

Bible Point

Jesus is the Savior born in Bethlehem.

Bible Verse

“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Timothy 1:15).

Growing Closer to Jesus

- Children will
- discover that God sent us a special gift—his Son,
 - learn about Jesus’ humble birth in Bethlehem,
 - teach Pockets about Jesus’ birth, and
 - realize we can always make room in our lives for Jesus.

Teacher Enrichment

Bible Basis

■ The Son of God is born!

**Luke
2:1-7**



Luke provides the only extensive account in the Bible of Jesus’ birth. The events described in this passage may have held greater significance for Luke than for the other Gospel writers because Luke was a physician and most likely was intimately aware of the process of birth. Whatever the reason, God made sure to tell us about these events, though none of the New Testament authors witnessed them. Luke must have gotten his information from Mary.

Luke 2:1-7 describes Mary’s situation. Certainly it had been difficult for Mary and Joseph to overhear the snickers of acquaintances who noticed that Mary had become pregnant prior to the completion of her marriage. Then she and Joseph had to travel from his home in Nazareth to his ancestral home of Bethlehem, a journey of about 70 miles. Though popular renditions of this trip usually show Mary riding a donkey, she and Joseph probably weren’t wealthy enough to own one. It’s more likely that they had to walk all the way even though Mary was close to her time to deliver.

The exact date of Jesus’ birth is impossible to calculate. According to Luke 2:2, the census occurred when Quirinius was governor of Syria. His first term occurred from 6 to 4 B.C., so Jesus was likely born between those dates. Unfortunately, the date of Jesus’ birth was miscalculated when the Christian calendar was created.

The census, which involved traveling to the hometown of Joseph’s family, created a problem for Joseph. In Jewish culture, if a woman was made pregnant by her pledged husband prior to the wedding, the husband was rejected by his family for the dishonor. If the woman was made pregnant by someone else, the woman was rejected by the husband’s family. So Mary and Joseph faced nothing but rejection as they went to visit Joseph’s family. Yet they went willingly, following through on God’s plan for them.









Prayer

- Read Hebrews 1:1-4.
- What do these verses reveal to you about the nature of Jesus Christ?
- Pray: While I spend time with your children this week, help me to bring glory to your name as I...

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.	"Perfect Present Name Tags" (p. 22), markers, safety pins or tape	
Let's Get Started Direct children to one or more of the optional activities until everyone arrives.	Option 1: Taking Care of Baby —Diaper and care for baby dolls.	Several dolls, doll clothing, disposable diapers, baby wipes, baby blankets, boxes	
	Option 2: Scentsational Ornaments —Make Christmas tree decorations from scented dough.	Modeling dough (see recipe on p. 27), cookie cutters, sharpened pencils, foil	
	Option 3: A Long Journey —Help paper balls make a trip around the room, and learn about Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem.	Shoe box, newspaper	
	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 a game, and learn what a savior is.	Bible, paper plates, scissors, CD player	
	Bible Song and Prayer Time —Sing a song, bring out the Bible, and pray together.	Bible, construction paper, scissors, CD player, basket	
	Hear and Tell the Bible Story —Open a gift, and hear the story of Jesus' birth from Luke 2:1-7.	Bible, wrapped package from Lesson 1	
	Do the Bible Story —Make Mary and Joseph crafts and pretend to look for room in the inn.	White construction paper, pencils, crayons or markers, 5 sheets of newsprint, black fine-tipped marker, safety pins, tape, cotton balls, 2-inch fabric squares	
 Closing	No Room for Pockets —Teach Pockets about Jesus' birth and sing her a lullaby.	CD player	
	Our Life Savior —Sing a song and pray.	Individually wrapped Life Savers candies	

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

Welcome Time

SUPPLIES: “Perfect Present Name Tags” (p. 22), markers, safety pins or tape

- Bend down and make eye contact with children as they arrive.
- Greet each child individually with an enthusiastic smile.
- Thank each child for coming to class today.
- As children arrive, ask them how they put last week’s lesson into practice. Use questions such as “What were some promises you kept last week?” and “Who did you tell about God’s promise?”
- Say: **Today we’ll learn that** ► ***Jesus is the Savior born in Bethlehem.***
- Hand out the present name tags children made during Lesson 1, and help children attach name tags to their clothing. If any of the name tags were damaged or if children weren’t in class that week, have children make new name tags using the photocopiable patterns.
- Direct children to the Let’s Get Started activities you’ve set up.

