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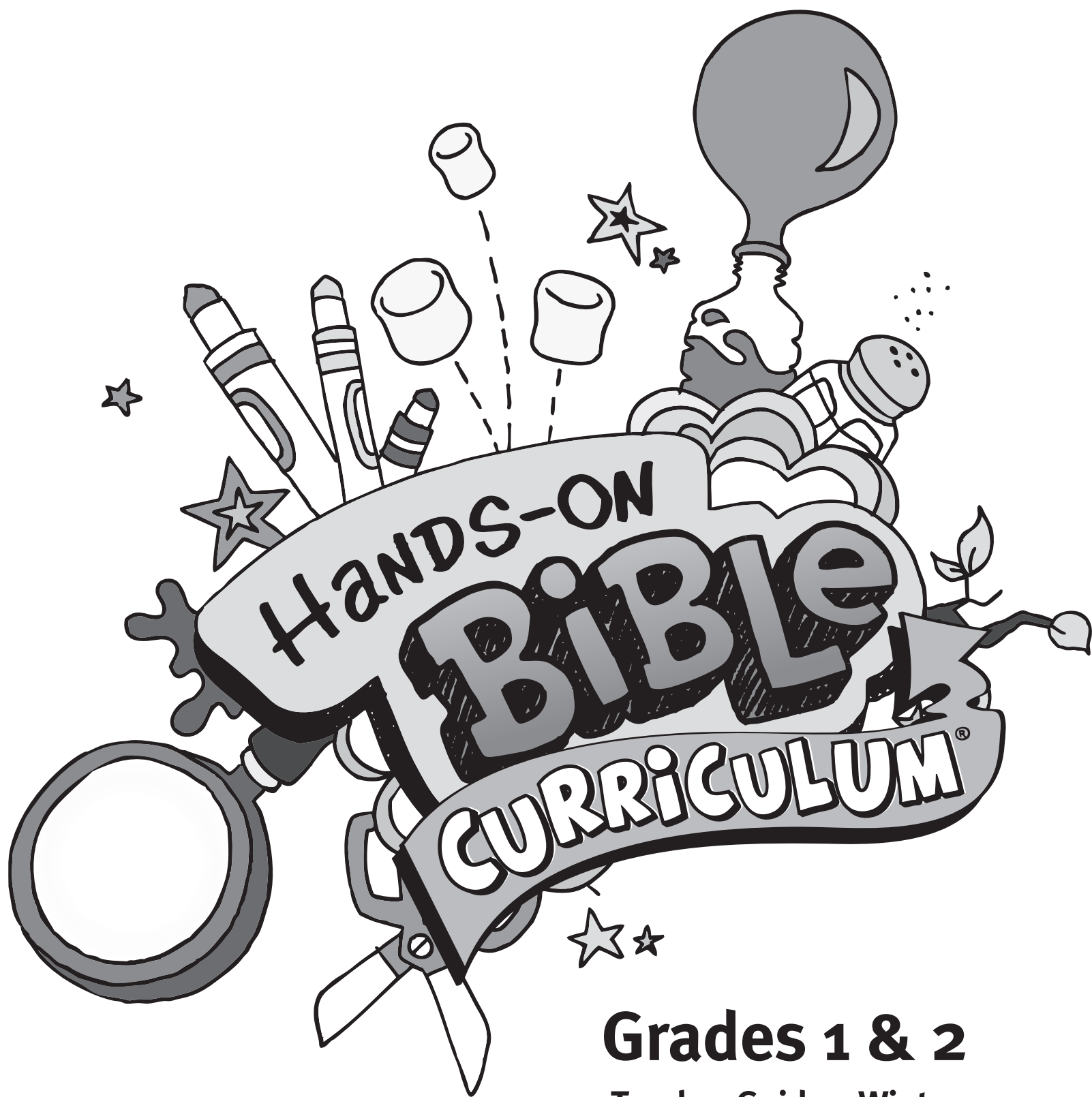
Teacher Guide

GRADES 1 & 2

Winter



Teach as
Jesus Taught!®



Grades 1 & 2

Teacher Guide • Winter

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Group resources really work!

This Group resource incorporates our R.E.A.L. approach to ministry. It reinforces a growing friendship with Jesus, encourages long-term learning, and results in life transformation, because it's



Relational

Learner-to-learner interaction enhances learning and builds Christian friendships.

Experiential

What learners experience through discussion and action sticks with them up to 9 times longer than what they simply hear or read.

Applicable

The aim of Christian education is to equip learners to be both hearers and doers of God's Word.

Learner-based

Learners understand and retain more when the learning process takes into consideration how they learn best.

We know you care about kids...

We do, too!

That's why we attempt to ensure that all crafts, toys, and gizmos meet or exceed national safety standards—and are produced by manufacturers that don't use child labor or abuse their labor force. You can order Group resources knowing that in addition to caring for *your* kids, you're also caring for children elsewhere.

Let's keep kids safe!

We strive to provide products that are mechanically reliable and hold together during normal, intended usage. Items are also checked for flammability, and both paint and surface coatings are checked for heavy metals—including lead.

You can help your children stay safe by seeing that toys and gizmos are used as designed, for the purposes designed, and that any broken pieces are disposed of promptly and properly. We value your feedback. If you become aware of a problem affecting the safety of any of our products, please inform us immediately.



Group

Hands-On Bible Curriculum®, Grades 1 & 2, Winter

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*Due to the way Christmas falls, we recommend rearranging lessons as needed so week 2 lines up with Christmas.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR FIRST- AND SECOND-GRADERS

MENTAL DEVELOPMENT

- Are interested in concrete learning experiences such as dramatizations and rhythms.
- Have a limited concept of time and space; are interested in the present but not in the past or future.
- Yearn for competence in developing skills.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Have high energy levels, which demand a lot of physical activity such as jumping and running.
- Are industrious; like to make things and complete projects.
- Are more interested in the finished product than the process.
- Are developing small-muscle coordination; are beginning to write.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- Usually prefer to stick to same-sex friendships.
- Thrive on organized games and group activities.
- Want to please teachers but are beginning to recognize their role in relation to their peers.
- Want to win and always be first; have a strong sense of competition with others.

