



Bible Point ▶

We are happy that Jesus came to save us.

Bible Verse

“The Savior...has been born today in Bethlehem” (Luke 2:11a).

Growing Closer to Jesus

- Children will ■ learn of Isaiah’s message from God,
■ tell why they’re happy that Jesus came to save us,
■ understand the importance of Jesus’ birth, and
■ share God’s promise with Pockets.

Teacher Enrichment

Bible Basis

■ God tells Isaiah that a Savior will come.



The passages we’re looking at today were written around 700 years before Jesus was born. The coming of a savior who would bring salvation to Israel was a long-anticipated event. The coming of the Messiah would usher in a time of peace and safety (Isaiah 11:6). It would be a time when righteousness would prevail, the needy would be cared for, and the wicked would be judged (Isaiah 11:4). The blind would see, the deaf would hear, and the disabled would be whole (Isaiah 35:5-6). Deserts would be watered by streams and springs, and we wouldn’t even have wild animals to fear (Isaiah 35:6-7, 9). It would be a time of joy and gladness, free from worry and sorrow (Isaiah 35:10)!

So why didn’t all this happen when Jesus came? Because he’s not finished yet! He finished his work of providing salvation but didn’t finish all that he’s going to do. He’s coming again to complete that work! His first coming laid the groundwork for his coming in judgment and power!

Our Savior has come, still lives in us, and will be coming again to fulfill all that has been prophesied about him. These are thoughts that the children in your class can begin to understand as you cover them in this lesson.

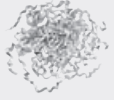

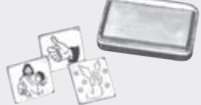





Prayer

- Read Revelation 22:1-6. What do you look forward to about Jesus’ second coming?
- What difference does the second coming of Jesus make as we celebrate his first coming?
- Prayer: God, help me lead my class to an excitement about both comings of Jesus as we...

Before the Lesson

- Collect the necessary items for the activities you plan to use. Refer to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies columns to determine what you’ll need.
- Make photocopies of the “Today I Learned...” handout (at the end of this lesson) to send home with your children.
- 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
Welcome Time	Welcome! —Receive name tags, and be greeted by the teacher.	"Star Name Tags" (p. 26), markers, pins or tape	
Let's Get Started Direct children to one or more of the optional activities until everyone arrives.	Option 1: Lion and Lamb Puppets —Make puppets to illustrate Isaiah's prophecy.	"Lion and Lamb" handouts (p. 27), paper lunch sacks, glue sticks, markers, newspapers	
	Option 2: A Stable Home —Prepare the <i>Learning Mat</i> stable for Jesus' arrival.	Brown crayons, cotton balls, glue, gray yarn	
	Option 3: A Special Gift —Decorate a gift box for use later in the lesson.	Large box, squares of gift wrap, safety scissors, glue, ribbon, markers	
	Pick Up Our Toys —Sing a song as they pick up toys, and gather for Bible Story Time.	CD player	
Bible Story Time	Setting the Stage —Play Tag using lion and lamb puppets.	Lion and lamb puppets from Option 1	
	Bible Song and Prayer Time —Sing a song, bring out the Bible, and pray together.	Bible, construction paper, scissors, basket or box, CD player	
	Hear and Tell the Bible Story —Talk about God's promise of a Savior in Isaiah 11:1-6; 35:3-10.	Bible, lion and lamb puppets from Option 1	
	Do the Bible Story —Create heart necklaces to remember God's promises.	Bible, yarn, markers, scissors, hole punch	
Closing 	Lions' Roar! —Teach Pockets about God's promise to send Jesus.	Lion and lamb puppets from Option 1	
	The Greatest Gift —Share reasons they're glad Jesus came to save us.	Gift Box from Option 3, Life Savers candies, bowl	

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

Welcome Time

Welcome!

SUPPLIES: “Star Name Tags” handout (p. 26), markers, pins or tape

- Kneel down to make eye contact with children as they arrive.
- Greet each child individually with an enthusiastic smile.
- Thank each child for coming to class today.
- Say: **Today we’re going to learn that ► we’re happy that Jesus came to save us.**
- Give each child a photocopy of a star name tag. Help children write their names on their name tags, and pin or tape them to their clothing. You may wish to cover the name tags in clear adhesive paper so they will last for the entire module.
- Direct the children to the Let’s Get Started activities you’ve set up.



