



THEME: ADVENT/CHRISTMAS

Objectives:

1. To learn the story of Jesus' birth.
2. To interact with the characters present at the time of Jesus' birth.
3. To meet and play with other families and children.

Prior to Family Faith Event

- Invite all families with 3-5 year olds to register.
- Choose a location that will allow use of the floor and has plenty of space for movement.
- Invite families to bring these items to share and use during the session:
 - Christmas crib or crèche and all the characters.
 - Christmas food or beverage to share with all.

EVENT PLAN

Welcome

- Invite all to gather in their family groups; a carpeted floor is best.
- Discuss the objectives in language that adults and children can understand.
- Invite the children to come forward and sit close to you for the first part of this family session.

Hymn: "O, Come Little Children"

Adults sing; have the words printed or projected.

Scripture Story: The Birth of Jesus

- Tell the story incorporating Matthew 1:18-2:12 and Luke 2:1-20.
- Or read a children's Bible version or story book.

Group Conversation

Use the following questions and/or develop your own to review what was heard in the reading/telling of the birth of Jesus.

- What is a stable used for?
- What might you find in a stable?
- Have you ever seen a sheep? How tall are they? What do they feel like?
- Who takes care of them? Why would a shepherd have a staff or a dog?
- What other animals might be found in a stable?
- What do angels look like? How do you know the angels were happy when they came to the stable?
- What gifts did the Kings bring for Jesus?
- What do you think Mary and Joseph were thinking when the shepherds, angels, and kings came to visit Jesus?

Game: "What or Who is Missing"

- Have families set up their Christmas crib or crèche in the middle of a family circle. Note: if family groups

are small, cluster two or three families together.

- Play “What or Who is Missing?”

- All, except the leader (an adult to start) close their eyes.
- The leader removes one item from the Christmas crib or crèche set and hides it from the group.
- The leader then invites the family group to open their eyes and try to determine which item is missing.
- The person who figures out what is missing becomes the next leader.
- Before continuing the game, the leader asks a few questions which reinforce everyone’s understanding of the characters present at Jesus’ birth. For example, if a sheep is the item, ask “How did the sheep get to the stable?” “How does a shepherd take care of the sheep?”
- The game continues as above.
- Allow families to continue playing the game until it is apparent that the younger family members are showing signs of being ready to move on to another activity.

Snack

Move the group to a different area for snack. The movement supports a child’s need to be active. Invite the children to hop or skip to the snack area.

Circle Prayer

- Place one Manger in the center of the circle.
- Give each child a character to carry to the manger.
- Line up the children according the order in which the characters arrive at the manger scene.
- Have a parade of characters to the manger with each child announcing who is arriving to all gathered around in a circle.
- All clap as each character is placed in the manger scene.
- When everyone has arrived at the manger, invite the children to gather around the manger while the adults sing the hymn.

Hymn: “Away in a Manger”

Adults sing; have the words printed or projected.

At Home

- Encourage families to play the “What or Who is Missing” game at home.
- Encourage families to give their Christmas crib or crèche a prominent place in their home where children will see it often, play with it and rearrange the characters.

Materials needed:

Copies of hymns for adults only or use overhead and project on wall

Beverages

Paper products

CD of “O, Come Little Children” and “Away in a Manger”

CD Player

Extra Family Activity: Play Christmas Pictionary (if time allows)

- Put three or four families together in a large circle.
- Provide large paper, markers and cards with Christmas items listed.
- Adults and older children do the drawing while the whole circle of remaining adults and children guess what is being drawn.
- If the child is doing the drawing, have an adult in the group choose an item for them to draw which meets their ability.
- List of items for Christmas Pictionary: Baby Jesus, wreath, angel, stocking, presents, candy cane, sheep, tree, star, Joseph, Mary, stable, shepherd, manger, King’s crown, add your own.