

Use Week of:

Unit 19 • Session 3

Jesus Was Born

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Luke 2

STORY POINT:

Jesus was born to be God's promised Savior.

KEY PASSAGE:

John 1:1-2

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Is Jesus God or a human?
As the Son of God, Jesus is both fully God and fully human.

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(10–15 MINUTES)
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APPLY THE STORY
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Additional resources are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit ministrygrid.com/gospelproject.

LEADER Bible Study

After the angel Gabriel appeared to Zechariah and predicted the birth of John—the forerunner of the Messiah—he appeared to Mary and predicted that she too would have a baby. This baby would be named Jesus, and He would be God’s Son. “He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High ... His kingdom will have no end,” Gabriel said. (See Luke 1:32-33.) Mary visited Zechariah and his wife, Elizabeth, who was pregnant with John. Inside the womb, John leaped for joy in the presence of Mary’s unborn baby.

Mary and Joseph lived in Nazareth. When Caesar Augustus called for a census, they traveled to Bethlehem—the very place the Messiah was prophesied to be born. (Micah 5:2) There, in a stable, God the Son entered the world as a baby.

Imagine the shepherds’ surprise when an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared. The Bible says that they were terrified! But the angel brought them good news: “Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you, who is the Messiah, the Lord” (Luke 2:11). This Savior—the long-awaited deliverer and redeemer—had come.

Not only did Jesus come into the world as the Savior, He came as our King. Some time after Jesus’ birth, wise men came to worship Jesus. They brought Him gifts suitable for a king—gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Jesus is the King who will rule forever, just as God promised King David. (See 2 Sam. 7.)

When you share this story with kids, remind them that Jesus came because we needed Him. The purpose of Jesus’ birth was twofold: to bring glory to God and to make peace between God and those who trust in Jesus’ death and resurrection. Celebrating the birth of Jesus is about rejoicing over the greatest gift we could ever receive. God’s own Son came to earth to be our Savior and our King.

The BIBLE Story

Jesus Was Born

Luke 2

Mary and Joseph lived in the town of Nazareth. During the time Mary was pregnant, the Roman emperor, Caesar Augustus, announced that everyone needed to be registered for a census.

Since Joseph was a descendant of King David, he and Mary traveled to Bethlehem, the city of David.

While they were there, the time came for Mary to have her baby. Mary and Joseph looked for a safe place to stay, but every place was full. So

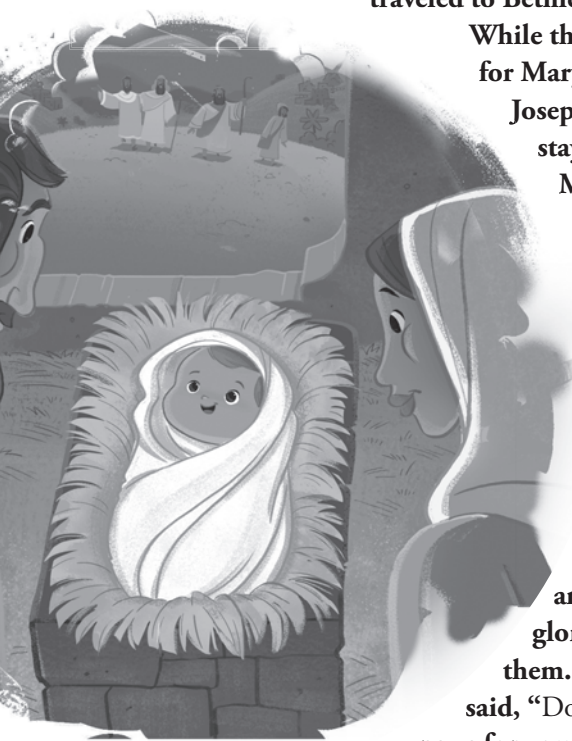
Mary and Joseph found a place where animals were kept, and that is where Mary had her baby. Joseph named Him

Jesus. Mary wrapped the baby tightly in cloth and laid Him in a feeding trough.

That night, some shepherds were watching over their sheep in the fields near Bethlehem. Suddenly, an angel stood before them and the glory of the Lord shone around them. They were terrified! The angel said, “Don’t be afraid! I have very good news for you and for all the people: Today a

Savior, who is the Messiah and the Lord, was born for you in the city of David.” Then the angel said, “You will find a baby wrapped tightly in cloth and lying in a manger.”

