

The First Christmas Gift

Jesus is born

Luke 1:26-38; 2:1-20; Matthew 1:18-25

Character Trait: Hope

(Estimated Lesson Time: 90 minutes)

Objectives:

- Children will identify that Christmas is a celebration of the birth of Jesus.
- Children will recognize that Jesus is God's only Son.
- Children will explain how Jesus came to bring us hope.

Supplies:

- *The First Christmas Gift* loaded onto a tablet or phone in the *Bible App for Kids*
- A ball *(suitable for throwing)*

Welcome Activity:

(5 minutes)

Welcome the children. Ask them to close their eyes and think of a time they spent with someone they loved. Who were they with? What did they do? How did it make them feel? Have the children open their eyes.

SAY: Gifts are not always physical things. The time we get to spend with our loved ones is one of the most precious gifts of all. Today you will be learning about how God created a way for us to know and be with Him no matter what.

Review:

(5 minutes)

Guide the children in a brief review of the previous lesson by asking the following questions:

- **What was the first thing Nehemiah did after he heard that Jerusalem was in ruins and his friends were in trouble?** *(He asked God to help them.)*
- **What did Nehemiah say to encourage his friends?** *("With God's help, we can rebuild these walls.")*
- **What did the enemies do when they saw the Israelites rebuilding the walls?** *(First, they laughed. Then, they prepared to attack.)*
- **What did the Israelites keep in their hands as they worked?** *(They kept a tool in one hand and a sword in the other.)*
- **What did Ezra, the priest, do after the wall was finished?** *(He read God's law and praised God for protecting them.)*

Today's Bible Story:

(10-15 minutes)

Show *The First Christmas Gift* from the *Bible App for Kids* or share the story aloud:

- The angel, Gabriel, told Mary, "You will have a baby!"
- "How?" asked Mary. "I'm not married."
- "God's Holy Spirit will come down to you. The baby will be God's Son."
- Mary believed him.
- Mary was engaged to Joseph, but he didn't believe her story.
- So an angel visited him, too.
- "Mary's not lying. Her baby will be God's Son. You must name Him Jesus."
- Many months passed.
- Then they traveled to Bethlehem, Joseph's hometown, to be counted by the government.
- After that long journey, Mary was ready to give birth.
- But all the inns in Bethlehem were full.
- So God's Son was born in a stable, wrapped in cloths, and laid on a bed of hay.
- They named Him Jesus.
- That night, an angel appeared to some shepherds in the hills near Bethlehem.
- "Good news!" the angel said. "Your Savior has been born. He's in Bethlehem, lying in a manger."
- Suddenly more angels appeared, so many of them that they filled the skies.
- "Praise God in heaven!" they all sang. "And may everyone who pleases Him receive His peace."
- When the angels left, the shepherds hurried to Bethlehem.
- They found the baby, their Savior, lying on a bed of hay.
- It was just as the first angel had said.
- After the shepherds had seen Jesus, they went through the town.
- They were very excited!
- They told everyone what had happened, and they praised God for what He had done!

Discussion:

(15 minutes)

Encourage the children to think more about the story by asking the following questions:

The angel, Gabriel, told Mary that she would have a baby. How would she be able to have a baby without being married? *(God's Holy Spirit would give her a baby. The baby would be God's only Son.)*

The angel also visited Joseph and told him what name he must give the baby. What was the name? *(Jesus)*

What Good News did the angel bring to the shepherds? *(Your Savior has been born. He is in Bethlehem, lying in a manger.)*

Explain that a savior is someone who rescues someone else from something bad or when they are in trouble. Why did the angel tell the shepherds that their Savior had been born? *(God had sent His Son, Jesus, to be our Savior. Jesus had come to fix our sin problem.)*

How did the shepherds know that Jesus had been born? *(The angels appeared in the sky to tell them the good news.)*

Once the shepherds had seen Jesus for themselves, what did they do? *(They went through the town. They were very excited. They told everyone what had happened and praised God for what He had done.)*

SAY: Jesus was born in a manger. But this was no ordinary birth! The angel said, "Good news! Your Savior has been born." The good news is that God has sent Jesus to be our Savior and to bring us hope. A savior is someone who saves others from danger or death.

SAY: Sin creates a problem that we cannot fix. Our relationship with God is broken beyond repair because of sin, and the payment for sin is death. Thankfully, God loved us enough to create a solution. He sent Jesus to be our Savior because He can save us from our sins.



God's Bigger Story:

(5 minutes)

SAY: After Adam and Eve first disobeyed God, sin continued to spread throughout the world. Sin broke the relationship between humans and God then, and it still breaks our relationship with Him today. But God loves us so much that He created a plan to fix our sin problem. God sent His Son, Jesus, to be our Savior.



Memory Verse:

(10 minutes)

The Savior *(reach both hands high in the air and look up)*
—yes, the Messiah, the Lord *(point both hands up)*—
has been born *(pretend to rock a baby in your arms)*
today in Bethlehem, the city of David *(point forward)*!

Luke 2:11 (NLT)



Activity:

(15 minutes)

Before the activity, place a ball somewhere visible in the room. Have the children sit in a circle.

SAY: Today you will be playing a game together. When the ball is tossed to you, you are to share something you remember from today's Bible story and then toss the ball to someone else. Only the person holding the ball is allowed to speak.

Next, have everyone sit for a few seconds, silently, and then explain that there is just one problem: You do not have a ball.

While still silent, ask the children to each raise their hand if they have a solution. Next, ask them to keep their hands silently raised if they see a ball somewhere to use. Lastly, ask the children to silently point to it. Call on a child to retrieve the ball and continue with the game until each child has had the opportunity to share aloud.

SAY: Thank you for playing and for your help solving the problem of the missing ball. We can also thank God for providing the help and rescue from sin we all need: His Son, Jesus.



Response Activity:

(10 minutes)

SAY: Jesus' birth happened long, long ago. What kinds of media coverage would it have received had it happened in the present day?

Have the children draw or write how the good news might have been shared where they live.

SAY: While Jesus' birth happened thousands of years ago, the hope that Jesus still provides is just as present for all of us today.

Character Trait: Hope

(10 minutes)

SAY: Jesus gives us hope because only He can fix our sin problem by paying the price for it. Without the hope that Jesus provides, we would spend a lifetime and eternity without God.

Encourage the children to think more about hope by asking the following:

- **Why is the hope that Jesus brings so important?** *(It means there is a way to fix our sin problem and restore our broken relationship with God.)*
- **Why do you personally need a savior?** *(We cannot fix our sin problem ourselves. Only God can do that.)*
- **What does sending Jesus to help us say about how God feels about us?** *(God loved us enough to send His only Son, Jesus, to help us.)*

Connect with Others:

(5 minutes)

SAY: Jesus is not just a nice guy who did great things. He is God's one and only Son. He is our Savior, a gift from God to help us fix the sin problem we cannot fix ourselves. Think about someone with whom you can share the gift of Jesus.

SAY: How can you share the good news of His birth with others?

Closing:

(2 minutes)

SAY: Sin is a problem we cannot fix ourselves. But thankfully, God loved us enough to save us. God sent Jesus to be our Savior. The good news on that very first Christmas was that God's gift of hope had arrived!

Prayer:

(2 minutes)

SAY:

Dear God,
Thank You for sending the gift of Your Son, Jesus. How grateful we are that You created a way to fix our sin problem. Help us share Your great gift of hope with others so that they may know You, too.
Amen.

Notes