



Teacher Guide

Preschool A

A LOOK AT YOUR ROLE

You Are Part of Something Big!

Christian schools are “workshops in Christian living,” where discipleship is practiced as lessons are taught, relationships are established, and the issues of everyday life are experienced. The One in Christ curriculum focuses on Christ. As a teacher of the faith, you have the privilege to tell the Good News of Jesus, our Savior, who lived, died, and now lives again, offering us forgiveness for our sins, a clean slate, and a happy home with Him in heaven. When this is emphasized in the Jesus Time lessons, the text will be blue. The goal of these materials is to help students grow in discipleship as they study God’s Word and apply the Bible truths to their lives. The materials have been developed to teach Bible stories in chronological order yet correspond closely with typical early childhood thematic units, with the understanding that the classroom environment *is* the curriculum.

Using the Teacher Guide

There is one Teacher Guide for each month of the year. You will be building up a library of Teacher Guides for your curriculum. To help you identify and organize the four quarters, the covers are color-coded. The pages are three-hole punched in case you would like to place each month or quarter in a separate binder. The pages are also perforated so you can take out individual weeks or lessons to place in file folders. Or you may keep the guides intact to store on your bookshelf.

Each month will have four weeks of lessons for four days per week. And each quarter will have one bonus lesson because of variations in schedules and calendars. You will find that there is an abundance of ideas. This provides you with the freedom to pick and choose what works best for you and your students. The first page of a weekly plan gives you an overview of the week. This is followed by two pages of ideas for each of the four days of Jesus Time lessons. Note that each activity has a heart icon. To keep track of the activities you choose, you can put a cross inside the heart. Any ideas that are not marked can be used at the end of the week if you need more ideas, or can be saved for another year. The key point to repeat throughout the week is at the top of the right-hand lesson pages.

The second main section of each weekly portion of the guide provides Circle Time and Center ideas on the monthly theme. Though independent of your Jesus Time, connections to our faith are made to show children that Jesus is a part of everything in our day. These activities help children to Express (language development), Create (artistic expression), Explore (science and math development), and Relate (social activities and physical development).

Take note of the numbers in parentheses at the end of each activity. These numbers relate the activity to an early childhood curriculum standard. Reproducible copies of these standards are found in the Administrator Guide for this curriculum. The standards are based on a compilation of state and national preschool standards.

Student materials consist of a packet of Family Letters. They illustrate the story and include a section for the children to color, emphasizing a key concept of the lesson.



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NEW TESTAMENT

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FROM THE EDITOR: A LOOK AT THIS MONTH

The cover shows a child dreaming about Christmas. Not only is Christmas an exciting time of the year because of presents and goodies, but the real “magic” in the air is God’s gift of salvation to us in the form of a precious little baby born in Bethlehem. We pray that after this unit, each of your children get caught up in the awe and wonder of God’s gift of grace. May they have visions of angel choirs and Christmas stars in their heads.

We know that because of sin, we needed a Savior. What a loving God we have to develop such a simple, beautiful plan for salvation! A tiny baby in a crude animal trough that would conquer sin, death, and the devil forever! As the star led the Wise Men, the Holy Spirit works faith in your children’s hearts through God’s Word to lead them to Jesus. Through faith, Simeon and Anna believed God’s promises. Through faith, your children can sing “Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child, Prepare a bed, soft, undefiled, A quiet chamber set apart For You to dwell within my heart” (*LSB* 358:13).

Here are a few things to keep in mind as you teach from this guide:

- Feel free to first teach a song and add the actions later if it’s too challenging for the children to do it all at once. We encourage you to repeat the same songs throughout the week so the children successfully learn them.
- Teach students the Invocation as the beginning of each Worship Time. The words can become an important part of your classroom worship routine. Tell your students that you are starting your Worship Time the same way that worship time begins at church. Echo prayer sections to be repeated are indicated with slashes.
- Remind students to wash their hands before making any food.
- Leave the cupettes out during Play Time so students can reenact the Bible story throughout the week. They may be a nice addition to the Block Center.
- Remember that process is more important than the finished product. Although we may suggest how a project can be completed, there is not one right way to make it.
- Make adjustments according to the needs of your children. We provide you with many ideas. Pick, choose, and adapt for what works best in your classroom. Think of this resource as a guide, not a prescription. As you view the Materials List, consider that you may not need everything, depending on which activities you choose. Also, the materials needed for the thematic portion of the lesson are not included.
- Throughout the lessons, you will see “The Basics” as an item on every Materials List. We assume that you will always have on hand the following items: a Bible, the *Little Ones Sing Praise* songbook and CD (*LOSP*), the *Lift Little Voices* songbook and CD (*LLV*), markers or crayons, scissors, a stapler, transparent tape, and a CD player. Other optional materials are suggested. *The Story Bible* (hardback version) and *Lutheran Service Book* (*LSB*) are often mentioned. Some resources may become unavailable after this publication. Search the Internet for new or similar resources that could replace these, if necessary.

Individualizing Instruction

Students with special needs may have a difficult time using crayons and markers. To adapt activities that require students to color items, provide premade pictures to glue on instead. Premade pictures can be found in the form of clip art, coloring pages, or pictures cut from a magazine. Present the pictures as an option for all students, to avoid singling out struggling students. Most students will use a combination of their own creations as well as the premade option. Providing a way for all students to participate is a wonderful way to build community within the classroom and show that everyone has value.

Lesson 14—God Has a Plan for Salvation

JESUS IS BORN

LUKE 2:1-7

Discovery Points

Law: Because of sin, you need a Savior.

Gospel: God loved the world so much that He gave His Son to save you from the punishment of your sins. All along, God knew what needed to be done.

