

Bible Point ▶

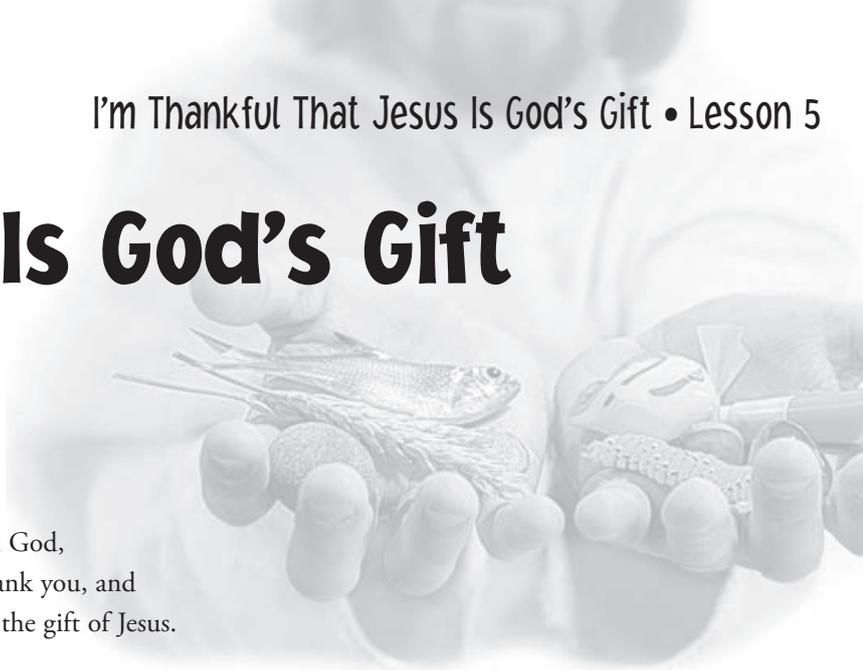
Jesus Is God's Gift

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,
 ■ explore different ways to say thank you, and
 ■ express their thanks to God for the gift of Jesus.



Teacher Enrichment

Bible Basis

■ I'm thankful that Jesus is God's gift.

**Matthew
1:18–2:11**



The wise men, or Magi, were likely religious leaders from Persia or Babylon. They were either astronomers or some type of astrologers. They apparently were not followers of the Jewish religion and had little or no knowledge of God. However, God somehow made it clear enough to them that a special king was being born that they were willing to travel hundreds of miles over dangerous desert wilderness to investigate and worship the new king.

The Magi's journey to worship Jesus in a lowly colony of the Roman Empire had great significance. Jesus is worthy of worship! *Our* reaction to Jesus' birth should be not only worship, but thankfulness that God chose to send a loving, merciful Savior to live and die for us.

Prayer

- Read Colossians 3:17.
- How does your life reflect thankfulness to God for sending the gift of Jesus?
- What can you do to show God how thankful you are for Jesus?
- Pray: Dear God, thank you for sending Jesus. Help me to demonstrate my thankfulness to the children I teach by...

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: Present Prancin’ —Hop, crawl, and walk along a pretend gift box.	Wrapping paper, masking tape or vinyl tape, scissors	
	Option 2: Story Scenes —Dress up and act out the story of Jesus’ birth.	Blanket; small box; yellow construction paper; scissors; tape; dress-up items including towels, bathrobes, neckties, and scarves	
	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.	Self-adhesive bows, CD player, AA battery	
	Jesus Is Our Gift —Sing a song about baby Jesus’ birth.	CD player	
Bible Activities	Thankful Sharing —Sing a song each time they thank God.		
	Interactive Bible Bulletin Board —Review the Bible Point with Cuddles the Lamb as they create a bulletin board together.	Gift patterns (p. 72), tape, scissors, empty gift box	
	Sing It Out —Sing a song about baby Jesus’ birth.	CD player	
	Bible Craft —Make unusual Nativity ornaments to remind them of Jesus’ special birth.	Craft sticks, craft glue, foil star stickers, brown and pink construction paper, fishing line or yarn	
	Bible Game —Play an exciting matching game with pretty “presents.”	Gift patterns (p. 72), crayons, scissors, paper plates, tape	
Closing 	Thank-Kabobs —Say a prayer, and have a snack.	Pretzel sticks, Jello-O squares, 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: Present Prancin’

SUPPLIES: wrapping paper, masking tape or vinyl tape, scissors

Before class, use masking tape or colored vinyl tape to make an outline of a 4-foot-square “gift” on the floor. Cut circles and hearts from wrapping paper, and then tape the shapes to the floor inside the gift outline.