Suddenly, a whole army of angels appeared, praising God and



saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to people He favors!”

When the angels left and returned to heaven, **the shepherds** decided to go see if the angel’s words were true. They **hurried to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph and the baby, who was lying in the feeding trough. Then the shepherds went and told others about the baby Jesus.** Everyone who heard about Jesus was surprised and amazed. Mary thought about everything that was happening and tried to understand it. **The shepherds returned to their fields, praising God because everything had happened just as the angel said.**

Christ Connection: The birth of Jesus was good news! Jesus was not an ordinary baby. He is God’s Son, sent to earth from heaven. Jesus, the promised Savior, came into the world to deliver us from sin and death.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Use props:** As you tell the story, display a nativity scene. Allow kids to move the pieces around as you tell the story.
- **Adjust lighting:** Dim the lights to simulate a nighttime setting. Shine a bright light when describing the angel’s appearance.

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: Jesus Was Born

BIBLE PASSAGE: Luke 2

STORY POINT: Jesus was born to be God's promised Savior.

KEY PASSAGE: John 1:1-2

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Is Jesus God or a human? As the Son of God, Jesus is both fully God and fully human.

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 share about some of their responsibilities. Have they ever been responsible for something that seemed too difficult to accomplish?

Activity page (5 minutes)

- "Story Stars" activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete "Story Stars" on the activity page. Guide kids to find the words for the coordinate points and write out today's story point.

SAY • Today we are going to hear the story of Jesus' birth. Have you ever heard the story of how Jesus was born? [*Allow kids to respond.*] Today we will dive into the story of how Jesus was born and think more about why He was born.

LOW PREP

- paper
- crayons, markers, or colored pencils

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Becoming small

Form groups of two to four kids. Invite each group to choose a small animal (cat, hamster, ladybug, turtle, squirrel, and so on).

Guide them to choose one person in the group to draw a picture of the animal. One person should be the writer. Group members should discuss what it might be like to live as that animal. Prompt kids to write a journal entry from the perspective of the animal about their activities in a day. Encourage kids to write several sentences.

Choose volunteers to read the stories aloud and share their drawings.

SAY • Those were some interesting stories! I'm not sure I would like to be an animal for a day. It would definitely be a step down from everything I get to enjoy as a person. Have you ever thought about what it was like for God the Son to come down to earth as a man? Think about that as we hear our Bible story.

OPTION 2: Word list

Form two teams of kids. Give each team a piece of paper and a pencil. Instruct a player on each team to write the word *CHRISTMAS* vertically down the left side of the paper, one letter per line. On the right side of the paper, she should write it in the opposite way, starting at the bottom and writing up (one letter per line).

- paper
- pencils
- dictionary

Tip: If your group is small, form words all together.

Challenge teams to fill in between the letters to create new words. (Examples: CowS, HulA, RooM, InpuT, SeaS, TikI, MotoR, ArcH, SoniC) If teams get stuck as time runs out, allow kids to consult a dictionary.

SAY • What are some things you think of when you hear the word Christmas? [*Call on kids to share.*] Great answers. When we hear our Bible story today, see if you notice some of the words that were mentioned.

Transition to teach the story

TEACH the Story



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BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Is Jesus God or a human? As the Son of God, Jesus is both fully God and fully human.

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

· camera

· backpack

· Bible

· alphabet blocks

[Leader enters carrying a camera and a backpack. The backpack contains a family photo album with baby photos and a Bible. Blocks that spell out JESUS are arranged on a table.]

LEADER • Hi there! I am so glad to see you. In case you forgot, my name is *[your name]*, and I am a studio photographer. Last week I told you about some photos I took of a new baby named John. I just got an exciting call yesterday from one of his relatives asking me to schedule another baby photo shoot—not for John but for his cousin who was just born. I remember spending a lot of summers with a cousin who was just a bit older than me. Those boys are going to have so much fun growing up together.

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

[Retrieve a Bible.] I'm excited to share today's Bible story with you. It's about the birth of John's cousin Jesus. Let's get started.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • Here's our big picture question and answer: *Is Jesus God or a human? As the Son of God, Jesus is both fully God and fully human.*

Now I'll ask the question, and you say the answer. *Is Jesus God or a human?* [Pause for kids to respond.] *As the Son of God, Jesus is both fully God and fully human.*

God the Son became a human, lived the perfect life we failed to live, and took the punishment we deserve for our sins by dying on the cross in our place. Think about that as you listen to today's Bible story.

