



PREPARATION

> SPEND THE WEEK STUDYING LUKE 2:8-20.

> GATHER MATERIALS

- **Early Arrival - Sculpting Thanksgiving** - play dough for each child.
- **Announcing Jesus' Birth** - Long sheets of paper, markers, glue, and glitter for each group.
- **Jesus is Born** - crown template, scissors, tape, sequins, pom poms, glitter glue, construction paper, googly eyes, etc.
- **Promise Board** - paper or index cards, markers, tape.
- **Do the Bible Story:** A sheet of paper and markers for each child.
- **Day Planner** - Day Planner activity sheet.

> **PRAY** for the children, the church, and the sermon series. Pray for the upcoming group meeting, your teaching, and your group's receptivity to the lesson.

HIGHLIGHTS

> **BIG PICTURE:** Jesus deserves celebration; one that is loud, exciting, and points people to Jesus.

> **LIFE APPLICATION:** Presents, parties, and parades are fun. But the real reason we should celebrate and be excited is because Jesus was born on Christmas Day! That's a reason to worship!

EARLY ARRIVAL ACTIVITY (GRADES 1-4)

As your group time begins, use this section to help get your kids thinking in the right direction.

> **Sculpting Thanksgiving**

Greet the children by name and allow them to participate in table initiatives as others arrive. Have enough play dough at each table for the children to sculpt with.

SAY: "I know you all had so much fun during Thanksgiving! Today, we are going to talk about how Jesus was born to a mom and a dad just like we were, but first let's spend some time sculpting one thing that happened during the Thanksgiving holiday."

> **Announcing Jesus' Birth**

Split the children up into groups of 5-6. Have each group come up with an official and royal announcement that announces Jesus' birth. Have a leader help each group make their announcement sound very official and royal: "Hear Ye, hear ye" etc. The announcement should also share why the kids are excited about being born (Jesus was born a baby just like us, He came to take away our sins, Jesus is God, Jesus loves us, Jesus cares for us etc.). Each group will write their announcement on a long sheet of paper and decorate it with markers and glitter to make it look worthy of a king. Have them role their announcement up like a scroll. Have each group stand before the group and make their announcement.

SAY: "Christmas is a time to celebrate. We celebrate our friends and our families

at Christmas, but more than anything else, we should celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas! When Jesus was born, an angel of the Lord announced his birth to a group of shepherds. They said "Today in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord." And do you know what happened next? A large group of angels appeared and began celebrating Jesus' birth and praising God!"

ASK: Do you know why Jesus' birth was so exciting? Jesus is God's Son and He came to earth to save us from our sins!

> Jesus is Born Activity

Preparation: party hats. (You can purchase these, or pass out one sheet of paper and one piece of yarn to each child and have them visit a small group leader to tape it in the shape of a cone and punch two holes in each side to tie the yarn as a chin strap. You also may want to cut off the excess on the bottom of the cone after it is taped. You may want to practice this once so you can demonstrate how to tape it correctly to the small group leaders.)

SAY, "Our story begins after Jesus was born. Happy Birthday, Jesus!! Everyone needs to put on their birthday hats! This is the most exciting celebration ever, because Jesus is the Savior God promised to send for us! Can you imagine how long the people had waited for Jesus? He's finally here! For the next 15 seconds we are going to have a party for Jesus! You can be loud and jump up and down and celebrate, but when I countdown from 15 and reach the number 1, you will want to sit back in your seats and get ready to hear our story!"

REVIEW ACTIVITY

> Bible Review

Direct students to open their Bibles to today's passage, read the passage, then ask the following discussion questions:

What did the angel of the Lord tell the shepherds? ("Today in the town of David, a savior has been born to you; He is the messiah, the Lord."The angel was telling the shepherds that Jesus is going to be the king of the world)

What did happened after the angel of the Lord announced Jesus' birth to the shepherds? (A large group of angels, probably hundreds or maybe even thousands of angels began to loudly God, they said, "May glory be given to God in the highest heaven! And may peace be given to those he is pleased with on earth." They were throwing a party for Jesus!)

Why is Jesus' birth worth celebrating? (Because Jesus is our savior who has come to take away our sins).

Why is it important to understand that Jesus is 100% human? (This tells us that Jesus understands us, God is so big that He can be hard to understand sometimes. God became a man in Jesus so that we could understand God better. God did this because He loves us.).

Why is it important to understand that Jesus is 100% God? (When we sin, we sin against God and deserve to be punished by Him. Because Jesus is God, He is able to take our punishment for sin.)

Why did God send Jesus? (The angel told the shepherds that Jesus is the Christ. The word "Christ" means messiah--the messiah was a person God promised from the Old Testament who would come and save us from our sins. Jesus was God in the form of a man sent to rescue us from sin.)

What did the shepherds do after they saw Jesus lying in a manger? (They worshipped the Lord--praising Him for what they had heard and seen. They were full of joy--they had just heard the greatest news in the world--God had come to earth as a man to save us from our sins! After seeing Jesus, they wanted to celebrate and worship like the angels because Jesus' birth calls for a loud and exciting celebration!)

How does God want us to celebrate Jesus? (Jesus is God's Son and He is our savior! We should celebrate him loudly. We should be so excited about Jesus that we can't help but tell other people about Him!)

> Celebration Board

Tell the children to draw a picture of something they celebrate at Christmas (presents, parties, Christmas lights, food, family). When they finish, they will come to you to tape it onto your "Celebration Board" (If you do not have a bulletin board, tape a poster to the wall that says CELEBRATION BOARD.) Put a large cross in the middle of the board.

ASK: "Of all the things we celebrate at Christmas, what is the most important? How does God want us celebrate Jesus at Christmas?" **SAY:** "God want us to celebrate Jesus loudly--the news about Jesus is the best news in the world and we want everyone to hear it!"

> Do the Bible Story

Give each child a sheet of construction paper. Allow several minutes for children to decorate the paper with markers. Then show them how to roll their paper into a megaphone shape. Secure with several pieces of tape.

ASK, "What are some ways we celebrate good news?" (parties, dancing, music.) **SAY:** The angels announced that Jesus is God's Son--that is really good news! In fact that is the best news we could possibly celebrate at Christmas time! Let's pretend we're angels and deliver that message.

Teach the children the following rhyme: "We're the angels and we're hear to say, God's Son Jesus was born today!" Have them say it through their megaphones while marching around the room. After each repetition, encourage the children to cheer and whistle and clap for Jesus.

>Discuss with preteens, using the following questions:

Why is Jesus worth celebrating? Why is the news about Jesus such good news? (Jesus is God and He is also man. God sent Jesus so that He could live a perfect life in our place and also die in our sins. Jesus is such good news because He makes us able to have a relationship with God).

How well does Jesus understand us? (Jesus understands everything about us. He was born a baby just like us.)

Why is Jesus the only person who can save us from our sins? (Because He is fully God and fully man).

