

KidZone

Guide 3



He Did It
for LOVE

“Wake up, sleepyhead!”
Shari shouted. “It’s
Christmas morning!”

Todd squinted at the alarm clock. Six o’clock. “Uggggggghhhh,” he moaned, “it’s way too early.” But since the tree was bulging with presents he figured it was worth dragging himself out of bed—even if it was still dark outside.

As Todd lumbered down the stairs, he glanced out the window. “Hey look out by the barn!”

“What is it—Santa Claus?” Shari smirked.

“No . . . it’s that stray cat again.”

Todd and Shari joined their mom at the kitchen sink as they peered out the window. The scrawny cat lay shivering under the hay truck. Todd fetched another can of cat food. When he opened the sliding glass door, the cat bolted into the bushes. Todd set the food on the porch and then joined the family at the breakfast table. “Well, at least the cat ate what we put out there last night. Maybe someday that goofy cat will figure out that we’re only trying to help her stay alive.”

“Too bad we don’t speak cat talk,” Shari mused.

“Huh?” Todd was confused.

“If we knew how to talk the cat’s language we could explain that we’re her friends,” Shari said. “But since she can’t understand what we say, she doesn’t know that we’re her friends and not her enemies.”

“Good point,” Mom said as she opened the family Bible. She turned to Luke 2 to read the Christmas story—

just as she did every year before opening presents. “You know, God faces a similar problem when He tries to tell people how much He loves them. Adam and Eve knew God as their Friend, but after they sinned, that friendship was broken. People started blaming God for all the bad stuff that happened. They saw God as their enemy rather than a friend. So God became one of us in order to communicate how much He loves us.”

“That’s why Jesus came as a baby in a manger, isn’t it?” Shari said. “He wanted to be able to talk to us in our own language.”

“Yes, that’s exactly why Jesus, the Son of God, came here and was born in Bethlehem,” Mom replied.

Jesus’ birth

The Christmas story is a familiar one. Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem, where Jesus was born. They laid Him in a manger because there was no room in the inn. Angels told shepherds where to find the Baby. Later wise men followed a star to worship Him.



1. Read Matthew 1:21 and write down why Jesus was born.

As we learned in Lesson 2, when Adam and Eve sinned, the result was death. In fact, every person on earth is doomed to die forever, because we have all sinned. Because God loves us so much, He did not want that to happen. So God the Father,

God the Son (Jesus), and God the Holy Spirit agreed upon a plan. It called for Jesus to leave heaven and be born as a human baby on this earth.

How well do you know the story of Christmas?

1. Why did Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem?

- A** Vacation.
- B** To buy Christmas gifts.
- C** To be registered.
- D** To visit family.

2. When the angel visited the shepherds, they were watching over their

- A** Herd of donkeys.
- B** Flock of sheep.
- C** Herd of camels.
- D** Herd of horses.

3. When Jesus was born, there was a special star in the sky.

- T** **F**

4. What is "myrrh"?

- A** A precious fabric.
- B** A fragrant spice.
- C** A scary video.
- D** A precious metal.

5. What did the angels sing when Jesus was born?

- A** "Silent Night, Holy Night."
- B** "Silver Bells."
- C** "Glory to God in the highest."
- D** Angelicas in B-flat minor.
- E** None of the above.

Answers: 1. C. (See Luke 2:4, 5.) 2. B. (See Luke 2:8.) 3. True. (See Matthew 2:2.) 4. B. (See John 19:39, 40.) 5. C. (See Luke 2:14.)

Jesus' life

Jesus came to show us what God is like. He is our example of how to live. Jesus shows us what it means to follow God.

2. Read John 14:9 and then write in your own words what it says about Jesus and God the Father.

When Jesus lived on this earth, He was perfect in every way. Because He never sinned, He could take the punishment—death—that we deserve. That’s how much God loves you and me.

Jesus’ death

God’s plan called for Jesus not only to live on this earth, but also to die here. The prophet Isaiah foretold Jesus’ terrible death on the cross many years before it happened. “But because of our sins he [Jesus] was wounded, beaten because of the evil we did. We are healed by the punishment he suffered” (Isaiah 53:5, TEV).

Jesus willingly died on a cross in our place. His back was torn from a brutal beating. His hands and feet were nailed to a cross. He was forced to wear a crown made of thorns. He was buried in a borrowed grave. This is what sin did to our Savior, Jesus—and what it should have done to us. Aren’t you thankful that He took the punishment that we deserve?

It’s hard to imagine how horrible Jesus’ death was. But the story doesn’t end there. Just a few days later God brought Jesus back to life. Today the Easter holiday celebrates this joyful event.

Because Jesus died for you and me, we can find forgiveness rather than death whenever we mess up. That’s why we don’t have to worry about our sins—because Jesus pardons those who have asked to be forgiven. Through Jesus we not only have forgiveness but we can live free from a burden of sin. We can live with peace and security in our relationship with Jesus.

