

The Son of God Is Born!

Luke 1:26-45; 2:1-20



Worship Theme:



Jesus' birth is something to celebrate.

Weaving Faith Into Life:



Children will celebrate the Savior's birth.

| Session Sequence | What Children Will Do | Supplies |
|---|--|---|
| 1 Let's Praise God! <i>(up to 25 minutes)</i> | Sing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Crown Him With Many Crowns" • "He Is the Light" • "Joy to the World!" • "His Great Love" (Romans 5:8) • "God With Us" | KidsOwn Worship Kit: <i>KidsOwn Worship DVD</i> Classroom Supplies: Video equipment, large box with lid, wrapping paper, bow, tape, scissors, Christmas tree, 1 candy cane per child |

Preschool

| Session Sequence | What Children Will Do | Supplies |
|--|---|--|
| 2 Let's Learn the Point! <i>(up to 25 minutes)</i> | Story Ornaments Decorate Christmas ornaments to tell the story of Jesus' birth. | Classroom Supplies: Red felt, scissors, glitter glue, Christmas stickers, yellow yarn, cotton balls, glue |
| | * Birthday Celebration Throw a birthday party for Jesus. | Classroom Supplies: Decorations, tape, paper plates, cups, napkins, drinks, frosted cupcakes, sprinkles or candies |
| | Musical Cheers Play a game to clap and cheer for Jesus' birth. | Classroom Supplies: Jingle bells, twist-ties, music player, Christmas music |

Elementary

| Session Sequence | What Children Will Do | Supplies |
|--|---|---|
| 2 Let's Learn the Point! <i>(up to 25 minutes)</i> | * The Shepherds' Story Watch the Bible story on video, and celebrate with it. | KidsOwn Worship Kit: <i>KidsOwn Worship DVD</i> Classroom Supplies: Video equipment, Bibles, 1 noisemaker per child |
| | Presents for Jesus Discuss what Jesus wants for this birthday, and prepare gifts to give him. | KidsOwn Worship Kit: <i>KidsOwn Worship DVD</i> Classroom Supplies: Video equipment, index cards, markers, colored pencils |
| | * Christmas Story Luminarias Make luminarias that illustrate the story of Jesus' birth. | Classroom Supplies: Small paper sacks, sand, bucket, cup, craft supplies, glue, votive candles |

| Session Sequence | What Children Will Do | Supplies |
|---|--|---|
| 3 Let's Pray! <i>(up to 10 minutes)</i> | The Offering Place gifts and offerings to Jesus in a large gift-wrapped box. | KidsOwn Worship Kit: <i>KidsOwn Worship DVD</i> Classroom Supplies: Video equipment, gift-wrapped box from Let's Praise God!, cards from "Presents for Jesus," blank cards |
| | Celebration Cheers Think of cheers of praise to God, celebrating Jesus' birth. | |
| | Celebration Prayers Thank God for the gifts he has given them. | |

* Starred activities can be used successfully with preschool and elementary children together.

Customize your session to fit your needs. You can separate preschoolers and elementary children for Section 2.

Or, if you keep the children all together for the entire worship session, we suggest you choose from the starred activities.

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Mary and Joseph's betrothal was quite different from engagements today. In fact, in Jewish culture at that time, a betrothed couple had already taken public vows and was legally bound as in a marriage, except that the couple was not to live together or have intercourse until the appointed time. Furthermore, it is made clear in Luke 1:27 and 34 that Mary was indeed a virgin.

Mary was troubled by the angel's greeting, probably because she was confused. She might have asked herself how she could be so highly favored by God when her family was a lowly one in Israel. But her confusion only intensified when the angel went on to explain what was to come!

Mary's initial response to the angel (Luke 1:34) doesn't indicate any hesitation in wanting the angel's message to be true. To be the mother of the Messiah was the dream of every Jewish woman. However, Mary had not yet lived with Joseph, and she knew the humiliation she would experience if it became known that she was pregnant. She also questioned the physical possibility of such a pregnancy.

