

## Christmas Day

### Jesus is born

#### INTRODUCTION

The Roman Emperor Augustus ordered a count to be made of all the people in the land. This meant that Joseph and Mary had to travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem, because Joseph had been born there. The journey was long and difficult, and the time was coming for Mary to have her baby.

#### SIGN OF THE CROSS

#### LIGHT THE CANDLES

As we light our candles today, we remember that Jesus is the light of the world.

#### SORRY

Jesus told a story about a loving father whose son left home and lived a wicked and selfish life. One day the son came back and was truly sorry for all his mistakes. His father hugged him and forgave him for everything. God is our loving father, and he will always forgive us if we are truly sorry.

#### GLORIA

#### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

To welcome today's Gospel sing Acclamation 3.

#### GOSPEL (LUKE 2:1-20)

Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem to register for the census ordered by Augustus. The time came for Mary to have her baby, and he was born in a stable because there was no room at the inn. She wrapped him in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger.

On a hillside near the town, some shepherds were watching over their sheep. Suddenly, an angel appeared and the sky was filled with God's glory. The shepherds were terrified, but the angel said, "Do not be afraid, for I have great news for you. Today a baby has been born in Bethlehem, he is Christ the Lord. You will find him lying in a manger."

The sky was filled with the sound of angels singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and peace to all people on earth!" The shepherds hurried to

Bethlehem and soon found the stable. There in the manger lay a tiny baby. They told Mary and Joseph what they had seen and heard that night, and they shared their amazement.

Mary listened carefully and cherished all these things in her heart. The shepherds went back to their sheep on the hillside, singing God's praises for everything had been as the angel had said.

#### DISCUSSION

Make a christingle according to the following directions, and use it as a visual aid for the discussion. A christingle is comprised of:

- an orange, to represent our world;
- a candle pushed into the top, symbolizing Christ, the Light of the World;
- a red ribbon tied around the orange to represent the blood of Christ; and
- four toothpicks with dried fruit stuck on them, to represent the fruits of the earth and the abundance of the four seasons.

Explain to the children what the different parts of the christingle symbolize. Emphasize:

- that Jesus came to save the whole world and everyone in it;
- his light reaches out to all people;
- by dying on the cross, he shed his blood and saved us all from our sins; and
- God is generous and gave us all a wonderful world, with plenty of food and resources. We should not be greedy and must try to always share what we can with others. This is very appropriate to remember at Christmas.

#### ACTIVITY

Complete the Advent wreath by "lighting" the final white candle. You can then help each child to make a christingle. (Much of the preparation can be done in advance.) Afterwards sing Christmas carols with the children.

#### CREED

#### CLOSING PRAYER

Dear Lord Jesus, on this Christmas morning,  
may our hearts and our homes  
be filled with the peace and love  
you shared with the world.

