

**THE CHRISTMAS STORY****Luke 1:26-38, 46-56; 2:1-40**

**Memory Verse:** “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who Christ the Lord (Luke 2:11 ESV).

**Background Helps:**

For the next two weeks our reading schedule and lessons take a break from *The Gospel According to Elijah and Elisha* in order to celebrate Christmas. The readings for week 3 cover the Christmas story as told by Luke, and the readings for week 4 cover the Christmas story as told by Matthew. This forecast includes only Luke’s account.

**Lesson Helps:**

Luke 2 tells the story of the birth of Jesus, perhaps the most famous story in the world! Your challenge is to make it fresh and alive for your students.

For young children, you will probably want to concentrate on the birth story itself in Luke 2:1-20. A possible lesson aim: My students will learn the story of Jesus’ birth in Luke 2, so that they will praise God and tell others the good news about Jesus. This lesson focuses on (1) the announcement of the angels in verses 8-14, in which they tell the good news of Jesus’ birth to the shepherds and give glory to God, and (2) the story of the shepherds in verses 15-20, in which they also tell others the good news and glorify God. Lead a time of worship in class, glorifying God, and then challenge your students to tell others about the birth of Jesus this Christmas season. In your lesson use storytelling techniques discussed in previous forecasts.

For youth and adults, your lesson can be broader, including more of the story in Luke:

- The annunciation to Mary (1:26-38)
- The birth of Jesus (2:1-20)
- The presentation of Jesus in the temple (2:22-40)

A possible lesson aim: My students will learn who the baby Jesus is, so that they will praise God and tell others about Jesus. The aim is similar to the first lesson above, but you can focus on what exactly is said about Jesus in each section of Scripture by:

- the angel Gabriel to Mary in 1:31-33, 35
- the angel to shepherds in 2:11
- Simeon to Mary and Joseph in 2:29-35 (see also 2:25-26)
- Anna to the people in 2:38

Ask your students to make the same response of praise to God (2:14, 20, 28-32, 38) and testimony to others (1:31-33, 35; 2:11, 17, 34-35, 38).

**Home Assignment:**

 Read Matthew 1–2.

 Memorize Matthew 1:21 ESV.