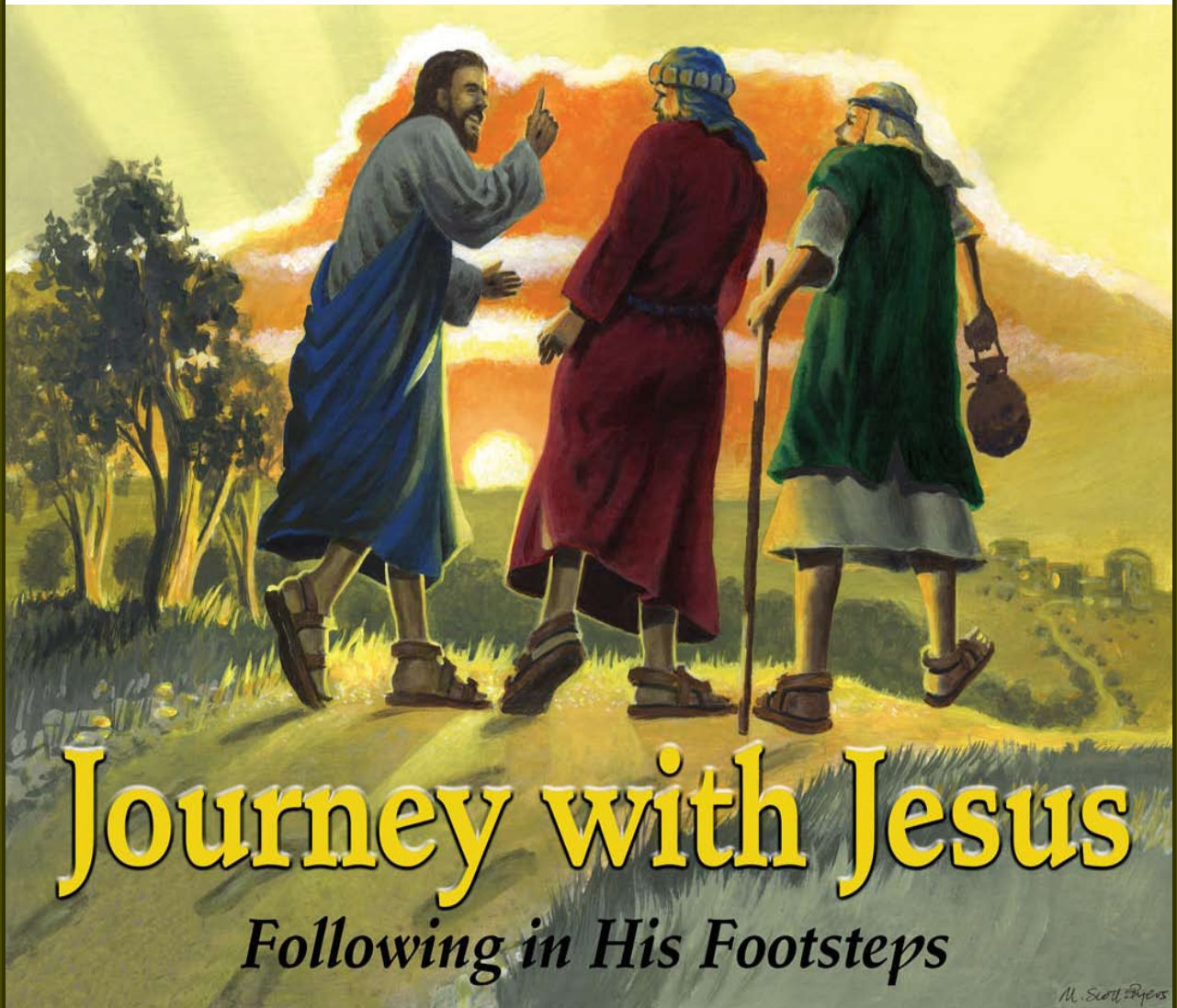


Early Childhood Bible Teacher— *Babies* **(Birth to Twelve Months)**



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Vacation Bible School

Early Childhood Bible Teacher—Babies (Birth to Twelve Months)

Journey with Jesus— Following in His Footsteps

Unit Overview	This unit focuses on Jesus growing as a child. Jesus' parents loved and obeyed God. The babies you teach are growing mentally, physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. What a great privilege to teach and love babies!
Bible Verse Phrases	Thank you, God, for baby Jesus (Luke 2:38). Jesus grew as a child (Luke 2:40, 52).
Learning Aim	To help babies know God loves them

Debbie Bertrand and **Jamie Michael** are the writers for the VBS Baby Unit. **Wilma Reed** wrote the "Bible Background" material.

