

An Advent Bible Study
Based on African American Spirituals

Mary
Had a
Baby



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✧ Opening Meditation ✧

ADVENT

It is a time of expectation and anxiety.

It is a day when we tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love.

We remember how you came, Lord, and we anxiously await your return.

You promised to return, and like Israel in the days of old, we expectantly await the fulfillment of your promise.

It is hard down here, Lord, and we know that you know all about it.

They treated you mean; treat us mean too!

Your body [would be] broken, but you came anyway.

They made you be born in a manger, but you came anyway.

Our eyes was blind, but you came anyway.

We didn't know who you were.

And so, *sweet, little Jesus boy*, we gather today, looking for you to show up in our celebration [and in our study], as we wait for you to come again,

All grown up, with all power in your hands. Hallelujah!

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✧ Introduction ✧

The birth of Jesus is celebrated in many kinds of songs: carols, hymns, oratorios and cantatas, and the African American spiritual. And yet the season of Advent is not just preparation for the Christmas season: putting up decorations, buying presents, baking treats, and lighting candles. The Advent season is the preparation in our hearts for the second coming of Jesus Christ. The season serves as our confession that even though we did not know who Jesus was when God came wrapped in flesh the first time, we are cultivating a value system that embraces the hope, joy, transformation, and communal healing that will be realized when Christ returns. African American spirituals provide an excellent medium by which to cross the divide between the first and second coming of Christ. Through them, all people can come to a better understanding of the unconditional love, justice, mercy, hope, faith, and community that Jesus brings for the flourishing of all God's children.

The African American spiritual represents a unique form in sacred music. The theology of spirituals speaks not only of God “who sits high and looks low” but one who profoundly and unequivocally identifies with those experiencing a world of cruelty, injustice, poverty, racism, and oppression. As the spiritual “Sweet Little Jesus Boy” describes, “They treat you mean, Lord; treat me mean, too! But that’s the way it is down here.” As a song form, the spiritual reflects the African origins, social context, musical vocabulary, Christian ethos, and biblical knowledge of the enslaved black people who created it. The songs in this Advent study point to the Messiah/Christ, about whom Isaiah prophesied: “Nations will come to your light and kings to your dawning radiance” (Isaiah 60:3). Yes, in the midst of opposites being drawn together, God’s pulling down the powerful, lifting up the lowly, feeding the hungry, and sending the rich away empty (Luke 1:52-53) “a little child”—whom Christians believe to be sweet, little Jesus boy, Mary’s baby—“will lead them” (Isaiah 11:6).

Mary Had a Baby: An Advent Bible Study Based on African American Spirituals utilizes four songs: “Mary Had a Baby,” “Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow,” “Children, Go Where I Send Thee,” and “Go, Tell It on the Mountain.” The lessons will engage the birth narratives of Christ as found in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke and will invite us to a time of rebirth and renewal, to not only welcome the Christ Child but the coming Reign of God. Prepare your heart by listening to and singing along with the downloadable selections, by interpreting the lyrics, by searching the Scripture, and by committing to living out the gifts of the Nativity in the twenty-first century.

LESSON ONE

✧ Mary Had a Baby ✧

Mary had a baby, oh Lord!

Mary had a baby, oh my Lord!

Mary had a baby, oh Lord!

The people keep a-coming and the train done gone.

Verses

1. What did she name him?
2. She named him Jesus.
3. Where was he born?
4. Born in a stable.
5. Where did she lay him?
6. She laid him in a manger.

KEY VERSE: *Look! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus.* (LUKE 1:31)

LUKE 1:30-31

30 The angel said, “Don’t be afraid, Mary. God is honoring you. 31 Look! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus.”

MATTHEW 1:18-25

18 This is how the birth of Jesus Christ took place. When Mary his mother was engaged to Joseph, before they were married, she became pregnant with the Holy Spirit. 19 Joseph her husband was a righteous man. Because he didn’t want to humiliate her, he decided to call off their engagement quietly. 20 As he was thinking about this, an angel from the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, don’t be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because the child she carries was conceived by the Holy Spirit. 21 She will give birth to a son, and you will call him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” 22 Now all of this took place so that what the Lord had spoken through the prophet would be fulfilled:

23 *Look! A virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son,*

And they will call him Emmanuel. (Emmanuel means “God with us.”)

