

UNIT 19 | SESSION 1

JESUS WAS BORN

MATTHEW 1; LUKE 1-2



CHRIST CONNECTION: God kept His promise to send a Savior! This is very good news. Jesus is God's Son. He came into the world to rescue people from their sins.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Who is Jesus? Jesus is the Son of God who came to earth to save us.

KEY PASSAGE: God loved the world and gave his one and only Son to everyone who believes in him. John 3:16

STORY POINT: Jesus was born.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study


Matthew and Luke’s accounts of Jesus’ birth showcase God’s faithfulness in sending us His Son. Long before Mary and Joseph embarked on their journey to Bethlehem, God had already promised to redeem His creation through the long-awaited Savior. Now, God was ready to make good on His promise of salvation—in an unexpected setting, at a seemingly inopportune time, and through the most unlikely of people.

The earthly arrival of God in human form caught many by surprise. From Jesus’ virgin birth to His first night spent in a manger, the lowliness of this humble King seemed counterintuitive to most people’s expectations of how the Messiah would arrive. The joyous birth of Jesus, however, was such a miraculous occasion that God sent angels to prepare the hearts of those who would behold the newborn King—not only Mary and Joseph, but also the shepherds in the field who believed by faith.

Despite all that seemed to go wrong in this story—from the decree of Caesar Augustus, the timing of Mary’s pregnancy and delivery, and there being no guest room for Jesus—God orchestrated every detail of this birth narrative so He would be glorified through the humble arrival of His Son. Through His angels, God spoke words of comfort, encouragement, and guidance to Jesus’ parents and the shepherds, leading them to trust Him with each next step.


Many Old Testament prophecies had shed light on how the Messiah would arrive. The prophet Isaiah spoke of a virgin giving birth to a son named Immanuel and later predicted a child with the title, Mighty God (Isaiah 7:14, 9:6). Meanwhile, Micah, a contemporary prophet to Isaiah, had predicted the Messiah would come from Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). These were only the beginning of many Old Testament prophecies Jesus would fulfill on His way to live a perfect life, die a sacrificial death, and rise again.

Pray for the boys and girls who will gather to hear this incredible Bible story. May they, too, find their place within God’s miraculous plan of redemption, placing true faith in the Savior born to bring us eternal life.



PREPARE
THE WEEK PRIOR


Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10–15 MINUTES


Greet preschoolers and open the session



LEARN

25–30 MINUTES

Teach preschoolers the story of the gospel



LOVE


30–40 MINUTES

Lead preschoolers to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

Lead preschoolers to live the mission of the gospel



BONUS

60–65 MINUTES

Teach preschoolers for an additional hour



Scan the QR code to listen to The Gospel Project for Kids Weekly Leader Training Podcast.



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a supply of the following items available during all teaching sessions: Allergy Alert, Bibles, washable markers, crayons, scissors (adult use), blunt-tip scissors, construction paper, copy paper, glue sticks, glue, tape, baby dolls, blocks, play dough, and a beanbag.

WELCOME

Hide and find

- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- nativity scene



LEARN

Feel Bible story items

- wool
- hay
- soft fabric

Tell the Bible story

- "Jesus Was Born" video (optional)

Review the Bible story

- Bible Story Picture Poster

Learn and practice the key passage phrase

- Key Passage Phrase Marker



LOVE

Pass the baby

- worship music
- toy Jesus figure

Play out the Bible story

- Bible-times clothing
- nativity related props



LIVE

Make sheep

- green construction paper, 1 per child
- cotton balls, several per child

Missions activity

- "About Annie" missions video

Snack and transition

- hand sanitizer (optional)
- "Complete the Path" activity page, 1 per child
- Big Picture Cards for Families



BONUS

Add hay to a manger

- small cardboard box
- yellow construction paper strips

Say the key passage phrase

- Key Passage Phrase Marker

Play with toy nativities

- various nativity sets

Swaddle babies

- baby blankets



WELCOME Preschoolers

Provide as many learning activities as possible from the Love and Live sections to give preschoolers opportunities to learn. Incorporate the Bible story, the Christ Connection, the story point, and key passage phrase in your conversations as the preschoolers engage in learning activities throughout the session.

Use the following activity to greet children as they enter the room. Talk about the big picture question and answer. After each child completes the welcome activity, encourage him to participate in the activities provided from the Love and Live sections of the leader guide.

HIDE AND FIND

Post the Big Picture Question Poster in the large group area. Hide the pieces from the nativity set around the room (reserve the wise men and related pieces as they do not appear in the Bible story today). Place the stable portion in the large group area near the Bible Story Picture Poster. Once kids find all the pieces, read the big picture question as you introduce the story for today. Add the figures to the stable as you name them together.

