

Grade 1 Liturgical Lesson for Christmas



Preparation before Class


Prior to class, make enough copies of the following for each student to have one copy of each:

- **Student Handout A: Christmas Traditions Matching**, found on **pg. 701** in this guide
- **Student Handout B: The Story of Christmas**, found on **pg. 702** in this guide
- **Student Handout C: Journey to Bethlehem**, found on **pg. 704** in this guide

Warm-Up

- Begin by writing the word *Christmas* on the board and ask your students what Christmas is. *Accept reasoned answers. Then, explain that Christmas is the day we celebrate the birth of Jesus. In today's lesson, we are going to learn more about Christmas, the day we celebrate the birth of Christ.*
- Next, distribute **Student Handout A: Christmas Traditions Matching**, found on **pg. 701** in this guide. Tell the class that there are many symbols and traditions surrounding the celebration of Christmas. Ask your students to name some of these symbols. *Accept reasoned answers, which might include a Christmas tree, a wreath, presents, candy canes, and so forth.*
- Then, have your students draw a line to match the drawing to the correct description of the Christmas tradition. You may need to read and point to the descriptions. When they have finished, review the answers and discuss how these symbols are meant to remind us of Jesus and His birth.

Activity

- Begin by distributing **Student Handout B: The Story of Christmas**, found on **pg. 702** in this guide. **Read aloud**  the story of the first Christmas from **Luke 2:1–20** from your Bible and have your students follow along.
- Next, ask your students the following questions and discuss the answers:
 - Caesar Augustus was the emperor of the Roman Empire when Jesus was born. What did he decree at the beginning of the story? *That the whole world should be enrolled. This means that he had ordered a census, or a counting of all the people in the Roman Empire.*
 - Why did Joseph go to Bethlehem? *Because he was of the house and family of David. For the census, everyone had to return to the hometown of his family. David was an ancient king of Israel, and God had promised that His descendants would rule forever.*
 - While they were in Bethlehem, Mary gave birth to Jesus. Why did she lay him in a manger, or a feeding tray for animals? *Because there was no room in the inn.*

C. Explain to your students that the Gospel describes Jesus as Mary's "firstborn son." It is important to note that Mary did not have any other children, even though Jesus is described as her firstborn. In Jewish law at the time of Christ, firstborn was a special legal title. The eldest male inherited special rights in his family. He was called the firstborn, even if there were never any other children. In Colossians 1:15, Jesus is called the "firstborn of all creation" to establish His right to rule over all creation. Luke emphasizes that Jesus is the firstborn because He is David's legal heir.

D. Continue to ask your students the following questions:

- To whom did the angel of the Lord appear? What did the angel announce? *He appeared to shepherds in the field keeping watch over the flock. The angel announced that the Messiah and Savior had been born. Messiah is the Hebrew word used to describe the Savior whom God had promised to Adam and Eve.*
- What did the multitude of the heavenly host (an army of angels) that appeared to the shepherds proclaim? Where else have you heard this proclamation? *They proclaimed, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." We say these same words at Sunday Mass during the Gloria (Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace to people of good will).*
- What did the shepherds do after the angels appeared to them? *They went to Bethlehem and saw the newborn Jesus lying in the manger.*
- What does the Gospel tell us Mary did with these events? *She kept them all in her heart and reflected on them.*

E. Then, explain to your students that there are two important things for us to take away from the story of Jesus' birth. First, the lives of the shepherds, who were the first to see the newborn Jesus, were changed because of the coming of Jesus. The same should be true for us too. Our lives should be changed by the coming of Jesus into our hearts. When we recognize Jesus for who He is—our Lord and Savior—we should be moved to tell others about Him and to proclaim the glory of God. Second, Mary kept these events in her heart and reflected on them. We should follow Mary's example. We should always be reflecting in our hearts on Jesus and what He has done for us.

Formative Assessment

- A.** Begin by teaching your students the words to “Away in a Manger” and lead them in singing the song as prayer.



Away in a manger
No crib for His bed,
The little Lord Jesus
Lay down His sweet head.

The stars in the sky
Look down where He lay.
The little Lord Jesus
Asleep on the hay.

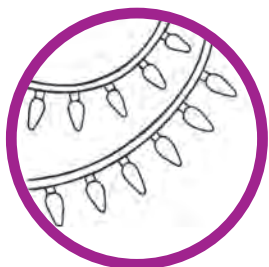
The cattle are lowing.
The poor Baby wakes.
But little Lord Jesus
No crying He makes.

I love Thee, Lord Jesus.
Look down from the sky
And stay by my side
'Til morning is nigh.

- B.** Next, distribute to your students **Student Handout C: Journey to Bethlehem**, found on **pg. 704** in this guide.
- C.** Then, explain to your students that they will be taking a brief quiz to see how much they remember from the story of Christmas. Have them write the correct answer from the answer key on each line. Students can complete the worksheet individually or you can do so as a group.
- D.** When your students have finished, review and discuss the correct answers. (Note: As you review, emphasize how interesting it is that Bethlehem means “House of Bread,” and that Jesus was laid in a feeding trough—a manger—after He was born. Wonder out loud if God is trying to teach us something?)

Christmas Traditions Matching

Directions: Draw a line to match the drawing to the correct description of the Christmas tradition.



Angels sang, “Glory to God in the highest!” to announce the birth of Jesus.

This sweet treat looks like a shepherd’s crook (staff), because Jesus is the Good Shepherd.

These should remind us that Jesus is the Light of the World.

These are green year-round. They remind us that God’s love for us is eternal, that our souls will live forever, and that we’ve been given eternal life.

We give these to remind ourselves that we’ve been given the ultimate gift: God’s life in our souls and His presence on earth.

The Story of Christmas

Directions: Listen and follow along as your teachers read this story.

Excerpts from Luke 2:1-20

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled. So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town. And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over



their flock. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck



with great fear. The angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

When the angels went away from them to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go, then, to Bethlehem to see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” So they went in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child. And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart.

Journey to Bethlehem

Directions: Write the letter of the correct answer on the line. If you are not sure, make your best guess.

Answer Bank

A. Bethlehem

D. Inn

G. Swaddling
Clothes

B. Stable

E. Manger

C. Jesus

F. Messiah

- _____ **1.** A house that people paid to stay in while traveling.
- _____ **2.** A shelter, sometimes in a cave, where animals eat and sleep.
- _____ **3.** A name that means “Savior” or “God saves.”
- _____ **4.** Warm, thin blankets that are used for wrapping babies up nice and snug.
- _____ **5.** The Jewish name for the Savior God had promised.
- _____ **6.** A feeding tray for animals.
- _____ **7.** The place where Jesus was born. Its name means “House of Bread.”