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 children to offer help as needed and to direct their conversation toward today’s lesson. Ask questions such as “What’s the most special gift you’ve ever gotten?” or “Who’s a special baby you know?”

■ Option 1: Taking Care of Baby

SUPPLIES: several dolls, doll clothing, disposable diapers, baby wipes or tissues, baby blankets, boxes or baby beds

Set up a pretend nursery in one corner of the room. Include a variety of baby dolls, disposable diapers, baby beds, baby wipes or tissues, doll clothing, and blankets to wrap the babies in. Shoe boxes make wonderful baby beds.

Let the children take turns diapering and caring for the “babies.” Encourage boys to help with babies too, and remind them that daddies love and help care for little babies. Ask the children if they remember when they were babies. Remind them that Jesus was a baby once, too. Ask questions such as “Why are babies like special gifts?” and “How does God care for us like we care for babies?”

■ Option 2: Scentsational Ornaments

SUPPLIES: modeling dough (see recipe below), cookie cutters, sharpened pencils, foil

Before class, prepare the following recipe for baby-scented modeling dough. Mix together 1½ cups flour, ¾ cup salt, ½ cup baby shampoo, and 2 tablespoons cream of tartar. Knead the mixture until it’s smooth and pliable. If the dough is too dry, knead in 1 tablespoon of water at a time.



◀ BIBLE POINT



Everyone likes the feeling of belonging. As children enter your room, call them by name. Introduce yourself to parents, and let them know you’re glad to be teaching their children.



A fun and inexpensive way to provide disposable diapers for children’s nursery play is to set out paper towels and a roll of masking tape. Show the children how to fold a paper towel into a triangular or rectangular diaper. Then fasten the diaper around the doll using masking tape instead of the tape tabs found on real disposable diapers.



Scatter a variety of cookie cutters around a table. Include such shapes as stars, hearts, and small gingerbread men. Show the children how to flatten pieces of modeling dough with the palms of their hands. Make sure the dough is about ¼-inch thick. Then let each child use a cookie cutter to cut out a dough shape. Help children use sharpened pencils to make a small hole at the top of each ornament. When the ornaments are dry, children may put ribbons through the holes for hanging.

As children work, ask them what the smell of the dough reminds them of. (The dough will smell like baby shampoo. Be sure to point out that this dough may smell nice, but it's not good to eat.) Remind them that Jesus was once a baby and that ► *Jesus is the Savior born in Bethlehem.*

To allow the ornaments to thoroughly dry, you may wish to keep them until next week. Otherwise, wrap the dough ornaments in foil, and let the children take them home to air-dry for a few days. Tell them they may hang the ornaments on their Christmas trees.



BIBLE POINT ►



Modeling dough may be sealed in plastic bags or margarine tubs for easy storage. Most flour-type modeling compounds will keep fresh for a week or two if carefully sealed.



BIBLE POINT ►

■ Option 3: A Long Journey

SUPPLIES: shoe box, newspaper

Set an open shoe box on its side at one end of the room. Gather children at the other end of the room. Have children wad up sheets of newspaper to make paper balls. Instruct children to blow the balls across the floor and into the shoe box. As children play, tell them that just as the paper balls are taking a long trip to the shoe box, Mary and Joseph took a long journey to Bethlehem, where they stayed in a small stable. Explain that ► *Jesus is the Savior born in Bethlehem.*

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 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 the 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.)

**X-TRA
IMPACT**

Have someone with a baby visit your class. Let the children see diapers, booties, and tiny fingers and toes. Have the parent tell when the baby was born and what a typical day with the baby is like.

Bible Story Time

■ Setting the Stage

SUPPLIES: Bible, paper plates, scissors, CD player



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. Encourage children to respond quickly so you'll have time for all the fun activities you've planned.