Sanctification: Through the power of the Holy Spirit, trust that our caring God always knows what we need. Rejoice that your Savior was born!

Background

Merry Christmas! Those words bring joy to our hearts and minds. The excitement of the children in your classroom grows each day as we anticipate and count down the days to Christmas, the day when we celebrate the birth of Jesus that occurred long ago.

As you read the Christmas story, and share it with your students, we pray the excitement of that day shines through your week and throughout this Christmas season. We pray you are able to capture that joy, capture those moments, and capture the gift that changed the world forever: the gift of a Savior through a tiny baby boy. This week, we focus on the sights and sounds of that joyous day, long ago, in a little stable. Imagine yourself at the scene as you prepare for this week. Hear the angel songs, see the sights, and smell the stable. Imagine the excitement of the shepherds as they ran to see the baby, and imagine the excitement Mary and Joseph must have felt as they met God's Son for the first time. Look up! See the large star that shined and guided the Wise Men who began to travel that night. Shhhh . . . look down. Bow your head in worship to the tiny little baby who slept in the hay on that glorious night—a night that changed the world!

Encourage your families to celebrate the days of Advent and Christmas by focusing on the birth of our Savior, and by celebrating and faithfully worshiping at home and with others in church. December is a busy time for all families. So many extra activities claim our time. The busyness of the season is likely to be hardest on families who do not have a warm and nurturing focus on Christ. As always, Christian teachers need to provide a caring, loving, and forgiving atmosphere for all the children.

Bible Words

For unto you is born . . . a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. Luke 2:11

Week 14

Letter of the Week: J

Day 1 Materials

- The Basics
- *The Story Bible* (CPH)
- Classroom crèche
- *Optional:* Jesus Is Born and Angels and Shepherds Cuppette Images (CPH) with 4 paper or plastic cups or Reproducible 14
- Jesus Is Born Finger Puppet Set (CPH)
- *Optional:* *Jump for Joy* CD (Promiseland Music)
- 12 x 18-inch piece of construction paper, Christmas cookie cutters

Day 2 Materials

- The Basics
- *The Story Bible* (CPH)
- Classroom crèche or Reproducible 14
- *Optional:* *Jump for Joy* CD (Promiseland Music)

Day 3 Materials

- The Basics
- Zippy puppet (CPH)
- 3 paper towel tubes and 1 paper plate per child
- Yellow tissue paper
- White, pink, and blue (or purple) washable paint
- Baby doll, 1 per child

Day 4 Materials

- The Basics
- *Angel! Angel!* (CPH)
- *Optional:* Angel halos premade from pipe cleaners or garland, 1 per child
- *Optional:* Paper for each child, 1 3-ring folder
- Red or white yarn
- Small wrapped candy cane, 1 per child
- Fruit-flavored round oat cereal



Open up *The Story Bible* to the Christmas story on page 283. As you read, add the characters to a classroom nativity scene. If you do not have a nativity scene available for your classroom, use the cuppettes available from CPH or the figures from Reproducible 14. Attach the cuppette or blackline images to blocks or overturned cups so that they will stand on their own.

You may wish to begin by adding the animals and briefly explaining to the children that a stable is like a barn. Continue the story and add Mary, Joseph, and the donkey. As you continue to read and tell the story, add the angel, the shepherds, and sheep. As you end the story, all the characters of the nativity scene will have been introduced, except for the Wise Men. Say, **The Wise Men followed the star and it took them a long time to get to baby Jesus' home on their camels.** Sing "What Do You Hear" (*LLV*, p. 11).



Sing "Oh What a Special Night" from the *Jump for Joy* CD from Promiseland Music. This joyful song focuses on telling the story from the animals' perspective. Suggestions for actions can be found at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=_qXeLolYCWE.



Make a special mat by tracing around Christmas cookie cutters on a 12 × 18-inch piece of construction paper. Laminate the mat. Set out the cookie cutters used and see if the children can match the shapes. To make it more realistic, use a Christmas tree cut out of green poster board instead of the construction paper. Trace around small cookie cutters that can represent ornaments. Retell the Christmas story as you talk about the Christmas symbols.

✦ ✦ ✦ God Has a Plan for Salvation ✦ ✦ ✦



Use the Jesus Is Born Finger Puppet Set at the appropriate times during the song. Start by placing Mary and Joseph finger puppets on index and middle fingers. Place donkey puppet on index finger of opposite hand. Hold Mary and Joseph near or above the donkey and move up and down together. Sing to the tune of “Mulberry Bush”:

Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem,
Bethlehem, Bethlehem.
Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem,
Riding on a donkey.

There was no room left for them,
Left for them, left for them.
There was no room left for them,
Except a little stable.

In that stable, Christ was born, *(Remove other puppets. Replace with Jesus in manger.)*
Christ was born, Christ was born.
In that stable, Christ was born.
Jesus Christ was born.

Angels sang of Jesus’ birth, *(Place angel puppet on index finger of opposite hand. “Fly” above Jesus.)*
Jesus’ birth, Jesus’ birth.
Angels sang of Jesus’ birth—
“Glory to God above.”

“Glory, glory!” now we sing,
Now we sing, now we sing.
“Glory, glory!” now we sing
To Jesus Christ, our King.



Pray: **Dear Jesus, You are my Savior. You are my friend. Your love for me will never end. Amen.**



Review, **Yesterday we heard a really exciting story from our Bible! Who remembers what happened in our story?**

Open your children's Bible and leave it open on your lap. Invite the students to join you with the actions as you review the story with the words listed below.

