



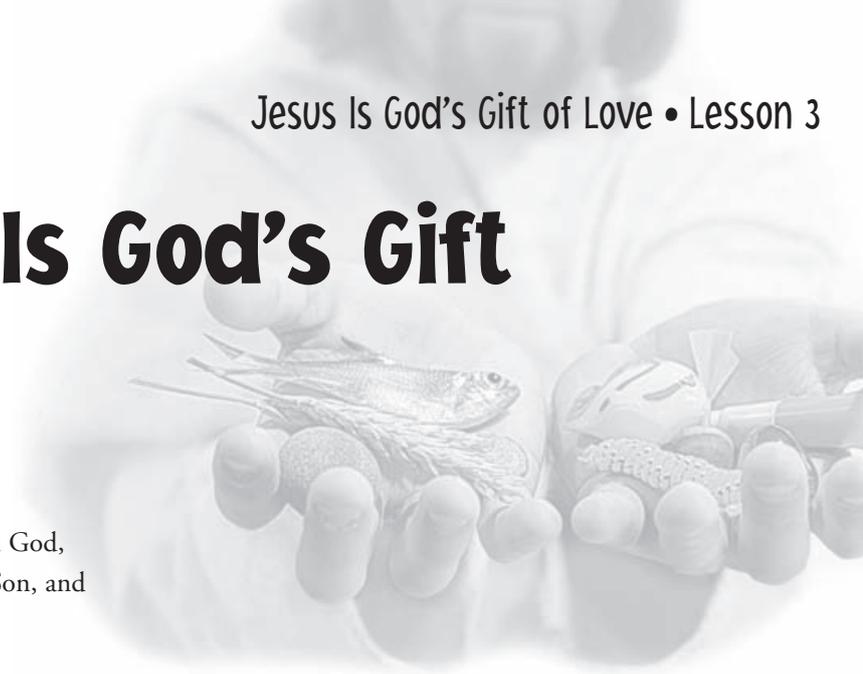
Jesus Is God's Gift

Bible Verse

Jesus is God's gift (adapted from Isaiah 9:6a).

Growing Closer to Jesus

- Children will
- discover that Jesus is a gift from God,
 - understand that Jesus is God's Son, and
 - realize that Jesus loves us.



Teacher Enrichment

Bible Basis

- Jesus is God's gift of love.

**Matthew
1:18–2:11**



Around Christmas we hear a lot about love. We all give gifts to the ones we love, we often get together with the ones we love, and we take time off from work and school to spend with the ones we love. It's altogether fitting that Christmas is when we celebrate God's gift of love to us in Jesus!

As you read through the story of Jesus' birth, it's easy to see how God loved Mary and Joseph. And of course he loved Jesus, too, protecting the baby Jesus through the Magi's dream warning them not to let Herod know about the One they had found. Isn't it great to know that this same God loves us as well? He loved us enough to send Jesus to die on the cross for us, and

that love is still with us today. What a great message of God's love to share with your toddlers!

Prayer

- Read Romans 5:6-8.
- How did Jesus' coming most powerfully demonstrate God's love for us?
- How well do you demonstrate God's love to your toddlers?
- Pray: God, thank you so much for the way you love me. Help me show your love to my class when I...

Before the Lesson

- Collect items for the activities you plan to use, referring to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies listed in the chart on the next page.
- Pray for the children in your class and for God's direction in teaching the lesson.

This Lesson at a Glance

	What Children Will Do	Classroom Supplies	Learning Lab Supplies
Arrival Activities Direct children to one or more of the optional activities until everyone arrives.	Welcome Time —Receive a warm welcome from the teacher and Cuddles the Lamb.	Name tags (p. 8), scissors, marker, tape or safety pins, CD player	
	Option 1: Angel-Stars —Create cute angels from stars.	Large star pattern (p. 47), tape, craft sticks, markers, scissors, yellow crayons, facial tissues, stiff paper	
	Option 2: Star Search —Shine flashlights to find sparkly stars.	Self-adhesive foil stars, extra flashlights, blanket, AA battery	
	Pick-Up Time —Sing a song as they help clean up the room.	CD player	
Bible Story Time	Bible Song —Sing a song about the Bible.	Bible, CD player	
	Jesus Is God's Gift —Interact with sensory StoryBoard figures as they hear the Christmas story from Matthew 1:18–2:11.	Angel-stars from Option 1, animal crackers, bowl, tape	
	Jesus Is Our Gift —Sing a song about baby Jesus' birth.	CD player	
Bible Activities	Interactive Bible Bulletin Board —Review the Bible Point with Cuddles the Lamb as they create a bulletin board together.	Star patterns (pp. 47-48), tape, scissors, yellow construction paper	
	Sing It Out —Sing a song about baby Jesus' birth.	CD player	
	Bible Craft —Create starry pictures to remind them of the night Jesus was born.	White paper, marker, yellow crayons, jumbo cotton balls, glue sticks	
	Bible Game —Catch a “falling star,” and sing a song.		
	Stars of Love —Say a prayer, and have a snack.	Bread, star-shaped cookie cutter, butter, colorful candy sprinkles, napkins, plastic knives	

