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## OUR GOD IS A GIFT-GIVING GOD.

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### Inspire (for parents)

As a newlywed, I was offended when my mother-in-law would show up with meals she had prepared for us. This sometimes happened two or three times a week. I assumed she was saying she didn't trust me to take care of her son. Turns out I was wrong. Over time, I heard her story of growing up in a ramshackle shack in some of the poorest stretches of the Appalachian Mountains.

“My sister and I would lie in bed most nights, sometimes with snow falling on us through the roof, and listen to our stomachs rumble,” she told me. “We never knew if there would be food in the morning. More often than not, there wasn't.” To her, having an abundance of food was a gift, and making sure we had enough food was her way of saying, “I love you.”

Many of us live in abundance. Often the gifts we give are not sacrificially given. And sometimes when our children receive a gift, they aren't challenged to think about the intent in the heart of the

giver. Perhaps this is why gratefulness doesn't flow easily for us, or our children.

Our God is a gift-giving God. He gives generously without spoiling us. The intent of His heart is always, always loving and good. And giving us Jesus, the long-awaited gift, was more sacrificial than we can comprehend. Every time we hear or speak the name Jesus, it is God's way of saying to us, “I love you. I love you. I love you.”

☪ by Janet Lee

### Getting Started ☪

**Scripture:** Luke 1:1–38, 46–80  
(Zechariah and the Angel)

**Main Point:** Jesus Is God's Gift

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.

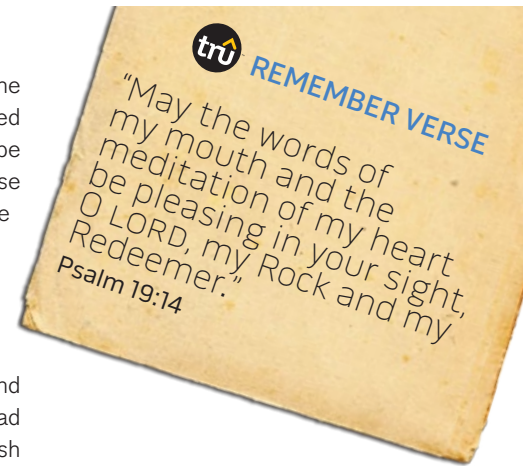
### Equip (for parents)

God was giving a loving gift to Mary when he spoke to her in Luke 1:30–33. God declared that He would send His Son who would be the Lord, the Messiah. From God's promise to Mary through the announcement of the angel, we see God once again acting on behalf of His people. We see Him bringing the long-awaited gift of His Son.

There are many promises throughout Scripture that foretell God's gift of His Son and what He will be like. In Genesis 3:15, we read that the Redeemer will be a man, “he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” We see in Genesis 12:3 that He will be Jewish—from the line of Abraham, through whom God had promised that “all peoples on earth [would] be blessed.” We know God promised David in 2 Samuel 7 the Messiah would come through his family line—a promise echoed many times through the words of the prophets during the exile. These promises are found in even more places than these, such as Psalm 89 and 132; and Isaiah 9 and 11.

We see these promises echoed: Jesus will have “the throne of his father David”; He will “reign over the house of Jacob forever.” Jesus is truly the long-awaited gift that God, in His mercy, brought in His own timing.

Jesus' mother, Mary, knew this to be true, for she praised God for “remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendents forever ...” (Luke 1:54–55). Mary knew God's love made it possible for Jesus to be the long-awaited gift for the redemption of His people. But she might not have known that God's love also made it possible for Jesus to be the long-awaited gift for the redemption of the whole world. ☪



### Support (for parents & kids)

Sometime this week, wrap an empty box or fill a gift bag with tissue, gather your family together and, **JUST FOR FUN**, take the “gift” and pass it to each family member. As you do have them take a moment to share about their favorite gift of all time. Tell them you are going to read together from The Big God Story and hear about a gift that God gave each of us. Then read **Luke 1:26–56** together as a family. After reading the passage, ask your children if they know what the gift was. Share with them that it was Jesus! Remind them that God sent His One and only Son for each of us.

When you are finished reading the passage and talking with your children, share with them that what they just heard is a part of The Big God Story in the Bible and that they will hear it in church this week. Close your time by praying and praising God for the long-awaited gift of His Son. ☪

