



Chapel Kids Family Nativity Devotional

Nativity Devotional Videos

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Click [HERE](#) to watch our Family Devo videos!



VIDEO 1

Introduction

Watch today's video at biblechapel.org/familydevo
or read the script below.

The Christmas story is among the most well known biblical accounts, loved by millions of Christians worldwide as they reflect on Jesus' birth and His mission to save humanity from sin.

One way during the Christmas season that we remember the birth of Jesus is by setting up and reflecting on the Nativity set.

There are so many things during the Holiday Season that can distract our attention away from the simplicity and significance of that first Christmas. So, to help us be mindful of what matters most during the Christmas season as a Church Community, we created this series of short devotions focused on the pieces of the Nativity - to bring them more fully to life and offer a deeper, spiritual significance for each figure. We hope you and those you love will be blessed as you do so. Let's begin with a short history of how the Nativity came to be.

The word "Nativity" is a Latin word that means "being born".

The first Nativity scene was created by Francis of Assisi in Italy and presented in a cave on Christmas Eve of the year 1223. Francis was inspired to do this after visiting the Holy Land and seeing where and how Jesus lived.

Francis had become concerned with the materialism and greed that consumed Italy at the time (sounds like our world today), and he wanted to visually help people remember the humble, simple circumstances of Jesus' birth to deepen their love and devotion for Jesus.

In a cave near the town's church, Francis performed a "Living Nativity" that used a real manger, hay, and live animals, with townspeople acting out the roles of the Holy Family and others. This tradition quickly spread throughout Europe, evolving over time from live reenactments to the Nativity Set we are familiar with today.

Just like those believers a thousand years ago we, too, face similar challenges during the Christmas Season, which can distract us and take our attention away from the humble, yet profound meaning of that first Christmas. As you take out your Nativity Sets and reflect on the birth of Jesus this Advent, may these devotionals help your family deepen your understanding and appreciation of what Christmas was meant to be - the humble birth of Jesus; God in human flesh; The King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Blessings to you on this Advent Nativity Journey.

VIDEO 1

The Manger

Watch today's video at
biblechapel.org/familydevo
or read the script below.

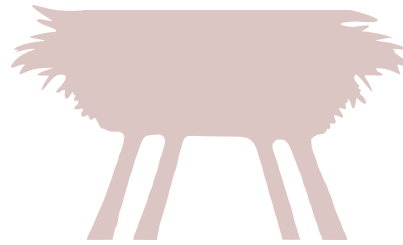
Let's first consider where God chose for Jesus to be born - an animal's manger.

When we think about royal kings, we think of big palaces with guards, high walls, and thick gates of riches, crowns, and royal robes. And when a royal child is born, there are proclamations and celebrations that rich and important people attend. But God's son - The King of Kings - was not born in a big, fancy palace. He was not even born in someone's home. Rather, in a place where animals ate, slept, and took shelter. Jesus' first bed "was no fancy, royal cradle made of gold and silver, but instead, a trough used to feed those animals. There was no fancy, royal robe for Jesus; just a simple cloth that he was wrapped in. And unlike a royal palace with guards, high walls, and a thick gate where very few were allowed in, the manger was an open place where anyone - even common people like shepherds - could easily approach and meet the newborn king.

While it may not seem to make sense to us that Jesus, the most important king in all of history, did not have what the royalty of His day had, Isaiah 53:8 reminds us that God's thoughts are not our thoughts, and God's ways are not our ways.

As we reflect on the manger, may we more deeply trust that God's thoughts and God's ways will always be better than ours. Remembering Jesus' example of entering into our world to live His life as a humble servant to all, may we follow His example of humility and service in how we choose to live our lives each day for Him.

Color and cut out the correlating piece on page 15.



God certainly did not leave the time and place of Jesus' birth to chance. Rather, He likely chose this simple (and probably pretty smelly) manger to remind us of several important things:

Jesus came to save all - rich and poor, powerful and suffering, important and unknown - and He did so as a humble servant without wealth or earthly power.