Giant timeline (1 minute)

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

• Giant Timeline

LEADER • The stories we've heard the last couple of weeks were about Jesus' family and the birth of John. **Jesus' family line proved He is the Messiah. John was born to prepare the way for Jesus.**

Does anyone remember what part of the Bible these stories are found in? (*New Testament, Gospels*) The Bible story we will hear today is called "Jesus Was Born." Whether this is your first time hearing this story or your one hundredth time, there is always something new to learn in God's Word.

• 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 Luke 2. 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 • Incredible! Can you imagine what it was like to travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem? The journey for Mary and Joseph was long—about 90 miles, and cars hadn't been invented yet! When they got there, Mary needed a safe place to have her baby. Imagine knocking on doors to find a place to stay, only to discover that every place was already full. So Mary and Joseph went to a place where animals were kept and that is where Jesus was born.

Do you know why Mary's baby was called Jesus? Look at Matthew 1:21. [*Allow kids to read the verse and respond.*] The name *Jesus* means "Savior."

Imagine being a shepherd in the dark hills when an angel appeared, the glory of the Lord shining all around. The shepherds were terrified. Do you remember what the angel said to them? Look at Luke 2:10-12. [*Allow kids to read and respond.*]

The shepherds hurried to Bethlehem and found the baby. What did the shepherds do after they saw Baby Jesus? Look at Luke 2:20. [*Allow kids to read the verse and respond.*]

We too can tell others the good news: **Jesus was born to be God's promised Savior!**

Christ connection

LEADER • The birth of Jesus was good news! Jesus was not an ordinary baby. He is God's Son, sent to earth from heaven. So, ***is Jesus God or a human? As the Son of God, Jesus is both fully God and fully human.*** Jesus, the promised Savior, came into the world to deliver us from sin and death.

Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided on page 45 to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 19, Session 3” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about who Jesus is. Guide them to discuss how we know Jesus really is the promised Messiah.

- “Unit 19, Session 3” questions from kids video



Missions moment (3 minutes)

Display the Brazilian flag and distribute the Brazil facts among five volunteers. Instruct them to take turns reading the facts, pausing when they get to the blank so other kids can call out the word they think fits in the blank.

- “Brazilian Flag” printable
- “Brazil Facts” printable

LEADER • Jesus was born to be God’s promised Savior.

That’s what missionaries want people all over the world to know. The Bible teaches us that we should go and tell all people about the Savior. That’s why missionaries go to places like Brazil.

Close in prayer, thanking God for missionaries.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together John 1:1-2.

- Key Passage Poster
- “The Word Was God (John 1:1-2)” song

LEADER • As we celebrate Jesus’ birth, think about the miracle of God’s coming to earth as a man. Jesus’ birth wasn’t His beginning. No one created Jesus. The Bible says God the Son has always existed. He was with God, and He is God. He became a human—Jesus—and lived on earth. God came down to be with us and to rescue us. Let’s sing.

Lead kids in singing “The Word Was God (John 1:1-2).”

Sing (4 minutes)

Open your Bible and read aloud James 1:17.

LEADER • Every good and perfect gift comes from God.

- “Jesus Messiah” song
- Bible

Jesus is God's gift of salvation to His people! In Luke 2, the angel announced that Jesus would bring great joy. Let's sing to Jesus, our Savior and King! Sing together "Jesus Messiah."

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Lord, we echo the words of the angels in the fields: Glory to God in the highest heaven! You were working out Your perfect plan to save sinners when You sent Your Son into the world as a helpless baby at just the right time. We praise Jesus as the Prince of Peace and look to Him as a light shining in a dark world. What a gift! We love You. 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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KEY PASSAGE: John 1:1-2

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Is Jesus God or a human? As the Son of God, Jesus is both fully God and fully human.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- construction paper
- markers
- scissors
- ziplock bags

Display the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading aloud John 1:1-2 together. Give each kid a piece of paper and a marker. Instruct kids to write the key passage, filling up as much of the paper as they can. Then provide scissors and invite them cut their papers into puzzle pieces.

