



UNIT 16 | CHRISTMAS | DECEMBER 14-15, 2019

4th-5th Lesson

Jesus Was Born

Bible Passage: Matthew 1; Luke 2

Story Point: God came to earth as a human baby to be with us.

Key Passage: “Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in everything; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.

Big Picture Question: Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and know He hears us.

**KID CONNECT:
10 MINUTES**

**LARGE GROUP:
30 MINUTES**

**SMALL GROUP:
20 MINUTES**

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Throughout the Old Testament, God reminded His people through the prophets of His promise to one day send a Rescuer. People cannot save themselves; instead, God planned to save people by sending His Son. God revealed that He would come from the family of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and He would bless the nations (Gen. 12:3; 17:19; 28:14). He would come from David’s family, and His kingdom would last forever (2 Sam. 7:12-13). He would be born in Bethlehem to a virgin (Micah 5:2; Isa. 7:14).

But after God’s people returned home from exile in Judah, God was silent. For 400 years, God remained quiet. The silence was broken in Luke 1 when an angel told Zechariah he would have a son—John. John would be the forerunner of the Messiah, preparing people for the Promised One. At just the right time, Jesus was born. The Old Testament whispers, “He’s coming ... He’s coming ... He’s coming ...” and the declaration of Luke 2 is “He’s here!”

Help kids understand the significance of Jesus’ birth. Jesus’ birth is not just the beginning; rather, it is a fulfillment of God’s plan to rescue sinners. God’s people could not save themselves, so God came to them. This tiny baby was the hope of the world. He would grow up to show people what God is like and to lay down His life to provide forgiveness and eternal life to all who trust in Him.

After Jesus was born, an angel appeared to the shepherds and said, “Don’t be afraid, for look, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people: Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you, who is Messiah, the Lord” (Luke 2:10-11).

Jesus’ birth was God’s gracious gift to us—God with us, for His glory and our peace.

KID CONNECT

WELCOME TIME

(VIDEO: INTRO MUSIC)

Play intro music and greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. As kids arrive, ask them to tell you how they celebrate Christmas with their family.

SAY • Christmas is such an exciting time! We all have fun family traditions that we use to celebrate the birth of Jesus. While you give and receive gifts this year, remember that God has given us the greatest gift of all: His Son.

WREATH ORNAMENTS

(1 paper straws in Christmas colors per kid, 1 white pipe cleaner per kid, 5-8 assorted green, red, and white pony beads per kid, 1 4-inch Christmas colored ribbon per kid, 1 5-inch string per kid)



Distribute one pipe cleaner to each kid. Have them bend one end, so when they string their beads and straws, they won’t fall off. Next, let the kids string beads and straw pieces onto their pipe cleaners into a circle. If they put too many beads and straws onto their pipe cleaner; it’s easy to take a couple off.

When your kids are finished, take the pipe cleaner and twist them into a circle.

Take your string and tie it in a circle and then loop it onto your wreath. Make sure to cut the string long enough to hang onto a Christmas tree.

Take some of your ribbon and tie a colorful bow onto the top of your wreath ornaments where you looped on your string.

LARGE GROUP

COUNTDOWN

(VIDEO: COUNTDOWN)

Show the countdown video as you transition to Large Group. Set it to end as the session begins.

LARGE GROUP GAME

(CG: GAME TIME SLIDE, CG + SFX: CHRISTMAS MOVIE TRIVIA SLIDES)

CHRISTMAS MOVIE TRIVIA

(Trivia Answer Sheet – per group, Winner Stickers, Prize)

SAY • It's game time again! How many of you love Christmas movies? I know I do! Well, today we're going to do something different for our game. I need everyone to sit with their Small Group Leader. We are going to have a small group vs. small group Christmas movie trivia challenge! Here's how it works; I will put up different Christmas movie trivia questions on the screen and you and your small group will need to quietly answer them on a sheet of paper. I say quietly because you don't want to accidentally give the answers to other small groups! Your SGL will be the one to fill out the answer sheet but they MUST put the answer that MOST people in the small group think is correct. Then we will collect the sheets and announce a winner at the end of Large Group. Oh, and did I mention there's a prize for every kid in the winning small group? Yep, that's right. A sweet prize!

OK, let's find out which small group knows the most about these different Christmas movies. Here we go!

WORSHIP

(VIDEO: NOEL, VIDEO: SILENT NIGHT)

(battery tea lights – 1 per kid)

Pass out 1 tea light per kid to hold before singing Silent Night. Collect the tea lights at the end of worship so they don't cause a distraction from Large Group.

SAY • We are going to do something special when we sing Silent Night. We are going to dim the lights (if possible) and pass out a battery-operated tea light for each of you to hold as you sing. As you look around the room, remember that if we trust in Jesus we are like a light in a dark place. Jesus wants us to tell others of His great love for them. Let's worship together.

INTRODUCE THE SESSION

(CG: HOUSE WITH TONS OF CHRISTMAS LIGHTS)

(no supplies needed)

SAY • Hey everyone! Raise your hand if you have decorated your house for Christmas. Awesome! Well last night, my small group came over and helped me decorate the outside of my house. Wanna see? Check it out.

