

UNIT 4 | CHRISTMAS BONUS SESSION

JESUS IS OUR GREATEST GIFT

LUKE 2



CHRIST CONNECTION: Jesus came into the world to rescue us from sin.

KEY PASSAGE PHRASE: God hears and rescues. Psalm 34:17

BABIES GOSPEL GEMS

- Jesus was born in Bethlehem.
- Jesus is God's Son.
- God sent Jesus to earth because He loves us.

BIBLE STORY FOR TODDLERS: When Mary was pregnant with Baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph had to go to Bethlehem to be counted. While they were there, Mary was ready to have her baby. Mary and Joseph looked for a place to sleep, but every place was full. So, Mary and Joseph stayed where animals slept. After Jesus was born, Mary placed Him in a box used to feed animals. That night, an angel visited shepherds who were taking care of their sheep. The angel told them good news: Jesus was born in Bethlehem! Then many angels came praising God. When the angels left, the shepherds ran to Bethlehem and found Baby Jesus. They praised God and told everyone about what they had seen.



LEARNING Activities

Engage babies in the following activities during the session. In each activity, provide **handheld Bibles** for babies to handle. Open a Bible to Luke 2. Show the **Bible Story Picture** as you say the gospel gems in a soothing voice. Read the **Key Passage Phrase Card**. Pray for the babies.

1 SING A SONG

Sing to the tune of “Jesus Loves Me.”

“Jesus came into the world
To rescue me from all my sins.
Jesus came, O yes, He did
To rescue me from all my sins.
Yes! Jesus rescues! (repeat three times)
He saves me from my sins.”

SAY “ Our Christ Connection reminds us that Jesus came into the world to rescue us from all our sins. Did you know that Jesus is God’s Son? He is, and He loves you very much! ”

2 WRAP A BABY

Sit the babies in leaders’ laps or in **horseshoe-shaped pillows**. Gather several **blankets or sheets**. Place a **baby doll** in the middle of the floor. Lay the blanket or sheet around the baby doll. Use a hand-over-hand method to guide the babies in wrapping the baby doll in the blankets. Allow the babies to continue using the blankets and wrapping the baby as you say the gospel gems.

SAY “ Jesus was born as a baby, just like you! When you were born, you were wrapped up in a blanket. In our Bible story, we learned how Jesus was born in Bethlehem. ”

3 ROLL THE GLOBE

Gather an **inflated globe**. Sit the babies in leaders’ laps or in **horseshoe-shaped pillows**. Place the globe in front of the babies. Roll the globe between all the babies. Say “God sent Jesus to earth because He loves you!” as each baby catches the globe. Continue rolling and catching the globe.

SAY “ Does God love us? Yes! God sent Jesus to earth because He loves us. Jesus is God’s Son. Jesus came into the world to rescue us from sin. ”

Check diapers, serve bottles if needed, and release babies to parents according to your church’s security guidelines. Give parents today’s **Big Picture Card**. Repeat the Christ Connection, gospel gems, and Bible-learning activities for babies who stay a second hour.



LEARNING Activities

Engage toddlers in the following activities. In each activity, show the Bible Story Picture as you review the Bible story. Provide small Bibles for toddlers to handle.

1 CIRCLE TIME

Open your Bible to Luke 2. Show the Bible Story Picture as you tell the provided toddlers' Bible story. Read the Key Passage Phrase Card and guide toddlers to say it with you. Pray for the toddlers.

2 STICK THE SHEEP

Draw a simple picture of a sheep on blank papers (one per toddler). Provide cotton balls and liquid glue. Squirt the glue onto paper plates. Guide the toddlers to dip the cotton balls in the glue and then stick the cotton balls on the sheep. Retell the Bible story as toddlers work. Provide paper towels and baby wipes for easy cleanup.

SAY “After Jesus was born, Mary put Him in a box used to feed animals. When the angel came to visit the shepherds, what kind of animal were they taking care of? Yes, sheep! When the angels left, the shepherds ran to Bethlehem and found Baby Jesus.”

3 MARCH AND SHOUT

Use these lyrics to lead the toddlers in a “Sound Off” march and shout around the room: “Have you heard the good news? / Jesus was born in Bethlehem. / Jesus! / Loves us! / Jesus loves us! / Yes, He does!” Repeat, moving as if leading a marching band. Review the story.

