

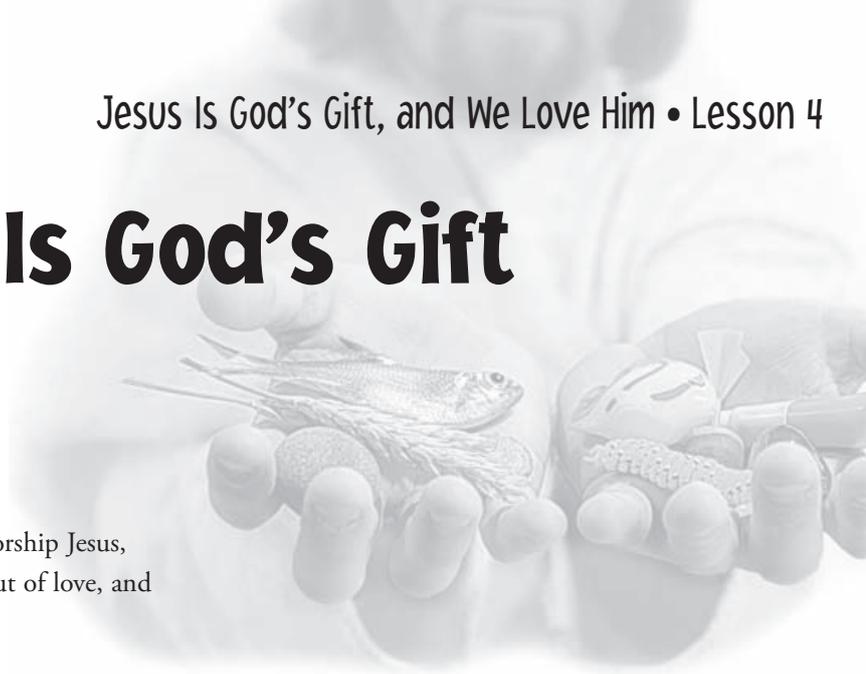
Jesus Is God's Gift

Bible Verse

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

Growing Closer to Jesus

- Children will
- learn that wise men came to worship Jesus,
 - understand that we give gifts out of love, and
 - express their love for Jesus.



Teacher Enrichment

Bible Basis

- **Jesus is God's gift, and we love him.**

**Matthew
1:18–2:11**



The Magi followed the star to Bethlehem, where their predictions were confirmed. Indeed a miraculous birth had taken place, and the Magi worshipped the new king joyfully and presented him with precious gifts. Throughout history, different symbolic meanings have been attributed to the Magi's gifts. One theory suggests that the gold represented Jesus' kingly nature, the incense his divinity, and the myrrh (a resin often used in burial) his humanity or mortality.

It's especially important at Christmastime to teach young children that gifts aren't the only expressions of love! Use this lesson to teach toddlers different ways of expressing their love for Jesus.

Prayer

- Read John 3:16.
- How does God's greatest expression of love, sending Jesus, affect your life on a daily basis?
- How can you demonstrate God's love to others this Christmas season?
- Pray: Lord, thank you for loving us so much. Please help me to show the children I teach how much you love them. Help me to...

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: Camel Rides —Go for rides on pretend camels.	Medium-sized boxes, newspaper, masking tape, markers or construction paper and scissors, grocery sacks, small towels	
	Option 2: Sweet Scents —Create sweet-smelling gifts.	Jumbo cotton balls, vanilla, markers, envelopes	
	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.	Box of cinnamon graham crackers	
	This Is the Way the Wise Men Came —Sing a song about the wise men.	CD player	
Bible Activities	Finding Jesus —Take turns leading each other to follow the star.	Yellow construction paper or poster board, scissors, tape	
	Interactive Bible Bulletin Board —Review the Bible Point with Cuddles the Lamb as they create a bulletin board together.	Heart patterns (p. 60), tape, scissors	
	Sing It Out —Sing a song about the wise men.	CD player	
	Bible Craft —Make and wear “wise men crowns” with colored “jewels.”	Jewel patterns (p. 60), grocery sacks, crayons, scissors, tape, self-adhesive bows	
	Bible Game —Pretend to be wise men visiting Jesus.	Crowns from Bible Craft	
 Closing	What a Treasure! —Say a prayer, and have a snack.	Doughnut holes with sprinkles, napkins	

*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: Camel Rides

SUPPLIES: medium-sized boxes, newspaper, masking tape, markers or construction paper and scissors, grocery sacks, small towels

Before class, firmly stuff two or three medium-sized boxes with crumpled newspaper to make “camels.” Close and seal the boxes with masking tape. Tear grocery sacks or newspapers in half and crumple them into wads. Tape the paper wads on the box to create two camel “humps.” Then twist strips of grocery sack paper to make “tails,” and tape them at one end of each box. Add eyes, noses, ears, and mouths with markers or construction paper.

