



a Kendall Hunt Company

Nativity of the Lord, A-C, Junior High - RCLB Lectionary



Junior High Session

Isaiah 9:1-6

Luke 2:14

Opening Prayer

Loving God, you sent Jesus into the world bringing your gift of peace. Help us work to be peacemakers, especially in the areas of our lives where peace is hard to find. Give us courage in difficult times to remember your gift. Through Christ Jesus, your son, we pray. Amen.

Opening Life Reflection

Show a short clip about twenty minutes into *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. In this segment of the video, Linus proclaims a portion of today's Gospel reading and states that the Gospel's content 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 use some of the "trappings" of Christmas in a positive way to show Christmas' true meaning?
- What are some traditions that celebrate the true meaning of Christmas?

Allow time for discussion, encouraging students to see where peacemaking is present in their ideas. 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. God wants us to share in the kingdom and know the peace intended for us.

Listening to the Word of God

Isaiah provides words of hope for the Israelites in the Old Testament reading today. The Israelites learn from Isaiah that a great 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 does Isaiah describe that indicates the Messiah will be a peacemaker?

In today's gospel, God offers peace to all people favored with God's grace.

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Read Luke 2:1-14

Allow for silence.

- What was so important in Bethlehem that Mary and Joseph had to go even though Mary was going to have a baby?
- Who were the first people to hear the good news about the birth of God's son?
- What did the angel say to the shepherds?

Scripture Background

Provide 2-3 minutes of background information on the readings using the Catechist Background section.

Isaiah shares God's news 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

- Who are the people favored by God's grace?
- How do we receive peace on earth?
- How will you spread that peace?

Doctrinal Discussion Starter

The Incarnation

God chooses to have Jesus enter the world not as a rich king, but as a poor prophet. Born in a stable and sharing a manger and hay with lowly animals, we know Jesus is from a poor family. His parents know poverty only too well and had just endured a grueling trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem so that they could be counted in Caesar's census. The first people to hear about Jesus' birth are shepherds, some of the poorest and most simple people of Jesus' day. Even though Jesus' economic status is low, his birth is the greatest glory of God and heaven that comes to be known to all people for all time.

What distinguishes us as Christians is our belief 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 we can know God through Jesus.



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- 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 end our prayers with words like "through Jesus Christ"?

Sacrament Connection

We first become part of God's family when we are baptized. We complete our initiation in the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist. These three 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.

