

# *Christ in Christmas*



written by: Lalon Christenson  
illustrated by: Angela Greenleaf

**AN INTERACTIVE CHRISTMAS  
DEVOTIONAL FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY**

Combine your child's love of opening gifts,  
lighting candles and listening to stories,  
and in six days they will know  
the true meaning of Christmas!



Laloni Christenson  
Author

Laloni Christenson, mother of four and grandmother of eight, was a stay at home mom for fourteen years. During those years, she enjoyed being a volleyball coach, a youth pastor and participating in praise bands. Various activities she enjoyed with her children included, volleyball and soccer with her girls, snow and water skiing with the family, homeschooling three children for several years, playing sports, paper routes and hunting with the boys. And of course, each year prepared *Christ in Christmas* for the family!

When her children were in high school, she returned to college and earned a Bachelor's degree from Central Christian College and her Master's Degree in Teaching from Lee University. Presently, she is a part-time Associate Faculty Member at Ashford University and enjoys being semi-retired, and living with her husband in Central Oregon.



Angela Greenleaf  
Illustrator

Angela, daughter of Laloni, participated in *Christ in Christmas* since she was five years old; therefore, so fitting that she took part in the creation of this book! Illustrating *Christ in Christmas* was one of her Senior Portfolio requirements to receive her Bachelor's Degree in Art. She earned a second Bachelor's degree in Christian Education, both earned from Sterling College in Sterling, Kansas.

Presently, Angela works as the Life Enrichment Director and Administrator at a retirement community. She has even implemented *Christ in Christmas* with like-minded residents in the memory care community. She earned her Master's Degree from the University of Wyoming, is a Master Trainer for the Best Friends™ dementia treatment program, and is a Certified Cognitive Stimulation Instructor. She enjoys her role as an educator, and continues to practice various art methods with residents at work, and in her spare time at home.



*This Book is for:*

*Parents and grandparents who want  
their children and grandchildren  
to learn the true meaning of the  
Christmas season, in a family setting.*

## What does “*Christ in Christmas*” look like?

“*Christ in Christmas*” is a hands-on Christmas devotional geared toward pre-school and grade school children. With little planning and preparation this book gives your family the techniques to have successful devotions during the week of Christmas. You will need a nativity set, six candles and your “*Christ in Christmas*” book. Your children will love doing the devotional and learning the *real* Christmas story.



### Here is an overview of the activity:

- Begin with an empty nativity set (crèche) beneath the Christmas tree.
- Each evening the family will light candles, open a wrapped Nativity piece, and read a devotional about the Christmas story. There are questions after each story for family discussion. The nativity piece will be set inside the crèche.
- The first night, you light one candle and open gift #1, the angel nativity piece., which is placed in the crèche under the tree. The devotion will be about angels.
- The second night light two candles, open gift #2, which is the Mary figurine. The devotion will be about Mary.
- The crèche is filling as this continues each night, as you learn about Joseph, the Shepherds, and the Wise Men. Finally, with great anticipation on Christmas Eve or Christmas morning, which ever you prefer, the family lights all six candles, and opens the baby Jesus figurine, and end your Christmas devotional with the story of baby Jesus. The Christ Child nativity piece is placed in the crèche, completing the story!
- At the end of the devotional there is a page that asks what gift can we give to God. This section encourages your family to live their lives for Christ.

## The History of “*Christ in Christmas*”

The idea of “*Christ in Christmas*” began for our family in 1981. Christmas devotions would begin on December first and continue until Christmas Day. Twenty-five presents were wrapped and each night before the devotions were read, the children took turns lighting a candle and opening the gift. Inside the gift would be an object relevant to the devotions. For example, a package of raisins would remind of us of grapes. The corresponding devotion would then be the story when Jesus turned water into wine. The devotionals at the beginning of the month centered on the ministry of Jesus and, as the holidays drew near, the topic turned to the Christmas story. The children loved the devotions and every night would remind Mom and Dad to do them.

