



Bible Point ▶

Jesus' birth is good news.

Bible Verse

"Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God's Son does not have life" (1 John 5:12).

Growing Closer to Jesus

Children will understand why Jesus' birth is good news, celebrate the good news, and learn that they can be good-news messengers as Gabriel was.

Teacher Enrichment

Bible Basis

Gabriel appears to Mary.

**Luke
1:26-38**



This passage provides the only extensive account in the Bible of Jesus' birth. Luke begins by describing the visit of an angel. The angel's announcement that Mary was favored by God no doubt caused her some confusion. She was an obscure person in an obscure family in Israel. In her culture, it was assumed that those in high positions were the ones favored by God.

The angel's description of her child must have confused Mary even more. How could any human—much less a lowly young virgin—give birth to the Son of God? But when Mary was told how the child would be conceived and was reminded that God can do anything, she responded in humble obedience.

The birth brought a reason to celebrate: The one who was born would be

- Savior—who would deliver them from bondage,
- Christ—the anointed Messiah promised in the Old Testament, and
- Lord—the Greek name for the Old Testament Yahweh!

Prayer

- Read Isaiah 7:14.
- How do you celebrate good news? How do you celebrate *the* good news?
- Pray: Lord, help me not take for granted the good news of Jesus' birth. Let me share my enthusiasm with my students 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.

Make photocopies of the “Growing Together” handout (at the end of this lesson) to send home with your children.

Pray for your students and for God’s direction in teaching the lesson.

This Lesson at a Glance

	What Children Will Do	Classroom Supplies	Learning Lab Supplies
Welcome	Welcome! —Receive a warm welcome from the teacher, and make name tags.	“Christmas Packages” name tags (p. 23), tape, safety scissors, markers or crayons	
Attention Grabber	Shout the News —Read Isaiah 40:9, and give and receive good news.	Bible	
Bible Exploration & Application	Good-news Angel Story —Sing a song, and learn the story of Gabriel’s message to Mary from Luke 1:26-38.	Bible, CD player, pen, paper	
	Rejoicing —Read Psalm 47:1 and Luke 1:46-50, and celebrate the good news of Jesus’ birth.	Bible	
	Good-news Angels —Make angels to spread good news about Jesus, and then learn from Daniel 8:15-16 and Luke 1:18-19 how God used Gabriel.	Bible, paper, pencil, safety scissors, tape, markers	
Closing 	Proclaim the News —Learn that Jesus came for them.	Bible	

Welcome

SUPPLIES: “Christmas Packages” name tags (p. 23), tape, safety scissors, markers or crayons

- Greet each child individually with an enthusiastic smile.
- Thank each child for coming to class today.
- Say: **Today we’re going to learn that ► Jesus’ birth is good news.**
- Help children make name tags. Photocopy the “Christmas Packages” name tags and follow the instructions. Help children write their names on the name tags and attach them to their clothing.
- Tell the children that the attention-getting signal you’ll use during this lesson will be raising your hand. Ask children to respond by raising their hands as they stop talking and focus their attention on you. Rehearse the signal with the children, telling them to respond quickly so you’ll have plenty of time for all the fun activities planned for this lesson.



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 will help children remember it and apply it to their lives.

Attention Grabber

Shout the News

SUPPLIES: Bible

Form two teams: the Shouters and the Listeners. Secretly assign each of the Shouters one word from this sentence: “Jesus’ birth is good news.” Make sure that each word is assigned to a child. If you have fewer than five children on the team, give some children more than one word. Have the teams sit across from each other. On the count of three, have all the Shouters call out their words at the same time as the Listeners try to figure out the message.

If the Listeners don’t understand the message on the first try, have the Shouters call out their words again on the count of three. Have the Shouters call out their words three or four times. If the Listeners still haven’t figured out the message, have the Shouters say the words of the message in order.

Ask: • **Listeners, was it easy or hard to figure out the message? Explain.** (It was hard because everyone was shouting; hard, because I didn’t know who to listen to; it was easy because they didn’t say it all at the same time.)