Before class, cut the centers out of paper plates to make them look like the lifesaving rings used to rescue swimmers. You'll need enough paper plates for half of your class.

Hand paper-plate lifesaving rings to half of the children. Instruct the children holding the rings to line up at one end of the room. Have the other children stand at the opposite end of the room. Say: **We're going to play a game called Toss Me a Lifesaver. We'll pretend that the children with the lifesaving rings are standing on the shore and that the rest of you are in the ocean. When I clap my hands, the children on the shore will toss lifesavers like Frisbees to the children in the ocean. If you catch a lifesaving ring, come to the shore. We'll take turns tossing the lifesaving rings until everyone is on shore.**

When all of the children are back on shore, switch places and have those who caught the lifesavers toss them. When you've finished, set the plates aside. Sit with the children in a circle on the floor.

Ask: • **How did the lifesaving rings help you play the game?** (They helped save me so I wouldn't be out; they helped me come to shore.)

• **How can lifesaving rings help you when you're swimming?** (They go around you and float; you don't sink in the water; they can save your life sometimes.)

• **Did you know you have a lifesaver who's with you every day? Who do you think your lifesaver is?** (God; Jesus.)

Say: **Jesus is a lifesaver. But instead of a saver, we call Jesus our Savior. Jesus is the Savior God promised to send us.** Show children the verse in the Bible. **The Bible tells us in 1 Timothy 1:15 that ► "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." This means that Jesus can save us from the wrong things we do. He stays with us, protects us, and keeps us safe. Jesus leads us to God. Let's sing a song to help us remember our Bible verse.**

Lead children in singing, "Jesus Came Into the World" (1 Timothy 1:15), track 5 on the CD, to the tune of "The Muffin Man."



SING

Jesus came into the world,
To the world,
To the world.

Jesus came into the world,
To save us from our sin.
(Repeat 3x.)

Say: **Jesus is the Savior God promised. And today we'll learn that ► Jesus is the Savior born in Bethlehem.**

◀ BIBLE VERSE

◀ BIBLE POINT



■ Bible Song and Prayer Time

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



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 stamp the *gift stamp* inside one of the surprise cards. Bookmark **Luke 2:1-7** in the Bible you'll be using.

teacher tips

Choose children to be the surprise-card collector, the Bible replacer (to put the Bible away), and the cheerleader. Just be sure to keep track of who fills your roles each week so each child gets a chance to feel special.

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 person. The Bible person will bring me the Bible marked with our Bible story for that week. Each of you will get a chance to be the Bible person. Before I choose today's Bible person, let's sing our Bible song. As we sing, I'll hand out surprise cards. Don't look inside your surprise card until the song is over.**

Lead children in singing "Read God's Book" (track 3) with the CD to the tune of "The Muffin Man." As you sing, hand out the folded surprise cards.

teacher tips

You'll probably be able to reuse most of the surprise cards. Each week, throw out any torn or crumpled cards, and make enough new cards for each child to have one.



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.

(Repeat 3x.)

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

Identify the Bible person. Ask the Bible person to bring you the Bible. Lead the class in clapping for the Bible person, cheering, and making fun applause sound effects by slapping your thighs with your palms. Help the Bible person open the Bible to the marked place, and show children where your story comes from. Then have the Bible person sit down.

Say: [Name] **was our special Bible person today. Each week we'll have only one special Bible person, but each one of you is a special part of our class! Today we're all learning that ► Jesus is the Savior born in Bethlehem.**

Let's say a special prayer now and ask God to help us learn that Jesus was God's promise come true. I'll pass around this basket. When the basket comes to you, put your surprise card in it and say, "God, please help me learn more about Jesus."

Have a child pass around the basket or box. After your helper has collected everyone's surprise card, set the basket aside, and pick up the Bible. Lead the children in this prayer: **God, thank you for the Bible and for all the stories in it. Teach us today that ► Jesus is the Savior born in Bethlehem. In Jesus' name, amen.**

BIBLE POINT ►



BIBLE POINT ►



■ Hear and Tell the Bible Story

SUPPLIES: Bible, wrapped package from Lesson 1



Before class, hide the wrapped *Jesus' birth story figures* from last week's lesson somewhere in the room.