As the years passed and our four children grew, we tailored the devotions to fit their ages. We used many different medias for the devotions: books, interesting articles from magazines and newspapers, video and audio recordings and poems were used. The “*Christ in Christmas*” devotional was in place as the children learned to read and it was a joy to watch them help one another read the Christmas story! We had a ritual for each part of the hands-on devotions. We took turns lighting and snuffing out the candles, opening the presents, and reading the stories. Every member of the family got to do something fun!

Friends and family would visit our home and share in our Christmas devotions from time to time. Many times we were asked to share this tradition and from that encouragement, we wrote this book. Just as our “*Christ in Christmas*” devotions was a family activity, writing this book was one as well. I wrote the stories, our oldest daughter, Angela illustrated the book. Our daughter, Amy uses the devotional series for her first grade class at a Christian school. The response from the children and parents has been overwhelming. Parents asked her for a version they could use at home.

We realize 25 days of devotions would be unrealistic for working parents, so we condensed the series into six days. Begin your devotions ten days prior to Christmas which will leave a couple evenings open for other holiday festivities. Then you will not miss any devotions, and the final story will be done on Christmas Eve or Christmas morning, whichever you prefer.

We are confident that when you do the “*Christ in Christmas*” six-day devotional series with your family, your children will know the real reason Christmas is celebrated. The last section in this book has guidelines and scriptures that help a person give their life to Christ. It is our prayer that during this devotional series, many children will make a decision to make Jesus Christ, Lord and Savior of their lives.

We wish you a “Christ filled Christmas!”  
The Christenson Family



This is a drawing of the nativity set our family uses. The children’s great grandmother gave it to the family. We cherish the set more every year.

## Supplies and Preparation

- **Candles**: Six candles, color of your choice. We suggest votive candles and holders because they are safer than taper candles.\* Tapers have a tendency to fall over, burn faster and drip more wax.
- **Gift Boxes**: Wrap each nativity piece in Christmas wrapping paper. Be sure to label each present with it's corresponding day. We like to make these the prettiest wrapped gifts under the tree!

- 1) Angel
- 2) Mary
- 3) Joseph
- 4) A Shepherd
- 5) A Wise Man
- 6) Baby Jesus



- **Crèche**: A Nativity Set (Crèche) with at least the six figures listed above. Inexpensive crèches can be purchased at department stores and even less expensive sets at second hand stores.
- **A Christmas Tree!** 😊

*\*Always have adult supervision when lighting and snuffing out candles. Never leave candles burning unattended. If using taper candles, replace when burned within 2" from the bottom.*

## To Present the Devotions

### Day One:

- Light one candle\*
- Un-wrap the present labeled “Day One,” which is the angel nativity piece.
- Read the “Day One” devotion in the “*Christ in Christmas*” book. Next, read and answer the discussion questions, snuff out the candle and close with prayer. Place the nativity piece in the crèche under the tree.

### Day Two:

- Light two candles\*
- Un-wrap the present labeled “Day Two,” which is the figurine Mary.
- Read the “Day Two” story about Mary in the “*Christ in Christmas*” book. Place the nativity piece in the crèche under the tree. Next, read and answer the discussion questions, snuff out the candles and close with prayer.

### Next four days:

- Continue this process until Day Six, which will land on Christmas day or Christmas Eve, whichever you prefer. Light all six candles, unwrap the present labeled six, which is the Baby Jesus nativity piece. Place the nativity piece in the crèche under the tree. Read the story, answer questions, snuff the candles and close with prayer.

