



THE
GOSPEL
PROJECT[®]

FOR PRESCHOOL

—★ **CHRISTMAS EDITION** ★—

Babies, Toddlers, and Preschool Leader Guide



Use Week of:

Christmas • Session 3

Jesus Was Born

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Isaiah 9; Luke 2

STORY POINT:

Jesus brings peace between
God and people.

KEY PASSAGE:

Galatians 4:4-5

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

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

INTRODUCE THE STORY
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TEACH THE STORY
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EXPERIENCE THE STORY
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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, not "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 Adam and Eve first sinned, the peaceful relationship between people and God was broken. But God promised to send a Rescuer. Many years later, Isaiah the prophet said, “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.

When Mary was pregnant with Baby Jesus, a man named Caesar Augustus sent out an order to all the people in the land: “Everyone must go to his hometown to be counted!” Caesar Augustus was the emperor of Rome, and he wanted a list of all the people who were living in the land.

Mary was going to marry to Joseph. Since **Joseph** was part of King David’s family, he **and Mary** left Nazareth in Galilee and **traveled to Bethlehem**, the city of David.

While **they** were there, Mary was ready to have her baby. Mary and Joseph **looked for a safe place to stay, 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, Jesus. She wrapped Him tightly in cloth** so He would be warm, **and she laid Him in a manger.**



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

But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid! I have 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, “Go find the baby. He will be wrapped in cloth and lying in a manger.”

All of a sudden, many angels appeared. They praised God and said, “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 Him, and they told others about Him. 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, and they praised God because **everything had happened just as the angel had said.**

Christ Connection: Jesus was born! This was very good news! Jesus was not like other babies. Jesus is God's Son. God sent Jesus to earth from heaven. Jesus came into the world to bring peace between people and God.

Bible Storytelling Tips

Act it out: Choose children to be Mary, Joseph, the angel, and shepherds. Wrap a doll in a blanket to be Jesus. Use costumes if available and guide the children to act out the Bible story as you tell it.

Find it: Hide the pieces of an unbreakable, realistic manger scene around the room. Send children to find the pieces and bring them to you. Add the pieces to the manger scene.

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: Jesus Was Born

BIBLE PASSAGE: Isaiah 9; Luke 2

STORY POINT: Jesus brings peace between God and people.

KEY PASSAGE: Galatians 4:4-5

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

Welcome time

- offering basket
- Allergy Alert download
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play Christmas music in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church's security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

Activity page

- "Find the Differences" activity page, 1 per child
- crayons or markers

Invite preschoolers to look at the first picture and then circle the nine things that are different in the second picture.

SAY • An angel appeared to some shepherds in a field in today's Bible story. The angel had very good news for the shepherds. The angel's message is good news for us, too. Let's listen to our Bible story to hear this good news.

LOW PREP

Play a quiet game

Sit preschoolers in a circle on the floor. Tell preschoolers that they must sit very quietly without making a sound. You will walk around the outside of the circle and tap the quietest child on the shoulder. That child will quietly stand up, walk around the circle, and gently tap the quietest child in the circle. That child will stand up while the other child

takes her place in the circle. Continue play as time allows.

SAY • That was a very peaceful game. Does your mom or dad ever say they want some peace and quiet? We are talking about peace in today's Bible story, but not that kind of peace. The peace we are talking about is the peace we have with God when we turn from sin and follow Jesus. We do not have to be afraid of God's anger toward our sin because Jesus took the punishment for our sin. Listen to our Bible story to hear how **Jesus brings peace between God and people.**

Make Christmas cards

Show preschoolers how to fold construction paper in half to form a card. Provide markers, manger scenes cut from old Christmas cards, glue, or manger scene stickers for preschoolers to decorate their cards. Ask preschoolers to think of someone they could give their card to. Encourage children to tell a message for you to write on their cards. You may also help older preschoolers write their own message.

SAY • We celebrate Jesus' birth at Christmas. These cards tell our families and friends that Jesus was born just as God promised! In today's Bible story, angels told the good news that Jesus was born.

- construction paper
- crayons and markers
- old Christmas cards
- manger scene stickers
- glue

Transition to tell the story

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, flip off the lights, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Invite preschoolers to move to Bible study while pretending to be sheep.

- countdown video (optional)

TEACH the Story



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

Introduce the Bible story

- Bible
- bookmark

Place a bookmark at Luke 2 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

SAY • The Bible tells us the true story of Jesus' birth. In the Old Testament Book of Isaiah, the prophet Isaiah said the Rescuer, or Prince of Peace, would come. In the New Testament Book of Luke, we can read the story of Jesus' birth.

Explain to children that all the stories in the Bible fit together to tell an even bigger story. The Bible tells us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

Watch or tell the Bible story

- Story Point Poster
- "Prophets Told About Jesus' Birth" video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

SAY • When Adam and Eve first sinned, the peaceful relationship between God and people was broken. God promised to send a Rescuer. God sent Jesus to earth from heaven. **Jesus brings peace between God and people.** Jesus was born just as Isaiah said He would be.

Practice the key passage

Place the key passage marker at Galatians 4:4-5 in your Bible. Invite a volunteer to open the Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage aloud. Practice the motions you created for the verse.

SAY • God chose to send His Son, Jesus, to earth as a baby. Jesus was not like other babies. Jesus is God's Son. Jesus took the punishment we deserve for sin. Jesus redeems us and gives us peace with God.

Lead preschoolers in singing familiar Christmas songs that worship Jesus.

- Key Passage Marker
- Key Passage Poster
- Christmas music

Learn the big picture question

SAY • Our big picture question asks, *Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us.* Many of God's prophets, like Isaiah, told about Jesus before He was born. They said God was planning to send a Rescuer who would bring peace. God did what He promised!