Have children gather around you. Show children **Luke 2:1-7** in your Bible. Say: **Our Bible story today comes from the book of Luke. But first, we're going on a trip to find a promised gift! Follow me!**

Encourage children to act out the story with you as they walk around the room in search of the hidden package. Time the story so they find the package when the story portion is over.

Begin walking slowly and say: **Mary and Joseph knew that Mary was going to have a baby.** (Stop, make rocking motions with your arms, and then begin walking again.) **Mary and Joseph knew that this baby** (stop, make rocking motions with your arms, and then start searching again) **was a promise from God!** (Stop, smile upward, and begin walking.) **A mean king** (stop and scowl; then begin searching again) **wanted to know how many people lived in his country, so Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem to be counted.** (Stop, count to five on your fingers, and then begin walking closer to the package.) **Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem to get counted.** (Stop and count to five on your fingers. Walk over to the package.) **And while they were in Bethlehem, God gave them a special gift.** (Hold up the gift.)

Ask: • **What do you think that gift was?** (Jesus.)

Say: **Let's open our gift and see.**

Encourage children to cooperate as they open the gift package, allowing each child a turn at tearing the wrapping paper. When the surprise is revealed, ask:

• **How did you feel, knowing we had a surprise to open?** (Excited; I wondered what it was; I wondered if you would remember your promise from last week.)

• **Did you want to hurry and find the surprise? Why or why not?** (Yes, because I wanted to know what it was; yes, I like surprises.)

Gather kids in a circle, and set the figures in the center.

Say: **Last week we learned that Jesus is the Savior God promised. And we learned that God always keeps his promises. Let's find out what happened that special night long ago when God gave us the gift he promised. We'll use these story figures during the next few times we're together. Our story today comes from the book of Luke in the Bible. You can help tell the story with the figures as I tell the story. I'll tell you when to move a figure.**

Long ago in a land called Judea, people were ordered to go to towns and be counted for their taxes. So Mary and Joseph got ready to go to the town of Bethlehem. Let's find Mary and Joseph. Choose a pair of children to find the Mary and Joseph figures and hold them.

Joseph and Mary knew that the trip to Bethlehem would be long and hard. But they were excited because they were going to have a baby! Have another child find the manger figure. **All day long they traveled up and down hills toward the town of Bethlehem.** Have the kids each walk their pieces to another child as you continue. **They were both very tired, but they were also excited. God had promised to send the world a Savior, and they knew God always keeps his promises. A baby was coming soon!** Have the kids put their pieces back in the center.

This Bible story is featured in *My First Hands-On Bible™*. Order several now for your ministry at group.com.



When Mary and Joseph came to Bethlehem, they tried to find a room to stay in. But the innkeepers said, “No room here! No room there! No room for anyone here or there!”

So Mary and Joseph spent the night in a stable. A stable is a place where animals sleep. There might have been cows and donkeys and sheep and doves. Have a child set the sheep near the manger. Let’s make sounds like the animals might have made. Encourage the children to make animal sounds such as “moo,” “heehaw,” “baa,” and “coo-coo.”



BIBLE POINT ►

Settle the children and very quietly say: **Then, in the quiet of the night, God sent his promise! ► *Jesus the Savior was born in Bethlehem!* Mary wrapped soft cloth around baby Jesus** (make motions like you’re rocking a baby; then gently lay the baby in a manger) **and laid him in a manger where the animals were fed.** Point to the manger.

Ask: • **Why do you think God kept his promise and sent Jesus?** (So Jesus could love us; so Jesus could be our Savior; because God promised.)

• **How do you think Mary and Joseph felt when they had to stay in a stable?** (Bad, because it wasn’t a very nice place to have a baby; glad, because at least there was a place to stay.)

• **Do you think Mary and Joseph believed God’s promise to send a Savior?**
Explain. (Yes, because they trusted God; yes, because God always keeps his promises.)



