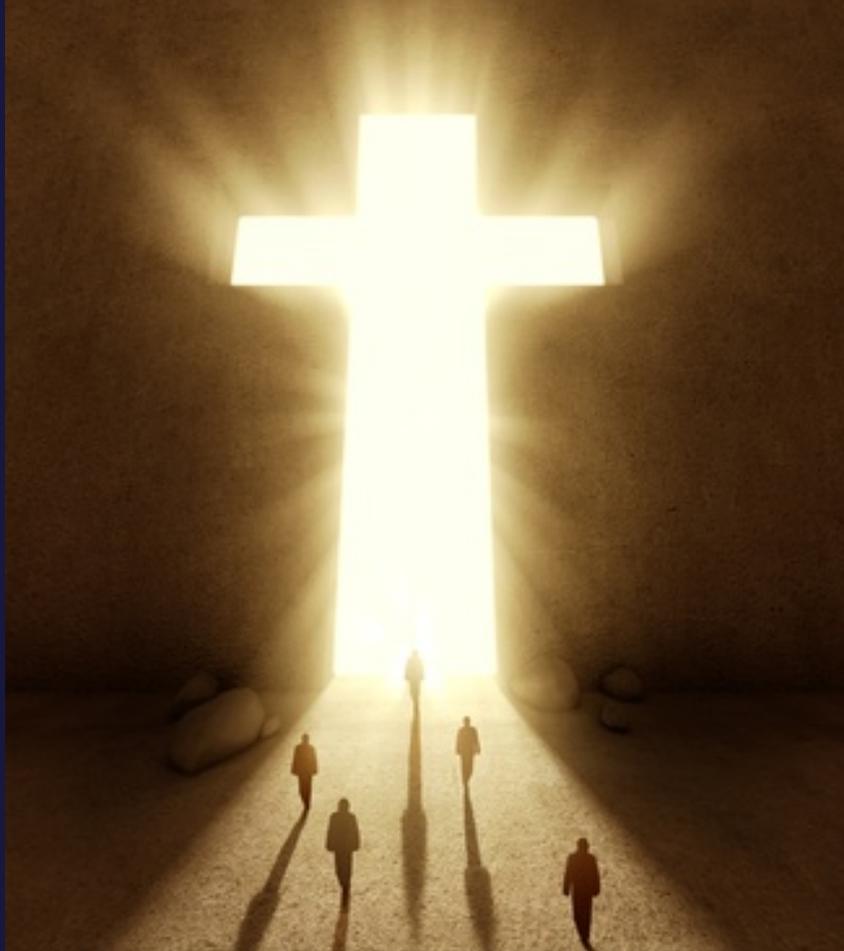


Curriculum



SAMPLE

Christmas: A Savior for All People

Be Prepared

The True Spirit of Christmas
Unwrapping the Christmas Story
Surprisingly Good or Bad?

A sample of the Christmas curriculum begins on the following page.



LEARN: Overview

Biblical Business Training (“BBT”) equips people to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ and empowers leaders in a small-group Bible study setting to apply Biblical principles at work. Our mission is [Faith for Work](#) – and our vision is [Leadership for Life!](#)

To find out more, visit www.B-B-T.org.



Curriculum: The BBT 1-2-3™ Format

BBT curriculum is rooted in Scripture and applicable the day you study it. The *BBT 1-2-3™* format enables the group to have a consistent Biblical basis for discussion.



Agenda – Introduces applicable Biblical principles



Group Leader Guide – Facilitates discussion and allows for shared leadership



Recap – Encourages community and application



LIVE: Sample Christmas

This 4-part study is designed to help you cultivate a spirit of humility to receive joy and blessing in this season of holy wonder. Topics include:

1. **Be Prepared**
2. **The True Spirit of Christmas**
3. **Unwrapping the Christmas Story**
4. **Surprisingly Good or Bad?**

No book is needed.



