

Teacher Guide

TODDLERS & 2s

Winter



Teach as
Jesus Taught!®



Toddlers & 2s

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®, Toddlers & 2s, Winter

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*Due to the way Christmas falls, we recommend rearranging lessons as needed so week 1 lines up with Christmas.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR TODDLERS AND 2s

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Toddlers and 2s

- play beside but not with other children (parallel play).
- are possessive about toys and are reluctant to share.
- have tantrums when they're frustrated.
- can chew food well.
- can drink from cups and eat with spoons.
- need adult help in socialization.
- imitate adults.
- often say "no" in response to questions.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Toddlers and 2s

- pick up tiny objects.
- turn pages and point to pictures in books.
- put together 3- to 10-piece puzzles.
- build with blocks.
- move with lots of energy but lack coordination.
- pull wheel toys backward and forward.
- run, jump, and climb but aren't always sure of their balance.

COMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT

Toddlers and 2s

- engage in simple dramatic play.
- use 50 to 100 recognizable words.
- put together two or more words to make a sentence.
- constantly ask "What's that?"
- refer to themselves by name.
- can point to and identify parts of the body and pictures of familiar objects.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Toddlers and 2s

- pray short, simple prayers.
- learn that God made everything.
- learn that the Bible is a book about God and Jesus.
- learn about God as a loving and kind Father.
- sing and talk about God.



Welcome to the Adventure!

The toddlers and 2s are your domain for this year! Whether this is your first year with them or your 30th, you will be blessed! These little ones are just learning about trust and the world around them. You can be the one who helps them trust Jesus and find him in the world they are discovering. What an adventure for you and for them!

Toddlers and 2-year-olds think very concretely. They pay attention for only a minute or two, and then they are off to satisfy their curiosity about something else. They are working on mastering their basic physical movements and are very proud of their accomplishments. They love consistency and repetition. They will listen to the same story about Jesus for weeks. The love of Jesus will become real to them through the love they experience from you. You will be an example of Jesus that they can touch first-hand!

Your children will learn best by hearing the story over and over again. They will want to touch, taste, smell, hear, and see what you are talking about. If you show them how to do things, they will imitate you. You will change their lives because you will be opening 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 you and your kids:


- **Do think outside the learning-space box!** Move tables so children can move around freely and work in groups. Use blocks and blankets to create unique spaces.
- **Don't expect them to sit still.** Allow children to move through experiences—touching, manipulating, tasting, smelling, and making noise—all for the glory of God.
- **Do take advantage of teachable moments.** Watch how your children act, and weave what happens into the lesson. Look for ways to bring tastes, smells, and sounds into your classroom, and use them during the lesson.
- **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.** They are anxious to share what they are learning. They will look for you every week.
- **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:

 This product is not to be used by a child under 3 years of age without adult supervision.

 Adult assembly required.

Module Introductions Within each quarter of Hands-On Bible Curriculum 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, taken 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.

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.

Parent Pages In each module introduction, there is a photocopiable Parent Page. These pages that you send home with your families will help reinforce the module's theme and encourage learning at home!

“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.

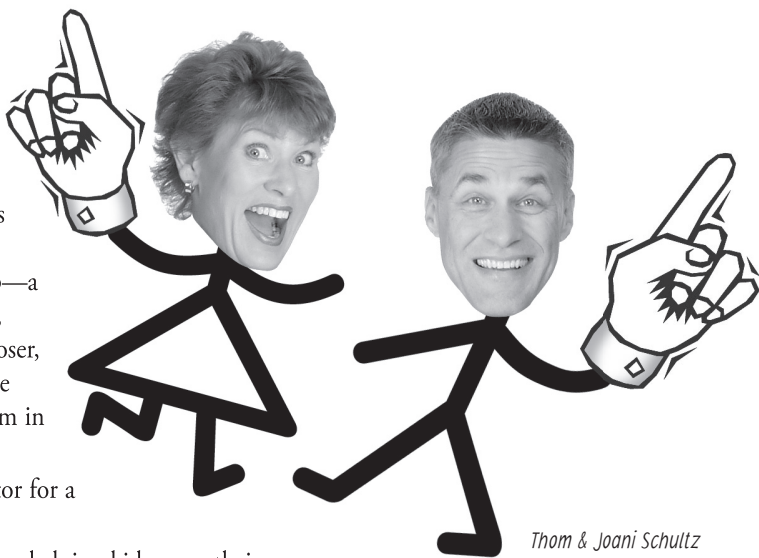
We believe that the church, like Martha, is often distracted by many things. It tends to deprioritize the one thing. Many other well-intentioned things get in the way. Churches and Christians can get sidetracked with an emphasis on rules, political positions, appearances, social action, secondary goals, 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.