**For other specific ideas and methods to present “*Christ in Christmas*,” read the “Variations section” at the end of this book.**

*\*Always have adult supervision when lighting and snuffing out candles. Never leave candles burning unattended. If using taper candles, replace when burned within 2” from the bottom.*



**Day One  
Open Gift #1**

# Angels

**Angels, Angels, Angels!**

**Almost everyone in the Christmas story gets a visit from an Angel!**

**What is an Angel?**

**Where do Angels come from?**

**Would you like to be visited by an Angel?**

**Would you feel afraid?**

**Would you feel important if an Angel visited you?**

**Why do Angels sometimes come to earth?**

**The word Angel means, “messenger from God,” God created Angels and they do many different jobs for Him. One of those special jobs is to watch and protect God’s people. Angels also worship and sing songs about how mighty and awesome God is!**

**In the Christmas story, Angels were to give the world a message! They told various people how God would send his Son to the earth. An Angel told Mary and Joseph that they would be the parents of God’s child! Thousands of Angels appeared to the Shepherds and told them about the Baby, Jesus.**

**The Angels were messengers from God, and did a great job of spreading the news about Jesus. God wanted Jesus to come to earth, so we could know what He is like. God our Heavenly Father loved the world so much that he sent us baby Jesus.**



1. What does the word “Angel” mean?
  2. Where do Angels come from?
  3. What do Angels do?
  4. What is the message the Angels want us to know at Christmas time?
- More about Angels: Daniel 6:22, Acts 12:7 and Psalms 91:11*

**Day Two  
Open Gift #2**

*Mary*

**Mary was a teenager who lived in a city called Nazareth. When God sent an Angel to visit Mary, she was very frightened! The angel saw that Mary was afraid, and told her to not be afraid, because God was very happy with her.**

**Gabriel was the name of this Angel, and he was sent from God to give Mary a message. Gabriel told Mary that God was pleased with her, and she would have a baby! He also told her to name the baby “Jesus.” The Angel said Jesus would be called the Son of the Most High!**

**Mary did not understand this message from God. She was very confused. She told the Angel it would be impossible for her to have a baby because she was not married!**

**Gabriel told Mary that with God, all things are possible. The Angel said the Holy Spirit would come upon her and she would have a baby. Again, he told her the baby would be called the Son of God.**

**Even though Mary did not understand how God could do these wonders, she answered the Angel and told him, “I am the Lord’s servant, may it be to me as you have said.” (NIV)**



1. What would you do if an Angel came into your bedroom one night?
2. The angel had a message for Mary. What was that message?
3. Did Mary believe what the angel told her?
4. What did Mary tell the Angel?

*More reading: Luke 1:26-38*

## **Day Three**

### **Open Gift #3**

*Joseph*

**Mary was engaged to become Joseph's wife. But, before they were married, Joseph realized Mary was going to have a baby. Even though Joseph loved Mary, he was embarrassed because he knew he was not the baby's father.**

**In this situation, Jewish tradition would tell Mary and Joseph to break off their engagement. Since both Joseph and Mary were Jewish, they would have to be formally break their engagement.**

**Joseph loved Mary very much and did not want to embarrass her, so he decided he would leave her quietly. While he was thinking about these things, God sent an Angel to Joseph in a dream. The Angel told Joseph to not be afraid to take Mary as his wife, because the baby she carried was conceived by the Holy Spirit!**

**The Angel told Joseph many wonderful things about Mary's baby. The Angel said this baby would fulfill what the prophets predicted. The prophets said a virgin would have a baby, and that baby would be called Emmanuel, which means, "God with us." They also predicted that He would save His people from their sins.**

**When Joseph heard this message from the Angel, he knew what to do. Joseph decided he would take Mary as his wife, and do just as the Angel said.**



1. When Joseph heard that Mary was going to have a baby, what did he want to do?
2. The angel helped Joseph make his decision. What did the angel say?
3. Did the angel change Joseph's mind?
4. What two things did the angel say about Baby Jesus?

