



OVERVIEW SECTION

How to Read This Lesson Plan

The **Overview Section** is the foundation of this lesson plan. The questions and activities for the class that you will be teaching on Sunday morning have been based (sometimes loosely) upon what you read in this section. The **Overview Section** is composed of five components (each component is underlined in the lesson plan):

How to Read This Lesson Plan (defines all components of the lesson plan)

Purpose of Sunday Morning Spiritual Formation (a reminder of why we do this)

Scripture(s) for the Session (a reminder that the scripture is to be read in every class)

Key Verses & Theology (background for teachers to ponder)

Themes to Focus on from the Scripture (the ideas that the session's lessons are based on)

The actual lesson is found in the second section, **The Sunday Morning Experience Section**. Think of this section as the step-by-step instruction guide to your Sunday morning teaching experience. There are four components to this section (again, each component is underlined in the actual lesson plan):

Preparation (including supplies needed)

Classroom Statement (a brief explanation of what will be taught/happening in the classroom)

Step-by-step process of the lesson (including the scripture to be read)

Suggested variations for age groups (Self-explanatory but not always applicable)

We encourage you to read the rest of this **Overview Section** before reading the **Sunday Morning Experience Section**.

Purpose of Sunday Morning Spiritual Formation

The purpose of Sunday Morning Spiritual Formation is, with God's help and in community, to hear and interact with the stories of our faith tradition, to pray, worship and play together, and to equip and support the building of relationships with God and with each other.

Scripture(s) for the Session: Luke 2:8-20; Luke 3:23-38 (abridged)

Please READ this aloud in every class you teach. The actual words to the scripture can be found in **The Sunday Morning Experience Section: Step-by-Step process of the lesson**. When reading to the class, please read it from the lesson plan (not an actual Bible) as the wording of the scripture has been modified to help clarify some language issues.

Key Verses & Theology: These are provided to help the teachers think about and build a framework for understanding the story to help in answering some of the questions that the students might raise in class.

Luke 3:23-38: 23 Jesus was the son of 38 son of Enos, son of Seth, son of Adam, son of God. So does God like or love Jesus more than other babies? More than you or me? Is Jesus different/special because of nepotism? The genealogy of Luke says, “No.” Luke’s genealogy does not just name Jesus as the son of God, but all those who came before him. And if Adam was the son of God, and we accept Adam as our first ancestor (in whatever form he takes), then we too are sons and daughters of God. If we agree to this reading/understanding of Luke’s genealogy, then it changes our reading of other parts of the Jesus story.

2:10But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people... The Good News can be startling and is often prefaced with the words, “Do not be afraid.” And what is the Good News in this case? That a child is born. Traditional theology based on the Jesus birth narratives of Luke and Matthew tell us that Jesus’ birth was a special occasion and that this special birth therefore made Jesus who Jesus was. But another way to understand the birth narrative is to think that *how* Jesus chose to live his life then made his birth, in retrospect, special.

For those of us who have experienced personally or through someone close to us the birth of a child, we know that every birth is good news: A child, my child, our child, my friend’s child has been born. And to think that each birth represents another opportunity for the world to be different, another gift of God given to the world to turn back to God – that is indeed Good news: A child is born.

2:15When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” 18and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. 19But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. Announcing a birth with style helps, doesn’t it? A child born in a barn and lying in a manger isn’t usually enough to get shepherds or anyone else of this world to stop and take notice. A kid born in a barn is just another kid born into limited resources, with the odds stacked against him/her. But a multitude of angels...that’ll get at least someone’s attention. And it does. The shepherds listen enough that they go into town: Not a common choice for shepherds, especially when they’re leaving the sheep less guarded (most likely they left a remnant of shepherds behind to watch over the sheep). But what if every child were welcomed into the world this way? What if every time a child was born, parts/aspects of the world would stop and go welcome that child? It certainly would cause a mother to “ponder all these things in her heart.” And who knows how that pondering would then affect parenting choices made over the years...?

Themes to Focus on from the Scripture: Themes are provided to help teachers understand the teaching of the *session* (not necessarily the class). Sometimes an activity in one class may not match up with any of the themes.

Belonging: As humans, a need that we have is to belong. Often we associate this sense of belonging with those who care for us, provide for us, for instance, like parents. In the Christmas story, God is portrayed as Jesus’ parent. Jesus belongs to God. And that’s important. But what sometimes gets

overlooked is that God is our parent too. We too are God's sons and daughters. None of us is alone. None of us is an orphan.

Identity: Who we think we are often comes from who we think we belong to. The Good news is that we belong to God. If we trust that we are God's son or daughter, then we can more fully receive what God has to offer us, thus helping us to become more of who are – God's child. Jesus embodies who we are and what we can do when we fully receive what God has to offer us.

Sharing: Once we believe we've been given something good, we want others to know the goodness of what we've received. Seen a good movie, listened to a good song, read a good book? Then what do you do? You go share it with someone! The shepherds do the same thing. They share the excitement of a child being born. And this excitement is contagious. And how exciting is it that each of us is God's beloved daughter/son? Looking at the Jesus story, we can see what is available to us to share when we live into the truth of being God's child.



