

## Snack

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Guide preschoolers to clean their areas. Take a restroom break and wash hands. Gather preschoolers for snack time. Thank God for the snack.

Serve a favorite snack for the preschoolers. Talk about how God sent Jesus to earth as a baby. Babies cannot eat snacks like the preschoolers are eating. Babies need their mommies and daddies to take care of them. **God chose a family for Jesus** so He could grow up to rescue us from sin.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert download
- snack food
- paper cups and napkins

## Transition

When a child finishes his snack, guide him to throw away any trash. He may select a book or puzzle to examine, play quietly with play dough or a favorite toy, or color the Bible story coloring page.

Offer the journal page and invite preschoolers to draw a picture of Mary celebrating God's plan to send Jesus. Children may also draw other scenes from the Bible story. Invite children to talk about their artwork. Pray for the children.

**SAY** • Dear God, thank You for choosing a family for Jesus to take care of Him as a baby. Thank You for keeping Your promise to send Jesus to rescue us from sin when we trust in Him. Help us to love You and worship You like Mary did. Amen!

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- Journal Page printable, 1 per child
- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschool

## Jesus Was Born

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Luke 2:1-20

**MAIN POINT:** Jesus was born as God promised.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Galatians 4:4-5

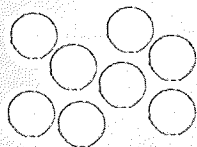
**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us.

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**SMALL GROUP OPENING**

(15–20 MINUTES)

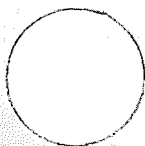
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**LARGE GROUP BIBLE STUDY**

(10–15 MINUTES)

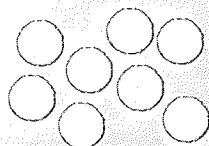
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**SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES**

(20–25 MINUTES)

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## Leader BIBLE STUDY

Do you think it was just by chance that Caesar Augustus called for a census? Did it just so happen that Mary and Joseph were traveling to Bethlehem—the very place the Messiah was prophesied to be born? (Micah 5:2) God is in control of all things, which He showed by using a pagan emperor to bring about His plan.

After Jesus was born, Mary laid Him in a manger. A king in a manger! It was so unlikely. But Jesus was no ordinary baby. He was God's Son, sent in the most humble of positions, "not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life—a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28).

Imagine the shepherds' surprise when an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared. The Bible says that they were terrified! But the angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, for look, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people: Today a Savior, who is Messiah the Lord, was born for you in the city of David" (Luke 2:10-11).

What a relief! This angel had come to bring good news. First, he proclaimed a Savior. The people of Israel were well aware of their need for a Savior. They made sacrifices daily to atone for their sin. Finally, a Savior had come who would be the perfect sacrifice for sin, once and for all.

Jesus was also Messiah the Lord. The word *Messiah* means "anointed one," especially a king. The Deliverer and Redeemer would be King over His people. And this was all happening in Bethlehem, the city of David—just as the prophet Micah said.

This is the best news ever! An army of angels appeared, praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to people He favors" (Luke 2:14). The purpose of Jesus' birth was twofold: to bring glory to God and to make peace between God and those who trust in Jesus' death and resurrection.



**MINISTRY GRID**  
training made simple

Additional resources for each session are available at [gospelproject.com](http://gospelproject.com). For free training and session-by-session help, visit [www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject](http://www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject).

# The BIBLE STORY

## Jesus Was Born

*Luke 2:1-20*

**When Mary was pregnant with Baby Jesus**, a man named Caesar Augustus sent out an order to all the people in the land: “Everyone must return to his hometown to be counted!” Caesar Augustus was the emperor of Rome, and he wanted a list of all the people who were living in the land.

Since **Joseph** was part of King David’s family, he **and Mary** left Nazareth and **traveled to Bethlehem**, the city of David.

While **they** were there, Mary was ready to have her baby. Mary and Joseph **looked for a safe place to stay, but every place was full** because of all the people who were in town to be counted. **So Mary and Joseph found a place where animals were kept, and that is where Mary had her baby, Jesus. She wrapped Him in cloth** so He would be snug and warm, and she **laid Him in a manger**.

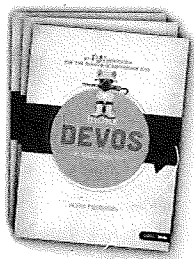
**Nearby, some shepherds were staying out in the fields** and watching their sheep to protect them from thieves and wild animals. **All of a sudden, an angel of the Lord stood before them. A bright light shone around the shepherds, and they were scared!**

**But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid! I have good news for you: Today a Savior, who is Messiah the Lord, was born for you in the city of David.”** Then the angel said, **“Go find the baby. He will be wrapped in cloth and lying in a manger.”**

**All of a sudden, many angels appeared. They praised God and said, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to people He favors!”**

So the shepherds went straight to Bethlehem to find Baby Jesus. They found Him, and they told others about Him. Everyone who heard about Jesus was surprised and amazed. Mary thought about everything that was happening and tried to understand it. The shepherds returned to their fields, and they praised God because everything had happened just as the angel had said.

