

King of Humility (2nd Part Christmas Bible Study)

FACILITATOR
GUIDE

PART 1: Jesus' Birth

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

GOAL

The goal of this lesson is twofold:

1. *To help students understand and follow* the actions of Jesus in their own lives through Bible study, hard questions, activities, and specific life application.
2. *To make it easy for you* to facilitate and teach students. That is why the Facilitator Guide is packed with easy-to-use instructions, timeframes, and questions that promote thinking and draw out real responses.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Be sure to check out the Live It Out section ahead of time to prepare. You'll need:
 - *two pieces of paper*

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HELPING YOUTH WORKERS MAKE DISCIPLES & DEVELOP LEADERS

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PART 1: Jesus' Birth

The Black Letters of Jesus: Jesus becomes one of the least when he comes to earth as a baby.

OVERVIEW

Jesus came to the world as a tiny baby. It wasn't a grand entrance of a king on a throne; it was the humble entrance of a tiny human. God cared enough about the least to come into the world as one of the least. He didn't focus on grabbing at status and title; instead, he focused on a sacrificial life. This lesson will help students see the difference between what the world values and what God values.

OPENING QUESTIONS

- What is your favorite Christmas tradition?
- What's the best gift you've ever given someone for Christmas?

WHAT THE BIBLE HAS TO SAY ABOUT IT

Companies that develop a new product they want to sell never just quietly slip it on the back shelves in a dingy store as a way of introducing it to consumers. They make it look amazing. They put up big displays. And they advertise. Commercials, billboards, Internet popup ads, Facebook banners—you name it, they do it. And if they really want to make a splash, if they really want their product to be a big deal, they get celebrities to do the work for them. They find important people—movie stars, singers, and athletes—and get the product in their hands. A few photographs later and a few commercials with “so and so” endorsing the product and it's hard not to want what they're selling.

Jesus' grand introduction to the universe was a bit different, though. For those who know the story well, it might be easy to skip over the profound strangeness of how Jesus came to the world. Jesus, the Son of God, became a tiny, feeble, weak, vulnerable baby. His grand rollout was in a back corner of a stable. And the angels announcing his birth did so to a group of common shepherds. He came as the least. And he came to the least. Not to the kings and leaders and religious elites. The angels didn't gather up the greatest men and women alive and present Jesus with trumpets and lights. They presented him to shepherds. The field workers. The uncultured. The non-elite. The least.

If this was a company unveiling a new product, their advertising agency would have a lot of explaining to do. But the honor of kings and the praise of the powerful were not what the birth of Christ was about. As you read the passage, note how Jesus came as the least for the least.

Read: Luke 2:1-20



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Discuss

- Why do you think God made his grand announcement to some of society's least?
- What do these verses tell you about what God cares about?
- What ideas, what memories, what emotions do you think Mary was feeling and treasuring?
- How do you think the shepherds responded to the angels?

A SECOND LOOK¹

Henri Nouwen was a brilliant scholar, an insightful priest, and a prolific author. He taught the most powerful people in the world at the best academic institutions, including Harvard and Yale, influencing the influencers and leading leaders. But Nouwen, with the help of a good friend, had the wisdom to realize that these titles and positions were unimportant. This realization changed his life. He left Harvard to go to L'Arche, a community for people with developmental disabilities. He went from teaching some of the most brilliant students to washing and feeding people who struggled even to read.

This change in Nouwen's life wasn't easy for him, but out of it, he learned some profound lessons about love and following Christ's example of becoming the least. The physically and mentally impaired residents of L'Arche offered Nouwen their vulnerable selves, something much more important than power and titles. He wrote in his book, *In the Name of Jesus*, "I am deeply convinced that the Christian leader of the future is called to be completely irrelevant and to stand in this world with nothing to offer but his or her own vulnerable self." Nouwen realized that to lead as Christ led had nothing to do with titles or status or influence or giving to charity. But, like Christ, a real leader engages the hard task of love by living with and becoming like the least.

Just as Jesus, the Son of God, willingly chose a dramatic reversal—from power to nothingness—Henri Nouwen consciously made a similar choice for the direction of his own life—from relevance to irrelevance, from teaching the powerful to washing the weak—engaging the hard task of love.

Discuss

- If you were Henry Nouwen, what would have been the hardest part of transitioning from elite universities to L'Arche?



¹ Henry Nouwen, *In The Name of Jesus* (Chestnut Ridge, NY: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1989).



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- As a student, what does it look like to have status (or how do you get status?)
- As a student, what would it look like to give up your status for the sake of someone else?

LIVE IT OUT: *What's in a Name?*

What you'll need: Two pieces of paper with half of the names listed below on one paper and the other nine names listed on the other paper.

Students will work to identify who the people are that are listed on their papers. In many cases, the names that are easiest to recognize are linked to achievements the world values, while the harder to recognize names are linked to kingdom values.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Divide the group into two teams and give each group a set of nine names.
2. Set a timer for three minutes (or another appropriate amount of time).
3. Have each group spend the three minutes looking over the list and identify as many names as they can (i.e. Michael Jordan = basketball player).
4. The team that can identify the most names within the time limit wins.
5. See the end of this lesson for short biographies on each individual on this list.

