

Christmas Eve

The Nativity of Our Lord · Middle School · Student Edition

For the student: Read along, fill in the blanks, and write your answers on the lines. Your parent has the answers.

Step 1 Understand the Collect

Most collects follow a five-part pattern: the **address** (the One to whom we pray), the **reason** (what God has done or promised), the **petition** (what we ask), the **purpose** (what we hope will result), and the **ending** (the closing that names the Trinity).

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.

1. Mark each part of the collect. Are any of the five parts missing?

2. The collect sets earth beside heaven. What do we have now, and what do we still wait for?

3. The collect speaks of "the mysteries of that Light." Why is Christ's coming called a mystery?

Step 2 Understand the Gospel

Read the Gospel on your own.

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. Why does Luke name Caesar Augustus and Quirinius (vv. 1-2)?

2. Why does it matter that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, "the city of David"?

3. Why do you think God sent the news to shepherds first?

4. The angel says, "Unto *you* is born... a Savior" (v. 11). Why does "unto you" matter?

Step 3 Find the Collect in the Gospel

1. Find at least two places where the collect's words appear in the Gospel. Explain each one.

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2. Isaiah 9:2 says, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light." How does Luke 2 fulfill it?
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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.

Cross-reference. "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons." (Galatians 4:4-5)

1. Which line of the Creed tells the story of Luke 2?
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2. Luther confesses Jesus as "true God... and also true man." Why must our Savior be both?

3. Galatians says God sent His Son "born of woman... to redeem." How does that match Luther's words "who has redeemed me"?

Think about it. How can a baby in a manger also be God? Read John 1:3 and Colossians 1:17 and be ready to talk about it.

Step 5 Wrap It All Up

1. Write a short collect of your own for this day. Use all five parts.

Pray today's collect together. Then answer:

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