BIBLE POINT ►



Say: **God always keeps his promises, and Jesus was God’s most special promise of all! ► *Jesus is the Savior born in Bethlehem.* And because Jesus came, we can have a friendship with him. Jesus can be our forever friend! Let’s thank Jesus for loving us and being our friend.**

Let any children who want to pray aloud do so, and then close in prayer. If no child wishes to pray aloud, allow a moment for silent prayer. Then pray: **Dear Jesus, thank you that you love each person here. Thank you that we can have a friendship with you. Thank you for being our Savior. In your name, amen.**

■ Do the Bible Story

SUPPLIES: white construction paper; pencils, crayons or markers, cotton balls, fine black marker; fabric cut into 2-inch squares, small safety pins, 5 sheets of newsprint, tape



Give each child a sheet of construction paper and a pencil. Let children take turns tracing either the boy or the girl *best friends stencil* from the Learning Lab. Then have children decorate their stencils to look like Mary or Joseph.

Say: **Let’s imagine that we’re Mary and Joseph looking for a place to stay. I’ll tape these five pieces of paper to the floor. They’re the inns in the town of Bethlehem.**

Tape five pieces of newsprint to the floor in various places in your room. Say: **When I call out, “Is there any room at the inn?” run with your Mary or Joseph figure to stand on a piece of paper. Make sure you’re touching at least a small part of the paper. If you can’t find any room, go to the stable.**

Point to a corner of the room and designate it as the stable. **Each time we play, I'll take one piece of paper away.**

Continue playing until there's finally "no room at the inn" and all of the papers have been taken away. Then ask:

- **How did you feel when you found there was no room for you?** (I felt left out; upset; thankful that there was at least a stable.)
- **How do you think Mary and Joseph felt when there wasn't any room for Jesus?** (Sad; left out; mad that no one would make room for Jesus.)
- **How can we make room for Jesus in our lives every day?** (Talk to Jesus; pray; read the Bible; help other people; ask Jesus to be our friend.)

Gather children in the work area where they decorated their Mary and Joseph figures. Give each child a cotton ball and a fabric scrap. Show children how to swaddle the cotton ball like a baby, and then carefully pin the fabric in place for each child. Let children draw faces on their baby Jesus figures with a fine black marker.

Have children lay their baby Jesus figures on top of their Mary or Joseph figures. Secure Mary's or Joseph's hands over the baby with a piece of tape so that the baby is cradled. Then say: **God promised us a Savior, and ▶ Jesus is the Savior born in Bethlehem. We want Jesus near us all the time. We can always make room in our hearts and lives for Jesus.**



Closing

■ No Room for Pockets

SUPPLIES: CD player



Bring out Pockets the Kangaroo, and go through the following script. After you finish the script, put Pockets away and out of sight.



- **Pockets:** *(Yawning and rubbing her eyes)* Hello, everyone. *(Yawns again.)*
- **Teacher:** Hello, Pockets. My, you look sleepy today. Did you stay up too late last night?
- **Pockets:** I think I stayed up all night long! I couldn't get to sleep in my bed because there was no room.
- **Teacher:** No room? What do you mean, Pockets?
- **Pockets:** I had my stuffed teddy bear and my stuffed mouse and my stuffed dinosaur with me. There was no room for me!
- **Teacher:** No room for Pockets? Maybe you could just sleep with one stuffed friend.
- **Pockets:** Oh, no! I couldn't do that! I always sleep with them all. But last night it felt like there was no room for me anywhere!
- **Teacher:** Today we learned about a special night when there was no room. Children, can you tell Pockets about the night Jesus was born and how there was no room at the inns? *(Allow time for the children to share with Pockets.)*

Pockets: Wow! Even my baby sister has a nice crib to sleep in. A stable isn't a very nice place for God's Son to be born.

Teacher: But God kept his promise, Pockets. ► *Jesus is the Savior born in Bethlehem.* And even though there wasn't room at the inns, there was room in a special stable. And we can make room for Jesus in our lives every day, too!

Pockets: *(Yawning)* That's pretty neat!

Teacher: Children, let's sing Pockets a song about baby Jesus. Maybe it'll help Pockets go to sleep.