TEAM 1

1. Tom Cruise
2. Elvis Presley
3. Dorothy Day
4. Mary MacKillop
5. Audrey Hepburn
6. Oscar Romero
7. Vincent de Paul
8. Marilyn Monroe
9. Conrad Grebel

TEAM 2

1. Julia Roberts
2. Francis Xavier Cabrini
3. Venus & Serena Williams
4. Oprah Winfrey
5. Mel Trotter
6. Shaquille O'Neal
7. Katherine Drexel
8. Jimi Hendrix
9. Thomas Merton

It is likely the names the students knew and recognized are names of individuals known for their contributions to sports or entertainment, and the names they didn't know were names of individuals known in the Kingdom of God as men and women who gave their lives for a higher purpose. It is truly amazing to see what the world values versus what God values. The men and women who give their lives to a higher calling reap a reward far greater than anything this world can offer. It is amazing how God honors those who willingly choose the path of the least and how that brings about God's glory.

Discuss

- What were the easiest names to identify?
- What does that tell you about what the world values?



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- What are the things that God values? Make a list.
- What is one way that you can live your life by God's value system?

APPLY IT

What is one way this week you can replace a self-serving action with a God-serving action?

Be specific:

What are you going to do?

When are you going to do it?

Is there someone who can keep you accountable?

THINK ABOUT IT

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose." – Jim Elliot, *The Journals of Jim Elliot* (Grand Rapids: Revell, 2002).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- *Illustration:* In the classic movie *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, we follow the adventures of the archaeologist Indiana Jones and his father as they search for the Holy Grail. At the height of the movie (spoiler alert!) they find the Grail, or at least a room full of cups that could be the Holy Grail. Indiana and the bad guy, Walter Donovan, are each given an opportunity to choose the cup that they think is the actual Grail. Donovan goes first and selects an ornately bedazzled, golden cup, saying, "This certainly is the cup of the king of kings." But he has chosen poorly and instead of receiving eternal youth, he falls dead. Indiana then chooses a humble, wooden cup. "That's the cup of a carpenter," he says. It's the right choice. In this season of celebrating the birth of Jesus, how do we come to terms with the reality that the God of the universe became human? That he became a carpenter and lived a human life on this earth? Christ did not come into this world by being born as an earthly king in a palace surrounded by human wealth but as a tiny, feeble, weak, and vulnerable baby in a humble stable surrounded by noisy animals and smelly shepherds.

MEMORY VERSE

"...Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. For he who is the last among you all is the one who is great."

Luke 9:48b (ESV)



MARK OF A DISCIPLE

Disciples of Christ know that God uses the seemingly insignificant to do great things.



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*Any reference within this piece to Internet addresses of websites not under the administration of LeaderTreks is not to be taken as an endorsement of these websites by LeaderTreks; neither does LeaderTreks vouch for their content.

LIVE IT OUT: *What's in a Name?* Biographies

TEAM 1

1. **Tom Cruise** Hollywood movie actor best known for roles in *Minority Report*, *The Last Samurai* and the *Mission: Impossible* films.
2. **Elvis Presley** Singer and actor in America best known for his songs "Hound Dog" and "Jailhouse Rock." Cultural icon who was nicknamed "The King."
3. **Dorothy Day** American journalist and Christian social activist. Helped found the Catholic Worker movement, a nonviolent, pacifist, movement that combines direct aid for the poor and homeless with nonviolent direct action on their behalves.
4. **Mary MacKillop** Australian Roman Catholic nun who co-founded the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart. As well as providing education in schools across the country, the Sisters also established a women's refuge, an orphanage, and a House of Providence.
5. **Audrey Hepburn** Hollywood movie actress best known for her roles in *Sabrina*, *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, and *My Fair Lady*.
6. **Oscar Romero** Archbishop of San Salvador and peace activist who started a group that spoke out on behalf of the poor and victims of the Salvadoran civil war. He was assassinated in 1980.
7. **Vincent de Paul** Priest who was dedicated to serving the poor and is venerated as a saint. Both DePaul University and St. Vincent de Paul Stores are named after him.
8. **Marilyn Monroe** American model and Hollywood movie actress best known for her roles in *Some Like It Hot*, *Bus Stop*.
9. **Conrad Grebel** Co-founder of the Swiss Brethren, he is known as the "Father of the Anabaptists" and is also respected for being one of the first well-known modern pacifists.

TEAM 2

1. **Julia Roberts** Hollywood movie actress best known for her roles in *Pretty Woman*, *My Best Friend's Wedding*, and *Ocean's Eleven*.
2. **Francis Xavier Cabrini** A social activist in Chicago, Mother Cabrini opened the city's first Italian immigrant school in 1899. Also founded orphanages across the country.
3. **Venus & Serena Williams** Professional tennis players and sisters who have both won all four USTA Grand Slam Titles.
4. **Oprah Winfrey** American talk-show host, media personality, Hollywood actress, and magazine publisher.
5. **Mel Trotter** Former alcoholic who founded and directed the Grand Rapids, Michigan City Rescue Mission for more than forty years.
6. **Shaquille O'Neal** Professional NBA player, rap star, and Hollywood movie actor. Has won NBA championships with the LA Lakers and the Miami Heat.
7. **Katherine Drexel** Dedicated her life and inheritance to the needs of oppressed Native Americans and African Americans in the West and Southwest United States and was a vocal advocate of racial tolerance. Founded the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament for Indians and Colored People.
8. **Jimi Hendrix** American singer, songwriter, and guitarist. Considered the top guitarist in *Rolling Stone Magazine's* 100 Greatest Guitarists of All Time.
9. **Thomas Merton** American writer, poet, and peace activist. Known for his dedication to inter-religious understanding and peace.