Yep, that's my house. I saw my neighbor leave their house wearing sunglasses...at night! I was so proud. You know, all these bright lights remind me of a very special story, the story of Jesus' birth.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION

(CG: BIG PICTURE QUESTION)

SAY • If you've been here the last few weeks, you might remember our big picture question: *Why do we pray?* Who can tell us the answer? [Allow responses.] That's right! *We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.* God had promised to send a Rescuer to defeat sin, but the people did not know when that would happen. Throughout the years, God's people prayed to God, asking Him to keep His promise. God always keeps His promises, and He heard the prayers of the people. When the time was just right, God sent Jesus to fulfill His promise and answer the prayers of His people.

GIANT TIMELINE

(CG: GIANT TIMELINE)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY • God's people had been waiting for the savior to come for hundreds of years. Between the end of the Old Testament and when Jesus was born, 400 years passed in which no prophets received messages from God. Can you imagine waiting that long to hear from God? God's promise to send a Savior went all the way back to the garden of Eden. After Adam and Eve sinned, God said that one day the Savior would defeat Satan. Though thousands of years had passed, God did not forget His promise. Let's hear more!

TELL THE BIBLE STORY

(CG: STORY POINT, CG: QUESTION 1, CG: QUESTION 2)

(Bible)

Tell the Bible story using the script provided below.

SAY • Joseph found out Mary was going to have a baby, but Joseph knew it was not his baby—Mary and Joseph were not married yet! Joseph decided to quietly break his engagement with Mary so she would not be publicly disgraced. Soon after Joseph thought these things, an angel appeared to him in a dream. The angel said, "Don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife. Her baby was put there by the Holy Spirit. Mary is going to have a son; name Him Jesus because He is going to save His people from their sins!" This happened just like the prophet said it would: "See, Mary will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they will name Him Immanuel," which is translated "God is with us." When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel commanded.

During the time Mary was pregnant, the Roman emperor, Caesar Augustus, announced that everyone needed to be registered for a census. A census is like taking attendance in school, except that they want to know where you live and not whether you're in class. So Joseph and Mary traveled to Bethlehem, the city of David. While they were there, the time came for Mary to have her baby. Mary and Joseph looked for a safe place to stay, but every place was full. So Mary and Joseph found a place where animals were kept, and that is where

Mary had her baby. Joseph named the baby Jesus. Mary wrapped Him in cloth and laid Him in a feeding trough.

In the same region, some shepherds were out in the fields watching over their sheep. All of a sudden, an angel of the Lord stood before them. A bright light shone around them, and they were terrified! But the angel said, “Don’t be afraid! I have very good news for you: Today a Savior, who is Messiah the Lord, was born for you in the city of David.” Then the angel said, “You will find a baby wrapped tightly in cloth and lying in a feeding trough.”

Suddenly, a whole army of angels appeared, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to people He favors!” So the shepherds went to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby who was lying in the feeding trough. The shepherds went and told others about the baby Jesus. Everyone who heard about Jesus was surprised and amazed. Mary thought about everything that was happening and tried to understand it. The shepherds returned to their fields, praising God because everything had happened just as the angel had said.

QUESTION 1: What does this story teach us about God?

SAY • Jesus’ birth is evidence that God hears our prayers and keeps His promises. God was working out His plan all along. The Bible stories in the Old Testament point forward to Jesus, and at just the right time, God sent His Son into the world. Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah and the answer to many prayers for a Savior.

QUESTION 2: Why did God send Jesus into the world?

SAY • Sin separated people from God, but God did not leave us on our own. We cannot save ourselves, so God came to earth as a human baby to be with us. God planned to send His Son, Jesus, into the world through the nation of Israel. Many years later, God kept His promise. Jesus was born into the world as the promised Messiah.

CHRIST CONNECTION

Note: You may use this opportunity to use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

SAY • The details of Jesus’ birth may be surprising, but Jesus is the Savior we need. He didn’t come to earth because we needed just a little help. He came because we desperately need Him. Without Jesus we would have no chance for a relationship with God. We would still be in stuck in our sin and without hope for eternity.

Jesus’ birth fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies. God the Son came into the world as Immanuel. Jesus was born to be “God with us” and to save people from sin.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION

(CG: BIG PICTURE QUESTION)

SAY • Do you remember our big picture question that we've been thinking about each week? [Allow kids to respond.] Yes! Our question is, *Why do we pray?* And the answer is, *We pray because we trust God, and we know He hears us.*

KEY PASSAGE

(CG: KEY PASSAGE)

(Bible)

Show the key passage slide. Open Bible and lead the kids to read together 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.

SAY • “Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in everything; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.

How can someone pray constantly? You have to go to school, talk with other people, and sleep; so how is that possible? This passage is about living a life of prayer. Praying should be a natural part of our daily life. When something exciting happens, we should pray. When something bad happens, we should pray. Prayer shows our trust in the Lord.

We can trust God with the big things and the little things. When we pray, we can bring everything to Him. Because we can trust God, we can give thanks in everything.