BIBLE POINT



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.

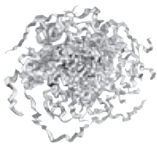
Let’s Get Started

Set up one or more of the following activities for children to do as they arrive. After you greet each child, invite him or her to choose an activity.

Circulate among the children to offer help as needed and direct children’s conversation toward today’s lesson. Ask questions such as “What’s the best news you’ve ever heard?” or “Has anyone ever saved you from a scary situation?”

Option 1: Lion and Lamb Puppets

SUPPLIES: “Lion and Lamb” handouts (p. 27), paper lunch sacks, glue sticks, markers, newspapers



Before class, make several photocopies of the “Lion and Lamb” handout. Cut apart the lion and lamb faces, and place them in two separate piles. You’ll need one puppet for each student and approximately the same number of lions and lambs.

Cover a table with newspapers, and set out the handouts, paper lunch sacks, *springfill*, markers, and glue sticks. Let children choose to make a lion or lamb puppet. Have each child use markers and *springfill* to decorate a puppet face and then glue the face to the bottom of a lunch sack. Show children how to use the puppets.

As children work, ask them what would happen if lions and lambs lived in the same place. (They wouldn’t get along peacefully!) Tell children that Jesus came to show us God’s love and to bring peace. That’s why ► we’re happy that Jesus came to save us.



If some students choose not to make puppets, ask volunteers to make extras. You’ll need one puppet for each child for activities in this lesson.

■ Option 2: A Stable Home

SUPPLIES: brown crayons, cotton balls, glue, gray yarn



Set out the *Learning Mat: Nativity* and the sheep and donkey from the *nativity kit figures*. You'll also need *springfill*, glue, cotton balls, gray yarn, and brown crayons. Allow children to glue *springfill* "straw" to the floor of the stable and to the manger. Invite them to color the stable walls on the *Learning Mat*. Have children glue cotton balls on the sheep and gray yarn on the donkey's tail and mane.

While children work, tell them that long ago God promised Jesus would come. Explain that God's people waited hundreds of years for Jesus' birth. Tell children that each week you'll be preparing the *Learning Mat* for the Christmas story and looking forward to Christmas, just as God's people looked forward to Jesus' birth. When children are done, return the *springfill* to the Learning Lab for use in a later lesson.

teacher tips

If the *ink pad* is dry, moisten it with three to five drops of water.



BIBLE POINT

■ Option 3: A Special Gift

SUPPLIES: large box, squares of gift wrap, safety scissors, glue, ribbon, markers



Set out a large box, along with scraps of gift wrap, safety scissors, markers, glue, ribbon, and the *angel stamp* and *ink pad*. The box needs to be large enough for children to stand in. Allow children to decorate the Gift Box creatively in a patchwork style. Explain that Jesus came as a special gift from God and that's why **► we're happy that Jesus came to save us.**

When children have finished decorating, gather up the *Learning Lab* items, and set the box aside for use later in the lesson.

When everyone has arrived and you're ready to move on to the Bible Story Time, encourage the children to finish what they're doing and get ready to clean up.

■ Pick Up Our Toys

SUPPLIES: CD player



Lead children in singing "Pick Up Our Toys" (track 2) with the *CD* to the tune of "Skip to My Lou." Encourage the children to sing along as they help clean up the room.

You'll be using this song each week to alert children to start picking up. At first they may need a little encouragement. But after a few weeks, picking up and singing along will become a familiar routine.

If you want to include the names of all the children in your class, sing the song without the *CD*, and repeat the naming section. If you choose to use the *CD*, vary the names you use each week.



**We will pick up our toys.
We will pick up our toys.
We will pick up our toys
And put them all away.**

**There's [name] picking up toys.
There's [name] picking up toys.
There's [name] picking up toys,
Putting them all away.**

(Repeat.)

Bible Story Time

■ Setting the Stage

SUPPLIES: lion and lamb puppets from Option 1

Tell the children you'll clap your hands to get their attention. Explain that when you clap, children are to stop what they're doing, raise their hands, and focus on you. Practice this signal a few times. Encourage children to respond quickly so you'll have time for all the fun activities you've planned.

