY: The shepherds didn't make excuses. *What did they do?*

- They hurried off (v. 16) to Bethlehem.
  - They reported the message to others (v. 17).
  - They glorified and praised God for all they had seen and heard (v 20).
- *What are some excuses people make today for not sharing Jesus with others?*
  - What will people say?
  - What if they don't believe me or they reject me?
  - I'm not ready yet.
- *Do you think these shepherds could have made the same excuses when they came away from the stable after seeing the Savior? What was different? (They were excited about what they had seen and heard. They weren't ashamed of it and instead of being afraid, they were glorifying and praising God.)*

**BIBLE LESSON—part 2**

SAY: The shepherds rejoiced to hear about the Jesus' coming. *Can you name anyone who responded in a different way?*

Choose a volunteer to read—Read Matthew 2:13-16

- *Why do you think King Herod acted this way? (If the Messiah, the King according to prophecy, had been born, it threatened his way of life.)*

- *Can you think of anyone in your life who has responded to the good news about Jesus in a negative way? Why do you think they've acted this way?*
- *Is there anyway this Christmas that you can share with them about the greatest gift of all?*

Here are some suggestions of ways you can use Christmas to share Jesus with your lost family members:

- Ask if you can read the Christmas story from the Bible during your family gathering. Read the same verses we read today in Luke 2:1-20. Then briefly explain that Jesus was the Savior of the world who died and rose again to take our sins away. Even feel free to briefly share your personal salvation testimony.
- Ask if you can pray for your family's Christmas meal. Don't use your prayer as a chance to preach, but simply to thank God for His love and for letting Jesus come to make a way so that all who commit their lives to Him can know for sure that they're going to heaven.
- Take private moments to share with your family individually your desire to see them come to Christ and follow Him.

Consider these stories:

Before Christmas one year a mom asked her daughter what she wanted for Christmas. The daughter responded that there was only thing she wanted for Christmas and it was her heart's desire but it was something that she didn't think her mom would be willing to give. The mom pressed for more information and the daughter responded simply, "Mom, the only thing I want for Christmas is for you to know Jesus as your Savior in the same way that I do, not because I want you to but because you realize that it's what you've always wanted and needed." Not long later that mom gave her life to Christ. <sup>1</sup>

Another story is told of a poor family who told their children that they wouldn't be able to afford much of a Christmas. One of the children spoke up, "You can afford my gift!" "What is it?" the parents asked. "My gift can be that you will begin going to church with me." The parents agreed and kept their word. <sup>2</sup>

## **KEY VERSE**

*KEY:* Today we've looked at two responses to Jesus' birth but the biggest part of this lesson is for you to look at how you've responded to Jesus.

- Have you trusted Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior?
- Have you accepted His gift of salvation?
- Do you know for sure that your soul is secure and you will spend eternity in heaven when you die?

*SAY:* If not, then talk to me or another of our adult leaders when we are finished. We want you to know what it's like to accept the greatest gift of all.

*Choose a volunteer to read—Read John 1:12-13*

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KEY: We are the reason that God sent His Son. This is what Christmas is all about. Keep that in mind next week when you are celebrating with your family.

**WRAP IT UP**

**Prayer Time**

*Pray specifically today that your students will have a merry Christmas as they celebrate the birth of the Savior.*

List prayer requests below and on the back of this page and pray for your students throughout the week. *Ask if any of your students want to pray today.*

**Prayer Requests**

<sup>1</sup>Source Unknown.

<sup>2</sup>Source Unknown.