

# The Birth of Jesus Christ Brought Joy to the Earth

**Purpose** To help each child feel the joy that Jesus Christ's birth brought to the earth.

**Preparation**

1. Prayerfully study Luke 2:1–20.
2. Bring a twelve-month calendar or make a time line for the birthday activity. To make a time line, divide a long strip of paper into twelve equal sections and write the names of the months, in order, one in each section.
3. Find out the birthday of each child in your class by asking the Primary secretary, the ward clerk, or the children's parents.
4. With the approval of your Primary president, invite a mother or expectant mother to briefly tell the children how she prepares for the birth of a baby. Ask her to include her feelings of excitement.
5. Prepare to sing or say the words to the first verse of "Far, Far Away on Judea's Plains" (*Hymns*, no. 212).
6. Materials needed:
  - a. A Bible.
  - b. A small piece of paper and a pencil for each child.
  - c. Tape or other adhesive.
  - d. Picture 2-6, The Nativity (Gospel Art Picture Kit 201; 62495).
7. Make the necessary preparations for any enrichment activities you want to use.

*Note:* As you discuss the children's births, be sensitive to the feelings of any adopted or foster children in your class. Make sure they understand that their births were also joyful events.

**Suggested Lesson Development**

Invite a child to give the opening prayer.

Follow up with the children if you encouraged them to do something during the week.

**Birthdays Are Special**

Attention activity

Tell the children that you are thinking of a special day. Explain that you will give them a clue, and ask them to listen to the clue and raise their hands when they know what day you're thinking of. Hum a birthday song such as "Happy Birthday" or give some other obvious clue.

- What special day am I thinking of?
- What do you like best about your birthday?

Calendar or time line activity	<p>Pass out the paper and pencils. Have each child write his or her name on a piece of paper. (Help the children as necessary.)</p> <p>Display the calendar or time line. Invite the children to say the names of the months with you as you read them. Read the name of each month again, one at a time, and invite any children who have birthdays in that month to tape their names on the calendar or time line.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you think your family felt when you were born?</li> </ul>
Guest speaker	<p>Introduce the mother or expectant mother, and have her express her feelings about preparing for the birth of a baby.</p>
Discussion	<p>Talk with the children about things their families might have done to prepare for their births, such as praying for them to be healthy, choosing names, obtaining baby clothes and other supplies, and planning a place for them to sleep. Help the children feel that their births were joyful and exciting events. If you are a parent, you may want to tell about what you did and the feelings you had when a baby was born into your family.</p> <p>Remind the children that being born and receiving a physical body is an important part of Heavenly Father's plan for us.</p>

### **Jesus Christ's Birthday Was a Wonderful Day**

Teacher presentation	<p>Tell the children that they are going to learn about the birth of a baby for whom people had been waiting many years. Long ago the prophets said that one day a savior would be born. He would make it possible for people to return to live with Heavenly Father again. The people waited and waited for the birth of this baby.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who was this baby? (Jesus Christ.)</li> </ul> <p>Point out that no one knew exactly when Jesus would be born. Some parents taught their children to look forward to this great event because they knew Jesus would show the right way to live and then make it possible for everyone to return to live with Heavenly Father. Without Jesus as our Savior, no one would be able to live with Heavenly Father again.</p>
Preparation for dramatization	<p>Invite the children to pretend that they lived long ago, before the birth of Jesus Christ. Tell them that they are children living near the city of Bethlehem. Their parents have taught them to look forward to the birth of the Savior. Tonight they are out in the fields, helping their fathers tend their sheep.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What will you take with you as you go with your fathers to tend the sheep? (Answers may include something warm to wear or something to eat.)</li> </ul> <p>Have the children close their eyes and imagine the following scene:</p> <p>Evening is coming, and the shepherds are gathering the sheep into the sheepfold, where they can sleep quietly until morning. The night is clear and the stars are starting to come out. Soon the sky is filled with bright stars. Everything is peaceful and quiet. (You may want to turn down the lights in the classroom to simulate nighttime.)</p>
Scripture story and dramatization	<p>Tell the story of the angel's appearance to the shepherds, as found in Luke 2:8–18. Read aloud a few verses from the Bible as you tell the story.</p>

Point out that the shepherds were afraid when they saw the angel, but the angel told them, “Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings [news] of great joy” (Luke 2:10).

Have the children pantomime being afraid to see the angel, then happy to hear what the angel had to say.

Explain that the angel told the shepherds about the birth of Jesus (see Luke 2:11) and told them where to find the baby Jesus (see Luke 2:12). Then suddenly the shepherds heard many angels “praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:13–14).

Song

Sing or say the words to the first verse of “Far, Far Away on Judea’s Plains.” Invite the children to join you if they know the words.

Far, far away on Judea’s plains,  
Shepherds of old heard the joyous strains:  
Glory to God, Glory to God,  
Glory to God in the highest;  
Peace on earth, goodwill to men;  
Peace on earth, goodwill to men!

Scripture story  
and dramatization  
continued

Explain that when the angels had gone back into heaven, the shepherds decided to go find the baby Jesus (see Luke 2:15). Have the children pretend to go with their fathers to Bethlehem to see the baby Jesus (you may want to move to another area in the classroom).

Show picture 2-6, The Nativity.

- Who are the people in this picture?

Explain that the shepherds found the baby just as the angel had told them they would. He was wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger (you may want to explain that *swaddling clothes* means that the baby was dressed in a piece of cloth wrapped around him). The shepherds were grateful for the many things they were allowed to see and hear about Jesus, and they told other people about what they had seen and heard (see Luke 2:17–18).

### **Summary**

Child participation

Invite each child to stand and tell about one thing that happened that night while the shepherds were tending their sheep. Emphasize that many people were very happy after waiting so long for the Savior’s birth.

Testimony

Tell the children how happy you are that Jesus Christ came to earth. Bear your testimony that Jesus is the Savior of the world, and tell the children that following Jesus’ teachings will help us return to live with Heavenly Father someday.

Encourage the children to go home and tell their families what they have learned about the birth of Jesus Christ.

Invite a child to give the closing prayer. Suggest that the child express gratitude for Jesus’ birth.

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**Enrichment  
Activities**

Choose from the following activities those that will work best for the children in your class. You can use them in the lesson itself or as a review or summary. For additional guidance, see “Class Time” in “Helps for the Teacher.”

1. Help the children act out the events surrounding the birth of the Savior. You may want to bring some simple props, such as scarves and a baby doll.
2. Help the children say the words and do the actions to “Once I Was a Baby” (the words can be sung to the tune of “Once There Was a Snowman,” *Children’s Songbook*, p. 249). Use crouching actions for the first verse and stretching actions for the second verse.

Once I was a baby, baby, baby.

Once I was a baby, small, small, small.

Now I’m growing bigger, bigger, bigger.

Now I’m growing bigger, tall, tall, tall.

3. Sing or say the words to “Away in a Manger” (*Children’s Songbook*, p. 42), “Mary’s Lullaby” (*Children’s Songbook*, p. 44), or “Oh, Hush Thee, My Baby” (*Children’s Songbook*, p. 48). The words to these songs are included at the back of the manual.
4. Make a tracing or copy of the illustrations of baby Jesus and the manger (found at the end of the lesson) for each child. Let each child color a manger and glue some hay, dried grass, or yarn on it to make a soft bed for the baby. Then have each child color the picture of baby Jesus. Help the children cut out their pictures of baby Jesus and glue them to the mangers.

