UNIT 28 | CHRISTMAS BONUS SESSION

JESUS IS OUR SUBSTITUTE

LUKE 2



CHRIST CONNECTION: Jesus came to save people from sin. If we believe in Jesus, we will be forgiven.

KEY PASSAGE PHRASE: If God is for us, who is against us? Romans 8:31b

BABIES GOSPEL GEMS

- Mary and Joseph were getting ready for a special baby, who was God's Son.
- They went to Bethlehem, and Mary had her baby in a place where animals were kept.
- An angel told the shepherds about Baby Jesus. They found Him and praised God.

TODDLER BIBLE STORY: Mary and Joseph were getting ready for a special baby. God had told Mary that her baby was His Son and the Savior of the world! Later, Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem, but there was no guest room available for them. Mary had her baby in a place where animals were kept. Mary wrapped Baby Jesus in cloths and laid Him in a *manger*, a feeding box for animals. Nearby, shepherds were watching their sheep when an angel appeared. The angel said, "Today, in Bethlehem, a Savior has been born! You will find Him in a manger." The shepherds hurried to find Jesus. They praised God for sending Jesus.



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 Poster 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 the lyrics below to the tune of "Baa, Baa Black Sheep." Provide jingle bell instruments to shake while you sing. Invite the babies to shake the bells as you sing.

"If our God is for us,
Who is against us?
Our God, He is the only God,
In Him, we will trust!"

> **SAY** *"Jesus came to save people from sin. Can we trust in Jesus? Yes! If we believe in Jesus, we will be forgiven of our sins."*

2 LOOK AT CARE ITEMS

Prepare a bag filled with baby care items (clothes, wipes, blankets, toys, board books, and so forth). Be sure to place a Bible board book in the bag. Pull out and explore the items one by one. Talk about how each item helps adults care for the babies. Be careful not to include any item that might cause tears, such as a bottle or pacifier. Say the first gospel gem as the babies explore.

> **SAY** *"Mary and Joseph got ready to care for a special baby. Did Jesus's parents get ready for Him to be born? Yes! Mary and Joseph were getting ready for a special baby, who would be God's Son. Jesus came to save people from sin. If we believe in Jesus, we will be forgiven."*

3 PLAY WITH SHEEP

Set out several toy sheep on the floor. Invite the babies to hold a sheep. As the babies look at the sheep, explain that sheep need a shepherd to take care of them. On the night Jesus was born, shepherds were nearby taking care of their sheep. Allow the babies to play with the sheep as you read the gospel gems.

> **SAY** *"Did someone tell the shepherds that Jesus had been born? Yes! An angel told the shepherds about Baby Jesus. They found Him and praised God."*

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 Poster 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 Poster as you tell the provided toddlers' Bible story. Read the Key Passage Phrase Card and guide toddlers to say it. Pray for the toddlers.

2 SING AND SHAKE TO THE TUNE

Provide chenille stems and jingle bells. Allow toddlers to string jingle bells onto the stems, securing the sharp ends with heavy tape. Invite the toddlers to shake their jingle bells as they sing the key passage phrase together to the tune of "Baa, Baa Black Sheep": "If our God is for us, / Who is against us? / Our God, He is the only God, / In Him, we will trust!"

> **SAY** "*Jesus came to save people from sin. If we believe in Jesus, we will be forgiven. Can we trust in Jesus? Yes, we can!*"

3 WALK THE PATH TO "BETHLEHEM"

Invite toddlers to walk behind you along a painter's-tape path around the room. Provide items for the toddlers to carry, such as a basket of play food or a baby blanket. Explain that Mary and Joseph traveled along the road to Bethlehem. "Journey" around the room, ending at the Bible Story Poster in the circle-time area. Display the poster as you retell the Bible story.

> **SAY** "*Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem, but was there a guest room available for them? No, there was not. Mary had her baby in a place where animals were kept. Mary wrapped Baby Jesus in cloths and laid Him in a* manger, *a feeding box for animals.*"

4 PLAY WITH A MANGER SCENE

Display an age-appropriate manger scene on the floor. If necessary, remove the wise men from the set. Provide extra toy sheep or other animals for the toddlers. Invite toddlers to examine the manger scene, allowing toddlers to use the figures to help retell the Bible story.

> **SAY** "*Did Mary and Joseph stay in a place where animals were kept? Yes, Mary had her baby in a place where animals were kept. Mary wrapped Baby Jesus in cloths and laid Him in a* manger, *a feeding box for animals.*"

5 TOUCH WOOL

Bring in pieces of wool fabric, yarn, or other wool items (socks, caps, blankets, scarves, and so forth). Allow toddlers to touch and examine the items. Explain that the wool on sheep can be used to make many different items that can keep us warm. Review the story.

> **SAY** "*The shepherds were outside watching their sheep when Jesus was born. Did someone tell the shepherds Jesus had been born? Yes, an angel appeared and said, 'A Savior has been born!' The shepherds hurried to find Jesus. They praised God for sending Jesus.*"

BONUS TEACHING HOUR

JESUS IS OUR SUBSTITUTE

LUKE 2

CHRIST CONNECTION: Jesus came to save people from sin. If we believe in Jesus, we will be forgiven.

KEY PASSAGE PHRASE: If God is for us, who is against us? Romans 8:31b

---

1 TRANSITION ACTIVITY: STICK "SHEEP" IN THE "FIELD"

Attach contact plastic to the wall at toddler height, sticky-side out. Hold a container of cotton balls on the other side of the room. Invite the toddlers to place cotton balls (or "sheep") on the plastic (in the "field"). Then count how many sheep are in the field. Review the story.

> **SAY** "*This is a lot of sheep! Shepherds were watching their sheep when an angel appeared. The angel said Jesus had been born. They hurried to find Jesus and praised God for sending Jesus.*"

2 MAKE A STARRY NIGHT PICTURE

Provide black or dark blue paper (one per toddler) and torn green paper pieces. Print the "Sheep Pictures" printable and cut out at least one sheep per toddler. Allow the toddlers to glue the green paper pieces to their dark paper. Then glue the sheep images to the middle of their paper. Provide star stickers for toddlers to put stars in the "sky." Write *Jesus was born!* on each toddler's paper. Review the story as toddlers work.

> **SAY** "*Were there shepherds nearby when Jesus was born? Yes! Nearby, shepherds were watching their sheep when an angel appeared. The angel said, 'A Savior has been born! You will find Him in a manger.' The shepherds hurried to find Jesus. They praised God for sending Jesus.*"

3 CHECK IN THE BOXES

Bring in small gift boxes or shoeboxes with lids. Gather manger items (a toy cow, a toy sheep, white strips of cloth, and a toy manger). (Print and use the "Manger" printable instead of the toy manger.) Place an item in each box. Guide the toddlers to guess what is in each box. Open each box and talk about how the item could have been at Jesus's birth. Review the Bible story.

> **SAY** "*Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem, but there was no guest room available for them. Mary had her baby in a place where animals were kept. Mary wrapped Baby Jesus in cloths and laid Him in a* manger, *a feeding box for animals.*"

4 WRAP A BABY

Lay wide strips of cloth and a baby doll by a toy baby bed. Invite a toddler to help wrap the baby with the cloths. Explain that Mary wrapped Baby Jesus in cloths, but He did not sleep in a bed like this one. Instead they laid Him in a *manger,* a feeding box for animals.

> **SAY** "*Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem, but was there a guest room for them? No, Mary had her baby in a place where animals were kept. Mary wrapped Baby Jesus in cloths and laid Him in a* manger, *a feeding box for animals.*"

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, Christ Connection, and gospel gems throughout the week.



THE GOSPEL

God's Plan for Preschoolers

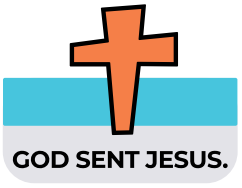
While preschoolers might not be ready to respond to the gospel, use this guide to help young minds begin to grasp big truths about Jesus and the kingdom of God.



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.