Give each child a lion or lamb puppet from Option 1. Send the Lions to one side of the room and the Lambs to the other.

Ask: • **Do these two animals get along very well? Explain.** (No, lions eat lambs; no, lambs are afraid of lions.)

• **What might happen if they were near each other?** (The lambs would all get eaten; the lambs would all run away; it would be scary!)

Say: **You're right! These animals don't get along at all! Let's play a game to show what might happen if they were together. When I say "Go!" you Lions chase the Lambs by taking teeny, tiny steps. Remember to roar while you're chasing them! The Lambs will run away by taking giant steps. Lambs, remember to say "Baaaa" while you're escaping! If a Lamb gets tagged by a Lion, he or she must come sit against this wall and wait for the game to end. Ready? Go!**

Be sure children travel around the room as you've told them to and play gently. When the last Lamb has been tagged, have children switch puppets and play again. Then have the Lions sit on one side of the room and the Lambs on the other.

Say: **These animals are natural enemies. But the Bible tells us that Jesus can help everyone be at peace with each other—even lions and lambs. That's why ► we're happy that Jesus came to save us. When we have Jesus' love in our hearts, we can even love our enemies. To see how nice this would be, let's have each Lion come and find a Lamb partner to sit with while we sing and pray.**

Have children form Lion and Lamb pairs before you move on to the next activity. If you have an uneven number of children in your class, form one trio.

■ Bible Song and Prayer Time

SUPPLIES: Bible, construction paper, scissors, basket or box, CD player



Before class, make surprise cards for this activity by cutting construction paper into 2x6-inch slips. Prepare a surprise card for each child plus a few extras for visitors. Fold the cards in half, and then stamp the *angel stamp* inside one of the surprise cards. Bookmark **Isaiah 11:1-6; 35:3-10** in the Bible you'll be using.

Have the children sit in a circle. Say: **Each week when we come to our circle for our Bible story, I'll choose someone to be the Bible helper. The Bible helper will bring me the**

Bible marked with our Bible story for that week. Before I choose today's Bible helper, let's sing our Bible song. As we sing, I'll pass out the surprise cards. Don't look inside your card until the song is over.



Choose a Bible you'll use for this section of the lesson each week. A children's Bible or an easy-to-understand translation such as Group's *Hands-On Bible*® works best. Some of the children in your class may be reading. If children can understand the words in the Bible, they'll have more interest in reading it—and they'll learn more from it.

Lead children in singing “Read God’s Book” (track 3) with the *CD* to the tune of “The Muffin Man.” As you sing, pass out the folded surprise cards.



SING

Now it's time to read God's book,
Read God's book, read God's book.
Now it's time to read God's book.
Let's hear a Bible story.

Now it's time to read God's book,
Read God's book, read God's book.
Now it's time to read God's book.
Let's hear a Bible story.

(Repeat.)

After the song, say: **You may look inside your surprise cards. The person who has the angel stamped inside his or her card will be our Bible helper for today.**

Identify the Bible helper, and then have the rest of the children clap for him or her. Ask the Bible helper to bring you the Bible. Assist the Bible helper in opening the Bible to the marked place, and show the children where your story comes from. Then have the Bible helper sit down.

Say: [Name] **was our special Bible helper today. Each week we'll have only one special Bible helper, but each one of you is a special part of our class! Today we're all learning that** ► **we are happy that Jesus came to save us.**

Let's say a special prayer now and ask God to help us learn why Jesus came to save us. I'll pass around this basket. When the basket comes to you, put your surprise card in it and say, “God, thank you for sending Jesus to save us.”

Pass around the basket or box. When you've collected everyone's surprise card, set the basket aside for use next week, and pick up the Bible. Lead children in this prayer: **God, thank you for the Bible and all the stories in it. Teach us today that** ► **we're happy that Jesus came to save us.** In Jesus' name, amen.



BIBLE POINT ►



BIBLE POINT ►

■ Hear and Tell the Bible Story

SUPPLIES: Bible, lion and lamb puppets from Option 1

Children should still have their lion and lamb puppets from “Setting the Stage.” Form a circle and say: **Long ago, when God first made the world, everything was good and beautiful and peaceful. But sin came into the world when Adam and Eve disobeyed God. God's perfect world was ruined.**

Ask: • **What is sin?** (Disobeying; doing bad things; not being nice.)

