



Use Week of:

Christmas • Session 3

Jesus Was Born

BIBLE PASSAGE:

John 1

STORY POINT:

Jesus came to bring us life.

KEY PASSAGE:

2 Peter 1:3

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

How does the Holy Spirit help Christians? The Holy Spirit comforts us, shows us our sin, and guides us as we live for God's glory.

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LEADER Bible Study

God's plan all along was to send His Son into the world to save sinners. At just the right time, God the Son "emptied himself by assuming the form of a servant, taking on the likeness of humanity" (Phil. 2:7). The birth of Jesus was a miracle.

The Gospels of Matthew and Luke begin by giving details of the Messiah's birth: Mary became pregnant by the Holy Spirit and gave birth to a son. The baby was God's Son, and He had an earthly father—Joseph. As the angel had instructed, Joseph named the baby Jesus.

The apostle John began his Gospel in a different way. John 1:1 parallels the words of Genesis 1: "In the beginning ..." In the beginning, God spoke creation into existence. Everything was created through God the Son. (Col. 1:16) John names Jesus as "the Word." (John 1:3)

John 1 provides a bigger picture to accompany the story found in Luke 2:1-20. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). As you teach kids about Jesus' birth, help them realize why Jesus came. Jesus did not enter an already good world that simply needed some guidance and improvement. He came into a dark world cursed by sin to a people who were spiritually dead.

Jesus' birth is good news for people who need a Savior. In God the Son's becoming a human, Jesus brought life and light to people who were dead in sin. Jesus came to give life to all who believe. He brought light into darkness and showed us what God is like.

Invite kids to celebrate the birth of Jesus, which brought joy and peace to a desperate and chaotic world. Pray that God would prepare the hearts of all children—from babies to preschoolers to older kids—to hear and believe the truths about Jesus and welcome Him into their lives as Lord and Savior.

The BIBLE Story

Jesus Was Born

John 1

John, one of Jesus' disciples, wrote to tell people about who Jesus is. John wrote that the Word—Jesus—existed in the beginning, before the world even began. The Word has always existed with God, and the Word has always existed as God. He was with God in the beginning. When God spoke at creation, all things were

created through His Word. Not one thing was created apart from Him.

The Word brought life into the world and light for all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness could not hide it.

God sent a man named John the Baptist to be a witness to the light. John was not the light, but he came to tell people about the light so they might believe. The true light was coming into the world to give light to everyone.

When Jesus came into the world, people did not recognize Him. His own people did not accept Him.

But this is good news: to everyone who did accept Him, He gave them the right to be part of God's family—to be children of God.

The Word became a human and lived among us. People saw His glory—the glory of the one and only Son of God. He was full of grace



and truth. John the Baptist told people that even though Jesus came into the world after him, Jesus is greater because He existed before John. **People received blessings from Jesus, grace upon grace.** Long ago, God gave people the law through Moses, but now He has given us grace and truth through Jesus Christ.

No one has ever seen God, but Jesus—God’s one and only Son—has shown us what God is like.

Christ Connection: The birth of Jesus was good news! Jesus was no ordinary baby. He was God’s Son, sent to earth from heaven. Jesus came into the world as a human to bring us life. He brought light into darkness and showed us what God is like.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Display a slideshow:** Create a slideshow of drawings or pictures highlighting each element of the story and bringing it to life. (a picture of John writing, a picture depicting creation, a picture of light shining in the darkness, and a picture of John the Baptist telling people about the Savior to come)
- **Dress up:** Dress in Bible times clothing and use a scroll to tell the story to the kids.

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: Jesus Was Born

BIBLE PASSAGE: John 1

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KEY PASSAGE: 2 Peter 1:3

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How does the Holy Spirit help Christians? The Holy Spirit comforts us, shows us our sin, and guides us as we live for God's glory.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to think of a time they heard good news. What was it? How did it make them feel?

Activity page (5 minutes)

- "In-car-what?!" activity page,
- 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete "In-car-what?!" on the activity page. Guide kids to fill in the blanks with the letters from *INCARNATION* to discover the definition. Point out that the number 1 indicates kids should use the first letter (*I*), 2 indicates the second letter (*N*), and so forth.

Also challenge kids to list other words they can spell using the letters *INCARNATION*.

SAY • Have you ever heard the word *incarnation* before?

That's a word we use to describe how God the Son became a human.

As we will see in today's Bible story, God the Son has always existed. But at just the right time, God sent Him to earth as a baby—Jesus.

Session starter (10 minutes)

**LOW
PREP**

OPTION 1: What's in a name?

Instruct kids to form a circle. Invite kids to introduce themselves with a title describing them. (Examples: "The Firstborn" or "The Reader") One kid will start by saying her nickname. The kid next to her will say the first kid's nickname and then share his own nickname. Continue around the circle so each kid says the previous kid's nickname and then his own.

SAY • Great job! Nicknames can give us clues about who a person is. They can help us know what a person is like, what he enjoys, or even how he looks. In today's Bible story, we will learn about one of Jesus' names. John called Jesus "the Word."