As children arrive, invite them to play on the pretty “package” on the floor. Encourage children to walk, hop, or crawl on their knees around the outline. Then let them jump to the wrapping-paper shapes inside the outline and say, “Thank you for Jesus” as they land. Mention that it makes us happy to know that ► Jesus is God’s gift. Point out that Jesus is the most special gift we could ever have.

Option 2: Story Scenes

SUPPLIES: blanket; small box; yellow construction paper; scissors; tape; dress-up items including towels, bathrobes, neckties, and scarves

Before class, place a table against the wall as a “stable.” Spread a blanket under the table as “hay,” and place a small box in the stable as a “manger.” Cut a large star from yellow construction paper, and tape the star on the wall above the stable.

Provide dress-up items such as towels, bathrobes, scarves, and neckties to use as belts. Invite children to dress up as people or pretend to be animals from the story of Jesus’ birth. Help children name the people in the Bible story, including Mary, Joseph, the angel, the shepherd, and the wise men. Encourage children to act out how the angels told the shepherds that Jesus was born and how the wise men brought special gifts to worship Jesus. Remind children that ► Jesus is God’s gift and that we’re happy Jesus came to love us.

Pick-Up Time

SUPPLIES: CD player



As Arrival Activities draw to a close, gently mention that it will soon be time to clean up. Encourage children to help you pick



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.




teacher tips

Toddlers and 2s need supervision at all times. It's best to have at least two adults in the classroom. The ideal ratio is a minimum of one adult for every three to four children.

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!


teacher tips

Repetition of enjoyable activities, songs, and games is a vital learning tool for toddlers. Don’t be afraid to repeat activities such as acting out Bible stories—repetition helps children learn!

■ Bible Story: Jesus Is God’s Gift

SUPPLIES: self-adhesive bows, CD player, AA battery



track 4



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, place a self-adhesive bow for each child somewhere in the room. Put an AA battery in the flashlight from Sensory Packet 1.

Panel 1



Place the CD player and the flashlight and star from Sensory Packet 1 beside you. Say: **We're going to hear a Bible story about a very special birthday, and we'll learn that ► Jesus is God's gift.** Set out the figures of Mary, Joseph, and the donkey. **This is Joseph, and this is Mary. We can tell them hello.** Have children pass the figures of Mary and Joseph.

Lead children in saying "Hello, Mary" and "Hello, Joseph." Encourage toddlers to feel Mary's hair and Joseph's belt as they pass the figures.

Mary and Joseph were excited because Mary was going to have a special baby! Mary rode on the donkey while Joseph walked beside them. They wanted to find a place for the special baby to be born. Hold the figure of Mary on the donkey and have her "ride" a short way. **Whoa, little donkey! Let's pet the nice donkey.**

Ask: • **How does the donkey feel?** (Soft; nice.)

Set out the StoryBoard stable and manger. Say: **Mary and Joseph traveled until they 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 and encourage children to follow.

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 stayed in a stable and waited for the special baby to be born. There were animals in the stable, too. Let's listen to the animals.** Play the "Animal Sounds" segment (track 4) on the CD. Pause the CD after each sound, and encourage children to identify the animal and then imitate its sound. Stop the CD after the sheep sounds.

Say: **Mary and Joseph waited in the stable. They 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 the children's eyes are closed, lay the figure of baby Jesus in the manger. Say: **One...two...three...open your eyes. Who do you see? Baby Jesus is born! Let's clap to show how glad we are that ► Jesus is God's gift!** Lead children in clapping. **We can tell baby Jesus we love him.** Have each toddler gently hold the figure of baby Jesus and help him or her say, "I love you, Jesus."

Lay the figure of baby Jesus in the manger.

Ask: • **Who gave baby Jesus to us?** (God.)

• **Who is our gift of love?** (Jesus.)

Say: **I'm so happy that ► Jesus is God's gift. And guess who else was happy?**

Set out the angel, shepherd, and sheep figures. Say: **The angels and shepherds were happy that ► Jesus is God's gift! God sent angels to tell the shepherds the happy news about Jesus' birth. Let's touch the angel's robe and the shepherd's staff. We can pat the fluffy sheep, too.** Give each child a turn to touch either the angel, sheep, or shepherd's staff.