*More reading: Matt 1:18-24*

**Day Four  
Open Gift #4**

# Shepherds

**Outside the city of Bethlehem were Shepherds watching their flock of sheep. Suddenly, the glory of the Lord and an Angel appeared to the Shepherds. Just as Mary and Joseph were frightened when the Angel appeared to them, the shepherds were also frightened. Again, the Angel told them, “Don’t be afraid!”**

**The Angel said, “Today a Savior has been born, who is the Christ. You will know the baby is the Christ because he will be wrapped in swaddling clothes and laying in a manger.”**

**Then suddenly there were thousands of Angels gathered in the sky praising God and saying:**

***“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth,  
peace, good will toward all men.”*** (NIV)

**The Angel told the shepherds to go to Bethlehem. Just as the Angel said, they found the baby wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger. They knew this Christ Child had to be very important because thousands of angels came to tell of his birth!**

**The shepherds were happy to see the Christ Child. But, the time came when the shepherds had to leave Baby Jesus. Everywhere they went, they told people about the Angels and the newborn Savior, Jesus.**



1. Were the shepherds happy or scared when the Angels appeared?
2. Where did the Angel tell the Shepherds to find Baby Jesus?
3. After the shepherds saw Baby Jesus, what did they do?
4. Should we be like the Shepherds and tell others about the birth of Jesus?

*Read more: Luke 2:8-20*



**Day Five  
Open Gift #5**

## *The Wise Men*

**When Jesus was born, the ruler over the land was King Herod. During this time there were Wise Men looking for a new King who would be born soon. These Wise Men lived far away in the East and followed a bright star to Jerusalem.**

**When King Herod heard that the Wise Men were looking for a new King, he became very concerned. He met with the Wise Men and asked them what they knew about the new King. The Wise Men told Herod it was written many years ago, that the Christ Child would be born in Bethlehem. King Herod told the Wise Men to find this child, because he wanted to worship the new king also!**

**The Wise Men left King Herod to search for the new King. They followed the star until it stopped right over where baby Jesus was. At last, they had found the King of the Jews! When they went into the stable where Baby Jesus was, they bowed down and worshipped him. The Wise Men gave gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to the baby who would someday be King!**

**The Wise Men were going to tell King Herod where the baby Jesus was, but in a dream God told them King Herod did not want to worship Jesus. In fact, Herod wanted to harm the baby! He was worried that the baby would become King and take his place. After the dream, the Wise Men did not go to Jerusalem where King Herod lived, instead they went home.**



1. What told the Wise Men a king would be born?
2. Where did the Star guide the Wise Men?
3. Did King Herod really want to worship the new born king?
4. How did the WiseMen know the King wanted to harm Baby Jesus?

Read more: *Matthew 2:1-12*

**Today wise men still search for Christ**

**Day Six  
Open Gift #6**

# *Baby Jesus*

**In the Roman Empire a man named Caesar Augustus wanted to know how many people lived in his nation. He ordered all people to return to the place where they were born so they could be counted. This was announced during the time Mary was going to have her baby!**

**Because Joseph was born to the family of King David, he had to travel to Bethlehem and be counted. Joseph took Mary on his trip to Bethlehem. Just as they arrived in the small town, Mary's baby was about to be born. Joseph had to find a place for Mary to have her baby!**

**Many people came to Bethlehem to be counted, and the Inns were filled by the time Mary and Joseph arrived. Joseph could not find a place for the baby Jesus to be born. Finally, someone let Joseph and Mary stay in their barn! That night Jesus was born in a stable!**

**Everything the Angels said, came true! The Angel, Gabriel, told Mary and Joseph that God's son, Jesus would be born. Thousands of Angels told the shepherds where to find the baby Jesus. The wisemen knew a King would be born, and they traveled many miles to give their gifts. Something very wonderful happened that night!**

**“God so loved the world that he gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” (NIV)**



1. Do you remember what we learned about Angels?
2. What does the word Angel mean?
3. What was the message the Angels brought?
4. What is the most important part of Christmas?
5. What is the most important thing you can do this Christmas?

