

# LESSON



## The First Christmas

### WORSHIP

We are thankful for the birth of Jesus.

#### References

Luke 2:1-7; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 43, 44.

#### Memory Verse

"Thanks be to God for his . . . gift!" (2 Corinthians 9:15, NIV).

#### Objectives

##### The children will:

**Know** that Jesus came from heaven and was born in a stable.

**Feel** wonder that Jesus was willing to leave heaven and be born on earth.

**Respond** by thanking Jesus for coming to the earth.

#### The Message



We worship God when we thank Him for sending Jesus to earth.

## Getting Ready to Teach

#### The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Joseph and Mary travel away from home to Bethlehem. Mary's baby is due soon. When they arrive in Bethlehem, they find the town filled with travelers, and guest rooms are filled to overflowing. So Baby Jesus is born in a stable, a place where animals are kept. His mother wraps Him in cloths and puts Him in a manger, because that is the only bed available. Mary and Joseph are happy that Baby Jesus is born. So are we.

#### This is a lesson about worship.

We are filled with awe as we contemplate the wonderful gift that God gave us when He sent His only Son to live and die for us. Thus we worship the Father and the Son as we thank them for the sacrifice both made. When we are truly grateful, we will also worship them as we tell others about that wonderful gift.

#### Teacher Enrichment

"The story of Bethlehem is an ex-

# TEN

<b>Program Outline</b>			
LESSON SECTION	MINUTES	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS NEEDED
<b>Welcome</b>	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
<b>1</b> <b>Readiness Options</b>	up to 10	<i>A. Baby Center</i>  <i>B. What Can Babies Do?</i> <i>C. Sing About Baby Jesus</i> <i>D. Christmas Book (optional)</i>	baby items such as clothes, bottles, diapers, food, pacifiers, rattles, dolls, stroller, blankets; pictures of babies and baby things (optional)  none baby doll for each child (optional) storybook about Jesus' birth
<b>*</b> <b>Prayer and Praise*</b>	up to 10	See page 106. <b>*Prayer and Praise</b> may be used at any time during the program.	
<b>2</b> <b>Bible Lesson</b>	up to 20	Experiencing the Story	Bible-times costumes
		Bible Study	Bible, <i>Little Voices Praise Him</i>
		Memory Verse	Bible
<b>3</b> <b>Applying the Lesson</b>	up to 15	<i>Giving Gifts</i>	none
<b>4</b> <b>Sharing the Lesson</b>	up to 15	<i>Christmas Card</i>	copies of Christmas card (see p. 150), art supplies, scissors

haustless theme. In it is hidden 'the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.' Rom. 11:33. We marvel at the Saviour's sacrifice in exchanging the throne of heaven for the manger, and the companionship of adoring angels for the beasts of the stall. Human pride and self-sufficiency stand rebuked in His presence. Yet this was but the beginning of His wonderful condescension. . . .

"God gave His only-begotten Son, that the path of life might be made sure for our little ones. 'Herein is love'"

(*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 48, 49).

## Room Decorations

Although we do not know when Christ was born, we can use the Christmas season to remember His birth. Add more shepherds and sheep to the displays. Turn the "house" into a stable by adding some farm animals, such as cows, donkeys, horses, etc. Use toy stuffed animals or larger cardboard cutouts of the Nativity scene. Have a table set up with unbreakable figures of the Nativity. Include a manger with "hay" and a baby doll.

## Teaching the Lesson

### Welcome

Welcome students at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Encourage them to share any experiences from last week's lesson study. Have them begin the readiness activity of your choice.

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### Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

#### A. Baby Center

Have these items available for children to play and interact with. You could also use pictures of babies and baby things pasted on cards for the children to handle and talk about. Ask: **Who can tell me something about babies?** Draw from the children information about newborn babies. (They cry, they can't talk, walk, play, etc. They sleep a lot. They have to be handled with care, etc.)

#### Debriefing

Allow response time as you say: **You know a lot about babies. Who has a baby at their house? What is it like to wait for a baby? Show me some things that we need for a new baby. Today we are going to learn about a baby who was born a long time ago. Who do you think it was? Tell me something you know about Baby Jesus. Things were very different then. Are you glad that Jesus came? I am. And that brings us to our message for today:**

#### You Need:

- baby clothes
- bottles
- diapers
- baby food
- pacifiers
- rattles
- baby dolls
- stroller
- baby blankets
- pictures of babies and baby things on cards (optional)



We worship God when we thank Him for sending Jesus to earth.