Set the pretend camels in one corner of the room. Provide small towels for children to use as “camel blankets.” As children arrive, invite them to “go for a camel ride” by sitting on the boxes and gently pushing them with their feet. Mention that in today’s Bible story, they’ll hear about three wise men who rode on camels to visit young Jesus. Explain that the wise men loved Jesus and brought him gifts. Remind children that ► Jesus is God’s gift to us.

Option 2: Sweet Scents

SUPPLIES: jumbo cotton balls, vanilla, markers, envelopes

Set out cotton balls, vanilla, and markers. Hand each child a letter envelope to decorate with the markers. Help each child dab a bit of vanilla on two cotton balls and then place the cotton balls into his or her envelope and seal it shut. Encourage toddlers to sniff the spicy envelopes. Tell children that wise men visited Jesus and brought special gifts like these spices. Explain that the wise men brought gifts because they loved Jesus. Remind children that ► Jesus is God’s gift to us. Encourage children to give their sweet-smelling envelopes as gifts to their parents to use as drawer sachets.




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.

■ 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.**

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: box of cinnamon graham crackers



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.



Panel 1



Set a box of cinnamon graham crackers beside you. Say: **We're going to hear a Bible story about Jesus' birth, and 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. We can tell them hello.** Let children hold the figures of Mary and Joseph. Lead each child in saying, "Hello, Mary" or "Hello, Joseph."

Mary and Joseph were excited because Mary was going to have a special baby! Mary and Joseph and their donkey went on a long trip. Hold the figure of Mary on the back of the donkey. Mary rode on the donkey, and Joseph walked beside them. Let's pretend we're little donkeys going to Bethlehem. Lead children in trotting motions as you repeat the following rhyme. Then add other motions and words such as *walk, hop, or jog.*

**Clip, clop, trot, trot—
On the way to Bethlehem!
Clip, clop, never stop
Till we get to Bethlehem!**

Say: **Let's turn back into boys and girls and see what happened when Mary and Joseph came to Bethlehem.**

Set out the StoryBoard stable and 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 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.*)

Mary and Joseph waited in the stable for the special baby to be born. The baby would be a gift from God. Do you know who that baby 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! ► *Jesus is God's gift.* And God gave Jesus to us because he loves us so much. We can tell Jesus that we love him, too.** Have toddlers gently hold the figure of



baby Jesus and say, "I love you, Jesus." Then return the figure to the manger.

Set the angel, shepherd, and sheep figures to one side of the story area. Let children touch the angel's robe, the shepherd's staff, and the sheep's fleece.

Ask: • **How does the angel's robe feel?** (Smooth; soft.)

• **What is the shepherd holding?** (A stick.)

• **What color is the sheep?** (White; black.)

Say: **God sent angels to tell the shepherds about Jesus' birthday. The angel told the shepherds that a special baby was born in Bethlehem.**

Ask: • **Who was the special baby?** (Jesus.)

• **Who is God's gift?** (Jesus.)

Say: ► ***Jesus is God's gift, and we love him. The shepherds loved Jesus, too. They wanted to visit baby Jesus.*** Move the figures of the angel, the shepherd, and the sheep over to the stable. **The shepherds loved Jesus and came to visit him. Who else came? 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. The wise men rode camels a long way to see Jesus. How did they find him? God put a bright star in the sky to help the wise men find Jesus.** Hold the star above the manger, and then let children take turns

holding the star and repeating the Bible Point.

Guess what the wise men brought Jesus? They brought birthday gifts! Wasn't that nice? Let's see what the wise men gave Jesus. Have toddlers smell the spice sticker and touch the gifts. Say: **We can taste spices like the wise men brought Jesus.** Hand each child a cinnamon graham cracker to eat. After kids have eaten their crackers, continue.

Ask: • **How did your treat taste?** (Good; I want more.)