When Mary was told how the child would be conceived and was reminded that God can do anything, she responded in humble obedience. She was God's servant, and she wanted God's plan to be fulfilled in her life.

We don't know if Mary went alone to visit Elizabeth, but it seems she left in a hurry, though the trip must have taken five days. Elizabeth's proclamation that Mary would bear the child of God was a final confirmation to Mary of all that she had likely been thinking during those five days of travel. With that realization, Mary burst into the poem we know as the Magnificat, as she gave glory to God for sending Jesus to earth through her.

Devotion for Leaders

Mary was a willing servant of God. Her life provides a great example of the attitude we should bring to our relationship with Jesus.

Weaving Faith Into Your Life: Read aloud Luke 1:34-38. Reflect on how scary and exciting it would have been for Mary to declare her service to the Lord by giving birth to the Savior. How have you reacted to God when he gives you a scary assignment to serve him? Pray to God, asking him to give you the strength to serve him no matter what God has called you to do.

Why We Worship for Leaders

The mighty, miraculous, mysterious power of God was displayed in the birth of Jesus, who came to earth, fully God and yet fully human, as a helpless newborn baby. The world was in desperate need of the salvation, hope, and light that Jesus brought. Some people understood their need and received Jesus with open arms, while others continued to grope in darkness.

When we recognize our spiritual needs, Jesus' love can fill our lives. He paid the price for our sins. He gives us hope in a hopeless world. And he shows us the way to a relationship with God. Let's worship God by celebrating the birth of the One who made all these things possible!

Easy Prep for Leaders

Let's Praise God!—Make sure your video equipment is ready. Wrap a large box and its lid in Christmas wrapping paper, and put a bow on the lid. Make sure you can open the box without unwrapping it.

A Joyful Noise—Watch "The Shepherds' Story" at least once so you'll be familiar with it.

Preschool Activities—Refer to the preschool pages for preparations.

1 Let's Praise God!


Play music videos from the *KidsOwn Worship DVD* as children arrive. Greet children by name, and give each one a candy cane as he or she enters the worship area. Tell the children not to eat the candy canes.

After you hand out the candy canes,

Say **Welcome, everyone! There's excitement in the air today! Could it be because it's almost Christmas? Let's celebrate the birth of Jesus!**

Ask volunteers to come to the front of the room and tell how their families celebrate Christmas.

Say **The last few weeks we've been talking about God's promise to send Jesus. God kept his promise! Jesus' birth is something to celebrate. Let's worship him together.**

 Sing "Crown Him With Many Crowns."

Say **Now, quickly greet your neighbor, and tell your neighbor about the best Christmas gift you ever got.**

Point out the large gift-wrapped box with a bow on it.

Say God gave us the best Christmas gift of all. If that gift were in this box, what would be in the box? Jesus would be in it! Let's say his name together: "Jesus!" Louder! "Jesus!" That's great! We'll use this box later to prepare a gift for Jesus. Our next song is about the best gift of all.

▶ Sing "He Is the Light."

Say Jesus really is the best gift ever. He brings joy to the world. Let's celebrate Jesus' birth. Let's clap and cheer, jump around, dance, and show our joy in whatever way we want. Let's show God that we have joy because Jesus was born!

▶ Sing "Joy to the World!"

Help the children form three groups based on where they're sitting.

Say When I point to your group, I want you to stand, shout out the praise I'm going to assign you, and then quickly sit down again. Group 1, you'll shout, "Jesus is born!" Group 2, you'll shout, "Celebrate Jesus!" Group 3, you'll shout, "Jesus is God!"

Have groups practice their parts once, then point to the groups at random, and have them shout their parts. Have them say their praise words fast, then slow, then loud, and then soft. End by having all the groups whisper their praise at the same time.

Next, point out the Christmas tree displayed in the room.

Say When you came to class today, you were given a candy cane. Take your candy cane, and hold it upside down.

Ask • What do you see?

Say The candy cane forms a J, which stands for Jesus! You can keep your candy cane for yourself. If you want to praise Jesus now for coming to earth, come and get another candy cane. Then say something like, "I praise you, Jesus, for loving me," and hang your candy cane on the tree. Let's fill our tree with praises!

