

Jesus Is Born

Lesson At-A-Glance

Scripture Reference
Luke 2:1-20

Lectionary Sunday/
Church Season
Christmas

Lesson Focus
Praise God for Baby Jesus!



Gather (10 minutes)

Arrival Time

Kids talk about happy news that they have heard and do an Activity Page.

Spark Resources

Activity Pages



Supplies

Markers, pencils, white board, dry erase marker

Circle Time

Kids greet each other with a class cheer, hear about the lectionary season, and list words that they say when they receive happy news.

Leaflet

White board, dry erase marker

Prayer Time

Kids pray a good news prayer.

None

None

Open the Bible (15 minutes)

Jesus Is Born Storytelling

Leader or kid reads aloud from the Spark Story Bible and kids act out the reactions of different characters in the Bible story.

Spark Resources

Spark Story Bibles

Supplies

None

Praise God for Sweet Jesus

Kids sing the story to the tune, "Away in a Manger."

Leaflets, Lesson Stickers

None

Let's Celebrate

Kids write about or draw a picture of a favorite Christmas tradition.

Leaflets

Pencils, markers

Activate Faith (15 minutes)

| | Spark Resources | Supplies |
|---|-----------------|--|
| Go to Bethlehem! Kids lead shepherds through a maze to Bethlehem. | Leaflets | Pencils |
| Mangers Kids learn about mangers. | Leaflets | None |
| Shepherds Search Kids play a game that reinforces the theme of the Bible story. | None | Bag of cotton balls, basket, timer, two blindfolds |

Send (5 minutes)

| | Spark Resources | Supplies |
|--|---|-------------------|
| Good-bye Time Kids select what they will do at home this week, say the lesson focus statement, and do a good-bye action rhyme. | Leaflets | Pencils, scissors |
| Prayer Time Kids say a rhyming prayer, based on "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star." | Leaflets, Family Pages  | None |



Looking for additional Spark content to further engage kids? Visit wearesparkhouse.org/kids/SHOSS to learn more about these options for purchase.

- The Director's CD-Rom contains Activity Pages, Coloring Pages, Family Pages, Large Group Openings, and two additional in-class activities for each lesson.
- A Spark Online annual subscription gives you access to all content contained in the Director's CD-Rom and the Spark Leader Guides, plus administrative tools and other extras.

Gather (10 minutes)

Arrival Time

Set out markers, pencils, and copies of the Activity Page for this lesson.

I'm so happy to see all of you today! My happy news is that today we will all celebrate the birth of Baby Jesus. What is your happy news? Can you tell us something happy that happened to you last week? Or tell us about the happiest news that you have ever received? Some ideas are: My friend got a new baby sister or Dad said I could get a kitten or Grandma is coming to visit! Write their news on the board, as they share it.

After everyone has arrived, read through the kids' responses. Tell kids about some happy news that you have received. **What did you do after hearing your happy news? Did you jump for joy? Run to tell someone your happy news?** Affirm responses and share your own.

Invite kids to do the Activity Page. When all kids have arrived, invite them to join you in a circle or small group.

Spark Resources

Activity Pages



Supplies

Markers

Pencils

White board

Dry erase marker

Circle Time

Let's all stand in a circle and put one hand in the middle so our hands stack on top of each other. Place your hand in first to demonstrate. After everyone has a hand in the circle, shout together, **God loves everyone! God knows our names! Now, we'll each shout our own name out loud and lift up our hand starting with the person whose hand is on top.** Kids take turns saying their names in the order their hands are stacked from top to bottom. After all names are said, tell everyone, **Raise both of your hands high and shout, "Praise God!"**

If the kids in your class tried the Faith on the Go! activities from last week's leaflet, be sure to invite kids to share what they did. Ask everyone how they showed love to someone or helped another person during the last week.

Hold up the leaflet and point to the picture of the manger on the gold background. **Our season of Advent is over. Now it is the season of Christmas! What a happy time! It says Christmas on the front of our leaflet next to this little symbol. What is this little symbol? (a manger) Why do you think our little Christmas picture is a manger? (Baby Jesus' first bed was a manger.) What color do you see behind the manger? (gold) The color for Advent was blue, but now the color has changed to gold to show how special Christmas is.**

Today we shared some happy news, and I wrote your news on the board. Point to the white board, and read all the messages out loud. **Wow! We have a lot of great things to celebrate! What are some words that you say when you hear good news?** Let kids respond. If they are stuck, prompt them with words like, Yippee!,

Spark Resources

Leaflet

Supplies

White board

Dry erase marker

Awesome!, or Hooray! **Let's see how many happy expressions we can list.** Write these words on the board, brainstorming to come up with as many words as possible.

After our prayer, we're going to hear a Bible story that had some very happy news in it. When they heard the news, they reacted in different ways: some of them sang; some of them ran to see what was going on; and some just smiled peacefully. Let's pray, and then we'll open our Spark Story Bibles and hear the happy news that made everyone so excited!

Prayer Time

We're going to pray a "Good News" prayer. Repeat each line after me! Pause to have kids echo each line after you.