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VBS Unit Overview for Babies

Sessions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Sessions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Unit Title: Journey with Jesus—Following in His Footsteps	<i>Journey Through the Marketplace</i> (Bible Learning Activities) Birth-to-Three Months: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to quiet music • Make photograph and footprint of each baby • Exercise arms and legs and sing • Place star posters in beds • Suspend stars from ceiling • Look in a mirror • Enjoy musical socks
Learning Aim: To help babies know God loves them	
Bible Verse Phrases: Thank you, God, for baby Jesus (Luke 2:38). Jesus grew as a child (Luke 2:40, 52).	
Bible Stories and Scripture References: Jesus Was Born in Bethlehem Luke 2:1-7 Thank You, God, for Jesus Luke 2:25-38 God Took Care of Jesus and His Family Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23 Jesus Grew as a Child Luke 2:39-40, 52 Jesus Learned About God at Church Luke 2:41-52	Four-to-Six Months: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use activities listed for birth-to-three months and add the following: • Look at Christmas photo album • Play with jingle bell shakers • Play peek-a-boo with mirror • Play with vinyl or cardboard blocks Seven-to-Twelve Months <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use activities listed for four-to-six months and add the following: • Listen to quiet music • Make photograph and footprint of each baby • Play with baby dolls • Suspend stars from the ceiling and sing • Play a filling and dumping game.

How to Use Early Childhood Bible Teacher—Babies

Basic Information for the Teaching Team Members:

- **Unit Title:** The main focus of teaching for VBS.
- **Learning Aim:** The outcome the teacher should teach toward and expect in the life of the child for the unit, stated from the perspective of the teacher. The Learning Aim is the key-organizing element for the unit.
- **Bible Verse Phrases:** A statement that expresses a concept from the Bible passage in language appropriate to the child. Bible phrase statements are to be used in conversation by the teacher with the baby.

Preparing and Planning for the Baby:

- **Study the Bible:** This material is written for the team members in an early childhood department. The Bible background writer takes the Bible story for each day and gives team members an opportunity for additional Bible study and life application.
- **Overview the Unit:** This information overviews the unit and reminds the team members of how this Bible story can impact the baby's life and their own personal lives.
- **Plan with the Bible Teaching Team:** The suggestions given are practical ways you as a team member can prepare for VBS and minister to the children God has entrusted to you.
- **Gather These Materials:** This is a list of resources you will need for the VBS unit.
- **Our Journey Begins (Greeting the Child):** First impressions are so important! You will be reminded to greet the babies on their level. This is also the time to gather needed information from the parent or caregiver.
- **Journey Through the Marketplace (Bible Learning Activities):** This section includes activities that the teacher will use with the baby (birth to twelve months) during VBS. The activities are divided into three age groups—birth-to-three months, four-to-six months, and seven-to-twelve months. The activities are age-appropriate and written so the teacher will have specific directions in preparing for and guiding the baby. A plan sheet (**Resource Item 4**) is available for the teachers as they plan for the week of VBS.
- **The Next Step:** This information is written for the teachers as they prepare for dismissal of the babies and evaluation of the session.
- **Parent Letter:** The Parent Letter (**Resource Item 3**) is the church's link to the home. The letter may be used as the basis for a letter to each family. There is space at the top of the letter for the church to personalize the letter and to add other information. The letter may be mailed before VBS begins or given to each family on the first day of VBS.

If you teach Babies (Birth-to-Twelve months):

- The curriculum is organized in a weekly unit rather than daily sessions. The activities suggested are grouped into three different age groupings—birth-to-three months, four-to-six months, and seven-to-twelve months. According to the age group you teach, choose at least two activities to do each day. Depending on the teachers available, you may choose more than one activity and then repeat the same activity or add something new each day. Babies learn through repetition and are storing the information learned.

--Debbie Bertrand, Editor

Suggested Schedule for VBS

Thank you for accepting the babies thirty minutes prior to the beginning of VBS! You are teaching teachers' children, and these teachers need to be in their classrooms on time. Teaching begins the moment a baby arrives. Don't wait for all the babies to arrive to begin teaching!