*See the end of this lesson for extra-time ideas and supplies.

Arrival Activities

Welcome Time

SUPPLIES: name tags (p. 8), scissors, marker, tape or safety pins, CD player



- Play “Jesus Is God’s Gift” (adapted from Isaiah 9:6a) (track 6) from the *CD* as children are arriving.
- Use Cuddles the Lamb to help you greet each child by name and with a warm smile.
- Tape or pin a name tag to each child’s clothing.
- Say: **Today we’re going to learn that ► Jesus is God’s gift.**
- Place Cuddles out of sight so the children won’t be distracted by him during the next activity.

Option 1: Angel-Stars

SUPPLIES: large star pattern (p. 47), tape, craft sticks, markers, scissors, yellow crayons, facial tissues, stiff paper

Before class, photocopy on stiff paper the large star pattern. Cut out a paper star for each child. Cut facial tissues into fourths so each child will have a square.

Set out yellow crayons, facial-tissue squares, markers, craft sticks, and tape. As children arrive, hand out the paper stars. Invite children to make “angels” on one side by drawing facial features on the top point of the star. Then help each child tape a tissue square to that side of the star as the angel’s “robe.” Turn the angels over and encourage children to use the yellow crayons to color the stars on the other side. Then tape the “angel-stars” to craft sticks. As children work, mention how they’ll hear a story about a special night when God sent angels and a bright star to let people know that Jesus was born. Remind children that ► Jesus is God’s gift.

Option 2: Star Search

SUPPLIES: self-adhesive foil stars, extra flashlights, blanket, AA battery



Before this activity, drape a blanket over a table. Stick self-adhesive foil stars under the table and to the sides of the blanket. Provide flashlights with batteries, including the flashlight from Sensory Packet 1, for which you will have to provide an AA battery.

Invite children to go “star gazing.” Let them take turns crawling under the blanket with flashlights and shining the lights on the stars. Mention that the night Jesus was born, God put a very bright star in the sky. Talk about how the wise men saw the star and it helped them find baby Jesus. Remind children that ► Jesus is God’s gift and that God wanted people to know that Jesus came to love them.

teacher tips

Have your arrival activities ready to go before children arrive. That way, you can warmly greet each child and direct children immediately to the activities.



teacher tips

Ask adult helpers to make extra angel-stars for anyone who chooses not to do Option 1. You’ll use the stars later in the lesson.



■ Pick-Up Time

SUPPLIES: CD player



track 2

As Arrival Activities draw to a close, gently mention that it will soon be time to clean up. Encourage children to help you pick up things in the room as you lead them in singing “Let’s Pick Up All Our Things” (track 2). Use the *CD* and sing the song to the tune of “Looby Loo.”



SING

Let’s pick up all our things.
Let’s pick up all our things.
Let’s pick up all our things
And put them all away.

Everyone here can help.
Everyone here can help.
Everyone here can help.
Let’s put it all away.

Let’s pick up all our things.
Let’s pick up all our things.
Let’s pick up all our things.
It’s time to stop our play.

teacher
tips

It’s important to say the Bible Point just as it’s written in each activity. Repeating the Bible Point over and over throughout the lesson will help kids remember it and apply it to their lives.

Bible Story Time

■ Bible Song

SUPPLIES: Bible, CD player

BIBLE VERSE ►



track 3

Say: **Who is God’s gift to us? ► Jesus is God’s gift. How do we know that? The Bible tells us. Show children the Bible. The Bible is God’s special book. The Bible tells us about God. Let’s sing a song about the Bible.** Using the *CD*, lead children in singing “God’s Special Book” (track 3) to the tune of “Row, Row, Row Your Boat.”