• **What’s the best news you’ve ever received?** (I found out that God loves me; I found out that my family was going to have a new baby; I found out that my parents weren’t getting a divorce.)

• **How did you feel when you got the good news?** (Excited; happy; good.)

• **What’s the best way to tell someone an important and exciting message?** (Jump up and down and yell it; whisper it; put it on television; write it on a big message board.)

Say: **Listen while I read Isaiah 40:9. See if you can tell me what the Bible says to do with good news.**

Read **Isaiah 40:9** from an easy-to-understand Bible such as the *Hands-On Bible* in the New Living Translation. Then ask:

• **Why would you want to shout news from a mountaintop?** (Because we want everyone to know about it; so people can hear.)



The story of Jesus’ birth may seem like old news to the children in your class—they’ve heard it many times, and it happened a long time ago. Help renew your children’s sense of wonder by reminding them that the miracle of Jesus’ birth hasn’t diminished in importance—it’s just as miraculous today as it was 2,000 years ago.



• **What was the good news to shout about in this Bible passage?** (That God is coming; that they didn't need to be afraid.)

Say: **Sometimes good news is so exciting that we want to climb a mountain and shout the news as loudly as we can! Isaiah 40:9 announced that God was coming. ► Jesus' birth is good news. Let's find out what happened when Mary heard this good news.**

Bible Exploration & Application

Good-News Angel Story

SUPPLIES: Bible, CD player, pen, paper



Cue the CD to track 2, "He's the King." Have the children sit in a circle just far enough away from each other so they won't be tempted to pester those around them.

Open your Bible to **Luke 1:26-38**, and show the passage to the children. Say: **The book of Luke tells us how the good news of Jesus came about. I'm going to read you this story, but I want you to help me tell it, OK? As I read, sometimes I'll stop and do a special action before I continue. I'd like you to repeat whatever action I do. Ready? Let's get started.**

Before there was any such thing as Christmas, an angel (pause and raise your arms wide and upward) **named Gabriel visited a young woman named Mary** (pause and cup your hands around your face and smile) **to tell her that Jesus would be born** (pause and rock your arms as if holding a baby). **When Gabriel, the angel** (pause and raise your arms wide and upward), **appeared and said, "Greetings, God is with you," Mary** (pause and cup your hands around your face and smile) **was scared** (pause and shake your arms, pretending to be scared). **She wondered what the angel** (pause and raise your arms wide and upward) **meant. But the angel** (pause and raise your arms wide and upward) **said, "Don't be afraid. God is happy with you. You're going to have a baby** (pause and rock your arms as if holding a baby) **and name him Jesus. He'll be called God's Son, and he'll be a king** (pause and cup your hands over your head as if forming a crown) **forever."**

Mary (pause and cup your hands around your face and smile) **was excited because her people, the Jews, had been waiting for this king** (pause and cup your hands over your head as if forming a crown) **for a long time. This news meant that the king** (pause and cup your hands over your head as if forming a crown) **would soon be there and that life would be better. So Mary** (pause and cup your hands around your face and smile) **said, "I want to serve God. Let all of this happen to me just as you said."** Then the angel (pause and raise your arms wide and upward) **went away.**

Ask: • **What was the good news the angel brought?** (A king was going to be born; Jesus was coming; Mary was going to have a baby.)

• **Why was Jesus' birth good news?** (Because he is God's Son; he was the king they were waiting for; because he would make things better.)

• **What made baby Jesus so special?** (God was his Father; he was born in a stable; everyone loved him; he was a king.)

That was good! Now let's sing a song about the good news the angel brought.

Lead the children in singing “He’s the King.” You’ll find the lyrics at the back of this Teacher Guide. Have the children think of actions for each line. Jot down the actions so you can prompt the children as they sing. Encourage volunteers to take turns leading one another in fun actions that match the song’s lyrics.

When the song is over, say: ► ***Jesus’ birth was good news because he was the king that the people were waiting for. The song says that God is the king of everything and that his love follows us wherever we go. Let’s celebrate that good news!***

Lead children in a round of applause for the good news of Jesus’ birth.