Good news!

Thank you, God,

For good news!

You bring us joy.

You give us hope.

Help us to share

Your good news.

Amen!

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

None

Open the Bible (15 minutes)

Jesus Is Born Storytelling

We've been talking about happy news, and now we're going to hear some of the best news, ever! It's the story of Jesus' birth. Let's read, Jesus Is Born, from our Spark Story Bibles. As you listen, imagine that you are standing in the fields with the shepherds when they first hear the happy news. How would you feel? What would you do?

Spark Resources

Spark Story Bibles

Supplies

None

Pass out the Spark Story Bibles and invite everyone to find Jesus Is Born on pages 212-217. Wait until all kids have found the story, assisting those who may need help. Encourage kids to follow along as you read or ask for a volunteer to read out loud.

Let's play a game of Guess Who? I'll whisper the name of someone from the story, and you will show how that person—or animal—reacted after Jesus was born. But there's one catch—you'll have to act out your part without making any sound! Meanwhile, the rest of the class will try to guess who you are. Let one or two kids at a time act out the following roles: Mary, Joseph, shepherds, angels, a

cow, a sheep, and a dove. Make sure that everyone has a chance to act out a role, even if that means having several kids be shepherds at the same time.

If kids are unsure of what to do, you could whisper the following hints:

- Mary could pretend to hold and rock a baby.
- Joseph could smile down and stand proudly.
- Shepherds could pretend to run somewhere, then stop, gather together, and look down at Baby Jesus.
- Angels could hold up their arms and pretend to sing.
- Cows and sheep could walk on all fours, pretending to make their noises.
- The dove could pretend to peck at birdseed, and fly around.

Have a brief conversation about the story. Ask the kids these questions:

1. Where did Joseph and Mary spend the night when Jesus was born? (*in a stable*)

2. What did the shepherds do when they heard the good news? (*They ran to Bethlehem to see the new baby.*)

3. How do you think Mary felt about sleeping with her newborn baby in a stable among the animals? Would you like to sleep in a stable? Affirm all responses.

Praise God for Sweet Jesus

If kids are not already seated at a table, move to one for this activity. Give each kid a leaflet.

Let's look at the first page of our leaflet. What is the happy news that we've been talking about? (*Jesus is born!*) **But someone very important is missing! Who is missing?** (*Baby Jesus*) **Let's complete the picture by putting Baby Jesus in his cozy manger bed.** Give each kid a large sticker, and let them put the sticker in place.

What did the angels do when they found out that Jesus had been born? (*They sang.*) **What do you think their voices sounded like?** Affirm responses. **Let's pretend to be angels right now, and sing the story of Jesus' birth! One way we can praise God for Baby Jesus is by singing! We'll sing the words of this story to the tune of a Christmas carol. Many of you have heard the song, *Away in a Manger*. Hum a verse to familiarize kids with the tune. That's the tune we'll use. Ready?** Sing through the song slowly, so kids can keep up. If kids in your class are beginning readers, you could sing the words, and they could hum the tune along with you.

Let's look at the bottom of this page and read about where we can find this story in the Bible. Today's Bible story, *Jesus Is Born*, is from the Gospel of Luke. Luke is one of four Gospels in the New Testament. The word, "gospel" means "good news." All four gospels tell the good news of Jesus!

Spark Resources

Leaflets
Lesson Stickers

Supplies
None

Hand out the three word stickers to kids. **Now look at the bottom of the third page in your leaflet. It has the same words that we just read, but it's missing some important words. Use the word stickers to fill in the blanks. Which word do you think goes where?** (*Gospels, good, news*) After attaching the stickers, read the statements together.

If you are interested in teaching your kids a Bible Memory Verse from this story, use this one. Teach it to them by inviting them to echo what you say, one phrase at a time.

"To you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord." Luke 2:11

Let's Celebrate!

Invite kids to open to the second page of their leaflets. **Who are those people at the bottom of the page?** (*the shepherds*) **What did they do after the angel told them the good news of Jesus' birth?** (*hurried to Bethlehem to see Baby Jesus*) **The people in today's Bible story celebrated Jesus' birth in all sorts of ways—angels sang, shepherds ran to Bethlehem, and Mary and Joseph smiled proudly. Even the animals played their part, snuggling in close to keep the baby warm. All of them praised God for Baby Jesus in their own way.**

What about you? How do you celebrate Jesus' birth in your family? Do you travel to visit relatives like the shepherds did when they visited Jesus? Do you make a birthday cake for Jesus? Think of your favorite tradition, then write about it on page 2. Assist kids with spelling as needed. If kids prefer, they may draw a picture of their favorite tradition inside the box, instead of writing.

Kids may not realize that many of the things we do to celebrate Christmas today tie in with the story of Jesus' birth. If kids have trouble thinking of Christian ways to celebrate Jesus' birth, say: **Putting a star or angel on top of a Christmas tree reminds us of the first Christmas, as does going to church. When we sing Christmas carols we are praising God for Baby Jesus, like the angels did. When we give each other gifts at Christmas, we celebrate God's greatest gift to the world—Baby Jesus! When we send each other Christmas cards, we are sharing the good news of Jesus' birth, like the angels and shepherds did.**

Spark Resources
Leaflets

Supplies
Pencils
Markers

Activate Faith (15 minutes)

Go to Bethlehem!