• **What kinds of bad things go on in our world today?** (People hurt each other; people get sick; things aren't fair; people are mean sometimes.)

Say: **Those things are all because of sin! When sin entered the world, people started doing bad, mean things. God's people did bad things—they worshipped idols and disobeyed God.**

Ask: • **How do you think God felt when his people sinned?** (Sad; mad; upset; not good.)

Say: **That's right. So finally, God let an army from Assyria fight against the Israelites, tear down their cities, burn their houses, and make them slaves. God scattered his people all over the country. Let's scatter like the Israelites.** Have children scatter all over the room, away from each other.

Ask: • **What would it be like to live far away from your friends and family?** (Yucky; lonely; boring; scary.)

Say: **When the Israelites scattered, it became easy for other nations to take over. Soon their land was under attack! That must have been scary! The people longed for God to save them from their enemies, even though they had sinned. So God told Isaiah, a prophet, that he would send a Savior—someone to forgive his people for their sins and bring them back together.**

Let's gather our lambs back together. Have Lambs form a circle near you. **The Bible tells us that when the Savior comes, he'll save everyone who believes in God!** Read **John 10:16** aloud from an easy-to-understand version of the Bible.

Ask: • **What do you think God means by "other sheep"?** (Other people; people from other countries; people from all over the world.)

Say: **Yes! Jesus wants everyone to come to him so he can take away their sins. Lambs, go find a Lion partner, and bring him or her back to our circle to sit with you.** When everyone is back together, say: **God told them what life would be like when their Savior came.** Read **Isaiah 35:3-10** aloud from an easy-to-understand version of the Bible. Then ask:

• **What would life be like when the Savior came?** (Good; happy; fun; exciting; wonderful.)

• **How do you think the Israelites felt when they heard that?** (Excited; happy; glad.)

• **When do you think they wanted the Savior to come?** (Right away; soon.)

Say: **Well, God's people had to wait 700 long, long years for the Savior to come. Imagine how happy they were when an angel finally announced that ►"the Savior...has been born today in Bethlehem"! Do you know who that Savior was? Pause for children to respond. It was Jesus! That's why ►we're happy that Jesus came to save us! When we ask Jesus to forgive us, he'll take away all the bad things in our hearts and give us peace and joy. When we're filled with Jesus' love, we can be at peace with everyone—even our enemies.**



Let's practice being at peace. Pretend that the person sitting next to you made you mad for some reason. Make a silly mad face! Now take turns saying, "Let's be at peace with each other," and shake hands. Then give each other a big smile!

Let children repeat this a few times with different partners.

Say: **Doesn't it feel better to be friends instead of enemies? Let's thank Jesus for being our peaceful Savior.**

Pray: **Dear God, we're so glad that you sent Jesus to be born in Bethlehem to save us and bring us peace and joy. Help us to bring peace to each other so that we can be more like you. In Jesus' name, amen.**

Say: **Since our lions and lambs aren't enemies anymore, it's safe to put them away together so we can play a game.**

Collect the lion and lamb puppets, and put them out of sight.

■ Do the Bible Story

SUPPLIES: Bible, yarn, markers, hole punch, scissors



Hold your Bible up, again showing the passage from Isaiah to the children.

Say: **Today we learned that God promised to send a Savior into the world. ► I'm happy that Jesus came to save us, aren't you?**

Ask: • **What are some other things that make you happy?**
(Christmas presents; my puppy; playing with my friends.)

Say: **God has given us so many things to be happy about. Let's make some happy hearts to praise God for his promises in today's Bible story.** Bring out the *heart stencils* from the Learning Lab, and have kids help you punch them out. Give each child one of the hearts.

Say: **I'm going to mention different things that God promised. If I say a promise that makes you happy, lightly toss your heart into the air, clap your hands in thanks to God, and then try to catch your heart before it touches the ground. Let's practice that one time before we begin.** Have kids move at least one arm's distance from each other, and let them practice this once or twice as they are sitting on the floor.

Read the following statements to the children. Pause after each one while children toss the hearts, clap, and catch them.