SING

This is God’s special book.
Yes, it’s God’s book you see!
I learn about all God has done
And his love for me!

(Repeat.)

Bible!

■ Bible Story: Jesus Is God's Gift

SUPPLIES: angel-stars from Option 1, animal crackers, bowl, tape



Before class begins, please check to make sure the StoryBoard figures' sensory items are still attached securely so the children can touch them without danger of pulling the items off or putting them into their mouths.

Before this activity, tape the star from Sensory Packet 1 high on the wall somewhere in the room. Sort through a box of animal crackers and put the farm animals in a bowl. Have children wash their hands.



Panel 1



Place the angel-stars children made in Option 1 beside you. Set the animal crackers behind you. Say: **We're going to hear a Bible story about the night Jesus was born. We'll learn that ► Jesus is God's gift of love.** Set out the StoryBoard figures of Mary, Joseph, and the donkey. **This is Joseph, and this is Mary. They were excited because Mary was**

going to have a special baby! Mary and Joseph and their donkey went on a long trip before their baby was born. Let's help Mary and Joseph travel.

Hand the figures of Mary, Joseph, and the donkey to three children. Let them walk once around the StoryBoard stable, and then hand the figures to three other children. Continue until everyone has helped Mary and Joseph "travel."

Set out the manger. Say: **Finally Mary and Joseph came to a town called Bethlehem. Let's say that together. Bethlehem. But there was no room in Bethlehem to stay. No room at all!** Repeat the following action rhyme with the children.

No room, no room, where could they stay? (*Shake your head and finger.*)
In a little stable filled with animals and hay! (*Make a "roof" over your head with your arms.*)

Say: **Mary and Joseph waited in the stable for the special baby to be born. We can put pretend animals in the stable.** Hand children each an animal cracker, and let them take turns "walking" the animals through the stable and making the appropriate animal sounds. Then let them snack on the animal crackers.

Say: **Mary and Joseph waited for a special gift from God. Do you know who that gift was? Close your eyes, and we'll find out!**

Panel 2



While children's eyes are closed, lay the figure of baby Jesus in the manger. Say: **One...two...three...open your eyes. What do you see? Look! Baby Jesus is born! And ► Jesus is God's gift of love! We can tell baby Jesus that we love him, too.** Have toddlers gently hold the figure of baby Jesus and say, "I love you, Jesus."

Return the figure of baby Jesus to the manger. Say: **Jesus was a special baby because Jesus is God's Son.** Set the figures of the



Understanding Your Toddlers and 2s' Communication Development

Toddlers and 2s...

- engage in simple dramatic play.
- use 50 to 100 recognizable words.
- put together two or more words to make a sentence.
- constantly ask "What's that?"
- refer to themselves by name.
- can point to and identify parts of the body and pictures of familiar objects.

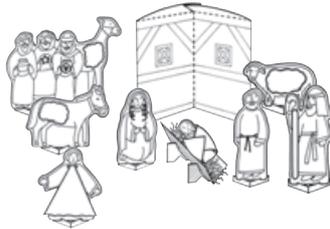


angel, the shepherd, and the sheep to one side of the story area. **Shepherds were in the fields caring for their sheep. We can touch the shepherd's staff and pat the sheep.** Have children touch the wooden staff and the sheep.

God sent angels to tell the shepherds about Jesus' birth. Let's have our pretend angels visit the shepherd. Hand out the angel-stars children made in Option 1. Encourage children to hold up the angel sides and "fly" around the room once and then return to their places.

Say: **The angels were happy about Jesus' birth. And the shepherds were so happy that they wanted to see Jesus and worship him. So they traveled to find baby Jesus.** Set the angel, shepherd, and sheep beside the stable. **Who else visited Jesus? Let's find out!**

Panel 3



Set the figure of the wise men off to one side of the story area. Say: **Wise men heard about Jesus' birthday. They wanted to worship Jesus, too. But how could they find him? God put a bright star in the sky to lead the wise men to Jesus. We have a bright star in our room. Can you find it?** Let the toddlers search for the star taped on the wall. When the star is found, say: **Hold your angel-stars with the star side facing out. We'll sing a song about twinkling stars while you hop around the room waving your stars.** Without the CD, sing the following song, "Twinkling Stars," to the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star." Encourage children to wave their paper stars as they hop around the room.



SING

Twinkling stars way up above
 Help us think about God's love.
 God gave us his only Son.
 Jesus is the special one.
 Twinkling stars way up above
 Help us think about God's love.