HANDS-ON BIBLE

In preparation for this activity, set out two clear drinking glasses on a flat surface and also have a full pitcher of water and a small cork close by.

Say: **When the angel told Mary that God would do a miracle and she would become the mother of Jesus, Mary was amazed by the news. It was almost impossible for her to believe! But the angel assured her that nothing is impossible with God. Do you believe that? Let’s try an experiment and see!**

Have the children open their *Hands-On Bibles* to Luke 1 and find the activity entitled “Is That Possible?” Read through this “impossible” activity together with the children, and then ask for some volunteers to assist you as you follow the instructions provided in the *Hands-On Bibles*.

After you’ve tried the experiment a few times with different volunteers, ask:

- **Were you surprised that the cork floated to the side in the first glass but always went to the center in the other glass? Why or why not?** (I was surprised because I couldn’t understand what the difference was between the two glasses; no, I tried this at home once and knew what would happen.)
- **Did this trick seem impossible to you? Why or why not?** (Yes, I don’t understand it; no, there’s always an explanation for tricks like this.)
- **Tell us a time something happened that you thought was impossible and would never happen.** (One time I found some money in the street by my house; I thought I would be really scared to go to the dentist, but I wasn’t scared and it didn’t hurt at all; my dad said we’d never get a dog, but we did.)
- **How did that make you feel?** (I felt really glad; I was surprised; I was happy.)

Say: **The cork moved to the center of the glass every time we filled the glass completely up because the cork will always move to where the water is highest—the center. So what seems like an impossible trick really is possible.**

Mary’s miracle was truly impossible—but it happened anyway, because God made it happen! That’s one of the many reasons ► *Jesus’ birth is such good news!*

Ask for volunteers to help you put the experiment items away.



Rejoicing

SUPPLIES: Bible



Say: **When Mary heard the good news that she was going to have a baby who would be God's Son, she was very excited. She knew that ► Jesus' birth was good news so she praised God. Let's review what Mary told God.**

Read **Luke 1:46-50** aloud. Say: **Mary was so excited about hearing that she was going to be the mother of Jesus that she praised God and made up a special song for God. We can praise God, too, for the good news about Jesus.**

Ask: • **What are some things we can do when we want to praise God?** (Sing; pray; dance; clap; shout.)

• **When is the last time you clapped so hard your hands turned red?** (At a birthday party; at a play; at a movie.)

Say: **Today we're going to try a new way of clapping to show how glad we are that Jesus came to earth.**

Have the children sit in a circle. If you have more than 10 children in your class, form two circles.

Choose a volunteer to be the first clapper. Have the first clapper start clapping slowly. Then have the person to the clapper's right become the second clapper. Have the first clapper and the second clapper alternate clapping. Then add a third clapper so that the sequence goes first clapper, second clapper, third clapper. Then add a fourth clapper and so on until everyone is included.

When everyone has the rhythm down, say: **Now it's time to speed it up!** Have the children clap in the same order, but have them increase the speed until everyone is clapping at the same time.

Stop the game by raising your hand. Wait for the children to raise their hands and focus on you.

Say: **We can also use instruments to celebrate Jesus' birth.**

Pass out the *tambourine*, *bell*, *bead ball*, and *mini-maraca* to four of the children in the circle. Try to space out the instruments evenly so children won't have to wait very long to have a turn. Continue the same clapping rhythm, but invite the children who have instruments to use them instead of clapping. After you complete one round of the rhythm, have the children pass their instruments to the person on their right. Continue this pattern until each child gets a turn with an instrument.

Ask: • **What are some reasons we should praise God?** (Because he made us; because the Bible says to; because God likes to hear us praising him; because God is so good.)

• **How do instruments help us praise God?** (God likes to hear music; it's fun and God likes us to have fun.)

• **What are some ways you can praise God when you are at home?** (Singing; clapping; playing instruments; praying.)