24 When Joseph woke up, he did just as an angel from God commanded and took Mary as his wife. 25 But he didn’t have sexual relations with her until she gave birth to a son. Joseph called him Jesus.

Meditation

Babies are awe inspiring! The birth of any child is a miracle that in the best of circumstances begins with conception in a loving relationship. So much more the case with Mary's baby, conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit because of God's love for humanity. A scared, pregnant, and unmarried teen, Mary went off into the Judean highlands to visit her older cousin Elizabeth, who was also expecting. When Mary entered the home of Zechariah and Elizabeth, Elizabeth's baby jumped for joy (Luke 1:44) inside her womb. Mary then began to praise God for her situation. Rather than being scared, she celebrated a sacred trust; rather than being fearful, she accepted that she had been favored. She recognized God as being one who can turn any situation around, raising up those of low estate, and humbling the proud. Rather than feeling punished, she knew that her baby was one of promise. Mary had a baby, oh my Lord!

Prayer

Dear God,

Help us to know that every baby is your baby, one for whom we should anxiously await and gladly welcome. Help us to know that each child represents wonderful possibilities for new life in a brand new world. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Watching, Waiting, Wondering (Luke 1:30-31)

Most families know the watching, waiting, and wondering of expecting a baby. What is it going to be? Will the baby be a girl or boy? What shall we name him or her? How will we decorate the room? What clothes should we buy? Pregnancy is a time of waiting. Once the pregnancy has been determined, family members watch for signs of growth. The baby moved! It's kicking! May I touch your stomach? Ah, here is the head!

These days, there are sonograms and all the tests of modern technology for answers. Sometimes an ailment is diagnosed and surgery can be performed in the womb. Of course, Mary and Joseph had a much more secure sign than even the tools of twenty-first century technology. They had a message from God that the baby would be a boy so healthy he would save the people from their sins. And even as the angel told Mary, "Don't be afraid!" pregnancy, especially a first one, is always scary.

But then, Mary had the baby. Oh my Lord! There is wonderment and awe. People may know the mechanics of the birth process; but when new life emerges, we are still amazed. And while all births are miraculous, the magnitude and power of the gift of the Christ Child called forth a divine proclamation. God loves humanity so much that God sent a gift of the Christ

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Child to come and show us how to live. How can we keep from singing? How could even those enslaved in America's "peculiar institution" not express the awe of that baby, who like them slept in a rough bed, layered with straw?

Each verse of "Mary Had a Baby" continues the story. Mary had a baby! What did she name him? She named him Jesus. Where was he born? Where did she lay him? In a stable, in a manger. Naming is important in the Bible as well as in African cultures, with naming rituals occurring on the eighth day after birth. The name indicates the new person's character and the expectations of the community. Both Mary and Joseph were told to name the baby, Jesus (Luke 1:31; Matthew 1:21). Jesus is the Greek version of the Hebrew name Yeshua or Joshua, meaning "YHWH (God) is salvation." Jesus would grow up to save, to deliver, and to liberate people from death-dealing circumstances.

Discussion Questions

1. *How are children named in your family and community?*
2. *How do names affect the social reception of children as they mature?*

This Train Is Bound for Glory

In this version of "Mary Had a Baby," every stanza ends with the refrain: "The people keep a-comin' and the train done gone." Along with the African American spiritual, trains were a new reality in the emerging industrial age of the early nineteenth century. Trains connected places that had been previously isolated, representing a way out, whether physical, spiritual, or imaginative. Train imagery figures prominently in African American lore. In the spiritual "Get on Board, Little Children," "The gospel train is coming. I hear the car wheels movin' and rumblin' through the land." People are challenged to reach the land of spiritual freedom.

There is also the historical image of the Underground Railroad, with conductors who led passengers (escapees) to stations (safe houses) on the way to physical freedom in the North. As the century progressed, there were the real trains that ran through tunnels built by heroes of legend such as John Henry, who died in a contest with a steam drill (invented in 1870). Even in the midst of the Civil Rights Movement (1960s), the Impressions were singing about trains. "People get ready, there's a train a-comin.' Don't need no ticket; you just thank the Lord!" In every case, the train is bound for a more glorious state of being, moving toward liberation and opportunity.

