



Use Week of:

Christmas • Session 3

Jesus Was Born

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Isaiah 9; Luke 2

STORY POINT:

Jesus was born to bring peace between God and people.

KEY PASSAGE:

Galatians 4:4-5

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us from sin.

INTRODUCE THE STORY (10–15 MINUTES)



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TEACH THE STORY (25–30 MINUTES)



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APPLY THE STORY (25–30 MINUTES)



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Additional resources are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject.

LEADER Bible Study

From the moment sin entered the world, its consequences were obvious. God's people were separated from Him; they did not enjoy the intimate relationship with their Creator for which He had created them. People were affected by sickness and pain. Corruption spread quickly throughout the earth. The situation seemed hopeless, yet God did not leave His people without hope.

It was into this hopelessness that God spoke. Hundreds of messages came through the prophets concerning a coming Messiah—One who would rescue people from their sins. But when would this Promised One come? How would He come? Would the people recognize Him?

The prophet Isaiah—who lived hundreds of years before Jesus was born—spoke specifically of the Messiah's birth. Isaiah told King Ahaz what the Lord would do. "The virgin will conceive, have a son, and name him Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14). He described the birth of a "Prince of Peace"—a Son of David who will reign forever. (Isa. 9:6-7) Isaiah said that He would be a King! (Isa. 11:1-5)

Everything God said about Jesus' birth came true. Hundreds of years later, Jesus was born into the world. After Jesus was born, Mary laid Him in a manger. A king in a manger! It was so unlikely. But Jesus was no ordinary baby. He was God's Son, sent in the most humble of positions. He "did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28).

God's plan to rescue people from sin was not a secret plan. God gave His people hope: a Savior is coming. Though death came through Adam, life comes through Christ. (1 Cor. 15:22) Through His death on the cross, Jesus finished the work for our salvation. In Him lies our hope of forgiveness and eternal life. Jesus, the Prince of Peace, reconciles to God everyone who trusts in Him.

The BIBLE Story

Jesus Was Born

Isaiah 9; Luke 2

When sin entered the world, peace between God and people was broken. But God promised to send a Rescuer. Many years later, Isaiah the prophet said, “A child will be born for us, a son will be given to us! He will be called the Prince of Peace.” Isaiah

said the Prince of Peace would be from Galilee.

God chose to send His Son, Jesus, to earth as a baby, and He chose Mary to be Jesus’ mother.

During the time Mary was pregnant with Baby Jesus, the Roman emperor, Caesar Augustus, announced that everyone needed to be registered for a census.

Every person traveled to the town where his family was from.

Mary was engaged to Joseph. Since Joseph was a descendant of King David, he

and Mary left their home in Nazareth of Galilee and 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 for Mary to

have her baby, but every place was full because of all the people who were in town to be counted.

So Mary and Joseph found a place where animals were kept, and that is where **Mary had her baby. She wrapped Baby Jesus tightly in**



cloth, and she laid Him in a manger.

In the same region, some shepherds were staying out in the fields and watching their sheep to protect them from thieves and predators. **All of a sudden, an angel of the Lord stood before them.** A bright light shone around the shepherds, **and they were terrified!**

But **the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid! I have very good news for you: Today a Savior, who is Messiah 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.” A king in a manger? That was no place for a king!

All of a sudden, many angels appeared, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to people He favors!”

So the shepherds went straight to Bethlehem to find Baby Jesus. They found Mary and Joseph, and the baby who was lying in the feeding trough. 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 had said.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Use props:** Show nativity figures and move them around as you tell the story.
- **Use lighting effects:** Dim the lights to tell the story. Use a soft spotlight on yourself. Shine a bright light when the angel appears to the shepherds.

Christ Connection: The birth of Jesus was good news! Jesus was not an ordinary baby. He was God's Son, sent to earth from heaven. Jesus came into the world to bring peace between people and God. He came to save people from their sins and to be their King.

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: Jesus Was Born

BIBLE PASSAGE: Isaiah 9; Luke 2

STORY POINT: Jesus was born to bring peace between God and people.

KEY PASSAGE: Galatians 4:4-5

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us from sin.

Welcome time

Tip: Be sensitive to kids who don't know much about their birth families or come from difficult situations.

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 what they know about when and where they were born.

SAY • In modern times, many people are born in hospitals.

In the past, it was more common for babies to be born at home. One thing is for sure, being born in a place where animals are kept and then being laid in a manger would have been unusual at any time!

Activity page (5 minutes)

- "Travel to Bethlehem" activity page,
- 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete the "Travel to Bethlehem" activity page. Instruct kids to complete the maze to guide Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem.

SAY • Great job with those mazes! You helped Mary and Joseph find their way to Bethlehem. Today we will hear about the time Jesus was born. His mother and her soon-to-be-husband traveled very far from their home before Jesus was born. Why do you think they traveled so far? We will learn more soon, but it all has to do with God's plan!

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Where would you find ... ?