The following schedule assumes you will have three-hour sessions each day. Adjust the schedule to fit your particular situation.

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 8:30-9:30AM | Greet the baby and begin teaching. |
| 9:30-10:00AM | Check and change diapers. Mark the Baby Schedule Card (Resource Item 1) with the codes on the card. One teacher could be responsible for changing diapers while the other teachers continue interacting with the babies, or each teacher could have three or four babies to care for each day during VBS. |
| 10:00-11:15AM | Continue activity teaching. If some babies are sleeping, one or two teachers could take babies who are awake on a stroller ride or a walk around the church. <u>Always have two teachers in the classroom at all times!</u> |
| 11:15-11:45AM | Check and change diapers. Follow instructions above. Begin placing belongings in their bags. |
| 11:45-12:00PM | Sing songs, read books, or play on the floor to keep the babies' attention from the door. One teacher should be at the door to greet the parent, gather the baby's things, and retrieve the baby. The other teachers should continue interacting with the children. |
| 12:00-12:15PM | Clean and sanitize the room and prepare the room for the next day. See instructions on <i>Prepare for the Child Guidelines (Resource Item 2)</i> |

Journey with Jesus—Following in His Footsteps

Study the Bible

Session 1 Bible Background (Jesus Was Born in Bethlehem - Luke 2:1-7)

Tradition depicts Joseph leading or walking beside the donkey that carried Mary over the rough terrain. Mary and Joseph traveled from Nazareth in Galilee through Samaria to Bethlehem in Judea, a trip of about ninety miles or about five days' journey. A decree issued by the Roman government required Joseph to make the long, arduous trip to pay taxes. Mary evidently accompanied her husband-to-be because the birth of her baby was at hand. However, it was not accidental that Mary's baby would be born in Bethlehem. That is where the prophet Micah prophesied the Savior would be born (Micah 5:2). The village was known as "the city of David" because David had tended his father's sheep in that area (1 Samuel 17:15). It was where the prophet Samuel had anointed David king (1 Samuel 16:1-13). Since the town was near the main route between Jerusalem and Egypt, an inn had existed there from early times.

When the weary couple finally arrived in Bethlehem, they may have sought lodging in a home. Hospitality to guests, even strangers, was an important Jewish social function. Or, finding the inn had no room for them, they may have gone directly to an outlying cave. Habitable caves existed throughout the Bethlehem hills and were used as stables in ancient times.

No nursery, no special crib, and no fancy garments awaited the Savior's arrival. After Jesus was born, Mary would have laid him diagonally on a square of linen, folded the corners over him, and then wound the swaddling securely around him. Perhaps once a day for the next six months, she would wash him and gently rub him with olive oil or dust him with powder and then rewrap him with the long linen strips. The swaddling prevented the baby Jesus from thrashing his arms and legs. It was customary to so wrap babies for the first six months to ensure strong, straight bones.

Jesus' bed was the animals' stone feeding trough. Perhaps Mary cushioned it first with straw and then lined it with a goat hair blanket they used for covering at night.

Mary and Joseph may have taken turns singing sweet songs to their newborn baby. They loved him and must have tried to understand that the Son of God had been placed in their care.

Session 2 Bible Background (Thank You, God, for Jesus - Luke 2:25-38)

Forty days after Jesus' birth, Mary and Joseph made the five-mile trek north to the temple in Jerusalem. It was time for the rites of purification and sacrifice to be performed (see Leviticus 12:1-8).

The law required the firstborn son to be redeemed at a cost of five shekels in memory of God's sparing the firstborn of the Israelites at the time of the Exodus (see Numbers 18:14-16). The law

also required Mary to sacrifice two turtledoves, or pigeons, which Joseph probably purchased in the temple courtyard.

A wealthy man might have purchased a sheep for the sacrifice. As a carpenter, however, Joseph may have found even the expense of the two birds a hardship. When Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple, it was probably swarming with hundreds of people. Among the mob were two special people—Simeon and Anna.

Simeon belonged to the class of humble and devout Jews who looked for the redemption of Israel. Consequently God shed abroad among the devout group the gift of prophecy and revealed truth to them that the scribes and Pharisees did not see. The Holy Spirit had assured Simeon that he would live to see the Promised One. Many years had passed. Simeon was now old. Every time a newborn baby boy was brought for dedication, he would probably wonder whether this child might be the hope of Israel.

