

Finding Christ in a Simpler Christmas

Idea #5: Bring the Story of Jesus' Birth into Your Celebration

Over the past six weeks, the Personal Finance Ministry has brought you practical suggestions for ways to slow down and enjoy the coming holidays while preparing yourself to really experience the joy of the season:

- ◆ Reset expectations to focus on what you most want to get from the holiday season
- ◆ Celebrate Advent in your home to help focus you and your family on the joyful anticipation of Christ's birth
- ◆ Give gifts that matter to the people that matter most to you
- ◆ Focus on a debt-free holiday to eliminate stress and maintain your focus on the real meaning of the season.

In this final installment, we encourage you to find ways to weave the story of Christ's birth into your celebration. There are many ways you can do this easily:

- ◆ Bring spiritual music into your celebration
- ◆ Share a reading of the story with family and loved ones
- ◆ Invite your family and friends to worship with you
- ◆ Remember to include the Old Testament foretelling of the birth and the story of John the Baptist—in addition to the story of Jesus' actual birth.

Please see reverse for "Put It Into Action."



Angels are always around us, but especially so at Christmastime. An angel, Gabriel, appeared to young Mary and proclaimed the news that she would be the mother of the Messiah, God's Son. An angel also appeared to Joseph to assure him that this unexpected baby Mary was carrying was part of God's good and perfect plan. Nine months later, a whole sky full of angels delivered a living birth announcement to a startled group of shepherds keeping watch over their sheep in the fields. A single angel could easily have delivered the message, but the joyful Father chose to send an army of them. So the night sky rolled back, the light of heaven poured over the land, and the heavenly heralds declared the good news that, after generations of hopeful expectation, the Messiah had been born!



Put It Into Action

Angels worship God, and Christmas is the perfect opportunity to join them in their jubilant exaltation. Some of the happiest times of the season occur in the midst of festive Christmas parties and holiday entertaining. The food, faith, friends, and fun seem to fill us up with the joy of the occasion. Have you thought of inviting a neighbor to your home, or someone who doesn't have a family with whom to celebrate? Hebrews 13:2 reminds us not to forget to show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it!



Final Thoughts

If you enjoyed this series, please consider joining the Personal Finance Ministry. Our goal is to bring Christian principals to the way that we manage our families' resources. We also believe we can best serve St. James' by working with other ministries to bring relevant messages and practical suggestions to these established communities. During our upcoming January meeting, we will be working to build content on financial planning and strategies for families with aging parents as well as developing content to build good money managers starting in middle and high school. Newcomers to this ministry are welcomed and encouraged. Please join us on Wednesday, January 12, at 7:00 p.m. in the Library.