LEAD: Start a small-group Bible study

Start leading today! [Learn more.](#)



PRAYERS



LEARN

True Spirit

In one edition of the *Peanuts* comic strip, Lucy says that Christmas is a time for kindness and to forgive one another. Charlie Brown says, “Why do that just at Christmas? Why can’t we have the Christmas spirit the rest of the year?” Lucy looks at Charlie and says, “What are you – some kind of religious fanatic?” What exactly *is* the true spirit of Christmas?

Remember

In our last study, we looked at the beginning of Luke’s Gospel. The angel Gabriel appeared to Zechariah in the temple and promised that his wife would bear a child who would prepare the way for the coming of Christ. Zechariah had a hard time believing that, because he and his wife were well beyond the years of childbearing. He asked for a sign, and the angel gave him more than he bargained for – he was unable to speak until the promise was fulfilled. At this point in Luke’s Gospel, Zechariah exits the stage. He’ll be back, but now we have a change of scene. Luke leads us from the great and holy temple in Jerusalem to an obscure village in a remote region not known for its piety. He leads us away from this well-known priest to an unknown peasant, from an old man to a young woman. He leads us from Zechariah to Mary.

Humility

More than anyone else in the Christmas story, Mary demonstrates the true spirit of Christmas. The true spirit of Christmas is not the spirit of family bonding, or the spirit of giving, or even the spirit of rejoicing. All of those things are well and good, but Mary teaches us that the true spirit of Christmas is a spirit of humility. Humility is one of those Christian buzz words we love to talk about, but when it comes right down to it, everything within us protests against it. Humility expresses itself in surrender. Some translations have used the word *bond slave* instead of *servant*. A bond slave is one who has basically given up his right to call the shots. He realizes he doesn’t own himself. He’s not autonomous. He belongs to someone else. Think of how different your life would be if you saw yourself as a bond slave of the Lord.



LIVE

Discussion questions: Read the text and scriptures below, and prepare to answer the questions.

1. Read Luke 1:26-38. What similarities are there between the news given to Mary and Zechariah? Refer to Luke 1:11-15 for Zechariah’s revelation.
2. Re-read Luke 1:34, 38. What strikes you about Mary’s response?
3. Read Luke 1:39-45. What happened when Mary arrived in Judea?
4. Read Genesis 25:19-26. What is the theme of this story along with Elizabeth/Mary and John/Jesus?
5. Read Luke 1:46-55. Find and discuss as many of God’s great reversals of fortune for the poor in spirit mentioned in these verses.

Application Question: Surrender is not easy for us; we like getting our own way. How will you express the true Christmas Spirit?



PRAYERS

Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer



PRAYERS

Opening Prayer & Prayer Requests



LEARN

Before you begin, read the AGENDA LEARN introduction together and review the APPLICATION QUESTION from the previous meeting's RECAP.



LIVE

Discussion Questions: Have someone read each Bible verse aloud and then ask the corresponding question. Be sure everyone has enough time to find the Scripture before the verse is read.

- 1) **Read Luke 1:26-38. What similarities are there between the news given to Mary and Zechariah? Refer to Luke 1:11-15 for Zechariah's revelation?**



Zechariah and Mary are both visited by the angel Gabriel. Both are given what seemed like an impossible promise involving a child. One of them would be filled with the Holy Spirit while still in his mother's womb. The other would be conceived by the Spirit. Both are given a sign.

Notes:

- 2) **Read Luke 1:34, 38. What strikes you about Mary's response?**



Mary's response wasn't an expression of doubt, as with Zechariah, but of confusion. On the one hand, she was stunned by the honor. On the other hand, she dreaded how this might play out.



Like every Jewish kid, Mary had grown up hearing all about the coming Son of David. It might have even crossed her mind that Joseph, her betrothed, was from the line of David. Betrothed couples had many of the responsibilities of marriage, without the privileges. Any breach of this binding contract was considered adultery punishable by stoning. She would be disgraced. A part of Mary likely wanted to fall down in grateful praise; another part wanted to protest such an unfair intrusion into her life. But somehow in the battlefield of her own heart, she chose to surrender. In simple faith, Mary said yes to God. That's the spirit of Christmas - humility. Mary said yes to God's intrusion because she saw herself as the Lord's servant.