Give candy canes to children who come forward, and encourage them to praise Jesus aloud before hanging their canes on the tree.

Say The tree looks great! Have you ever noticed that trees always seem to point up and reach their branches out? God's love is like that, it reaches higher than the sky and out to us. Let's go back to our seats and sing "His Great Love" (Romans 5:8).

▶ Sing "His Great Love" (Romans 5:8).



ALLERGY ALERT



Be aware that some children have food allergies that can be dangerous. Know your children, and consult with parents about allergies their children may have. Also be sure to read food labels carefully as hidden ingredients can cause allergy-related problems.

Say Matthew 1:23 says, “She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means ‘God is with us.’” God gave Jesus to us, and that’s an amazing gift. Let’s sing!

 Sing “God With Us.”

Pray Dear God, thank you so much for sending Jesus to be born as a baby and to be our Savior. Help us to appreciate your gift and truly celebrate Jesus this Christmas. In Jesus’ name, amen.

2 Let’s Learn the Point!

Preschool Activities, pages 53-54

At this time, have the preschool leader invite the preschoolers to go to their own room for this section of activities. Tear out the Preschool Activities page, and give it to the preschool leader. Have the preschool leader bring the preschoolers back to participate in Let’s Pray! with the older children. If you prefer to keep all the children together, do the starred (*) activities. They will work well with both elementary and preschool children.

Elementary Activities

* *The Shepherds’ Story*

Say Let’s watch a video that shows us why Jesus’ birth is something to celebrate. As you watch it, you may want to follow along in your Bibles in Luke 2:1-20.

 Show “The Shepherds’ Story” video.

Give each person a noisemaker, such as a party favor or a kazoo.

Say Now let’s watch “The Shepherds’ Story” again. Every time you see something to celebrate, use your noisemaker! Show the video segment again. When it’s over, ask kids to set their noisemakers on the floor at their feet or put them in their pockets.

- Ask**
- **Why is Jesus’ birth something to celebrate?** (Because it was a miracle; because Jesus came to die for us.)
 - **What does your family do to celebrate Christmas?** (Open presents; decorate; go out to look at Christmas lights.)
 - **What can we learn from the shepherds about how to celebrate Jesus’ birth?** (We can thank him; we can pay attention to him; we can be excited; we can tell other people.)

Leader Skillbuilder

Children will be excited about Christmas and easily distracted during this session. Use these activities to channel their energy into positive expressions of their excitement. For example, if you notice an extra measure of fidgeting during discussions and activities, take a brief “Praise and Wiggle” break. Have children stand and wiggle their whole bodies as they say “Thank you, God, for Christmas!” or something similar. Then have them sit again. If their focus begins to drift to the more commercial aspects of Christmas, be patient, but gently draw the focus back to celebrating the birth of Jesus.

Say ➤ **Jesus' birth is something to celebrate because he was the answer to God's promise. Hundreds and thousands of people, throughout all generations since Adam and Eve, had waited for Jesus to come to show us the way back to God. He kept his promise and sent Jesus to earth. That's reason to celebrate!**

Encourage children to take their noisemakers home and use them to celebrate Jesus' birth on Christmas day.

Presents for Jesus

Say ➤ **When it's your birthday, what's the main thing you look forward to? Probably presents! Let's treat Jesus to some presents today for his birthday.**

Ask ➤ • **What kinds of things might Jesus need?** (Jesus doesn't need anything; Jesus needs us to follow him.)

Say ➤ **Jesus has everything he needs. After all, he owns everything in the universe! But there is something he wants that only you can give him.**

Ask ➤ • **What would that be? What does Jesus want more than anything?** (Jesus wants us to obey him; Jesus wants us to love him; Jesus wants us to serve him.)

Say ➤ **Our love is the only thing he doesn't have if we don't give it to him. Our love is what he wants! He wants you for a friend. Think about it this way.**

Ask ➤ • **How do your mom and dad feel when you give them a big hug or say, "I love you"?** (They feel special; they know I love them.)

Say ➤ **That's just how Jesus feels when we give him our love! Since Jesus' birth is something to celebrate, let's give him the best birthday gift of all—ourselves.**

Pass out index cards, markers, and colored pencils to everyone.

Say ➤ **In the center of your card, write your name in big letters and decorate it. Add words of love to your card, and make special designs on it. Later, we'll give our cards, which represent ourselves, to Jesus.**



Play "Crown Him With Many Crowns" in the background as the kids work. When the cards are finished, set them aside for The Offering.

(continued on page 55)

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Luke 1:26-45; 2:1-20

Worship Theme:



Jesus' birth is something to celebrate.

Easy Prep for Leaders

Story Ornaments—Cut shapes (circles, diamonds, or hearts, for example) from red felt so you have one per child. The shapes should be approximately 6 inches or big enough to hold these decorations: glitter glue, Christmas stickers of baby Jesus and angels or stars, bits of yellow yarn, small cotton balls, and glue. Use a large needle to thread string through each ornament. Tie the string in a loop.

Birthday Celebration—Gather decorations, such as crepe-paper streamers, Christmas lights, and shiny garland. Provide Christmas sprinkles or small red and green candies for decorating cupcakes.

Musical Cheers—Have a music player ready to play Christmas songs. String a twist-tie through each bell. You'll need two bells per child.

Using Theo

Consider using Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet today in these ways:

- Have Theo lead the preschoolers from the main worship area to the preschool room.
- Have Theo distribute the felt shapes during "Story Ornaments." Have him watch the children and praise their efforts.
- See the KidsOwn Worship Kit for a puppet skit written for today's worship session.



Story Ornaments

Have children sit at a table, and give each child a red felt ornament.

Say **Our Bible story today is about Jesus' birth. As I tell it, you can decorate your Christmas ornament. When we finish, your ornament will tell the Christmas story! A long time ago, an angel named Gabriel appeared to Mary. He said, "Don't be afraid. God is pleased with you. He's going to give you a special gift. You're going to have a baby, and his name will be Jesus. He'll be the Son of God!"**

Pass out angel or star stickers, and help children put them on their ornaments.

Say **The angel told Mary that her cousin Elizabeth was going to have a baby, too. Mary was very surprised. She loved God so much that she said, "I am God's servant. I believe these things will happen!"**

After the angel left, Mary went to visit Elizabeth. When she got to Elizabeth's house and said "Hello," something funny happened! The baby inside Elizabeth's tummy jumped for joy! That's because Elizabeth and her baby knew that Jesus was going to be born!

Help children put dots of glitter glue on their ornaments to represent the joy Elizabeth and her baby felt.

Say **Later, Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem.**

It was time for Mary to have her baby, but all the hotels were full in Bethlehem. So they found a stable, which is where animals live.

Glue bits of yellow yarn to the ornaments. The "hay" can be pressed into a few of the dots of glitter glue or regular glue.

Say **They stayed in the stable for the night, and that's where Jesus was born! There was no crib in the stable, so Mary and Joseph put the baby Jesus to sleep in a manger, where cows eat their hay.**

Pass out baby Jesus stickers, and help children place them on their ornaments.

Say **Then God sent angels to announce the birth of his Son. He sent them to shepherds who were watching their sheep in a field nearby. Let's glue some little fuzzy balls to our ornament to remind us of the sheep and their shepherds who first heard about Jesus.**

Help children glue cotton balls to their ornaments.

Say **At first the shepherds were afraid. But the angel said, "Don't be afraid. I have great news! God's Son has been born in Bethlehem! Go look for a baby sleeping in a manger." Then all the angels started singing for joy. The shepherds ran off to find the baby Jesus. They found him in the stable, and they worshipped him. Then they went and told everyone they knew that God's Son had been born!**

Story Ornaments (continued)

- Ask** • Why do we celebrate Jesus' birth?
• What are some ways we can celebrate his birth?

