



Use Week of:

Christmas • Session 3

Jesus Was Born

BIBLE PASSAGE:

John 1

STORY POINT:

Jesus came to bring us life.

KEY PASSAGE:

2 Peter 1:3

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

How does the Holy Spirit help Christians? The Holy Spirit comforts us, shows us our sin, and guides us as we live for God's glory.

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LEADER Bible Study

God's plan all along was to send His Son into the world to save sinners. At just the right time, God the Son "emptied himself by assuming the form of a servant, taking on the likeness of humanity" (Phil. 2:7). The birth of Jesus was a miracle.

The Gospels of Matthew and Luke begin by giving details of the Messiah's birth: Mary became pregnant by the Holy Spirit and gave birth to a son. The baby was God's Son, and He had an earthly father—Joseph. As the angel had instructed, Joseph named the baby Jesus.

The apostle John began his Gospel in a different way. John 1:1 parallels the words of Genesis 1: "In the beginning ..." In the beginning, God spoke creation into existence. Everything was created through God the Son. (Col. 1:16) John names Jesus as "the Word." (John 1:3)

John 1 provides a bigger picture to accompany the story found in Luke 2:1-20. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). As you teach kids about Jesus' birth, help them realize why Jesus came. Jesus did not enter an already good world that simply needed some guidance and improvement. He came into a dark world cursed by sin to a people who were spiritually dead.

Jesus' birth is good news for people who need a Savior. In God the Son's becoming a human, Jesus brought life and light to people who were dead in sin. Jesus came to give life to all who believe. He brought light into darkness and showed us what God is like.

Invite kids to celebrate the birth of Jesus, which brought joy and peace to a desperate and chaotic world. Pray that God would prepare the hearts of all children—from babies to preschoolers to older kids—to hear and believe the truths about Jesus and welcome Him into their lives as Lord and Savior.

The BIBLE Story

Jesus Was Born

John 1

John, one of Jesus' disciples, wrote to tell people about who Jesus is. **John wrote that the Word—Jesus—existed in the beginning, before the world even began. The Word has always existed with God, and the Word has always existed as God.** He was with God in the beginning. **When God spoke at creation, all things were created through His Word.** Not one thing was created apart from Him.

The Word brought life into the world and light for all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness could not hide it.

God sent a man named John the Baptist to be a witness to the light. John was not the light, but he came to **tell people about the light so they might believe.** The true light was coming into the world to give light to everyone.

When Jesus came into the world, people did not recognize Him. His own people did not accept Him.

But this is good news: to everyone who did accept Him, He gave them the right to be part of God's family—to be children of God.

The Word became a human and lived among us. People saw His glory—the glory of the one and only Son of God. He was full of grace



and truth. **John the Baptist told people that even though Jesus came into the world after him, Jesus is greater because He existed before John.** People received blessings from Jesus, grace upon grace. Long ago, God gave people the law through Moses, but now He has given us grace and truth through Jesus Christ.

No one has ever seen God, but Jesus—God’s one and only Son—has shown us what God is like.

Christ Connection: The birth of Jesus was good news! Jesus was no ordinary baby. He was God’s Son, sent to earth from heaven. Jesus came into the world as a human to bring us life. He brought light into darkness and showed us what God is like.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Use space:** Start on one side of the room. When you reach the part of the story where Jesus came to earth, move to the opposite side of the room.
- **Use lighting:** Tell the story in a dim room. When you reach the part of the story about Jesus being a light in the world, use lighting effects to brighten the stage.

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: Jesus Was Born

BIBLE PASSAGE: John 1

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KEY PASSAGE: 2 Peter 1:3

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How does the Holy Spirit help Christians? The Holy Spirit comforts us, shows us our sin, and guides us as we live for God's glory.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to discuss how they feel about the dark. Are any of them uncomfortable in a dark room? Discourage any kids from teasing or being rude if some kids are afraid of the dark.

SAY • Being afraid of the dark is a common fear. Even adults are uncomfortable when we cannot see what's around us. Today, we will learn about the light of the world, and how He came into the world to overcome darkness. Not physical darkness, but spiritual darkness. Who do you think the light of the world is?

Activity page (5 minutes)

- "The Word Revealed" activity page,
- 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete the "The Word Revealed" activity page. Instruct kids to cross out the second letter and every other letter after that to reveal a special phrase: *the Word became flesh*.

SAY • What do you think *the Word became flesh* means? Who is the Word? When did He become flesh? We'll talk more about that today.

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Christmas Words

Play a word association game with the kids. Say words associated with Christmas traditions common where you live. Encourage the kids to respond with the first different word they think of. You may record their words on a piece of paper or dry erase board.

Suggested words: Christmas, manger, holly, star, gift, baby, and so forth.

SAY • We have a lot of things we connect in our brains with Christmas. When you think of the holiday, you may think of presents, decorations, or special cookies. The most important part of Christmas is Jesus' coming into the world. We will learn more about Jesus, and why He came to earth as a human.