What did the slaves mean by placing the image of Mary's newborn baby beside that of a train station? "The people keep a-comin' and the train done gone." The phrase may constitute a spiritual warning. Mary's baby represents freedom, salvation, and deliverance, "Oh my Lord!" Do not miss

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your opportunity to worship him. Jesus is the way out from sin and death. Don't be too late! This phrase, however, could also constitute a reality check. On many plantations, Christmas was the one time of year in which everyone was allowed to relax, making it a better time to attempt an escape from slavery. In *Roots: The Gift* (often shown on TV during the Christmas season), Alex Haley reconstructs how an escape at Christmas might have been accomplished more easily. While the slaveholders and their guests at the big house were partying, the slaves in the quarters might plan a get-away. The television version demonstrates how utterly important it was for potential runaways to get to the meeting place on time. Don't be too late! You don't want the train/the conductor to be gone by the time you get there.

In "Mary Had a Baby," awe and wonder are side by side with reality. Eschatology, the branch of theology that is concerned with the end times, of which Advent is a part, is mediated by the narrative of what must be done right now. You've got to take care of that baby. With feet firmly grounded in their present situation, proclaiming a way out of oppression, in one simple song these enslaved theologians retold the story of Jesus' birth and expressed the end-time belief and the present reality that some might get left behind. You might get left behind in slavery if you are not ready to go. You may also miss the opportunity to experience eternal freedom if you do not take care of the business at hand.

Another spiritual expresses it a different way: "I got shoes, you got shoes, all God's children got shoes. When I get to heaven, gonna put on my shoes and gonna walk all over God's heaven. Everybody talkin' 'bout heaven ain't going there, heaven!" This speaks to a readiness for the coming of God's justice. As a child born in poverty, Mary's baby would not have shoes any more than the slaves did. Like Mary's baby, they were presently lying on a bed of straw; but they planned to be on that train to a brighter tomorrow. By faith they awaited a train that was bound for glory, where they could walk all over God's heaven and be free in that life from those who would deny them freedom in this one.

Discussion Questions

1. *How does this spiritual enlarge your understanding of African American history and culture?*
2. *How do the biblical story and the story of American slavery complement and/or challenge each other?*

Immanuel (Matthew 1:18-25)

Matthew sets the stage with an account of Jesus' genealogy (1:1-17). He wants to prove to his audience that the story is about a Hebrew and a figure of royal lineage. The story is about Jesse's family. His son David brought the

tribes of Israel, the Hebrew children, to unity and glory. Particular women such as David's grandmother Ruth are also included. The account also serves to remind of God's saving action in history. From the nomad Abraham to King David, from exile in Babylon to the return to Judea, God was present. God was with the people. After this appropriate introduction, Matthew is now ready to tell the story. Here's what happened:

Mary and Joseph were engaged. In ancient times, *betrothal* meant that couples were as good as married legally and socially but not sexually. Joseph had a dilemma. He had observed the social mores of the day and refrained from sexual relations with Mary during their engagement, but Mary came up pregnant. By law, Joseph could have had Mary stoned to death. Her pregnancy appeared to be evidence of her unfaithfulness to him and to the community. The penalty for adultery was death (Deuteronomy 22:13-21). Because Joseph was a righteous man, he did not want to expose her to public humiliation and death. After making the decision to call off the engagement quietly, Joseph received a revelation from an angel. In a dream, the angel told Joseph that Mary had conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and not to be afraid. The angel also provided the child's name: Jesus. In verse 23, the angel makes the link with Old Testament prophecy, telling Joseph that Mary's baby is part of the promise of salvation for God's people, an indication that God has not forgotten; God is with us still. A young woman has conceived and will bear a baby boy. He will be called Immanuel, "God is with us." Joseph awoke and obeyed the voice of God by completing the contract with Mary, marrying her and naming the baby Jesus.

By singing about the birth of a Savior so long ago, by acknowledging the arrival of Immanuel, the enslaved demonstrated an understanding that even in slavery God was present as they brought forth new generations. Hope is the gift every child brings to the world. Each child carries the light of God within by which it may receive the gospel of Jesus Christ. Every pregnant woman bears a potential liberator, one who may be anointed to increase freedom and justice in the world and point someone to Jesus Christ. The gift of new life and the presence of Immanuel help us experience the immediacy of God right here and right now.