*Christ Connection: Jesus was born! This was very good news! Jesus was not like other babies. Jesus is God's Son. God sent Jesus to earth from heaven. Jesus came into the world to save people from their sins and to be their King.*



**WANT TO  
DISCOVER  
GOD'S WORD?  
GET  
MORE!**

Invite preschoolers to check out this week's devotionals to discover that Jesus is God's one and only Son. Everyone who believes in Jesus will not perish but will have life forever with God. (See John 3:16.) Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out [www.lifeway.com/devotionals](http://www.lifeway.com/devotionals).

# Small Group OPENING

**SESSION TITLE:** Jesus Was Born

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Luke 2:1-20

**MAIN POINT:** Jesus was born as God promised.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Galatians 4:4-5

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us.

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## Welcome time

- “Joy to the World” song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert download
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play the unit theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church’s security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

## Activity page

- “Crib Matching” activity page, 1 per child
- pencils or crayons

Guide preschoolers to draw a line connecting matching cribs.

**SAY** • One of these sets of cribs do not look like the others. That is because one of them is not a crib at all. It is a feeding trough that animals eat out of. Can you guess whose mommy laid Him in a feeding trough when He was born? Baby Jesus. Jesus is the greatest King there ever was or ever will be, but He didn’t have a fancy crib to lay in. God chose to send His Son to earth in an unusual way. Let’s find out more in today’s Bible story.

## Celebrate Jesus freeze dance

Play the unit theme song or another favorite Christmas worship song while the preschoolers dance. After a



- “Joy to the World” song (optional)

few moments, stop the music and call out, “Freeze!” Preschoolers must freeze and shout, “Jesus was born!” After children have shouted the good news, turn the music on and invite them to dance again. Continue playing as time allows.

**SAY** • Wasn’t it fun to celebrate Jesus’ birthday by singing and dancing? Christmas is the time we celebrate that God sent Jesus to earth as a baby. Today we’re going to learn that **Jesus was born as God promised.**

### **Pack for a journey**

Provide a few suitcases or totes, clothes, and various items for preschoolers to “pack.” Set up the suitcases and items in one corner of the room and call that part of the room *Nazareth*. Designate another part of the room to be Bethlehem. Invite preschoolers to pack and travel to Bethlehem.

**SAY** • Long ago, God said through His prophet Micah that God would send Jesus to be born in Bethlehem. In our Bible story, we’ll find out how God brought Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem at just the right time for Jesus to be born.

- suitcases or totes
- various items for children to “pack”

### **Transition to Bible study**

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, flip off the lights, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Invite preschoolers to make barnyard animal sounds as they move to Bible study.

- countdown video (optional)

# Large Group LEADER

**SESSION TITLE:** Jesus Was Born

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## Introduce the Bible story

Once the preschoolers are seated, ask if any preschoolers know the name of the city in which they were born. Share with the children about where you were born.

**SAY** • Mary and Joseph were living in Nazareth when God chose them to be God's family. Long ago, God's prophet said that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem. Bethlehem was very far away from Nazareth! Let's see how God kept His promise.

## Watch or tell the Bible story

Open your Bible to Luke 2.

**SAY** • The Bible is God's Word. The stories we read about in the Bible are true because God always speaks the truth. God sent Jesus to earth!

Show the Bible story video "Jesus Was Born" or tell the Bible story in your own words using the script provided.

Use the bolded version for younger preschoolers.

## Talk about the Bible story

**SAY** • **Jesus was born as God promised.** This was very good news! Jesus was not like other babies. Jesus is God's Son. God sent Jesus to earth from heaven.

- Bible
- "Jesus Was Born" video
- Bible Story Picture Poster

- Main Point Poster
- Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle



Jesus came into the world to save people from their sins and to be their King.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline or big story circle as you ask the following review questions:

1. In what town was Jesus born? (*Bethlehem*)
2. Where did Joseph and Mary have to stay since the town was full? (*a place where animals were kept*)
3. Who appeared to the shepherds? (*an angel*)
4. What did the shepherds do after they saw Baby Jesus? (*They praised God and told everyone about Jesus.*)

## Learn the big picture question

**SAY** • Do you remember our big picture question and answer? *Why was Jesus born?* [*Invite preschoolers to answer.*] That's right. *Jesus was born to rescue us.* Jesus is God's Son. God the Son was in heaven with God, but He came to earth as a human baby so He could grow up to rescue us from sin.

• Big Picture Question Poster

## Practice the key passage

Open your Bible to Galatians 4:4-5. Read the key passage aloud several times. Sing together the key passage song, "Adoption As Sons."