Say: **The wise men came to see Jesus, and they brought special birthday gifts. Let's see what gifts they brought. We can pat their camel, too.** Have toddlers smell the spice sticker and touch the gifts. Let children pat the camel. Then say: **The wise men brought spices and gold to Jesus. Weren't those nice birthday presents? The wise men knew that ► Jesus is God's gift and that Jesus is a gift of love. We can sing a special song to Jesus to show him our love.**

■ Jesus Is Our Gift

SUPPLIES: CD player



Using the CD, lead children in singing "Jesus Is God's Gift" (adapted from Isaiah 9:6a) (track 6) to the tune of "Jesus Loves Me." Encourage children to do the motions in parentheses.

teacher tips

Important: Put the StoryBoard away and out of reach of children.





Jesus was born one winter night (*cradle-rock your arms*),
Overhead a star shone bright. (*"Twinkle" your fingers.*)
Baby Jesus is God's Son (*hold one hand flat, and then make a fist with your other hand and put it on top*);
He's God's gift to everyone. (*Cover your heart.*)

Jesus is God's gift. (*Point upward, and then cover your heart.*)
Jesus is God's gift. (*Point upward, and then cover your heart.*)
Jesus is God's gift. (*Point upward, and then cover your heart.*)
He is our gift from God. (*Cover your heart, and then point upward.*)

(Repeat.)



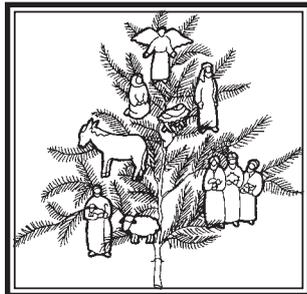
Say: **God gave us a special gift of love when he gave us Jesus. Jesus is our forever friend. If we believe in Jesus, we will live with him someday in heaven. What a wonderful gift of love! Even the bright Christmas star wasn't as warm and bright as Jesus' love!**

Say: **Let's put glittery stars on the Christmas tree to remind us of the night Jesus was born.**

Bible Activities

■ Interactive Bible Bulletin Board

SUPPLIES: star patterns (pp. 47-48), scissors, tape, yellow construction paper



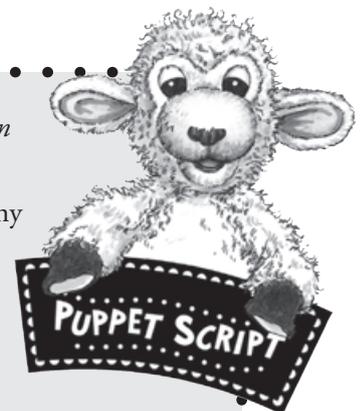
Before class, photocopy the star patterns onto yellow construction paper. Cut out a small star pattern for each child. Then cut a large star pattern for Cuddles. You may wish to use glitter glue to add sparkly tips to the stars. Tape the large star to Cuddles' head.

Bring out Cuddles the Lamb, and go through the following script. When you've finished, put Cuddles away, out of sight of the children.

Cuddles: (*Wiggling his head with the paper star*) Hello, hello! Have you seen my pretty star? I can't find it anywhere!

Teacher: We see your star, Cuddles!

Cuddles: (*Looking up and down*) Where? Where?



Teacher: Children, can you tell Cuddles where his star is? (*Pause for children to point to the star. Then remove the star from Cuddles' head.*)

Cuddles: Thank you for helping me, boys and girls. I'd like to give you each a cuddle to say thank you! (*Have Cuddles give each child a snuggly cuddle.*)

Teacher: We heard a story about a special star today, Cuddles. God put a bright star in the sky when Jesus was born. We're going to put stars on our Christmas tree; would you like to help us?

Cuddles: Sure! I'd like to put my star on the pretty tree, too!

Help Cuddles tape his star to the top of the tree and repeat the Bible Point. Then have Cuddles hand each child a paper star. Help children tape their stars on the bulletin board Christmas tree. Each time a child places a star, lead him or her in repeating the Bible Point. When all the children's stars are in place, invite children to take turns finding and pointing to different decorations on the tree.

Teacher: We have so many pretty decorations on our tree that remind us of Jesus' birthday. Cheery stars and lights remind us how happy we are that Jesus is a special gift of love. Let's sing a song to show how glad we are that ► Jesus is God's gift.