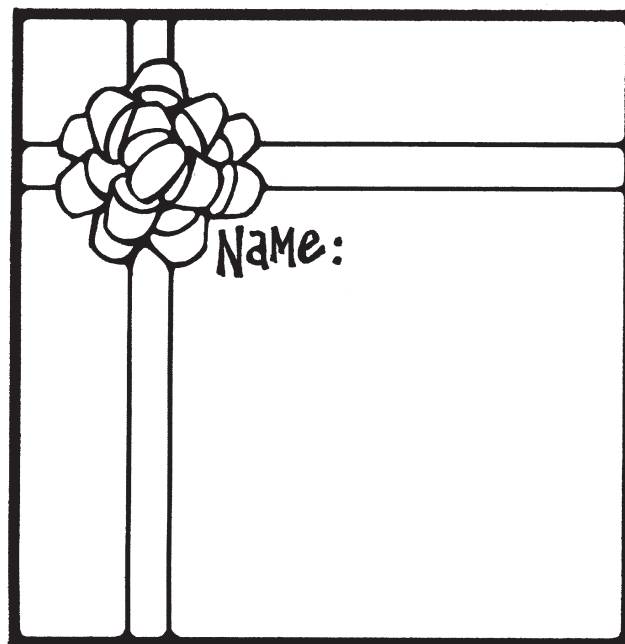
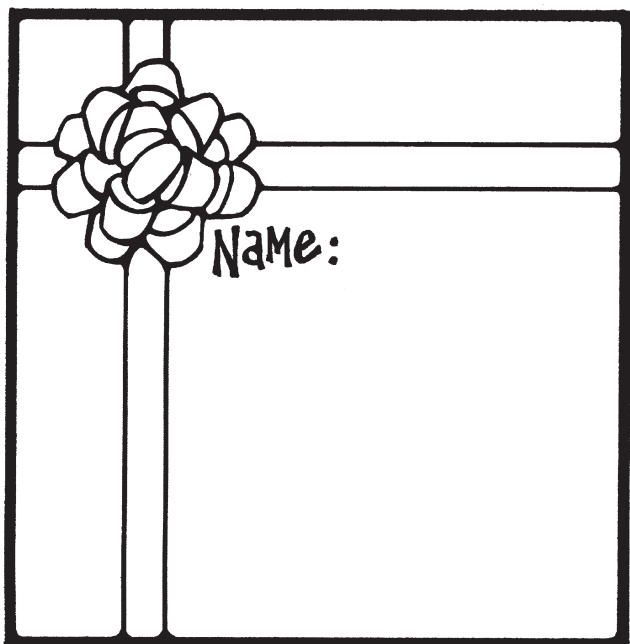
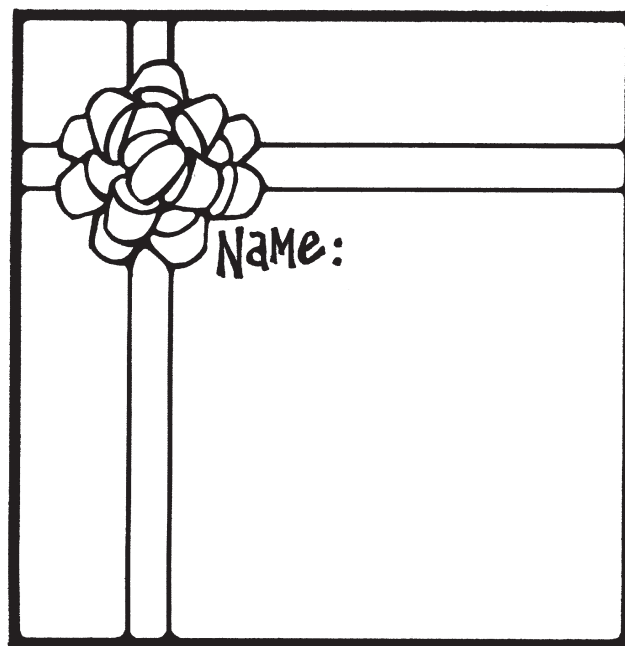
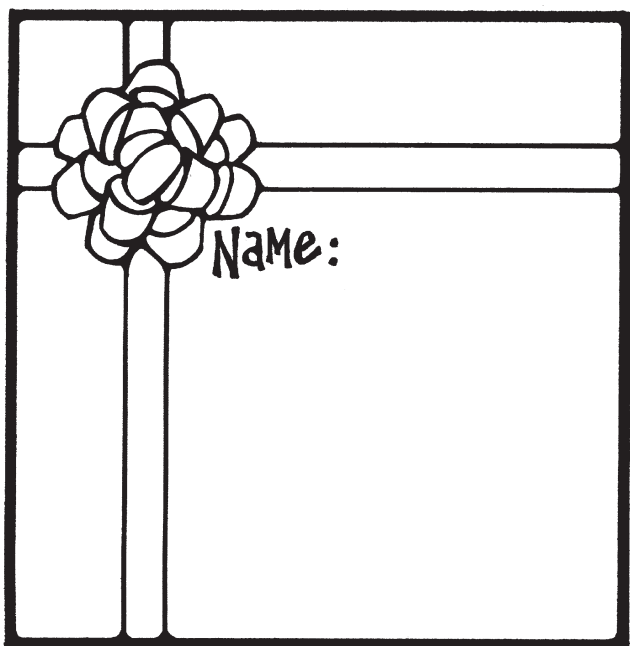
What's the most important thing your church can do for kids? Help them choose the one thing. And use tools like Hands-On Bible Curriculum to make it a reality.