Then one day, a couple brought their baby for the rites. When Simeon saw the infant, he took the baby in his arms and began praising God. The old man hailed the little baby as the gift from God, the Messiah. This baby would be a light to the entire world, a hint that Gentiles were included in God's plan for redemption. Further, Simon indicated that the child's future held heartbreak for Mary.

Similarly, the aged Anna belonged to the godly remnant who anticipated the Messiah. She listened to the reading of the scrolls and believed fully the prophecies they contained. Whether she was eighty-four years of age or had been a widow eighty-four years is unclear. Either way, the meaning is that she was elderly. She now spent her days in the temple fasting, praying, and looking for the Promised One.

Like Simeon, Anna may have lived with the constant expectation that tomorrow the Messiah would come. In God's perfect timing, the old woman entered just as Simeon lifted the baby and thanked God for God's faithfulness in letting him live to see God's Son. Suddenly Anna recognized the infant in Mary's arms and proclaimed the child as the Messiah. She told everyone who, like she and Simeon, anticipated Israel's redemption.

Both Simeon and Anna must have rejoiced that their years of waiting were over. They praised God and thanked him for letting them see Jesus.

Session 3 Bible Background (God Took Care of Jesus and His Family - Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23)

God's watchful eye was on his Son. As soon as the Wise Men left, Joseph received angelic instruction again. King Herod's anger was beyond control. The Wise Men had outwitted him when they left without letting him know where to find the new King. Herod's fury posed a threat for the baby born to be the Savior. Joseph as Jesus' legal father was responsible for his safety. Joseph followed the angel's instruction and immediately set out for Egypt.

A sizable number of Jews had lived in Egypt since the time of the exile, approximately 600 years before Jesus was born. Large concentrations of Jewish people lived in several large cities, but small Jewish communities were also established throughout Egypt. To reach Egypt, which was outside of Herod's jurisdiction, required a lengthy journey of several hundred miles across sun-baked desert wastes. Even in the company of a caravan, the trip was dangerous and tiring. The caravan probably took the route west of Bethlehem to the shores of the Mediterranean Sea and then followed a coastal road to Egypt and safety.

Egypt had offered refuge to the Hebrews on other occasions. Abraham had gone there (Genesis 12:10), and Jacob and his descendants had lived there for an extended time (Gen. 46:20). Now Egypt promised protection for Jesus and his parents.

Perhaps in Egypt Joseph found work as a carpenter. When Herod died, a heavenly messenger instructed Joseph to return to Nazareth with his family.

Joseph seems to have assumed he should return to Judea. However, Archelaus, Herod's power-happy son, ruled the country. Archelaus was fully as treacherous as his father. Being warned in a dream, Joseph took his family back to Nazareth. Antipas, another of Herod's sons, ruled in Galilee. Jesus' reference to him as a "fox" (Luke 13:32) reveals something of his cunning nature. Herod Antipas was responsible for having John the Baptist beheaded (Mark 6:22-28).

Each time Joseph was instructed through a divine message, he promptly obeyed. The journey was hazardous, but God kept the family safe.

The whole experience—the flight to Egypt, the slaughter of innocent babies, the return to Galilee—fulfilled prophecies made by Jeremiah (Jeremiah 31:15) and Hosea (Hosea 11:1) many years earlier. God is not only faithful in keeping his promises; God also faithfully cares for his people.

Session 4 Bible Background (Jesus Grew as a Child - Luke 2:39-40, 52)

When Mary and Joseph returned to Nazareth from Egypt, they must have been happy to be reunited with their family and friends. They were probably relieved to be back in their home and Joseph's carpenter's shop. Nazareth was a good place for Jesus to live and grow up.

Since Jewish families enjoyed healthy foods, Jesus grew strong, likely on a nutritious diet of goat's milk and meat, fresh fruits, and breads made of wheat or barley. His vegetables were boiled or stewed and then seasoned with salt, onion, garlic, mint, or dill. To sweeten his food, Jesus would have used wild honey or syrups made by boiling down dates and grapes.

Jesus probably began helping Joseph in his carpenter's shop while he was a little boy. Today we tend to think of carpenters primarily as builders. In Jesus' time, though, many of the items used in everyday life were wooden, made by the village carpenter. Since all Jewish boys were taught a trade, Jesus may have served an apprenticeship with Joseph. Felling trees and then making the wood into useful items was strenuous work, but it was good exercise for a growing boy.

