



CHRISTMAS EVE AND CHRISTMAS DAY:

The Light has Entered the World

CHRISTMAS EVE

This Christmas Eve, as you return home from last-minute shopping, your church's Christmas Eve service, or family gatherings, take a moment to read the following scripture passage. Spend some time reflecting on how Jesus entered the world.

SCRIPTURE

Read Luke 2:1-7

"In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn."

CHRISTMAS DAY

SCRIPTURE

Read John 1:1-5

REFLECTION:

Merry Christmas! We have been waiting with eager anticipation for today. We journeyed with Mary, and Joseph, and the shepherds, and heard the angels announce the good news that Jesus was born. Jesus is often described as "the light of all people" coming into the world. The day has finally arrived when we celebrate Jesus' coming into the world.

In Jesus, God comes into the world as a human being to be with us. Jesus is both human and divine. Those two things coexist in him, just like light and dark. John tells us darkness does not overcome the light. The darkness is there alongside the light as it shines. Darkness helps light stand out, just like the stars shining in the night sky.

There are good things about both light and darkness. In fact, we need both of them. Light helps us see, and darkness tells our body when it's time to rest. The cycle between them is how we mark time. If it's entirely dark and there's no light, it can be hard to see and become unsafe. If it's too bright, that can also make it hard to see. Not to mention too much sun can hurt our eyes and even our skin. Light and dark are most useful to us when they are in balance and work together.

After we enjoy the last bit of Christmas celebrations, we will enter into the coming season of either longer and brighter days, or shorter and darker days, remembering Jesus comes into the world with love for all of us and all of creation. We can celebrate that Jesus sees the good in everything and everyone, including both light and darkness. Learning from his example, we can try to love everyone too and see the good in all things.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

As you color and cut the shadow box character of baby Jesus, ponder these questions:

- Think about your Christmas celebrations and share how you saw light and darkness working together.
- What other things coexist together?
- What ways have you shown love this Advent season?

ACTIVITY:

The story of Christmas occurs in light and darkness.

Take out your Christmas Shadow Box Theater and characters, use nativity characters you have in your home, or create your own set of paper characters. You will need Mary, Joseph, Angels, Shepherds, Baby Jesus, and a flashlight. Your flashlight is the spotlight!

Tell the story of Christmas together. You can read it from the Bible or use the included script. Every time something happens in darkness, turn off the spotlight. Every time something happens with light or in the light, turn on the spotlight. What did you notice? What did you discover about the story?

PRAYER:

God,

You created a world of light and darkness, and you called it all good.

You love dark and light colors and dark and light places.

Even your stories are full of darkness and light.

Thank you for showing us the beauty of our dark and light world.

Help us find glimpses of your glory everywhere we go.

Amen.