Discussion Questions

1. What can we learn about family dynamics from the interactions of angels, God, Mary, and Joseph?
2. How have you experienced God's presence during Advent? How do you experience it during the Christmas season?

Twenty-first Century Nativity: Honoring Mother and Child

Too many in twenty-first century America take for granted that a pregnant woman will have a safe delivery. Yet throughout the world, childbirth remains a major cause of death for mother and child. In fact, the African American infant mortality rate of 13.1 per 1,000 is higher than that of Romania (11 per 1,000), and more than double the rate of white American women (5.6 per 1,000), which is beaten by Japan (2.6) and many other countries, although not by any in Africa or South America.* Studies show that while lifestyle choices (smoking, obesity, HIV/AIDS) can make an impact, the mortality rate is the same for black women without these factors. Birth weight is also important. A 2007 study in Chicago revealed that the birth weight of babies born to first-generation African and Caribbean women dropped to 6.8 pounds compared with their immigrant mothers' babies (7.3 pounds), while the babies of white women remained at 7.5 pounds. Befuddled doctors concluded that the stress of racism, endured by black women spending their entire lives in America, affects mother and child.**

For children born during slavery, their families knew that they were being born into hard times. In slavery, it could mean the disruption of a family line by means of the auction block. Nevertheless, in hope the ancestors would always ask a question at the birth of each child, "Is this the one?" "Is this [our Moses], the one who will get us out of slavery?" "Is this the one through whom God will bring salvation?" In childbirth, mother and child are performing a sacred act. What would happen if we were to greet every birth as an indication of the promise of God's love and saving purpose in the world?

While neither Mary nor Joseph speak in Matthew's birth narrative, our featured song returns Mary's voice to her. Mary is questioned. Mary names. Mary acts. Perhaps the powerless slaves identified with the many women of the Bible whose voices and names are often obscured. In the twenty-first century, the people of God are called to acknowledge and listen to the voices of mothers, women, and girls. Girls and boys must be taught self-respect and the importance of speaking for themselves: not letting others rob them of their voices or put words in their mouths. Let us remember the case of 2013 Nobel Peace Prize nominee Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani schoolgirl (born in 1997) who in 2012 was shot in the head in a botched assassination attempt, for speaking in favor of education for women. In the twenty-first century, we must advocate equality for women in every aspect of life, including the church. Honoring mothers is a first step in honoring all people.

The next step is to honor the children. It is hypocritical to drool over the Christ Child while failing to be concerned about the birth, health, and wealth of children in the twenty-first century. For more than 30 years, Marian

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Wright Edelman has honored children through the nonprofit advocacy organization she founded in 1973. Through the Children's Defense Fund, Edelman is striving to level the playing field for children through education, health insurance, food programs, housing, and violence prevention.***

While Mary's story is one of the divine hand at work in human history, it can be interpreted as a cautionary tale on teen pregnancy. Her potential plight is a reminder that parenting is not a game and bringing children into the world and raising them is a shared responsibility. Having sex outside the covenant of marriage can lead to a serious situation. What happens if Joseph is not honorable? Critical to loving the Lord, our neighbor, and ourselves is cherishing the sacredness of our bodies, respecting the bodies of others (thus doing no harm), and honoring the gift of sexuality and procreation. As such, our beliefs are foundational to our values and our activity. And yet children are not responsible for how they come into this world. The children keep a-comin'. We must be the train in the station that welcomes the gift of life, and honors mother and child, living with hope for the salvation of our community through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Discussion Questions

1. *The number of children born out of wedlock in the black community has actually decreased in the twenty-first century. What do you think accounts for this?*
2. *What can churches do to help children in their communities flourish?*

References

*http://open.salon.com/blog/howard_steven_friedman/2012/06/26/us_infant_mortality_rate_higher_than_other_wealthy_countries

**<http://rolandmartinreports.com/blog/2012/11/washington-watch-why-are-infant-mortality-rates-so-high-among-african-americans-video/>

***<http://www.childrensdefense.org/about-us/>

* LEADER GUIDE *

To the Leader

The Leader Guide will help you prepare to lead the lessons as well as organize class time. It is included in this resource as an economical device to help those who are facilitating this study for adult learners. It has been updated from the 2003 edition. Before getting into the lessons, be sure to read the Opening Meditation and the Introduction on pages 4 and 5. These will set the stage by illuminating the nature of Advent and of the African American spiritual. Encourage the participants to read them as well.