Also, as the animals were fed physical food from the trough, we are fed spiritual food through Jesus, who was laid in that trough.

Finally, we can remember that Jesus stepped down from His heavenly throne - His heavenly home- and became homeless for us so that we can have a home with Him forever in Heaven.





VIDEO 2

The Christmas Star

Watch today's video at biblechapel.org/familydevo or read the script below.

The Christmas Star's light piercing the night sky is often interpreted as the light of Christ coming into the world, piercing the darkness of sin and ignorance to reveal the truth of God and the hope of His salvation.

The star also represents God's guidance, as He used it to lead the Magi (who we also call The Wise Men) to Jesus. This reminds us that God will also provide direction to those who wisely seek Him today.

The star reminds us to allow our lives to shine in a way which will point people to Jesus. As Jesus Himself encourages us in Matthew 5:14-16 we are the "light of the world" and a "city on a hill that cannot be hidden", who cannot be hidden, showing others the goodness and joy that comes from giving our hearts and our lives to Jesus.

Color and cut out the correlating piece on page 14.

The Angels



VIDEO 2

The Angels

Watch today's video at
biblechapel.org/familydevo
or read the script below.

The angels, which is the Latin word for “messenger”, announced the Gospel (the Latin word that means “Good News”) about the birth of Jesus. While there is often one angel in most Nativity Sets, that one angel can remind us of the many angels who took part in the events surrounding the birth of Jesus. There was the Angel Gabriel, who shared with Mary and then Joseph that God chose them to be the Earthly parents of Jesus.

And there was the angel who shared the message of the Good News of Jesus' birth to the shepherds in the fields! That angel was accompanied by a multitude (the Bible does not give us the exact number, possibly thousands or even millions) of other angels joyfully celebrating the coming of Jesus.

Like the Christmas angels, WE are also called to be messengers of the Gospel - the Good News of the birth of Jesus, and the hope of salvation and eternal life that He offers to all people. God calls us to do this not only with our words, but also with the example of how we live our lives. And, like the Christmas Story angels, may we do this faithfully and joyfully.

Color and cut out the correlating piece on page 15.



VIDEO 3

The Shepherds



Watch today's video at biblechapel.org/familydevo or read the script below.

The Shepherds in Bible times were not seen as high in society and were likely looked down upon by others. People in those times might have expected God to reveal the birth of Jesus to kings in royal palaces or to the religious leaders, not lowly shepherds tending to dirty, smelly animals in the fields.

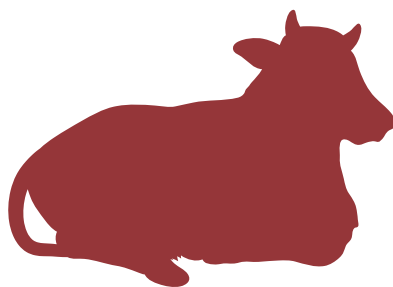
Yet, remembering what we shared in the Manger Devotional, God's thoughts are not our thoughts, and God's ways are not our ways. Here, God chooses the humble and lowly over the proud and powerful. As the Bible tells us in many places, God has a tender heart for shepherds. He often refers to Himself as a shepherd, and Jesus also calls himself the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for His sheep to save them.

The shepherds were humbled and amazed that God chose them to hear this Good News, and they just could not keep it to themselves. After hurrying off to find Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus, they told anyone they could find about the great miracle they had seen and their joy of meeting Jesus.

The shepherd's faith and immediate response to the message from the angel reminds us that God will use anyone - regardless of how high or low they are in society - to fulfill His perfect plans. These ordinary individuals were chosen to witness the extraordinary, making their story a timeless symbol of hope, faith, and obedience.

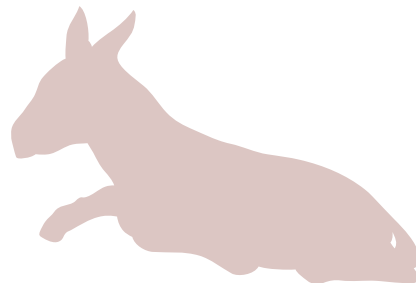
Like the Christmas Story shepherds, the Good News of Jesus is something that we are also called to share, and the Christmas season is a great time to do so. We can be a part of this epic story as we model the shepherds' example of experiencing the joy of knowing Jesus and faithfully sharing that joy with others, whom God places in our lives.

Color and cut out the correlating piece on page 14.



VIDEO 4

The Animals in the Manger



Watch today's video at biblechapel.org/familydevo or read the script below.

Even though the Bible describes Jesus being born where the animals slept and ate, it does not specifically say that the animals were there. But there is still some good symbolism to consider from the animals depicted in the Nativity Scene. *Color and cut out the correlating piece on page 14.*

The Lamb

Jesus is often referred to in Scripture as the "Lamb of God." In the Old Testament, lambs without blemish were sacrificed to temporarily cover the sins of the people. The lamb in the Nativity Scene symbolizes Jesus' earthly mission to be God's perfect, sacrificial lamb who permanently takes away the sins - and the penalty for those sins - for all who trust in Jesus.

The Camel

This animal provided transportation for the Wise Men from the East. Known for its endurance and ability to travel long distances in the desert, the camel can symbolize the carrying of Jesus' message into many, faraway lands.

The Donkey

Prized for its strength, endurance, and sure-footedness, a donkey carried Mary pregnant with Jesus (who is called "The Prince of Peace") to Bethlehem. Thirty-three years later, Jesus rode again on a donkey as The Prince of Peace into Jerusalem to show He came not to bring war (which would have been symbolized by a king riding a large war horse), but to bring God's peace and salvation to all people.

The Ox

In the Bible, the ox symbolizes strength, diligence, and service due to its farming role in plowing fields to make them ready for planting. Similarly, we are called to be strong, diligent, and to serve others in fields of life that God places us in; to prepare that ground and plant seeds for God's harvest of people who will believe in and accept Jesus in their hearts as their only true Savior.



VIDEO 5

The Wise Men + Their Gifts

Watch today's video at biblechapel.org/familydevo
or read the script below.

The Wise Men (also called the "Magi") were highly skilled in studying the stars (what we would call astronomy today). We know from the Bible that they were "from the East," most likely Persia (which is modern day Iran).

The Wise Men likely knew of the writings of the prophet Daniel, who 500 years earlier, had been an official in Persia and wrote a prophecy giving the timeline for the birth of the Messiah (a word that means Savior). You can read this prophesy in Daniel Chapter 9.

These Wise Men, guided by the Christmas Star, likely traveled 800 to 900 miles to see the baby Jesus. As they came from a great distance, they represent the many lands that Christ's teachings would one day reach. The gifts that they brought Jesus included gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Gold was a kingly gift,

acknowledging Jesus as the King of Kings. Frankincense, used in worship at temples, was a priestly gift, recognizing Jesus as God's Great High Priest. Myrrh, used for preparing a dead body for burial, signified that Jesus would die as a sacrifice for the sins of the world.

While we include the Wise Men in the Nativity Scene, it is commonly understood that they did not likely arrive at the manger on the night of Jesus' birth. They more likely came months, or possibly even years later. That is why Matthew 2:11 says the Wise Men visited and worshiped Jesus in a house, not the stable.

Like the Wise Men, may we be so devoted to seek, find, and bow down to worship Jesus as our king, and help others that God places in our lives to do the same.

Color and cut out the correlating piece on page 13.

VIDEO 6

Mary + Joseph

Watch today's video at biblechapel.org/familydevo or read the script below.

Both Mary and Joseph demonstrated the willingness and courage to listen to, accept, and do God's will for their lives and to trust His promise to provide for them despite their fears.

As an unmarried pregnant girl in her culture, Mary faced condemnation by all around her and put her very life in danger when she obeyed God's plan for her to be the earthly mother of Jesus.

Joseph also faced ridicule to be engaged to a girl, already pregnant, before they were to be married. While he could have called the marriage off, Joseph showed courage and compassion in accepting and caring for Mary and becoming the earthly father of Jesus. What amazing examples of having faith in and trusting God in unknown, hard, and fearful situations.

Reflecting on Mary and Joseph's example, we, too, are called by God to journey along paths that we may not understand, that may feel hard and cause us fear. Like Mary and Joseph, may we be faithful to God's call and totally trust Him to guide and take care of us along the way as we do His good and perfect will.

Color and cut out the correlating piece on page 15.



Mary + Joseph

The page is decorated with four stylized manger scenes, each with a baby Jesus figure in the center. The mangers are arranged in a square pattern: top-left (light pink), top-right (olive green), bottom-left (olive green), and bottom-right (light pink).

VIDEO 7

The Baby Jesus

Watch today's video at biblechapel.org/familydevo or read the script below.

And now, the most precious, beautiful, majestic, and wonderful figure of the Nativity - the baby Jesus; the Savior of the world; God in human flesh who stepped down from His heavenly throne to sacrifice His life for us; to take our sins away, cancel the punishment we deserved, and adopt us as children of God who will live eternally with Him - here on earth and one day forever in Heaven.

Instead of coming to earth as a powerful, privileged ruler, Jesus coming as a baby showed His innocent, loving nature and His becoming vulnerable in a world full of darkness and evil.

The Baby Jesus is usually depicted with His arms stretched wide. This is symbolic of Jesus' invitation of salvation to ALL people - rich and poor, young and old, famous and unknown, powerful and oppressed. God's word in verses like 1 Timothy 2:4 and 2 Peter 3:9 tells us that He "desires all people to be saved

and to come to a knowledge of the truth" and that He "is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." This is why Christmas is so special - because it is the most important and epic time in history that, as John 3:16-17 tells us, "...God so loved the world that he gave His one and only Son - Jesus - that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." **Amen!**

As you take out your Nativity sets this year and in years to come, we pray that these devotionals will help bring an additional appreciation for the birth of Jesus. May God bless you this and every Christmas, and may the Jesus (the King of Kings and Lord of Lords) inhabit your hearts in a beautiful, meaningful, and lasting way!

Color and cut out the correlating piece on page 15.

Nativity Family Activities

Now that you know more about each figure in the Nativity and their significance, here are a few unique ideas for further bringing your Nativity Scene to life in meaningful and memorable ways. **These ideas are a few of our own family traditions from when our children were growing up:**

Activity One

During Advent, keep the Nativity figures separate and in different places around your home until Christmas Eve. For example, the manger and star in a central “Bethlehem” location, the shepherds and animals in another place representing “the fields”, and the Wise Men traveling from afar (perhaps to the “East” of the main scene or another room all together), etc. On Christmas Eve, they can all “arrive” at the manger.

Activity Two

Mary and Joseph can have a unique journey of their own by rotating them through each of the family member’s bedrooms for several days each during Advent, as they “travel” toward your “Bethlehem” central place. When Mary and Joseph are in each family member’s room, the goal is to meditate on their faithful obedience and courage, and on the coming of Jesus.

Activity Three

If you have a Jesus that is a separate figure in the set, consider wrapping Him up and having Him be the first present that is opened on Christmas Eve or on Christmas morning by one of the kids.

Activity Four

Prior to tearing into the gifts (hard to get the kids to wait for sure!), you can have a breakfast “Birthday Party” for Jesus. You tell the story of His coming to save us through the symbolism of layering three pancakes (Trinity), strawberries between each pancake (the scarlet of our sins), and putting whipped cream over the top (His righteousness covering the scarlet of our sins and turning them white as snow). There are many other meaningful takes on this breakfast that can be researched online. This tradition can help your family to pause and first reflect on Jesus and His coming to Earth to save us from our sins as a first thought for this joyous day.

Nativity Coloring

Color and cut out the correlating nativity piece each day.

Glue the pieces onto a large piece of construction paper to display or attach a cardboard toilet paper roll so they can stand on their own! Get creative as you build a Nativity set as a family!