• Key Passage Poster  
• "Adoption As Sons" song

**SAY** • Our key passage tells us that God sent His Son to be born as a baby just like us. Jesus is God's Son, but He became a human being. Jesus is the only Person who has ever lived who has always obeyed God's laws perfectly. **Jesus was born as God promised** to rescue us from sin.

## Transition to small groups

# Small Group ACTIVITIES

**SESSION TITLE:** Jesus Was Born

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Luke 2:1-20

**MAIN POINT:** Jesus was born as God promised.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Galatians 4:4-5

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us.

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• birthday hats and  
noisemakers (optional)

## Sing “Happy Birthday” to Jesus

Provide birthday hats and noisemakers if you have them available. Invite preschoolers to sing the “Happy Birthday” song with Jesus’ name after “Happy birthday, dear [name].” Invite the children to blow the noisemakers and shout “hooray!”

**SAY** • We celebrate Jesus’ birthday at Christmas because His birthday is the most special birthday in all of history! Jesus is God’s Son sent from heaven to earth! **Jesus was born as God promised.** This is good news! We want to thank God for sending Jesus to save people from sin.

## Play dough nativity

• play dough  
• play dough utensils

Provide play dough and play dough utensils for preschoolers to use. Invite preschoolers to make the people who were mentioned in today’s Bible story. Explain that they will be making a nativity, or a scene from the night that Jesus was born. Briefly review the Bible story as the children make the play dough figures. Invite children to play out the Bible story together as you review it.

**SAY** • Great job making a nativity! Have you ever seen a nativity scene at your house or maybe at a store

during Christmas? Christmas is when we celebrate that **Jesus was born as God promised**. Jesus came into the world to save people from their sins and to be their King.

## Search for Baby Jesus

Provide a baby doll and show it to the preschoolers. Invite preschoolers to close their eyes while you hide the baby doll somewhere in the room. For younger preschoolers, hide it in plain sight. Invite children to open their eyes and look for Baby Jesus. Play again as time allows. You may invite older preschoolers to hide Baby Jesus in subsequent rounds.

**SAY** • Great job searching for Baby Jesus! Angels appeared to shepherds who were watching their sheep at night. An angel told the shepherds exactly where to find Baby Jesus, and the shepherds ran to Bethlehem to look for Him. **Jesus was born as God promised**. Jesus was not like other babies. Jesus is God's Son. God sent Jesus to earth from heaven.



• baby doll

## Make “Jesus was born!” cards

Provide construction paper, crayons and markers, stickers, and other favorite art supplies. Assist preschoolers as they fold the construction paper in half and write *Jesus was born!* on the inside flap. Guide children to make cards to celebrate Jesus' birth. Invite children to think of someone they know who needs to hear that God sent Jesus to earth as a baby so He could rescue us from sin.

**SAY** • We give our friends birthday cards on their birthdays to show them that we love them and we are glad they were born. The best way we can show love to our friends is to tell them about the most important

- construction paper
- art supplies
- old Christmas cards fronts

birthday ever! **Jesus was born as God promised,** Jesus is God's Son. God sent Jesus to earth from heaven. Everyone needs to know how Jesus can save them from their sin and be their King!



## Tell the good news

Invite preschoolers to sit in a circle with you. Once the children are seated, whisper “Jesus was born!” to the child seated on your left. She will whisper the good news to the child on her left, who will pass on the message. Continue until the good news returns to you. Play again as time allows, choosing a different message each round.

**SAY** • When the shepherds found Baby Jesus, they told others about Him. Everyone who heard about Jesus was surprised and amazed. **Jesus was born as God promised!** This is very good news everyone needs to hear! Jesus is God's Son. God sent Jesus to earth from heaven. Jesus came into the world to save people from their sins and to be their King.

## Snack

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Guide preschoolers to clean their areas. Take a restroom break and wash hands. Gather preschoolers for snack time. Thank God for the snack.

Serve animal crackers for today's snack. Invite preschoolers to hold up a sheep and say "baaa" if they find any sheep in their snack mix. Talk about how God sent angels to tell shepherds that His Son was born in Bethlehem. The shepherds praised God and told everyone the good news when they saw Jesus.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert download
- snack food
- paper cups and napkins

## Transition

When a child finishes her snack, guide her to throw away any trash. She may select a book or puzzle to examine, play quietly with play dough or a favorite toy, or color the Bible story coloring page.

Offer the journal page and invite preschoolers to draw a picture of Baby Jesus in the feeding trough. Remind the preschoolers that Jesus is God's Son. Jesus was born to be our King, but He was not born in a palace. Jesus was born to rescue us from sin, so He was born as a baby just like us, but He never once disobeyed God. Pray for the children.

**SAY** • Dear Jesus, thank You so much for coming to earth as a little baby. Thank You for always obeying God so You could die on the cross and come back to life to rescue us from our sin when we trust in You. Amen!

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- Journal Page printable, 1 per child
- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- *Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschool*