



CHRISTMAS BONUS SESSION

# YOUNGER PRESCHOOL **LEADER GUIDE**



CHRISTMAS BONUS SESSION

# JESUS IS OUR RESCUER

LUKE 2



**CHRIST CONNECTION:** Jesus was born! This is very good news because Jesus is God's Son who came to earth to save people from their sins.

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** How can we glorify God? We can glorify God by loving and obeying Him.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Do everything for the glory of God. 1 Corinthians 10:31

**STORY POINT:** Jesus came to rescue us from sin.



## PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

### LEADER Bible Study

The announcement of Jesus' birth came in a completely unexpected way. Instead of announcing the birth of the Savior in the halls of power or the seats of religion, God chose for a group of shepherds on the outskirts of Bethlehem to be the first to hear of Christ's birth. The announcement from angels to the shepherds watching over their flocks was significant not only because of the message they gave, but also for the people to whom it was given.

Shepherds spent their days on the fringes of society taking care of animals. Living on the outskirts made it difficult for these shepherds to make it to synagogue and participate in the daily spiritual life of their community. Because the shepherds constantly worked with livestock and were regularly exposed to manure and dead animals, they would have been considered unclean according to Jewish law.

It was no accident that God choose often overlooked and outcast shepherds as the ones to whom the angels would give the announcement of Jesus' birth. This announcement was a powerful statement about the nature of the kingdom of God. God's kingdom is for all people, and no one is outside of God's plan to know of His love.

The long expected announcement was remarkable. Jesus had been born in the city of David for all people. Three significant titles are used here to describe why that is good news for all people. First, Jesus is the Savior—the one who rescues people from sin. Next, He is the Messiah, the Anointed One of God who came to lead God's people into God's kingdom. Finally, He is the Lord, the ruler of all the universe.


The shepherds' response to this glorious news included curiosity, awe, and obedience. This Christmas, may we do everything we can to see Jesus, adore Him for who He is, and boldly proclaim the truth that Jesus is the Savior, Messiah, and Lord.



**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

#### Build a manger scene

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster
- ☐ manger scene



### LEARN

#### Decorate Christmas cookies

- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster
- ☐ sugar cookies
- ☐ colored icing
- ☐ assorted sprinkles
- ☐ plastic spoons
- ☐ disposable plates

#### Tell the Bible story

- ☐ "Jesus Is Our Rescuer" video (optional)

#### Review the Bible story

- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster

#### Learn and practice the key passage phrase

- ☐ Key Passage Phrase Marker
- ☐ worship music



### LOVE

#### Gather the sheep

- ☐ cotton balls
- ☐ candy canes
- ☐ painter's tape

#### Play with a farm set

- ☐ index cards, 5
- ☐ alphabet blocks or wooden letter tiles



### LIVE

#### Make a cross ornament

- ☐ plastic tablecloth
- ☐ hot glue gun and glue (adult use only)
- ☐ jumbo craft sticks, 2 per child
- ☐ yarn or twine
- ☐ adhesive jewels

#### Snack and transition

- ☐ hand sanitizer (optional)
- ☐ "Lead Shepherds to Jesus" activity page, 1 per child
- ☐ Big Picture Cards for Families



### BONUS

#### Say the key passage phrase

- ☐ Key Passage Phrase Marker

#### Toss Christmas bows

- ☐ small bin
- ☐ painter's tape
- ☐ self-adhesive Christmas bows

#### Create a shepherd's staff

- ☐ chenille stems



## 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, the 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 room. 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.

### BUILD A MANGER SCENE

On a table inside the room door, place the Big Picture Question Poster, blocks, and the manger scene figures and animals. As children and their parents arrive, wish them a “Merry Christmas.” Welcome the children into the room and help them to put away any coats or bags. Invite the children to the prepared table with blocks and manger scene figures. Guide the children to use the materials provided to build their own manger scene. As the children build a stable and arrange the people figures, ask them to tell you about the various people in the Bible’s Christmas story. At least once during the building time, point to the poster and read it aloud to the children.

**SAY** “Merry Christmas, friends! It makes me happy to be able to see you at Christmastime. Christmas is when we celebrate the birth of Jesus. You have done such a good job of building a manger scene with the blocks and the figures. Tell me what you already know about the birth of Jesus. [Allow responses.] In our Bible story today, we are going to hear what happened when Jesus was born. Our big picture question and answer says, **How can we glorify God? We can glorify God by loving and obeying Him. JESUS CAME TO RESCUE US FROM SIN.**”







LEARN

## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

### LEARN the Bible Story

#### 1 DECORATE CHRISTMAS COOKIES



Post an Allergy Alert sign at the classroom door. On disposable plates, place a cookie, a dab of icing, and a spoon. Invite preschoolers to be seated at the table. Guide preschoolers to spread icing on their cookies with their spoons. Help each child shake sprinkles on the icing. Say a prayer and encourage preschoolers to eat while you tell the Bible story.

**SAY** “We love to do fun things like decorating cookies, listening to music, and exchanging gifts at Christmas. What are other fun things that you like to do at Christmastime? [Allow responses.] While you eat your cookies, I am going to tell you a Bible story about why we celebrate Christmas.”

#### 2 TELL THE BIBLE STORY

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

#### JESUS IS OUR RESCUER

**SAY** “Mary and Joseph had to go to a town called Bethlehem because the king said everyone needed to go to their own town to be counted.

When they got there, Mary was ready to have her baby. They looked for a place to stay, but there were no rooms left anywhere. Mary and Joseph found a place where animals stayed, and that is where Mary had her baby, Jesus. She wrapped Him up to keep Him warm and put Him in a feeding box for animals.

Nearby, some shepherds were taking care of their sheep. Suddenly, an angel appeared, and a bright light shone all around. The angel said, “Do not be scared! I have very good news! A special baby, Jesus, was just born in Bethlehem. He is wrapped in cloth and sleeping in a feeding box.”

The shepherds hurried to Bethlehem and found Baby Jesus just as the angel said. They were so happy and told others about Jesus. Then they went back to their sheep, thanking God for the wonderful news.”

Christ Connection: Jesus was born! This is very good news because Jesus is God’s Son who came to earth to save people from their sins.



## LEARN

### THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

#### 3 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

Show children the Bible Story Picture Poster. Tell the children that you are going to ask several review questions. Guide children to toss their used plates and utensils into a trash bin as they answer questions. Questions may include: Where did Mary and Joseph travel? (to Bethlehem) What was Mary ready to do when they got to Bethlehem? (have a baby) Where did Mary have her baby? (in a place where animals stayed) What did Mary call her baby? (Jesus) Who did the angels appear to? (shepherds) What did the angels tell the shepherds? (A special baby was born in Bethlehem.) What did the shepherds do after the angel left? (They hurried to Bethlehem.) What did the shepherds do after they saw Jesus? (They told others about Jesus.)

**SAY** “While Mary and Joseph were in Bethlehem, Jesus was born. Shepherds came to visit Baby Jesus. They were so happy that Jesus was born that they went told others about Jesus. Jesus was born! This is very good news because **JESUS CAME TO RESCUE US FROM SIN.**”

#### 4 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of “Here We Go Round’ the Mulberry Bush”:

Jesus was born on Christmas day,  
On Christmas day,  
On Christmas day.  
Jesus was born on Christmas day,  
To rescue us from sin.

#### 5 LEARN AND PRACTICE THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at 1 Corinthians 10:31. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the phrase aloud. Guide preschoolers to stand up and to spread out. Play music and direct children to dance. Stop the music, prompt children to “freeze,” and call on a child to say the key passage phrase. Continue playing and stopping the music until each child has had a turn. Say to the children that we bring glory to God when we love, obey, and praise Him. Play the music again and encourage children to dance. Stop the music, lead everyone to freeze and say the phrase together.

**SAY** “To bring glory to God means to love Him, to obey Him, and to praise Him for being so great. Today, we heard how shepherds came to visit Jesus and went away praising and thanking God for Jesus. These shepherds brought glory to God, just like our key passage phrase says to do.”

#### 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 CARE FOR A BABY DOLL



Provide the children with baby dolls and baby care items. Invite the children to care for the baby doll by rocking it, wrapping it in a blanket, pretending to feed it a bottle, reading it a Bible story, and by tucking it into bed. As the children play with and care for the baby doll, ask them to tell you how they think Mary cared for Baby Jesus.

**SAY** 🗨️ Can you tell me some ways that a mother takes care of her baby? [Allow responses.] While Mary and Joseph were in Bethlehem, it became time for Mary to have her baby. Mary wrapped Baby Jesus up to keep Him warm and she put Him in a feeding box for animals. Then, some shepherds came to Bethlehem to see Baby Jesus. They thanked God for the wonderful news that Jesus was born. They went away praising God because Jesus was born! This was very good news because Jesus is God's Son who came to earth to save people from their sins. 🗨️

### 2 GATHER THE SHEEP

Use painter's tape make a few squares on a table. Spread some cotton balls across the table. Tell the children they will pretend to be shepherds and the cotton balls will be sheep. Give each child a candy cane, and encourage her to use the candy cane to drag all the cotton balls into the squares.

**SAY** 🗨️ What kind of animals do shepherds take care of? (sheep) What do you think it would be like to be a real shepherd? [Allow responses.] You did a great job being a pretend shepherd and gathering all the sheep. In our story today, shepherds were caring for their sheep, when all of a sudden something amazing happened! Do you know what it was? [Allow responses.] 🗨️

### 3 PLAY WITH A FARM SET

Place a toy farm, accessories, and animals on a low tabletop or the floor. Invite a child to play with the barn and the farm animals. As the children play, ask them to tell you what they remember from the Bible story and where Baby Jesus was born.

