



Family MATTERS

A Christ-center resource for families and teachers

The Very First Christmas Party

They didn't even know there was going to be a party.

They were minding their own business that night, just doing their job. Keeping watch over their flocks by night, when all of a sudden they received an invitation like no other. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord was all around them. This was very unusual. This was very unexpected. They were very afraid.

The angel reassured them saying, "Don't be afraid." This must have helped a little, but more astonishing news was to come. The angel then said, "I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord."

Before they could ask any questions about this incredible news, the angel continued, "This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Now they had some details to work with. Place: City of David, which would be Bethlehem. Not far away. What to look for: A baby wrapped in cloths lying in a feeding trough. Shouldn't be too hard to locate.

Suddenly, many more angels appeared and starting singing. It must have been quite a sight. First a surprise messenger, with a great message. Then details about where to find this incredible gift, followed by an army of singing angels! Wow!

These shepherds then said, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord told us about." So they went—in fact, they went in a hurry. Soon, they found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger—just as they had been told.

This was the first Christmas party. Unlike parties today, there were probably no gifts brought by the guests. Most likely, there were no games played with the guest of honor or any cake and ice cream. Most likely, there were no party favors presented to the guests as they were leaving.

Yet, like today, when we attend a good party, we are likely to tell others all about it! That is just what these shepherds did. We are told they spread the word about this child, and those who heard it were amazed. These shepherds had been to a great party, heard the greatest news ever, and were now telling others about the great message of a Savior.

The invitation is here again this Christmas. It is an invitation given to all of us, to once again come to this party at the manger. It is a simple party, with one honored guest. We are invited to come and see this gift of a baby, a Savior who is Christ the Lord.

VOL. 14 NO. 4
DECEMBER 2009

Family Links

Activities for families to reinforce Bible story truths in the home.

Time for a Happy Birthday Jesus Family Christmas Party!



Here are some ideas for you to use for a Christmas party with your family and friends.

■ Presents for Others.

Before the party, have an adult go out and buy special toys to be donated to a charity toy drive during the holidays. Wrap them up ahead of time, and then let the children open them (most of the fun is in opening a gift), yet knowing that these gifts are not for them—but for others. (Many toy collection programs prefer unwrapped gifts.) As each gift is unwrapped, enjoy the surprise, and then pray for the child who will eventually receive this gift. Pray also, that these children would see Jesus as the best gift of all. Following the party, deliver the gifts to an agency that will distribute the presents.

■ Pin the Star on the Tree.

Similar to “pin the tail on the donkey.” Get a large piece of posterboard and draw a triangular Christmas tree on it. Place it on a wall. Have everyone attending the party make a star with their name on it. (Use cookie cutters for patterns if you like, or make up your own.) Blindfold each person one at a time, place a piece of tape on their star, and have them try to put their star on the top of the Christmas tree.

■ Ornament Making.

Collect all kinds of supplies, everything from toothpicks to cotton balls, cardboard, dried vegetables, pieces of fabric, etc. Then, using Christmas cookie cutters as outlines, make homemade tree ornaments. Be sure to have yarn or string, markers, crayons, glitter, and plenty of glue on hand.

■ Let’s Make a Christmas Tree Cake.

It’s a party—so you gotta have cake! Bake up a boxed cake mix in a 9-by-13” pan. Remove it from the pan and cut it into the shape of a Christmas tree. Frost it with green, white, and red frosting, and enjoy! Be sure to sing “Happy Birthday, Jesus” before you eat.

■ Story Time.

Have everyone bring a Bible to the party. Open it up to the “Christmas Story” in Luke 2:1-20. Go around the room having each person (who is able to) read a verse at a time. Talk about how surprised the shepherds must have been to hear this good news and how exciting it was to be the first visitors to see Baby Jesus.



Family MATTERS

Vol. 14 • No. 4
DECEMBER 2009

“Family Matters” is published by LCMS District and Congregational Services—Children’s Ministry; The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295; (314) 965-9000 • www.lcms.org

Writer: Dr. Steve Christopher. **Editors:** Judith Christian/Karen Eggemeyer. **Designer:** Karen Eggemeyer

■ Visit us on the Web at www.lcms.org/children

TO SUBSCRIBE: Go to www.lcms.org/children; click on “Sign Up: Receive eNews.”

TO REPRINT: Permission is granted to reprint articles from this newsletter with the line “Reprinted with permission of LCMS Children’s and Family Ministry.”

