

March 15, 2020
Whole Group



Jesus Was Born

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 2:1-12; Luke 2:1-20

MAIN POINT: Jesus was born to be God's promised Savior.

KEY PASSAGE: 1 Timothy 1:15

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What makes Jesus different? Jesus is fully God and fully man.

Leader BIBLE STUDY

Do you think it was just by chance that Caesar Augustus called for a census? Did it just so happen that Mary and Joseph were traveling to Bethlehem—the very place the Messiah was prophesied to be born? (Micah 5:2) God is in control of all things, which He showed by using a pagan emperor to bring about His plan.

After Jesus was born, Mary laid Him in a manger. A king in a manger! It was so unlikely. But Jesus was no ordinary baby. He was God's Son, sent in the most humble of positions, "not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life—a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28).

Imagine the shepherds' surprise when an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared. The Bible says that they were terrified! But the angel brought them "good news of great joy." (See Luke 2:10-11.) The people of Israel were well aware of their need for a Savior. They made sacrifices daily to atone for their sin. Finally, a Savior had come who would be the perfect sacrifice for sin, once and for all.

Not only did Jesus come into the world as the Savior, He came as our King. Some time after Jesus' birth, wise men came to worship Jesus. They brought Him gifts suitable for a king—gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Jesus is the King who will rule forever, just as God promised King David. (See 2 Sam. 7.)

When you share this story with kids, remind them that *Jesus came because we needed Him. The purpose of Jesus' birth was twofold: to bring glory to God and to make peace between God and those who trust in Jesus' death and resurrection. Celebrating the birth of Jesus is about rejoicing over the greatest gift we could ever receive. God's own Son came to earth to be our Savior and our King.*

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Small Group OPENING *(before Large Group...)*

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to help new kids connect to your group. As kids arrive, ask them if any have ridden on a horse, donkey, or other animal. What was the occasion? How far did they ride?

SAY • In our story today, we'll hear about people who traveled very far. In Bible times, there were no airplanes or cars. People traveled on donkeys, horses, or other animals you can ride. Who do you think the travelers were?

Census workers

Provide a few older volunteers with a copy of the "Census Worker" printable as they arrive. The volunteers will go around the room while everyone is coloring, counting the number of people who fit into each category and writing the numbers in the appropriate boxes on the sheet.

SAY • In our game the census workers counted different people in the room. When a government counts all the people in a country, it's called a census. A census helps a government keep track of who lives there. Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem to be counted in a census. What do you think happened when they got there?

Session starter (10 minutes) — **Star search**

There will be many yellow paper stars at the table. One of them will stand out as special with glitter or something like that.

Hide the stars around the room. Challenge the kids to find them all and bring them to you. You may form two teams and assign point values to the stars, turning the game into a friendly competition.

SAY • Today we will learn about a group of wise men who saw a special star in the sky and followed it for miles and miles. What do you think they were looking for? We will soon learn what they searched for and if they found it!

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Gifts for a king

Form groups of four to six kids. Give each group a pencil and a piece of paper. Groups should each choose a kid to write. Instruct groups to make a list of items they might give as a gift to a two-year-old boy. (Examples: blocks, puzzles, toy cars, trains, books, and so forth)

Allow a few minutes for kids to work, then invite them to share their answers. List their ideas on a chalkboard or dry erase board.

SAY • In today's Bible story, some wise men came to visit Jesus when He was about two years old. They brought Jesus some gifts that seem pretty unusual. We are going to find out what they brought and why.

Transition to large group...

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Small Group LEADER *(after Large Group...)*

Activity choice (10 minutes) — Giant storyboard

There will be a large sheet of paper divided into three sections and labeled with these Scripture references:

Luke 2:4-7; Luke 2:8-12; Matthew 2:1-2,10-11.

Form three groups of kids making sure each group has an older child as a leader. Assign each group one section of the storyboard. Distribute Bibles and markers. Instruct each group to find their assigned Scripture reference and read it aloud.

Then kids should work together to illustrate a scene from their part of the Bible story. **Encourage them to think about the part of their section that made Jesus so different or that showed He was God. How could they highlight that part of the story in their illustration?**

Allow several minutes for kids to work. Then call on each group to describe their scene.

SAY • Great work, everyone. These pictures show what happened in today's Bible story. God kept His promise to send a Messiah. He sent His Son into the world! Jesus was born to be God's promised Savior.

Prayer (5 minutes)

Ask the kids to share about a way they fail to see Jesus as king in their lives.

SAY • *What makes Jesus different? Jesus is fully God and fully man.* Jesus lived a perfect life of obedience and yet died as though He were a sinner. By dying the death we deserve and rising again, He made the way for us to be forgiven. Jesus is King, even when our sinful hearts don't want Him to be. Thankfully, the Holy Spirit guides us after we trust in Jesus, and He helps us live lives that glorify Jesus as King.

Take prayer requests and pray, thanking God for sending Jesus. Confess that we still rebel against His kingship sometimes. Ask for help to live to glorify Him.