**SAY** 🗨️ When it was time for Mary to have her baby, she and Joseph looked for a place to stay, but there were no rooms anywhere. Mary and Joseph found a place where animals stayed, like our barn. That is where Mary had her baby. She wrapped Baby Jesus and put Him in a feeding box for animals. When the angel appeared to the shepherds, the angel told them to find a baby wrapped in cloth and sleeping in a feeding box. The shepherds hurried to Bethlehem and found Baby Jesus just as the angel said. **JESUS CAME TO RESCUE US FROM SIN.** 🗨️

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**







## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

### LIVE for God out of love

#### 1 MAKE A CROSS ORNAMENT

Prior to the session, hot glue two jumbo craft sticks together to form a cross shape. Glue a loop of yarn or twine to the top of the cross for make an ornament. Make one ornament for each preschooler. Cover a table with a plastic tablecloth. Distribute a cross ornament, washable markers, and adhesive jewels to each child. Guide the children to use the craft supplies to decorate their crosses.

**SAY** “ Look at your cross ornaments. They are such great reminders of our Bible story today. We celebrate Christmas because Jesus was born, but why was Jesus born? **[Allow responses.]** Jesus lived a perfect life, died on a cross, and came back to life. The cross can help us remember that **JESUS CAME TO RESCUE US FROM SIN**. Now that is something wonderful to celebrate at Christmastime! ”

#### 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 is very good news because Jesus is God’s Son who came to earth to save people from their sins. ”

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

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### **1 SEARCH FOR THE BABY**

Hide a small doll somewhere in the classroom. Instruct preschoolers to bring you the doll when they find it. After they find it, guide them to be seated and to close their eyes while you hide the doll again. Then, guide them to go look for the baby again. Play several rounds of hiding the doll and directing the children to look for and find it. When you are finished with the game, seat the children. Ask preschoolers to listen carefully to the Bible story and for who went to find Baby Jesus after He was born.

### **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 RESCUER**

- Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem to be counted.
- When they got there, Mary was about to have her baby. There were no rooms left, so they stayed in a place where animals were kept.
- Mary had Baby Jesus there and placed Him in a feeding box.
- Nearby, shepherds saw an angel who told them about the special baby born in Bethlehem.
- The shepherds found Jesus! They told others the good news, and then they went back to their sheep and praised God.

### **3 SING A SONG**

Sing the song to the familiar tune of “Here We Go Round’ the Mulberry Bush”:

Jesus was born on Christmas day,  
On Christmas day,  
On Christmas day.  
Jesus was born on Christmas day,  
To rescue us from sin.

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

Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at 1 Corinthians 10:31. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the phrase aloud and lead the children to take turns holding the doll while repeating the verse. Talk about how **JESUS CAME TO RESCUE US FROM SIN**. Say the key passage phrase again together

### **5 PRAY**

Pray, praising God for His good plan in sending Jesus as a baby to save us.



## BONUS Teaching Hour Activities

### 6 TRAVEL THROUGH BETHLEHEM



Lead children to form a line and travel through “Bethlehem” while singing carols. Stop to ask questions about Mary and Joseph’s journey. Discuss what the journey may have been like for the shepherds.

**SAY** “What do you think that it was like in Bethlehem when Joseph and Mary traveled there? [Allow responses.] Joseph and Mary didn’t have cars to drive on the roads, but toy cars are fun to play with today. Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem because the king said everyone needed to go to their own town to be counted. While they were there, Baby Jesus was born. This is very good news because **JESUS CAME TO RESCUE US FROM SIN.**”

### 7 TOSS CHRISTMAS BOWS

Peel and stick Christmas bows to a beanbag. Place a small bin next to a classroom wall. Using painter’s tape, make a line a few feet away from the bin. Lead the children to line up behind the line. Give the first child in the line a beanbag with a bow. Say the key passage phrase to the child. Give the child the beanbag and challenge him to say the phrase while tossing the beanbag into the bin. (If needed, allow him several attempts.) Once he has managed to get the beanbag into the bin, give the next child at turn, and so forth.

**SAY** “We have had a lot of practice saying our key passage phrase. Can you say it with me again? [Lead children to repeat it.] Today, as we celebrate the birth of Jesus, we are reminded of that Jesus is God’s Son who was born as a baby and came to rescue us from sin. We can honor Him and give Him glory by loving Him, by praising Him, and by obeying Him.”

### 8 CREATE A SHEPHERD’S STAFF

Show children chenille stems. Encourage each child to select two different colored stems. Demonstrate how to twist the stems together creating a striped pattern. Then guide the children to bend the one end of the stems around creating a shepherd’s crook. Show the children how their creation looks like both a shepherd’s crook and a J, for Jesus.

**SAY** “In our Bible story, we heard how angels appeared to some shepherds and told them the good news that a special baby boy, Jesus, was just born in Bethlehem. The shepherds hurried to Bethlehem and found Baby Jesus just as the angel said. They were so happy and told others about Jesus. Jesus was born! This is very good news because Jesus is God’s Son who came to earth to save people from their sins.”

Release preschoolers to parents according to your church’s security procedure. Tell them something 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.