

## “Sonshine In The Rain”

**-It was during the rainy season in Seattle Washington when a young boy was being tucked into bed by his mother. As the rain pounded his window and the thunder roared outside, she was about to turn off the light when he asked with a tremor in his voice, “Mommy, will you sleep with me tonight?”**

**The mother smiled and gave him a reassuring hug. “I can’t dear,” she said, “I have to sleep in Daddy’s room.”**

**A long silence was broken at last by a shaken little voice saying, “The big sissy!”  
(Hopefully some laughter. :D)**

**-When we think about this story, it is funny, but rainy seasons can cause emotions of distress.**

**-Have you ever experienced a rainy season, where the sun never seemed to shine, everything was dark and dreary and the rain just didn’t seem to let up? (...)**

**-How did it make you feel? (Depressed, discouraged, hopeless, etc.)**

**-This is actually the start of our study today. It begins with a metaphorically “rainy season” in the land of Israel, the time right before Christ was born.**

**-The Romans ruled the nation of Israel with a cruel hand, taking what they wanted from the Jews with no regard to the laws.**

**-King Herod ruled over Israel and was very wicked. He even killed his own sons and wives because he was afraid they were trying to take over his throne.**

**-The Jewish leaders were appointed by Herod and were dishonest and unfair in the treatment of their own people, the Jews.**

**-They charged them high taxes that some couldn’t pay and these Jewish leaders would take their possessions or even their lives for slavery if they didn’t.**

**-After hearing this, do you believe this was a rainy season for the Jewish people? (...)**

**-Do you think they felt discouraged and hopeless? (...)**

**-Let’s bring it home today for a moment, do you sometimes feel discouraged and hopeless when you are watching the news? (...)**

**-Have you ever been discouraged by bad news that was either about you or someone you cared about? (...)**

**-Are you or someone you know in a “rainy season” in your own lives right now? (...)**

**-There is hope for all of us! Just as the Jews were feeling totally hopeless and lost, God sent His Light of hope, His Son Jesus, to lift them out of the rainy season their hearts were experiencing.**

**-We are going to learn how to focus on that true Light that can shine in our hopeless situations.**

**-To help us learn how to do this, we are going to look at the story of Joseph, Mary and God Himself from Luke chapter 2. Let’s read together verse #1 on our Verse Sheet to set the stage: (Luke 2:1-5 “ In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. [This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was**

governor of Syria.] And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a *Child*. ”)

**-We're going to take a moment and look at this "rainy season" that Joseph and Mary may have felt at this time. They were being forced to leave their home because of this new law.**

**-Do you think Mary and Joseph wanted to leave what was familiar to them? Their town, family, friends, home, job? (Why or why not?)**

**-Have you ever had to do this? (...) What was it like? (...)**

**-Let's read our next set of verses together to learn *Who* else left something familiar to come to Bethlehem, #2 on our Verse Sheet: (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.")**

**-Who was this child? (Christ)**

**-Now think about this for a minute, Mary and Joseph left everything they knew to come to Bethlehem. But what did Christ leave in order to come here to be on earth? (Heaven, where angels were at His beck and call. Where He was not confined by anything but had the power to do everything. Where He was One with His Father.)**

**-After reading this and knowing Christ left everything to be with Joseph and Mary and mankind, do you think the Lord understands when we have to leave all that is familiar and go to a new place? (...)**

**-Do you think the Lord understands when we are asked to bear something difficult by our Heavenly Father, just as He was? (...)**

**-Here He was, the King of the Universe, Creator of All that exists and worshipped on His heavenly throne by the angels, and then came down to a dirty world to bear the sins of all humanity. His heavenly being is born into a tiny, constricting, fleshly body into a dirty animal stall. Then He falls into the arms of a mother that He created and laid into an animal's feeding trough in a world that He created that rejected Him because of their own sin. And now He has to die for them, all alone and away from all His glory and His own Heavenly Father!**

**-Now, after hearing this, do you think He understands our pain in a dark and rainy season? (...)**

**-The Bible tells us there is nothing He does not understand! Hebrews 2:17-18 says "Therefore, He had to be like His brothers [humanity] *in every way*, so that He could become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For since He Himself was tested and *suffered*, He is able to help those who are tested [and suffering]."**

**-Christ understands. And the beauty of all of this is He willingly did this for you and me in obedience to the Father.**

