

Christmas Eve

The Nativity of Our Lord · Late Elementary · Parent Edition

For the parent: Read each part aloud and work through the questions together. Your answers are printed in blue italics, so no preparation is needed. Your child uses the Student Edition.

Step 1 Understand the Collect

A collect is a short prayer the pastor prays for the whole church. Here is today's collect:

O God, You make this most holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that as we have known the mysteries of that Light on earth we may also come to the fullness of His joys in heaven; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Words to know. *Brightness:* shining light. *True Light:* Jesus, the real Light of the world. *Mysteries:* wonderful things God shows us that we could never figure out ourselves. *Fullness:* all of it, with nothing missing. *Swaddling cloths* (in the Gospel): strips of cloth wrapped snugly around a newborn. *Manger:* a feeding box for animals.

1. We are talking to _____.
Answer: God.
2. God makes this most holy _____ shine.
Answer: Night.
3. We ask to come to the fullness of His joys in _____.
Answer: Heaven.

Step 2 Understand the Gospel

Luke 2:1-14

1 In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. **2** This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. **3** And all went to be registered, each to his own town. **4** And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, **5** to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. **6** And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. **7** And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

8 And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. **9** And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. **10** And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. **11** For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. **12** And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." **13** And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, **14** "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

1. In what town was Jesus born?
Answer: Bethlehem, the city of David (verse 4).
2. Where did Mary lay the baby?
Answer: In a manger (verse 7).

3. Who heard the news first?

Answer: Shepherds out in the field at night (verse 8).

4. What were the angel's first words?

Answer: "Fear not" (verse 10).

Step 3 Find the Collect in the Gospel

Say to your child: Our prayer says God makes this night shine with light. In the story, a dark night suddenly shines. Let's find our prayer in the story.

1. The collect says the night shines with *brightness*. Find the verse where light shines around the shepherds.

Answer: Verse 9: "the glory of the Lord shone around them."

2. The collect talks about *joys*. What did the angel bring?

Answer: "Good news of great joy that will be for all the people" (verse 10).

3. The collect calls Jesus the *true Light*. What did the angel call the baby?

Answer: "A Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (verse 11).

Parent note. The glory shone on the shepherds, but the sign they were given was a plain baby in a manger. God's light comes to us hidden in humble things: a baby then, and today His Word, the water of Baptism, and the bread and wine of His Supper.

Step 4 The Small Catechism

The Second Article. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was **conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary**, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. **What does this mean?** I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.

1. Find the words in the Creed that tell what happened at Christmas.

Answer: "Conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary."

2. Luther says Jesus is "true God" and "also true man." What in Luke 2 shows He is a real baby? What shows He is God?

Answer: A real baby: He was born, wrapped in cloths, and laid in a manger. God: the angel calls Him "Christ the Lord," and the glory of the Lord shines at His birth.

Step 5 Wrap It All Up

Pray today's collect together one more time. Then ask:

1. What does Jesus do for you by being born?

Answer: He comes to be my Savior. He was born so that He could live, die, and rise again for me, and give me peace with God.