- Big Picture Question Poster



Missions moment

Lead preschoolers to sit in a circle. Give a child an apple. Play music as preschoolers pass the apple around the circle. Stop the music. The child holding the apple gets to ask the big picture question. Lead the group to respond with the answer. Play several rounds as time allows.

SAY • Many people in China give each other “peace apples” as gifts at Christmas, but most don't know that Jesus came to bring peace between God and people. We can pray that many people in China will hear and believe this good news!

- real or artificial apple
- Christmas music

Pray and transition to experience the story

EXPERIENCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: Jesus Was Born

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STORY POINT: Jesus brings peace between God and people.

KEY PASSAGE: Galatians 4:4-5

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

LOW PREP

- index cards
- markers
- large sheet of paper
- alphabet blocks (optional)
- magnetic letters (optional)
- baking sheet (optional)

Spell JESUS

Write the letters that spell *JESUS* on index cards, one letter per card. Write *JESUS* on a sheet of paper in large print. Encourage the children to put the cards in order to spell *JESUS*. You may also use alphabet blocks or magnetic letters instead of writing letters on cards.

SAY • Jesus was born! This was very good news! Jesus was not like other babies. Jesus is God's Son. God sent Jesus to earth from heaven. Our sin separates us from God, but **Jesus brings peace between God and people.** We celebrate Jesus' birth at Christmas!

Make sheep ornaments

Print the "Sheep Ornament" printable on heavyweight paper. Cut out one sheep for each child. Cut white tissue paper into 1-inch squares. Tear off a sheet of waxed paper for each child.

Guide preschoolers to place their ornament on their waxed paper. Slightly thin white glue with water and brush it all over a child's sheep ornament. Guide a preschooler to cover his sheep with squares of white tissue. Brush on more glue and invite him to add additional layers of white tissue if desired.

Punch a hole in the ornament and loop a ribbon

- "Sheep Ornament" printable
- heavyweight paper
- scissors
- tissue paper
- waxed paper
- white glue
- water
- plastic cup
- paintbrush
- hole punch
- ribbon

through the hole. Lay the ornament on a fresh square of waxed paper to dry and transport home.

SAY • The shepherds were in the field watching their sheep when they saw an angel of the Lord and a bright light! The angel told them, “Do not be afraid. I have good news for you. Today a Savior has been born.” Jesus is our Savior who rescues us from sin. Sin separates us from God, but **Jesus brings peace between God and people.**

Find manger scene pieces

Cover a table with a sheet or tablecloth. Place a large plastic tub filled with artificial straw or shredded paper on the table. Hide nonbreaking, realistic manger scene figures in the bin. Encourage children to dig in the paper and find the hidden figures. Suggest children arrange the figures and retell the Bible story in their own words. Invite children to hide the figures for other children to find when they finish.

- plastic tub
- artificial straw or shredded paper
- nonbreaking manger scene figures
- sheet or tablecloth

SAY • We see scenes like these at Christmas. Do you have one at your house? The figure of Jesus reminds us that God sent His own Son to be our Rescuer. ***Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us.*** Jesus was not like other babies. Jesus is God’s Son. **Jesus brings peace between God and people.**

Listen to jingle bells

Help a preschooler thread four jingle bells on a chenille stem. Twist the chenille stem closed to make a circle. Guide preschoolers to take turns dropping their jingle bell bracelets into a tub or bucket. Talk about the happy sounds the bells make. Give each child a bell bracelet and sing familiar Christmas songs about Jesus together.

- jingle bells, 4 per bracelet
- chenille stems
- tub or bucket

SAY • The bells make a happy Christmas sound. Christmas is a happy time because we remember that God sent Jesus to be the Rescuer, or Savior. Our sin separates us from God, but **Jesus brings peace between God and people**. We celebrate this very good news! We sing songs, send cards, and celebrate in many ways! Jesus is born!

- Allergy Alert download
- apples
- knife (adult use only)
- plates
- napkins



Pray and enjoy peace apples

Post an allergy alert. Slice enough apples to give each preschooler three apple slices. Remind preschoolers that many people in China give each other “peace apples” at Christmas. Explain that you all will say a specific prayer for each apple slice.

First slice: Pray that more people will go to China to tell the good news about Jesus.

Second slice: Pray that many people in China will trust in Jesus to rescue them from sin.

Third slice: Pray that followers of Jesus in China will tell other people in China the good news about Jesus.

SAY • A lot of people celebrate Christmas in China, but most do not know the real reason for the celebration. They do not know that Christmas is when we celebrate Jesus’ birth! When you are at home with your family this week, remember to pray for the people of China.

Snack and review

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Wash hands and gather preschoolers for snack time. Pray, thanking God for the snack.

Consider serving manger sandwiches for a snack if your group did not already eat apples. Make sandwiches with bread and jelly. Trim crusts. Cut each sandwich into four triangles. Turn each quarter so the longest side is on top. Show a preschooler how to insert two pretzel sticks for the manger legs. Sprinkle shredded cheese on top to serve as hay. Remind children that **Jesus brings peace between God and people.**

Display the Bible story picture as you ask the following questions. Retell portions of the Bible story as needed.

1. Where did Mary put Baby Jesus? (*in a manger*)
2. Who heard the news that a Savior was born? (*the shepherds*)
3. Who told the shepherds this good news? (*an angel*)
4. Where did the shepherds go to find Baby Jesus? (*Bethlehem*)
5. ***Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us.***

Transition

When preschoolers finish their snack, they may color the Bible story coloring page or play a simple game to practice the key passage or big picture question.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert download
- paper cups and napkins
- snack food
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- bread (optional)
- jelly (optional)
- knife (teacher use) (optional)
- pretzel sticks (optional)
- shredded cheese (optional)

- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Key Passage Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers