



A Christmas Series – Lesson 1

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Leader Outline

Lesson: Making Room

Main text: Luke 2:6-7

Description: There was no room for Jesus in the inn on the night He was born. Is there room for Him in your heart and life? If there's not, it's up to you to change that. He's not going to force His way in.

Supplies:

- Small, clear Tupperware container with a lid
- Enough Hershey's bars to fill the container to the brim (fill the container before the message)
- A small action figure or other object that will fit in the container

Game: No Room for you here!

Small Group Questions:

1. What is special about Jesus being born in a stable instead of an inn?
2. Is that the way you would expect the savior of the world to be born? If not, how?
3. Have you ever stopped to think about whether or not there's room in your heart and life for Jesus?
4. What are some things that take up room in your life that aren't so good?
5. Have you ever felt Jesus standing at your "door" and knocking? Have you let Him in?
6. If not, what's stopping you?
7. Do you sometimes feel like you need to get your life in order and your heart right *before* you can invite Jesus into every part of your life?
8. How does it make you feel to know that Jesus is so in love with you that He wants to be in every part of your life?
9. If your life ended tomorrow, do you think you would wish you had spent more time letting Jesus in?
10. What are some ways you can let Jesus in to every area of your life this week?

Game

Split the group up into groups of one, two, and three, with the exception of two players. Those two players are “it.”

Send half of the groups to hide while the second half close their eyes. Play a song (a Christmas Carol, if you want to get everyone in the spirit of the message!) while the first half of the group hides.

Once the song is over, the second half of the group opens their eyes. Their objective is to go find people who are already hidden and hide with them (like sardines).

The rules are that you have to stay with your group (group of one, two, or three), and you have to **hide in groups of four**. This means that if someone is alone, they have to find a group of three to hide with, a group of two has to find a group of two to hide with, and a group of three has to find a solo person to hide with.

The second group gets a thirty second head start while the two people who are “it” wait behind. Once thirty seconds is up, those two get to start looking for everyone who hasn’t hidden yet.

If a group who is trying to hide comes upon a group that is too large or small to hide with, the group that is already hidden will shout, “no room for you here!” giving away that there’s someone not hidden in that area.

Once the two players who are “it” tag a team who has not hidden yet, that team is out and the round is over.

For the next round, switch teams—the ones who hid first are now the ones who have to find a group to hide with, and vice versa.

The last two teams to still be in the game without getting caught win!

Teach

When we hear the Christmas story of Jesus being born, two things that really stand out are *where* He was born and *how* He was born. Let me give you a little back-story here. The first census ever has just been taken. In those days, they didn't have email, where you just send over your information. They didn't have phones or texting. So to register for this census, everyone had to travel to a different city.

Any guesses on how they traveled?

They walked, and they rode animals. Most of you wouldn't even want to walk home, so can you imagine having to walk to a whole new city? And when you weren't walking, riding a donkey or a camel?

Now, since they didn't have cars or trains or anything, it may seem like this stinky, sweaty mode of transportation wasn't all that weird to them. And it probably wasn't, except for one little detail.

Mary was pregnant. *Very* pregnant.

Now, we live in a world full of celebrities and people who are treated as very important. A good portion of the world got up at four in the morning to watch a royal wedding. People go crazy over the Kardashians. All of these people are treated differently. They're given a lot of things because of their status.

So with that in mind, how would you expect the modern pregnant woman who had been chosen to be the mom of the entire world's savior to be treated days before her delivery?

Personally, I'd expect her to be pretty pampered. I'd expect her to be spending the day in a spa, getting a massage. Or maybe spending the day decorating her unborn baby's nursery. Or maybe just spending some time relaxing. Either way, I wouldn't expect her to be traveling at all, and I definitely would not expect to see her riding on a donkey.

Now, how would you expect the savior of the world's birth to look like? A fancy hotel with clean sheets? A nice hospital room with fancy amenities?

And what about after He was born? You would expect family and friends to be visiting. For paparazzi to be hiding around the corner, trying to get a good picture.

Let's see how it actually looked.

Read Luke 2:6-7:

While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped Him in cloths and placed Him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. - Luke 2:6-7

Wow. Definitely not what I would have expected.

I mean, we've got the savior of the world in the flesh here, and He's born in a stable, not even in His parents' hometown. He doesn't even have a bed waiting for Him upon His arrival to earth, but instead He has to sleep in a manger.