God promised

- **to send Jesus as our Savior,**
- **that we would have peace,**
- **to help us not be afraid,**
- **that blind eyes will see and deaf ears will hear, and**
- **that sadness will go away.**

Say: **There are so many reasons ► to be happy that Jesus came to save us! Find a partner now, and let's share the news of God's promise to send Jesus.** Have kids find partners, and give each child a length of yarn and a marker. Punch a hole in each heart. Have them each draw a happy face inside the heart and thread the yarn through the hole. Help them tie the ends of the yarn to make a necklace.

When kids are finished, have them exchange necklaces with their partners and stand facing each other.

Say: **Each of you will take turns putting your partner's necklace around your partner's neck. As you place it on your partner say, ► "I'm happy that Jesus came to save us!" Then give your partner a high five, and gather in a circle so that I can return your lion and lamb puppets.**

teacher tips

Use a hole punch to make a hole in each of the hearts.

If you have more than 20 kids, trace extras ahead of time on poster board, and cut them out. You'll need one heart for each child.

BIBLE POINT ►

BIBLE POINT ►

Closing

■ Lions' Roar!

SUPPLIES: lion and lamb puppets from Option 1

Distribute the lamb and lion puppets. Bring out Pockets the Kangaroo, and go through the following puppet script. When you finish the script, put Pockets away and out of sight.

Direct children to put on the puppets and happily roar and “baaaa” until Pockets appears.



Pockets: What's all the noise? (*Sees lions and is frightened.*) Are those LIONS?

Teacher: Don't be afraid, Pockets! Yes, those are lions and lambs!

Pockets: Lions and lambs—together! Hey, you lambs better run away before those lions eat you! Shoo! Go on, shoo! I'm afraid of lions—why aren't these lambs afraid?

Teacher: Well, you don't have to be afraid of these lions! These are puppets! We're celebrating God's promise!

Pockets: What's that?

Teacher: Today we learned about a very special promise God made to Isaiah and to all his people. Who can tell Pockets about God's promise?

(*Allow children to share what they've learned about God's promise that Jesus came to save us.*)

Pockets: Oh, I know about Jesus. My mom told me about him! She said all creation—everything God made—looked forward to Jesus' coming!

Teacher: What else did your mom say?

Pockets: Well, she said Jesus came to save us from sin and make us clean inside so we can live in heaven with him.

Teacher: That's right, Pockets! Today we're celebrating because ► we're happy that Jesus came to save us. And we can share that happiness with others by telling them about God's promise!

Pockets: I want to celebrate, too! (*Sings and dances as she leaves.*) Let the lions roar, celebrate some more! God's promises are true. He takes care of me and you! Goodbye, everyone!

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BIBLE POINT ▶

■ The Greatest Gift

SUPPLIES: Gift Box from Option 3, Life Savers candies, bowl

Form a circle, and place the Gift Box from Option 3 in the center of the circle. Place a bowl of Life Savers candies in the box. Say: **Because God sent Jesus, we can have a new life with God. You might say that Jesus is our lifesaver! Let's share some reasons why ▶ we're happy that Jesus came to save us.**

Have children take turns standing in the box, taking a candy, and sharing a reason they're happy Jesus came to save us. When each child has shared, pray: **Dear God, thank you for sending Jesus to save us and give us new life. Thank you for loving us and wanting us to be with you forever. In Jesus' name, amen.** Save the Gift Box for use in next week's lesson.



Want even more activity ideas for this lesson? Check out HandsOnBible.com/tips.



Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.

Photocopy the "Today I Learned..." handout (at the end of this lesson) for this week, and send it home with your children. Encourage parents to use the handout to plan meaningful family activities to reinforce this week's topic.



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.

■ Lively Learning: Lifesavers!



Form pairs and have children line up opposite the Gift Box. Give the first child in line the *plastic ring* from the Learning Lab. Send his or her partner to stand beside the Gift Box. Say: **Toss the *plastic ring* into the box. If it looks like you're going to miss, your partner will catch the *plastic ring* and put it in the box for you. Once your partner has saved you by catching the ring, hold up your arms and say, ► "I'm happy that Jesus came to save me!"** Then switch places with your partner.

When everyone has had a turn, put the *plastic ring* away and out of sight.