Walking, walking on our way to the town of Bethlehem. *(Pat legs rhythmically.)*

Moving, moving, here we go, riding on a donkey's back. *(Move up and down as if on a bumpy ride.)*

Stopping, stopping. We are here! We made it to Bethlehem. *(Raise hands; show happy faces.)*

Knocking, knocking, on the doors—Wow! It's really crowded here. *(Pretend to knock.)*

Looking, looking, still no room. All the inns are full tonight. *(Shield eyes to focus looking.)*

Waiting, waiting . . . See, a stable! Found a place for us to stay. *(Form triangle hands for stable roof.)*

Crying, crying. Baby's coming! Baby Jesus is born tonight. *(Pretend to cry.)*

Resting, resting, all night long, baby lies in soft, warm hay. *(Pretend to rock baby in arms.)*

Praising, praising our dear Lord, for the Savior born tonight. *(Raise hands above heads.)*

Conclude, **We praise God because He is so good to us. He loved us enough to send His only Son down to earth to become human. He would grow up to be a man who would die on the cross to take our sins away!**



Use classroom instruments and sing the following song to the tune of "O Come, Little Children":

O come, little children, and welcome your King.
To Jesus, your Savior, loud praises now sing.
He comes to forgive you and save you from sin.
To Jesus, your Savior, loud praises now sing.



Sing the first stanza of the song "In a Little Stable" (*LOSP*, p. 81):

In a little stable *(Make a triangle roof in front of you.)*
Far across the sea *(Make water waves.)*
Was a little Baby *(Pretend to rock a baby.)*
Just like you and me. *(Point to a child; point to self.)*

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Add a nativity scene to your classroom worship area. Keep in mind that young preschoolers may still put items in their mouths. The set should have large, nontoxic pieces, such as the Fisher Price Nativity Scene. If you cannot purchase a set, make an extra set of the reproducible figures on page 14, and use these as part of your classroom worship area. Attach them to wooden craft sticks and poke them into a mound of play dough or attach them to clean toilet paper tubes.

Introduce the nativity scene by talking about each one of the characters in the set. The stable where Jesus was born is like a barn. The manger is the place where the animals ate from each day. Place the figurines around your classroom. Each day, move them closer to the nativity scene as you count down to your Christmas classroom celebration. Add the figurines to the nativity scene in this order: the animals, Mary and Joseph with the donkey, baby Jesus, the angel, the shepherds and the sheep. Save the arrival of the Wise Men for after Christmas or the time when you talk about their travels. The Wise Men were not there the special Christmas night. It took a long time to travel to where Jesus, Mary, and Joseph were staying. The star was in the sky for a long time to show them the way. Sing “Sleep Now, Baby” (*LLV*, p. 13), adding a stanza for each new figure arriving at the manger.



Sing the song “In a Stable” from the *Jump for Joy* CD from Promiseland Music. The children can echo after the leader. Jesus is God’s gift of great joy because He saves us from our sins. If the children become familiar with the song, let the children take turns being the song leader. Indicate the leader by letting him or her hold a Christmas bow.



Teacher: Hello, Zippy! Good Morning! We are so happy to see you!

Zippy: Hi, everyone! I'm happy to see you too! *(Zippy notices the nativity scene.)* Hey, you have something new here! What is it?

Teacher: Well, Zippy, I wonder if the children can tell you? *(Allow the students to answer and direct the conversation to each piece of the manger scene, introducing it to Zippy. Zippy should respond to each character, excited to be learning about the nativity scene characters. For example, "Wow! I love sheep!*

They say baa, baa!" If the attention span of the class allows, ask some of them to tell you their favorite character in the nativity scene.)

Zippy: *(After all of the characters have been introduced)* Thanks, everyone, for telling me about your nativity scene. I think I'm going to go find one of those for my house. *(Zippy exits.)*

Teacher: I'm so glad that we were able to share our nativity scene with Zippy today!

Remembering Jesus' birth is the most special thing about Christmas. He is our Savior, who takes our sins away!



Sing to the tune of "Skip to My Lou":
Joy to the world, the Lord has come.
Joy to the world, the Lord has come.
Joy to the world, the Lord has come
To save us from our sin.
Joy to the world, the Lord has come.
Joy to the world, the Lord has come.
Joy to the world, the Lord has come.
Glory now we sing.

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Before class, collect 3 paper towel tubes and 1 paper plate for each student in your class. For every student, you will need to cut 2 of the paper towel tubes in half in order to create 4 Advent candles. Leave 1 paper towel tube full size to represent the Christ candle.

Let the students paint the paper towel tubes (“candles”). Three will be purple (or blue), 1 will be pink, and the tall candle will be white. Students will also paint the bottom of the paper plate green, or you may prefer to purchase green paper plates. Talk about the circular shape of the wreath; it goes around and around and never stops, just like God’s love never ends. And our life will never end because Jesus is our Savior, and He gives us life forever. The green color also reminds us that evergreens, which real wreaths are made of, never turn colors.

Once the candles and base are dry, glue or tape the “candles” in 4 equidistant places

around the wreath. The white candle will go in the middle of the plate. Inside each of the 5 candles, insert a small rectangle (approximately 2 × 8-inches) of yellow tissue paper to create the flame. Talk with students about the finished wreaths during Circle Time.

Send the wreath home with a note such as: “We are counting the weeks until Christmas. You can count with us too! Pull up the candle “flame” (the yellow tissue paper) on a blue candle for week 1. Week 2 is also a blue candle, week 3 is the pink candle, and week 4 is the blue candle. Each candle reminds us of God’s love, that He would send His Son to earth to be our Savior and forgive us from our sins. On Christmas Eve, “light” the white candle in the center. It is the Christ candle, which reminds us that Jesus was born for you and me!”