THE SUNDAY MORNING EXPERIENCE SECTION

Preparation

- Print out this lesson plan and bring it with you on the Sunday Mornings you are teaching
- Arrive at pre-arranged time to join other teachers, shepherds and staff for an opening prayer.
- Supplies Needed: Two crowns (I get mine from Burger King); pictures of the characters in the story; names of the characters written out on cards; a stack (or two) of playing cards with the characters taped on the inside of them (characters to print out and copy and tape on cards are at the end of this lesson plan - takes about an hour's time of prep).

Classroom Statement

This Movement & Games class consists of reading the story to the class and playing two games that are designed to help the students remember the story.

Step-by-Step Process of Lesson

Shepherd comes in with students

SHEPHERD ASKS "Question of the Day."

INTRODUCE yourself

Hi, my name is ____ and I want you call me (tell the students how they may address you).

PRAY (Short and simple is perfect)

God, thank you for this day and for each other. We need your help. Help us to learn about you this day. Amen.

TELL

- As I read you the story, listen for how Jesus is described and to whom Jesus belongs.

READ Scripture

Luke 2:8-20

8In that region of Bethlehem, there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9Suddenly, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and the shepherds were terrified. 10But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: 11To you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. 12This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." 13And then there was with the angel a multitude of the

heavenly host, praising God and saying, 14“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!” 15When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” 16So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. 17When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; 18and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. 19But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. 20The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Luke 3:23-38 (ABRIDGED)

Now Jesus’ ancestors (ancestors simply mean grandparents, great-grandparents, great-great grandparents, and on and on) included King David, Jacob, Isaac, Abraham, Noah and Adam (do those names sound familiar?). All these people were children of someone else. But who are the parents of Adam and Eve? That’s right, God is. And so, just like Jesus, Adam and Eve are considered “children of God.” According to the story of creation and Adam and Eve, all of us can count Adam and Eve as our ancestors. This means we have some of the same ancestors as Jesus! This also means that you and I are God’s children too.

ASK

- So what words did you hear that helped to describe who Jesus was?
- And who were some of Jesus’ ancestors?

TELL

- We’re going to play a game now that helps us to pay attention to Jesus’ ancestors – to who Jesus belonged to.

EXPLAIN

- There will be two teams.
- Each team will have a different king for each turn
- The king wears a crown.
- The crown may not fall off.
- Each team will be given cards with the names of characters that we’ve just reviewed about Jesus’ genealogy on them
- Each member of the team must hold at least one of these cards.
- The two teams will line up at the wide end of the room.
- At the narrow end of the room there is a chair.
- I will place a picture on the chair.
- Each team must figure out who that is a picture of and match that picture with one of the names that their holding.
- Once your team decides on the name you think the picture is, then you give that card AND ONLY that card to your king.
- Your king then runs to the chair and sits on it.
- If your king gets to the chair first and has the right name and your king still has their crown on their head, then your team gets one point.

- If your king can then repeat some of what we said about that character earlier in class, then your team gets a second point.

DO Trivia Race Game

TELL

- This next game will include all the same pictures we just used in the last game.
- The goal of the game is to get all the cards.
- The way you do this is by slapping the cards. Let me show you what I mean.
- First, I'm going to pass out all the cards to you.
- So, I need everyone in a circle.
- Get in as close as possible.
- Now, I'm going to go around and give each of you card until I run out of cards.
- Don't look at the cards, just keep them in a stack face down as I pass them out.
- Now, once I've finished passing out all the cards, I will start.
- I start by taking the top card from my stack of cards and placing that card face UP in the middle of our circle.
- Who is it s picture of?
- If it is not a picture of baby Jesus, then the person next to me puts their first card from their stack face up in the middle of our circle.
- If it is not a picture of baby Jesus, then the next person in the circle put their first card from their stack face up in the middle of our circle.
- As we go around the circle, each of you should put your card down quickly – it makes the game more fun.
- The best way to pull the card is to push it forward a little bit with your thumb so you can grab it better with your other hand. Then as you pull your top card off the stack, flip it BACKWARDS, so that you can't see what card it is that you are pulling off your deck.
- If you or someone else puts a card down that is the picture of baby Jesus, then you slap that upturned card.
- First person to slap the pile gets all the cards that are under it and you add it to your stack.
- Make sure all rings and watches are taken off, because they hurt.
- If you slap the deck and the card was NOT baby Jesus, then you must put the top five cards from you stack under the pile in the middle of the circle.
- If you run out of cards, you can always get back into the game by slapping baby Jesus (that's either a really funny line or an offensive line – feel free to edit it if you find it offensive).
- If you are out of cards and you slap a card that is not baby Jesus, then you'll be 5 cards in the hole, which means once you do get cards, you'll have to take that many cards and put them into the card pile in the middle of the circle.
- First person to collect all the cards wins.
- Optional: If the game seems to be well-liked, play a second round with Joseph and Mary being the TWO cards that get slapped, instead of baby Jesus.

DO the Card-Slap Game

CLEAN UP

DISMISS FOR SINGING