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Express feelings with physical action.
- Crave individual attention and affirmation.
- Are self-centered; each child wants to be first.
- Need to feel capable; this is directly related to their self-esteem.
- Want everything to be fair; have a clear-cut sense of justice.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

- Understand God's love and God's world through personal experience.
- Don't comprehend the spiritual nature of God; think of God as a giant, a magician, or an invisible man.
- Don't comprehend the Bible's chronology except that the Old Testament came before Jesus and the New Testament talks about Jesus.
- Have a literal and concrete understanding of Bible stories and biblical truths; don't comprehend abstract ideas such as the Trinity.



Welcome to the Adventure!

Now why are you teaching first and second grades? Whether it's because you've done it for as long as you can remember or because you are giving it a try for the first time to fill a need, you'll find first- and second-graders to be endearing kids who unpack their world in concrete terms. They experiment with all of their senses and ask tons of questions. You can make a huge difference in their lives by introducing them to Jesus and helping them grow in their understanding of him. You will be launching them on a life-long journey of knowing, loving, and following their Savior, Jesus.

First- and second-graders think concretely, yet wonder about the world they are discovering. They want to meet Jesus and interact with him in ways that help them understand who he is and how he works. Our master teacher, Jesus, used active learning 2,000 years ago, and it still works today!

Your students will learn best by experiencing new ideas and concepts through a variety of styles. They want to touch, taste, smell, hear, and see what they are learning about. They will naturally want to ask questions and interact with you and their peers, so allow plenty of time for questions and discussion. If you encourage them, they will try new things and learn difficult concepts. You will change their lives as you open their minds and hearts to the most important person in their lives, Jesus.

Here are a few helpful do's and don'ts to make experiential learning work best for your kids:

- **Do think outside the learning-space box!** Move tables so students can move around freely and work in groups. Scope out other areas, such as a foyer, a parking lot, or a fellowship hall, that can be used for activities.
- **Don't turn down the volume!** Recognize the difference between good "learning noise" and a situation needing your attention. Active-learning activities often are fast-paced and noisy.
- **Do take advantage of teachable moments.** An activity that bombs may provide a wonderful opportunity for learning if you ask questions such as "Why didn't this work?" "How is this like what happens in real life?" or "What can we learn from this experience?"
- **Don't show children the contents of the Learning Lab® before they are used in the lessons.** Keep them guessing what's coming next!
- **Do get to know your children.** Be aware of the attitudes they bring with them. They may be dealing with family, school, or relationship issues. Encourage students to share their feelings as they participate in activities.
- **Don't forget—experiential learning is fun and captivating!** Enjoy it! A positive experience learning about God within the safe boundaries of your classroom will lead to more positive experiences with God outside the classroom. What a great way to encourage your students to discover the joy of the Lord firsthand and to grow in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ!



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

Making the Most of Your Hands-On Bible Curriculum®

WARNING: **CHOKING HAZARD—**

Learning Lab contains small parts. Not for children under 3 years.

Module Introductions Within each quarter of Hands-On Bible Curriculum, there are three modules. Each module has a theme that runs throughout the lessons. The introduction to each module includes an overview of the lessons and a chart listing the Bible Point and Scripture used in each lesson.

Bible Point There's one point that you want your children to take home at the end of your lesson. That's the Bible Point. You'll see it referenced in the margin as well as italicized and underlined in the lesson. We've designed for it to be repeated numerous times during the lesson so no one will miss it.

Bible Verse These words, straight from God's Word, show the biblical basis for the lesson. The Bible verse appears in boldface in the lesson.

Teacher Enrichment This part of the lesson is just for you. If you can, read it early in the week. It includes an explanation of the Bible passage and some suggested ways to pray during the week so you'll be prepared, heart and mind, for your important hour with your children.

This Lesson at a Glance This valuable chart shows you the big picture for your lesson. You can quickly see what supplies you'll need and what needs to be done before you begin. A minute on this page will save you 10 during your lesson!

The Jesus Connection To us, this is the most important thing—making the connection between the story and Jesus, the reason for the story. You'll find a Jesus Connection in every lesson, set apart in a box. We want children to find Jesus every week in your class, so don't miss this part of the lesson.

Hands-On Bible® Connection We want all kids to use their Bibles every week. The *Hands-On Bible* is, in our estimation, the best way to get kids into this important book. It's the Bible that kids not only read but also *do*! In every lesson, you'll find a quick, fun way to get your kids involved in using their Bibles. The tip is in a box that you can't miss.

Teacher Tips You'll find these in the margin throughout the lesson. They're just to give you additional ideas to enhance what you're doing. They vary from alternative ideas for activities to age-level insights.

Take-Home Papers These photocopiable pages that you send home with your families every week will help to reinforce the lesson and encourage learning all week long!

“There is only one thing worth being concerned about.”

—Luke 10:42

What is this one thing? It’s the whole reason for this curriculum—

it’s the whole reason for Sunday school. It’s what we (and you) want your kids to know! Check out what Thom and Joani Schultz (Group’s chairman and chief creative officer) have to say about the one thing and what it means in your life.

In Luke chapter 10, Jesus visits the home of Mary and Martha. As Martha worries about preparing dinner and being a busy servant, she gets upset because Mary isn’t helping. But Jesus tells her, “There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her.”

Martha was doing good work. In fact, she was serving the Lord. But Jesus made his priority for us clear. He wants to have a loving relationship with us even more than he wants us to serve him.

