

The Saviour Is Born

Christmas Lesson Celebration

1. *Connecting:* Play a storytelling game about unexpected surprises.
2. *Teaching:* Hear the surprising story of Jesus' birth (Matthew 1:18–25).
3. *Responding:* Worship Jesus by creating songs or raps.

SUPPLIES

- Bible

Optional Supplies:

- Memory Verse poster
- *The Action Bible*, images of Jesus' birth, wise men follow the star, wise men bring gifts
- *The Action Bible*, pages 532–537
- Student Pages
- Pencils

Today you will have a special celebration lesson teaching your children about the wonderful birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Use this lesson at Christmas.

Before class, review the Salvation Path at the beginning of this guide. If possible, make copies of it to give children who want to understand more about becoming a child of God.

Teacher Devotion

On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Matthew 2:11

We do not know for sure, but many scholars think the wise men's gifts had significant meaning. Gold was typically given to a king, incense (or frankincense) represented God, and myrrh was a spice used for burying someone who died. The 3 gifts recognized that Jesus is King, He is God, and He was going to die for our sins.

You probably do not have gold, incense, and myrrh to give Jesus this Christmas. But what you do have is even more valuable. This week think of 1 gift you can give Jesus. For example, if you want to give Him more of your time, commit to spending 15 minutes each day in prayer and worship. Or if you want to give Him more of yourself, give up 1 worry that prevents you from fully trusting God. As you lay your gift before Jesus, kneel in worship before the One who gave up everything for you. He is Immanuel. He is God with you. He is worthy of your worship!

Family Connection: Let families know that during this week's lesson the children will be celebrating Jesus' birth. If families already celebrate Christmas, encourage them to talk about ways they can worship Jesus. If families do not celebrate Christmas, encourage them to ask their children to tell them the wonderful, true story of the Saviour's birth.

LESSON TIME

1. Connecting: Play a storytelling game about unexpected surprises.

Welcome your children with a cheery Christmas greeting.

Teacher Tip: Some of your children may have never celebrated Christmas before, and this might be the first time they hear the story of Jesus' birth. Be sure that you share this lesson as though you are unwrapping the best gift ever given—because it is!

When everyone has arrived, ask the children to pair up and sit facing their partners. Tell them they will tell a story together about unexpected surprises in an ordinary day.

The first partner will begin telling a story about an ordinary day. Be sure to use lots of detail. For example, you might start by saying, "I woke up and stretched in bed. I threw off the blanket and ran to pull on my clothes because I was cold." As the first person tells the story, the other person can hold up a hand. Whenever the partner holds up his hand, the storyteller must add something very unexpected to the story. For example, if the partner held up a hand after you put on your clothes, the unexpected twist might be, "But my clothes had shrunk overnight and I could not put them on." Then the storyteller continues the story with ordinary activities until the partner raises her hand again. After about 5 minutes, you will switch so the other child can be the storyteller.

Give the children 5 minutes for the first storytelling. Then tell the children to switch so their partners can tell a story. Congratulate the children on their unexpected additions to the stories.

Let the children know that today's special lesson is about an unexpected event: God sent His Son Jesus to earth as a baby. Why? Tell the children to listen carefully and they will find out. The reason has to do with them personally.

2. Teaching: Hear the surprising story of Jesus' birth (Matthew 1:18–25).

Let's hear the story of how Jesus was born. Mary, Jesus' mother, was promised in marriage to an honourable man named Joseph. But before the marriage, something surprising happened.

Tell the children that you will pause at certain places in the story and ask them what they think happens next. After you read each of the three questions, allow the children to answer before continuing the story. If possible, show *The Action Bible* images as you tell the story.

Do you think that:

Mary told Joseph that she never wanted to get married?

Joseph sold his house and moved to a different village?

Mary became pregnant?

Let the children guess.

Mary became pregnant but Joseph was not the baby's father. As we heard, Joseph was an honourable man, and he did not want to shame Mary. So he decided that he would divorce her in a quiet way. While he was still thinking about what exactly he would do, Joseph had a dream. In this dream, the angel of the Lord told him something surprising.

Do you think he told Joseph:

Mary was a terrible woman and he should marry a woman from a different village?

He should take Mary as his wife because her baby was from the Holy Spirit?

Mary's parents thought he was the father and they were very angry with him?

Let the children guess.

The angel told Joseph to take Mary as his wife because she would have a son, who was from the Holy Spirit. The angel also told Joseph to name this baby Jesus, because He would save His people from their sins. That was some very surprising news for Joseph! But he did just what the angel told him to do. A few months later, Mary gave birth to her son, and He was named Jesus.

About 700 years before Jesus was born, God had said that Jesus would be known as "God with us." Although God had always been with His people (as we have seen in the stories of Adam and Eve, Abraham, Isaac, Daniel, and others), now He would come in a surprising way to be with His people.

The Son of God would come to earth as a human in the person of Jesus Christ. What surprising reason did God have for doing this?

Was it because:

He wanted to show people that He could do amazing things?

He wanted to be friends with every person on earth?

He wanted to know what it was like to eat our food?

Let the children guess.

Why did God do this surprising thing? Because He wants to be friends with each of us forever!

This was a very difficult thing for God to do. Everyone in the whole world has sinned. Because God is holy and good, that means that we could never be friends with God until our sins were paid for. But only a perfect person, someone who had never sinned, could pay for our sins. That means you could not do it. That means I could not do it. We are not perfect. We have sinned. But Jesus was perfect. God sent His Son as a little baby who would grow up perfect and without sin. When He was an adult, Jesus willingly paid for our sins by dying for us so we could be friends with God again.

Let's go back to the story of the birth of Jesus, the Christmas story. Some time after Jesus was born, some important wise men arrived from a country in the East. They were looking for the new king of the Jews. They went to the royal court to find out where he was.

The wise men asked King Herod, "Where is the new king of the Jews? We saw a star in the sky that signalled his birth. We are eager to meet him and give him gifts and praise."

Herod consulted with the Jewish religious experts and found that the Messiah, or Saviour, was supposed to be born in Bethlehem. He then did something surprising.

Do you think that he:

Got on a ship and sailed away?

Lied to the wise men?

Killed the wise men?

Let the children guess.

King Herod lied to the wise men. He told them to carefully search for the child in Bethlehem. When they found him, they were supposed to let Herod know where the child was so he could also worship Jesus. But Herod was really planning to kill the child so that he was the only king.

The wise men went on their way. Above their heads shone the star they had seen in their own country, guiding them in the direction they should go. This new king was the most special person in the world. Even the stars celebrated His birth.

The star led them to Mary, Joseph, and Jesus. When the wise men saw Jesus, they did a surprising thing.

What do you think the wise men did?

They worshipped Jesus.

They took Jesus back to their own country.

They told Mary and Joseph that Jesus was an ordinary baby.

Let the children guess.

The wise men bowed in worship. They offered Jesus gifts of gold, incense, and myrrh. These were gifts for a king.

The wise men were warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, so they returned to their country by another route. God then warned Joseph through a dream about Herod's evil plan to kill Jesus, and God told Joseph to escape with Jesus and Mary to Egypt. The Bible does not tell us, but maybe Joseph used the wise men's gifts to help pay for the trip and their life in Egypt.

Joseph kept Jesus safe in Egypt until God told him through a dream that it was safe to return to Israel because Herod was dead. Joseph obeyed and moved his family back to Israel.

- **What was surprising in this story?**
- **When someone has a new baby, how do the mother and father let people know? How did God let people know His Son had been born?**

He sent a star to guide the wise men. You can add that He also sent angels to tell shepherds, but that is told in a different place in the Bible.

- **The prophet Isaiah said that the Saviour born of a virgin would be called Immanuel, which means "God with us." Why is "God with us" an excellent name for Jesus?**

Because now God was with us as a human being in Jesus.

- **How does it make you feel to know that God our heavenly Father was willing to send His only Son to earth to die for our sins?**

Show the Memory Verse poster, if you are using it. Encourage the children to memorize the verse.

On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother
Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him.

Matthew 2:11a

3. Responding: Worship Jesus by creating songs or raps.

When the wise men worshipped Jesus, they brought gifts of gold, incense, and myrrh. The wise men recognized Jesus was someone very special and deserved to be worshipped. Let's worship Jesus now with a wonderful celebration!

Divide your children into groups of 5. Explain that you will suggest some celebration sentences. Each group is to pick one of the celebration sentences and create a song or a rap using that sentence. They will have about 3 minutes to create their song or rap. The song or rap should praise God for the wonderful gift of His Son.

In a rap they will say the words to a strong beat. They may use clapping and will want to repeat the line several times. In a song, they can use a tune they already know. Here are some celebration sentences for you to share with the children. You can add some sentences of your own. It does not matter if several groups pick the same sentence.

Celebrate! God sent His Son to earth on Christmas.

God loves each of us lots and lots and lots!

God sent His Son, and now we can be friends with God forever.

All the earth claps because of the gift God has given us.

After the children have created their songs or raps, have each group perform for the others. Encourage clapping. This celebration should take about 15 minutes.

Optional: If you are using the Student Pages, there is space for children to worship through writing or drawing.

Jesus' birth was wonderful. And His death is very important to us, too. He died for my sins and for your sins. He also rose again to life so we can be adopted into God's family and live with Him forever. If you want to become God's forever child, or if you just want to learn more, come talk to me after class today.

Teacher Tip: Be available after class for children who want to know more about becoming a Christian. Use the Salvation Path at the beginning of this book to help explain the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ!

Close class by praying this blessing based on Isaiah 9:6 over the children:

Blessing: May Jesus—the Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace—make Himself known to you this Christmas! And may you respond to Him with worship just as the wise men did.

Lead the teens in singing this quarter's song, if possible.

"Great Are You Lord" by All Sons and Daughter: <https://youtu.be/vQLMnPYoR9k>