

Christmas Devotion #1



Ask:

- What sort of plans do you and your family make at Christmas time? *Christmas party, decorations, gifts, church event, family gathering, etc.*
- Has there ever been a time when things didn't go according to your plan? What happened? *Let one or two kids share about the experience. Ask them if anything good happened from this unexpected thing.*



Dialogue: Things happen all the time that are not part of our plans. When this happens, God wants us to have the right response to these situations. At the very first Christmas, many things happened that were not part of the plan, from man's perspective. Let's see how these people responded to God's plan.



Look Up: Matthew 1:18-25



Ask:

- What event were Mary and Joseph planning? *Their wedding.*
- What unexpected thing happened in their life? *Mary was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.*
- Before Joseph knew that the child was from the Holy Spirit, what did Joseph plan to do? *Divorce Mary quietly.*
- Why? *Because he thought that she had sinned and had been with another man.*
- What changed his plans yet again? *An angel appeared to him and told him that the child that had been conceived in Mary was from the Holy Spirit.*
- What plan did God have for Joseph that he wasn't planning on? *To be the earthly father of the Savior.*
- What did Joseph do after the angel spoke to him? *He obeyed God and took Mary to be his wife.*
- What plan did God have all along for the birth of Immanuel? *That he was to be born of a virgin. (Explain the word "virgin" if needed to the kids.)*



Dialogue: Even though this announcement to Mary and Joseph was not part of their plan to begin with, it was part of God's plan all along. In Matthew 1:23, the angel quotes something from the Old Testament. (*Reread Matthew 1:23 if necessary and then read Isaiah 7:14.*) Isaiah 7:14 is called PROPHECY. The word "prophecy" refers to a promise that God makes about the future. This prophecy was given 735 years BEFORE Jesus came to earth. The fact that Jesus was going to be born of a virgin had been part of God's plan for 735 years before it happened. Before the angel came to Mary, she had no idea that SHE was the virgin that was going to fulfill this prophecy but God knew. God planned it that way all along. And actually God's plan in sending Jesus to be the Savior didn't just begin when God told Isaiah what to write in that prophecy; God had it all planned out before the creation of the world.



Look Up: Luke 1:38

**Ask:**

- What was Mary’s answer when the angel told her that she was going to be the mother of the Savior? *“I am the Lord’s servant.”*
- How could this unexpected announcement bring joy? *Joy that the Savior had finally come. Joy that she was going to be the earthy mother of that Savior. Joy that the Lord saw her as one highly favored and faithful, or joy at being one of the few people to see an angel.*
- How could this unexpected announcement bring difficulties? *Dealing with the gossip of those around her because she was pregnant without being married, fear of being rejected by Joseph or being punished by law if people thought that she had been with a man outside of marriage, wondering if her parents would believe her or understand, or losing her friends because they didn’t understand.*



Dialogue: Mary answered in humility. She didn’t doubt or get angry. She trusted God. When things happen that we don’t plan on, we should have the same response as Mary.

**Ask:**

- What is something that has happened in your life that was not part of your plan?
- How did this event bring joy?
- How did this event bring difficulties?
- What was your response? How could you respond differently next time?
- What did God teach you about his plan in what happened?

(Answers will vary for these questions. You may want to share an example from your own life to help your kids/teens understand this concept. Or give an example to them that they just went through in order to talk about these questions/principles.)

**Activity:**

1. Give a child a paper towel tube or toilet paper tube.
2. Tell the child to close his eyes.
3. Place a piece of candy somewhere in the room outside of the direct vision range of tube that the child will be looking through in the next step.
4. Tell the child to put the tube up to his eye. He can open that eye, but he must keep his other eye closed. (He could cover his closed eye with his hand if that helps.)
5. Ask him what he sees through the tube. Now let him search for the candy until he finds it.

Supplies:

- Paper towel tube or toilet paper tube
- Candy

**Ask:**

- Why couldn’t you see the piece of candy at first? *Because you could only see a little bit of the room since you were looking through the tube.*
- Who saw the big picture and knew where the candy was? *Teacher, parent, other kids, etc.*
- Just because you couldn’t see the candy, does that mean that it wasn’t there? *No, it was there even though you could not see it.*



Dialogue: Life is full of times when we can't see the big picture. Maybe your best friend moves away, your parents get divorced or remarried, or you start a new grade at school. We do not know what the future holds or if these situations will bring happy times, sad times, or a mix of both. But even though we don't know the future, who does? (*God*)



Look Up: Psalm 139:16



Ask:

- What is something in your past that has happened that God knew was going to happen? *Who your parents would be, moving to a new house, someone you love passing away, etc.*
- What is something in your future that you don't know about but God does? *Who your teacher will be next year, if and who you will marry, when you will die, etc.*



Dialogue: God knew everything that is going to happen to you, even before you were born. Anything that does or does not happen, God already knows about. Nothing takes God by surprise and things don't happen by mistake. This was true in Mary and Joseph's life and this is true in your life. God wants you to be like Mary and Joseph and trust him. He sees the big picture and you can trust him that whatever he allows into your life is ultimately for your good and his glory because God is good and loving.

Ponder and Pray:



- When the angel told Mary that she was going to have a baby do you remember what her response was? *"I am the Lord's servant."*
- Is there something going on in your life where you need to tell the Lord that you are accepting his will in your life? *If so, you can tell God that right now as we end our devotion time.*



Further Study:

Attributes of God - Recommended resource – The Attributes of God for Kids by Lydia White – www.attributesofgodforkids.com

- God is Sovereign
- God is Love
- God is All-Knowing (Omniscient)
- God is All-Powerful (Omnipotent)
- God is Holy

Character Quality - Recommended resource - <https://www.networkerstec.com/character.html>

- Humility
- Patience - <https://iblp.org/discipleship-tools/biblical-character/patience>

Life Purpose - <https://www.networkerstec.com/life-purpose.html>

FREE PDF download of additional Christmas devotionals in this series:

www.networkerstec.com/christmas-resources.html



Thoughts for Parents: Mary and Joseph's betrothal and engagement started out like any other...one filled with much joy from the couple, their family, and friends. But it quickly got complicated. While Scripture does not say how Mary and Joseph's parents accepted the news, take a moment to meditate on your response if your son or daughter was in this situation. Would you believe your daughter was pregnant through the Holy Spirit and would bear the Messiah? Would you support your son that said that he saw an angel that told him that he would be the earthly father of the Messiah? Sometimes God calls our children into things that are not part of our plan for them or what we thought would happen – even very good things. For example, maybe you wanted your child to go to a good college and get a degree to have a well-paying job but the Lord seems to be calling them into ministry, the pastorate, or the mission field. Are you going to trust God's plan for your child? Maybe God is calling your grown son or daughter into homeschooling, but no one else in your family has ever done that. Maybe God is opening a door of opportunity in another state for your grown son or daughter which will require them to move far away from you. Will you trust God with his plan for your children and grandchildren? God has a plan for you and your children; sometimes it is easier to trust God for yourself, but he wants you to trust him with your family too!