Let's look at the third page of the leaflet. When the shepherds heard that Jesus had been born, they praised God—and then what did they do? (*They ran to Bethlehem to find the new baby.*) **It might have been a difficult journey to make at night, as it could have been easy to get lost in the dark. So, let's try to help the shepherds find their way through this night-time maze.**

Spark Resources
Leaflets

Supplies
Pencils

Try doing the maze with your finger, first. Then, when you think you've got the path figured out, try it again with a pencil. Your goal is to bring the shepherds to see Jesus, and then back out of the maze again. If you choose the right path, you'll be able to pick up letters along the way. Write those letters on the lines below. Then you'll know what the angel said to make the shepherds start their nighttime journey in the first place! (*Solution: Jesus is born!*)

By first using their fingers to do the maze, kids should be able to find a successful route on their own. However, be ready to help kids with this activity, as needed.

Mangers

Turn to the back page of your leaflets. When Mary gave birth to Jesus she laid him in a manger. What is a manger? (*a feeding box for animals*) **Has anyone here ever seen a real manger?** Let kids respond. **Let's read some facts about mangers, and see what we can learn about them.** Because the facts are short, kids may want to volunteer to read them out loud.

Spark Resources
Leaflets

Supplies
None

Would you like to sleep on a bed of hay with animals all around you? Why or why not? Pause for responses. **Isn't it interesting that Jesus, God's own Son, was born in a simple stable? What do you think that says about Jesus?** (*God's gift of Jesus was for ALL of us, not just the rich and powerful.*)

Shepherds Search

We're going to play a game, in which we pretend to be shepherds tending to their sheep at night, like the shepherds who heard the good news of Jesus' birth. These cotton balls will be our sheep. Hold up a cotton ball. I'm going to scatter the sheep all over the floor, then you can try to gather them and put them in this basket. It won't be as easy as it sounds!

What time of day was it when the angels appeared to the shepherds? (*night*) So, to make sure it's nice and dark, you'll be blindfolded as you try to pick up the cotton sheep. Once you've collected a few, you'll try to drop them into this basket—while still blindfolded!

In order to avoid bumping heads, we'll have only two kids gather sheep at a time. I'll set a timer to make sure that everyone has a chance to play. You may want to gather sheep on your hands and knees, so you can feel for both the sheep and the basket! At the end of the game we'll see how many sheep you gathered!

Choose two kids to be the first shepherds, and blindfold them. Scatter about eight cotton balls around on the floor, and set the timer for one minute. See how many cotton balls the kids can collect before the timer goes off. Then, have those two kids return to their seats, and choose another two to continue the game. Scatter eight more cotton balls onto the floor (in addition to any that are left over from the first round), and let the game continue. When everyone has had a turn, count how many cotton balls are in the basket.

When the angel appeared to the shepherds to tell them about Baby Jesus, what did the shepherds do? Did they continue watching their sheep? Let kids respond. **No! They were so excited that they left their sheep while they hurried to Bethlehem! Like the shepherds, we can praise God for Baby Jesus by sharing the happy news of Jesus' birth.**

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

Bag of cotton balls

Basket

Timer

Two blindfolds

Send (5 minutes)

Good-bye Time

Thank you for coming to class today! We heard about the night that Jesus was born, and how shepherds and angels reacted to the happy news. We can praise God for Jesus, too! Tell your family and friends the story of Jesus' birth. Jesus came for them, too!

Direct attention to the back of the Faith on the Go! slip on the bottom of the back page of the leaflet.

Kids can fill in the blanks with the name of someone they want to give this slip to, their own name, and today's date. Encourage them to mark one or more of the ideas or add their own. Have kids cut the slip off on the line, ready to give to someone else.

After class, give this slip to someone you want to do the activity with. It's like a coupon for time with you. Next week, we can tell each other what we did to share God's love and remember our Bible story!

It's time for our Go Out! circle. Give kids time to stand with you in a circle. **Today we heard the words—Praise God for Baby Jesus! Let's say it together: Praise God for Baby Jesus! Let's go out with God's love!** Say this rhyme together while doing the motions:

**Put both hands in,
Put both hands out,
Put hands up high,
And shake them all about.
Spin around once,
Spin again and shout:
Go, God! Go, us! Let's go out!**

Prayer Time

Let's sing our prayer to praise God for Baby Jesus. We'll use the tune *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*. I'll sing the prayer, line by line, and you repeat after me. Then we'll try singing the whole prayer together.

**God, you sent an angel bright
To tell shepherds in the night
Of the gift of your own child:
Baby Jesus, meek and mild.
Help us share the gospel true:
Jesus came for me and you!
Amen.**

Be sure to send leaflets and Family Pages home with kids.

Spark Resources
Leaflets

Supplies
Pencils
Scissors

Spark Resources
Leaflets
Family Pages



Supplies
None