Direct kids to mix up their puzzle pieces and assemble them to practice saying the key passage. If time allows, let kids trade and complete a partner's puzzle. Provide ziplock bags for kids to take home the puzzles.

SAY • What does our key passage tell us about God the Son? [*Allow kids to respond.*] Jesus was no ordinary baby. He is God the Son who came to earth as a human. Let's say our big picture question and answer: ***Is Jesus God or a human? As the Son of God, Jesus is both fully God and fully human.***

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

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

Distribute Bibles. Guide boys and girls to open their Bibles to Luke 2. Explain that the Book of Luke was written by a doctor named Luke. Point out that in today's Bible story, Joseph and Mary traveled from their home in Nazareth

to the town of Bethlehem. [*Help kids locate Nazareth (E5) and Bethlehem (I4) on the New Testament Israel Map.*] Then choose a volunteer to read aloud Luke 2:10-11.

SAY • Jesus' birth was good news! Jesus wasn't born into the world to just show people the right way to live or be kind to people; **Jesus was born to be God's promised Savior.** A *savior* is someone who saves from danger or destruction. Jesus was born to rescue sinners from sin and death.

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. Why do you think Jesus was born in such a humble way rather than in a palace to a wealthy family?
Guide kids to consider how Jesus can relate to ordinary people because of His upbringing. He gave up His glory and power in heaven to live humbly among people. Jesus' birth reflects how His kingdom's values differ from the world's values. We can boldly and humbly approach His throne in prayer.
(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Heb. 4:15-16.)
2. Why was Jesus' birth good news? *Help kids understand that Jesus came because we needed Him. God showed His love for us by sending His Son into the world. We were separated from God because of our sins, but God was working out His promise to rescue sinners through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.*
(Option: Choose a volunteer to read John 3:16.)
3. Why should we tell others about Jesus? *Lead kids to recognize that salvation through Jesus bring the privilege and responsibility of sharing the gospel with the world. God calls us to live as witnesses to the saving power of Jesus—in what we say and how we live.*
(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Ps. 66:16.)

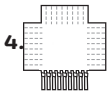
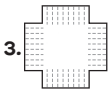
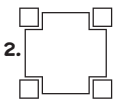
Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

LOW PREP

- various craft beads
- yarn or string
- scissors

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

- 2 coordinating pieces of fleece fabric, 1 yard of each
- fabric scissors or rotary cutter
- ruler



Activity choice (10 minutes)



OPTION 1: String beads

SAY • Arts and crafts are very popular in Brazil.

Many artists enjoy painting, making things out of clay, weaving baskets, and making colorful jewelry. Beaded jewelry is common and is often sold in markets.

Invite kids to make a beaded bracelet or necklace using the beads and string or yarn. Let them choose their colors and patterns, and then string the beads. Help them tie a knot to finish the necklace or bracelet. Encourage kids to give the jewelry they made to someone and tell that person that Jesus is the Lord and Savior.

If time permits, allow them to make a piece of jewelry to keep. As they work, remind them of missionaries in Brazil who tell artists and craftsmen about Jesus.

OPTION 2: Make a blanket

Invite kids to follow these steps to make a blanket. If class time is limited, complete steps 1 to 3 before the session and allow kids to complete the blankets by knotting the fringe.

1. Cut off the finished edge of two pieces of fleece fabric. Trim the pieces if necessary to ensure they are the same size.
2. Lay the pieces together. Cut 5-inch squares from each corner.
3. Every inch around the blanket, cut a 5-inch slit.
4. Demonstrate how to pick up two layers of fringe and knot them together.

Give the blanket along with a small picture book to a family in your church with a new baby. If your group is large, consider making multiple blankets.

SAY • When Jesus was born, Mary wrapped Him tightly in cloth. The birth of Jesus was good news! Jesus came because we needed Him. Jesus was no ordinary baby; **Jesus was born to be God’s promised Savior!**

Is Jesus God or a human? As the Son of God, Jesus is both fully God and fully human. He is the greatest gift we could ever receive. God’s own Son came to earth to be our Savior and our King.

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God’s glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas. Then pray, thanking God for the greatest gift—His Son.

As time allows, lead kids to complete “True or False?” on the activity page. Kids should mark whether each statement is true or false and then correct any false statements.

- pencils
- Journal Page
- “True or False?” activity page, 1 per kid

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