THE MUSIC

Because each lesson is based on an African American spiritual, the music is crucial in teaching the lessons. While the lyrics are provided at the beginning of each of the lessons, you will need to download the digital song files, using this link: AbingdonPress.com/MaryHadABaby. The lyrics correspond to this particular arrangement. However, rather than listening to each song, you may also choose to have the participants sing each song as part of a devotional time that would include:

1. Listening to or singing the music.
2. Reading the Scripture, the Key Verse, and the story passage.
3. Reading the meditation.
4. Praying.

THE BIBLE LESSON

Prepare each lesson ahead of time. Read through the lessons, along with all of the referenced Scripture. This study is particular to the Advent season, with an emphasis of preparing our hearts for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. During Advent, we also prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus as a baby. Allow the lessons to help you meditate on the reason for the season in ways that will communicate joy and expectation for the participants. Each lesson begins with an introduction entitled “Watching, Waiting, Wondering” in order to facilitate the expectations of Advent.

Each lesson will end with a section entitled “Twenty-first Century Nativity.” It will help summarize and contextualize biblical and cultural/historical teaching in a way that keeps the community grounded in Advent, what we need to do as we continue to look for Jesus to come back. Each lesson will help the participants

take stock of how the past affects the present and the future and what the Christ Child might expect from disciples on behalf of all of God's children.

Many of the sections have discussion questions at the end. Utilize them in the best way to stimulate learning for the participants. Additionally, the Leader Guide includes ice-breakers, additional questions, activities, and information that you may find helpful. As you plan your class time, make decisions about what to include. Or you may find that you need the additional information to fill in the time and enhance conversation.

THE GROUP MEETING

Be sure to bring everything that you may need to create a stimulating learning and worship environment. You may need a computer to play the downloadable songs or some hymnals if you are choosing to have the group sing. Bring visuals that will help the participants stay focused. A miniature nativity scene would be perfect. Traditionally, the baby Jesus is not added to the nativity scene until Christmas Day; so using this kind of visual will remind the participants that we are waiting for Jesus to come.

Pray throughout the preparation process. Ask God to work with you as you apply your mind and heart to study. God will increase your ability to be fruitful and effective with your adult participants if you are willing to put in the necessary time. Take notes as you study. Be ready for new insights. Do additional research to resolve any questions in your mind.

During class, facilitate the conversation so that all participants have an opportunity to contribute. By listening patiently to each expression, you encourage all participants to do the same. At the same time, be mindful of persons who may monopolize the conversation or offer judgmental opinions. Be as gracious as possible in steering the discussion back to the material at hand. Encourage the participants to read the lesson before the class meets so that they too can bring insights and new information. Don't be afraid to move away from the text, even as you want to cover the material included during the designated time. Remember that the ultimate goal is that you and your students experience the fellowship of growing together in Jesus Christ.

LESSON ONE: Mary Had a Baby, page 7

LUKE 1:30-31; MATTHEW 1:18-25

KEY VERSE: *Look! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus.* (LUKE 1:31)

YOUR PREPARATION

- * Review the song lyrics as you listen to “Mary Had a Baby.”
- * Read the Scripture lesson.
- * Before reading the Meditation, read “Mary’s Song” (Luke 1:46-55). You may choose to refer to it during class.
- * Review the directions for the ice-breaker and decide whether to include it.
- * Take time to research and review the additional information included. You may choose to read through the genealogies of Jesus in Matthew 1:1-17 and Luke 3:23-38.
- * Remember to pray.

DURING CLASS

Opening (with an ice-breaker)

- To engage participants immediately, play the name game as they arrive.
- A. The first person, which could be you, gives his or her name, placing an adjective or description in front of the name.
 - B. The second person repeats what the first person said and then adds his or her own name and descriptor, and so on. Examples: “I am Musical Marilyn.” Second person: “You are Musical Marilyn, and I am Dynamite David.” Third person: “Dynamite David and Musical Marilyn, I’m Victorious Ms. Vee!”
 - C. Since participants will continue to arrive during the game, ask those who have had a turn to repeat their names for the newcomers. Allow 2–3 minutes.
- * Have the participants open their books to page 7 and direct their attention to the lyrics. Play the music for “Mary Had a Baby” as the participants read the words.
 - * Have the class read the Key Verse in unison.
 - * Ask a volunteer to read the Scripture lesson aloud.
 - * Read the Meditation on page 8 aloud.
 - * Have the class read in unison the Prayer.

