

The Birth of Jesus Christ (Christmas)

Lesson
46

PURPOSE To help each child feel gratitude for the birth of Jesus Christ.

- PREPARATION**
1. Prayerfully study Matthew 2:1–12 and Luke 1:26–35; 2:1–20.
 2. Find out a few simple details about the births of the children in your class, such as where they were born, what color of hair they had, and where they lived the first week of their lives. Be sensitive to the feelings of any adopted children.
 3. Cut strips of paper (approximately 8" long and 1 1/2" wide) for Christmas chains. Cut enough strips for each child to make a chain a few links long.
 4. Write a note explaining the Christmas chain (see lesson) to each child's parents, so they can encourage their child to do kind deeds.
 5. Materials needed:
 - a. A Bible.
 - b. A small nativity scene. You may want to use a baby doll wrapped in a blanket, lying in a small box. Cut a star from paper to put over the nativity scene. If a nativity scene is not available, use picture 1-75, The Birth of Jesus (Gospel Art Picture Kit 200; 62116).
 - c. Crayons and glue.
 - d. Picture 1-75, The Birth of Jesus (Gospel Art Picture Kit 200; 62116); picture 1-76, No Room at the Inn (62115); picture 1-77, The Announcement of Christ's Birth to the Shepherds (Gospel Art Picture Kit 202; 62117); picture 1-78, The Wise Men (Gospel Art Picture Kit 203; 62120).
 6. Make the necessary preparations for any Enrichment Activities you want to use.
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**LEARNING
ACTIVITIES**

Invite a child to give the opening prayer.

Attention Activity Have a child stand by you as you tell the details you know about his or her birth. Repeat for each child in the class.

We celebrate Jesus Christ's birth at Christmastime

Explain that since this is the Christmas season, we are celebrating the birth of someone we all love.

- Whose birth are we celebrating?

Story Tell the story of the angel's visit to Mary, as found in Luke 1:26–35. Explain that the angel told Mary that she would be the mother of the Son of God, Jesus.

- What was the name of Jesus' mother? (See Luke 1:27.)
- Who was the father of Jesus? (Heavenly Father. See Luke 1:35.)

Explain that Joseph was not Jesus' father. He was a good man chosen to take care of Jesus. The angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him about the important baby Mary would have. The angel told Joseph that Mary should be his wife.

Story Show picture 1-76, No Room at the Inn, and tell about the journey of Joseph and Mary from Nazareth to Bethlehem, as found in Luke 2:1–7. Read Luke 2:7 aloud, explaining any words that may be unfamiliar to the children.

Activity	<p>Have the children sit or kneel on the floor in front of the nativity scene. You may want to provide a blanket for them to sit on. Pass around picture 1-75, The Birth of Jesus, and have each child tell about one thing he or she sees in the picture.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why didn't Mary and Joseph sleep in the inn? (See Luke 2:7.) • Where was Jesus born? (In a stable.) • What kind of a bed did Mary have for baby Jesus? (See Luke 2:7.)
Song	<p>Help the children sing or say the words to "Away in a Manger" (<i>Children's Songbook</i>, p. 42). Improvise hand and arm movements to fit the words.</p> <p>Away in a manger, no crib for his bed, The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head; The stars in the heavens looked down where he lay, The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.</p>
Story	<p>Show picture 1-77, The Announcement of Christ's Birth to the Shepherds, and tell about the visit of the shepherds, as described in Luke 2:8-20.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why were the shepherds afraid? (See Luke 2:9.) • What did the angel tell the shepherds? (See Luke 2:10-12.) • What did the shepherds do after they visited baby Jesus? (See Luke 2:17, 20.)
Story	<p>Show picture 1-78, The Wise Men, and tell about the visit of the wise men, as described in Matthew 2:1-12.</p>
Activity	<p>Have the children stand and pretend to ride camels around the room, following the star that will lead them to baby Jesus.</p> <p>After several trips around the room, have the children get off their camels and come back to the nativity scene. Explain that by the time the wise men found baby Jesus, Joseph had found a better place for the family to stay and they were no longer in the stable. Remind the children that the wise men brought gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Have each child tell if his or her pretend gift is gold, frankincense, or myrrh and then present it to the baby Jesus.</p>
	<p>Our gift to Jesus is to be like him</p> <p>Explain that each Christmas as we celebrate the birthday of Jesus, we can give gifts to him. We can't give gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh like the wise men did, but we can give another type of gift. We give a gift to Jesus when we try to be like him. We are being like Jesus when we are kind to our family and friends.</p>
Activity	<p>Help each child make a Christmas chain with several links. Have the children color their links and then glue the links together (see illustration at the end of the lesson). Tell the children to put their chains somewhere in their homes where they will remind them to do kind deeds for others as gifts to Jesus. Challenge the children to do at least one kind deed each day until Christmas.</p> <p>Help the children think of kind deeds they can do. Remind them that when they do kind deeds, they are giving a wonderful gift to Jesus. Give each child a note explaining the chain to his or her parents.</p>
Testimony	<p>Explain that the birth of Jesus Christ was one of the most important things that has ever happened on the earth. Express your love for Jesus and your desire to be like him, not only at Christmastime but all year long.</p>

**ENRICHMENT
ACTIVITIES**

Choose some of these activities to use during the lesson.

1. Retell the story of the birth of Jesus while the children act out the parts of Joseph, Mary, the innkeeper, the shepherds, and the wise men. Use props such as a baby doll, a small blanket, and a shawl, if they are available. Give every child a chance to participate. You may want to repeat the activity, allowing the children to take different parts.

2. Help the children cut or draw simple star decorations. Let the children color their decorations, and attach a string to each star so the child can hang it somewhere in his or her home.
3. Discuss some of the commercial preparations for Christmas that the children have noticed. Help them understand that things like gifts and parties are fun, but Christmas is really about the birth of Jesus Christ and the importance of focusing on him and his life.
4. Discuss local Christ-centered Christmas customs that you enjoy or are aware of. Invite the children to talk about any Christ-centered traditions their families enjoy at Christmastime.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

1. Have the children pretend to be the shepherds resting in the field. Help them act out the fear the shepherds felt when they saw the angel, then the happiness they felt when they understood the news. Help them imagine hearing the angels sing and looking at the beautiful night sky and seeing the star. Walk together around the room to search for the baby. Kneel before the baby Jesus in the manger, and sing a song of praise.
2. Help the children do the actions to the following verse as you say the words:
*A baby in a manger (rock arms as if cradling a baby),
 A loving mother near (reach out arms),
 A star shines in the heavens (point with awe to the sky),
 The Son of God is here (clap hands for joy)!*
3. Sing or say the words to "Little Jesus" (*Children's Songbook*, p. 39) or "Jesus Said Love Everyone" (*Children's Songbook*, p. 61). Remind the children that we celebrate Jesus' birth at Christmastime.
4. Make simple paper cutouts of the swaddled baby Jesus. Collect dried grass, hay, or straw and bring it for the children to glue onto a "manger" (a square of paper). Have the children glue the baby Jesus cutout over the bed of grass or straw.