(Lead the children in singing "Away in a Manger" (track 4) with the CD. As you sing, have Pockets yawn a few times and then doze off. When you've finished singing, turn off the CD player.)



SING

**Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.**

"Away in a Manger" by John Thomas McFarland and James R. Murray.

Teacher: *(Quietly)* You all sang so nicely that Pockets is sound asleep—just as Jesus slept soundly in his manger. Let's put Pockets to bed now. *(Lay Pockets gently in the Learning Lab box.)*

Permission to photocopy this script from Group's Hands-On Bible Curriculum® Pre-K & K granted for local church use. Copyright © Group Publishing, Inc., 1515 Cascade Avenue, Loveland, CO 80538. group.com



Our Life Savior

SUPPLIES: *individually wrapped Life Savers candies*



Before class, place individually wrapped Life Savers candies inside each of three *gift boxes* from the Learning Lab. You'll need two candies for each child. Hide the *gift boxes* in the room.

Ask: • **Why did Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem?** (To be counted; to have baby Jesus.)

Say: **They went to Bethlehem, and that's where God's promise came true. Let's learn a song about going to Bethlehem. Once we know the words, we'll use the song to help us find some gifts.**

Lead children in singing, "Here We Go to Bethlehem" to the tune of "The Mulberry Bush." This song is not on the *CD*.



SING

**Here we go to Bethlehem,
Bethlehem, Bethlehem.
Here we go to Bethlehem
To find a gift from God.**

teacher tips

At this stage in their social development, 5- and 6-year-olds are learning to share and cooperate, and can understand and follow rules.

When children seem comfortable with the words, say: **There are three gifts hidden in our room. Find a partner, and hunt for the gifts together while we sing “Here We Go to Bethlehem.”**

When all three of the gifts have been found, tell children to find places to sit with their partners. Say: **Just as Jesus is a gift for all of us, there’s something for all of us in these gifts.** Let the children who found the gifts open them and hold up what’s inside.


These Life Savers will help remind you about Jesus.

Ask: • **Who remembers why Jesus is our saver or *Savior*?** (Because Jesus forgives us when we do wrong things; because Jesus protects us; because Jesus loves us and keeps us safe.)

Hand each child two Life Savers candies. Say: **Put your Life Savers on the tips of your little fingers. Tell your partner one way Jesus saves or helps you. Then eat one of your Life Savers.** Allow 15 seconds for the partners to share. **Now tell your partner one way you can make room for Jesus in your heart and life every day. Then eat your other piece of candy.** Allow 15 seconds for the partners to share.

Close with a prayer. Pray: **Dear God, we thank you for always keeping your promises. We thank you that ► *Jesus is the Savior born in Bethlehem.* Help us always make room for Jesus in all we do. In Jesus’ name, amen.**

Collect name tags for next week’s use, and remind children to take home any crafts they made today.



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: The Animals in the Stable Said...*

Have the children sit in a circle. Begin by rolling a ball to a child. Then have the child with the ball imitate an animal sound that might have been heard in the stable the night Jesus was born. Encourage the other kids to guess what animal it is. Then have the child roll the ball to another player. Continue until everyone's had a turn.

■ *Make to Take: Surprise Package Story*



Make surprise books to tell about Jesus' birthday in Bethlehem. Hand each child a photocopy of the "Surprise Package" handout on page 37. Have the children color the handouts with crayons or markers. Encourage them to make their papers look like gift packages.

Tell children to carefully cut the handouts on the solid lines. Then have them turn their papers over. Show them how to fold the numbered boxes to the inside, one on top of the other. Begin by folding box 4 toward the center. Then fold box 3 on top of 4 and so on, until box 1 is facing up. Crease well along each fold.

Let children "unwrap" their surprise packages by unfolding the numbered boxes. When the "package" is open, have each child draw a picture of Jesus in the manger in the center of the cross shape. Help each child write the word "born" in the square with the picture.

Rewrap the boxes by folding the sides in numbered order. Read aloud the mini-story on each page of the surprise book. Encourage the children to read their books aloud to family and friends.