Say that with me.

#### B. What Can Babies Do?

Say: **Let's talk about what babies can and cannot do. Let's take turns showing what babies can do.** (Babies can cry, sleep, eat, turn over, etc. Children act as if they are babies.)

Say: **Now show me some things that you can do, but babies cannot do.** (Babies cannot talk, walk, run, feed themselves, read, write, draw, etc. Children act out some of these activities.) **What do you think Baby Jesus could do after He was born in the stable?** (cry, sleep, eat, etc.)

**Debriefing**

Say: **Babies depend on others to take care of them. And even though you are older, you still need someone to take care of you. Who takes care of you at home? Yes, they take care of you in many ways. Who do you think took care of Baby Jesus? Who was watching over Him from heaven? Who sent Jesus to us? Let's remember,**



We worship God when we thank Him for sending Jesus to earth.

**C. Sing About Baby Jesus**

If possible, have a baby doll for each child to hold. Or have children take turns holding and cuddling a baby doll.

Say: **When Jesus was a baby, I'm sure that Mary and Joseph sang to Him, just as your mommies and daddies sang to you. What are some songs about Jesus that you like to sing?** (Allow time). **Those are all good songs.**

Say: **There are many songs we can sing to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Let's sing "Away in a Manger"** (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 141) (or any song about Baby Jesus).

**You Need:**

- baby doll for each child (optional)

**Debriefing**

Say: **When we sing songs about Jesus, we worship Him. Are you glad Jesus came to earth? Let's thank God for Baby Jesus. Remember,**



We worship God when we thank Him for sending Jesus to earth.

**Say that with me.**

**D. Christmas Book (optional)**

Read to the children one of the Christmas picture and story books that tells the true meaning of Christmas.

**Debriefing**

Ask: **Are you glad that Jesus came to live on earth? Let's thank God for Him.** Say: **Remember**

**You Need:**

- storybook about Jesus' birth



We worship God when we thank Him for sending Jesus to earth.

**That is the real meaning of Christmas.**



**NOTE: Prayer and Praise appears on page 106.**

2

**Bible Lesson**

**Experiencing the Story**

**You Need:**

- Bible-times costume for each child

**Scenery:** *The room decorations will provide the scenery for this Nativity play. Designate a place in the room as a “hotel,” and another as the “stable” near it.*

**Characters in order of appearance:**

- Visitors to Bethlehem (Walk wearily into Bethlehem.)
- Mary and Joseph

*Dress all the children in Bible-times costumes. Select a boy and a girl to play Joseph and Mary. Other children may be visitors to Bethlehem. As the story is read or told, have an adult assist the children in playing their parts.*

Bethlehem at the time Mary and Joseph went there was probably a noisy, busy place. People crowded into the narrow streets, and all of them were tired.

The Roman emperor had ordered a count, called a census, of everyone who lived in the country. Each man had to go to the place where he had been born and take his family with him to be counted. Joseph’s family home was in Bethlehem, so he and Mary had to go there.

Mary and Joseph had been traveling for a long time to get to Bethlehem. They lived in Nazareth, and Nazareth was 70 miles away from Bethlehem. Bethlehem was crowded with people who had come to be counted. It had been a long trip, and Mary and Joseph were tired. And Mary was going to have a baby soon.

Mary and Joseph tried to find a guest room where they could stay. But there were a lot of other people looking for guest rooms too. Unfortunately, there were no guest rooms left in Bethlehem.

However, a place was found for them in the shelter where animals were kept. Here they would be warm and safe and that’s where Mary’s baby was born. She wrapped her newborn boy in warm cloths and held Him close. Then she laid Him in a manger. That was the only bed she had for Him. The little baby slept while His mother rested. Mary and Joseph really loved their new baby.

But Mary’s son was no ordinary baby. He was Jesus, the Prince of heaven! He had come to earth to be born as a baby so He could show us what God is really like.