■ Make to Take: Pine Cone Advent Calendars



Give each child a pine cone and several 2-foot lengths of colored ribbon. Allow children to decorate their pine cones with glitter glue. Then help them glue three or four ribbons to the pine cone so they stream from the top or bottom. Explain that children can tie a knot in the ribbons each day until Christmas to help them prepare for Jesus' birth.

■ Treat to Eat: Lion and Lamb Cookies

You'll need two cookies for each child, plastic knives, white and yellow icing, white and yellow coconut, and raisins. Direct children to ice one cookie with white icing and top it with white coconut to make a lamb. For the lion, have children spread yellow icing and make a mane with yellow coconut. Children may add raisins for eyes.

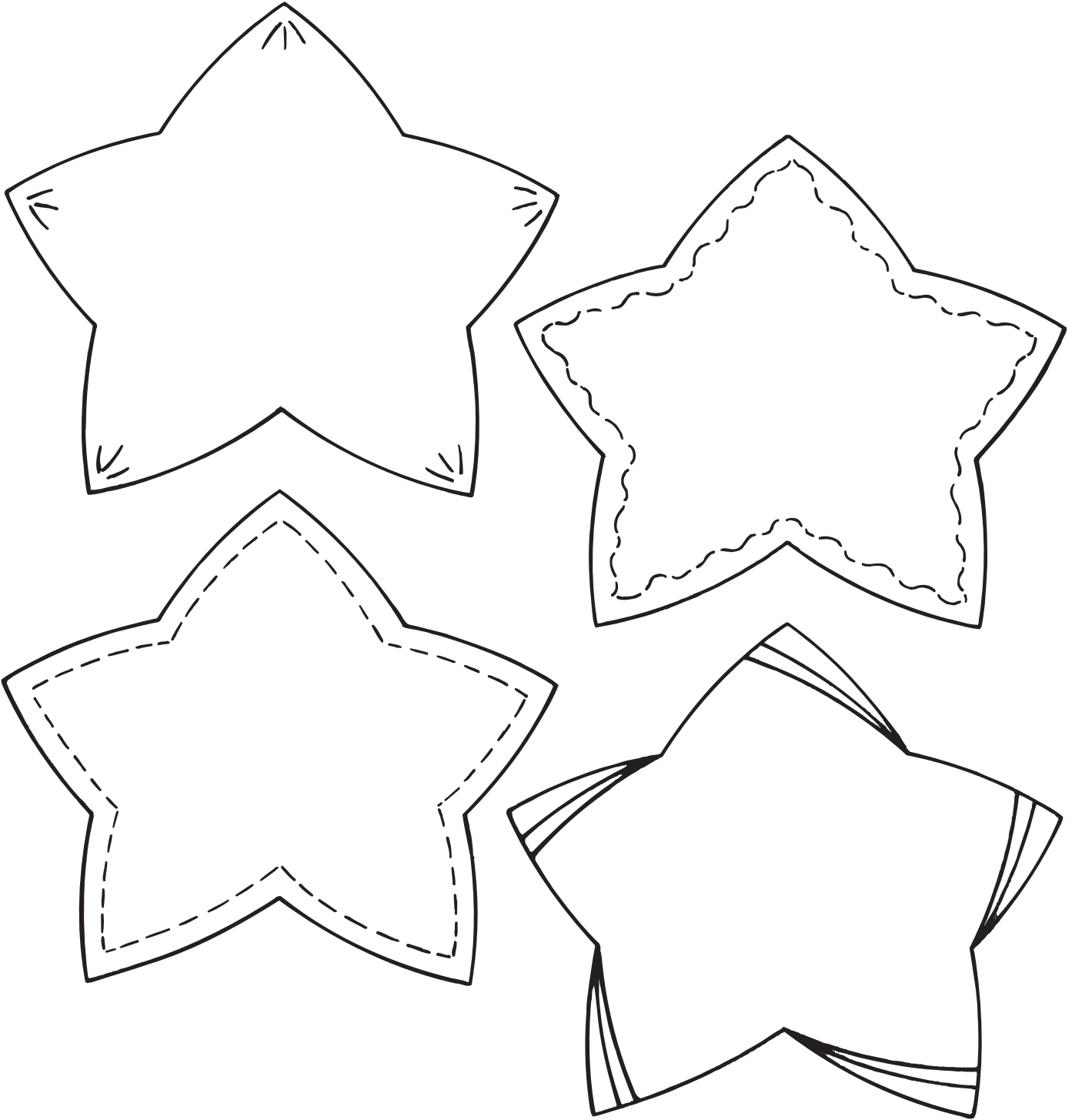


■ Story Picture: God's Promise

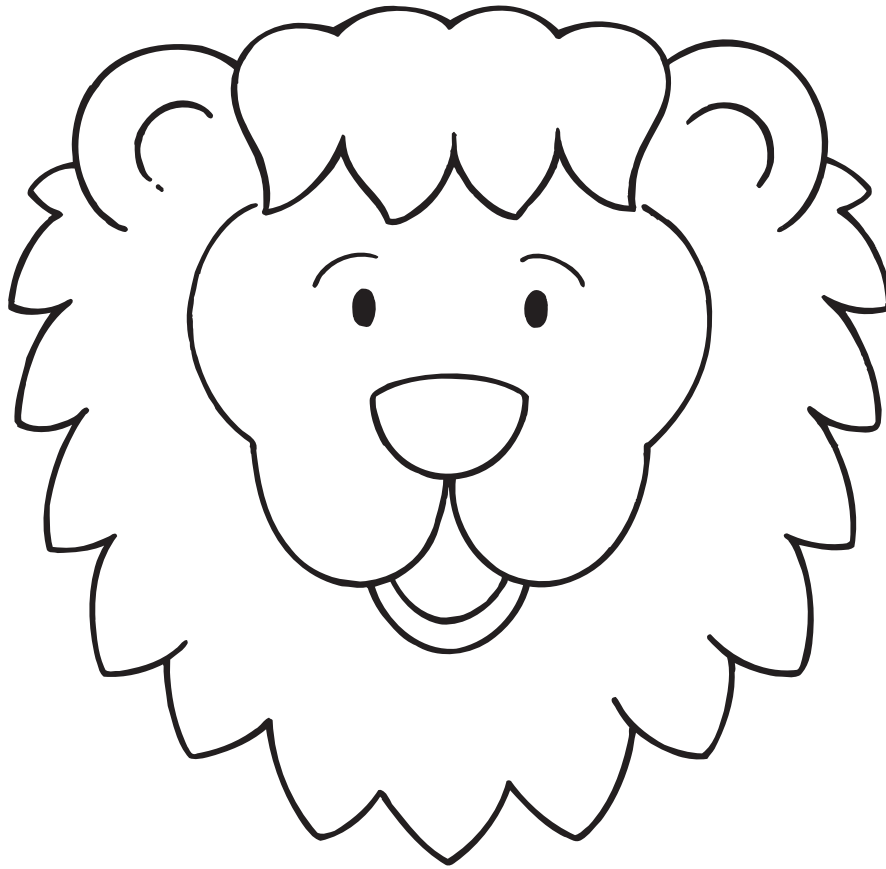
Give each child a photocopy of the "Today I Learned..." handout. Set out glue, cotton balls, short lengths of yellow and brown yarn, and crayons. Show children how to glue yarn to the lion's mane and calf's tail. Then have children pull cotton balls apart and glue them to the sheep. After gluing on yarn and cotton balls, children can color the rest of the picture.

Star Name Tags

Photocopy this page and cut out the name tags.



Lion and Lamb



Today I learned...

We are happy that
Jesus came to save us.

Today your child learned that we're happy Jesus came to save us. Children learned that God promised Isaiah and all his people that Jesus would come to save them. Children shared reasons why they're happy Jesus came.

Verse to Learn

"The Savior...has been born today in Bethlehem"
(Luke 2:11a).

Ask Me...

- What special promise did God give to Isaiah and to all his people?
- Why are we glad Jesus came?
- How can our family share God's promise with others?

Family Fun

- Make edible lions and lambs by shaping biscuit dough. For each face, flatten and shape one biscuit. Cut thin dough strips to make the lion's mane, and then place them around the lion's face. For the lamb, cut small dough triangles for ears. Pull off small bits of dough for lamb's wool, and lightly place on face. Make eyes and noses from raisins or red cinnamon candies. After baking the biscuits, your family may wish to share them with a neighbor or friend.

God's Promise (Isaiah 11:1-6; 35:3-10)