Say: **The wise men knew that ► *Jesus is God's gift.* When the wise men saw Jesus, they bowed down on their knees and worshipped him. The wise men loved Jesus, just as we love him. Let's sing a song to remind us how the wise men came to visit Jesus.**

■ *This Is the Way the Wise Men Came*

SUPPLIES: CD player



Lead children in singing "This Is the Way the Wise Men Came" (track 7) to the tune of "The Mulberry Bush." Use the CD and do the motions in parentheses.



This is the way the wise men came (*bounce up and down like you're riding a camel*),

Wise men came, wise men came.

This is the way the wise men came

To visit baby Jesus. (*Make cradling motions with your arms.*)



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



This is the way the star shone bright (*raise arms above head and open and close your fingers*),

Star shone bright, star shone bright.

This is the way the star shone bright

Over baby Jesus. (*Make cradling motions with your arms.*)

(Repeat.)

If you have older toddlers, add verses such as

- This is the way they brought their gifts,
- This is the way the shepherds came,
- This is the way the angels came, and
- This is the way we love our Jesus.



Say: **We love Jesus, and we know that he loves us.** ► ***Jesus is God's gift* to us. God sent Jesus to be our forever friend. Someday, if we believe in Jesus, we will live with him in heaven. This is the best gift of all!**



Say: **Let's find out more about our Bible story.**

Bible Activities

■ Finding Jesus

SUPPLIES: *yellow construction paper or yellow poster board, scissors, tape*

Before class, cut a large star shape out of the yellow construction paper or poster board. Using the tape, attach the star to a wall or cabinet in your room so that all of the children can see it.

Ask: • **What are some things you look for in your room at home?** (My toys; my brother; my candy.)

• **Where are some places that you find those things?** (Under my bed; in the kitchen; outside.)

Say: **In our Bible story today, we learned that the wise men were looking for Jesus. God gave them a big star to follow. Let's pretend we're wise men looking for Jesus.**

Choose three of the children to be the wise men. Encourage those children to put their hands above their eyes and search for the star. Say: **These three wise men are going to lead us in tiptoeing to the star.** Allow time for all of the children to follow the wise men to the star, follow-the-leader style. When everyone gets there, lead the children in saying ► ***Jesus is God's gift.*** Then move the star to another corner of the room and allow three different children to be the leaders. Continue to play the game until each child has had a chance to be a wise man.



Choose different ways of traveling. For example, skipping, crawling, and hopping would be fun.



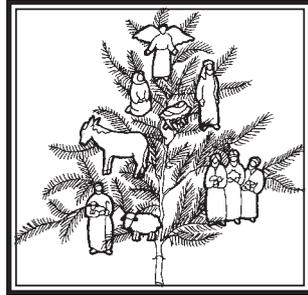

BIBLE POINT

After each child has had a turn, say: **The wise men used a star to help them find Jesus! ► Jesus is God's gift to the wise men and to us! Let's hang pretty hearts from the Christmas tree to remind us of Jesus' love for us.**

■ Interactive Bible Bulletin Board

SUPPLIES: heart patterns (p. 60), tape, scissors

Before class, photocopy the heart patterns. Cut out a paper heart for each child in class.


teacher tips

The Interactive Bible Bulletin Board is a simple device that offers so much that young children need: routine and familiarity, opportunities for creative expression, and visual reminders of previous lessons. If you haven't used this idea, give it a try!

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

Cuddles: Hello, everyone! Ooo, I'm so happy that I want to give you all snuggly cuddles! *(Have Cuddles give each child a warm hug.)*

Teacher: That was very nice, Cuddles. But why all the hugs and cuddles?

Cuddles: Because I *love* you! And when you love others, you want to show them.

Teacher: We've been learning that ► Jesus is God's gift. And we heard a Bible story about how the wise men brought gifts to Jesus to show that they loved him. We love Jesus, too, don't we boys and girls? *(Pause for responses.)* Would you like to help us add hearts to the bulletin board, Cuddles?

Cuddles: Sure! Then we'll remember how much we love Jesus when we see those hearts.

Have Cuddles hand each child a paper heart. If there's time, allow children to use crayons or markers to decorate the heart shapes. Then help children tape their paper hearts on the Christmas tree. Each time a child places a paper heart, lead him or her in saying, "I love you, Jesus." When all the paper hearts are on the tree, continue.

Teacher: Our Christmas tree is full of love. That's because Christmas is all about Jesus—and Jesus is all about love! The shepherds and wise men visited Jesus because they knew that ► Jesus is God's gift. Let's sing a song to remind us how the wise men came to tell Jesus they loved him.