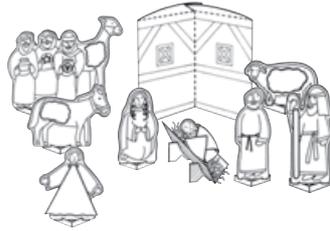


If you have very young toddlers in your class, let them simply hold the StoryBoard figures. Repeat the Bible Point often, and reinforce learning with hugs and smiles.



The shepherds were happy and wanted to see baby Jesus and worship him. Set the angel, shepherd, and sheep figures beside the manger. **Who else came to see 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 the good news about Jesus' birthday. They loved Jesus and wanted to see him, but how could they find him?** Hold the star above the stable. **God put a bright star in the sky above the stable. The star was a sign that Jesus had been born. Let's make the star shine!**

Give each child a turn shining the flashlight on the star.

They rode camels and followed the bright star to find Jesus. Oh, look! The wise men are bringing special presents to Jesus. Let's see what they have. Invite children to scratch and sniff the spice sticker and then touch the gifts. Let children pat the camel.

Say: **The wise men brought special gifts to Jesus because they loved him. Let's play a fun game and find gift bows. When you find a pretty gift bow, bring it back to the manger.** Help children find the bows you placed around the room earlier. When everyone is sitting in the story area, say: **now let's give our pretty bows to Jesus and say, "I love you."** As each child lays his or her bow beside the StoryBoard manger, lead the child in saying, "I love you, Jesus."

Jesus is God's Son, and he's the best gift there is! I'm thankful that ► ***Jesus is God's gift.*** One good way to say thank you is to sing a special song. Let's sing a song to thank God for the best gift in the world—Jesus!

■ 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.



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: I'm thankful that ► ***Jesus is God's gift*** and that Jesus is a gift meant for everyone! Let's sing a song to show how thankful we are for Jesus!

teacher tips

Important: Put the StoryBoard away and out of reach of children. Return the *flashlight* and *star* to the Learning Lab.



Bible Activities

Thankful Sharing

SUPPLIES: none



Sit in a circle with the class. Hold the *toy bear* in your lap.

Say: **I'm thankful that ► Jesus is God's gift! I'm also thankful for a lot of other things. God has given us many things to be thankful for. Let's tell God that we're thankful for all of the gifts he's given to us.**

Pass the bear around the circle, and encourage each child to give the *toy bear* a hug while stating one thing he or she is thankful for. After each child shares, lead the whole class in singing a round of "If You're Thankful and You Know It" (not on the *CD*) to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It." For example, a child who is holding the bear might say "I'm thankful for my family." Then the class would sing:



SING

If you're thankful for your family, clap your hands! (*Clap, clap.*)

If you're thankful for your family, clap your hands! (*Clap, clap.*)

If you're thankful and you know it

Then your life will surely show it.

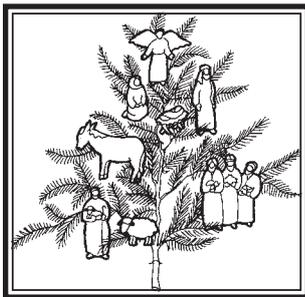
If you're thankful for your family, clap your hands! (*Clap, clap.*)

Continue to pass the *toy bear* around the circle and sing verses of the song until each child has had an opportunity to participate. End the song by being thankful for Jesus.

Say: **I'm thankful that ► Jesus is God's gift! Let's put gifts around our Christmas tree to remind us of the best gift of all!**

Interactive Bible Bulletin Board

SUPPLIES: gift patterns (p. 72), tape, scissors, empty gift box



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



BIBLE POINT



teacher tips

It's OK for some children to repeat answers. Some ideas for verses include family, food, sunshine, and pets.



BIBLE POINT



Bring out Cuddles the Lamb holding an empty gift box.

Cuddles: *(Looking into his empty box and shaking his head)* Ooo, what'll I do? What'll I do?

Teacher: Hello, Cuddles. You sound worried. What's in your box?

Cuddles: *(Holding the box so children can see it's empty)* Nothing. There's nothing in my box at all! That's the problem. I don't have a gift for my grandpa.

Teacher: Well, maybe we can help you think of a gift, Cuddles. What's something you like more than anything?

Cuddles: *(Thinking)* Hmmmm...I know! I like giving warm cuddles! *(Have Cuddles give each child a hug.)*

Teacher: That's a nice gift to give, Cuddles! Everyone likes to get a special hug! That's a gift of love. And we have another gift of love, too. Children, who is God's gift of love? *(Lead toddlers to say "Jesus.")* We've been learning that ► Jesus is God's gift. And today we're going to put gifts on the bulletin board to remind us of the best gift of all—Jesus! You can help.