SAY “Did the angel tell the good news? Yes, that good news is: Jesus was born in Bethlehem! Did the shepherds praise God? Yes, they praised God and told everyone about what they had seen.”

4 IMAGINE AND LISTEN

Talk about the places where we sleep and things we might sleep with. Use examples such as a sleeping bag, bed, pillow, blanket, nightlight, and so forth. Retell the Bible story, asking toddlers to listen for things that remind them of sleep (place, animals, at night, and so forth). Encourage toddlers to imagine how Mary and Joseph’s “sleep” might have looked and felt.

SAY “Mary and Joseph looked for a place to sleep, but every place was full. Where did Mary and Joseph stay? Yes, they stayed where animals slept. There, Jesus was born and was placed in a box used to feed animals.”

5 FILL THE CONTAINER

Provide two plastic containers. Fill one container with small plastic animal figures and leave the other empty. Set the containers side by side. Ask the toddlers which container is full. Pour water into the animal container, one cup at a time, until it is full. Say, “It looked like our container was full, but there was still room.” Review the Bible story.

SAY “Mary and Joseph looked for a place to stay. Were the places empty or full? Yes! The places were all full. Jesus was born in Bethlehem, in a place where animals slept.”

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KEY PASSAGE PHRASE: God hears and rescues. Psalm 34:17

1 TRANSITION ACTIVITY: COUNT THE PEOPLE

Guide the toddlers to form a circle. Go around the circle, pointing to and saying the number out loud as you count each toddler. Continue counting and adding toddlers as they arrive. For a smaller group, use people figures and have the toddlers count the people. Add to or take away “people” so toddlers count and recount the people. Retell the story.

SAY “ Mary and Joseph had to go to Bethlehem to be counted. While they were there, Mary was ready to have her baby—Baby Jesus. Jesus was born in Bethlehem! This is the best news ever! ”

2 SING A SONG

Sing to the tune of “Jesus Loves Me.”

“Jesus came into the world
To rescue me from all my sins.
Jesus came, O yes, He did
To rescue me from all my sins.
Yes! Jesus rescues! (repeat three times)
He saves me from my sins.”

3 GO TO BETHLEHEM

Choose toddlers to pretend to be Mary, Joseph, and the angels. Allow them to play out the story as you read the Bible story aloud. Ask questions to review the story such as “Who went to Bethlehem?” (Mary and Joseph) “What happened while they were there?” (Mary had Baby Jesus.) “Did Mary and Joseph find a place to stay?” (Yes, Mary and Joseph stayed where animals slept.)

SAY “ Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem to be counted. Mary and Joseph looked for a place to sleep, but every place was full. Jesus was born in Bethlehem! ”

4 SORT THE BOXES

Collect several boxes of various sizes (cereal boxes, cardboard boxes, and so forth). Challenge the toddlers to place boxes of the same size in the same row. Repeat, sorting the boxes by color or shape. Fold in the flaps on a larger box. Place a baby doll and a blanket in the box as you retell the Bible story.

SAY “ After Jesus was born, where did Mary place Jesus? Yes, a box! Mary placed Baby Jesus in a box used to feed animals. Our Christ Connection reminds us Jesus came to the world to rescue us from our sins. ”

Check diapers, serve a snack if needed, and release toddlers to parents according to your church’s security procedures. Give parents today’s Big Picture Card to reinforce today’s Bible story, gospel gems, and Christ Connection throughout the week.



THE GOSPEL

GOD'S PLAN FOR PRESCHOOLERS

While preschoolers might not be ready to respond to the gospel, use this guide to help young minds begin to grasp big truths about Jesus and the kingdom of God.



Ask: "Who is in charge at home? Who is in charge over the whole world?" Explain that God made everything! He is King over everything, and He is in charge.



Ask: "Have you ever done something wrong?" Tell preschoolers that everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin makes God sad.



Explain that God must punish sin. He loves us, and He sent His Son, Jesus, to earth. Jesus came to take away the punishment for sin.



Ask: "Do you like presents?" Explain that Jesus gives us the best present. He never did anything wrong, but He was punished in our place. Jesus wants to take away our sin because He loves us.

Pray that God will save your preschoolers. As you faithfully teach the Bible, you are planting gospel seeds in children's hearts. Ask God to grow the preschoolers into children who love and trust in Jesus.