



CHRISTMAS BONUS SESSION

# YOUNGER PRESCHOOL **LEADER GUIDE**



the **GOSPELPROJECT**



CHRISTMAS BONUS SESSION

# JESUS IS OUR GREATEST GIFT

LUKE 2



**CHRIST CONNECTION:** Jesus was born! This was very good news! Jesus came into the world to rescue us from sin.

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Why does sin separate us from God? Because God is holy.

**KEY PASSAGE:** The LORD hears, and rescues. Psalm 34:17

**STORY POINT:** Jesus was born.



## PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

### LEADER Bible Study

In the Gospel accounts of Christ's birth, the miraculous plans of God coincide with the seemingly mundane events of humanity to reveal the promised Messiah. God used modest means to bring about the divine incarnation of His only Son who would deliver us from the death we deserve.

Where was Jesus' birth prophesied in the Old Testament? How does His birth make a way for people to receive the gift of eternal life?

Jesus' genealogy, found in Matthew 1, demonstrates how the long-awaited Savior can be traced back to Abraham. Later, in verse 23, we read the prophecy first relayed in Isaiah 7:14: "Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign: See, the virgin will conceive, have a son, and name him Immanuel." In today's passages—written about 700 years after the words of Isaiah—an angel of the Lord appeared first to Mary, then to Joseph, and later to the shepherds in the field, announcing this newborn baby as the Savior of the world. These ordinary people experienced God's great power at work through the miraculous birth of Jesus.

Consider the grandness of the nativity story. Reflect on the wonder of Jesus coming to earth in such lowly form. The humble birth of Christ would lead to His humbling death: crucified and left to die among wretched sinners. Yet this would not be the end of His story—nor for those who trust in His name! In three days, Jesus would rise from the grave, and by faith in His finished work on the cross, we can be reconciled to God as recipients of His grace.


Pray for the boys and girls who will gather to be taught this spectacular passage of Scripture. May they find their place within God's redemption story, placing true faith in the Savior born to bring us eternal life. May they turn from their sins and call upon Immanuel, our "God with us" forever. And like the shepherds in today's passage, may you faithfully share this good news, giving praise to the God of our salvation for the great gift we have in Jesus!



**PREPARE**

**THE WEEK PRIOR**


Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



**WELCOME**

**10–15 MINUTES**


Greet preschoolers and open the session



**LEARN**

**25–30 MINUTES**


Teach preschoolers the story of the gospel



**LOVE**


Lead preschoolers to love the God of the gospel

**30–40 MINUTES**



**LIVE**

Lead preschoolers to live the mission of the gospel



**BONUS**

**60–65 MINUTES**

Teach preschoolers for an additional hour



## PREPARE

### PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

## GATHER Supplies

Keep a supply of the following items available during all teaching sessions: Allergy Alert, Bibles, washable markers, crayons, scissors (adult use), blunt-tipped scissors, construction paper, copy paper, glue sticks, glue, tape, baby dolls, blocks, play dough, and a beanbag.



### WELCOME

#### Find ornaments and decorate a tree

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster
- ☐ large shallow bin
- ☐ shredded paper
- ☐ plastic, Jesus-themed ornaments
- ☐ tabletop tree



### LEARN

#### Arrange a manger scene

- ☐ manger scene set

#### Tell the Bible story

- ☐ "Jesus is the Greatest Gift" video (optional)

#### Learn and practice the key passage phrase

- ☐ Key Passage Phrase Marker



### LOVE

#### Gather the sheep

- ☐ flexible straws, 2 per child
- ☐ cotton balls, 10-15 per child
- ☐ disposable cups, 1 per child
- ☐ paper plates, 1 per child

#### Ice sugar cookie gifts

- ☐ paper plates, 1 per child
- ☐ sugar cookies, 1 per child
- ☐ napkins
- ☐ icing, assorted colors
- ☐ sprinkles



### LIVE

#### Watercolor an ornament

- ☐ "Watercolor Ornaments" printable, 1 per child
- ☐ heavyweight paper
- ☐ watercolor paints
- ☐ paint brushes
- ☐ small disposable cups
- ☐ art smocks
- ☐ 3-inch lengths of yarn, 1 per child
- ☐ hole punch
- ☐ paper towels

#### Snack and Transition

- ☐ hand sanitizer (optional)
- ☐ "Connect the Dots" activity page, 1 per child
- ☐ Big Picture Cards for Families



### BONUS

#### Say the key passage phrase

- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster
- ☐ rhythm instruments

#### Say the key passage phrase

- ☐ Key Passage Phrase Marker

#### Decorate a gift box

- ☐ small boxes with lids, 1 piece per child
- ☐ index cards, 1 per child
- ☐ wrapping paper
- ☐ bows and ribbon

#### Write in the snow

- ☐ paper plates, 1 per child
- ☐ shaving cream



## WELCOME Preschoolers

Provide as many learning activities as possible from the Love and Live sections to give preschoolers choices to learn. Incorporate the Bible story, Christ Connection, story point, and key passage phrase in your conversations as the preschoolers engage in learning activities throughout the session.

Use the following activity to greet children as they enter the classroom. Talk about the big picture question and answer. After each child completes the welcome activity, encourage him to participate in the activities provided from the Love and Live sections of the leader guide.

### FIND ORNAMENTS AND DECORATE A TREE

In a large, shallow bin, spread and fluff shredded paper. Hide ornaments in the bin and assemble a tabletop tree. Place the bin with its hidden ornaments, the tabletop tree, and the Big Picture Question Poster on a table just inside the classroom door. Welcome each child's family as they arrive. Direct children to the table with the bin of ornaments and the Christmas tree. Invite children to dig through the paper shreds until they find an ornament. Then guide him to hang it on the Christmas tree. Encourage children to take turns finding all of the ornaments and hanging them on the tree. As children work, read the big picture question and answer to them several times.

**SAY** “Merry Christmas, friends! I am so glad to celebrate Christmas with you. I have a question for you: Whose birth do we celebrate at Christmas? **[Allow responses.]** Yes, we celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas. Here's another question for you, and it's a tough one: Why was Jesus born on earth? **[Allow responses.]** Yes, **JESUS WAS BORN** to save us from our sin. Our big picture question and answer says, **Why does sin separate us from God? Because God is holy.**”







LEARN

## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

### LEARN the Bible Story

#### 1 ARRANGE A MANGER SCENE

Place a small table in the group time area. Randomly place the pieces of the manger scene on the table. Invite children to the group time area. As the children arrive, show them the manger scene and invite them to help you to arrange its pieces. When the children are finish their task, direct them to be seated for the Bible story time.

**SAY** “Thank you for helping me set up our manger scene. Raise your hand if you have a manger scene at home. At Christmastime, we celebrate the good news that **JESUS WAS BORN**, and many people decorate by putting out a manger scene. Let’s listen carefully to hear the wonderful Bible story about Jesus’ birth.”

#### 2 TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Open your Bible to Luke 2. Tell the following Bible story using the provided storytelling points. You may choose to review the Bible story by showing the video.

#### JESUS IS OUR GREATEST GIFT

**SAY** “One day, an angel told Mary she was going to have a very special baby. The angel explained, “This baby will be God’s Son.” Then an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream. The angel said, “Do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. Her baby was put there by the Holy Spirit. Name Him Jesus because He will save His people from their sins!”

During the time Mary was pregnant with Baby Jesus, they had to travel to Bethlehem to be counted.

While they were there, Mary was ready to have her baby. Mary and Joseph looked for a 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 manger.

That night, some shepherds were watching their sheep in the fields. An angel stood before them. A bright light was around the shepherds, and they were scared!

The angel said, “Do not be afraid! I have good news for you: Today a Savior was born for you.” Then the angel said, “Go find the baby. He will be wrapped in cloth and lying in a manger.”

Suddenly, many angels appeared. They praised God and said, “Glory to God!”

When the angels left, the shepherds hurried to Bethlehem to find Baby Jesus. They found Him, and then they told others about Him. Everyone who heard about Jesus was surprised and amazed. The shepherds praised God because everything had happened just like the angel had said.

Christ Connection: Jesus was born! This was very good news! Jesus came into the world to rescue us from sin.