Cuddles: I'm so happy! I can give my grandpa a *hug* for Christmas—and I can help you with the bulletin board!

Have Cuddles hand children the gift cutouts. If you have time, allow children to decorate the paper gifts with crayons or markers. Then help children tape the pictures under the Christmas tree on the bulletin board. Each time a child places a picture, lead him or her in repeating the Bible Point. Then continue.

Teacher: Giving hugs is a nice way to say thank you. Singing special songs is another way to say thank you. We can sing a thank you song to God for the gift of Jesus.

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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.

**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.*)

(Repeat.)

Say: **We know that ► Jesus is God's gift and he was born one special night in Bethlehem. Let's make special decorations to remind us of the night Jesus was born.**



■ Bible Craft

SUPPLIES: craft sticks, craft glue, foil star stickers, brown and pink construction paper, fishing line or yarn

Set out craft sticks, glue, brown and pink construction paper scraps, foil star stickers, and fishing line or yarn. Hand each child three craft sticks, and help children glue the sticks into triangle-shaped "stables." Place a star sticker at the top point of each triangle. Then let children tear small "mangers" and "babies" from brown and pink construction paper. Help children glue the babies in the mangers and then glue the mangers onto the bottom of the craft-stick triangles. As children work, ask questions such as "Why did God put a bright star in the sky?" and "Who is the best gift we know?"

When the stables are finished, tie lengths of fishing line or yarn at the top of the triangles to make Nativity ornaments. Say: **Hold up your stables and point to the star.** Pause. **Point to the manger.** Pause. **Now point to the baby in the manger.** Pause. **Jesus is the best gift we know! Let's play a game with pretend gifts to remind us that ► Jesus is God's gift!**



■ Bible Game

SUPPLIES: gift patterns (p. 72), crayons, scissors, paper plates, tape

Before class, photocopy the gift patterns. Photocopy a pair of patterns for each child. Color the patterns, one color per pair, and then cut them out. Tape one gift cutout from each pair to a paper plate.

Scatter and tape the "gift plates" to the floor. Hand each child a picture. Say: **When I say, "Go, go gifts!" go stand beside the gift plate that matches the picture you're holding. When I say, ► "Jesus is God's gift," we'll clap and say, "Thank you for Jesus!"**

Alternate having children clap or match pictures. If you have older toddlers, let them switch pictures and find new gift plates to match.

When you've finished playing, say: **That was fun! It's also fun to thank God for Jesus. Let's tiptoe to the snack table and thank God for his special gift of Jesus.**





Closing

■ Thank-Kabobs

SUPPLIES: pretzel sticks, Jell-O squares, napkins

Before class, prepare Jell-O squares and keep them chilled.

Have children wash their hands. Then gather everyone at the snack table.

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



Say: **We've been learning that ► *Jesus is God's gift.*** Jesus wants to be our forever friend. If we believe in Jesus and love him, one day we will live together with him in heaven. We want to thank God for giving us such a special gift. There are lots of ways to say thank you. We thanked God in a song and in a game. Now we can thank God with a prayer. Fold your hands. Pray: **Dear God, thank you for Jesus. We love Jesus so much, and we love you, too. In Jesus' name, amen.**

Hand each child a napkin with a few pretzel sticks and Jell-O squares. Say: **Let's make yummy "thank-kabobs." Slide a Jell-O square on each pretzel stick. Then we'll name something we're thankful for each time we gobble a bite.**

When everyone has finished, have children throw their napkins in the wastebasket. Remind children to take home their Nativity ornaments.



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.

■ *This Is the Way the Wise Men Came*

Without using the *CD*, lead children in singing “This Is the Way the Wise Men Came” to the tune of “The Mulberry Bush.” Do the motions in parentheses.



SING

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.*)

■ *Starlight, Star Bright*

Set a chair at the front of the room facing the wall, and place the star from Sensory Packet 1 under the chair. Have the children sit behind the chair in a group. Choose one child to sit in the chair facing away from the group. Tap one of the children to silently take the star and hide it in his or her lap. Lead the children in saying, “Starlight, star bright, where is the star tonight?” Then let the child sitting on the chair turn around and guess who has the star. Continue playing until everyone has had a turn to guess.

Patterns

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