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■ Sing It Out

SUPPLIES: CD player



Using the CD, lead children in singing "Jesus Is God's Gift" (adapted from Isaiah 9:6a) (track 6) to the tune of "Jesus Loves Me." Encourage children to do the motions in parentheses.



Jesus was born one winter night (*cradle-rock your arms*),
Overhead a star shone bright. (*"Twinkle" your fingers.*)

Baby Jesus is God's Son (*hold one hand flat, and then make a fist with your other hand and put it on top*);

He's God's gift to everyone. (*Cover your heart.*)

Jesus is God's gift. (*Point upward, and then cover your heart.*)

Jesus is God's gift. (*Point upward, and then cover your heart.*)

Jesus is God's gift. (*Point upward, and then cover your heart.*)

He is our gift from God. (*Cover your heart, and then point upward.*)

(Repeat.)

Say: There are lots of fun shapes at Christmas time. Stars remind us of the bright star when Jesus was born. And hearts remind us that ► Jesus is God's gift of love. Let's make pretty designs with stars.



■ Bible Craft

SUPPLIES: white paper, marker, yellow crayons, jumbo cotton balls, glue sticks



Before class, write “Jesus is God’s gift” on the bottom of a white sheet of paper. Then photocopy this paper so each child will have one. Separate the two “*Symbols of Jesus*” rubbing plates.

Say: **The wise men followed a bright star in the sky to help them find baby Jesus. Let’s color a star on our papers to remind us that ► Jesus is God’s gift.**

Using the star from the “*Symbols of Jesus*” rubbing plates, help each child create a star shape on his or her paper by placing the paper on top of the rubbing plate and then rubbing a yellow crayon across the paper until the image appears. Then allow the children to glue cotton balls on their papers to represent clouds in the sky.

Ask: • **In our Bible story, why did God put a star in the sky?** (To help the wise men find baby Jesus; to show them the way.)

• **Why do you think the wise men wanted to see baby Jesus?** (They loved him; they knew he was special; they were happy he was born.)

Say: **The wise men wanted to see baby Jesus. They knew how special he is! God sent Jesus to us because he loves us. We can take this paper home and give it to someone to remind them that ► Jesus is God’s gift to us.**



■ Bible Game

SUPPLIES: none



Sit with children in a large circle. Hold up the star from Sensory Packet 1. Say: **Can you catch a falling star? Well, maybe not a real star, but we can catch this pretend star. When I call someone’s name, stand up, and I’ll toss the star to you. Catch the star, and then toss it back to me.**

Continue playing until everyone has had at least one turn to catch and toss the “falling star.” Then, without using the CD, lead children in singing the star song they sang earlier during the Bible Story to the tune of “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.” Encourage children to open and close their fingers like “sparkly stars.”



SING

**Twinkling stars way up above
Help us think about God’s love.
God gave us his only Son.
Jesus is the special one.
Twinkling stars way up above
Help us think about God’s love.**

Say: **Let’s be pretend stars and “twinkle” over to the snack table.** Lead children to the snack table as they open and close their fingers like “twinkly stars.”



Closing

■ Stars of Love

SUPPLIES: bread, star-shaped cookie cutter, butter, colorful candy sprinkles, napkins, plastic knives

Help children wash their hands. Gather children at the snack table.

Ask: • **Who is God's gift of love?** (Jesus.)

Say: **We've been learning that ► Jesus is God's gift. God sent Jesus to love us, and we love Jesus, too. Let's say a prayer thanking God for his special gift of Jesus. Fold your hands.** Pray: **Dear God, thank you for your gift of Jesus. We love Jesus and know he's the best gift of all! In Jesus' name, amen.**

We heard about the bright star that God put in the sky to tell about Jesus' birth. Now we can make delicious stars to eat. Hand each child a slice of bread on a napkin. Help children use the cookie cutter to cut star shapes from their slices of bread. Let children spread a bit of butter on the bread and then shake colorful candy sprinkles on the butter. As children enjoy their treats, remind them that Jesus was a special baby and that God put a bright star in the sky to show everyone that baby Jesus was his Son.

When children have finished eating, have them throw their napkins in the wastebasket. Be sure children take their angel-stars home along with their star pictures.





For Extra Time

If you have a long class time or want to add additional elements to your lesson, try one of the following activities.