Facilitate a brief discussion. Maybe a friend, a coworker, or a family member has mistreated you. You've been cheated and you're angry about it. You're not getting a fair shake. What do you do? How do you handle that? Do you try to secure your own position, demand your own rights? Humility means you start with surrendering your rights and plans and desires and questions to the Lord.

Notes:

3) Read Luke 1:39-45. What happened when Mary arrived in Judea?



Mary didn't even have to say a word. Before she could speak, Elizabeth broke out in a Holy Spirit-inspired blessing on Mary and her child.



This is another example of the spirit of Christmas. Elizabeth's humility is seen in the fact that she recognizes Mary as the most blessed among women. She's humbled by the fact that Mary would come visit her; she doesn't feel deserving. She says Mary believed that the Lord would deliver on his word. Not only that, but she recognized that the child in Mary's womb is greater than the child in her own womb. She called Mary, "the mother of my Lord." John, who did a prenatal somersault, pointed to Jesus even from the womb. Years later, John would confess, "He must increase; I must decrease."

Notes:

4) Read Genesis 25:19-26. What is the theme of these verses along with the story of Elizabeth and Mary and John and Jesus?



Knowing and accepting your place in God's plan expresses humility.



We all have a place, but each is different. In some cultures, the younger is supposed to serve the older. We see that when Rebekah prayed to the Lord about the struggle in her womb, he said, "The older will serve the younger." But that's not the way it was supposed to work. Elizabeth would have John first and Mary would have Jesus after yet, John was called to serve the younger, Jesus. The difference with Elizabeth and John as compared to Esau and Jacob was that no one was struggling. Both Elizabeth and John were filled with joy and humility. When we as humans can finally get that and stop comparing ourselves with others, and start doing what we are called to do, the result is what we see in Elizabeth and John – Joy. You can't have joy if you're always chafing under the fact that God's plan for you doesn't seem important as God's plan for someone else.



Facilitate a brief discussion. Why is it often so hard to rejoice with those who rejoice? What does that say about us?

Notes:

Like Mary, each one of us is born into a humble state. Spiritually, we're bent toward sin, separated from God. But God sent his Son so that our fortune might be reversed.

5) Read Luke 1:46-55. Find and discuss God's many great reversals of fortune for the poor in spirit mentioned in these verses.



Mary was so overwhelmed that she broke out in praise and thanksgiving. Again, a humble-filled response filled with spiritual liberation.



This song of Mary's has at least 15 quotations from the Old Testament. Mary knew her Bible. The first part (v. 46-49) focuses on what God did for her. Then she reveals the same principles at work in others (v. 50-55). Some have taken this as a political manifesto of liberation for the poor and oppressed of the Earth. But, the



liberation she describes is not political or economic, but spiritual. Mary will be called blessed because her son will save her and others from sin. The liberation is not for the poor, period – but for the poor who fear God, trust God, and look to God for salvation.

Notes:

Application Question: Surrender is not easy for us; we like getting our own way. How will you express the true Christmas Spirit?



PRAYERS

Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer



LEAD

Ask yourself: How will I cultivate the true Spirit of Christmas as I interact with others at work, at home, at church and in my community? Increase my humility, decrease my pride.



PRAYERS

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LEARN

God does not enter the world through a royal family in the capital, but through a humble woman in an out of the way town. Elizabeth and Mary rejoice together sharing their lives, foreshadowing the way that John will humble himself to give up his esteemed place as the elder to prepare the way for Jesus. Mary and Elizabeth surrender their lives to God's plan through a spirit of humility.

Scripture references for this study: Luke 1:26-55 and Genesis 25:19-26



LIVE

- Cultivating humility in seeing our life
- Cultivating humility in sharing our life
- Cultivating humility in surrendering our life

Application Question: Surrender is not easy for us; we like getting our own way. How will you express the true Christmas Spirit?



LEAD

Ask yourself: How will I cultivate the true Spirit of Christmas as I interact with others at work, at home, at church and in my community? Increase my humility, decrease my pride.