

DAY TWO

The Way in a Manger Morning Devotions

Location

Create a manger scene for the morning devotion setting. Use a small shed, lean-to, stable-type building on your campground if there is one available. Place a manger in the building and spread straw or grass on the ground or floor. Set this up the previous night.

Scripture

Read the following accounts of the birth of Christ as a background in your planning of today's program.

- Luke 2:1-21
- Matthew 1:18-23; 2:1-12.

God's Wake-up Call

1. Greet the campers with "Merry Christmas! This is the day of Jesus' birth!"
2. Inform the campers of the ways they will celebrate the birth of Christ today:
 - Listening to the story of Christ's birth as told in the Bible
 - Singing Christmas carols
 - Making Christmas crafts
 - Decorating a Christmas tree
 - Eating a Christmas dinner
 - Celebration of Christ's birth in other lands
3. Share with the children the excitement of giving and receiving.

Say: "*God gave Christ to us. It was a gift. Each year we celebrate the gift God gave to us. Christmas is the name we have given to Christ's birth. We are happy and thankful for God's gift to us. We are also happy to receive Christ in our lives. Enjoy the day! Merry Christmas!*"

Reflection Activity

Have the campers sit in a circle or several circles and share with each other, the following thoughts. Allow two minutes for each sharing time.

- Think about the way your family celebrates Christmas. Share with the person next to you one activity you do that makes Christmas special.
- Think about the way your congregation celebrates Christmas. Share an activity your congregation does that celebrates the birth of Christ.
- Have the campers form a large circle and sing one verse of "O Come, All Ye Faithful!" Close the morning devotions with a prayer that celebrates the birth of Christ.

Suggestions for Classes

1. Christmas crafts:
 - ornaments
 - nativity scenes
 - Ojos de Dios (God's Eye)
 - woodcraft
 - seasonal decorations
 - decorate Christmas cookies
 - make gingerbread houses
2. Christmas celebrations around the world
3. Woodcrafts
4. Christmas cooking
5. Music class
 - Christmas songs
 - learn about the origin and composer
 - songs in other languages
6. Candle making
7. Christmas stockings

Theme Class

Supplies:

Bible

Crayons

marker

pencils

pens

pictures

glue

glitter

materials to make ornaments

1. Tell the story of Jesus' birth. Read the accounts in both Matthew and Luke. You may want to read the story from a children's Bible. Assign roles to different campers. Have the campers act or mime the story of Jesus' birth while you read the story.

2. After reading the story have the campers gather in small groups. Assign one counselor per group. Have the groups find a spot in the class area or near the class area that allows for sharing without disturbance from other groups. Have the counselors lead a very simple sharing with the campers using the following statements and/or questions as a guide:

- If you could give a gift to someone, what would that gift be? Remember, you can only give a gift if you have that gift.

- How does it feel to receive a gift from someone? Why?

- God gave us a gift, his son Jesus Christ. Why do you think God gave us his son?

3. Give each group a packet of paper, crayons, felt markers, pens, and pencils. Tell the campers they are to design and create a Christmas card to Jesus. The cards will be placed on a Christmas tree in the dining room. Have the campers sign their cards and return them to the campers at the end of the week.

4. Close the class session with the singing of Christmas carols and a prayer.

Questions for Chats

1. What was the best gift you ever received? Why?

2. What does it mean to you to give a gift

3. Why do we give gifts to each other?

4. What does the gift of Christ mean to you?

Evening Activity

1. Decorate a Christmas tree. (Consider leaving the tree up for the entire week; see Day Four Class Suggestions)

2. Sing Christmas carols.

3. Have a counselor read *The Night Before Christmas* by Henry Moore to the campers.

4. Have a white elephant gift exchange. A white elephant is an item that is no longer useful but in satisfactory condition that can be given to another person. Have the campers wrap their gifts. If campers bring unwrapped gifts, use newspaper, paper sacks, and assorted wrapping paper to wrap the gifts. Please be sure there is one gift for each child.

A suggestion for gift distribution:

Have the campers form a circle with each person holding their gift. Play Christmas music while the campers pass the gifts around in the circle. 'When the music stops, the gift they are holding is the gift they receive. Have the campers open their gifts.

5. If there are Christmas traditions particular to your local area through culture, diversity, and history include the celebrations in your evening activity

Campfire Ideas

Unless there is inclement weather, hold the campfire outdoors under the stars. If possible, place Christmas lights on the path leading to the campfire site. Sing Christmas songs and carols during the campfire. Use the following as suggestions

for a campfire worship:

- Place the Christmas tree to the side of the campfire to create a Christmas atmosphere. *Option:* Use the Christmas tree with lights instead of the campfire.

- Select a part of the Christmas story to be mimed during the campfire worship. One person reads the scripture and campers, dressed in period costume, act out the scripture: Luke 2:1-21; Matthew 1:18-23; 2:1-12.

- If possible use all the campers in the story of Christmas and create a live nativity pageant.

- Give each camper an unlit candle. Have one person light their candle then share their light with the person next to them. Continue lighting the candles until all the candles are lit. End the campfire by singing, "Silent Night."

Cabin

Devotions

Supplies:

construction

paper

markers

pens and pencils glitter

ribbon

Dear Jesus

Give each camper a piece of construction paper folded in half. Have available markers, pencils, and pens. Many children write "Dear Santa" letters. Have the campers write a "Dear Jesus" letter. The letters will reflect the campers' feelings about receiving Jesus as a gift in their lives. When the campers have finished their "Dear Jesus" letters, let them share the letters if they wish. End the devotions with a prayer thanking God for Christ, the gift of Christmas.