PRAY AND DISMISS TO SMALL GROUPS

SMALL GROUP

Bible Passage: Matthew 1; Luke 2

Story Point: God came to earth as a human baby to be with us.

Key Passage: “Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in everything; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.

Big Picture Question: Why do we pray? We pray because we trust God, and know He hears us.

NATIVITY SCENES

(1 paper plate and pen – per kid)

Give each kid a paper plate and a pen. Then direct kids to follow your instructions to draw a scene on their plates. Give the following prompts:

1. Put the paper plate on top of your head.
2. Draw a rectangle in the middle of the plate.
3. Draw a triangle roof above the rectangle.
4. Draw square inside the rectangle.
5. Draw a baby inside the square.
6. Draw a star above the roof.

Let kids vote on the best nativity scene in your group.

SAY • Those are some pretty great nativity scenes! How do you think life was different for people 2,000 years ago when Jesus was born?

DISCUSSION

(Bible – 3-4 per group)

SAY • Because God the Son came to earth to be with us, we can know God. Joy comes from knowing God. We can rejoice! We can pray to God as our heavenly Father. Every good thing comes from Him, and He is always in control; so we can give thanks in all circumstances.

- Why do you think Jesus has so many names?
- What words come to mind when you think about Jesus?

Distribute Bibles. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Matthew 1. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Matthew 1:22-23. Explain that hundreds of years before Jesus was born, the prophet Micah said the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. The prophet Isaiah said He would be called Immanuel. Every prophecy about Jesus’ birth came true.

Choose another volunteer to read aloud Matthew 1:22-23 again. Then lead the group to discuss the following questions.

1. What news did the angel share with the shepherds? Why was it good news?

Lead kids to recall that the angel announced the birth of a Savior and Messiah. This was good news because God the Son had come into the world to rescue sinners. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Mark 1:15.)

2. How did people celebrate Jesus' birth? How do you celebrate?

Review that the angels and shepherds praised God and shared the good news with others. Invite kids to share their own family traditions for celebrating the birth of Jesus. Encourage them to spend time this week praising God and telling someone else the good news about Jesus. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 16:25-27.)

3. How can we respond to God's gift of Jesus?

Help kids understand that we can praise and thank God for sending Jesus. We can ask forgiveness for our sin and ask Jesus to be our forever friend. Then we can tell others about Jesus.

Use the gospel plan provided to explain how to become a Christian. Invite kids to ask questions and remember it is okay if you don't know the answer. Talk with another volunteer or your coach if you need help.

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means "good news." It is the message about Jesus, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.

God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Consider reading Genesis 1:1 from the Bible.

We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God. (Romans 6:23)

God provided. Read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.

Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family forever. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.

We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. If they are not ready for this, it's okay! Let all the kids know that God loves them and that you are so happy they are here today!

SAY • God came to earth as a human baby to be with us because He loves us. Jesus' birth should bring us great joy because we now have a way to be with God forever! Do any of you want to pray, asking God to forgive all the times you disobey Him, and invite Jesus into your life? [allow responses] Let's close our eyes and you can pray with me if you are ready.

God, thank you for sending Jesus to pay for my sin and for making a way for me to be with you forever. Please forgive me for all the times I disobey you. I want to live for you, and I know I need you in my life. Help me to follow you. I love you. Amen

If anyone in your group prayed to accept Jesus please connect with the family at pick-up and share this news with your Coach and Coordinator.

SAY • Today your child prayed to accept Jesus! They shared that they believe that Jesus paid for their sin and they want to follow God's plan for their life.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY: MURAL RACE

(large black poster board or construction paper – 1-2 per group depending on group size, colored chalk and 2-3 Bibles – per group)

Instruct kids to sit a circle around the poster board. If your group is large, form two teams and sit in separate circles.

Give each kid a piece of chalk and provide a large piece of poster board for each team. Supply Bibles for kids to find Matthew 1:18-25 and Luke 2:1-20 if they need help recalling details of the Bible story.

Explain that when you say go, the first player on each team will begin drawing a nativity scene. After about 10 seconds, call out "Pass!" Players must pass the paper to their left. Then the next player will draw, adding details to the existing drawing.

Continue around the circle as time allows or until everyone has a turn. Then call time and invite kids to share what they drew. Kids may pass the paper back around the circle and describe their own contributions to the scene.

SAY • Mary, Joseph, and Jesus were in a stable because there was no other room available in Bethlehem. God came to earth as a human baby to be with us. Jesus' birth fulfilled Old Testament prophecy. God the Son came into the world as Immanuel. Immanuel means "God with us." Jesus came to save people from sin.

REFLECTION AND PRAYER

(Journal Page - 1 per kid, pencils)

Ask the kids the following questions:

What does this story teach me about God?

What does this story teach me about myself?

Who can I tell about this story?

Make time for prayer requests and pray for your group. If time allows, have kids complete the Journal Page provided with this session.

CONNECT WITH PARENTS/INFLUENCERS

(Activity Page - 1 per kid)

Send home the Activity Page and encourage kids to complete it with their family.