CHRISTMAS LESSON

Reading from the Word: John 1:1-18

Readings CD 3, Track 9  Recitation CD, Track 32

The people who walked in darkness
Have seen a great light;
Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death,
Upon them a light has shined.

(Isaiah 9:2)

Christmas (CHRIST – MAS) is the celebration of the Lord’s birth into the world in Bethlehem of Judea. In today’s lesson you will have a chance to think about why the Lord came on earth and why He chose our earth for His birth.

WHY THE LORD CAME ON EARTH

When the Lord was born, it was a very sad time on the earth. The teachings that the Lord had given to His people in the Word of the Old Testament had been twisted and corrupted by the leaders of the church. The Lord told them they were “making the Word of God of no effect” by their traditions. The truth in the Lord’s Word had been lost in the multitude of rules made up by the scribes and Pharisees.

They used their position to make themselves powerful and rich, and not to teach the people how to live a good life and go to heaven. Nobody knew what was true and good any more. It was like there was a great darkness in the minds of the people.

Then one wonderful day the Lord came on earth, born as a little infant in a stable in Bethlehem.

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.
The Lord came to save the world from the power of hell.
The Lord came on earth to bring light to the darkness.

Without the truth of the Word, people had no protection against evil spirits. The influence of hell would have become so powerful that the human race would have died from the earth.

Some of the stories in the New Testament show us how people’s bodies and minds were being taken over by demons (evil spirits). Perhaps you know the story of the man who had been possessed by demons for long time. The Lord commanded the unclean spirits to come out of the man and enter a herd of swine (Luke8:26-34).

Some of the hardest work the Lord did was in fighting the hells to make sure they didn’t keep good people from reaching heaven.

The Lord came to change the way people thought about Him

In those days people thought of Jehovah as an angry God who liked to punish people. They did not have any clear idea of the Lord. They may have pictured Him as a pillar of fire or a cloud of smoke, or the thunder and lightning on Mt. Sinai.

The Lord was born, grew up, and little by little taught people that He is a loving, merciful, Human God. He showed His wisdom in the things that He taught, His love in all the ways He helped people, and His power in the miracles that He did.

Jehovah and Jesus Christ are the same God shown to us in different ways.
The Lord came to teach He is the God of all people

The people of the church at that time thought of Jehovah as the God of Israel. The Lord came to teach that He is the God of all the earth.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan the Lord wanted people to understand that everyone is their neighbor.

We should love and care for all people, just as He Himself loves and protects everyone.

The Lord came to show us how to love and serve each other

The Lord loves everyone. The stories of the New Testament show the Lord teaching, healing and showing forgiveness to all people.

The Lord came to show us that following Him to heaven means loving and serving other people.

The Lord came to reveal His power over all things

While He was in the world, the Lord performed many miracles.

He healed the sick, He fed the hungry, He sent away evil spirits, He calmed the storm, He walked on the water, and He even raised people from death.

He showed that all things of creation are under His charge.
WHY THE LORD CHOSE OUR EARTH

The Word is the Lord with us. The Word teaches us the most important things we need to know:

- that there is a God
- that there is a heaven and a hell
- that there is a life after death
- how to love and care for each other
- how to become angels of heaven one day and be happy forever

The Lord chose to be born on our earth because the people and inventions on this earth made it possible for the events of the Lord’s life, and His teachings, to be written down and preserved for all time. In this way, the Lord can be with all people, forever.

The Lord chose our earth because here the WORD could be written

There has been writing on the earth from ancient times. At first, people wrote on tablets, then on parchment. Later paper was used.

The Word needed to be written down. There needed to be a written record of the Lord’s birth, life and resurrection. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John wrote down a history of the Lord’s life and teaching. If people just told the stories they would slowly get changed and forgotten. If you have ever played the game, Whisper Down the Lane, you will know how quickly things that people tell each other get muddled.

The Lord’s teachings needed to be written down so that each generation, and each person, could read them and learn from them. In this way they could be preserved forever.
The Lord chose our earth because here the Word could be spread

The Lord’s teachings needed to be spread throughout the world. There are inventions on this earth that made the spread of the Word possible. That is because the people of this earth take a special interest in the things of nature and science.

The monks used to copy the Word by hand. Their work was very beautiful, but it might take a monk a lifetime to complete one copy of the Word. So few people could have their own book of the Word.

The invention of the printing press brought a great change. Many copies could be made quickly. Many more people could have their own book.

The people of this earth had also developed ways to travel between nations. The Roman Empire had especially fine roads that made travel easier, and a strong army to protect travelers from robbers. Ships and navigation aids enabled people to sail all over the world.

By these means the Word could be spread from one nation to another. The Lord’s truth could be taught everywhere.

And what about today, and in the future? What part will computers and the internet play in making the Lord’s Word available to all people? What inventions are yet to come?