If possible, give each child a baby doll to hold and pretend to be baby Jesus. Model the actions with your own baby doll. Chant:

Sweet, sweet baby boy (*Admire baby. Hold baby in one arm, and stroke baby’s cheek with other hand.*)

Fills the earth with peace and joy.

Sleep, sleep, baby boy. (*Hold baby in one arm, and put index finger to lip with the other.*)

Fill the earth with peace and joy.

Rock, rock baby boy. (*Rock baby in arms.*)

Fill the earth with peace and joy.

Pat, pat baby boy. (*Hold baby against shoulder and gently pat back.*)

Fill the earth with peace and joy.



Sing to the tune of “Michael, Row the Boat Ashore”:
Christ was born in Bethlehem. Alleluia!
Born to save us from our sin. Alleluia!
Every girl and every boy. Alleluia!
Join us in our song of joy. Alleluia!

Encourage the children to listen for the word *Alleluia* and raise their arms up in the air or shake wrists in praise each time they hear it. We sing praise to the Lord because **our Savior has been born. Jesus takes our sins away! God knew what we needed: His Son to save us from the punishment of our sins.**



Read the book *Angel! Angel!* by Cherie Pless Dittmer. Before the story, hand out angel halos to each student. Halos may be made from a fuzzy pipe cleaner that has been formed into a circle, or a length of gold or silver garland.

During the story, enjoy this book with repetitive text that encourages the students to read the story aloud along with the teacher. Read the book throughout the week so that the children become familiar with the text and can read it with you.

After the story, have the students write their own class story, *Christmas Night, Christmas Night* by [insert teacher’s name]’s Class. Provide each student with a piece of paper and invite each of them to draw a picture about Christmas night. After they have finished drawing, ask the students to tell you about their drawings and fill in the following sentence: **[Child’s Name], [Child’s Name], What do you see? On Christmas Night, I see _____.** Once the pages are written, add them to a three-ring folder and read the class book during your day. Add the class book to your bookshelf.

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Before class, separate fruit-flavored round oat or whole-grain cereal by color. Set out a bowl of green and a bowl of red Os. You may also want to provide white colored Os by setting out a bowl of frosted round oat cereal. Place a piece of transparent tape across the bottom edge (*not* the rounded top of the cane) of a small, wrapped candy cane and then use a hole punch along that reinforced edge to make a hole for stringing. Provide red and/or white lengths of yarn (so the children can wear them around their necks). As each child begins at the Art Center, tape 1 edge of the yarn to the table. Let the children string yarn through the

opening of the cereal. You may want to tape the edge of the yarn so it doesn't fray and is easier to string. Provide several samples of premade necklaces using various patterns the children can imitate (e.g., red, green, red, green; or 3 whites and then 3 reds), but accept any design by the children. When the child has strung several pieces of cereal, have them add the candy cane. It may not end up exactly in the middle of their design, but it will help to give the necklace some balance. Remind the children that this upside-down candy cane looks like the letter *J*. The word *Jesus* starts with the letter *J*.

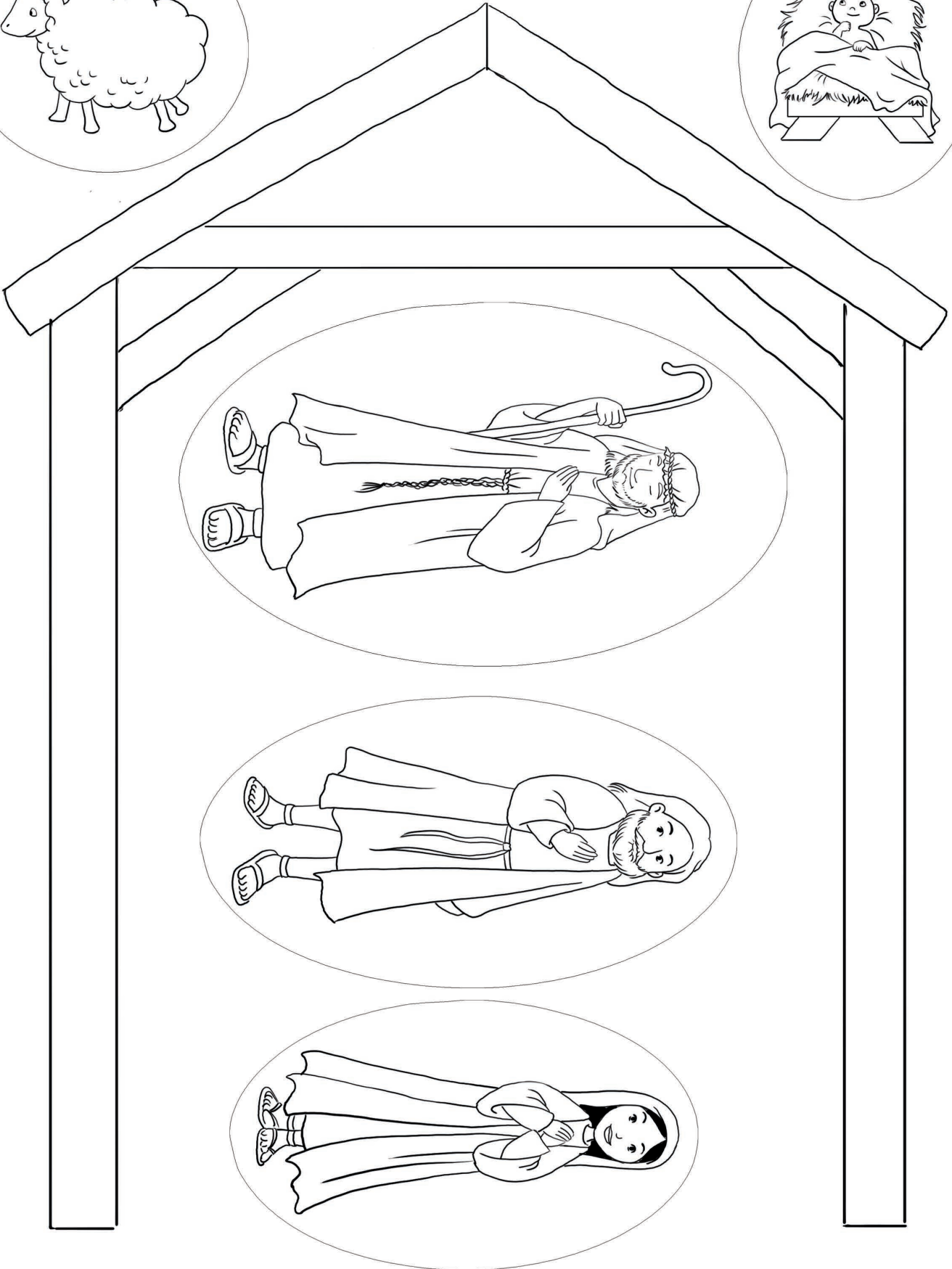
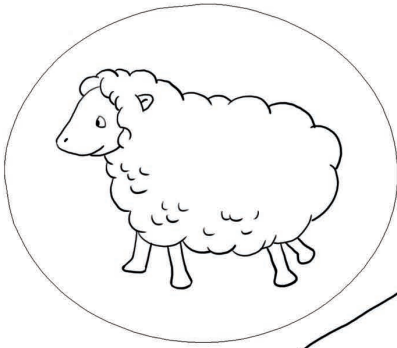