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■ Sing It Out

SUPPLIES: CD player



Lead children in singing “This Is the Way the Wise Men Came” (track 7) to the tune of “The Mulberry Bush.” Use the CD and do the motions in parentheses.



This is the way the wise men came (*bounce up and down like you're riding a camel*),

Wise men came, wise men came.

This is the way the wise men came

To visit baby Jesus. (*Make cradling motions with your arms.*)

This is the way the star shone bright (*raise arms above head and open and close your fingers*),

Star shone bright, star shone bright.

This is the way the star shone bright

Over baby Jesus. (*Make cradling motions with your arms.*)

(Repeat.)

Say: **The wise men were important people—almost like kings. We can make crowns like the wise men might have worn. Then we'll pretend to be wise men visiting Jesus.**

■ Bible Craft

SUPPLIES: jewel patterns (p. 60), grocery sacks, crayons, scissors, tape, self-adhesive bows

Before class, cut grocery sacks into long, 2-inch-wide strips. Cut a strip for each child. Photocopy the jewel patterns. Cut out one or two paper jewels for each child.

Set out tape and crayons. Give each child a paper strip and “jewels” to scribble-color. Then help children make fitted headbands with their paper strips and tape. Tape jewels on the headbands. Then let each child stick one or two self-adhesive bows to his or her headband as “crown jewels.” As children work, remind them how the shepherds and wise men loved Jesus, just as we love Jesus.

When the children have finished, let them identify the colors of their jewels and then wear their “crowns.” Then say: **You look fine in your crowns! Now let's pretend to be wise men visiting Jesus.**



■ Bible Game

SUPPLIES: crowns from Bible Craft

Say: **We're make-believe wise men going to visit Jesus. Let's climb on our pretend camels and go for a ride. Bumpity, bumpity, bump!** Make riding motions as you walk around the room. **Bump, bump—whoa, camels! Climb down from your camels. How do we get to Jesus? Which way do we go?** Shield your eyes and point toward the “horizon.” **Look! A bright star! Do you see it shining?**

Climb on your camels, and let's follow the star to Jesus! Bumpity, bumpity, bump! Bump, bump—whoa, camels! Pause, and have kids climb off their camels.

Where's the star? We must follow the star to see Jesus! Point upward. Oh, there's the bright star! We're almost there. Climb up on your camels one more time. Bumpity, bumpity, bump. Make riding motions as you walk. Bump, bump, bump, bump—whoa, camels! Stop, and pretend to get off your camel. We're here and look! There is little Jesus. We'll take him our special gifts of spices and gold. Pretend you're handing a gift to someone. Now let's tell Jesus we love him. Kneel on the floor. We love you, Jesus.

Pause for a few moments of silence. Then say: That was nice. It's always nice to tell Jesus how much we love him. Now let's ride our camels over to the snack table. We'll have a delicious treat fit for a king!



Closing

■ What a Treasure!

SUPPLIES: doughnut holes with sprinkles, napkins

Help children wash their hands. Then gather them at the snack table.

Ask: • **Who is our gift from God?** (Jesus.)

Say: **We've been learning that ► *Jesus is God's gift.* We know that Jesus loves us and that we love Jesus, too. Let's say a prayer and thank God for his special gift of love. Fold your hands. Pray: Dear God, thank you for the gift of Jesus. We love him so much. In Jesus' name, amen.**

Hand each child a napkin with two or three doughnut hole "jewels." Say: **Hold your jewels up to the light and see how they sparkle! Then enjoy your delicious "crown jewels."**

Have children throw their napkins in the wastebasket when they've finished eating. Remind children to take their crowns and sweet-scent envelopes home.





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.

■ Finger-Rhyme Fun

Review the finger rhyme children learned earlier in the module. You may wish to hand each child a sheet of newsprint to lay on the floor as a pretend “manger.” Have children “lie in the manger” like baby Jesus as they act out the rhyme.

One little baby—asleep on the hay. (*Hold up one finger, and then lay your head on your hands.*)

Two loving parents keep watch while they pray. (*Hold up two fingers, and then fold your hands.*)

Three wise men traveled on camels to find (*hold up three fingers, and then shield eyes with hand as if searching*)

One little baby—your Jesus and mine. (*Hold up one finger, and then point to yourself.*)

■ Sweet Song

Without using the CD, lead children in singing “Jesus Is God’s Gift” (adapted from Isaiah 9:6a) to the tune of “Jesus Loves Me.” Encourage children to do the motions in parentheses.



SING

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.*)

Patterns

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