■ *Treat to Eat: Baby Food*



Bring a small jar of baby applesauce and a plastic spoon for each child. Have children clean their hands with baby wipes or at a nearby sink. While the children eat, talk about caring for babies. Ask questions such as "Why do babies eat this kind of food?" "Do you think Jesus ate baby food?" "How is taking special care of babies a good way to show we love them?" and "Why was Jesus the most special baby ever born?"

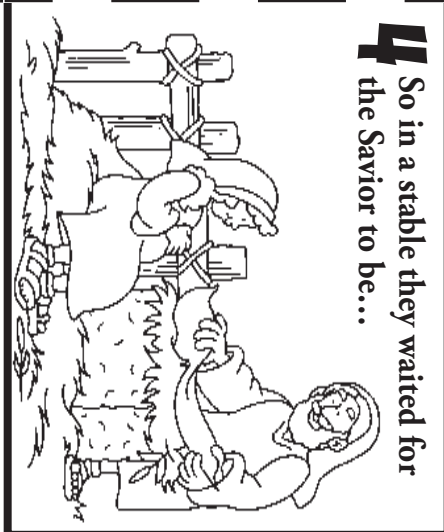
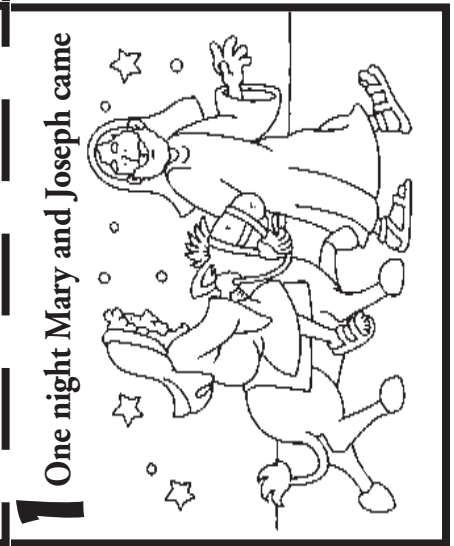
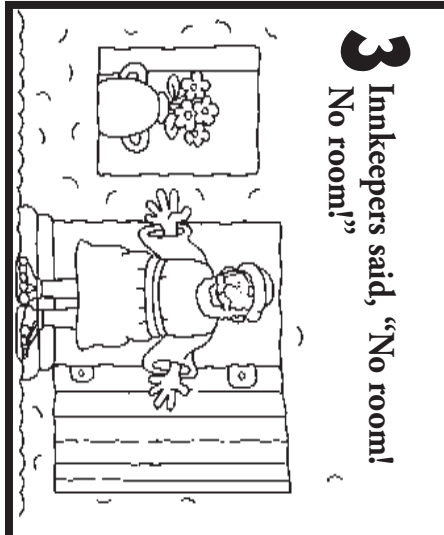


■ *Story Picture: Stable Scene*

Hand each child a photocopy of the "Today I Learned..." handout. Set small squares of fabric, uncooked spaghetti, and white glue on a table. Have each child glue a square of fabric on baby Jesus for his swaddling clothes. Then children can glue pieces of uncooked spaghetti noodles in the manger and on the floor as hay.

Surprise Package

Photocopy this handout. Cut out the cross shape. Fold the numbered boxes one on top of the other starting with box 4. After the last box is revealed, draw a picture of baby Jesus in the manger.



Today I learned...

Lesson 2

Today your child learned that Jesus was humbly born in a stable. Children learned what a savior is, and they talked about ways to make room for Jesus in their lives.

Jesus is the Savior
born in Bethlehem.

Verse to Learn

"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"
(1 Timothy 1:15).

Ask Me...

- Why did Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem?
- Why do I need Jesus to be my Savior?
- How can our family make room for Jesus every day?

Family Fun

- Snuggle up with your child, and look through his or her baby album. Talk about the time your child was born, and compare and contrast your child's birth with Jesus' humble birth in the stable. Compare a crib with the manger, compare the sounds of a hospital delivery room with the sounds of a stable, and so on. Point out that Jesus was a gift from God, and so is your child!

The Son of God Is Born! (Luke 2:1-7)