Say: **The Bible says in Psalm 47:1, "Come, everyone! Clap your hands! Shout to God with joyful praise!" When we want to praise God, we can clap our hands. We can also use instruments to celebrate. ► Jesus' birth is good news, and it's worth celebrating with joyful sounds!**

Bible Insight

When Gabriel visited Mary to tell her about her role in God's great plan, he illustrated her importance simply through his greeting. In Mary's time, greetings varied depending on a person's rank and social status. Although Mary had virtually no social status because she was young, unmarried, and a woman, Gabriel said: "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!" (Luke 1:28)—a more illustrious greeting than the traditional greeting even for a person of status.



BIBLE POINT ►

Have the children celebrate Jesus' birth by clapping their hands or using their instruments. Collect the instruments and return them to the Learning Lab for later use.

Good-News Angels

SUPPLIES: Bible, paper, pencil, safety scissors, tape, markers

This is an interesting craft that children will enjoy. However, if you're running short of time, you may want to move on to the closing.

Have children make these angels to spread the good news of Jesus to their families. Before class, trace a circle on a sheet of paper and draw a straight line through the center. Photocopy enough circles for each child to have one.

Have children cut out the circles and then cut them in half. Show children how to roll one half of the circle into a cone shape and tape it. Help them draw eyes and a mouth near the points of their cones. This shape will be the body of the angel.

Demonstrate how to fold the other half-circle accordion-style and tape it to the back of the angel to make the wings.

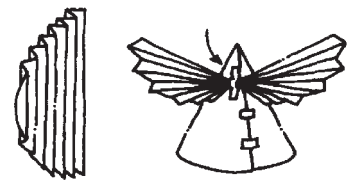
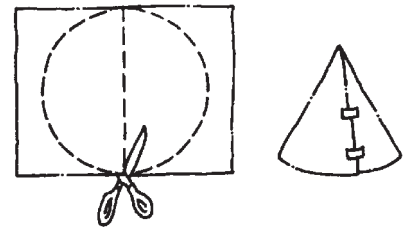
Say: **God often used angels to send messages to people. Gabriel, the angel God sent to Mary, talked to other people in the Bible, too.** Open your Bible to **Daniel 8:15-16** and show children the verses. **God sent Gabriel to talk to Daniel in the Old Testament and to a man named Zechariah in the New Testament.** Turn to **Luke 1:18-19** and show children the verse about Zechariah. **Gabriel is the same angel God sent to tell Mary the good news about Jesus' birth.**

Ask: • **Why do you think God picked an angel to tell Mary the good news about Jesus?** (Because Mary would believe an angel; because it was special news and someone special had to tell the message.)

• **Do you think Mary was scared of the angel? Why or why not?** (Yes, because Mary was confused; yes, because he must have been a big angel, and very old.)

Say: **Mary was confused at first but the angel told her not to be afraid, so she wasn't. ► Jesus' birth is good news. Say that with me: "Jesus' birth is good news." You can be messengers and share the news with someone you know. Turn to a friend and tell him or her who you're going to share the good news about Jesus' birth with. Then tell your friend what you'll say to tell why Jesus is special.**

Ask volunteers to share their ideas with the rest of the class. Have children take their angels home. Encourage children to use their angels to tell their families about the good news of Jesus' birth.



Closing



BIBLE VERSE ➡

Proclaim the News

SUPPLIES: Bible



Have children stand in a circle. Say: ► ***Jesus' birth is good news! And I have even more good news—listen.***

Put your hand on a child's shoulder, shake the *tambourine*, and say: **I hereby proclaim that Jesus came for** [child's name]. Make your way around the circle, affirming each child.



When you've finished, put away the *tambourine* and say: **Each of you is special to God. God sent his Son for you. Jesus is God's Son, sent to us from heaven.** Open your Bible to **1 John 5:12** and show it to the class. **The Bible says, ► "Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God's Son does not have life." That means that if we believe in Jesus and tell God we are truly sorry for our sins, we will become forever friends with Jesus and live with him in heaven one day. That's really good news!**

Pray this closing prayer: **Lord, we thank you for the good news of Jesus' birth. Jesus is special, and that makes us happy. We want to be excited that you sent your Son for us. Thank you for your gift. We pray that you will help us to be messengers for you wherever we go. In Jesus' name, amen.**