**-*He is the Son that willingly lightens our night* if we focus on Him!**

**-Let's continue on with this beautiful story. Let's read together verse #3: (Luke 2:8-12**

“And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at *night*. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a Baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”)

**-First off, what time of day was He born? (night)**

**-Let’s stop here for a moment. What are some feelings that you or people you may know experience when nighttime falls? (Fear, dread, worry, etc.)**

**-Do you ever lay awake at night worried about something? (...)**

**-What are some things you may worry about? (Fear of the future, feelings of loneliness, disappointments, discouragement...)**

**-On this note, why do you think Jesus was born at night and not in the day? (To show us that He is the Light that can come into that darkness if we let Him. In John 8:12, it says: “When Jesus spoke again to the people, He said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the Light of Life.”)**

**-He is the “Sonshine” in our darkness if we let Him!**

**-Let’s read our next set of verses together, #4: (Luke 2:13-14 “Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on *earth peace to those on whom His favor rests.*”)**

**-What do you think that last part means, “*peace to those on whom His favor rests*”?** (God’s favor rests on those who accept this wonderful gift of Jesus, His own Son, as their Savior. Accepting Jesus Christ as our Savior opens our lives to God’s Holy Spirit, Who comes into our hearts and gives us *incredible personal peace in times of trouble*. A peace that comes in the midst of a storm that has no explanation but guards our hearts and walks us through the rain.)

**-Let’s continue on this journey and discover more about The Son that can truly lighten our rainy nights. Let’s read together verse #5 on our Verse Sheet: (Luke 2:15 “When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “*Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.*”)**

**-What are the shepherds going to do here? (Seek Jesus out!)**

**-What lesson can we learn from this in our own lives? (To seek Him out! When darkness falls in our lives, or rainy seasons, all we have to do is seek Him out. Call upon His name, and He is there with us, never leaving us! Experiencing it with us just as He did with Mary and Joseph. He is always near, we just have to turn to Him, seeking and reaching to the One who is Able to do all things!)**

**-Let’s finish our story together by reading verse #6 on our Verse Sheet together: (Luke 2:16-20 “So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the Baby, Who was lying in the manger. When they had seen Him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this Child and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But *Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned,***

*glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.”)*

**-Now, let’s take a moment and turn to Mary. What did Mary do?** (She treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.)

**-Do we *treasure* up all the good things He has done for us in the past and ponder on them?** (...)

**-Let’s take a moment and list some now:** (...)

**-How does refreshing your memory on the good He has done help you during a rainy season in your life?** (It reminds us of how faithful God was, is and will be.)

**-Did you also remember the gifts of love, peace, hope, and understanding that His Spirit gave you in the midst of the storms?** (...)

**-Remembering His faithfulness in the past gives us strength in the present season.**

**-At the end of our last verse, what did it say the shepherds did?** (They returned and glorified and praised God.)

**-The shepherds, who were the lowest in their society, *returned to their everyday lives of troubles and hardships* while offering praises and glory to God! They didn’t run away from their troubles, they praised God.**

**-Are we willing to glorify and praise God in the midst of our own troubles and hardships too?** (...)

**-Do we believe that just as Jesus was there for Mary, Joseph and the shepherds that He is here with us too?** (...)

**-Hebrews 13:5b says “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”**

**-He is our Rock, He is our Fortress and He truly is our “Sonshine” in the rainy days of life. He is our hope and our eternal peace as we walk through this life with Him.**

**-The following is a poem that may help us put it all in perspective. Let me read it to you and hopefully it will encourage you today!**

To my Lord I mean a lot  
He blesses me with all He's got  
He counts the hairs upon my head  
And tucks me in my cozy bed.  
He carries me when I cannot walk  
And gives me a voice so I may talk  
He leads me from the ways of harm  
And through the cold He keeps me warm  
My Lord is the Way the Truth and the Life  
He cures my blindness and gives me sight  
**I'm forever thankful for all that He gives  
And so I proclaim to all that He lives!**  
By: Jeff Eilerman (Missouri, USA)

## SONSHINE IN THE RAIN VERSE SHEET

1. Luke 2:1-5 “ In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a *Child*.”
2. 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.”
3. Luke 2:8-12 “And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at *night*. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a Baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”
4. Luke 2:13-14 “Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth *peace* to those on whom His favor rests.”
5. Luke 2:15 “When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “*Let’s go* to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”
6. Luke 2:16-20 “So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the Baby, Who was lying in the manger. When they had seen Him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this Child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. *But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.*”