The Lord chose our earth because here the Word could be preserved

Because, on this earth, the Word could be written down and published, it has been preserved for more than two thousand years. The people of this earth continue to develop new ways to record and spread the Word.

By all these means the Lord’s Word will be preserved on the earth for the generations of the future. The Lord’s Truth will stand forever.
**ACTIVITIES**

1) **Learn the recitation** *(Isaiah 9:2)*

The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death,  
upon them a light has shined.

2) **Make an Illuminated Manuscript**

- Read the page about illuminated manuscripts.  
- Choose a verse about the Christmas story.  
- Copy it very carefully with a calligraphy pen.  
  (Remember to make the first letter large.)  
- Decorate the first letter.  
- Make a beautiful border.  
- “Illuminate” your manuscript – add gold decoration with a gold pen or paint.

3) **Color a Stained Glass Window**

- Use markers to color the Christmas picture on the transparency.  
- **Be sure to color on the rough side of the transparency so the markers don’t smear.**  
- Tape the picture on a window that gets bright light.  
- Enjoy your stained glass window.

*Note: There is also a copy on plain paper if you would prefer to color that.*  
**OR**  
You can use it to photocopy additional transparencies—perhaps you have brothers and sisters who would enjoy coloring one (see note in Parents Manual).*
In the Middle Ages, monks carefully copied the Word by hand.

They had to make the vellum, or parchment, to write on. They used calf, goat, or sheepskin. It was scraped until it was thin and flexible. The sheets were ruled, and the text carefully copied with a quill.

The scribe would often write the initial letter of a chapter or section larger, and surround it with decoration. Each page was decorated with its own special border.

Finally, the page was illuminated—decorated with gold paint or gold leaf.

The monks who copied the Word worked in a special room in the monastery called the Scriptorium. To protect the precious manuscripts, no candles were allowed. A monk might have completed only one copy of the Word in his lifetime.
FOR UNTO YOU IS BORN THIS DAY A SAVIOUR WHICH IS CHRIST THE LORD
LESSON 32

CHRISTMAS LESSON

WHY THE LORD CAME ON EARTH
Stories from the Word read in this lesson: John 1:1-18

THEME
Festival Lessons (Lessons 32-34)

OVERVIEW OF THE STORY
The reasons why the Lord was born on our earth are introduced in a very simple way. It was important for the Lord’s Word to be written down and preserved. The New Testament presents a new vision of the Lord.

THE SPIRITUAL STORY
♦ The Lord is present with people by means of His Word.
♦ Jehovah and Jesus Christ are the same God shown to us in different ways—the New Testament presents a different idea of the Lord.
   (Some examples: Luke 5:1–11;
   Matt. 9:2–8
   John 9:1–11
   Luke 17:11–19
   Luke 15:11–24
   John 5:1–11
♦ Without the Lord’s coming, no one could have been saved.

IMPORTANT IDEAS FOR THE CHILD
♦ The Lord came to save the world from the power of hell.
♦ The Lord fights for what is right.
♦ The Lord came to show us how to lead a good life that will lead to the happiness of heaven.
♦ The Lord wants us to see Him as a loving, merciful God.
♦ The Lord is the perfect Hero. By means of His example, He shows us how we can become heroes as well.

PREPARATION FOR THE READING FROM THE WORD
Can you recall two times that a special “light” was seen in the Christmas story? (the glory of the Lord shone around the shepherds the field; the star the wise men followed)

Why do you think the story of the Lord’s coming is associated with light?

**Reading from the Word:** *John 1:1-18*

Listen to the lesson on the CD. Follow the reading in your copy of the Word.

**Discussion Ideas**

- In the gospel of John we are told that the Lord is “the light of men” and “the light shines in the darkness.” What do you think this means?
- The Lord makes sure that His Word is available somewhere on the earth for people to read and learn from.
  - What are some of the ways the Word is spread throughout the earth?
  - Are you free in your country to read and learn from the Word?
  - Do you know about any time or place in the world in which people were not allowed to worship the Lord or have the Word?
- “All that the Lord has said we will do” (*Exodus 24:7*). How do you “spread” the Word into your own life.

**Activities**

1. **Learn the recitation** (*Isaiah 9:2*)

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   Have seen a great light;
   Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death,
   Upon them a light has shined.

2. **Make an Illuminated Manuscript**

   Gold paint, or a gold pen, is needed to “illuminate” the manuscript.

3. **Color a Stained Glass Window**
   - In Project Materials envelope
   - It is important to color on the rough side of the transparency to prevent smearing!
   - There is also a copy on plain paper that can be used to photocopy additional transparencies—perhaps there are other children in the family who would enjoy coloring one.
   (Note: You need to use inkjet transparencies if the coloring will be done with washable markers; other kinds of transparencies will smear unless permanent markers are used.)