There were times when families and friends just enjoyed one another's company. Jesus may have joined other children in playing ball games. Toys might have included whistles, rattlers, wheeled animals, hoops, and spinning tops. As Jesus grew older, he may have joined the adults in playing various kinds of board games, including a game akin to checkers. In its own way, each form of recreation helped Jesus develop his mind and body.

Aramaic was the common language of the people, but Roman domination brought with it some use of Latin. Religious studies were conducted in Hebrew, the language of the Old Testament Scriptures. Since the trade routes that ran north and south of Nazareth resounded with numerous dialects and lesser tongues, trades people usually became accomplished linguists. Jesus may have learned to speak several languages.

Religious ceremonies and festivals were important facets of Jesus' family life. Mary and Joseph made regular pilgrimages to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. They probably took Jesus with them, even though only one such trip is recorded.

As Jesus grew from infancy to adolescence, he steadily matured physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Surely Mary and Joseph were pleased to watch Jesus grow. God also was very pleased with his Son's development in each stage of life.

Session 5 Bible Background (Jesus Learned About God at Church - Luke 2:41-52)

Jesus and his family were devout Jews. The family went to Jerusalem every year to celebrate the Passover. Passover celebrated God's deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage. The Passover celebration rekindled hope that God would send a Deliverer to Israel. When a Jewish boy reached the age of twelve years, custom prescribed that he be presented at the temple and take part in temple worship.

Most often the family and relatives would travel in a caravan to Jerusalem. The women and children led the procession followed by the men. A twelve-year-old boy could travel with either group. To go with a large group of other pilgrims, share the excitement and adventure of such a journey, and visit with relatives during the journey was an exhilarating experience.

During the Passover, rabbis and other scholars often assembled in the temple to discuss various matters. Discussing the promise of Messiah surely would have been one of their favorite topics.

When the week of the feast was over and the caravan started home, Mary and Joseph must have each assumed Jesus was in the company of the other since a twelve-year-old boy could travel with either the women or the men. Apparently on the evening of the first day's journey, Mary and Joseph discovered Jesus was with neither group. No doubt they spent a restless and anxious night. The next morning they journeyed all day back to Jerusalem to look for Jesus. Another tense night passed. The next day they found him in the temple. He was sitting in the midst of the learned men, talking with them and asking them questions. His inquiries were so insightful, the scholars were amazed at this understanding and his answers.

How relieved Mary and Joseph must have been to find him safe and in the company of the scholars. Yet a mother's reproach seemed in order (Luke 2:48). Jesus seemed puzzled that his parents did not know that he was in the temple and that they thus had not come straight to the temple to look for him (2:49). Jesus' response was not intended to be disrespectful. Rather it reflected a sense of his divine mission in the world and his unique relationship to God.

Mary and Joseph were astonished that their son had such understanding. They returned to Nazareth where Jesus continued to grow into an obedient, responsible youth.

Overview the Unit

This unit focuses on Jesus growing from a baby to a child. Jesus' parents loved and obeyed God. The babies you will teach are growing mentally, physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. As you teach and interact with them, you are laying foundations to aid in their mental, physical, emotional, social, and spiritual growth. What a great responsibility and privilege to teach and love babies!

Plan with the Bible Teaching Team

- Read the story of Jesus' birth through his trip to the temple as a child in Luke 1:1 through Luke 2:52. God planned for Jesus to be born to Mary and Joseph. He chose this couple to be his earthly parents. What an incredible responsibility! God also planned that each baby in your class would be born to a special family. These families may come in many different sizes and shapes! Be sensitive to all situations. Pray for all the families touched by your ministry.
- Send the **Parent Letter (Resource Item 3)** to all the babies assigned to your class. Personalize the letter by including information about the baby's room, the teachers, what time you will be ready for the baby, and other information you think will be helpful to the parents.
- Make five copies of the **Baby Schedule Card (Resource Item 1)** for each baby assigned to your department. The card may be revised to coincide with your church's schedule. Parents may prefer to take the schedule cards home and have them prepared for VBS before they arrive each day. Remember to use the codes on the card and send home the cards each day. This information will be beneficial to the parents and will eliminate the need to tell them at the end of VBS, all the details of the morning.
- Read through the suggested activities for the babies. Decide which team member will be responsible for preparing and gathering the needed items for each activity. Make copies of the **Plan Sheet (Resource Item 4)** for each teacher. Decide who will take pictures of the babies. Pictures should be taken on the first and second days of VBS. Try to capture the babies involved in an activity. Directions for making the ***Journey with Jesus Booklet (Resource Item 5)*** are given in the Birth-to-Three month section. Prepare the booklet before VBS begins.

