

Christmas Devotion #2



Ask:

- Do you like surprises? What is a surprise that you have received?
- Surprises can be good or challenging, or a mix of both. What kind of surprises can be good?
- What kind of surprises can be challenging?



Look Up: Luke 2:1-7



Ask:

- What did Caesar Augustus decree? *He decreed that people had to return to their family's home town to be counted in a census.*
- What unexpected action did Joseph and Mary have to do because of this decree? *They had to leave their home town of Galilee to go to the city of Bethlehem since Joseph was from the family line of King David.*
- How might Mary have felt about this? *Mad, frustrated, sad, inconvenienced, worried, or scared.*
- Has anyone in your family had a baby? Who was there to support that person giving birth? *Mom, grandma, husband, sister, aunt, doctor, etc.*



Look Up: Micah 5:2



Dialogue: God was promising, about 700 years before Jesus was born, that the Savior was going to be born in Bethlehem. But wait! When the angel appeared to Mary and Joseph to tell them that they were going to be the earthly parents of the Savior, they didn't live in Bethlehem. They lived 90 miles away!

Did God choose the wrong people? Did Mary and Joseph live in the wrong place? Not at all—God had a special plan! He put in the ruler's heart to declare a census that would cause Mary and Joseph to pack up and go to Bethlehem at the specific time that the Savior was going to be born.



Ask: Why did God want Mary and Joseph to go to Bethlehem? *To fulfill the prophecy that the Savior was going to be born in Bethlehem.*



Dialogue: Mary might have realized that she was going to have her baby away from her family. Maybe she was sad or afraid that her mom or someone she knew wouldn't be there to help her. If Mary had chosen not to go with her husband to Bethlehem, she might have been acting outside or against the will of God. Mary probably did not understand how her journey fit so perfectly into God's plan for the Savior. But even though Mary didn't know everything, she trusted the Lord and her husband that God had given her. God wanted Mary and Joseph to go there because he had specifically promised that the Savior was going to be born in Bethlehem. Whenever God tells us to do something, we can trust that his ways are best! Repeat after me (*Pump your fist in the air as you say each attribute*) — God is amazing!

God is all-powerful! God is all-knowing! God is good! This journey may not have been part of their plan, but it was part of God's plan in sending the Savior.

Because God is all-knowing he is able to tell man what is going to happen in the future. Do you remember what this is called? (*Prophecy*) There are over 1,800 prophecies in the Bible and at least one half of them have been fulfilled.¹ There are around 500 prophecies specifically about Jesus—concerning his birth, life, death, and resurrection.² There was a man named Peter Stoner who was a mathematician. He looked at eight specific prophecies about Jesus and figured out what the chances/probability would be of Jesus fulfilling just these eight prophecies by accident. The odds of this happening are 1 in 10¹⁷. That is 1 chance in 100,000,000,000,000,000 (17 zeros after 10)³. Stoner gives this example to help us understand it. Imagine 1,017 silver dollars, two feet deep, spread out over the state of Texas. One of these silver dollars has a mark on it but you don't know where it is. Now what if I blindfolded you and told you to find the marked silver dollar. What is the chance that you will find the right one on the first try? That is the same chance that these eight prophecies would come true about Jesus by accident. And remember, this is just eight prophecies, not the hundreds of prophecies that actually came true! Only an all-knowing, all-powerful God could accomplish what he did through Biblical prophecy!



Activity:

1. Take a large container and place a lot of the **same** item in that container.
2. Mark one of those items ahead of time (e.g. draw an "X" on it, paint it, color it) and place it in the container with all the other items.
3. Then blindfold a child or have him close his eyes and see if he can find the marked item in one try.
4. Allow him or another child to try again. Then remind the children of the discussion above about biblical prophecy.



Supplies:

- Large container like a shoe box, 1 gallon zip-lock bag, or mixing bowl.
- A lot of the **same** item like pennies, cheerios, or beads.
- Marker/paint
- Blindfold

Ponder and Pray: End your devotion time, praising God that he is all-knowing and all-powerful.

Further Study:

- 100 Prophecies Fulfilled by Jesus – Chart - <https://www.hendricksonrose.com/100-prophecies-fulfilled-by-jesus/9781890947194/pd/947199?event=WL|1011169>
- Not Part of the Plan by Kristin Clark and Bethany Beal - <https://girldefined.com/the-books/not-part-of-the-plan>
- *A Bethlehem Christmas: Celebrating the Joyful Season* by Charles Swindoll
- **FREE PDF download** of additional Christmas devotionals in this series: www.networkerstec.com/christmas-resources.html

¹ <https://www.gotquestions.org/Bible-prophecy.html>

² <https://www.gotquestions.org/prophecies-of-Jesus.html>

³ <https://oneminuteapologist.com/does-prophecy-confirm-jesus-as-messiah/>