OPTION 2: Flashlight freeze

Dim the lights in the room and begin playing a song. Direct kids to begin walking around the room. Take turns shining the flashlight on each kid. As soon as you shine the flashlight, that kid should immediately freeze or she is out. Continue shining the light on each kid until the song ends or everyone is frozen.

- flashlight
- Christmas song of your choice

SAY • Would there ever be a room so dark that a flashlight would not work in it? [*Allow kids to respond.*] No! When light comes into a dark space, the darkness cannot overtake the light. John described Jesus' birth as light coming into a dark world. The birth of Jesus was good news! Let's hear more.

Transition to teach the story

TEACH the Story



SESSION TITLE: Jesus Was Born

BIBLE PASSAGE: John 1

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BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How does the Holy Spirit help Christians? The Holy Spirit comforts us, shows us our sin, and guides us as we live for God's glory.

Suggested Theme Decorating Ideas: Decorate for Christmas over the existing theme. Use simple decorations such as string lights, garland, or a nativity scene.

Countdown

• countdown video

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

• leader attire
• Bible

[Leader enters wearing festive attire. He or she may choose to wear Christmas accessories over existing themed attire.]

LEADER • Welcome back to the firehouse, everyone! Last week, I shared how firefighters can help people in more ways than just putting out fires. We can help in all kinds of emergencies.

If you were ever having an emergency, what number should you call? *[Allow kids to respond.]* That's right! 911. Do you call 911 if you want to know what time it is or the weather forecast for the day? *[Pause for responses.]* No! 911 is an emergency number. When people call 911, they need someone to come and rescue them or their property.

Today, we are going to learn how God saw His

Tip: If you prefer not to use themed content or characters, adapt or omit this introduction.

people, desperate and dead in sin, and sent the Rescuer—His Son, Jesus. Jesus is the Light of the world who came to bring life into the darkness of this world.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • Over the last few weeks, we have been thinking about this question: *How does the Holy Spirit help Christians? The Holy Spirit comforts us, shows us our sin, and guides us as we live for God's glory.*

God did not intend for Christians to deal with hard times on our own. He sent the Holy Spirit to comfort all who believe in Jesus. The Holy Spirit comforts us by reminding us of the truth about God and ourselves.

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review. -Giant Timeline

LEADER • Jesus was born to bring life and light into a dark world. Our Bible stories from the past two weeks described how Jesus continued to bring life even after He returned heaven. After his ascension, Jesus promised to send a Helper: the Holy Spirit. **God kept His promise to send the Holy Spirit.** The Holy Spirit empowered the disciples to perform miracles in Jesus' name, and the church grew and spread. The light of Jesus can never be overcome by darkness. His kingdom will continue to come and spread until one day every knee will bow to Jesus—the Word of God, the Light of the world who offers life to all who call on Him as Savior.

- Bibles
- “Jesus Was Born” video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Story Point Poster

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to John 1. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Jesus was Born.”

LEADER • The Light of the world had come! God the Son has always existed. He was with God the Father before the world began. God created the world through His Word, Jesus. The Word became flesh when Jesus was born. He has always existed, but Jesus came to earth as a human to dwell with people. But Jesus wasn’t just a man; He was also fully God.

In Old Testament times, people were supposed to live for God by obeying the law He gave Moses. But they failed to obey perfectly. They made sacrifices as an offering to the Lord and as payment for their sins by faith in the Savior God promised. When Jesus came, He brought grace and truth and eventually laid down His life as the ultimate sacrifice for sin.

Jesus came to bring us life.

We obey God’s commands for living—not because we think our obedience will save us but because we love God and want to honor Him. Nothing we do ourselves could ever save us from our sins or earn us a place in heaven. True forgiveness for sin comes only through the once-and-for-all sacrifice of Jesus.

Christ connection

LEADER • Jesus’ birth was good news! God loved us so much. He did not want to leave us in the darkness of our sin. All along, He planned to rescue sinners by sending His Son. The birth of Jesus was good news! Jesus was no ordinary baby. He was God’s Son,

Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided on page 49 to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

sent to earth from heaven. Jesus came into the world as a human to bring us life. He brought light into darkness and showed us what God is like.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the “Jesus Was Born” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about when Jesus was born. Guide them to discuss what their families do to celebrate Jesus’ birth.

• “Jesus Was Born” questions from kids video



Missions moment (3 minutes)

Show the Lottie Moon photos. You may choose to review the facts from the “Lottie Moon Fact Strips” printable.

LEADER • Lottie Moon lived more than 100 years ago.

These pictures of her can help us remember her and work she did as a missionary. Lottie died on Christmas Eve in 1912 after serving in China for 39 years. She knew that **Jesus came to bring us life**, and she wanted the people of China to have the eternal life that Jesus offers.

• “Lottie Moon Photos” printable
• “Lottie Moon Fact Strips” printable (optional)

Key passage (5 minutes)

Make a single upright stack of foam cups, one cup per word of the key passage. Write one word of 2 Peter 1:3 along the top rim of each cup in order. Add to each rim three other words so each cup shows four words total. Spin each cup to mix up the words. If your group is large, prepare several stacks and form smaller groups.