SAY “ Welcome to church. I’m so glad you’re here. Around the room are special figures. Let’s find them and take them to the large group area. Our big picture question asks, **Who is Jesus? Jesus is the Son of God who came to earth to save us.** Our nativity helps us learn about a time when **JESUS WAS BORN.** You found the pieces to the nativity scene. Let’s see who they are as we put them into the stable. ”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





LEARN the Bible Story

1 FEEL BIBLE STORY ITEMS



Post an Allergy Alert. Greet children in group time. Pass around wool, hay, and soft fabric. Talk with the children about how each item feels, mention that wool comes from sheep, hay is usually found in barns/feed troughs, and the soft fabric may be used to make baby blankets.

SAY “ Today, I brought a few things that remind me of our Bible story. Listen carefully to find out what wool, hay, and soft fabric have to do with our Bible story. ”

2 TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Open your Bible to Matthew 1; Luke 1–2. Tell the Bible story using the following summary. You may choose to review the Bible story by showing the video.

JESUS WAS BORN

SAY “ One day, God sent an angel named Gabriel to a town called Nazareth. The angel visited a virgin named Mary. Mary was going to be married to a man named Joseph. The angel greeted Mary, saying “The Lord is with you!”

Mary was surprised and a little scared. The angel said, “Don’t be afraid, Mary. God is happy with you. This is what will happen: You are going to have a baby boy, and you will name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be a king forever.” Mary asked, “How can this happen?” The angel said, “The baby is from God. He will be God’s Son. Nothing is impossible for God!”

An angel appeared to Joseph too. The angel said to him in a dream, “Joseph, don’t be afraid to take Mary as your wife. The baby inside of her is from God. When the baby is born, name Him Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins.”

At that time, the leader of the land sent out an order: “Everyone must go to his hometown to be counted!” So, Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem.

While they were there, the time came for Mary to have her baby. She wrapped Him in cloth so He would be snug and warm, and she laid Him in a manger since there was no guest room available for them.

Some shepherds were in a nearby field watching their sheep. An angel suddenly appeared to them, and a bright light shone all around. The angel said, “Don’t be afraid! I have very good news: Today a Savior was born for you in the city of David.”

The shepherds hurried to Bethlehem and found Baby Jesus. ”

Christ Connection: God kept His promise to send a Savior! This is very good news. Jesus is God’s Son. He came into the world to rescue people from their sins.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

3 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

While looking at the Bible Story Picture Poster, ask a few questions about the story. Conclude with a reminder about the objects the kids touched.

SAY “ At the beginning of our group time, we felt wool, hay, and soft fabric. The hay reminds us that Jesus had an animal feeding trough, or manger, for His first bed and soft fabric for His blankets. The wool reminds us that the shepherds were the first to hear about Jesus’ birth. God kept His promise to send a Savior! This is very good news. Jesus is God’s Son. He came into the world to rescue people from their sins. Let’s tell each other the good news about Jesus. Pretend you are one of the shepherds in Bethlehem and tell a friend, **‘JESUS IS BORN!’** ”

4 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of “The Wheels on the Bus”:

God loved the world and gave His one
And only Son to everyone,
God loved the world and gave His Son
Jesus is His name.

5 LEARN AND PRACTICE THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at John 3:16. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Learn the key passage phrase. Say the key passage phrase together while pretending to rock a baby.

SAY “ In our Bible story, a special baby was born—God’s promised Savior. His name is Jesus. Jesus is God’s Son. God sent Jesus to save people from their sins. Our key passage phrase says God loves the world so much, He sent Jesus, His one and only Son. Jesus is God’s promised Savior. ”

6 PRAY

Pray, thanking God for loving the world so much He was willing to send Jesus to save people from their sins.

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God because of what we learned

1 SING A SONG

Gather the children and lead them to sing “Happy Birthday” to Jesus. Talk about the importance of celebrating the birth of Jesus all year long, not just at Christmastime.

SAY “ I like to sing ‘Happy Birthday’ to people, don’t you? We usually talk about Jesus’ birthday at Christmas. But we can—and should—talk about Jesus’ birth any time of the year. It’s important to tell other people about Jesus. God promised to send a Savior to the world to save people from their sins. God kept His promise. God sent His one and only Son, Jesus, to save people from their sins. ”

2 PASS THE BABY

Lead kids to sit in a circle on the floor. Play worship music while passing a toy Jesus figure around the circle. Periodically stop the music and ask children to name something from the Bible story they remember. Restart the music and continue to play. Details from the story may include, the angel’s name was Gabriel, Gabriel visited Joseph, Gabriel visited Mary, Mary was going to have a baby, the baby’s name was to be Jesus, they went to Bethlehem, the shepherds saw angels in the sky, the angels told them to go to Bethlehem and see Baby Jesus, and so forth.

SAY “ **JESUS WAS BORN.** We have named several things from our story today that help us think about Jesus’ birth. But perhaps the most important thing to remember from our big picture question and answer for today is, **Who is Jesus? Jesus is the Son of God who came to earth to save us.** ”

3 PLAY OUT THE BIBLE STORY

Using any Bible times costumes and nativity-related props, lead the kids to play out the Bible story. If the group is small, consider breaking the story into pieces and acting out different parts at various intervals.

SAY “ It was fun to play out the Bible story. I like how it reminds us that the things in the Bible really happened. **JESUS WAS BORN.** God really did send His Son, Jesus, as a baby, to rescue people from their sins. Only Jesus can rescue people in this way. Only God could keep a promise to send a Savior. ”

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE for God out of love

1 MAKE SHEEP

Give each child a sheet of green construction paper, a glue stick, and several cotton balls. Allow the children to glue the “sheep” into the “pasture” while reciting the key passage phrase together.

SAY “**JESUS WAS BORN.** On the night He was born, angels told shepherds who were watching their sheep to go to Bethlehem to find Baby Jesus. The shepherds hurried to find Him.”

2 MISSIONS ACTIVITY

Show the “About Annie” missions video. Pray, thanking God for Annie Armstrong’s life and the work she did to help Native Americans have what they needed. Thank God for the influence this brave woman had in helping missionaries tell people all over North America about Jesus.

SAY “Annie Armstrong was a brave woman who asked women to pray and help people. She wanted to help people in need and help them learn about Jesus.”

3 SNACK AND TRANSITION



Post an Allergy Alert. Serve the snack. As children eat, review and talk about the Bible story. When children finish their snack, lead them to complete the activity page. As they work, continue talking about the Bible story and emphasize the Christ Connection.

SAY “God kept His promise to send a Savior! This is very good news. Jesus is God’s Son. He came into the world to rescue people from their sins.”

Remember to communicate helpful information to the bonus teaching hour leaders. If parents are picking up children at this time, tell them something their child did well during the session. Distribute Big Picture Cards for Families. Encourage parents to engage with the family discussion starters and family activities during the week.



TEACHING HOUR

BONUS Teaching Hour Group Time

1 ADD HAY TO A MANGER

Greet the children in group time. Give each child several strips of yellow construction paper. Display the cardboard box and invite the kids to add the “hay” to the “manger” as they sit together for the large group time. Once each child has finished, use the provided story points to tell the Bible story.

2 TALK ABOUT THE BIBLE STORY

Open the Bible to Matthew 1; Luke 1–2. Use the summarized points below to talk about the Bible story.

JESUS WAS BORN

- An angel visited a young woman named Mary who was going to be married to a man named Joseph. The angel said, “The Lord is with you!”
- Mary was surprised and a little scared. The angel said she was going to have a baby, and the baby would be God’s Son.
- Then an angel visited Joseph in a dream. The angel said, “Mary is going to have a baby. Name the baby Jesus because He will save His people from their sins.”
- Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem, and that is where Jesus was born. An angel appeared and said, “I have very good news: Today a Savior was born for you in the city of David.” The shepherds hurried to Bethlehem and found Baby Jesus.

3 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of “The Wheels on the Bus”:

God loved the world and gave His one
And only Son to everyone,
God loved the world and gave His Son
Jesus is His name.

4 SAY THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at John 3:16. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Learn the key passage phrase. Encourage children to fold hands together as if they are holding the world while repeating the key passage phrase.

5 PRAY

Pray, thanking God for sending Jesus as a baby to be born in Bethlehem, so that Jesus could be both fully man and fully God.



TEACHING HOUR

BONUS Teaching Hour Activities

6 DRAW A NIGHT TIME SCENE



Give each child a piece of paper, markers, and crayons. Encourage them to draw a nighttime scene. Talk about the night **JESUS WAS BORN**.

SAY “ The Bible says the angels appeared to the shepherds and told them **JESUS WAS BORN**. They went to Bethlehem to see Him. Our key passage phrase tells us all about this: ‘God loved the world and gave His one and only Son to everyone who believes in Him. John 3:16.’ ”

7 PLAY WITH TOY NATIVITIES

Set out various, kid-friendly, nativity sets. Allow kids to play freely, and encourage them to retell the Bible story points as they play. Gently correct any missing or misunderstood points.

SAY “ Today we learned about when **JESUS WAS BORN**. We know that Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem and that is where He was born. An angel appeared and told the shepherds about Baby Jesus. God kept His promise to send a Savior! This is very good news. Jesus is God’s Son. He came into the world to rescue people from their sins. ”

8 SWADDLE BABIES

Lay baby blankets on a table with several baby dolls. Invite kids to practice swaddling the babies. Offer children assistance as needed to prevent frustration. Talk with the kids about the Bible story.

SAY “ The Bible tells us that when **JESUS WAS BORN**, Mary wrapped him in cloth to keep Him snug and warm. She laid Him in a manger because there was no other room available to them. God kept His promise to send a Savior! This is very good news. Jesus is God’s Son. He came into the world to rescue people from their sins. ”

Release preschoolers to parents according to your church’s security procedure. Tell them something their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session.