OPTION 2: Light in the darkness

Provide each kid with a small LED keychain light. Dim the lights in your room and encourage the kids to leave their lights off until you signal them to turn them on one at a time. Do not allow the kids to shine their lights into the faces of others. Direct them to point their lights only straight up.

SAY • It's amazing what a difference a single light can make in a dark room. And each additional light really started to add up. Soon the room didn't feel dark at all! Today, we will learn about the light of the world, and how He came to overcome the darkness of the world. That's what Christmas is all about!

LOW PREP

- piece of paper and pen (optional)
- dry erase board and marker (optional)

- LED keychain lights, 1 per kid

Tip: LED keychain lights can be purchased on many online retail sites. They should cost around 75¢ per light or less if purchased in bulk.

Transition to teach the story

TEACH the Story



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Countdown

• countdown video

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

• leader attire
• Christmas decorations (optional)

[You may choose to add Christmas decorations over the regular firefighter theme decorations. Leader enters wearing firefighter costume.]

LEADER • Welcome to the station, kids! As you can tell, we decorated for Christmas. I love this time of year. As a firefighter, I spend most of my working time thinking about helping other people because it's my job; but in December, it feels like everyone shifts gears to think about others before themselves, and I really love that.

Tip: If you prefer not to use themed content or characters, adapt or omit this introduction.

Firefighters often have the honor of saving someone's life, but there's a kind of salvation that we can never offer. That's the salvation from sins that only Jesus is able to provide. This week, in honor of the Christmas season, let's talk more about Jesus' coming to earth. That's what Christmas is all about, after all!

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • Our big picture question hasn't changed: *How does the Holy Spirit help Christians? The Holy Spirit comforts us, shows us our sin, and guides us as we live for God's glory.* The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity, along with God the Father and God the Son. Each Person is fully God living perfectly united as one God. But only Jesus is also fully human. Jesus came to earth as a human to make the way for us to be saved. When we are saved, the Holy Spirit lives within us to help us honor God through all areas of our life.

Giant timeline (1 minute)

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

• Giant Timeline

LEADER • Although we've been studying the time after Jesus returned to heaven and sent the Holy Spirit, let's look back at how and why Jesus came to earth. You may expect us to read from Luke 2, and talk about the shepherds who came to see Baby Jesus in the manger. But not this year. Instead, I want to talk about John 1. You may not think of John 1 as a passage that has to do with Christmas, but it tells us more about who Jesus is. Jesus was not just a baby born in Bethlehem. He is God the Son! Let's hear more about it.

• Bibles

• "Jesus Was Born" video

• Big Picture Question Poster

• Bible Story Picture Poster

• Story Point Poster

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to John 1. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "Jesus Was Born."

LEADER • Bible scholars have spent years studying and thinking about the name John used for Jesus: The Word. In the original language of the Book of John, the Greek word used is *Logos*. *Logos* is the same word from which we get the word *logic*. When John called Jesus the *Word*, he was packing a lot of meaning into a single ... well, word!

Jesus is the exact representation of God's character. He is a reflection of God's plans and purpose in the world. He is the logic and reason behind all of creation. When God spoke the world into existence, the Son was there, creating together with God the Father. When John explains that the Word became flesh, he's explaining that the full power, perfection, and glory of God was becoming human. It's incredible to think about, and nearly impossible for us to really understand.

Imagine that you have a tiny, little eye-dropper. Imagine you went to the seashore and squeezed the little rubber bulb and stuck the end into the ocean. Now imagine that when you released the rubber bulb, it sucked in all the water from all the oceans in all the world—and still looked like a regular little eye-dropper. In a way, that can help you think about the miracle it was for God the Son to come to earth as a human baby. Jesus is the light in a dark world. He is the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us. **Jesus came to bring us life.**

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.

Christ connection

LEADER • The birth of Jesus was good news! Jesus was no ordinary baby. He was God's Son, sent to earth from

heaven. Jesus came into the world as a human to bring us life. He brought light into darkness and showed us what God is like.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the “Christmas, Session 3” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about Jesus’ birth. Guide them to discuss how their families celebrate Jesus becoming human.

• “Christmas, Session 3” Questions from Kids video



Missions moment (3 minutes)

Show the pictures from the “Lottie Moon Photos” printable. You may choose to review the facts from the printable used in Unit 28 Session 2 Missions Moment.

• “Lottie Moon Photos” printable
• “Lottie Moon Fact Strips” printable (optional; see Unit 28 Session 2)

LEADER • Lottie Moon lived over 100 years ago. These pictures of her can help us remember her and the work she did for Jesus. Lottie died on Christmas Eve in 1912 after serving in China for 39 years. She knew that **Jesus came to give us life** and she wanted the people of China to have the eternal life that Jesus offers.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together 2 Peter 1:3. Then sing “Life and Godliness (2 Peter 1:3).”

