

One truth shared: The message of the angels is what brings us such great joy at Christmas!

But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

Luke 2:10-12

A Savior Has Been Born

It was an interesting message the angels brought. To some it might be so familiar that they really don't stop to think much about it. For example, “the angel said, ‘Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.’” The angels talked about great joy that first Christmas night. There are many things that might bring people joy at Christmas: getting presents, decorating the tree or cookies, putting up the lights, gathering with family and the like. But the great joy the angel was talking about was different. No, the “good news” from the angels that would bring “great joy” would come from the message they had to bring: “Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you.”

To find *that* kind of great joy means you need to first acknowledge your need for a Savior. Note how personal God wants this to be: a Savior has been born... *to you!* God sent his son... *for you!* There isn't one of us to whom this doesn't apply because:

- We know the jagged edges which come from knowing you are the one who hurt others with your selfishness.
- We are so familiar with the broken feeling of standing before almighty God knowing that no matter how good you have tried to be and how hard you have worked that you couldn't possibly meet the standard of perfection which he demands from you.

Our jagged edges and inner brokenness are symptoms of what's wrong with us—we are sinners. We can try to earn worth through performance. But all it gives is an unstable sense of worth that constantly fluctuates with each performance you give. It's a roller coaster that isn't worth riding. It'll steal your joy.

“Do not be afraid,” the angel said. Here's Christmas joy: Jesus comes to bring peace to broken people like you and me. This is the peace of knowing that all is right between you and God—not because you did what needed to be done, but because Jesus did fully and perfectly everything that needed to be done for your salvation and gives that perfection to you as a free gift of his grace through faith.

God made us emotional beings, and he gave us a broad range of emotions to feel. You can't have all “good” ones unless you are willing to also have the “bad” ones. They all come in the same package. But it's Christmas! God desires for you only peace and joy! “Today, a Savior has been born to you!”

Prayer: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace! Take away all anger, sadness, or anxiety and fill me with the great joy that comes from knowing a Savior is born for me. Keep me in your peace. Amen.

Foundation Teen Facilitators Guide

Year B – Christmas

Good News of Great Joy

One truth shared: The message of the angels is what brings us such great joy at Christmas!

A Savior Has Been Born

Starting the Discussion: *This first section is intended to be light and easy, to engage and get the conversation going. Have a little fun with these questions.*

What are some of your family traditions that always bring wonderful memories and lots of joy at Christmas?

Connecting: *This section serves as a bridge between the opening conversation and the body of the study/discussion. It should get the group thinking about the topic/text even before they've looked at it.*

- For many people, the holidays are not a time for joy, but a time of sadness. Why is that? List some of the things that might make the holidays not so joyful for some.
- How can we find joy in the holiday season even amidst the sadness?

Digging In: *Here we want to dig into some texts or the text for the day and see what Scripture says. The questions are meant to be open ended to give a beginning of a scriptural conversation. These are a guide for a spiritual and scriptural conversation.*

- The first words the angel said to the shepherds were, "Do not be afraid." What would make shepherds afraid of angels?
- We look back to the birth of Jesus from the perspective of the cross. How does this help us approach his cradle with joy rather than fear?
- What's the message for you in the fact that the first ones the angels told about Jesus' birth were shepherds?
- What does Christmas guarantee for us that helps to heal our brokenness?

Conclusion: *Here we want to wrap up the discussion, perhaps circling back to the "connecting question" above.*

The Christmas season lasts twelve days. Discuss together how to keep Christmas joy last through the coming 365 days of a new year.