

JESUS WAS BORN

Matthew 1; Luke 1-2



God sent the angel Gabriel to a woman named Mary. Gabriel said, “Greetings, favored woman! You are going to have a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be called the Son of God, and he will rule over God’s kingdom forever.”

Mary replied, “How is this possible? I’m not even married!” The angel replied, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and you will give birth to a son. Nothing is impossible with God.”

“I am the Lord’s servant,” said Mary. “May it happen just as you said.” Then the angel left. During this time, Mary was engaged to a man named Joseph. When Joseph learned that Mary was pregnant, he planned to quietly end their engagement. But an angel appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, don’t be afraid to take Mary as your wife. The baby inside her is from the Holy Spirit. When the baby is born, you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel commanded. All this happened to fulfill what God promised long ago through the prophet:

“See, the virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they will name him Immanuel,” which means “God is with us.”

In those days, a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole empire should be registered. So, Joseph and

Mary went from Nazareth to Bethlehem to be registered. While they were there in Bethlehem, Mary gave birth to Jesus and wrapped him tightly in cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

In the same region, shepherds were out watching over their sheep at night. An angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said, “Don’t be afraid, because I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you, who is the Messiah, the Lord.” Then many angels appeared with the first angel, and they all praised God, saying: “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to people he favors!”

When the angels left, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go straight to Bethlehem and see what has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” They hurried off and found Mary, Joseph, and the baby who was lying in the manger. Then the shepherds went and shared the good news of what they had been told.

Christ Connection: God kept His promise to send Jesus, the Messiah, to save people from their sins. God will keep His promise to save everyone who trusts in Jesus as Savior and Lord.



1 WELCOME TIME

Greet each preteen as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

- **Share with us your favorite birthday memory. How did you celebrate?**
- **Who was there? Did you have a favorite gift?**

2 SESSION STARTER

OPTION 1: HOW CAN THIS BE?

Prior to the session, print two copies of the “Crazy Animal Facts” printable. Cut one copy apart, but save the second copy to use as an answer key. Have the kids sit in a circle; then drop the paper strips in the middle of the circle. Allow each kid to pick up a piece of paper. Have the kids with animal names stand on one side of the room and the kids with facts stand on the other side. Lead the kids with animal facts to take turns sharing what their fact says. Then have the kids with the names try to match up with the correct fact.

SAY ““ These are some crazy animal facts! And even though they may be hard to believe, they’re true! In our lesson today, Mary was told that she would have a baby, and that that baby would be the Messiah. Mary had to decide if she trusted that information or not. Let’s get into our lesson to find out what her reaction was to this information. ””

OPTION 2: NO MORE ROOM



Before class, create a large space for the kids to move around freely. Create a 1’x1’ square in the middle of the space using tape. Inform the kids that they will be playing tag, trying to get from one side of the room to the other. Assign a tagger and have the other kids line up on the opposite end of the room from the tagger. Tell the kids that the tape square is a safe space, but only one person can be in the box at a time and only for five seconds.

SAY ““ In our lesson today, there was no guest room for Jesus, so Mary had to find somewhere else to lay Baby Jesus. Let’s learn more to find out where this was. ””



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY

The Bible tells us what is true about God and about ourselves. All of the stories in the Bible fit together to tell us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

Today we are going to hear about when Jesus was born. Through our Bible story, we will learn that **JESUS, THE PROMISED MESSIAH, WAS BORN**. Whether this is your first time or your tenth time hearing this story, there is always something new to learn in God's Word.

Read from Matthew 1; Luke 1-2.

•What does this story teach us about God?

The prophet Isaiah prophesied that 'a virgin would give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14).' Today we learned that Immanuel means 'God with us.' God made clear to His people throughout the Old Testament that He loved them and wanted them to be close to Him, but the people were stubborn and insisted on living lives apart from God. **This story teaches us that God wants to be close to us.**

•Why is it important that Jesus was both fully God and fully man?

God knew from the very beginning that Jesus would need to be among His people, in the flesh, and live as we do. For Him to come and live among His people, He became one of us, while still being God. He understood firsthand the things that we face (Hebrews 4:14-16). He was tempted, experienced hunger, pain, and heartache, yet through it all He never sinned. **Through His sinless life He was able to become the sinless offering for all people's sin.** If He hadn't come to live as we do, He couldn't demonstrate sinless living and take on that penalty for us. He had to come be 'with us.'

Form groups of two or three and practice retelling the Bible story in your own words. Think of someone you could share the story with this week.

