

## Jesus Was Born

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Matthew 2:1-12; Luke 2:1-20

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

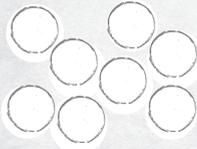
**KEY PASSAGE:** 1 Timothy 1:15

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** What makes Jesus different? Jesus is God's One and Only Son.

### SMALL GROUP OPENING

(15–20 MINUTES)

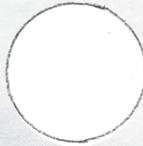
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### LARGE GROUP BIBLE STUDY

(10–15 MINUTES)

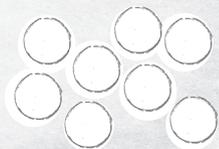
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### SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

(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 brought them "good news of great joy." (See Luke 2:10-11.) 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.

Not only did Jesus come into the world as the Savior, He came as our King. Some time after Jesus' birth, wise men came to worship Jesus. They brought Him gifts suitable for a king—gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Jesus is the King who will rule forever, just as God promised King David. (See 2 Sam. 7.)

When you share this story with preschoolers, remind them that Jesus came because we needed Him. 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. Celebrating the birth of Jesus is about rejoicing over the greatest gift we could ever receive. God's own Son came to earth to be our Savior and our King.



**MINISTRY GRID**  
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# The BIBLE STORY

## Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Use props:** Keep a set of props out of sight and pull them out as you tell the Bible story. Suggested props: flashlight (bright light), shepherd's staff (shepherds), plastic crown (king), gifts (wise men).
- **Use a nativity set:** Use the pieces of the nativity set to tell the story. Add nativity figures as you come to the Bible person in the Bible story.

## Jesus Was Born

*Matthew 2:1-12; 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 go 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. 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 and laid Him in a manger.**

Nearby, **some shepherds were in the fields watching after their sheep. All of a sudden, an angel of the Lord stood in front of 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.**”

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

**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. The shepherds returned to their fields. They praised God because everything had happened just as the angel had said.**

**Some time later, wise men came to visit Jesus. They asked King Herod, “Where is the king of the Jews? We want to worship Him.” King Herod was angry. A new king? Herod was king! Herod told the wise men to find Jesus.**

**“Tell me where He is so I can worship Him, too,” Herod said. But Herod was lying. Herod did not want to worship the new king; he wanted to kill Him!**

**The wise men followed a star in the sky and found Jesus. They fell to their knees and worshiped Jesus. Then they gave Him gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.**

**When it was time for the wise men to go home, God warned them in a dream not to tell Herod where Jesus was. So they took a different way home.**

*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 forever.*



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

Invite preschoolers to check out this week’s devotionals to discover that the wise men recognized Jesus as the King of the Jews. (Matt. 2:2) Jesus is King over all creation and is worthy of worship. (Heb. 1:8) 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:** Matthew 2:1-12; Luke 2:1-20

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

**KEY PASSAGE:** 1 Timothy 1:15

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** What makes Jesus different? Jesus is God's One and Only Son.

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## Welcome time

- "What Makes Jesus Different" 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

- "Jesus in the Stable" activity page, 1 per child
- pencils or crayons

Direct preschoolers to mark the animals as indicated in the instructions.

**SAY** • Today we are going to hear the story from the Bible about Jesus' birth. Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem to be counted. While they were there, Mary was ready to have her baby. Every place was full, so they found a place where animals were kept, and that is where Mary had Baby Jesus. She wrapped Him in cloth and laid Him in a manger.

## Sing “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star”

Sing the song “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star,” and invite the preschoolers to sing along with you. Sing the song a few times with the children. If you are unfamiliar with the tune or lyrics, check it out online before class.

**SAY** • A group of men called wise men followed a star a very long way to find Jesus. The star led them to Jesus, and they worshiped Him when they found Him. The birth of Jesus was the good news that they had been waiting for.



## Decorate a Christmas tree

Set up a small, artificial Christmas tree in your classroom. Add Christmas lights to the tree if it is not pre-lit. Provide unbreakable ornaments for preschoolers to use to decorate the tree.

**SAY** • It is not Christmastime! Why are we decorating a Christmas tree? Well, today, we are hearing the Christmas story from the Bible, the story about Jesus’ birth. The story of Jesus’ birth is not just a story for Christmas, though. Jesus coming to earth to rescue us from sin is something to celebrate every day!

- small artificial Christmas tree
- Christmas lights
- unbreakable Christmas ornaments

## 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 pretend to rock a baby as they move to Bible study.

- countdown video (optional)

# Large Group LEADER

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## Introduce the Bible story

Option: Consider looking online for animal sound effects.

Make barnyard animal sounds. Invite preschoolers to raise their hands if they know what animal makes that sound.

**SAY** • In our Bible story today, Mary had Baby Jesus in a place where animals were kept. Can you believe it? God's One and Only Son was born where the animals had to stay! A king should be born in a palace, but Jesus is no ordinary King!

## Watch or tell the Bible story

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

Place a bookmark at Matthew 2 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

**SAY** • The Bible is the most special book of all. God gave us His words in the Bible. Everything in the Bible really happened. Today's Bible story comes from Matthew.

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling helps. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

## Talk about the Bible story

- Main Point Poster
- Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle

**SAY** • Jesus was a very special baby. The angels praised Him. Shepherds told others about Him. The wise men traveled a long way to worship Him. **Jesus was**

**born as God promised.** God sent Jesus to earth from heaven. Jesus came into the world to save people from their sins and to be their King forever.

