



A Christmas Story Bible Study – Beyond to Hope

The holidays can be the hardest for so many people. This Christmas Story Bible study lesson is meant to bring hope into lives that may be wondering if God has forgotten. It is a reminder to all of us that God is faithful no matter what we may see with our eyes or feel with our hearts.

Scripture: Luke 2:25-38

Introduction Activity:

Give everyone 30 seconds to write down as many characters as they can remember from the Christmas Story.

Then play "What happened next?" Arrange participants in a circle. Start the story telling by saying "First an angel told Mary she was going to have a baby." or a beginning point you would like to use. Then you say "What happened next?" The next person must repeat your beginning statement and add their next statement for the Christmas story. The next person repeats both statements and adds their what next statement, etc. As play continues, have each person cross out the people they had listed. Continue seeing how far they will take the Christmas story. See if anyone had names of characters that were not included and discuss if needed.

Most will probably end with the Wisemen or before. Let them know that today we're going to take the Christmas Story a little farther to two people who had waited all their lives to meet the Messiah. But first we'll have to go backwards before we go forwards to clearly see God's faithfulness.

A Christmas Story Lesson of God's Faithfulness

Wonder:

Let's put ourselves in the shoes of the Jewish people in the days right before Jesus or John the Baptist were born. God had not spoken through prophets in about 400 years (period of time between the time of Malachi and the New Testament). Do you think some started wondering if God had forgotten them? ...that maybe God had forgotten to send their Messiah?

Has there ever been a time in our life, when we may have begun doubting God's faithfulness; maybe we've wondered if God had forgotten us. Maybe this year (2020

right now) seems that way. Things are not the same; they are confusing and maybe has been a bit scary. We don't know what to expect in this next year.

The good news is Christmas is a reminder that God is truly faithful; He does NOT forget His children! He is in control and can be trusted. Let's walk into this next year with that in mind.

Isaiah 49:15-16 says - *"Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! 16 See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me."*

Where we get confused is "to what" God is faithful. He is faithful to His plan for His family -which is an abundant life here and for eternity - His presence always with us!

This truth of this Christmas Story Bible lesson is found in the most well known, most quoted verse of the Bible - **John 3:16** - *"For 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."*

In **John 10:10** Jesus goes on to say - *"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy ; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."*

And finally Jesus goes on to say in **Matthew 28:20** - *"and lo, I am with you always , even to the end of the age."*

A Story:

So with all that in mind, I want to tell you a story...

Tell the story of the [Legend of Three Trees](#) .

It takes approximately 6-8 minutes to read the story slowly and clearly, leaving pauses for effect. You may like to hear someone else read [The Tale of Three Trees](#) before reading it aloud yourself, or we have other activities and ideas to go along with the story.

After reading, ask the question. "Did the trees' dreams come true?" Allow for discussion.

Isaiah 55:8 tells us, *"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD."*

We, like the three trees, may think our dreams & plans are best. The Tale of Three Trees may be just a fictional story, but it reveals a great truth. The truth of God's faithfulness even when we may not understand, even when we may think He's forgotten - can also be seen in the lives of four very real people from the Bible. In the Christmas story, we can see that the LORD, Jehovah God, always, always knows best...He is faithful!

Christmas Bible Study Verses:

Focal passage - **Luke 2**

Let's look at four of the different characters in the Christmas story. Each had a dream, yet God does the unexpected, the unexplainable, the unlimited!

The first two are probably most well known besides Jesus: Read **Luke 2:1-7**

Use the familiarity of the story of Mary & Joseph to initiate the conversation for the Christmas Bible study lesson.

A look at Mary - Ask what do you think some of Mary's dreams were? Was God's plan for her bigger? Better? Was God faithful?

A look at Joseph - Ask the same.

The following two characters are not often included in Christmas Bible study lessons, yet they were powerful witnesses of God's faithfulness soon after the birth of Christ.

Simeon - Read Luke 2:25-35

When many in Israel had believed God had forgotten them and had themselves quit watching for the Messiah, Simeon "was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel". God had spoken to him through His Holy Spirit, and Simeon believed God. We don't really know how old Simeon was at this time or how long he had waited, but many believe he was indeed aged in years for when He saw Jesus and the promise of God, he said in vs 29, "Now, Lord, Thou dost let thy bondservant depart in peace, according to Thy word;"

Anna -Read Luke 2:36-38

And then there is Anna, a widow of many years. She served in the temple both night and day. She must have been watching and waiting too, trusting in God's faithfulness - vs.38 "And at that very moment she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continues to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem."

Christmas Bible study Conclusion:

There were probably times in each of these lives when they wondered if God had forgotten them, yet they clung to the promise of His faithfulness.

Show the underside of something like a tapestry or piece of embroidery. Allow others to guess what the picture is on the other side.

Life is like a tapestry. When you look from underneath, it looks like a mass of mess - random threads that seem to be tangled with no pattern! Yet when it is seen from above, the beauty of the planned artwork is evident. We only see life from here below, and yes, many times it appears as a mass of mess, forgotten by the artist and left to random

chance! That is not the truth though! God has a plan for each of us, and although we can't see the pattern of the threads, He can and He is in control of them. We can trust like Mary, Joseph, Simeon and Anna; He is faithful!

1 Corinthians 1:7-9

"Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. 8 He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful."

Philippians 1:3-6

"I thank my God every time I remember you. 4 In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, 6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

Romans 8:28

"And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."

Christmas Story Activities

- Puzzle Problems

Give pieces of a puzzle to each person. Ask them to put the puzzle together, but do not show or tell them what the puzzle is to be. You may even want to hold a few pieces back as "missing pieces." For time sake, you will probably want to use a 24-48 piece puzzle. I have used multiple puzzles and formed small teams. Ask if it was more difficult because they didn't know what the final picture should be. Was it a problem since there were missing pieces? Relate this to how we must trust God knows the whole picture; He knows the future and we can trust Him even when we feel like pieces are missing.

Or use this [puzzle object lesson](#) - "God Holds All the Pieces"

- Christmas Story Word Scramble

Give each person a word from the Christmas story like "angel", "manger", "shepherd", etc. written on a slip of paper. Have them write it on another slip with the letters scrambled. Write each scramble word on the board and have everyone try to unscramble as many as they can within a timed limit.

Discuss how circumstances in life can seem mixed up and confusing at first, but later we look back and are able to see how God put things back into correct order so they make sense.

Another option is to print or make your own Christmas word scramble.