Say Jesus' birth is something to celebrate! The best way to celebrate is to give our love to him. That's the present he likes best of all. Let's all say, "I love you, Jesus" together. (Pause.) That's great! I know you just made Jesus happy! And look at the pretty ornaments you made! The decorations on your ornament will help you remember the story so you can tell your family. Then you can hang the ornament on your tree.

Preschool Leader Tip

For "Story Ornaments," you could use small red or green paper plates for the ornaments. Use a hole punch to make holes for hooks or loops of yarn.

* Birthday Celebration

Say Jesus' birth is something to celebrate, just as you celebrate your birthday.

- Ask** • How do you celebrate your birthday?
• Why do we celebrate birthdays?
• Why is Jesus' birth something to celebrate?

Say Let's have a birthday party for Jesus. We'll decorate the room to tell him he's special and even give Jesus a present!

Have children help you decorate the room. Then let each child add sprinkles or candies to a cupcake.

Say Before we eat our cake, let's give Jesus presents!

- Ask** • What kind of present should we give Jesus?

Say Does Jesus need a toy or a new bathrobe? Does he need food or a nice sweater? No, Jesus doesn't need any of those

Preschool Leader Tip

After the room is decorated for "Birthday Celebration," you may want to play the "Musical Cheers" game before giving Jesus his gift and eating the cake.

things. But there is something he wants more than anything else—our love!

- Ask** • How do your mom and dad feel when you give them a big hug and say, "I love you"?

Say That's just how Jesus feels when we tell him we love him. Let's give Jesus the best birthday gift of all—our love. Let's say all together, "We love you, Jesus!" (Pause.) That's great! Let's hug ourselves as if we were hugging Jesus and say it again. (Pause.) That's just what Jesus wants—your love. Jesus' birthday is something to celebrate! Let's eat our cake now and tell ways your family celebrates Jesus' birthday.

ALLERGY ALERT



Be aware that some children have food allergies that can be dangerous. Know your children, and consult with parents about allergies their children may have. Also be sure to read food labels carefully as hidden ingredients can cause allergy-related problems.

Musical Cheers

Help children attach the bells to their shoes by looping the twist-ties through their shoelaces and twisting them. If their shoes don't have anything to fasten the bells to, twist the ties around a finger on each hand to make jingle rings.

Help the children form a big circle.

Say Let's play a game to celebrate Jesus' birth! While the music is playing, walk around in a circle. As you walk, your bells will make happy sounds to celebrate Jesus' birth. When the music stops, it's time to celebrate! Cheer and clap and dance and do whatever happy thing

you want to do to show Jesus that we're happy he was born. Are you ready?

Play Christmas music while the children walk in a circle, starting and stopping the music at intervals. Whenever the music stops, encourage children to express joy and celebrate Jesus' birth with actions and words.

- Ask** • Why is Jesus' birth something to celebrate?
• How will you celebrate Jesus' birth this week?

Say Jesus was God's gift to us, and he loves to see us happy about him. Let's keep celebrating all week, even at home. Jesus' birth is something to celebrate!

(continued from page 52)

* Christmas Story Luminarias

Give each person a small white paper sack. Set out a bucket of sand, a cup, and craft supplies on the tables.

Say While I tell our Bible story today, use these supplies to decorate your sack in a way that tells the story of Jesus' birth. Then we'll add sand and a candle to each one to make a special Christmas candleholder called a luminaria.

A long time ago, an angel named Gabriel appeared to Mary. He said, "Don't be afraid. God is pleased with you. He's going to give you a special gift. You're going to have a baby, and his name will be Jesus. He'll be the Son of God!" The angel also told Mary that her cousin Elizabeth was going to have a baby, too. Mary loved God so much that she said, "I am God's servant. I believe you, and I am willing to do whatever God says."

After the angel left, Mary went to visit Elizabeth. When she got to Elizabeth's house and said "Hello," something odd happened! The baby that was growing inside Elizabeth jumped for joy! That's because Elizabeth and her baby knew that Jesus was going to be born!