**Debriefing**

Allow response time as you ask: **How would you feel if you had to leave your home and go to live in a new place without your family? What if your new place wasn’t nearly as nice as the home you had left? Would you want to go home again right away? Jesus could have felt like that, but He didn’t. He came to earth because He loves us. His birth is the reason people around the world celebrate Christmas. Christmas is about Christ, which is another name for Jesus. Every Christmas we remember that He chose to be born. He wanted us to know what God is really like, and we thank Him for that. Remember,**



We worship God when we thank Him for sending Jesus to earth.

**Say that with me.**

**Bible Study**

**You Need:**

- Bible
- Little Voices Praise Him*

You might want to sing the first verse of "The Bible" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 53) to begin this activity.

Ask: **Where can we read the story about Jesus being born in Bethlehem?** (in the Bible) Open your Bible to Luke 2:1-7. Point to the verses and say: **This is where we find the story of Jesus' birth in God's Word, the Bible.** Point to each verse as you read verses 4-7, paraphrasing as necessary.

**Debriefing**

Allow response time as you ask: **Who was Baby Jesus' mother? Who was His father? When Baby Jesus was born, how did His mother keep Him warm? Where did she lay Baby Jesus? Was Baby Jesus a special baby? Who sent Baby Jesus to live with Mary and Joseph? Why? Remember,**



We worship God when we thank Him for sending Jesus to earth.

**Say that with me.**

**Memory Verse**

Open your Bible to 2 Corinthians 9:15 and say: **Here is where we find today's memory verse in God's Word, the Bible.** Read the verse aloud, then use the motions described below to teach it.

**You Need:**

- Bible

**"Thanks**

Clap your hands five times.



**be to God**

Point upward.



**for His . . . gift!"**

Pretend to rock Baby Jesus in your arms.



**2 Corinthians 9:15** Palms together; then open as if opening a book.



Repeat several times in a rhythmic manner, with the actions, until children are familiar with the verse.

## PRAYER AND PRAISE



### Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Allow time for sharing experiences from last week's lesson study and review the memory verse. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.

### Suggested Songs

Sing the following words to the tune of "Praise Him, Praise Him" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 221):

Thank Him, thank Him,  
All you happy children,  
Jesus came, Jesus came.  
Thank Him, thank Him,  
All you happy children,  
Jesus came, came to earth.

Other songs in *Little Voices Praise Him*, nos. 140-153.

### Mission

Say: **We know that missionaries in other countries are thankful to God for sending Jesus to earth.** Use a story from *Children's Mission*.

### Offering

Say: **Because He loves us and we love Him, we give Jesus our offerings. Let's sing the offering song "Here Is My Money"** (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 32).

Say (and have children repeat after you): **Thank You, Jesus, that we can give offerings to help people around the world. Amen.**

### Prayer

Today, and for the rest of this quarter, invite children to express their thanks for Jesus as you pray together. After one or two volunteers have prayed, close with a simple prayer in which you thank God for the gift of Jesus.

\*Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.

## 3

**Applying the Lesson****Giving Gifts**

Say: **Jesus came from heaven to earth for us. That was a gift to us from God. We too can give someone a gift by doing something for them. What can you do for your family to give them a gift?** Allow response time. (Help pick up toys, help set the table, etc.) **When you think of something, act it out for us, and we'll try to guess what it is.** (Children volunteer to mime.)

**Debriefing**

Say: **God gave us Jesus, His best**

**gift. Why do you think God did that? What will your next "doing" gift for your family be? When will you do it? Will you need help? Do you really want to do it? Why?** (Try to draw the idea that they want to give gifts to others because they love them.)

**Let's remember to thank God for giving Jesus to us. Remember,**



We worship God when we thank Him for sending Jesus to earth.

**Say that with me.**

## 4

**Sharing the Lesson****Christmas Card****You Need:**

- copies of Christmas card (see p. 150)
- art supplies
- scissors

**cards in the mail at this time of year? Today we are going to make a Christmas card to give to someone, such as a friend or neighbor, or someone in your family. Think about someone while you work.**

Have the children decorate the cards,

In advance, make a copy of the Christmas card for each child. (See page 150.)

Distribute art supplies. Remind the children that God's best gift to us is Jesus. Ask: **Does your family receive Christmas**

cut them out, and fold in half on the dotted line. Help them write their name on the inside of the card.