LEARN

## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

### 3 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

Point to some of the people in the manger scene. As you point to a person, ask children to tell you about that person from the Bible story. Point to the angel, Mary, Joseph, Baby Jesus, and shepherds.

**SAY** “An angel told Mary and Joseph that Mary would have a very special baby. This baby boy would save His people from their sins. While Mary and Joseph were in Bethlehem, **JESUS WAS BORN**. This was very good news! Jesus came into the world to rescue us from sin.”

### 4 SING A SONG

Sing the song below to the tune of “Skip to My Lou”:

Hear, hear, hear and rescue.  
Hear, hear, hear and rescue.  
Hear, hear, hear and rescue.  
The Lord hears and rescues.

### 5 LEARN AND PRACTICE THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at Psalm 34:17. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Help preschoolers learn the key passage phrase. Lead children to say the key passage phrase while pretending to ring a bell.

**SAY** “The key passage phrase reminds us that God loves us so much that He hears our prayers and sent us a Rescuer. God sent Jesus into the world to rescue us from sin.”

### 6 PRAY

Pray, thanking God for sending Jesus to rescue us from sin.





LOVE

THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

## LOVE God because of what we learned

### 1 PASS THE GIFT



Arrange a circle of chairs in the middle of the classroom, one for each child. Instruct children to sit in those chairs. Show children a beanbag that will be a pretend wrapped Christmas gift. Play upbeat Christmas worship music as children pass the gift around the circle. Stop the music, prompting the child holding the beanbag to say, "Jesus is our greatest gift!" Restart the music and continue play as interest allows.

**SAY** "I love to give and receive gifts from my friends and family, do you? Jesus is our greatest gift! At Christmastime, we celebrate that **JESUS WAS BORN!** This was very good news! Jesus came into the world to rescue us from sin."

### 2 GATHER THE SHEEP

Prior to the session, expand flexible straws and curve them into a shepherd's staff shape. Place 10-15 cotton balls onto a paper plate for each child. Give each child two shepherd's staff straws, a plate of cotton balls, and a disposable cup. Play upbeat Christmas worship music as children work to use their staffs to move the cotton ball sheep into their cup pens.

**SAY** "The shepherds were caring for their sheep in the fields when they learned that **JESUS WAS BORN.** They were amazed and began the journey to worship Jesus. You cared for your sheep by moving them into their pens."

### 3 ICE SUGAR COOKIES



Post an Allergy Alert. Place a cookie and plastic spoon onto each child's plate. Spoon several different colors of icing onto the plate next to the cookie. Seat children at a low table. Place a prepared plate in front of each child. Invite children to decorate their cookie. Show children how to use the back of the spoon to spread icing onto their cookies. When the children are finished icing their cookies, help children to shake some sprinkles onto each of their cookies. Say a prayer, thanking God for the gift of Jesus. Invite children to eat their cookie.

**SAY** "What is one thing you would like to get for Christmas? **[Allow responses.]** Those gifts sound great, but Jesus is the greatest gift of all. At Christmastime, we celebrate that **JESUS WAS BORN!** This was very good news! Jesus came into the world to rescue us from sin. And He is the very best gift."







## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

### LIVE for God out of love

#### 1 WATERCOLOR AN ORNAMENT

Prior to the session, print the “Watercolor Ornaments” printable on heavyweight paper, one per child, and cut them out. Punch a hole at the top of each ornament. Thread and tie yarn through the hole, creating a hanger. Fill cups half full of water. Assist children in putting on art smocks. Distribute ornaments, water cups, watercolor paints, and paintbrushes. Demonstrate how to use watercolor paints. Give paper towels as needed. When the child has finished, set her ornament aside to dry.

**SAY** “Ornaments remind us of God’s love and His greatest gift to us. God loves us so much He sent Jesus to rescue us from sin. In return, we show our love to God, like the shepherds did, by telling others the good news that **JESUS WAS BORN.**”

#### 2 SNACK AND TRANSITION



Post an Allergy Alert. Serve the snack. As children eat, review and talk about the Bible story. When children finish their snack, lead them to complete the activity page. As they work, continue talking about the Bible story and emphasize the Christ Connection.

