

Christmas Day

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).

Almighty God, grant that the birth of Your only-begotten Son in the flesh may set us free from the bondage of sin; through 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. Which parts are missing?

2. The collect calls sin "bondage." What does that picture say about sin?

3. The collect says Jesus' *birth* sets us free. How can that be, when the price was paid on the cross?

Step 2 Understand the Gospel

Read the Gospel on your own.

John 1:1-14

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God. **3** All things were made through him, and

without him was not any thing made that was made. **4** In him was life, and the life was the light of men. **5** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. **7** He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. **8** He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

9 The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. **10** He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. **11** He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. **12** But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, **13** who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. **14** And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

1. Verse 1 echoes Genesis 1:1. Why begin the story of Jesus "in the beginning"?

2. Verse 11 says His own people did not receive Him. According to verses 12-13, who does become a child of God?

3. "Dwelt" in verse 14 literally means "pitched His tent." Why is that fitting?

4. The Word came "full of grace and truth." What does that tell us about how God comes to us in Jesus?

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.

2. Galatians 4:7 says, "So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God." How does this verse connect the collect and John 1:12?

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. "Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery." (Hebrews 2:14-15)

1. Luther confesses Jesus as "true God... and also true man." Match each half to a verse in John 1.

2. Luther says Jesus redeemed me "from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil." Which of these does Hebrews 2:14-15 name, and how does it echo the collect?

3. Why does Luther say "not with gold or silver"?

Think about it. Why did God have to become a man to save us? Read Hebrews 2:14-15 again 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 becoming flesh?