Thom & Joani Schultz

Name Tag Pattern

Photocopy and cut out the name tags.



Jesus Is God's Gift

Bible Basis: Matthew 1:18–2:11

The birth of Jesus was one special event! Not only did God tell Mary about it by sending an angel, but he made sure that Joseph stuck with Mary after she became pregnant by sending an angel to speak to him, too! Once Jesus was born, Magi who had come from far away found Jesus to worship him. And even they experienced something supernatural: They were warned in a dream not to go back and tell Herod about Jesus' birth.

When the Magi came, they brought gifts to Jesus—fancy, expensive gifts fit for a king! Isn't it interesting that they brought gifts to the One who himself was a gift—the best, most valuable gift ever? What a wonderful gift that was, when Jesus died and came back to life again to provide salvation for all who would believe. God loves the children in your class, and that wonderful gift of salvation through Jesus is just waiting for them.

Jesus Is God's Gift

Lesson	Emphasis	Page
1	Jesus is God's gift, born on Christmas.	11
2	Jesus is God's gift for everyone.	25
3	Jesus is God's gift of love.	37
4	Jesus is God's gift, and we love him.	49
5	I'm thankful that Jesus is God's gift.	61



Toddlers & 2s

Parent Page

Jesus Is God's Gift

For the next five weeks, the toddlers and 2s class will be learning that Jesus is God's gift. The children will use their five senses to discover that Jesus was a special gift of love from God to humankind.

Use the Parent Page ideas to help reinforce the point that Jesus is God's gift.

Tips for Toddlers and 2s

Birthday parties are such fun! Even toddlers realize that birthdays are special celebrations where love is generously sprinkled among pretty presents and gooey cake. By celebrating Jesus' birth with a joyous party, your toddler will begin to learn that Jesus' birthday is extra special—a birthday the whole world celebrates! Bake a cake, wrap pretty presents, and sing "Happy Birthday to You" to Jesus as you nurture a spirit of celebration for God's wonderful gift of love.

Together Time

- Provide building blocks or boxes and a small, unbreakable Nativity set for your child to play with. Encourage your child to use the figures to act out the story of Jesus' birth as you tell the story.
- Invite your child to help wrap Christmas gifts with festive wrapping papers and colorful bows. As you enjoy your "wrap session," explain that Jesus is our special gift of love from God.
- Repeat this simple action rhyme from class together:

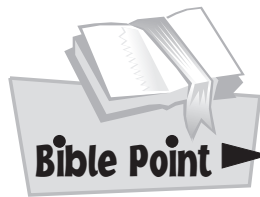
Jesus Is Born (Finger Rhyme)

One little baby—asleep on the hay. *(Hold up one finger, and then lay your head on your hands.)*

Two loving parents keep watch while they pray. *(Hold up two fingers, and then fold your hands.)*

Three wise men traveled on camels to find *(hold up three fingers, and then shield eyes with hand as if searching)*

One little baby—your Jesus and mine. *(Hold up one finger, and then point to yourself.)*



Bible Point ▶

Jesus Is God's Gift

Bible Verse

Jesus is God's gift (adapted from Isaiah 9:6a).

