

The Ornaments of Christmas

A Family Christmas Devotional by Kathy Howard

The real reason we celebrate Christmas can easily be lost in our culture's commercialized version of the holiday. But with a little time and effort you can help your family focus on Jesus and His gifts for us. I hope the following Christmas-themed devotional will be a helpful tool. Depending on the age of your children, you can use the following as one devotional or break it up into three shorter ones. Use Christmas ornaments or decorations as visuals. Pass the ornament around during the times of reflection, thanksgiving, and worship and ask each family member to share.

The Christmas Angels

Angels announced the birth of Jesus. But the angels did not take God's good news to kings or important leaders. Instead, these mighty messengers visited humble, regular people like you and me - people who were willing to hear and believe the good news about the Savior.

The angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and gave a greeting that would change her life forever:

“Don’t be afraid, Mary,” the angel told her, “for you have found favor with God! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus.” Luke 1:30-31, NLT (If your children are older, read Luke 1:29-38 for the whole encounter.)

Gabriel also visited Joseph, the carpenter engaged to Mary:

“Joseph, son of David,” the angel said, “do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” Matthew 1:20-21, NLT (If your children are older, read Matthew 1:18-25 for the whole encounter.)

Then later, on the night Jesus was born, an angel of the Lord also appeared to shepherds in the fields surrounding Bethlehem:

"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!" Luke 2:10-11, NLT (Read Luke 2:1-20 for the whole encounter.)

Reflect: How do you think you would react if an angel visited you? Would you be afraid? Doubt his news? Why should we celebrate the news about Jesus?

The Christmas Star

Stars at Christmas remind us that God wants us to know about Jesus. The Christmas star appeared to magi who lived very far away and led them on a long journey to Bethlehem to find baby Jesus.

And the star they had seen in the east guided them to Bethlehem. It went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were filled with joy! Matthew 2:9-10, NLT (Read Matthew 2:1-12 for the whole story.)

The star also reminds us of Jesus. The Bible calls Jesus the bright, morning star. He lights our way in this life and He is the way to eternal life.

Offer thanks: Thank God for how He guides your family. Thank Him that He helps you know Jesus, the true and eternal Light.

The Christmas Crown

The crown reminds us that Jesus - that tiny baby born in Bethlehem more than 2,000 years ago - is also our wonderful Lord and King.

The magi from the east traveled a very long way for one reason - to worship Jesus the King:

“Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose, and we have come to worship him...They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.” Matthew 2:3, 11, NLT

Hundreds of years before Jesus' birth, the prophet Isaiah told us about King Jesus:

His government and its peace will never end. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David for all eternity. Isaiah 9:7, NLT

Earthly kings will come and go. But Jesus was, is, and will always be our King eternal!

“The world has now become the Kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign forever and ever.” Revelation 11:15, NLT

Worship King Jesus: What gift can you give Jesus this Christmas? As a family, sing a favorite carol, hymn, or praise song that acknowledges Jesus as King!