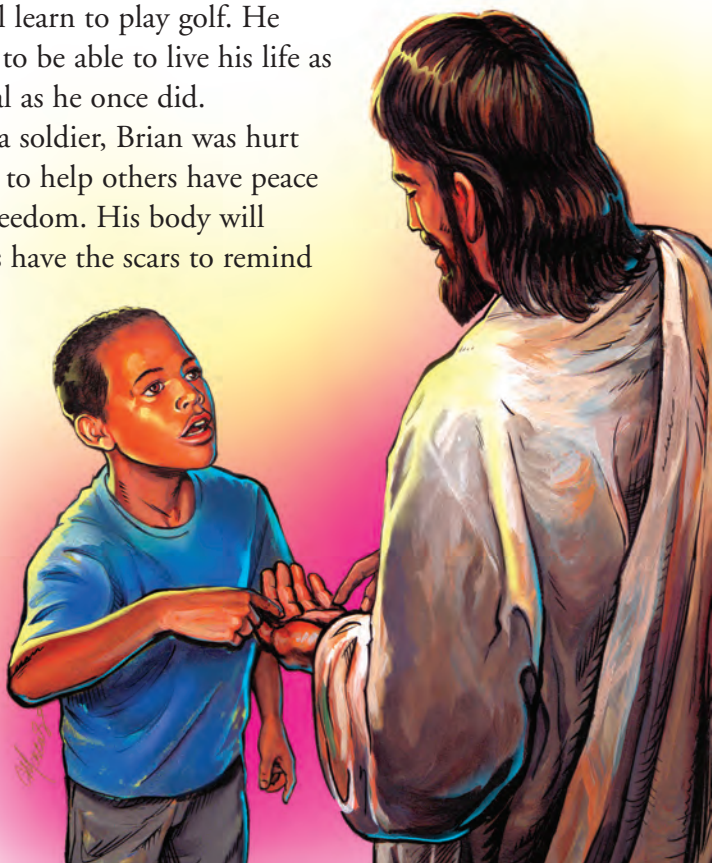
If you read the newspaper or watch television news you know about war. A recent newspaper article shared Brian’s story. Brian’s story helps us to understand Jesus’ sacrifice and love for each of us.

Brian is a soldier. He became a soldier to protect freedom and to provide freedom to others. He risks his life so others can live without oppression. While fighting in a war a road-side bomb blew up under the Humvee in which he was riding. His world changed instantly. The driver of the Humvee was killed and Brian was badly hurt.

Brian was taken by helicopter to a hospital where he was treated for a broken jaw, a broken arm and many other injuries.

Brian says his injuries may keep him from throwing a football again or playing second base as he did in high school. But he hopes that he can. Brian thinks that maybe he will learn to play golf. He wants to be able to live his life as normal as he once did.

As a soldier, Brian was hurt trying to help others have peace and freedom. His body will always have the scars to remind



him and others of his sacrifice. When Jesus was nailed to the cross he also suffered so we can have freedom from our sins. Jesus will always have the scars. His scars are a reminder for us of Jesus' love and care for us.

When we are tempted to do wrong, remember the scars from the nails in Jesus' hands. When Jesus was nailed to the cross those scars were a bleeding sore. The beautiful news is that you can live forever with Jesus because of His sacrifice for you.

These ugly sores, reminders of Jesus' death, bring beautiful news. You see, one day God will decide whether each person will suffer the punishment for sin—death—or will live forever with Him in heaven.

3. According to Acts 16:31, what do we need to do to escape the punishment?

Why would Jesus do it?

A writer named Brennan Manning tells the heartwarming story of seven-year-old Richard Ballenger in Anderson, South Carolina. It was the day before Christmas. Richie's mother was busily wrapping some packages and asked her young son if he would please shine her shoes. Soon Richie was finished, and with a proud smile he handed his mother the shoes. They looked like they had been dipped in a bucket of shellac. His mother was so pleased she handed him a quarter.

On Christmas morning, as Mom put on the shoes to go to church, she felt a strange lump in one shoe. Taking it off,

she shook the shoe—and out dropped a quarter wrapped in a small piece of paper. On the paper, in Richie’s childish scrawl, were the words: “I did it for love.”

That’s the reason Jesus was born as a baby on this earth and died on a cross. In the manger we unwrap the very first Christmas gift of all, and we can imagine wrinkled wrapping paper with the handwriting of God: “I did it for love.” As Jesus hangs on the cross, He exclaims throughout the universe: “I did it for love.”

Christians don’t have to fear the punishment for sin. Jesus’ love has paid the penalty!

Talking to God

Pray this prayer to tell Jesus that you believe in Him:

Dear God, I am a sinner. No matter how good I try to be, I’ll never be good enough on my own to make it to heaven. I believe You can forgive me for all my sins because You came as a baby and lived on this earth, and then died on a cross for me. Thank You for living and dying for me. I accept Your gift of eternal life. In Jesus’ name, Amen.



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