- Prepare the **I'm Growing Just Like Jesus** book (**Resource Item 6**) prior to VBS. Print out one copy of each page. To create book format, copy the pages as follows onto 8 1/2" x 11" white cardstock: Title page and page 8 – one-sided; pages 2 and 3—print back-to-back; pages 4 and 5—print back-to-back; pages 6 and 7—print back to back. Laminate or cover each page in clear contact plastic if possible. Then, staple the book together.
- Prepare nametags for each baby in your class and the baby's belongings. Make five or six masking tape strips for each baby every day. Place the strips on waxed paper for easy removal and place them close to the door.
- Place a copy of *Prepare for the Child Guidelines* (**Resource Item 2**) in a prominent place in the room.

Gather These Resources:

Resources	Age Group
Bible	Birth-12 months
*CD—"Baby Loves Hymns" ISBN: 083061056629	Birth-12 months
Resource Item 1: Baby Schedule Card	Birth-12 months
Resource Item 2: <i>Prepare for the Child</i> guidelines	Birth-12 months
Resource Item 3: Parent Letter	Birth-12 months
Resource Item 4: Bible Learning Activity Plan Sheet	Birth-12 months
Digital camera	Birth-12 months
Resource Item 5: <i>Journey with Jesus</i> Booklet	Birth-12 months
8 1/2" x 11" white copy paper (2 pieces)	Birth-12 months
8 1/2" x 11" white cardstock (1 piece per child)	Birth-12 months
Washable tempera or acrylic paint (any color)	Birth-12 months
Foam paintbrushes	Birth-12 months
Baby wipes	Birth-12 months
Black and white poster board (2 of each color)	Birth-6 months
Stars (large, adhesive-backed, silver and gold)	Birth-6 months
Clear contact plastic	Birth-6 months
Magnetic strip or Velcro®	Birth-6 months
9" x 12" cardstock or poster board (2-4 pieces, various colors)	Birth-12 months
Resource Item 6: <i>I'm Growing Just Like Jesus</i> Book	Birth-12 months
8 1/2" x 11" white cardstock (5 sheets)	Birth-12 months
Aluminum foil (optional)	Birth-12 months
Fishing line or string	Birth-12 months
Unbreakable mirror or mirror board (available at craft stores)	Birth-12 months
Magnetic strip or Velcro®	Birth-6 months
Baby socks (2 or 3 pairs)	Birth-3 months
Small jingle bells (1 or 2 for each sock)	Birth-3 months
Heavy duty thread	Birth-3 months
Magnetic photo album	4-6 months

Christmas cards (religious scenes or pictures only)	4-12 months
Family pictures from children in class or magazine pictures depicting family members	4-12 months
6-8 oz clear plastic water bottles (empty)	4-12 months
Jingle bells (2 or 3 per bottle)	4-12 months
Glue or colored masking tape	4-12 months
Towel or blanket	4-12 months
Vinyl blocks or cardboard blocks	4-12 months
Two baby dolls	7-12 months
Blanket or towel	7-12 months
Diaper bag filled with a blanket, rattle, diapers, and empty travel-size baby wipe container	7-12 months
Metal bowls or pots	7-12 months
Connecting links or pop beads	7-12 months

*Available from Barnes and Noble bookstore or www.barnesandnoble.com

Guiding the Session for Babies

Our Journey Begins

Greeting Each Baby

When Maddie's mom knocks on the door, greet her warmly. Then, look at Maddie and say, *Maddie, I'm so glad to see you today. We are going to have a good time at church today!* Take Maddie and her bag, and remind her mom to fill out the **Baby Schedule Card (Resource Item 1)** while you get Maddie settled. Return to the door to get the card and give her mom the security tag or pager. Assure her that Maddie will be loved and cared for today. Place her schedule card next to her bed or cubby.