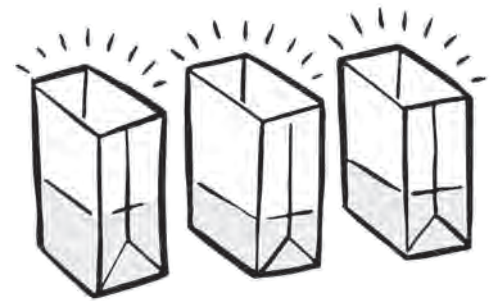
Later, Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem. It was time for Mary to have her baby, but all the hotels were full in Bethlehem. So they found a stable, where animals were kept, and they stayed there for the night. That's where Jesus was born! There was no crib in the stable, so Mary and Joseph put the baby Jesus to sleep in a manger. A manger is a trough that holds food for the cows.

Then God sent angels to announce the birth of his Son. They appeared to some poor shepherds who were watching their sheep in a field nearby. At first the shepherds were afraid. But the angel said, "Don't be afraid. I have great news! God's Son has been born in Bethlehem! Go look for a baby sleeping in a manger." Then all the angels started singing for joy. The shepherds ran off to find the baby Jesus. They found him in the stable, and they worshipped him. Then they went and told everyone they knew that God's Son had been born!

- Ask**
- **What does the Christmas story tell us about God's love?** (God sent his only Son to earth for us; God made a sacrifice because he loved us.)
 - **Why is Jesus' birth something to celebrate?** (Because it was a miracle; because he is the Son of God; because Jesus was born to be our Savior.)
 - **How will you celebrate Jesus' birth?** (By praising God; by going to Christmas Eve service at church; by reading the Christmas story.)

Worship Leader Tip

Playing Christmas music softly in the background during "Christmas Story Luminarias" while you tell the Bible story will help create a peaceful atmosphere in the room. You may want to read the Christmas story from Luke 2 instead of the using the text here.



When kids have finished decorating their sacks, have each one pour a cup of sand into the bag and place a votive candle inside it.

Say When you light the candles inside the sacks, the light will glow through the sacks, which is why they're called luminarias. You can give your luminaria to your family for Christmas and tell them the story of Jesus' birth.

3 Let's Pray!


The Offering

Gather the children around the tree. Pass out the cards children made during the "Presents for Jesus" activity, and place the large gift-wrapped box from Let's Praise God! near you. Give blank cards to the preschoolers.

Say We learned that the best gift to give Jesus is ourselves. In a minute, we'll pass this gift box around, and you can put your card in it along with your offering, if you brought one today. When you put your card in the gift box, think and pray about giving yourself to Jesus.

Ask • How can our money gifts help others learn about God's gift to us? (They can buy a Bible with it; they will see that God's children know how to share.)

Say Let's celebrate Jesus' birth by giving him our gifts now. As you put your card and offering in the box, tell Jesus silently that you give him your love.

 Sing "Joy to the World!" as the offering box is being passed.



Celebration Cheers

Have kids form small groups of four or five children.

Say Work with your group to make up a cheer of praise to God that celebrates Jesus' birth. You'll have a few minutes to make up your cheer, and then we'll share them with each other. Jesus' birth is something to celebrate, and we're going to celebrate it loud and clear! Give children a few minutes to make up their praise cheers. Then have the groups perform their cheers for each other.

Great cheers, everyone! Those really celebrated Jesus' birth loud and clear! On the count of three, do your cheer one last time. This time, we'll do them all together. Don't think about what the others are doing, just concentrate on saying your cheer to God. Ready? One, two, three!

Celebration Prayers

Have children sit in chairs or on the floor.

Say ➤ **Jesus' birth is something to celebrate. Let's celebrate right now with prayer. I'm going to pray "Thank you, God, for the gift of..." then you finish the prayer by standing up quickly, saying one word that completes the prayer, and sitting back down again. It's OK to pray more than once, and it's OK if more than one of you pops up at a time. We call that popcorn-style praying, because you pop up randomly, just like popcorn! Let's get our celebration prayers popping!**

Say the prayer, and allow enough time for every child to respond.

Pray ➤ **God, we thank you for sending Jesus to us! Thank you for giving us something so great and wonderful as your Son to celebrate! We love you and praise you. In Jesus' name, amen.**