• Key Passage Poster
• “Life and Godliness (2 Peter 1:3)” song

LEADER • When Peter wrote these words, he may not have known that we would still be learning them and treasuring them thousands of years later. But they are God’s words written through Peter, and they are a wonderful reminder that, in Jesus, we have everything we could ever need and more!

• “This is Where the Mission Begins” song

Sing (4 minutes)

LEADER • The same power of God by which Jesus came to earth, lived a perfect life, died the death we deserve, and rose in victory can be ours through the Holy Spirit when we have faith. His power and help are the beginning of the mission for us!

Sing together “This is Where the Mission Begins.”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Father, thank You for sending Your Son to live with us as a human. Help us to trust You and dedicate our lives to serving You and glorifying You. Allow us to be a part of Your plans to grow Your kingdom in the world. Use us to spread the gospel to lost people everywhere. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

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 Christ, 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. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



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 and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to 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, as sinners, 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 for eternity. 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. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. 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. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

APPLY the Story



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BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How does the Holy Spirit help Christians? The Holy Spirit comforts us, shows us our sin, and guides us as we live for God's glory.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

• Key Passage Poster

Challenge volunteers to say the verse from memory. Thank each kid's effort and encourage all the kids to continue working to memorize the key passage. Then, set the key passage to the tune of a Christmas song your group is familiar with and sing it together multiple times.

SAY • Peter wrote these words to believers who were facing persecution. They were being treated badly, hurt, and even killed because of their faith in Jesus. Peter wanted them to know that the Holy Spirit was with them, and He gave them all the power they needed to live for God's glory. ***How does the Holy Spirit help Christians? The Holy Spirit comforts us, shows us our sin, and guides us as we live for God's glory.***

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

• Bibles, 1 per kid
• Story Point Poster
• Small Group Timeline and Map Set
(005802970, optional)

Distribute a Bible to each kid. Help them find John 1. Remind the kids that John is in the Gospels division of the New Testament. Ask them which book comes right before John and which comes right after. (*Luke, Acts*) Explain that even though John 1 doesn't specifically talk about Jesus' birth in Bethlehem, it's about His coming to earth as Savior.

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. Who existed in the beginning with God? (*The Word, John 1:1*)
2. Who came to tell about the light coming into the world? (*John the Baptist, John 1:6-9*)
3. What did Jesus show us when He became human? (*What God is like and His love for us, John 1:14-18*)
4. How do we receive “grace and truth” through Jesus?
Guide kids to see that everyone who repents and believes the gospel is saved. We receive the truth of the gospel as a gift from God and His grace saves us from our sin. Apart from Jesus, no one can receive grace and truth.
5. What does it mean for Jesus to be the light of the world? *Discuss the fact that, although we think of light and darkness as opposites, darkness is really the lack of light. Light and darkness don’t clash and cancel one another out, light always defeats darkness and pushes it back. Jesus’ work on the cross defeated sin and death—spiritual darkness—overcoming it completely.*
6. Why is it important to understand who Jesus is beyond just a baby born two thousand years ago?
Help kids think through the importance of Jesus’ identity as God the Son. Remind them that His full humanity combined with His full deity made Him the only One who could provide the perfect sacrifice. Jesus’ birth is important because it marked the moment God came to earth to save us from sin.

SAY • Jesus came to bring us life. Jesus’ life did not just teach us about God, it set the stage for Him to give us eternal life through His death and resurrection.

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

LOW PREP

- “Lottie Moon Photos” printable
- scissors
- tape
- ribbon

Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment found in Teach the Story.

Activity choice (10 minutes)



OPTION 1: Lottie Moon

Distribute copies of the “Lottie Moon Photos” printable. Invite kids to cut out one of the photos and tape a loop of ribbon to the back. Allow the kids to take the ornaments to hang somewhere in their home.

SAY • At Christmastime, we celebrate that **Jesus came to bring us life**. Lottie Moon wanted everyone to know that truth, and she dedicated her life to teaching people in China about Jesus. You can take these ornaments home to hang somewhere. When you see your ornament, you can be encouraged to live on mission for Jesus!

OPTION 2: Christmas cards

Provide the kids with heavyweight paper, markers, glitter pens, Christmas stickers, and other craft supplies. Encourage the kids to make Christmas cards for their friends or neighbors. Help them write the story point in the card, or another message about Jesus or the gospel.

SAY • Christmastime is a great reason to give cards to people. We can use cards like these to help us share the gospel and show love to those around us. **Jesus came to bring us life**, and the Holy Spirit helps us tell others about the wonderful life Jesus brought!

Reflection and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper to each child. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or about the gospel?

- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Whom can I tell about this story?

Make sure to send the sheets home with kids alongside the activity page so that parents can see what their kids have been learning.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session. Pray for your group.

Tip: Give parents this week's Big Picture Cards for Families to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.