



The reason to party.

Can you think of some different times and reasons when people hold a celebration? What kinds of things to do they do?



We are about to enter Advent- advent is a time in the year where people wait excitedly and prepare for Christmas. People count down the days by lighting candles and opening calendars. They get ready for the day by putting up the decorations, buying and wrapping presents, and beginning to bake and make lots of yummy treats! As friends of Jesus though it's important we don't just get caught up in all the fancy fuss of Christmas (as amazing as it can be!) Christmas actually is about remembering something a lot less glittery and sparkly. It's remembering a simple, dirty stable- probably the most 'un-Christmassy' place you can imagine!! What happened in this animal shed is the reason for celebrating Christmas in the first place- here Jesus was born, because there was no room for Him anywhere else and God's big rescue plan was launched into action. A rescue plan we're all invited to be part of.

A special invitation.

Have you ever been invited to a really special party? How did you feel to get the invitation? What did you do to get ready?



Read Luke 1v26-28 & Matthew 1v18-25 or watch [Mary and Joseph Bible Passage Animation](#) and [Mary and Joseph Saddleback kids link](#)

Mary and Joseph received some pretty spectacular invitations!! Mary was invited to be the mother of God's Son and Joseph to be his Dad on Earth. These invitations were incredibly special but they weren't necessarily the easiest to accept...

Mary wasn't married yet. If she had a baby people might assume she hadn't been following God's good advice in the Bible for how to live life His best way. People might talk about her, if they really thought she'd done the wrong thing they could even stone her...



What do we want our children to know?

To remember the real reason we celebrate at Christmas.

To look at how Mary and Joseph trusted God to use Him in His big plan.

To think about what that means for us- will we accept our invitation to God's family and be willing to play our own part in His plans.



Memory Verse

Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.

Revelation 3v20

**OLDER GROUPS
TEACHING**

Joseph knew the baby wasn't his, he must've felt incredibly hurt at first... by choosing to accept God's invitation people might think he was silly for marrying Mary when she clearly hadn't been true to him or they might think that the baby actually was his and that He too hadn't followed God's good advice in the Bible and sinned with Mary. He'd also been told he'd be helping to bring up the Messiah- God's promised rescuer- he must've felt nervous about whether or not he'd be up to the job!!!

Both Mary and Joseph had to decide whether to let God into their lives- He gave them the choice to be part of His big plan and they could've said no! They had to trust that if they said 'Yes!' to Him that He would be with them and even if it wasn't easy He knew best.

RSVP...

We have that same choice to make too! We are invited to join God's family and to be part of His big plan but as we would with a party invitation we have to decide whether or not we want to accept and think about our reply.



We have to decide whether we have room in our lives for Jesus...

Can we trust that by saying yes to Him that He will be with us even when sometimes it's hard?

Remember that little baby born in a stable at Christmas didn't stay a baby. He grew up to be a man, a man who taught God's word, who healed and did miracles and who showed us God's best way to live. But He wasn't just any old teacher or leader; He was God's Son (remember it was God's Spirit coming on Mary that made her pregnant- Luke 1v35). We celebrate at Christmas because it's the beginning of the plan we see fulfilled at Easter. That baby born in a stable willingly gave up His life on the cross so we could be friends with God again. He took on our sin and accepted the punishment that should be ours. If we're God's friends we're saved!! And that is definitely something worth having a party for!

So as you count down the days to Christmas, as you bake, decorate, shop and wrap make sure you also make time to remember and to celebrate the real meaning of Christmas and make room for the baby born in a stable who came to save us and make a way for us to be friends with God again.

'Dear Father God, Thank you that you sent Jesus as a tiny baby at Christmas to kickstart your rescue plan. Thank you for Mary and Joseph being faithful and willing to be a part of that plan. Thank you that the baby didn't stay in the Manger, thank you that He grew up up to save me by dying on the cross for me. Please help me to remember the real reason to celebrate this Christmas. Help me to be like Mary and Joseph and to trust you. Please use me to share your Good News with other people who need to hear it. Amen'

TEATIME TEASER

- Read the parable of the feast in Luke 14v15-24. Talk about how you would respond to God's invitation to you?? Will you be at the feast? Are you willing to be part of His plan like Mary and Joseph?

Activities!

1

PRINT OUT OR FILL IN YOUR RESTORE ADVENT CALENDAR- HOW CAN YOU BE MAKING SPACE FOR JESUS THIS ADVENT, WHICH SUGGESTIONS WILL YOU CHOOSE OR CAN YOU COME UP WITH SOME OF YOUR OWN?



2

WHY NOT MAKE AN ADVENT WREATH- EACH OF THE CANDLES REPRESENTS SOMETHING ABOUT WHO JESUS IS AND WHAT HE CAME TO DO.

[PAPER ADVENT WREATH](#)

[ADVENT WREATH CRAFTING IDEAS](#)

[SYMBOLISM OF CANDLES EXPLANATION](#)



3

MAKE A CHRISTINGLE- THEY TOO ARE FULL OF SYMBOLISM THAT HELP US TO REMEMBER THE REAL REASON FOR CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS

[CHRISTINGLE INSTRUCTIONS AND EXPLANATION](#)