The following memory verse song may be incorporated into your classroom throughout this week. The memory verse for this week is from Luke 2:11, "For unto you is born . . . a Savior, **who is Christ the Lord.**" Sing God's Word with your students!

Sing this paraphrase to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell":

A Savior born for you,
A Savior born for you,
The special child is Christ the Lord!
A Savior born for you!

Depending upon the number of students in your classroom, you may want to sing this song inserting each child's name in the place of "you." Note that the last part of the Bible Words is in a different color. Feel free to leave that section off as the children learn the verse. Most students will find the lengthier version too long and challenging, but we've left it so you can use the entire verse as you discuss it in class.



CHRISTMAS



Jesus Is Coming

(Worship) Sing to the tune of “Christmas Is Coming”:

Jesus is coming, your loud hosannas sing!
Light the Advent candles for your Savior King.
With love and forgiveness into our world He comes.
Welcome Him with joy into your hearts and homes. (P.4.4.1)

Advent Wreath

(Worship) Add an Advent wreath to your classroom altar or worship area. Make one or purchase a child-friendly version with pretend or battery-operated candles. Count the candles with the children. There are 5, just like we have 5 fingers. Each week, you or a student in your classroom will turn on another candle.



Talk about preparing for Jesus’ birthday celebration and what you are doing around the classroom to get ready. One candle is lit for each of the 4 weeks of Advent leading up to Christmas Day. The order of the candles is as follows: week 1: blue candle (hope), week 2: blue candle (peace), week 3: pink candle (joy), week 4: blue candle (love), and on the last school day before Christmas: white candle (for Christmas Day). (P.1.2.4)

Light a Candle

(Worship) Sing a new stanza each week in Advent. Sing the last stanza on your last day of school before Christmas break. Sing to the tune of “Jimmy Crack Corn”:

Light a candle for hope today,
Light a candle for hope today,
Light a candle for hope today.
Advent time is here.

Light a candle for peace today . . .

Light a candle for joy today . . .

Light a candle for love today . . .

Light a candle for Christ today,

Light a candle for Christ today,

Light a candle for Christ today.

Christmastime has come. (P.4.4.1)

O Come, Emmanuel

(Worship) Sing to the tune of “The Farmer in the Dell”:

O come, Emmanuel,
O come, Emmanuel,
Come and save Your people now.
O come, Emmanuel.

Now let us sing with joy,
Now let us sing with joy,
Jesus came to save us all.
Now let us sing with joy.

O come, Emmanuel,
O come, Emmanuel,
Live within our hearts we pray.
O come, Emmanuel. (P.4.4.1)

CHRISTMAS



Candy Canes

(Circle Time) Give a wrapped candy cane to each student to hold. Talk about the shape of the candy cane. Upside down it is the letter *J*! Tell the students *J* is for Jesus. Sing “Joy to the Word.” The sweet smell of the peppermint reminds us of the sweet gift of baby Jesus. Following the Circle Time, add the candy canes to the Science or Art Center. (P.2.3.3)

Musical Christmas Chorus

(Circle Time) Select musical instruments for each student. March around your building, having the students play their instruments as they walk. If you find someone along the way, stop and tell them “Jesus is born!” Remind the students that the angels sang to the shepherds to tell them “Jesus is born!” (P.4.4.3)

Heart Tree

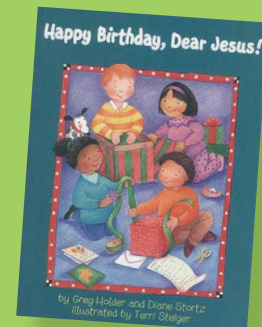
(Circle Time) Add a Christmas tree to your Circle Time area. It can be a 3-D tree or a paper bulletin board tree purchased or created with a triangle and a square base. On the tree, add construction paper hearts and number them equal to the number of school days left until the last day before you will end for Christmas break. At each Circle Time, have a student add a heart to the tree. As the tree fills with heart ornaments, talk about Jesus’ upcoming birthday. Say, **The hearts remind us that God loves us so much He sent His Son to earth to be our Savior.** Count the number of hearts yet to be placed on the tree. (P.1.2.6)