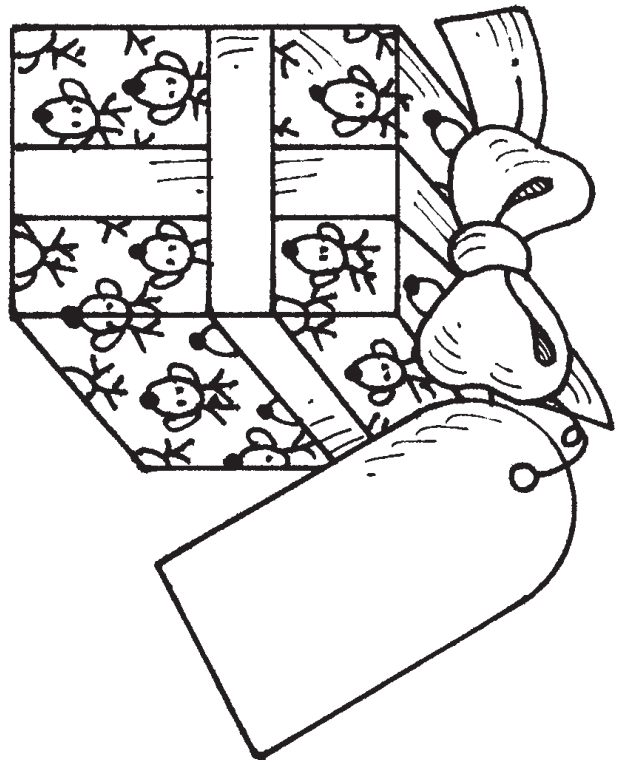
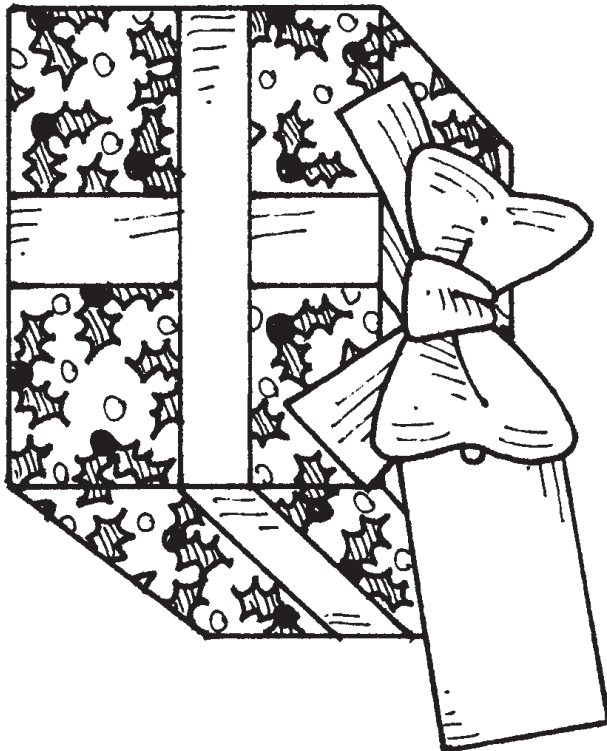
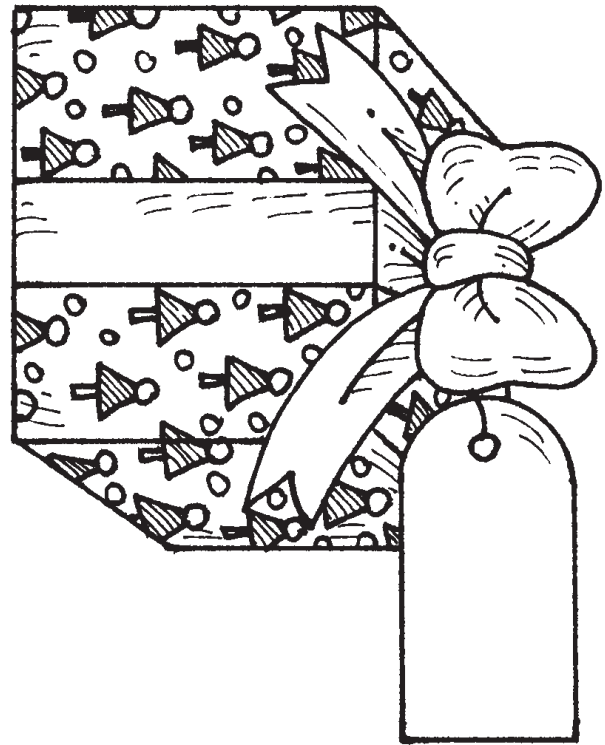
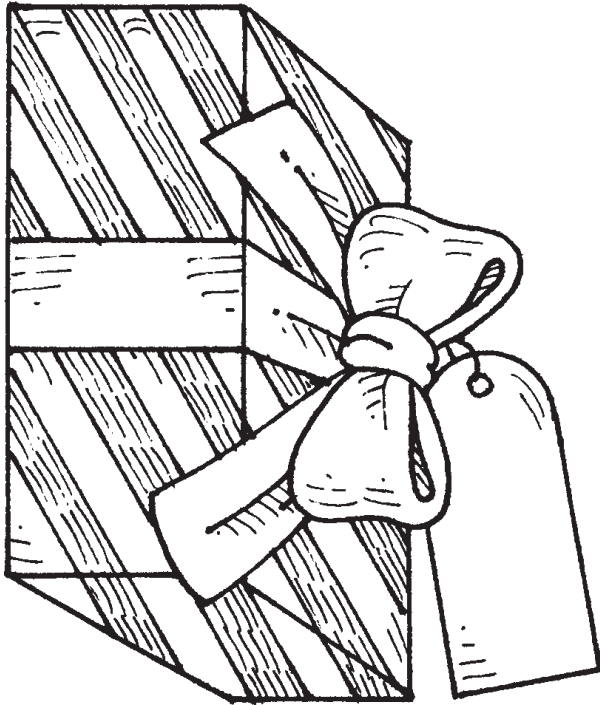


Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.

Photocopy the "Growing Together" handout (at the end of this lesson) for this week, and send it home with your children. Encourage children and parents to use the handout to plan meaningful activities on this week's topic. Follow up the "Growing Together" activities next week by asking children what their families did together.

Christmas Packages

Photocopy this page and cut the name tags where indicated.
Have children decorate them and write their names on the gift tags.



Growing... Together

Bible Story

Gabriel appears to Mary.
(Luke 1:26-38)

Jesus' Birth 1:
Jesus' birth is good news.

Key Verse

"Whoever has the Son has life;
whoever does not have God's Son
does not have life" (1 John 5:12).

In Touch

Today your child learned about the wonderful news that Gabriel brought to Mary about Jesus' birth. The children learned that Jesus' birth is good news because he brings love and hope to all of us. Your child also discovered that good messages are worth celebrating and sharing.

Message Bringers

Together, look for things in your home that bring you good news or give you messages that keep you safe. Don't forget alarm clocks, kitchen timers, smoke alarms, and doorbells. Talk about good news you've received lately and praise God for it. Discuss ways that God shares his good news with us, such as through prayer and the Bible.

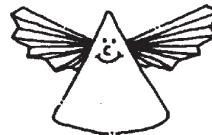
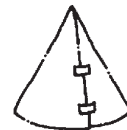
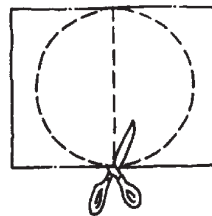
Spread the News



Leave cheerful and uplifting messages such as "I'm glad you're part of our family" in unusual places this week. Put notes on the milk container in the refrigerator. Hide a smiley face in the cereal box. Write in the steam on

the mirror in the bathroom. Draw a heart or write a note to tuck in a lunch sack or wallet.

Angels



Make these angels with your family. Draw circles on paper and cut them out. Then cut the circles in half. Roll one half of the circle into a cone shape and tape it. Draw an angel face at the pointed end of the cone. Fold the other half-circle accordion-style and tape it to the back of the angel to form wings. Give the angels to friends and

family members and tell them about the good news of Jesus' birth.