■ *Star Roll*

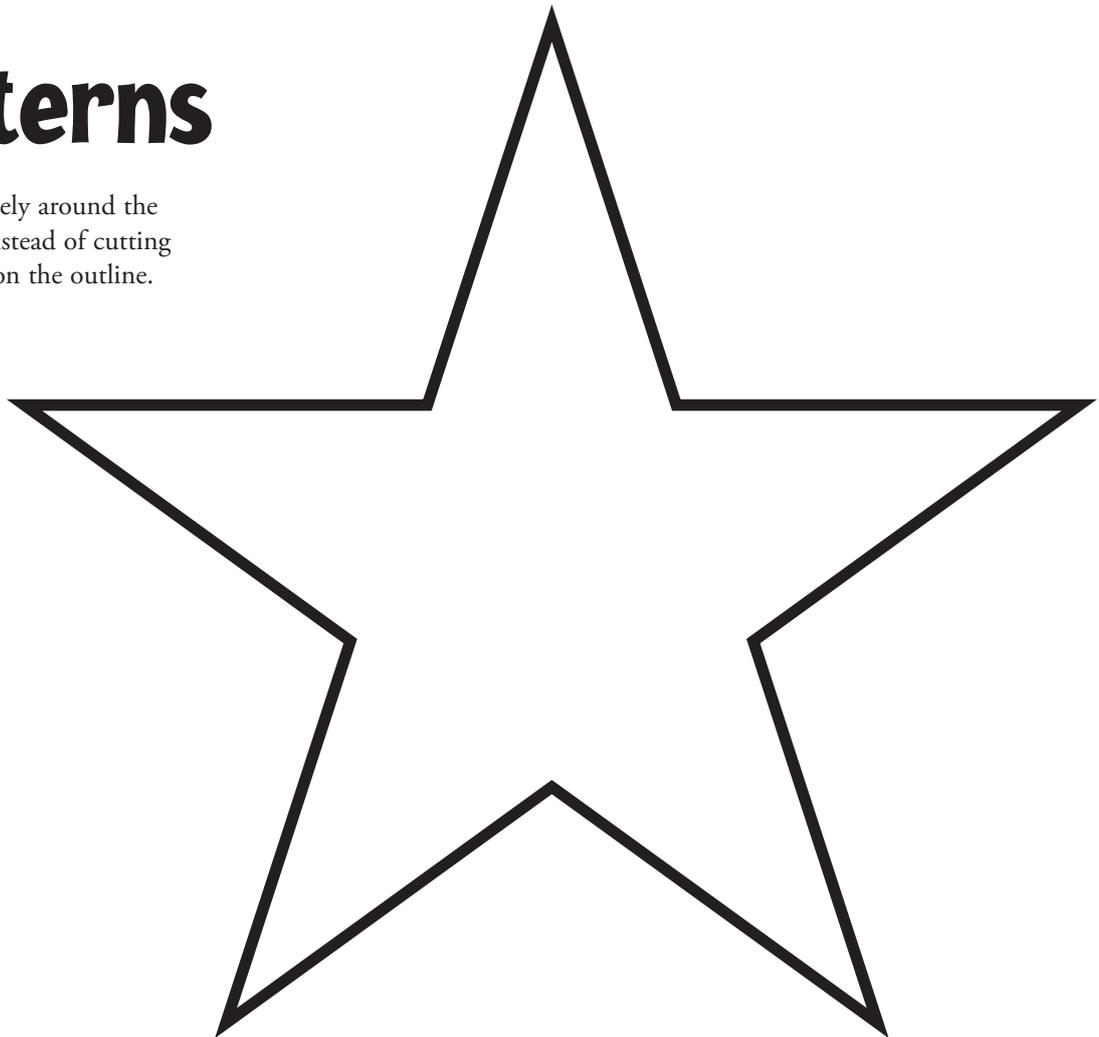
Have children sit in a circle on the floor. Tell them to sit with their legs crossed and knees touching their neighbors' knees. Pass the star from Sensory Packet 1 around the circle. Help children "count the stars" by saying a number each time the star is passed to them. For a musical variation, encourage toddlers to sing "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" without the *CD* as the star is passed. Be sure everyone has at least one chance to touch the star.

■ *Light Bright*

Before this activity, stick a self-adhesive star to each child's clothing. (You may also use construction paper stars.) Let children take turns shining the flashlight from Sensory Packet 1 on each other's stars. Help all the children say, "Jesus loves [name]" as the light shines on each child's star.

Patterns

Cut loosely around the pattern instead of cutting exactly on the outline.



Patterns

Cut loosely around each pattern instead of cutting exactly on the outlines.

