**Christmas camping survival kit**

*“In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it…The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”* ***John 1:5-6, 14***

The miracle of Christmas is the wonder of God becoming a man and dwelling, or setting up camp among us. We have given you a Christmas camping survival kit to be used as a devotion with your family on Christmas day. In the kit you should have some beans, a candle, a band-aid, and a compass. Each of these will represent something about Jesus and His reason for coming. You will need a few things for the devotion. First, get a Ziploc bag, a little water, and some paper towels. Second, get online so you can play the songs to go with the devotion and sing them as a family. You can find the songs at the Genesis blog with youtube links to versions that have lyrics. And of course, you will need a Bible. Set the mood by having everyone gather in a place that can feel like a camp fire.

Reading

John 1:1-14 – After reading explain to everyone that Christmas is about Jesus, and the truth that God became a person who dwelt among us. God came to us and pitched a tent or set up camp. Tell your family that the devotion is a camping survival kit and that each item will help explain why we need Jesus and what He came to do.

Song

O Come All Ye Faithful - Casting Crowns version can be found here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D1MnmkVfpqE>

Jesus is our life – project with beans

***“In Him was life….”*** – Ask your family what it means that Jesus is our life. Explain that we have our physical life because we were created by God and God has given new Spiritual life through Jesus coming and dying for us. Take the beans out of the bag and have your family prepare them by putting them inside a few folded paper towels, adding a bit of water, and then putting them in Ziploc bag and sealing. Ask your family what might happen in the next few weeks with the beans. Hopefully they will say that the beans will sprout and grow. Tell your family that this can be a picture of what Jesus’ coming means for us. That we, like the beans are dead in our sin, but that Christ gives us new birth and helps us grow. Ask someone in your family to give thanks for the new life we have in Christ.

Jesus is our light – project with the candle

***“The light shines in the darkness…”***  - If possible turn out the lights, then light the candle. Tell a story about a time in your life when you couldn’t see, maybe even on a camping trip, and then how light helped you see. Share with them that when Jesus was born in Bethlehem the Light of the World had come. Ask your family to look at the light while thinking about why Jesus came, and have each person answer the question, “What is one thing about the coming of Jesus that speaks to you?”

Song

*Joy to the World –* Paul Baloche version

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZMCchG2SJVU>

Jesus brings us grace – project with band-aid

***“Full of grace”*** - Ask your family, “What is sin?” Explain that sin has left us broken, in need of forgiveness, and far from God. It is like a big wound that we can’t heal. Pull out the band-aid and ask your kids what it is and how we use it. Once they have shared that a band-aid covers a cut or wound so that it can heal, share that Jesus came to bring us grace. He was born in a manger, but later died on a cross, and he did this so that we could have our sins forgiven and our lives healed. Explain that the word “grace” means that God gives us what we need, not what we deserve. He loves us even when we sin and run from Him. And that Jesus came as one who was full of the grace of God giving us salvation as a gift.

Christmas Story – Reading

As a family read the Christmas story in Matthew 1:18-25. Ask your family to listen for the name the angel gives to Jesus (Immanuel) and what the name means (God is with us). Ask your family why God being with us is so important? Explain that the way He came by being born in Bethlehem and placed in a manger shows us that he came for everyone, and that God is still with us. Christmas reminds us that God is with us.

Jesus, full of truth – Project with the compass

Pull the compass out and show it to everyone, and let everyone have it. Show your family how it works, and how to find north. Ask them how having this might help when you are camping especially if you get lost in the woods. Explain that like a compass, Jesus shows us the truth about God, and by coming he shows us how to live our lives and which way we should go. Explain that using a compass does take some training so that we can use it effectively. Ask your family to think of ways we can grow in knowing God’s truth and living by it (reading the Bible, prayer, going to church…).

Song

*Angels We Have Heard on High* – David Crowder version

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c6qnrA-oNWk>

Prayer

\*Give each of the items from the survival kit to someone in your family and have them give thanks for what that item represents (Christ is our life, light, he is full of grace and truth) and ask God to help us understand the meaning of this in our life this Christmas and in the coming year.