Guiding Through Activities

As these babies are growing and developing, it is important to remember that you can do much more than care for their immediate physical needs. It is so important that you do all you can to ensure the babies feel loved and secure, as well as, stimulate them while encouraging their overall development! Find at least two activities you will do with your babies each day. You can repeat this activity and/or you can add something new each day. It is important for babies to experience repetition and familiarity to feel secure and safe.

Journey Through the Marketplace

Bible Learning Activities for Babies

Activities for Birth-to-Three Months:

- **Turn on quiet music and check each baby schedule card.**
Play quiet music during the session. Check the **Baby Schedule Card (Resource Item 1)** to know what time Maddie needs her bottle. Teachers should have the bottles ready for the baby according to their parent's instructions. It is so important to meet the baby's needs according to their schedules so they will feel secure in your care. Mark the card using the code given on the card. This information will be beneficial to Maddie's mom and will eliminate the need to tell her, at the end of VBS, all the details of the morning.
- **Take a photograph and make a footprint of each child.**
On day one or two, take a vertical photograph of each child involved in an activity or in a teacher's lap. Print the ***Journey with Jesus Booklet (Resource Item 5)*** on 8 ½" x 11" white copy paper. Make a two-sided copy with page one and two on white 8 ½" x 11" cardstock. Fold it in half. Make one vertical photograph of each child involved in an activity. Glue or tape the picture on the left-hand page under the words "Jesus Loves." Two teachers are needed for this activity. Use a foam paintbrush to paint a child's foot with any color of washable tempera or acrylic paint. Press it onto the right-hand side of the paper. Have baby wipes available to clean the child's foot. Write the child's name and date of VBS on the front of the book. Give this to the parent at the end of VBS. What a special keepsake this will be!
- **Exercise the babies' arms and legs and sing "Thank You, God, for Baby Jesus."**
As you rock, change, feed, and exercise the babies' arms and legs, sing, "Thank You, God, for Baby Jesus" to the tune of "Mary Had a Little Lamb." Use the following words: *Thank you, God, for baby Jesus, baby Jesus, baby Jesus. Thank you, God, for baby Jesus. Oh I love you so.*
- **Place star posters in the beds.**
Cut the poster board in half. Place gold stars on an 11" x 14" white poster board and silver stars on an 11" x 14" black poster board. Laminate or cover the poster board with clear contact plastic. Place on the back of the board magnetic strip or Velcro®. Place the boards on the side of the baby beds. Babies at this age move their heads from side to side. Move the boards often to encourage the baby to look both ways. Make one board for each bed.
- **Suspend stars from the ceiling.**
Die-cut or cut out different-sized stars from white cardstock or poster board. Some of the stars could be covered in aluminum foil. Use string or fishing line to hang the stars from the ceiling about 6' from the floor and/or the changing table. You can manipulate and turn the stars as you change Lacy's diaper. Sing, "Jesus Loves Me," substituting Lacy's name.
- **Look in a mirror and read a book.**
Place the unbreakable mirror or mirror board on the side of Lacy's bed. Position the mirror so Lacy can see herself. If you use mirror board, attach a piece of magnetic strip or Velcro® to the back and attach it to the side of the bed. As Lacy sees herself in the mirror,

say, *Lacy is growing to be a big girl just like Jesus. I love Lacy. Jesus loves Lacy.* Read the book *I'm Growing Just Like Jesus* (Resource Item 6).

- **Enjoy musical socks.**

Attach a jingle bell to a baby sock with heavy-duty thread. Place the sock on Lacy's foot. When she moves or kicks, she will enjoy hearing the bell jingle. Move Lacy's hands and feet across the midline of her body as you sing, "If You're Happy and You Know It." Continue with the motions of the song.

Activities for Four-to-Six Months:

- **Use the suggestions in the birth-to-three month section and add the following activities.**

- **Look at a Christmas photo album.**

Place in a magnetic photo album the fronts of Christmas cards depicting the Christmas story. Do not place pictures of Santa, Rudolph, or other fantasy pictures in the album. As you sit on the floor with Madeline, open the album and allow her to look at the pictures. When you come to a picture of baby Jesus, say, *Thank you, God, for baby Jesus. Thank you, God, for Madeline.* On the third day of VBS, place pictures of each child's family in the photo album, if possible. If family pictures cannot be gathered, cut out pictures of mommies, daddies, and children from magazines. Show Madeline the pictures of her family members while she sits with you on the floor. Talk to her about each person, using that person's name. As you show Madeline the picture of her mommy, say, *Mommy loves Madeline very much. Jesus loves Madeline, too.*

- **Play with jingle bell shakers.**

Place two or three jingle bells inside two-to-four empty 6-8oz clear plastic water bottles. Glue or tape the lids closed. Place the bottle under a towel or blanket. When Bryce sees the blanket, lift the edge so he can see the bottle. Encourage him to retrieve the bottle if he is beginning to move or get one of the bottles and offer it to him. When he shakes the jingle bell shaker, say, *Thank you, God, for Bryce's ears. He can hear the beautiful bells!* Continue to play this game with the other children.

