



a Kendall Hunt Company

Nativity of the Lord, A-C, Intermediate - RCLB Lectionary



Intermediate Session

Isaiah 9:1-6

Luke 2:14

Opening Prayer

Thank you, God, for sending Jesus into the world. He began his human life with poor parents and his first visitors to the crude stable were lowly shepherds. Help us remember the true gift of this Christmas season. Through Christ Jesus, your son, we pray. Amen.

Opening Life Reflection

Show a one-minute clip from the first few minutes of the movie, Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas. Look for the scene where Cindy Lou and her father are shopping. There is chaos all around them and Cindy Lou is buried in a mountain of gift boxes. She asks her dad if maybe this isn't a bit much, but her father responds that this is what Christmas is all about. (If you are unable to show the video clip, you can still discuss the following questions.)

- What are some things that get in our way of understanding the true meaning of Christmas?
- How can we be careful not fall into the traps set by commercialism at Christmas?
- What is Christmas really all about?

Allow time for discussion, encouraging students to be honest with their perceptions. God came into the world to be with us in a special way. It is through God's very special gift, Jesus, that we can know God. Jesus was born a human being and we celebrate his birth at Christmas.

Listening to the Word of God

In the Old Testament reading today, we find the prophet, Isaiah, providing words of hope for the Israelites. He tells them that light will come into their darkness when the child of God comes.

Read Isaiah 9:1-6

Allow for silence.

Scripture Discussion Starters

- How does Isaiah use the image of light to tell about the Messiah?
- What other images does Isaiah use to show that the Messiah will be a liberator?
- What do we learn about the Messiah from the titles that Isaiah gives him?

In the gospel today, we learn that God's son is born in a humble stable and sleeps on the hay with animals.

Read Luke 2:1-14



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Allow for silence.

- Why did Mary have to travel so far when she was going to have a baby soon?
- Why wasn't Jesus born in a comfortable room?
- Who were the first people to hear the good news of Jesus' birth?

Scripture Background

Today's first reading from Isaiah makes clear that a wonderful gift is coming in the future. This gift, the Messiah, will lead people from darkness to light and free them from those who would oppress them. A child will be born and it is in Luke's gospel that we hear an account of this birth.

Luke gives us two distinct components in his infancy narratives. First he gives us the setting. Decreed by the rulers of the day, people were to journey to their hometown and be counted in the census. For Joseph, this meant taking his pregnant wife to Bethlehem. No sooner had they gotten to Bethlehem than the baby, Jesus, was born. Next, an angel visited shepherds in a nearby field. At first the shepherds were frightened, but the angel calmed them with the good news of a savior born in Bethlehem. This savior came to bring peace for all people.

Questions for Deeper Reflection

- How is Jesus light in our darkness?
- Why do you think it was important to God that Jesus should be poor?
- How has Jesus been a gift for you?



Doctrinal Discussion Starters

The Incarnation

Jesus enters the world through a poor family. We know he is poor because he is born in a stable and shares the manger and hay of lowly animals. His parents had just traveled on a tiring journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem so that they could be counted in Caesar's census. The first people to hear about Jesus' birth were shepherds, some of the poorest and most simple people of Jesus' day. In all of this poverty, however, it is the greatest glory of God and heaven that comes to be known to all people for all time.

As Christians we believe that God revealed himself to us through the Son of God, Jesus. The Son of God became human so that we might know God's saving grace. Jesus became truly man while remaining truly God. We can never see God ourselves, but it is through Jesus that we can know God.

- How can we know God's love for us through Jesus?
- How is it possible for Jesus to be a mediator between us and God?
- Why do we end our prayers with words like "through Jesus Christ"?

Sacrament Connection

God chooses us, and we become part of the family of God. There are three Sacraments of

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Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. These sacraments lay the foundation of our—
Christian lives and through Christ we can share in God's divine nature. We are born anew in
Baptism, are strengthened in Confirmation and are given the food of eternal life in Eucharist.