*Turn the page and read about a gift we can give Jesus.*

# *A Gift You Can Give To Christ*

Jesus came to earth as a baby, and He died to become our Savior. Jesus left His home in Heaven to live with us. Why? The Heavenly Father wanted us to know Him, and by sending us His Son, we can see what God is like. We can see his love and forgiveness for mankind. God gave us such a wonderful gift in the life of Jesus Christ, who became the sacrifice for our sins.

Wouldn't it be nice to give God a gift?  
Can you imagine what God might need?  
God made the heavens and the earth.  
If God needed anything, he would create it!  
So what can we give someone who has everything?  
There is something God wants more than any gift we  
could give at Christmas time.  
God wants you to love Him and live your life for Him.

*God wants your heart for Christmas!*

*“My son, give me your heart and let your eyes keep to My ways.”*

*Proverbs 23:26 (NIV)*

# Steps to Give Your Life to Christ

**Accept:** “Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.”  
John 1:12 (NIV)

**Believe:** “That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”  
Romans 10:9 (NIV)

**Confess:** “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins, and purify us from all unrighteousness.”  
1 John 1:9 (NIV)

***“For God so loved the World that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him, should not perish, but have ever lasting life.” John 3:16 (NIV)***

The model for becoming a believer in Christ Jesus, used in this devotional book, represents the majority of Protestant/Christian concepts for faith in Jesus Christ. We understand and appreciate that churches have their particular models, events, teachings and services, which in essence accomplish the same goal, living a life dedicated to God, through Jesus Christ. As parents and grandparents it will be important to follow through with any commitments your children or grandchildren make. We suggest you connect with your local place of worship and visit with the leadership to learn more about the process to live a Christ-centered life. It is important for children to be involved with a faith-community where Christian life is modeled and commitment encouraged to promote Christian growth.

## Variations for “Christ in Christmas”

- **Decide where the Nativity set will be displayed. A great place is on the floor under the tree, which signifies the best gift! This spot was our favorite. Another suggestion is near your dining table, so you can do devotions around the table. Sometimes we set it on the fireplace hearth.**
- **If you do not have time to wrap the nativity pieces, hide them and bring them out each evening. Another idea for “unveiling” the pieces, is to hide them and use a treasure hunt method to find them.**
- **Sometimes, we would put a small piece of hard Christmas candy inside the present. The children enjoyed hard candy during the story and discussion time. The next evening they will remind you about the devotions!**
- **Tailor the stories to your family’s ages and needs. For preschool children you might want to tell the story in your own words. Older children can spend more time in the following discussion. Read from meaningful stories or articles you have recently read. Read directly from the Bible using versions that the children can understand. Read a chapter each night from your favorite Christmas book.**
- **Use this time to reflect on how your Christmas season is progressing. Ask questions such as, have we reached out to anyone? Shall we go caroling? Shall we visit the shut-ins? Why do we give gifts? Shall we decrease our gift buying this year and give to others less fortunate than us?**

- At the end of devotions read the Christmas cards you've received from friends and relatives. Christmas cards are great prayer reminders. Pray specifically for each of the families represented by the cards.
- Use poems, pictures, and Christmas cards to enhance the specific devotional.
- Add nights to the "*Christ in Christmas*" week, and include family traditions that have become special.
- Plan your week so that the Baby Jesus figurine is opened on Christmas morning or Christmas Eve, whichever is appropriate for your family's celebration of Christmas. Your schedule will dictate which nights you are free to do your devotions. Your family may need to start ten days out to adjust for Christmas plays, parties, services, etc. It's better to start too soon, and have an extra night, than to have rushed or skipped devotions.
- *Christ in Christmas* is very versatile and is open to expansion according to your traditions and imagination.

*It is our prayer that Christ in Christmas  
will become a part of your family tradition.  
But most of all, we wish that Christ will  
become a reality in your  
Christmas celebration.*



Christ in Christmas

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