**SAY** “**JESUS WAS BORN!** This was very good news! Jesus came into the world to rescue us from sin.”

Remember to communicate helpful information to the bonus teaching hour leaders. If parents are picking up children at this time, tell them something their child did well during the session. Distribute Big Picture Cards for Families. Encourage parents to engage with the family discussion starters and family activities during the week.



## **BONUS** Teaching Hour Group Time

---

### **1 WORSHIP WITH INSTRUMENTS**

Display the Bible Story Picture Poster in the group time area. Loudly play a rhythm instrument while playing Christmas worship music. Invite children to come and praise God with you. As children arrive, give them an instrument and guide them to play along with the music. When the song has finished, collect the instruments and encourage children to return to their seats.

### **2 TALK ABOUT THE BIBLE STORY**

Open the Bible to Luke 2. Use the summarized points below to talk about the Bible story.

#### **JESUS IS OUR GREATEST GIFT**

- During the time Mary was pregnant with Baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph had to travel to Bethlehem to be counted.
- While they were there, Mary was ready to have her baby. Mary and Joseph looked for a place to stay, but every place was full.
- 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 manger.
- That night, an angel visited shepherds who were taking care of their sheep. The angel told them good news: The Savior was born.
- Many angels came, praising God. When the angels left, the shepherds hurried to Bethlehem and found Baby Jesus. Then they told others about Him. Everyone who heard about Jesus was surprised and amazed. The shepherds praised God.

### **3 SING A SONG**

Sing the song below to the tune of “Skip to My Lou”:

Hear, hear, hear and rescue.  
Hear, hear, hear and rescue.  
Hear, hear, hear and rescue.  
The Lord hears and rescues.

### **4 SAY THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE**

Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at Psalm 34:17. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Lead children to say the key passage phrase while clapping each syllable.

### **5 PRAY**

Pray, thanking God for sending Jesus to rescue us from our sin.



## BONUS Teaching Hour Activities

### 6 CREATE PLAY DOUGH MANGER SCENES



Distribute play dough, rollers and cutters, and blocks to small groups of children. Invite children to work together to create a manger scene. Guide children to roll and cut the play dough to create people or animals. Show the children how to stack blocks to create a stable and a manger for their play dough creations.

**SAY** “ Tell me about the manger scene you created. [Allow responses.] Today we learned Jesus is our greatest gift. We heard **JESUS WAS BORN** in Bethlehem. His parents were named Mary and Joseph. Angels appeared to shepherds and told them about His birth. They encouraged the shepherds to go and to find the baby boy. When they found him, they went and told others about Him. Everyone who heard about Jesus was surprised and amazed. ”

### 7 DECORATE A GIFT BOX

Prior to the session, write the word JESUS on one index card per child. Cut wrapping paper into smaller, more manageable pieces for children. On a low table, create a gift wrapping station with wrapping paper, ribbons, bows, blunt-tip scissors, and clear tape. Distribute a gift box to each child. Guide children to select wrapping supplies for their boxes. Assist them in wrapping the boxes and lids separately. When children finish wrapping, distribute the JESUS index cards and lead children to put the cards into their boxes.

**SAY** “ You’ve wrapped your presents beautifully. Put this gift under your tree at home to help you remember that Jesus is God’s greatest gift to us. Give it to one of your family members on Christmas morning. At Christmastime, we celebrate that **JESUS WAS BORN!** This is very good news! Jesus came into the world to rescue us from sin. ”

### 8 WRITE IN THE SNOW



Post an Allergy Alert. Assist children in putting on art smocks and instruct them to be seated at the table. Place a plate with a mound of shaving cream in front of each child. Invite children to play with the shaving cream by writing or drawing pictures in it. Demonstrate for children how to write a J for Jesus, a G for God, and a C for Christmas in the “snow”. When children are done playing, quickly clean their hands with wet wipes.

**SAY** “ We often think of snow at Christmastime. In some places, it does snow, and in others, it doesn’t. But it was fun to pretend to play in the snow today, wasn’t it? We drew a J for Jesus, a G for God, and a C for Christmas. At Christmastime, we celebrate that **JESUS WAS BORN.** When we tell others about Jesus’ birth, we share His greatest gift with them. ”

Release preschoolers to parents according to your church’s security procedure. Tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session.





# 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.