Happy Birthday, Dear Jesus! by Greg Holder and Diane Stortz

(Circle Time) After reading, ask, **What did the families in the story do to get ready for Jesus’ birthday? What kinds of decorations do you put up at your house? Do you have a favorite ornament for your Christmas tree?** Discuss the different preparations that the families made to celebrate Jesus. Talk with the children about the line in the book that explains that we give birthday gifts to Jesus when we do things for others. Encourage the children to think of ways they can show love to someone else in order to thank Jesus for being our Savior.

You may want to find ways to invite the families of your students to have a “Happy Birthday, Jesus” party at their house. Suggest this book and encourage your families to make a birthday cake together, just like the families did in the story. **What was the most important thing that the families did together to celebrate?** Talk about how reading the Bible together helps us to remember how much God loves us. Close by singing “Happy Birthday” to Jesus with the students and/or sing “Happy Birthday, Lord” (*LOSP*, p. 89). (P.2.1.2)





Jack Be Nimble

(Nursery Rhyme) Jack be nimble, Jack be quick.
 Jack jump over the candlestick
 On your way to see the babe,
 Born this wonderful Christmas Day!

Make a pretend candle using a cardboard tube and a yellow and/or orange tissue paper “flame.” Let the children take turns jumping over the candle. Change the name “Jack” to the name of the child who is jumping. Each time, elevate the candle by raising it up on a book. Add a book each time, after all the children have had a turn at that level.

Children can make their own candle by gluing a roll of Lifesaver candies to a cardboard or cardstock base to represent a candlestick. To represent the flame, students can glue a wrapped Hershey’s Kiss to the top of the roll. (P.3.4.2.1)

J Prints

(Writing) Attach 2 clothespins with springs to an unwrapped candy cane on its side, to use as handles. Show the children how to dip the candy cane into a tray of red paint and stamp onto a piece of white construction paper. Let them make many marks to cover their paper. Use candy canes of various sizes. Can any child figure out how to put 2 candy canes together to form a heart? (P.4.1.1)



Donkey, Donkey

(Nursery Rhyme) Donkey, donkey, old and gray,
 Open your mouth and gently bray.
 Lift your ears, and blow your horn
 To wake the world this sleepy morn.

The donkey must have been tired after a long journey to Bethlehem. But what is he so excited about on Christmas morning? He’s braying about the birth of the Savior, Jesus Christ! The Good News that Jesus was born to save us from our sins is worth making noise about! Make donkey headbands by giving each child a strip of brown paper. Cutting off a strip from a brown grocery sack works well. Give each child 2 brown ovals and 2 slightly smaller triangles to glue inside the ovals. Staple the oval “ears” to the headband, and then adjust to fit the child’s head. Staple in place. (P.4.3.2)



Express

CHRISTMAS

Animal Collage

(Art) Precut pieces of tan or light brown construction paper to resemble a stable (house) shape. Cut scraps of fur fabrics into small pieces and also provide white cotton balls and yarn for animal tails. Allow students to glue the pieces onto the paper in any design, creating fuzzy works of art that resemble the animals on that first Christmas night. (P.4.1.1)

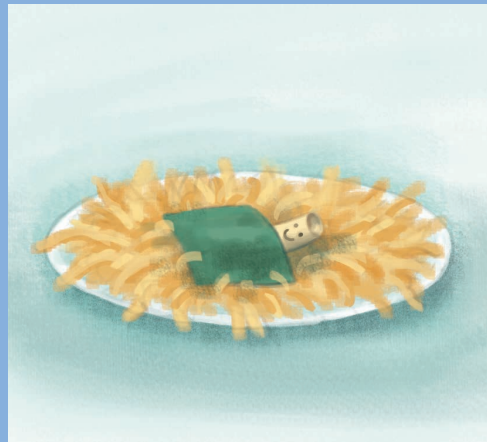
Craft Stick Barns

(Art) Draw a simple outline of a house on a piece of paper. Make a 4½-inch square with a triangle on top. Make a copy for each child. Show the children how to use liquid glue to attach 4 wooden craft sticks on top of the outline to create a square and attach 2 wooden craft sticks to create a triangle, since the base of the triangle has already been placed. When the “stable” is dry, you may give students time to decorate it with markers, even adding “baby Jesus” inside. See if they can copy a simple circle and oval that you model. (P.3.4.3.2)

Pasta Manger Scenes

(Art) Before class, use a paper shredder to prepare a large amount of shredded yellow paper or use gold shred fill crinkle used to stuff gift bags. Cut fabric into 3 × 4-inch squares. Use a black permanent marker to draw eyes, a nose, and a mouth onto a piece of wide rigatoni pasta for each child.