2 MISSIONS MOMENT

Explain to kids that Annie Armstrong was born in Baltimore, Maryland, on July 11, 1850. She was the second youngest of five children. She developed an interest in missions work at a young age while attending missionary meetings with her mother. 'Miss Annie,' as she was affectionally called, was touched when she heard a speaker talk about the difficult living conditions of Native Americans who had been forced from their lands onto reservations. Annie realized that churches near her home could work together to supply the needs of the people she heard about even though they were far away. Annie organized women in her church, and other Baltimore churches to gather clothes needed for 240 Native American students at a school. This collection of clothing shipped to these students was the beginning of a ministry to Native Americans that continued throughout Annie's life. Annie made five trips to help these Native Americans.

Pray, thanking God for Annie Armstrong's life and the work she did to help people have what they needed.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

The truth that God is with us still applies to us today. When we repent and believe that Jesus died on the cross and rose again for our sins, God promises that He will always be with us (Hebrews 13:5-6). Have you put your faith in the only one who can save you? I would love to talk with you if you have questions or if you are ready to make that decision.






4 PRAY

Thank You, God, for sending Your Son, Jesus, to die in our place. Help us trust You with everything in our lives and grow more in our faith each day. Amen.

THE GOSPEL

GOD'S PLAN FOR ME

The gospel is the good news—the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use Scripture and the guide provided below to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

				
GOD RULES	WE SINNED	GOD PROVIDED	JESUS GIVES	WE RESPOND
Ask: "Who is in charge at home?" Explain that because God created everything, He is in charge of everything. Read Revelation 4:11.	Ask: "Have you ever done something wrong?" Tell kids that everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin separates us from God. Read Romans 3:23.	Explain that God is holy and must punish sin. God sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment we deserve. Read John 3:16.	Ask: "What is the best gift you've ever received?" Say that Jesus took our punishment for sin by giving His life, and He gives us His righteousness. God sees us as if we lived the perfect life Jesus lived. This is the best gift ever! Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.	Explain that everyone has a choice to make. Ask: "Will you trust Jesus as your Savior and Lord? You can turn from self and sin and turn to Jesus." Read Romans 10:9-10.



THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

1 THINK ABOUT THE STORY

- **Where was Jesus before He was on earth?**
- **God kept His promise to send Jesus. Why are you glad Jesus came to be the Savior?**

2 GROUP DISCUSSION

Distribute Bibles. Guide preteens to open their Bibles to Luke 1. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Luke 1:26-28, 2:4-5.

Remind preteens that Caesar Augustus ordered a census to be taken of the people, so all people had to return to their hometowns to be counted. Joseph, being in the line of David, was required to return to Bethlehem with his pregnant wife, Mary. This was not a short journey just across town or even a few hours away; they traveled for days to reach their destination. It was even prophesied by the prophet Micah that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). Choose another volunteer to read aloud Luke 1:26-28, 2:4-5 again. Then lead the group to discuss the following questions.

1. What does 'nothing is impossible with God' mean?

God can do all things. He is the Creator of everything, and all things are in His control. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Luke 1:37.)

2. How did the shepherds respond to the news they heard? How do you think you would have responded?

The shepherds were given a message from God that they could not wait to act upon. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Luke 2:15-16.)

3. Immanuel means 'God with us.' How does it make you feel to know that God became one of us and promises to be with everyone who believes in Him?

Knowing that God had promised to be with us brings great comfort. He wants a relationship with each of us, desires to speak with you daily through prayer, and wants to meet you in the pages of your Bible. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Psalm 23:4.)

BIG PICTURE QUESTION

Who is Jesus?
Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God,
who came to earth to save us.



THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

1 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY

Instruct kids to open their Bibles to John 3:16. Lead them in reading the key passage aloud together. Give each kid a piece of paper and something to draw with. Encourage them to write the key passage in large letters using fun colors and handwriting styles.

Tell kids that reading about the birth of Jesus today ties directly in with our key passage for this unit. God sent His only Son, Jesus, to live a perfect life, die in the place of sinners, and rise again. Those who believe in Jesus will receive eternal life with Him.

2 PRAY

Invite volunteers to share prayer requests. Then pray, thanking God for sending His Son, Jesus, to die in our place. Ask Him for help to trust Him with everything in our lives and to grow more in our faith each day.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

BIRTH OF JESUS DRAWINGS

Before class, write down several key words or phrases that relate to the lesson on pieces of paper, such as: angel, Mary, manger, shepherds, etc. Place the words in a small bowl or bag. Explain to the kids that they will be taking turns drawing parts of today's lesson. They will each have the opportunity to draw out a word or phrase from the bag and then illustrate it for their classmates to try and guess.

Remind kids that while it's fun to play this game and guess at these drawings, God left no guessing for us: **JESUS, THE PROMISED MESSIAH, WAS BORN.**