Print the “They Belong” printable and cut apart the different cards. Draw cards one at a time and show them to the kids. Ask the kids to describe where you would expect to find each person. Make sure you end by showing the prince card.

SAY • The Bible tells us that Jesus is the Prince of Peace.

You might think that as a prince, Jesus belongs in a castle or a beautiful palace. However, we know that Jesus was born in a place where animals are kept, and He was laid in a manger, where animals eat their food. What do you think it sounded like, or smelled like, in the stable?

OPTION 2: Baby show-and-tell

Place into a large brown bag items used when caring for a baby, such as a bottle, pacifier, outlet protector, rattle, teething ring, or other items. Let the kids take turns pulling one item from the bag and explaining what it’s used for, or guessing what it’s used for if he or she does not know. Try to include enough items for each kid to have a turn withdrawing an item and explaining its use.

SAY • Taking care of a baby is a lot of work, and we have lots of different products that can help us take care of babies. Today we will learn about Jesus when He was a baby. Do you think His earthly mother or father used any of these items?

LOW PREP

- “They Belong” printable
- scissors

- large brown bag
- baby bottle
- pacifier
- outlet protector
- rattle
- teething ring
- other baby items

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

[Leader enters wearing an apron and oven mits.]

LEADER • Hello and merry Christmas! Welcome back!

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

This is a very busy time of year for me. There are so many different and delicious treats that people make around the holidays. Today, I am working on a recipe that my friend gave me to try. It's for a special kind of sweet bread called *potica* (po-TEET-sah).

Potica comes from Central Europe, and many different varieties can be found depending on where the recipe comes from. One thing they usually have in common is a filling made of honey and ground walnuts. Traditionally, potica is made to enjoy around Christmas or Easter. My good friend was telling me about how his mom makes it every year. He said it's his favorite Christmas treat.

So far, I'm finding it pretty challenging. You have to roll the dough thin—paper thin! Then you spread

a layer of the walnut filling over the whole thing and carefully roll it up. Then you can cut it into loaves or place the roll into a round cake pan to bake. When it's done, you slice it to show all the beautiful spirals of sweet bread and filling. I'm struggling to get the dough thin enough without tearing, but even the not-so-glamorous looking results taste amazing.

You know, speaking of something amazing that didn't look glamorous, I'd like to talk to you about Jesus' birth. After all, it's the reason for the season!

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • We've been studying a big picture question for the past few weeks. Does anyone remember it? [*Allow responses.*] Right! ***Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us from sin.***

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline.

• Giant Timeline

LEADER • You may remember that we have been learning about God's plan to send Jesus to earth to rescue us from sin. We learned that everything God prophesied about Jesus in the Old Testament happened just as He said it would. Then we learned that God chose two ordinary people, Mary and Joseph, for an extraordinary task: to be the earthly parents of Jesus. Today's story is called "Jesus Was Born."

• 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 Isaiah 9; 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 • Sin has messed up every part of God's creation. When Adam and Eve disobeyed God and ate the forbidden fruit, their relationship with God broke. Their relationship with each other broke. Their relationship with nature broke. But God did not leave Adam and Eve without hope. He promised that one day a descendant of Eve would rescue the world from the pain and sadness of sin.

But when would He arrive? God promised to give Abraham a son, but Isaac was not the Messiah. Jacob was blessed by God too, but he was not the Messiah. Joseph was Jacob's favored son who saved his family, but he was not the Messiah either. Years passed and the Messiah had not come. Eventually, a prophet named Isaiah wrote about the Messiah. He said that the Messiah would be the Prince of Peace. That meant the Messiah would provide the way to fix the relationships sin had broken.

Many years after Isaiah wrote those words, Jesus was born into the world. Although He is God's Son, the Prince of Peace, Jesus was not born into a fancy palace or glamorous lifestyle. Even so, His birth was amazing. Angels sang out to proclaim His arrival. The Messiah had finally come! **Jesus was born to bring peace between God and people.**

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 not an ordinary baby. He was God's Son, sent to earth from heaven. Jesus came into the world to bring peace between people and God. He came to save people from their sins and to be their King.

After coming into the world as a human baby, Jesus grew up. He lived a perfect life without sin and died the death we deserve. On the third day, Jesus rose from the dead to prove that He had defeated sin. When we believe in Him, God forgives us and makes us right with Him.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the “Christmas, Session 3” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about why God did not send Jesus right away. Guide them to discuss what makes waiting difficult. How can we learn to wait more patiently?

• “Christmas, Session 3” questions from kids video



Missions moment (3 minutes)

Invite a group of volunteers to come up and put on Bible times clothing. Assign a girl to be Mary, a boy to be Joseph, and a few kids to be shepherds. The rest of the kids will be angels. Help the kids act out the Christmas story. Then talk to the kids about creative ways, like a Bible story skit, that they can tell their friends about what they have been learning in church. Encourage the class to think outside the box. They could paint a scene from a Bible story to give away, write a song about God’s goodness to sing, or something else.