The day of the activity, direct each student to use glue to cover a small paper plate with a large amount of “hay” (yellow paper). The plate will represent the manger. After the plate is covered with glue and hay, use glue to attach “baby Jesus” (the pasta piece). Finally, cover the pasta piece with a “blanket” (piece of fabric). Talk about how baby Jesus slept peacefully in the hay that night. (P.4.1.1)



Manger Prints

(Art) Use a dull pencil to draw a simple manger on a Styrofoam meat tray. Draw a simple wooden box with legs, an oval-shaped baby with circular head, and an outline of hay. Let the children spread yellow or brown paint over the top of it and then press a piece of paper onto the paint. If they carefully lift straight up, an image of the manger should be imprinted on the page. (P.4.1.1)



Baby Rattle

(Art) Ask parents for a donation of old baby socks their child no longer fits into. They can be any small size and can be mismatched. At the Art Center, let the children choose 2 socks. The child will stuff 1 of the socks with cotton batting and then place (push) a jingle bell inside the batting. A plastic cat ball with a bell inside makes a great sound, but a large jingle bell will also do. Twist the end of the sock and then fold the end of it back over and around itself to create a ball. Give the ball back to the child and see if he or she can stuff (push) the ball into the 2nd sock, which you are holding open. Once the ball is snug against the bottom of the outer sock, securely tie the open end (top) with short, colorful ribbons. Remind the children that the word *jingle [bell]* starts with the letter *J*. This rattle could be a “gift” for baby Jesus (or for a crisis nursery center) and/or a fun toy to toss around at Circle Time. Let children shake their own rattles and sing the following song, to the tune of “Jingle Bells”: (P.4.4.3)

Ring the bells, ring the bells, ring the bells today.
Jesus came, Jesus came for us on Christmas Day.
Ring the bells, ring the bells, ring the bells today.
Jesus came, Jesus came to take our sins away.

Gingerbread (Baby) Jesus

(Snack) Before class, make gingerbread boys out of your favorite gingerbread cookie dough. Before baking, add 2 raisins for the eyes and snip a dried cranberry in half for the mouth. Add the other half of the cranberry on top of the head for a tuft of hair. At Snack Time, let the children use clean paintbrushes to dip into a bowl of white frosting and paint on a “diaper.” Show the children a sample (put the “diaper” between the legs and high up on the waist, almost to below the arms), but don’t expect them to copy it exactly. Take a picture before the children eat their creation. (P.4.1.1)

Marshmallow Mangers

(Snack) To make approximately 12 mangers, melt $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of butter and 2 cups of miniature marshmallows in a large pan. Add 4 cups of chow mein noodles. Let the



children stir. Allow the mixture to cool slightly, but not entirely, and then provide each student with an ice cream scoop full of the marshmallow noodle mixture. Have each student press the pad of his or her finger into the middle of the round scoop to form a hole in the center and shape into a manger. Add a baby carrot or half a piece of string cheese to the manger to represent baby Jesus asleep on the hay. Another option is to snip off a section of a large marshmallow and insert an almond into a slit at the top of it to represent Jesus wrapped in swaddling cloths, but be diligent to monitor the children when using any choking hazard or potential allergy threat. (P.3.4.3.1)

Stable Toast

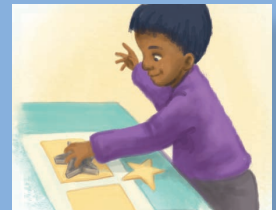
(Snack) Toast 2 slices of bread. Cut 1 slice of bread in half to make a triangle shape.

On a plate, lay the square toast and add the triangle shape to create a house look (stable).

Use a cookie cutter to cut out a star shape from a cheese slice and add that to the top of the stable roof. Add a baby carrot on top of the square toast to represent baby Jesus. Thank God for giving us baby Jesus (and food)! (P.3.4.3.2)



Cut



Cut star



Place star

Create

CHRISTMAS

Gingerbread Play Dough

(Sensory) Explain that at Christmastime, many people decorate houses made out of gingerbread. Show pictures from the Internet, if possible. Do students remember the name of the town Jesus was born in? The name *Bethlehem* means “house of bread.” As much as possible, let the children help you mix the dough. Before you add the liquid to the dry ingredients and also before you heat it, ask, **What do you think will happen next?** Mix 1 cup flour, ½ cup salt, and 2 teaspoons of cream of tartar together in a large pot. In a small bowl, mix spices (e.g., cinnamon, allspice, ginger, nutmeg) together until you achieve a desired smell; fold into the flour mixture. In another bowl, mix together 1 cup of water and 1 teaspoon of vegetable oil. Add the water and the oil to the dry mixture and stir well. Cook for 2–3 minutes, stirring often. The dough will start to pull away from the side of the pan. Turn the dough onto a wax-covered surface. After it’s cooled, knead until smooth. (P.1.7.2)



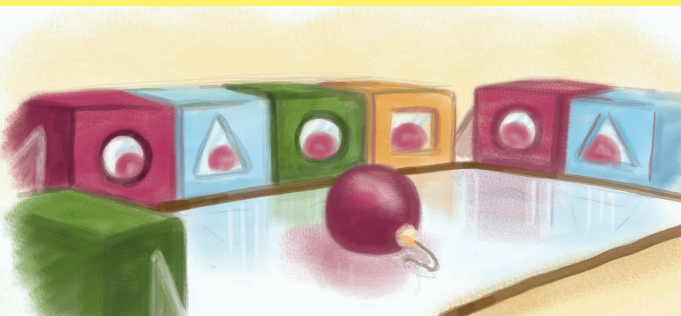
Christmas Play Dough

(Sensory) Add peppermint extract to your favorite play dough recipe. Consider making red, green, and white play dough to enhance the holiday experience for the students. Add holiday cookie cutters, sprinkles, cookie sheets, pot holders, and serving spatulas for pretend baking fun. You may be able to find thin foil baking containers at a dollar store.