Watching, Waiting, Wondering (Luke 1:30-31), page 8

- * Ask a volunteer to read this section.
 - * Refer the participants to page 38 to see the Hebrew names for God; or simply mention that there are many names, listing a few examples.
 - * Engage the participants with the Discussion Questions concerning family naming traditions and name acceptance in society. You may choose to include this commentary: Sometimes celebrities give their
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children unusual names: Blue Ivy (Beyonce and Jay Z), for example. In the African American community, some have moved toward combination names (parts of father and mother's names) or made-up names and have moved away from the biblical, ancestral, and African names. What do you think of these practices?

Names for God and the Meanings

El Shaddai (Lord God Almighty)

El Elyon (The Most High God)

Adonai (Lord, Master)

Yahweh-YHWH (the Hebrew name for God, often pronounced *Jehovah*)

Jehovah Nissi (The Lord My Banner)

Jehovah-Raah (The Lord My Shepherd)

Jehovah Rapha (The Lord That Heals)

Jehovah Shammah (The Lord Is There)

Jehovah Tsidkenu (The Lord Our Righteousness)

Jehovah Mekoddishkem (The Lord Who Sanctifies You)

El Olam (The Everlasting God)

Elohim (God)

Qanna (Jealous)

Jehovah Jireh (The Lord Will Provide)

Jehovah Shalom (The Lord Is Peace)

Jehovah Sabaoth (The Lord of Hosts)

This Train Is Bound for Glory, page 9

- * Have several participants take turns reading this section aloud, one paragraph at a time.
- * Engage the participants with the discussion questions by reminding them that the creation of spirituals and of a Christian identity occurred over time. Africans did not walk the plank from the slave ship, singing spirituals.
- * You may also choose to give this commentary: Many slaves lived in “Advent mode”—expecting/anticipating. What does it mean to live in perpetual expectation? After long periods of time, how does one keep hope alive? Do unfulfilled hopes strengthen or weaken faith?

Immanuel (Matthew 1:18-25), page 10

- * Participants may find it interesting to compare the genealogy of Jesus found in Matthew 1:1-17 with the one in Luke 3:23-38. Do not let the discussion take more time than necessary. Point out that the genealogies were included as proofs so that people of Jewish descent would believe.
 - * Ask participants take turns reading this section aloud, a paragraph at a time.
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- * Be prepared to read aloud Deuteronomy 22:13-21, concerning the stoning of pregnant unmarried women. Have participants comment on Joseph's involvement in protecting his wife and providing for her child. How is his behavior an example in the twenty-first century?

More Discussion Questions

- How can churches and communities promote the understanding that "each child carries the light of God within"?*
- Do African Americans still look for a potential liberator?*

Twenty-first Century Nativity: Honoring Mother and Child, page 12

- * After the first two paragraphs are read aloud, take a moment for participants to discuss the question at the end of paragraph 2: "What would happen if we were to greet every birth as an indication of the promise of God's love and saving purpose in the world?"
- * Continue the reading, and end the lesson with a brief discussion.
- * Remind the participants to read the next lesson before the next meeting.
- * Ask for a participant to close out in prayer.

LESSON TWO: Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow, page 14

LUKE 2:15; MATTHEW 2:1-12

KEY VERSE: *When they heard the king, they went; and look, the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stood over the place where the child was.* (MATTHEW 2:9)

YOUR PREPARATION

- * Review the song lyrics as you listen to "Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow." The words for the third verse begin at the bottom of page 17.
- * Read the Scripture lesson.
- * In reading the Meditation, locate and read all of the Scripture references.
- * Look for either a photo or computer image of the constellation "The Big Dipper." Be able to identify the North Star.
- * Take time to research and review the additional information included.
- * Many adults like arts and crafts. If you choose to, plan to have the participants decorate a small gourd. Have on hand a cleaned gourd for each participant, some paint pens, and paper towels and other items for cleaning up. Have the supplies available at the beginning of class.
- * Remember to pray.