Not exactly the amenities you would imagine for the Son of God, are they? But because there was no room for them in the inn, they had to stay in a stable. Instead of close friends and family surrounding them, they had animals.

Now, this is truly wonderful, because we see from the very beginning how much Jesus loves us. He was willing to get down and dirty for our sin, from the very beginning of His life.

So we read this story now and it gives us a nice, warm, fuzzy feeling to think about Jesus loving us so much that He was born in a stable with animals all around Him and angels singing, but we forget about what got them to that point; His family was denied a room, because the rooms were all full.

And sadly, sometimes we deny Him a room, too.

Read Revelation 3:20:

Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me. – Revelation 3:20

It's interesting to see that it says, "I stand at the door and knock" instead of, "I'm coming in to be with you" or, "I'm at the door, let me in!"

Jesus is going to knock, but He's not going to force His way in.

Now, back to inns that denied Mary and Joseph. They didn't deny them a room because they didn't want them there, but because all of the rooms were full due to so many people traveling for the census.

When we deny Jesus room in our hearts, it's not always because we mean to. It's not always because there's a big sin in our life that we don't want Him to see or because we've decided we don't want Him in our life. No, sometimes it's just because we have too much other stuff in our life.

Not all of that stuff is bad. Sports, school, friends . . . those are all good things. But if

you let your heart become too focused on those things, you may start to forget to spend time with Jesus. And before too long, it's been a couple of weeks, and you can't remember when the last time you prayed was.

Before you know it, you can end up leaving Jesus out in the cold, knocking and waiting to come in.

Now, I need a volunteer.

Get out Tupperware container full of Hershey's Bars.

Okay, I've got a container here full of candy bars. Candy bars are good, right? Right. I'm glad we all agree.

I've also got this action figure, and he's also pretty cool.

We're going to pretend that this container represents good things that are important to me. I really like this action figure, so I'm going to need you to put him in the container and shut the lid.

Allow the volunteer to do this. Eventually, in order to fit the action figure in, they're going to have to take some chocolate bars out.

Okay, let's talk about that. The action figure, which I really like, couldn't fit in. What was the only way to fit him in? We had to take some chocolate bars out.

Does that mean that the chocolate bars are bad? Of course not. But there's only so much room in the container.

Now, before they (the volunteer) removed some chocolate bars, what were they doing? They were trying to force the action figure in, and it just wasn't working.

Jesus is never going to force His way into your life. Sometimes, I wish He would do that for some of you. But He's not going to. I can never force you to let Jesus into your life, and He's never going to force Himself in. Why? Because it wouldn't be real.

Let's say you have a friend who you just love so much. You love hanging out with them, and you love talking to them. But here's the problem—they never seem to want to talk to you. Every time you ask them to hang out, they make an excuse to not see you.

What if they got in trouble at school, and their punishment was that they were forced to sit and talk with you for an hour every day. Would that be true friendship?

Of course not! It doesn't matter how much you love them, or how badly you want to be

friends. If someone is forcing them to hang out with you, nothing about that is genuine.

Jesus is not going to force His way in. We have to accept Him. And what a gift it is to be able to make that choice. I promise you, choosing to let Jesus into your heart and life will be the best choice you have ever made.

Christmas is a great time to reflect on all God did for you. It's a wonderful season to think about how Jesus loved us so much. He was born in a dirty, smelly barn so that He could one day die for our sins.

It's also a great time to reflect on if you have made room for Him. I'm sure that you'll hear the Christmas story many times this season. Next time you think of Jesus being born in a manger, don't just think of how great it is. Think of how He, even before He was born, was turned away because there was no room for Him. And ask yourself if you're doing the same thing.

Small Group Questions

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Teach – Wrap Up

We all have things in our lives that have to be removed in order to make room for Jesus.

I want you spend a few minutes thinking about what those things are in your life. I'm going to turn a song on, and I just want you to sit and pray for a minute about what God would want you to remove from you heart or life in order to make more room for Jesus.

Play an appropriate worship song.

Obviously, it was God's plan for Jesus to be born in a stable and not in an inn. But just think of how different things would have been for that inn if the innkeeper had welcomed Jesus and His family in that night. Everyone there would have gotten to experience it all—the birth of the savior, the angels coming down and singing—everything.

That inn would have become a special place—the place Jesus was born. People would probably have traveled far and wide just to get a glimpse of the place of birth of their savior. Instead, it's just another inn that eventually faded into history.

Don't let your life be like that. Don't get to the end of your life and look back, only to think of how different things would have been if you simply would have made room for Jesus.