- **Play peek-a-boo with the mirror.**

Colton will love looking at himself in the mirror. Sit with Colton and play peek-a-boo with the mirror. As he looks at himself, say, *I see Colton. I love Colton. Jesus loves Colton.*

- **Play with vinyl or cardboard blocks.**

Colton will enjoy stacking, holding, touching, and throwing the blocks. As Colton plays with the blocks, say, *Colton, you are growing. You can play with blocks! You are growing just like Jesus.* Read the book *I'm Growing Just Like Jesus* (Resource Item 6).

Activities for Seven-to-Twelve Months:

- **Use the suggestions in the four-to-six month section and add the following activities.**
- **Turn on quiet music and check each baby schedule card.**

Play quiet music during the session. Check the **Baby Schedule Card (Resource Item 1)** to know what time Maddie needs her bottle. Teachers should have the bottles ready for the baby according to their parent's instructions. It is so important to meet the baby's needs according to their schedules so they will feel secure in your care. Mark the card using the code given on the card. This information will be beneficial to Maddie's mom and will eliminate the need to tell her, at the end of VBS, all the details of the morning.

- **Make a photograph and footprint of each child.**
Follow directions given in the birth-to-three month section.
- **Play with baby dolls.**
Place on the floor two dolls, blanket, and a diaper bag. Place some diapers, a rattle, and an empty travel-size baby wipe container in the diaper bag. As Brayden crawls to the items, say, *Brayden, Mary and Joseph loved baby Jesus. They took care of him.* Help him to open the bag and find the items for the baby. Name the items as he takes them from the bag. Remember, they are storing many words to use at a later time!
- **Suspend stars from the ceiling and sing.**
Suspend the star mobile from the ceiling (directions in birth-to-three month section). Some of the stars could be hung low enough for Abby to touch. If Abby gets upset, you can walk over to the stars and move them around with your hand. As she watches the stars, sing, "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star." Also sing, "Thank You, God, for Baby Jesus" to the tune of "Mary Had a Little Lamb." Use the following words: *Thank you, God, for baby Jesus, baby Jesus, baby Jesus. Thank you, God, for baby Jesus. Oh I love you so.*
- **Play a filling and dumping game.**
Place connecting links or pop beads beside the metal bowls or pots. Begin dropping each link or pop bead in one at a time. When Abby drops each one in the bowl, say, *Ms. Jamie loves Abby. Mommy loves Abby. Jesus loves Abby, too.*

The Next Step

- **Check each baby's diaper:**
During VBS, schedule a time during each hour to check diapers. Make sure each baby's diaper has been checked at least once during the session. Mark the **Baby Schedule Card (Resource Item 1)** at the approximate time using the code on the card. This information will be helpful to both teachers during the session and parents.
- **As babies are leaving:**
Place the schedule card, parent letter (unless it was mailed prior to VBS), and other belongings in their bag. Remove the nametag when the parent comes. Make sure the person picking up the baby has a security tag before releasing the baby. Make the baby's exit as quiet as possible so as not to upset the other babies in the room.
- **At the end of the session:**
Refer to the ***Prepare for the Child Guidelines (Resource Item 2)*** to ensure proper cleaning of the room and the equipment.
- **Ask yourself these questions:**
 1. Was the room ready and prepared when the first baby arrived?

2. Did I spray the changing table with bleach solution (one-fourth cup bleach to one gallon water) after each diaper change?
3. Did I remove a mouthed toy and disinfect (one teaspoon to one gallon water) it before returning it to the play area?
4. Did I give the baby as much attention as possible? Did I physically remain on his or her level?
5. Did I relate the learning aim to each activity through my conversation with the babies?
6. What specific needs of the babies do I need to address before the next day?