You could also cut out a Christmas tree shape from green paper, laminate it, and then use it with the play dough. The tree shape serves as a special mat for the play dough table. Talk about the triangle shape and the color green. Add straws to the area, and show students how they may make holes in the shapes they cut out and pretend to hang their “ornaments” on the Christmas “tree” (play dough mat). Talk about the different sizes and shapes of the cookie-cutter ornaments. Younger children may have more success picking off pieces of play dough and dropping the small pieces on the tree as ornaments instead of rolling and cutting out the dough. (P.3.4.3.2)

Mirror Blocks

(Science) Use a “full-length” mirror from your dramatic play area and mirror blocks (vinyl blocks with soft mirrors sewn on). Lay the large mirror on a flat surface and add the blocks on top. Provide a selection of 3–5 Christmas ornaments for the students to choose from. Add an ornament to the blocks on the mirror and watch as colors and shapes appear in the blocks.



Move the blocks around to count the number of images the students can see from 1 Christmas ornament. Talk about *reflection*, *light*, and *color*. What happens with 2 or more Christmas ornaments on the mirror?

If you do not have mirror blocks, use a kaleidoscope and let each student peer inside to see the shapes and colors around your classroom, especially focusing on shiny, colorful ornaments. (P.1.7.3)

Tree Trimming

(Sensory) Set a small, 2- or 3-foot Christmas tree in the sensory table. Add ornaments that are safe for small children or create your own paper ornaments using old Christmas cards, a hole punch, and a pipe cleaner. You may wish to purchase cloth nativity scene ornaments from a retailer, or use the reproducible page for creating nativity ornaments. You may also wish to add garland (this works best if it is cut into pieces that wrap no more than twice around the tree.) Encourage the students



to work with a partner.

Allow the

students to decorate and redecorate the Christmas tree throughout the season! Talk about how the ornaments feel (e.g., soft, smooth, light) and how the tree feels (e.g., scratchy, pokey). (P.3.4.3.2)

Candy Cane Melting

(Science) Did you know that candy canes will melt in water? Introduce the word *dissolve* to your students and watch as the candy canes disappear. Add a small amount of water and a piece of candy cane to small, clear cups. The more water and the smaller the piece of candy cane, the faster the process. Try using hot and cold water too. Have the students predict what color the water will be. Record your predictions. (P.1.7.5)

Counting Candy Canes

(Math) Sort a variety of wrapped candy canes by color or size. Help the students count the candy canes. Which color has the most? Which size has the most? Which has the least? Are any piles the same? (P.1.2.8)

Tasteful Graph

(Math) Taste test small pieces of 3 or 4 different kinds of candy canes. Graph each student's favorite candy cane. Which one does the class like best? Which does the class like least? Talk about the shape of the candy cane, *J* for *Jesus*. (P.1.2.6)

No Room in the Stable

(Math) Create 5 math mats shaped like a stable (house). Label them with numbers from 1 to 5 by writing the numerals inside the roof. Add counters shaped like stars, candy canes, or other Christmas symbols. Help the students count out items to match the number on the stable. To simplify the activity and make it a matching activity, add images of the nativity characters to each stable and provide duplicate images for students to place on top. Use multiple copies of the same Christmas card, Reproducible 14, or the Bible Story Digital Flannelgraph from CPH for images. For the 1st stable, just add baby Jesus. For the 2nd stable, show Jesus and Mary. For the 3rd stable, show Mary, Joseph, and Jesus. For the 4th stable, add a sheep to the family. For the 5th stable, add a shepherd or a donkey to the scene, for 5 characters total. (P.1.2.5)

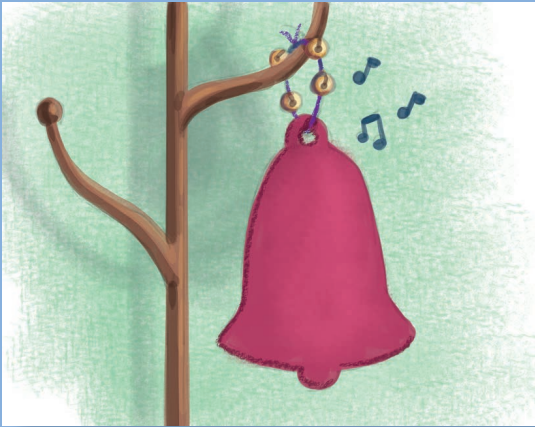


Explore

CHRISTMAS

Ding Dong

(Social game) Cut a large bell shape out construction paper or poster board. Poke a hole at the top; string a length of yarn or other string through the hole to hang, but before securing the bell, string several jingle bells through the yarn. Find a good place to hang the bell so that it's at or close to a child's height. Let the children take turns throwing



a beanbag or sock ball at the bell to make it ring. Practice overhand and underhand throws. Vary the distance from which the students throw for more or less of a challenge. Around the world, churches ring bells at midnight on Christmas Eve to signal the birth of our Savior. (3.4.2.2)

Musical Animal Crawl

(Social game) Students should be spread out in the playing area. (This game works best when played indoors in a large open space. But it may be



played in smaller spaces, such as the classroom, if the tempo is kept at slower beats.) Play the wood block, and invite the students to crawl to the beat: slowly or quickly. Talk with the students about fast and slow tempos, explaining the difference in movement. Talk about the different animals in the manger scene and the sounds they make. Students should pretend to be each animal as they move. (P.4.2.3)

Bow-dacious

(Social game)

Set out a large bag of bows throughout your playing area. You will need multiple bows for each color. Let the children dance around to some lively Christmas music. When you stop the music, call out a color. Each child must put his or her toe on a bow that color. Most likely, the children will have to share a bow. If a child needs help, let him or her run around by holding hands with a child (who knows the colors). Play the game in your classroom by walking instead of running and limiting the playing area. (P.3.4.1.5)

Relate