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THERE WAS NO
'PEACE ON EARTH'
FOR ME AT THAT
MOMENT.

Inspire (for parents)

I repeatedly slammed the freezer door, packages of frozen food spilling onto the floor. At one point, I didn't know if I could stop. I admit it—I snapped! My nine- and eleven-year-old daughters were playing upstairs unaware that mom had lost it. (You'd think they would have at least been curious about all the banging.) They had been arguing with me and with each other all day. They had pushed every one of my buttons. Three years as a single parent, and I had hit the wall—I just couldn't take it anymore. There was no "peace on earth" for me at that moment, only turmoil, anger, and fear.

We all have our desperate days. In these moments the lyrics of the song "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day" seem all too real, "And in despair I bowed my head; 'There is no peace on earth,' I said."

It's been 11 years since the day "mommy lost it." I know now that I was never alone. I've given up the quest to parent perfectly. My girls have watched me learn to lean into Him. God's Son brings peace.

by Janet Lee

Getting Started

Scripture: Luke 2:1–20 (Birth of Jesus)

Main Point: God's Son Brings Peace

This resource is designed to allow your family to have time in God's Word **before your children attend church**. Because God's plan is for parents to be the spiritual nurturers of their children's faith, we know that as you grow spiritually, your children will grow spiritually as well.

Equip (for parents)

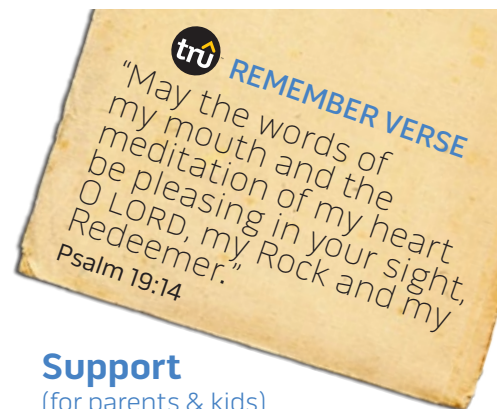
Like Pharaoh of the past and Pilate in the future, Caesar Augustus was an unknowing player in God's plan to bring peace to His people. Caesar Augustus is known as one of the greatest Roman leaders. His reign was known as *pax romana* (Rome's Peace). Because of this, many people hailed Caesar as savior. In fact, after Caesar's death, he was worshipped as a god.

Old Testament prophecies describe the Messiah as the Ruler who will bring peace to Israel and to the nations. The word for peace in the Greek is *Eirene*, which translates in Hebrew as *Shalom*. In the Bible, "peace" refers to more than the lack of conflict. Peace encompasses the actions one undergoes to bring about restoration and wholeness.

This understanding of peace is completely different from the *pax romana* under Augustus. Under the Romans, "peace" meant the subjugation of their enemies and the establishing of order. In short, the *pax romana* was not peace at all.

In stark contrast, God's Son brought peace through humility. His peace restores the relationship broken between God and humans when sin entered the world (Genesis 3:16–19). Jesus took on the world's sin as His own. As the angels told the shepherds, Jesus is the true Savior, Messiah, and Lord. Unlike Caesar, Jesus' peace is a gift offered, not a will imposed.

Without Christ, the world cannot find peace. Romans 3:16–17 tells us "ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know." In God's kingdom, peace reigns for everyone who believes. And those who are a part of His kingdom have the responsibility to use their lives, gifts, and resources to be ambassadors of God's peace.



Support
(for parents & kids)

> JUST FOR FUN, as you are driving, point out different road signs to your kids. As you do, ask them what they think each sign represents. For younger kids, look for signs with familiar meanings like a stop sign or a school crossing sign. For older kids, choose signs like yield or one-way signs.

After you have spent some time discovering the meaning of signs on the road, find a quiet time and gather your family together. Share with them that you are going to read together from The Big God Story. Before reading, pray God's Spirit will speak to each one of you. Then, read **Luke 2:1–20**. Have them listen and try to identify a sign from this portion of Scripture. After reading the passage, ask your children if they know what the sign represented. Now ask them who God showed the sign to. Remind them of what the angels said to the shepherds, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace." Share with your kids that God's Son was a sign of peace.

Tell your kids that what they just heard is a part of The Big God Story in the Bible, and they will hear it in church this week. Close your time by praying and thanking God for sending His Son, Jesus, who brings us peace.