

## Devotion: The Incarnation

During Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ! This is the incarnation: God coming to earth as fully man and fully God. In Matthew chapter 1:18-21, we read about the birth of Jesus Christ. The angel appears to Joseph to tell him that Mary's baby will be named Jesus, because He will save people from their sins. The name Jesus means "Savior." This is what Jesus DOES for us. Jesus saves us from our sins.

As we continue reading in Matthew chapter 1, we see in verse 23 a quote from Isaiah 7:14, "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." The name Immanuel means "God is with us" or "God with us." This name shows us that Jesus is WITH us. He is guiding and helping us. Even at the end of Jesus's time on earth before He ascends into heaven, He promises to give His followers the Holy Spirit. That's why He says in Matthew 28:20, " 'And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.' " We receive the Holy Spirit of God when we repent of our sins and trust in Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

So, why is the incarnation important for followers of Jesus Christ? The writer of Hebrews says it clearly in Hebrews 2:17, "Therefore he [Jesus] had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people."

Jesus became human in every way (except He did not sin) in order to represent us as our high priest, the final high priest! If the incarnation did not happen, Jesus could not have died for our sins on the cross. He could not have risen from the dead on the third day to defeat sins and death SO THAT we can have a relationship with a holy and righteous God. He could not have ascended into heaven and be seated at the right hand of God. And because He ascended into heaven and left earth, He sent the Holy Spirit to indwell us so that we can carry out God's work on earth!

The incarnation is essential. That's why we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the one who saves us and is with us!

Take some time to meditate on these scriptures that focus on the character of God:

- Humility of God – Hebrews 2:5-7
- Generosity of God – John 3:16-17
- Plan and Purpose of God – Colossians 5:15-20, Galatians 4:4-5

## Family Activity

**Big Idea:** Jesus is Immanuel – “God with us.”

**Opening:** Ask your kids if they have a stuffed animal or blanket that they take with them everywhere. If they do, have them go get it and bring it over. Then, take a minute to have them share about why it is important to them. If you had a stuffed animal or blanket as a kid, share with your kids about it. Then, tell your kids that there is someone who is always with us. His name is Jesus! One of His names is Immanuel which means “God with us.”

**Activity:** Have everyone get into one line. The person at the front of the line will lead the family around the house with everyone following. Try to stay together as a group. Switch the line leader so all of the family gets a turn to lead.

**Transition:** Sometimes the family stayed together. At other times, it was hard to stay together and follow the leader. The amazing thing about God is that He sent Jesus, his one and only son, to earth (John 3:16-17) to show us that He is with us. He will never leave us. He will always be with us no matter where we go! Christmas is about celebrating God coming down to earth to be with us!

**Bible Reading:** Matthew 1:18-25

**Songs to Sing Together:** Silent Night, Away in a Manger

**Prayer Focus:** Thank God for sending Jesus to earth to be with us and save us from our sins! Have your kids take turns praying and then close in prayer.