**Debriefing**

Allow response time as you say: **You have made such pretty cards! To whom will you give your card? Why do you want to give it to that person? What will you say when you give it to them? Do you really think God's best gift to us is Jesus? Why? Remember,**



We worship God when we thank Him for sending Jesus to earth.

**Say that with me.**

**Closing**

Sing "God's Best Gift" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 145) or "Good-bye to You" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 45). Offer a brief prayer thanking God for the gift of Baby Jesus.



## STUDENT LESSON

# The First Christmas

## References

Luke 2:1-7; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 43, 44

## Memory Verse

"Thanks be to God for his . . . gift!"  
(2 Corinthians 9:15, NIV).

## The Message

We worship God when we thank Him for sending Jesus to earth.

*Have you ever been on a long trip? Have you wished you could stop and rest? A long time ago Mary and Joseph traveled to a city called Bethlehem. That trip changed their lives.*

Bethlehem at the time that Mary and Joseph went there was probably a noisy, busy place. People crowded into the narrow streets, and all of them were tired. They had been traveling for a long time to get to Bethlehem. The king had ordered a count, called a census, of everyone who lived in the country.

Each man had to take his family to the place where he had been born to have their names written in a record book. All these people had come to Bethlehem to be counted and registered.

Two of those people were Mary and Joseph. They lived in Nazareth, and Nazareth was 70 miles away from Bethlehem. Joseph and Mary, just like all the other visitors to this busy little town, had come to Bethlehem to register because Joseph's family came from there. It had been a long trip, and they were tired. And Mary was about to have a baby.

Mary and Joseph tried to find a guest room where they could stay. But, there

were a lot of other people looking for guest rooms too. Unfortunately, there were no guest rooms left in Bethlehem.

However, a place was found for them in the shelter where animals were kept. Here they would be warm and safe. And that's where Mary's baby was born.



Mary wrapped her newborn boy in warm cloths and held Him close. He was so precious and so beautiful! Quietly she laid Him in the manger. That was the only bed she had for Him.

But Mary's son was no ordinary baby. He was Jesus, the Prince of heaven! He had come to earth as a baby to show us what God is really like. He was willing

to leave heaven to save the whole world from sin.

Jesus' birth is the reason people celebrate Christmas. Christmas is about Christ, another name for Jesus. Every Christmas we remember that He chose to live here to show us what God is really like. Christmas is also a good time to share His love with everyone.

# Do and Say

## Sabbath

Each day this week read the lesson story and use the following to review the memory verse:

**"Thanks . . . . .** Clap your hands five times.

**be to God . . . . .** Point upward.

**for His . . . gift!" . .** Pretend to rock Baby Jesus in your arms.

**2 Corinthians 9:15 .** Palms together; then open as if opening a book.

## Sunday

Help your child "read" the pictures and tell the lesson story. Sing "Away in a Manger" or another song about Baby Jesus during family worship. Thank God for sending Jesus to earth.

## Monday

Tell your child that Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem because the leaders of the country were taking a census. That means they were counting everyone. Help your child count the people in your family and name them.

Thank Jesus for your family.

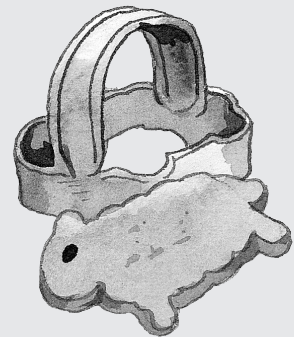
## Tuesday

Visit a place where your child may see some common

farm animals, such as cows and donkeys. Talk about caring for animals and thank God for them. (Alternative: Look at pictures.)

## Wednesday

Help your child make cookies in the shapes of things in the lesson story (animals, manger, stable, Mary and Joseph). Save some cookies for tomorrow. As you share a cookie, remember that we worship God when we thank Him for sending Jesus to earth.



## Thursday

Let your child invite a friend over or visit someone. Share some cookies and tell the story about Baby Jesus. Remember to worship God by thanking Him for sending Jesus to earth.

## Friday

Help your child look at the pictures in the lesson book and tell the story about Baby Jesus during family worship. Sing about Jesus' birth, then thank God for sending Him to earth.

