

God Came to You

Luke 2:1-14

Lesson 4

Exploring Faith Bible Study Series

Lesson Purpose:

When your group has finished with this lesson hopefully they will have an understanding of what Christmas is really about. Instead of traditional Santa and church on Christmas Sunday, the story of God coming as a tiny baby will provide real meaning. The concept of God entering into our world in the most humble conditions so He could show us His great love is the central concept of this lesson. Through the love we see in the Christmas story He shows us our sin and invites us into relationship with Him.

Icebreaker:

Invite the group to think for a moment about this question: **What is your favorite Christmas memory?** Ask group members to share their responses.

Life Connections

Use these questions to help your group members to begin to open up with one another and to think about their own lives. The answers to these questions need not be spiritual in nature. The intention is for practical real life responses.

- 1) **What does Christmas mean to you?** Time with family; stress; buying gifts.
- 2) **Why do we celebrate Christmas?** To show one another how much we love them through giving gifts; because of Santa Claus; something to do with the church and Jesus.
- 3) **What happened on the very first Christmas?** Jesus was born.
- 4) **How does Christmas affect us throughout the year?** (Not just at Christmastime). The bills last long after Christmas; we plan for the next holiday with our family throughout the year.

Scripture's Answers: Luke 2:1-14

In this section the Life Connection questions are now related to the passage of Scripture being used in this Bible Study. The answers to the following questions should come out of the text as well as out of the individual's hearing and understanding of what they have heard read.

Have a member of the group read the Scripture passage aloud for all to hear. Make sure extra Bibles are available so everyone can follow along.

Scripture:

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find the baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Suddenly a great company of heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to all on whom his favor rests."

(Luke 2:1-14)

Introduction:

Our scripture reading describes shepherds being told the good news of the Savior's birth. It is hard to understand why God chose shepherds, being that they were the outcasts of society, to be the first to hear the good news. It seems it would have been a better marketing strategy to send the angels to influential, powerful people. However, the angels coming to these on the fringes shows us God's interest in all people.

Teaching Time:

Say to your group: **"Here we have some interesting characters. Angels and shepherds are the focus of the verses we are studying together. Angels are special messengers from God and shepherds, in biblical times, were considered unsavory, untrustworthy characters."**

- 5) **Why do you think God chose the shepherds?** Because He had to start with someone; because He wanted to let people know that the good news was for everyone.
- 6) **What was this "good news of great joy" that the angels told the shepherds about?** Jesus' birth; a special baby was born in David's town.
- 7) **When I say the word "Savior" what descriptive words come to your mind?** Hero; courageous; strong; powerful; fearless.
- 8) **When I say the word "baby" what descriptive words come to your mind?** Fragile; helpless; fussy; sweet; precious.
- 9) **How do "savior" and "baby" go together?** They don't; they are opposite of one another; they shouldn't be on the same list together.

Teaching Time:

Say to your group: **"It's surprising that God would send His angels to tell these ordinary shepherds that a baby was going to be their Savior. Angels usually come to special people not people on the fringe of society. For some reason God wanted the shepherds to know about the coming of His Son. God wanted the shepherds to know that a Savior had been born."**

- 10) **What do you think is important about God sending a baby to earth to be a Savior?** It is different than anything else we would expect; He wants us to accept the Savior, so He makes him easy to get along with; it seems strange to me.

Teaching Time:

Say to your group: **"The most important thing God wanted us to understand when He sent Jesus as a baby was that He wanted to be near to us. Jesus came to save us but not like some hero from a movie. He started out just like we start out, He felt what we feel, and He understands us because He has been where we are. This baby Savior is important to us because this was God, not trying to show us his love by force or power, but through the cries of a little newborn baby. If Christmas is really about love, let me ask a question I asked earlier and see if your answer is different."**

11) **How does Christmas affect us throughout the year?** (Not just at Christmas time). If it is about God wanting to show us his love, it means a lot more than presents; it changes what I thought about the story of Jesus; it makes me think God cares about me and how I am feeling every day.

Reflection:

Invite the group to take a moment to reflect silently on the questions you are going to ask. These questions can be answered or you may choose to allow the members of the group to think about them.

12) **How do you think about God knowing He came as a tiny baby?**

13) **Jesus didn't just come as a baby; He grew up and felt love and betrayal, joy and pain. He knows exactly what you are feeling, He knows your needs and He wants to be close to you? How do you respond to knowing that?**

14) **How will Christmas look different to you this year knowing that God sent His Son Jesus for you?**

Optional Activity Time:

As a way to make the reflection more meaningful in the lives of group members there are two activities to engage in. First, give the group time to write the answers to the reflection questions in a journal they can keep throughout the study time and the week to come. Second, send each group member home with these questions to think about and write about in a journal during the week. When the group gathers together the next time, break the group up into smaller groups and give them the opportunity to share what they have been thinking about since they last met.

Teaching Time:

Say to your group: **"We can know and believe that God sent His Son into the world at Christmas but remain the same. Or we can choose to invite this loving God into our hearts and lives. As we pray together, you have a choice to make: Will you continue to live your life as if God has no interest in you, or will you ask Him into your heart and live in response to the love He offered us on Christmas, the same love He offers us everyday?"**

Conclusion:

Take time to pray together before the group leaves. Allow group members to share insights and ask questions they may have.

Possible Prayer:

Lord Jesus,

We are amazed You would be willing to give up all of Your strength and Your power to enter into this world as a tiny vulnerable baby. We cannot even begin to understand the sacrifice You made when you did. Thank You for coming. Thank You for experiencing what we experience. Help us to live our lives in such a way that Christmas doesn't just mean presents and Christmas trees, but Christmas means you came to earth to show us Your love. Will You help us to accept that love? Be our Savior, we pray.
Amen.