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together 2 Peter 1:3. Challenge the kids to spin each cup, identifying the correct words and lining them up so

• Key Passage Poster
• “Life and Godliness (2 Peter 1:3)” song

they can read the key passage in order.

LEADER • Great job! Each word in Scripture is important! Lead kids in singing “Life and Godliness (2 Peter 1:3).”

Sing (4 minutes)

Open your Bible and read aloud John 8:12.

LEADER • Jesus is the Light of the world! Jesus brings life and light to a dark and dead world. As God’s children, we never have to walk in darkness. When Jesus lives in us, His light can shine through to others. Let’s praise Him for all we have in Him! Sing together “This Is Where the Mission Begins.”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Thank You for sending Jesus, the Word, to earth to bring us life. Thank You that through Him, we won’t live in darkness. Thank You for the life we have in You and the eternal hope we have through faith in Jesus. Help us share this hope with others and be Your light in the world. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

• “This Is Where the Mission Begins” song
• Bible

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

APPLY the Story



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KEY PASSAGE: 2 Peter 1:3

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How does the Holy Spirit help Christians? The Holy Spirit comforts us, shows us our sin, and guides us as we live for God's glory.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- ball of yarn

Display the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading aloud 2 Peter 1:3 together.

Guide kids to stand in a circle. If you have more kids than number of words in the key passage, form two or more smaller groups. Give one kid a ball of yarn. Direct him to hold the end of the ball of yarn, say the first word of the key passage, and then toss the yarn to another kid. That kid should say the next word. As kids toss the yarn to one another, a “web” will begin to form. Play until kids say the entire key passage.

SAY • Great job! What an encouragement it is to know that God always gives us everything we need to live for Him! *How does the Holy Spirit help Christians? The Holy Spirit comforts us, shows us our sin, and guides us as we live for God's glory.*

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Story Point Poster
- Small Group Timeline and Map Set (005802970)

Explain that at Christmas, we celebrate life and light coming into the world when Jesus was born. Remind kids that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. [*Point out Bethlehem (I4) on the New Testament Israel Map.*]

Distribute Bibles. Guide boys and girls to open their Bibles to John 1. Choose a volunteer to read aloud John 1:12. Say that **Jesus came to bring us life.**

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. How can we know God if no one has ever seen Him?

Help kids recognize Jesus is God and has revealed who God is. Jesus showed us what God is like and taught about the kingdom of heaven. We read Jesus' words in the Bible.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Heb. 1:2-3.)

2. What does it mean to be a child of God? *Through Jesus' work on the cross, people who turn from their sin can be adopted as God's children. As our Father, God frees us from sin and gives us everything we need. Help kids recognize that as children of God, we have access to all of God's blessings.*

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Gal. 4:4-5.)

3. Because we know Jesus brought life and light to a dark world, how should we live? *Help kids recognize that God wants us to be lights in a dark world by living like Jesus and by telling others the good news of the gospel. We can show Jesus' love to others and live in a way that shows that He is our greatest treasure.*

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Matt. 5:14.)

SAY • Jesus came to bring us life. After Jesus' death and resurrection, He instructed His followers to share with others the good news of why He came. The birth of Jesus was good news! Jesus was no ordinary baby. He is God's Son, sent to earth from heaven. Jesus came into the world as a human to bring us life. He brought light into darkness and showed us what God is like.

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

LOW PREP

- “Lottie Moon Photos” printable
- scissors
- tape
- ribbon

Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment found in Teach the Story.

- craft sticks, 16 per kid
- 4-inch parchment paper squares
- LED tealights, 1 per kid
- glue or hot glue gun (adult use)

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

Activity choice (10 minutes)



OPTION 1: Lottie Moon

Distribute copies of the “Lottie Moon Photos” printable. Invite kids to cut out one of the photos and tape a loop of ribbon to the back. Cover the back with a piece of construction paper or wrapping paper. Encourage the kids to take the ornaments to hang somewhere in their home.

SAY • At Christmastime, we celebrate that **Jesus came to bring us life**. Lottie Moon wanted everyone to know that truth, and she dedicated her life to teaching people in China about Jesus. You can take these ornaments home to hang on a tree or in a window. When you see your ornament, you can be encouraged to live on mission for Jesus!

OPTION 2: Light of the world luminaries

Demonstrate how to create a luminary. Lead kids in following these steps:

1. Glue together the ends of four craft sticks to form a square.
2. Glue a parchment paper square to the back of the craft stick square.
3. Repeat steps 1 and 2 three more times to form the four sides of the luminary.
4. Glue together the four sides to form the luminary box.
5. Position an LED tealight in the center and watch the luminary glow.

SAY • Jesus brought light into darkness and showed us what God is like. We are to be lights in the world by carrying the truth of the gospel to all people. Display this luminary at home as a reminder of why Jesus

came and how we can share Him with the world.

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas. Then pray, thanking God for sending His Son, Jesus, to bring life and light into darkness. Tell Him you love Him and want to honor Him with your life.

As time allows, lead kids to complete "Into the World" on the activity page. Kids should circle the correct phrase to fill in the missing words for each statement.

• pencils
• Journal Page
• "Into the World"
activity page,
1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.