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

1. To what city did Mary and Joseph travel? (*Bethlehem*)
2. Where did Mary and Joseph stay in Bethlehem? (*a place where animals were kept*)
3. Who told the shepherds where to find Jesus? (*an angel*)
4. How did the wise men find Jesus? (*They followed a star.*)
5. How did the wise men know not to tell Herod where Jesus was? (*God warned them in a dream.*)

## Learn the big picture question

**SAY** • Jesus was born! This was very good news! Jesus was not like other babies. Jesus is God’s Son. Our big picture questions asks, *What makes Jesus different? Jesus is God’s One and Only Son. Jesus was born as God promised.*

• Big Picture Question Poster

## Practice the key passage

Open your Bible to 1 Timothy 1:15. Read the key passage aloud several times. Sing together the key passage song, “Into the World.”

**SAY** • Our key passage tells us that Jesus was born to save sinners. We are all sinners. God sent Jesus to earth to save all of us from our sin. We are not able to be saved without trusting Jesus.

• Key Passage Poster  
• “Into the World” song

## Transition to small groups

# Small Group ACTIVITIES

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- yellow construction paper
- scissors

## Follow the star

Cut out a star shape from yellow construction paper. Play a game of follow the leader where the leader holds the star. Choose a child to hold the star. Lead the rest of the group to line up single file behind him. The child holding the star will move about the room performing movements of his choosing, such as skipping, hopping, waving his hands, and so forth. The rest of the children should mimic his actions. Choose another child to hold the star and play again. Continue to play until each child has a chance to hold the star.

**SAY** • The wise men followed a star in the sky and found King Jesus. They fell to their knees and worshiped Him. **Jesus was born as God promised.** Jesus was not like other babies. ***Jesus is God's One and Only Son.*** God sent Jesus to earth from heaven. Jesus came into the world to save people from their sins and to be their King forever.

## Care for a baby

Allow the preschoolers to play with baby dolls and blankets. Demonstrate to the preschoolers how to swaddle the babies with a blanket. Explain to preschoolers how Mary and

- baby dolls
- blankets
- baby doll bottles (optional)

Joseph took care of Jesus when He was born.

**SAY** • You are taking care of babies. Mary and Joseph took care of Jesus, too. When **Jesus was born as God promised**, Mary wrapped up Jesus in warm cloths and placed Him in a feeding trough. 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 sin and to be their King forever.

## Engage the senses

Set up a sensory station in the room and allow the preschoolers to touch and smell hay, wool, and cloth. Use raffia or shredded yellow paper instead of hay if allergies are an issue. Remark to the children that these things may have been in the stable when Jesus was born. Consider locating some animals sounds to play in the background for preschoolers to use their sense of hearing to think about the Bible story as well.

**SAY** • Different animals made their home in the place where Jesus was born. The Bible tells us that Jesus was wrapped in cloth and placed in a manger. A manger is where barn animals would eat their food. Would you expect God's Son to be born in a place full of animals? [*Invite preschoolers to respond.*] **Jesus was born as God promised**, and God brought Jesus to earth in a humble way. ***What makes Jesus different? Jesus is God's One and Only Son.***

## Make Baby Jesus spoon art

Before class, collect unused single-serve wooden ice cream spoons. Provide gauze, ziplock bags, and raffia. Guide

- Allergy Alert download
- fresh hay
- wool
- soft cloth
- animal sound effects (optional)
- raffia (optional)
- yellow paper (optional)

- clean single-serve ice cream spoons, 1 per preschooler
- gauze
- raffia
- ziplock bags
- marker
- adhesive labels (optional)

preschoolers to place the raffia in a ziplock bag like a nest. Instruct a preschooler to draw a face on her wooden spoon. Help her wrap gauze around the handle of the spoon, leaving the face exposed. Encourage the preschooler to place “Baby Jesus” inside the bag with the grass. Write the main point on her bag or use an adhesive label.

**SAY** • Jesus was born and placed in a manger! The birth of Jesus was the good news that the people of God had been waiting for. **Jesus was born as God promised** to be our Savior. Jesus saves us from our sin when we trust Him.

## Play a flashlight game

Gather children in a circle. Turn on a flashlight and spin it on the floor. The child the flashlights points to when it stops spinning gets to ask the group the big picture question. Allow preschoolers to take turns spinning the flashlight.

**SAY** • The shepherds were in the fields watching their sheep. An angel of the Lord suddenly stood in front of them, and a bright light shone around them. That light was much brighter than this flashlight! The angel told the shepherds that God’s Son, the Savior, the Messiah had been born. **Jesus was born as God promised.** *What makes Jesus different? Jesus is God’s One and Only Son.*

- flashlight
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Main Point Poster (optional)

## 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 snack. Remind preschoolers that Jesus was born in a place where animals were kept. **Jesus was born as God promised.** The shepherds and the wise men came to visit Jesus, and they praised Him because they knew He was their Savior King.

- 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 line down the center of the page. On one side, invite preschoolers to draw a picture of Jesus as a baby sleeping in a manger. On the other side, they may draw Jesus after He rose from the dead to rescue people from sin. Remind preschoolers that Jesus is different from anyone else because **Jesus is God's One and Only Son.** Pray for the children.

**SAY** • God, thank You for keeping Your promises. You promised to send Your One and Only Son to save people from sin. Help us to turn from our sin and trust in Jesus. God, we love You and praise 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.

- books
- puzzles
- play dough
- Journal Page printable, 1 per child
- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- *Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers*