

DEVOTION: "Precious Gift"

BIBLE STORY: "Birth of Jesus"

TEXT: Matthew 1:18-25; 2:1-23; Luke 1:26-40; 2:1-20,40

BIBLE STORY:

Mary was a young Jewish girl that lived in the town of Nazareth. She was engaged to Joseph, who was a carpenter.

One day the angel Gabriel spoke to Mary. The angel said, "**Mary, you will give birth to a son. Give Him the name Jesus, who is the Son of God.**"

Mary conceived the child by the Holy Spirit. Soon afterwards, Mary visited Elizabeth who was expecting baby John the Baptist. About three months later, Mary returned to her home.

One night the angel appeared to Joseph in a dream, telling him to marry Mary. Joseph obeyed.

A command was given that the Jewish people must return to their ancestral home town and register. Joseph took Mary with him and went to Bethlehem. When they finally arrived, the city was full of people. Where would they sleep? There was no room for them. Finally, Joseph found a humble place, a stable. During the night, baby Jesus was born. Mary placed baby Jesus in a manger.

That same night some shepherds were watching their sheep in a nearby field. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared. He said, "**Today in the city of David, a Savior was born.**" Then a multitude of angels appeared, saying, "**Glory to God in heaven.**" The shepherds quickly went and found baby Jesus lying in a manger. They worshiped Jesus, the Savior.

Some wise men from the east saw a special star in the sky. They followed the star, looking for the new born king of the Jews. When they finally arrived in Bethlehem, they saw the shiny star above a house. Entering, they saw the child Jesus with His mother Mary. They bowed down and worshiped Jesus, giving Him precious gifts of gold, incense, and myrrh. Then the wise men returned to their home.

Being warned in a dream by an angel, Joseph took Mary and baby Jesus to Egypt. King Herod wanted to kill baby Jesus. Later when it was safe, the angel appeared again in a dream, telling them that they could return. So Joseph returned with Mary and Jesus to live in the town of Nazareth.

Jesus grew in strength and wisdom, and in favor with God and man.

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT: God's most precious gift to mankind is Jesus, His Son.

Little Grace wanted to buy a new pair of colorful red mittens. It was very cold outside. Her old mittens were faded and thin. So each time Grace received any money, she put all her coins into her little jar on the table next to her bed.

Finally the day arrived when Grace had enough money to buy the new pair of colorful red mittens. Her mother drove her to the store. Grace went inside the store, walked to the aisle where the mittens were located, and she picked up the colorful red mittens. Then she walked to the counter and paid the lady with her coins.

While Grace was paying, she overheard a girl about her age say, ***“But mommy, I want mittens, just like that girl has. My hands are so cold outside. Please get me a pair of mittens. That could be my Christmas gift!”***

She saw the mother look sadly at her daughter. Then the mother replied, ***“Cindy, we can’t get any gifts this year. You know I’ve been sick and haven’t been able to work. But maybe this coming week I’ll feel better and will be able to work. Then I’ll get you those mittens.”***

When Grace and her mother got into the car, she noticed that the other little girl and her mother were getting into their old, worn out car parked next to them.

Suddenly Grace said, ***“Mommy, wait a minute!”***

Grace got out of the car. Walked over to the other little girl and said, ***“Merry Christmas.”***

Then Grace handed her the plastic bag with her new pair of colorful red mittens.

The girl smiled and muttered shyly, ***“Thank you.”***

Grace smiled, turned and went back to her car.

After they were driving away, her mommy said, ***“Grace, why did you give the little girl your new pair of colorful red mittens?”***

Grace answered, ***“Mommy, she needed them. Did you see how cold her hands were and her mommy couldn’t buy her a pair.”***

Her mommy said, ***“But, Grace, why didn’t you keep the new pair of colorful red mittens and give her your old pair? They’d keep her hands warm.”***

Grace replied, ***“But that’s not what Christmas is about. God loves us and gave us His most precious gift, Jesus. So I had to give her something precious and not something I was throwing away! Did you see how happy she was, mommy?”***

Her mommy replied, ***“Yes, Grace, she was very happy! And I believe Jesus is very happy too!”***

God gave us His most precious gift, Jesus, His Son.

What precious gifts are we giving Jesus this year?

PRAYER: (optional)

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