• Bible times clothing
• baby doll

LEADER • The gospel is the best news ever. As long as you are telling the truth about God’s love and mercy, there’s no wrong way to share it! Missionaries often look for new ways to reach people. One of Jesus’ followers, Paul, said that he wanted to reach as many people as he could in any way he could. (1 Cor. 9:19-23) We can live on mission too by sharing the gospel with those we meet and showing them God’s love.

• Key Passage Poster

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Galatians 4:4-5.

LEADER • Jesus was born to bring peace between God and people. Our key passage is a reminder that Jesus' birth was the first step toward His fulfilling God's plan. Because of Jesus, we can be adopted as sons and daughters of God!

• Christmas songs of your choice

Sing (4 minutes)

LEADER • God wants us to be free from sin. He sent His Son to earth to die for our sin. When we believe in Jesus, God forgives our sin and leads us to be more like Jesus each day!

Sing together Christmas songs of your choice.

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Father, thank You for sending Jesus to bring peace. Nothing we can offer You can earn Your love, but we praise You for loving us anyway. Help us live each day for Your glory. 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: Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us from sin.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

• Key Passage Poster

Display the key passage poster and read it with the kids a few times. Cover the poster and challenge volunteers to say the passage from memory. Praise each kid's efforts and encourage all of them to continue trying to memorize it. Then work with the kids to put the words of the key passage to the tune of a popular Christmas song. Sing the passage together.

SAY • Our key passage reminds us that at just the right time, God sent Jesus in a unique way. The sinless Son of God was born of an ordinary woman. **Jesus was born to bring peace between God and people.**

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

• Bibles, 1 per kid
• Story Point Poster

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

Distribute a Bible to each kid. Help them find Isaiah 9 and Luke 2. Discuss the differences between the Old Testament and the New Testament, and ask the kids which of the two books are in each testament. Help them understand that Isaiah is part of the Major Prophets and Luke is one of the Gospels. Remind the kids why we have Bible divisions. Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. Isaiah said the Rescuer would be called the Prince of

- what? (*peace, Isa. 9:6*)
2. Why did Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem? (*to be counted in a census, Luke 2:15*)
 3. What did the angels say after telling the shepherds where to find Jesus? (*Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to people He favors; Luke 2:14*)
 4. What does it mean to have peace between God and people? *Guide kids to discuss the way Adam and Eve related to God before sin, without guilt, shame, or fear. Talk about how sin separates people from God, and help them understand that peace between God and people means people can relate to God the way they did before sin entered the world.*
 5. How did Jesus provide peace between God and people? *Discuss why Jesus died on the cross and how He offered His sinless life to provide us with eternal life with God. Discuss why a sacrifice was needed and how Jesus' sacrifice was perfect. Remind the kids that those who believe in Jesus are declared righteous by God. We are not punished for our sins if we are in Christ because Jesus took the punishment we deserved.*
 6. Why do you think Jesus came to earth as a baby with normal parents instead of a baby with royal, wealthy, and powerful parents? *Guide kids to see that Jesus came to earth not to set up an earthly kingdom, but to rescue people from sin and prepare the way for God's heavenly kingdom. Help them see that Isaiah's prophecy about Jesus being a ruler will be fully accomplished when Jesus returns to destroy all sin.*

- craft sticks
- scissors
- yarn or twine
- glue

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

Activity choice (10 minutes)



OPTION 1: Decoration sensation

Provide each kid with three craft sticks and two 6-inch lengths of yarn or twine. Help the kids cut one craft stick in half to use as a cross piece on the other two full-size sticks. Use a dab of glue to stick the pieces together to make two crosses. Then help the kids wrap the yarn over the intersections of the two sticks, leaving enough slack to tie a loop from which the ornament could be hung.

SAY • When we think of Christmas, we usually think of Jesus as a baby. But the best part of Christmas is knowing that Jesus did not stay a baby. He grew up. He lived a perfect life and died on the cross to pay for our sin. You made two cross ornaments. You can keep one for yourself and give the other to a friend. When you give the second one away, use it as a chance to share the whole story of the gospel, including Jesus' birth, death, and resurrection!

LOW PREP

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

OPTION 2: Peacemakers

Provide the kids with different scenarios. Ask the kids what it might look like to make peace in each scenario, and invite a few volunteers to roleplay the scenarios.

Suggested scenarios:

- You have two friends who are upset with each other because one played a mean trick on the other.
- Your brother took your favorite game without asking and lost many of the pieces needed to play it.
- New neighbors moved in next door. They have a kid about your age, but she doesn't know Jesus.

SAY • **Jesus was born to bring peace between God and people.** When we believe that Jesus is God's Son

who died on the cross for our sins and rose again on the third day to conquer death, God forgives our sin and gives us eternal life with Him. As people who experience peace with God, we can also work to help people experience peace with others and with God. We do this by sharing God's love and telling people about Jesus.

Reflection and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute a journal sheet 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 journal 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.

• pencils and crayons
• paper
• Bible Story Coloring
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.