

UNIT 19 | SESSION 1

JESUS WAS BORN

MATTHEW 1; LUKE 1-2



CHRIST CONNECTION: God sent His Son, Jesus, to rescue people from their sins.

KEY PASSAGE PHRASE: God loved the world and gave his only Son to all who believe in him.
John 3:16

BABIES GOSPEL GEMS

- God sent an angel to Mary and Joseph. The angel said Mary would have a baby and name Him Jesus.
- Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem. Jesus was born in a place where animals stayed.
- That night, an angel came to shepherds and said, “Today a Savior was born for you!”

BIBLE STORY FOR TODDLERS: One day, God sent an angel to a young woman named Mary. She was going to marry a man named Joseph. The angel said, “Don’t be afraid. You will have a baby boy and name Him Jesus. He will be God’s Son. Nothing is impossible for God!” In a dream, the angel told Joseph, “Don’t be afraid. Mary’s baby is from God. Name Him Jesus. He will save His people from their sins.” Later, Mary went with Joseph to his hometown, Bethlehem, to be counted. While there, Jesus was born in a place where animals were kept. That night, an angel appeared to shepherds. The angel said, “Don’t be afraid! Today a Savior was born for you!” The shepherds left to find Baby Jesus.



LEARNING Activities

Engage babies in the following activities during the session. In each activity, provide handheld Bibles for babies to handle. Open a Bible to Matthew 1. Show the Bible Story Poster as you say the gospel gems in a soothing voice. Read the Key Passage Phrase Card. Pray for the babies.

1 SING A SONG

Sing to the tune of “Three Blind Mice”:

“God loved the world and gave His Son.
God loved the world and gave His Son.
To all who would believe in Him.
To all who would believe in Him.
God loved the world and gave His Son.”

SAY “ Our key passage phrase says, ‘God loved the world and gave his only Son to all who believe in him.’ God’s Son, Jesus, came as a baby. The angel told Mary and Joseph to name the baby Jesus. Shepherds came to visit the baby in Bethlehem. Who did God send? Yes! God sent His Son, Jesus. ”

2 LOVE THE BABY

Sit the babies in leaders’ laps or in horseshoe-shaped pillows. Allow the babies to hold a baby doll. Pass the doll to each baby and encourage the baby to hug the doll. Offer a blanket for the doll. Model covering the doll with the blanket. Invite the babies to cover the doll. Engage with the babies and the baby dolls as you read the gospel gems.

SAY “ The angel said that Mary would have a baby and she should name Him Jesus. You have a name that was chosen for you too! What did Mary name her baby? Mary named the baby Jesus. ”

3 CELEBRATE JESUS’ BIRTH

Sit the babies in leaders’ laps or in horseshoe-shaped pillows. Encourage the babies to clap their hands to celebrate that Jesus was born. Repeat the phrase, “Today a Savior has been born to you.” Model clapping your hands at the end of the phrase. Invite the babies to clap with you. Offer ribbons or scarves for babies to hold and wave to extend this activity.

SAY “ An angel came to the shepherds and said, ‘Today a Savior has been born to you.’ We can celebrate that baby today! Who was born? A Savior was born! ”

Check diapers, serve bottles if needed, and release babies to parents according to your church’s security guidelines. Give parents today’s Big Picture Card. Repeat the Christ Connection, gospel gems, and Bible-learning activities for babies who stay a second hour.



LEARNING Activities

Engage toddlers in the following activities. In each activity, show the Bible Story Poster as you review the Bible story. Provide small Bibles for toddlers to handle.

1 CIRCLE TIME

Open your Bible to Matthew 1. Show the Bible Story Poster as you tell the provided toddlers' Bible story. Read the Key Passage Phrase Card, and guide toddlers to say it. Pray for the toddlers.

2 NAME YOUR EMOTION

Offer toddlers a nonbreakable handheld mirror. Challenge the toddlers to make faces showing different emotions. Display the "Emotions Pictures" printable for the toddlers to model each emotion. Encourage the toddlers to demonstrate feeling happy, sad, angry, or scared.

SAY “ The angels told Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds, ‘Don’t be afraid.’ Who did the angels say had been born that day? The Savior! The angels had good news: Jesus was born. ”

3 MOVE TO THE MUSIC

Use an electronic device to play familiar Christmas songs. Encourage the toddlers to pretend to rock a baby as the music plays. Instruct the toddlers to stop rocking “the baby” when the music stops. Stop and start the music randomly. Repeat as interest allows. Retell the story.

SAY “ An angel told Mary that she was going to have a baby. An angel told Joseph that the baby was from God. Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem where the baby was born. Who was the baby that was born? Yes! That baby was Jesus! Jesus was sent to rescue people from their sins. ”

4 FILL A MANGER

Print the “Manger Outline” printable (one per toddler). Gather cream-colored raffia or off-white shredded paper and glue sticks. Invite the toddlers to apply the glue to the inside of the manger. Then fill the manger with the raffia or paper. Offer animal stickers, if desired. Encourage toddlers to decorate their mangers as you read the Bible story.

SAY “ Jesus was born in Bethlehem in a place where animals were kept. Mary laid Baby Jesus in a manger. A manger is a feeding box filled with food for animals to eat. Where was Jesus born? That’s right! Jesus was born in Bethlehem. ”

5 TRAVEL TO BETHLEHEM

Tape the Bible Story Poster on a wall in the room. Gather the toddlers and explain that you are going to “take a trip” to “Bethlehem” (point to the picture). Encourage the toddlers to hold hands as they “travel” to Bethlehem. Allow the toddlers to help you count the friends as they arrive in Bethlehem. Invite the toddlers to replay and try new ways to travel. Retell the story.

SAY “ Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem to be counted. Bethlehem was Joseph’s hometown. While they were there, the time came for Jesus to be born. Where was Jesus born? That’s right. Jesus was born in a place where animals were kept. ”

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1 TRANSITION ACTIVITY: SHARE GOD'S LOVE

Cut out heart shapes from **construction paper**. Encourage the toddlers to offer the hearts to a friend based on your instruction. Call out instructions like, “Give your heart to a friend wearing red” or “Give your heart to a friend taller than you.” Collect the hearts and play again.

SAY “ Our key passage phrase tells us that God loved the world and gave His Son to all who believe in Him. God gave us Jesus because He loves us. Does God love you? Yes, He does! ”

2 SING A SONG

Sing to the tune of “Three Blind Mice”: “God loved the world and gave His Son. / God loved the world and gave His Son. / To all who would believe in Him. / To all who would believe in Him. / God loved the world and gave His Son.”

SAY “ Our key passage phrase says, ‘God loved the world and gave his only Son.’ God’s Son came as a baby. Who did God send? Yes! God sent His Son, Jesus. ”

3 PACK A BAG TO TRAVEL

Tape the **Bible Story Poster** on a wall in the room. Invite toddlers to pretend to pack a “bag” to go on a trip. Talk about what the toddlers should pack. Encourage the toddlers to pretend to unzip and pack their bags. Continue until the toddlers determine that their bags are full. Pretend to carry the bag while you travel around the room to “Bethlehem” (point to the picture). If desired, offer a **duffel bag or suitcase** and use **items around the room** for toddlers to pack and unpack. Review the Bible story as the toddlers play.

SAY “ Mary went with Joseph to his hometown of Bethlehem. They traveled to Bethlehem to be counted. Who was born when Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem? Jesus was born. ”

4 MAKE A KEY PASSAGE PHRASE HEART TRAIN

Cut out several hearts from **construction paper**. Line up the hearts horizontally and write a few words from the key passage phrase on each heart. Now draw simple shapes on each pair of heart sides that touch each other to make a simple matching game (e.g., Heart 1: God loved the world [circle]; Heart 2: [circle] and gave his only Son [triangle]; Heart 3: [triangle] to all who believe in him [square]; Heart 4: [square] John 3:16.). Help toddlers match the hearts and say the phrase with them. **Tape** each heart in place to make the heart train.

SAY “ God’s Son came to earth as a baby. Who did God send? Yes! God sent His Son, Jesus. ”

Check diapers, serve a snack if needed, and release toddlers to parents according to your church’s security procedures. Give parents today’s **Big Picture Card** to reinforce today’s Bible story, Christ Connection, and gospel gems throughout the week.