Many might say Jesus is the one thing. But no, it’s a **growing relationship with Jesus**. Martha would have identified serving Jesus as the one thing. But Mary better understood the *real* one thing.

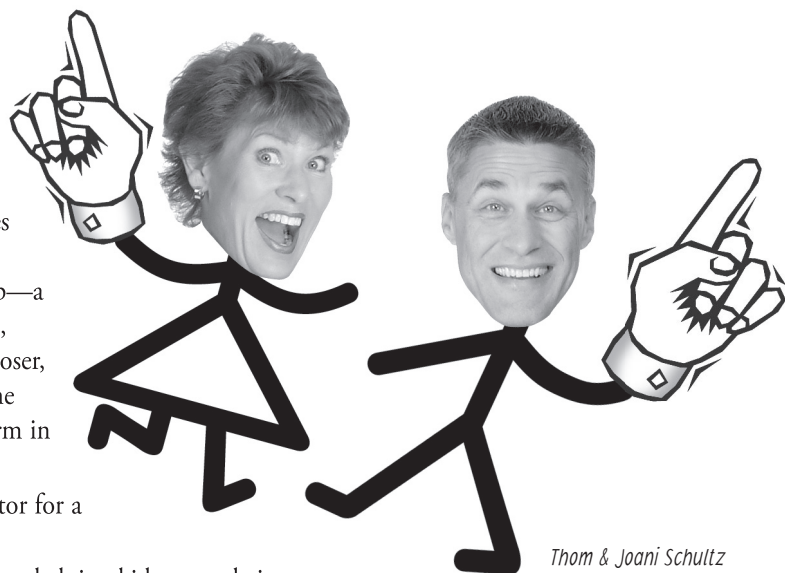
We believe that the church, like Martha, is often distracted by many things. It tends to deprioritize the one thing. Many other well-intentioned things get in the way. Churches and Christians can get sidetracked with an emphasis on rules, political positions, appearances, social action, secondary goals, theological disputes, solemnity, rituals, and more. To the spiritually hungry, churches often seem more preoccupied with these distractions than the one thing.

If the church wishes to pursue a growing relationship with Jesus, it will need to rethink and reprioritize its ministry. A one-thing ministry emphasizes relationship. And we believe a relationship with Jesus resembles in many ways a human-to-human relationship—a friendship. The process of attraction, getting acquainted, enjoying one another’s company, having fun, growing closer, and forming a bond of love and devotion is a natural one that lends clues to how a one-thing relationship may form in the context of church ministry.

How can we build a church that becomes an incubator for a one-thing relationship, for *real* friendship with Jesus?

That’s what Hands-On Bible Curriculum is all about—helping kids grow their friendships with Jesus. As they experience the Scriptures and do the activities, they’re building that relationship in a real and relevant way.

What’s the most important thing your church can do for kids? Help them choose the one thing. And use tools like Hands-On Bible Curriculum to make it a reality.



Thom & Joani Schultz

Jesus' Birth

Children anticipate Christmas more than any other day of the year. The days before this special holiday are full of excitement and wonder that captivate us all. Think of what children have to look forward to—candies, cookies, parties, decorations, special music, and a visit from a jolly man chauffeured by magical reindeer and overloaded with toys. In all the excitement and celebration, it's easy to overlook the most important gift of all.

These four lessons will help first- and second-graders understand that Jesus' birth is a special gift from God. They'll see that Christmas brings good news that they can spread all year long. They'll learn that Jesus is special because he's God's Son. Use these lessons to help children keep their focus on the miracle in the manger—God's incredible gift of his Son.

Four Lessons on Jesus' Birth

| Lesson | Bible Point | Page | Bible Basis |
|----------|--|------|----------------|
| 1 | Jesus' birth is good news. | 15 | Luke 1:26-38 |
| 2 | Jesus is God's Son. | 25 | Luke 2:1-7 |
| 3 | We can tell others about Jesus' birth. | 35 | Luke 2:8-20 |
| 4 | Jesus is the greatest gift of all. | 47 | Matthew 2:1-12 |

The Signal

During the lessons on Jesus' birth, your attention-getting signal will be raising your hand. Have children respond by raising their hands as they stop talking and focus their attention on you. Tell children about this signal before the lesson begins. Explain that it's important to respond to the signal quickly so the class can do as many fun activities as possible.

During the lessons, you'll be prompted when to use the signal.

The Fidget Buster

When your students are too antsy to pay attention to the lesson, use this fidget buster to get the wiggles out.

Say: **Let's take a break to play Hop Around the Christmas Tree. I'll be the tree. You make a circle around me. When I say, "Hop right," hop to the right on your right foot. When I say, "Hop left," hop to the left on your left foot.**

When kids have worked their wiggles out, say: **Stop hopping! Stretch up as high as you can. Now bend over and touch the floor. Shake out your whole body. Now sit down and take three deep breaths with me. Good job! Let's be as quiet as little Christmas mice as we go back to our lesson.**

The Time Stuffer



The Time Stuffer for the four lessons on Jesus' birth invites children to decorate a tree for Christmas.

You'll need construction paper, safety scissors, tape, and markers or crayons.

Tape a rectangular piece of brown construction paper on the wall close to the floor. During the first two weeks, have children trace their hands on green construction paper and cut out the shapes. Assist the children in writing "Jesus loves [child's name]" on their hand shapes. Tape the shapes to the wall in overlapping rows with the fingers pointing down. Start at the bottom of the tree and taper the tree as you add rows.

During the second two weeks, children will cut Christian symbols out of construction paper to decorate the tree. They can make doves, crosses, mangers, angels, and stars with photocopies of the Christmas patterns on page 13 and color them if they like.

Encourage the children to work on the tree anytime they arrive in class early or finish a project before others do.

Digging Into the Bible



Every lesson in each four- or five-week module focuses on a key Bible verse that ties in to the Bible Point of the lesson. In addition, each lesson points to a related activity in the *Hands-On Bible*, to further illustrate your Bible teaching with fun and action. Since kids tend to remember only 10 percent of what they hear but recall 90 percent of what they do, including a *Hands-On Bible* experience with each lesson is a great way to help them remember what they've learned, long after class has ended.

Remembering God's Word

This module's key Bible verses will help children see that what they learn about Jesus in these lessons is just as important to them today as it was to the shepherds and wise men on the day Jesus was born. Have fun using the following Bible verse activity ideas anytime during the lessons on Jesus' birth.

■ The Same Game

Make two masking tape lines across the floor to divide your classroom into three parts. Then use masking tape to make a large Y (for yesterday) in one space, a large T (for today) in another space, and a large F (for forever) in the third space.

Say: **The Bible says, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).** Explain that just as Jesus helps us today, he helped people long ago and will help people tomorrow. Jesus' birth is something everybody can celebrate forever.

Invite the children to share how Jesus helps us. For example, a child might say that Jesus protects people when they're scared. Have all the children start in the "yesterday" section and make a pose of how Jesus might look as a protector. Then say: **Jesus Christ is the same yesterday** (pause), **today** (pause), **and forever** (pause). As you state each time period, the children should hop to the appropriate section and strike the same pose.

Have another child share a different helpful quality of Jesus and suggest a pose that would illustrate that quality. Then say the verse again but change the order in which you say yesterday, today, and forever.

Play this game until several qualities of Jesus have been mentioned. Then say: **Let's say the verse again together: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." Everybody can celebrate Jesus!**

Have all the children jump up at one time and wave their arms in the air, shouting: **Celebrate Jesus! Hooray!**

■ “Sharing the Good News” Hop

Play this version of the Bunny Hop to teach children that it’s fun to tell others about Jesus’ birth.

Have children stand in a line holding the waist of the person ahead of them. Have children sing or shout out the words as they do the actions and travel in a circle around the classroom.

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Go into all the world, | <i>(Extend right heel; then tap foot. Repeat.)</i> |
| All the world, | <i>(Extend left heel; then tap foot. Repeat.)</i> |
| All the world. | <i>(Jump one step back.)</i> |
| And preach the good news | <i>(Jump in place.)</i> |
| To everyone! | <i>(Jump three steps forward.)</i> |

Then say: **That was fun! Now let’s say the Bible verse together: “Go into all the world and preach the good news to everyone” (Mark 16:15).**

For extra fun, lead the children outside the classroom and hop to other classrooms. Have them share the good news with other classes and then hop back to their own classroom.

Christmas Patterns

Photocopy and cut out these patterns. Have children trace the shapes onto construction paper and then cut out and decorate the shapes. Use them to trim the Time Stuffer Christmas tree.





Bible Point ▶

Jesus' birth is good news.

Bible Verse

"Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God's Son does not have life" (1 John 5:12).

Growing Closer to Jesus

Children will ■ understand why Jesus' birth is good news,
■ celebrate the good news, and
■ learn that they can be good-news messengers as Gabriel was.

Teacher Enrichment

Bible Basis

■ Gabriel appears to Mary.

**Luke
1:26-38**



This passage provides the only extensive account in the Bible of Jesus' birth. Luke begins by describing the visit of an angel. The angel's announcement that Mary was favored by God no doubt caused her some confusion. She was an obscure person in an obscure family in Israel. In her culture, it was assumed that those in high positions were the ones favored by God.

The angel's description of her child must have confused Mary even more. How could any human—much less a lowly young virgin—give birth to the Son of God? But when Mary was told how the child would be conceived and was reminded that God can do anything, she responded in humble obedience.

The birth brought a reason to celebrate: The one who was born would be

- Savior—who would deliver them from bondage,
- Christ—the anointed Messiah promised in the Old Testament, and
- Lord—the Greek name for the Old Testament Yahweh!


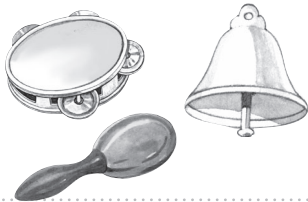


Prayer

- Read Isaiah 7:14.
- How do you celebrate good news? How do you celebrate *the* good news?
- Pray: Lord, help me not take for granted the good news of Jesus' birth. Let me share my enthusiasm with my students by...

Before the Lesson

- Collect items for the activities you plan to use, referring to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies listed in the chart.
- Make photocopies of the “Growing Together” handout (at the end of this lesson) to send home with your children.
- Pray for your students and for God’s direction in teaching the lesson.

This Lesson at a Glance

| | What Children Will Do | Classroom Supplies | Learning Lab Supplies |
|---|---|---|---|
| Welcome | Welcome! —Receive a warm welcome from the teacher, and make name tags. | “Christmas Packages” name tags (p. 23), tape, safety scissors, markers or crayons | |
| Attention Grabber | Shout the news —Read Isaiah 40:9, and give and receive good news. | Bible | |
| Bible Exploration & Application | Good-News Angel Story —Sing a song, and learn the story of Gabriel’s message to Mary from Luke 1:26-38. | Bible, CD player, pen, paper |  |
| | Rejoicing —Read Psalm 47:1 and Luke 1:46-50, and celebrate the good news of Jesus’ birth. | Bible |  |
| | Good-News Angels —Make angels to spread good news about Jesus, and then learn from Daniel 8:15-16 and Luke 1:18-19 how God used Gabriel. | Bible, paper, pencil, safety scissors, tape, markers | |
| Closing  | Proclaim the News —Learn that Jesus came for them. | Bible |  |

Welcome

SUPPLIES: “Christmas Packages” name tags (p. 23), tape, safety scissors, markers or crayons

- Greet each child individually with an enthusiastic smile.
- Thank each child for coming to class today.
- Say: **Today we’re going to learn that ► Jesus’ birth is good news.**
- Help children make name tags. Photocopy the “Christmas Packages” name tags and follow the instructions. Help children write their names on the name tags and attach them to their clothing.
- Tell the children that the attention-getting signal you’ll use during this lesson will be raising your hand. Ask children to respond by raising their hands as they stop talking and focus their attention on you. Rehearse the signal with the children, telling them to respond quickly so you’ll have plenty of time for all the fun activities planned for this lesson.



BIBLE POINT



It’s important to say the Bible Point just as it’s written in each activity. Repeating the Bible Point over and over will help children remember it and apply it to their lives.

Attention Grabber

■ Shout the News

SUPPLIES: Bible

Form two teams: the Shouters and the Listeners. Secretly assign each of the Shouters one word from this sentence: “Jesus’ birth is good news.” Make sure that each word is assigned to a child. If you have fewer than five children on the team, give some children more than one word. Have the teams sit across from each other. On the count of three, have all the Shouters call out their words at the same time as the Listeners try to figure out the message.

If the Listeners don’t understand the message on the first try, have the Shouters call out their words again on the count of three. Have the Shouters call out their words three or four times. If the Listeners still haven’t figured out the message, have the Shouters say the words of the message in order.

Ask: • **Listeners, was it easy or hard to figure out the message? Explain.** (It was hard because everyone was shouting; hard, because I didn’t know who to listen to; it was easy because they didn’t say it all at the same time.)

• **What’s the best news you’ve ever received?** (I found out that God loves me; I found out that my family was going to have a new baby; I found out that my parents weren’t getting a divorce.)

• **How did you feel when you got the good news?** (Excited; happy; good.)

• **What’s the best way to tell someone an important and exciting message?** (Jump up and down and yell it; whisper it; put it on television; write it on a big message board.)

Say: **Listen while I read Isaiah 40:9. See if you can tell me what the Bible says to do with good news.**

Read **Isaiah 40:9** from an easy-to-understand Bible such as the *Hands-On Bible* in the New Living Translation. Then ask:

• **Why would you want to shout news from a mountaintop?** (Because we want everyone to know about it; so people can hear.)



The story of Jesus’ birth may seem like old news to the children in your class—they’ve heard it many times, and it happened a long time ago. Help renew your children’s sense of wonder by reminding them that the miracle of Jesus’ birth hasn’t diminished in importance—it’s just as miraculous today as it was 2,000 years ago.



BIBLE POINT ▶

• **What was the good news to shout about in this Bible passage?** (That God is coming; that they didn't need to be afraid.)

Say: **Sometimes good news is so exciting that we want to climb a mountain and shout the news as loudly as we can! Isaiah 40:9 announced that God was coming. ▶ Jesus' birth is good news. Let's find out what happened when Mary heard this good news.**

Bible Exploration & Application

■ Good-News Angel Story

SUPPLIES: Bible, CD player, pen, paper



track 2

Cue the CD to track 2, "He's the King." Have the children sit in a circle just far enough away from each other so they won't be tempted to pester those around them.

Open your Bible to **Luke 1:26-38**, and show the passage to the children. Say: **The book of Luke tells us how the good news of Jesus came about. I'm going to read you this story, but I want you to help me tell it, OK? As I read, sometimes I'll stop and do a special action before I continue. I'd like you to repeat whatever action I do. Ready? Let's get started.**

Before there was any such thing as Christmas, an angel (pause and raise your arms wide and upward) **named Gabriel visited a young woman named Mary** (pause and cup your hands around your face and smile) **to tell her that Jesus would be born** (pause and rock your arms as if holding a baby). **When Gabriel, the angel** (pause and raise your arms wide and upward), **appeared and said, "Greetings, God is with you," Mary** (pause and cup your hands around your face and smile) **was scared** (pause and shake your arms, pretending to be scared). **She wondered what the angel** (pause and raise your arms wide and upward) **meant. But the angel** (pause and raise your arms wide and upward) **said, "Don't be afraid. God is happy with you. You're going to have a baby** (pause and rock your arms as if holding a baby) **and name him Jesus. He'll be called God's Son, and he'll be a king** (pause and cup your hands over your head as if forming a crown) **forever."**

Mary (pause and cup your hands around your face and smile) **was excited because her people, the Jews, had been waiting for this king** (pause and cup your hands over your head as if forming a crown) **for a long time. This news meant that the king** (pause and cup your hands over your head as if forming a crown) **would soon be there and that life would be better. So Mary** (pause and cup your hands around your face and smile) **said, "I want to serve God. Let all of this happen to me just as you said."** Then the angel (pause and raise your arms wide and upward) **went away.**

Ask: • **What was the good news the angel brought?** (A king was going to be born; Jesus was coming; Mary was going to have a baby.)

• **Why was Jesus' birth good news?** (Because he is God's Son; he was the king they were waiting for; because he would make things better.)

• **What made baby Jesus so special?** (God was his Father; he was born in a stable; everyone loved him; he was a king.)

That was good! Now let's sing a song about the good news the angel brought.

Lead the children in singing “He’s the King.” You’ll find the lyrics at the back of this Teacher Guide. Have the children think of actions for each line. Jot down the actions so you can prompt the children as they sing. Encourage volunteers to take turns leading one another in fun actions that match the song’s lyrics.

When the song is over, say: ► ***Jesus’ birth was good news because he was the king that the people were waiting for. The song says that God is the king of everything and that his love follows us wherever we go. Let’s celebrate that good news!***

Lead children in a round of applause for the good news of Jesus’ birth.



HANDS-ON BIBLE

In preparation for this activity, set out two clear drinking glasses on a flat surface and also have a full pitcher of water and a small cork close by.

Say: **When the angel told Mary that God would do a miracle and she would become the mother of Jesus, Mary was amazed by the news. It was almost impossible for her to believe! But the angel assured her that nothing is impossible with God. Do you believe that? Let’s try an experiment and see!**

Have the children open their *Hands-On Bibles* to Luke 1 and find the activity entitled “Is That Possible?” Read through this “impossible” activity together with the children, and then ask for some volunteers to assist you as you follow the instructions provided in the *Hands-On Bibles*.

After you’ve tried the experiment a few times with different volunteers, ask:

- **Were you surprised that the cork floated to the side in the first glass but always went to the center in the other glass? Why or why not?** (I was surprised because I couldn’t understand what the difference was between the two glasses; no, I tried this at home once and knew what would happen.)
- **Did this trick seem impossible to you? Why or why not?** (Yes, I don’t understand it; no, there’s always an explanation for tricks like this.)
- **Tell us a time something happened that you thought was impossible and would never happen.** (One time I found some money in the street by my house; I thought I would be really scared to go to the dentist, but I wasn’t scared and it didn’t hurt at all; my dad said we’d never get a dog, but we did.)
- **How did that make you feel?** (I felt really glad; I was surprised; I was happy.)

Say: **The cork moved to the center of the glass every time we filled the glass completely up because the cork will always move to where the water is highest—the center. So what seems like an impossible trick really is possible.**

Mary’s miracle was truly impossible—but it happened anyway, because God made it happen! That’s one of the many reasons ► *Jesus’ birth is such good news!*

Ask for volunteers to help you put the experiment items away.



■ Rejoicing

SUPPLIES: Bible



Say: **When Mary heard the good news that she was going to have a baby who would be God's Son, she was very excited. She knew that ► Jesus' birth was good news so she praised God. Let's review what Mary told God.**

Read **Luke 1:46-50** aloud. Say: **Mary was so excited about hearing that she was going to be the mother of Jesus that she praised God and made up a special song for God. We can praise God, too, for the good news about Jesus.**

Ask: • **What are some things we can do when we want to praise God?** (Sing; pray; dance; clap; shout.)

• **When is the last time you clapped so hard your hands turned red?** (At a birthday party; at a play; at a movie.)

Say: **Today we're going to try a new way of clapping to show how glad we are that Jesus came to earth.**

Have the children sit in a circle. If you have more than 10 children in your class, form two circles.

Choose a volunteer to be the first clapper. Have the first clapper start clapping slowly. Then have the person to the clapper's right become the second clapper. Have the first clapper and the second clapper alternate clapping. Then add a third clapper so that the sequence goes first clapper, second clapper, third clapper. Then add a fourth clapper and so on until everyone is included.

When everyone has the rhythm down, say: **now it's time to speed it up!** Have the children clap in the same order, but have them increase the speed until everyone is clapping at the same time.

Stop the game by raising your hand. Wait for the children to raise their hands and focus on you.

Say: **We can also use instruments to celebrate Jesus' birth.**

Pass out the *tambourine*, *bell*, and *mini-maraca* to three of the children in the circle. Try to space out the instruments evenly so children won't have to wait very long to have a turn. Continue the same clapping rhythm, but invite the children who have instruments to use them instead of clapping. After you complete one round of the rhythm, have the children pass their instruments to the person on their right. Continue this pattern until each child gets a turn with an instrument.

Ask: • **What are some reasons we should praise God?** (Because he made us; because the Bible says to; because God likes to hear us praising him; because God is so good.)

• **How do instruments help us praise God?** (God likes to hear music; it's fun and God likes us to have fun.)

• **What are some ways you can praise God when you are at home?** (Singing; clapping; playing instruments; praying.)

Say: **The Bible says in Psalm 47:1, "Come, everyone! Clap your hands! Shout to God with joyful praise!" When we want to praise God, we can clap our hands. We can also use instruments to celebrate. ► Jesus' birth is good news, and it's worth celebrating with joyful sounds!**

Bible Insight

When Gabriel visited Mary to tell her about her role in God's great plan, he illustrated her importance simply through his greeting. In Mary's time, greetings varied depending on a person's rank and social status. Although Mary had virtually no social status because she was young, unmarried, and a woman, Gabriel said: "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!" (Luke 1:28)—a more illustrious greeting than the traditional greeting even for a person of status.



BIBLE POINT ►

Have the children celebrate Jesus' birth by clapping their hands or using their instruments. Collect the instruments and return them to the Learning Lab for later use.

■ Good-News Angels

SUPPLIES: Bible, paper, pencil, safety scissors, tape, markers

This is an interesting craft that children will enjoy. However, if you're running short of time, you may want to move on to the closing.

Have children make these angels to spread the good news of Jesus to their families. Before class, trace a circle on a sheet of paper and draw a straight line through the center. Photocopy enough circles for each child to have one.

Have children cut out the circles and then cut them in half. Show children how to roll one half of the circle into a cone shape and tape it. Help them draw eyes and a mouth near the points of their cones. This shape will be the body of the angel.

Demonstrate how to fold the other half-circle accordion-style and tape it to the back of the angel to make the wings.

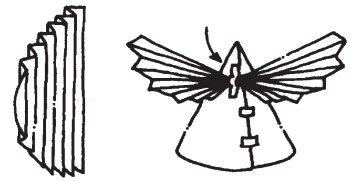
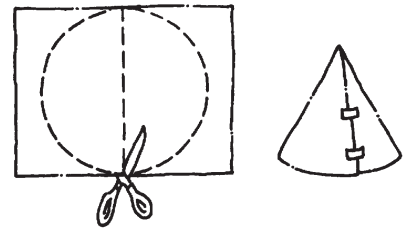
Say: **God often used angels to send messages to people. Gabriel, the angel God sent to Mary, talked to other people in the Bible, too.** Open your Bible to **Daniel 8:15-16** and show children the verses. **God sent Gabriel to talk to Daniel in the Old Testament and to a man named Zechariah in the New Testament.** Turn to **Luke 1:18-19** and show children the verse about Zechariah. **Gabriel is the same angel God sent to tell Mary the good news about Jesus' birth.**

Ask: • **Why do you think God picked an angel to tell Mary the good news about Jesus?** (Because Mary would believe an angel; because it was special news and someone special had to tell the message.)

• **Do you think Mary was scared of the angel? Why or why not?** (Yes, because Mary was confused; yes, because he must have been a big angel, and very old.)

Say: **Mary was confused at first but the angel told her not to be afraid, so she wasn't. ►Jesus' birth is good news.** Say that with me: **"Jesus' birth is good news."** You can be messengers and share the news with someone you know. Turn to a friend and tell him or her who you're going to share the good news about Jesus' birth with. Then tell your friend what you'll say to tell why Jesus is special.

Ask volunteers to share their ideas with the rest of the class. Have children take their angels home. Encourage children to use their angels to tell their families about the good news of Jesus' birth.



Closing



■ Proclaim the News

SUPPLIES: Bible



Have children stand in a circle. Say: ► ***Jesus' birth is good news! And I have even more good news—listen.***

Put your hand on a child's shoulder, shake the *tambourine*, and say: **I hereby proclaim that Jesus came for** [child's name]. Make your way around the circle, affirming each child.

BIBLE VERSE ►



When you've finished, put away the *tambourine* and say: **Each of you is special to God. God sent his Son for you. Jesus is God's Son, sent to us from heaven.** Open your Bible to **1 John 5:12** and show it to the class. **The Bible says, ► "Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God's Son does not have life." That means that if we believe in Jesus and tell God we are truly sorry for our sins, we will become forever friends with Jesus and live with him in heaven one day. That's really good news!**

Pray this closing prayer: **Lord, we thank you for the good news of Jesus' birth. Jesus is special, and that makes us happy. We want to be excited that you sent your Son for us. Thank you for your gift. We pray that you will help us to be messengers for you wherever we go. In Jesus' name, amen.**

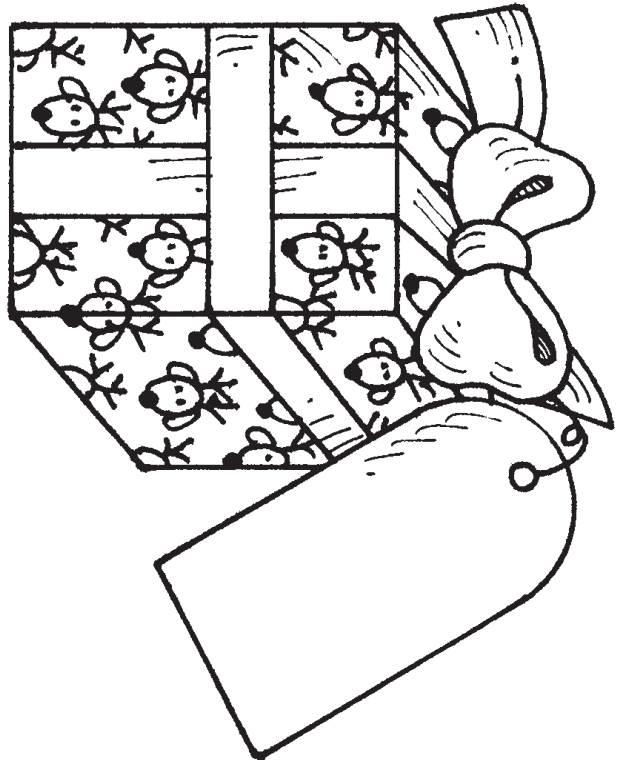
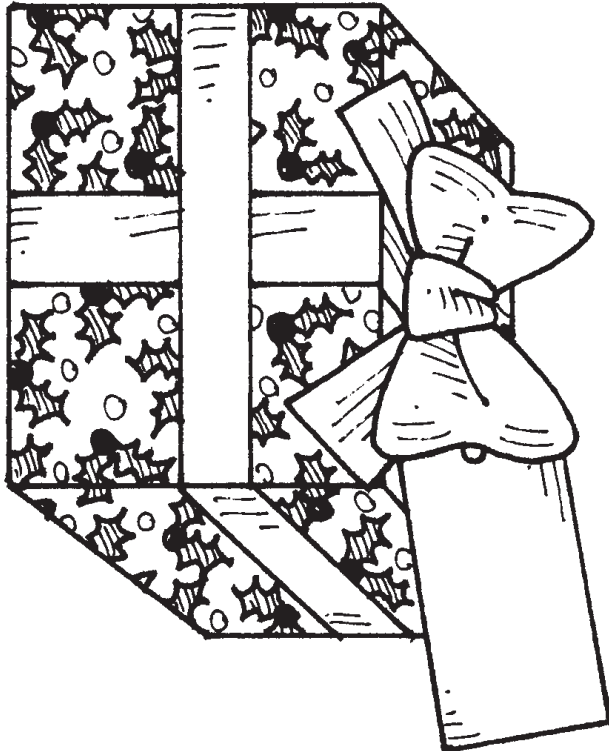
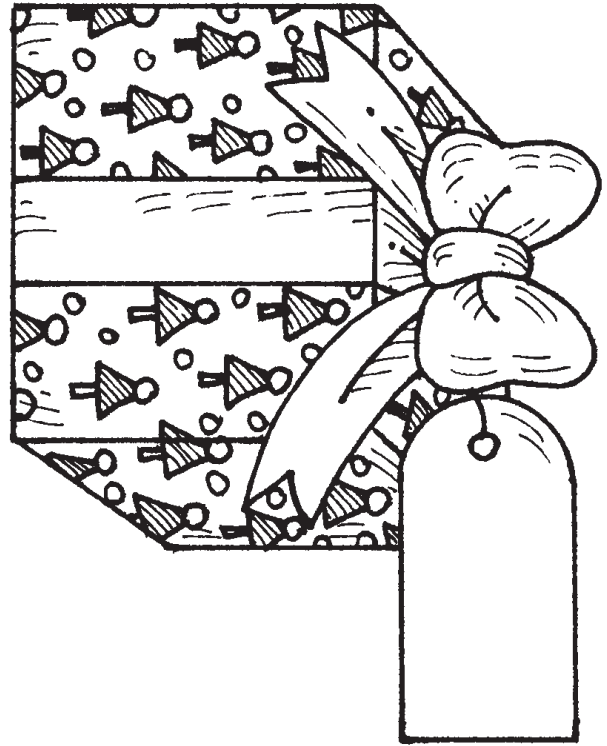
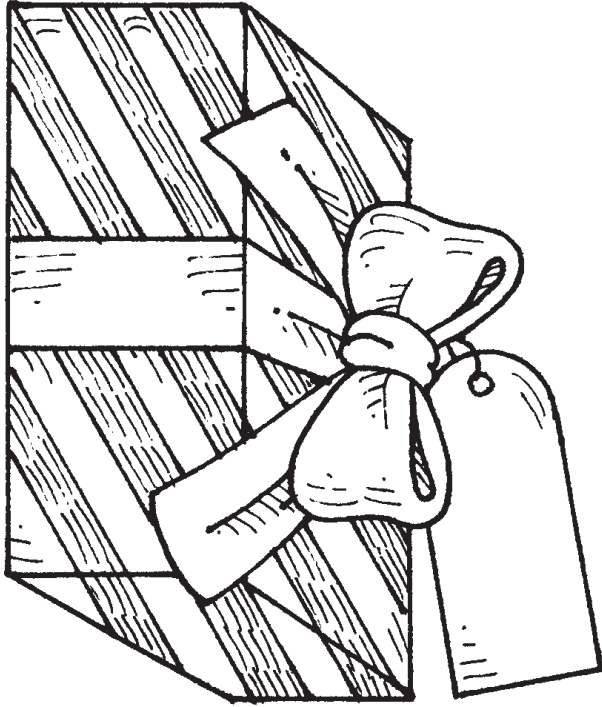


Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.

Photocopy the "Growing Together" handout (at the end of this lesson) for this week, and send it home with your children. Encourage children and parents to use the handout to plan meaningful activities on this week's topic. Follow up the "Growing Together" activities next week by asking children what their families did together.

Christmas Packages

Photocopy this page and cut the name tags where indicated.
Have children decorate them and write their names on the gift tags.



Growing... Together

Jesus' Birth 1:
Jesus' birth is good news.

Bible Story
Gabriel appears to Mary.
(Luke 1:26-38)

Key Verse
"Whoever has the Son has life;
whoever does not have God's Son
does not have life" (1 John 5:12).

In Touch

Today your child learned about the wonderful news that Gabriel brought to Mary about Jesus' birth. The children learned that Jesus' birth is good news because he brings love and hope to all of us. Your child also discovered that good messages are worth celebrating and sharing.

Message Bringers

Together, look for things in your home that bring you good news or give you messages that keep you safe. Don't forget alarm clocks, kitchen timers, smoke alarms, and doorbells. Talk about good news you've received lately and praise God for it. Discuss ways that God shares his good news with us, such as through prayer and the Bible.

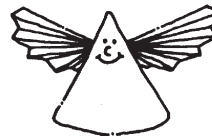
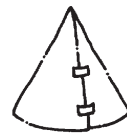
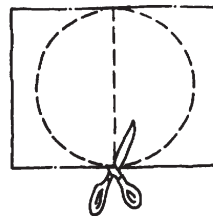
Spread the News



Leave cheerful and uplifting messages such as "I'm glad you're part of our family" in unusual places this week. Put notes on the milk container in the refrigerator. Hide a smiley face in the cereal box. Write in the steam on

the mirror in the bathroom. Draw a heart or write a note to tuck in a lunch sack or wallet.

Angels



Make these angels with your family. Draw circles on paper and cut them out. Then cut the circles in half. Roll one half of the circle into a cone shape and tape it. Draw an angel face at the pointed end of the cone. Fold the other half-circle accordion-style and tape it to the back of the angel to form wings. Give the angels to friends and

family members and tell them about the good news of Jesus' birth.



Teacher Guide

GRADES 1 & 2

Winter

Teach as Jesus Taught!®

JESUS USED EVERYDAY OBJECTS—a mustard seed, a fig tree, a lost coin—to teach his disciples the truths that would change the world. With Hands-On Bible Curriculum, you can teach as Jesus taught, using fun surprises that children can touch, see, and smell to relate eternal truths they won't forget.

This quarter your 1st- and 2nd-graders will learn these important Bible lessons:

JESUS' BIRTH

Luke 1:26-38

Jesus' birth is good news.

*Luke 2:1-7

Jesus is God's Son.

Luke 2:8-20

We can tell others about Jesus' birth.

Matthew 2:1-12

Jesus is the greatest gift of all.

JESUS GROWS UP

Luke 2:41-52

God wants us to learn about him.

John 1:19-28

God wants us to honor him.

Matthew 3:13-17

God has special things for us to do.

Luke 4:1-13

We can use God's Word when we need help.

JESUS' MINISTRY

Mark 6:35-44

Jesus wants us to share.

Luke 10:25-37

Jesus wants us to be kind to others.

Luke 17:11-19

Jesus wants us to say thank you.

Mark 2:1-12

Jesus wants us to help others.

Luke 19:1-10

Jesus wants us to be fair.

*Due to the way Christmas falls, we recommend moving the lessons as needed to line up Lesson 2 with the week of Christmas.

Also available:

AWARD-WINNING HANDS-ON BIBLE®

God's Word comes alive with hundreds of fun, interactive activities. It also coordinates with Hands-On Bible Curriculum!



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