Growing Closer to Jesus

Children will ■ understand that Jesus was born on Christmas,
■ realize that baby Jesus was God's Son, and
■ learn that God gave Jesus to us.

Teacher Enrichment

Bible Basis

■ **Jesus is God's gift, born on Christmas.**

**Matthew
1:18–2:11**



The custom that we now have of giving gifts to one another at Christmas originated from the Magi bringing gifts to Jesus. Unfortunately, the giving of gifts has become so commercialized and Santa-ized that few people other than Christians probably even know that there's any connection between Christmas gifts and Jesus.

Your toddlers are beginning to understand gifts and to get excited about Christmas. They know what fun it is to open presents and to have birthday parties. This is a great time for them to begin seeing Christmas as Jesus' birthday, the day God gave us the greatest gift ever!









Prayer

- Read Romans 6:23.
- How did Jesus bring us the gift of eternal life?
- What impact has God's greatest gift had in your life?
- Pray: God, thank you for the wonderful gift you gave us in your Son, Jesus. Help me to share that gift with the children I teach 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 on the next page.
- Pray for the children in your class and for God's direction in teaching the lesson.

This Lesson at a Glance

	What Children Will Do	Classroom Supplies	Learning Lab Supplies
Arrival Activities Direct children to one or more of the optional activities until everyone arrives.	Welcome Time —Receive a warm welcome from the teacher and Cuddles the Lamb.	Name tags (p. 8), scissors, marker, tape or safety pins, CD player	
	Option 1: Wrapped in Love —Make cute “babies” and wrap them in colorful “blankets.”	Baby-in-a-blanket pattern (p. 23), crayons, scissors, stickers	
	Option 2: In a Stable —Play in a pretend stable, and learn that Jesus slept in a manger.	Blanket, small box, newspaper, stuffed animals	
	Pick-Up Time —Sing a song as they help clean up the room.	CD player	
Bible Story Time	Bible Song —Sing a song about the Bible.	Bible, CD player	
	Jesus Is God’s Gift —Interact with sensory StoryBoard figures as they hear the Christmas story from Matthew 1:18–2:11.	CD player	
	Jesus Is Born (Finger Rhyme) —Learn an action rhyme about Jesus’ birth.		
Bible Activities	Discovering Gifts —Pass a huggable bear around the circle, and remember that Jesus loves them.	Shoe box and lid, wrapping paper, scissors, tape	
	Interactive Bible Bulletin Board —Review the Bible Point with Cuddles the Lamb as they create a bulletin board together.	Nativity patterns (pp. 22-23), scissors, tape, evergreen branch, light blue paper	
	Sing It Out —Recite an action rhyme about Jesus’ birth.		
	Bible Craft —Make miniature mangers with pretend babies to tuck in.	Paper cups, wooden ice-cream spoons, tissue paper, crayons, scissors, tissues	
	Bible Game —Sing a song, and pretend to be a baby “asleep in the hay.”	CD player, spoon babies from Bible Craft	
Closing 	Animals in the Manger —Say a prayer, and have a snack.	Animal crackers, napkins, apple juice, paper cups	

*See the end of this lesson for extra-time ideas and supplies.

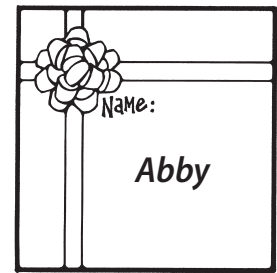
Arrival Activities

Welcome Time

SUPPLIES: name tags (p. 8), scissors, marker, tape or safety pins, CD player



- Play “Jesus Is God’s Gift” (adapted from Isaiah 9:6a) (track 6) from the CD as children are arriving.
- Use Cuddles the Lamb to help you greet each child by name and with a warm smile.
- Tape or pin a name tag to each child’s clothing.
- Say: **Today we’re going to learn that ► Jesus is God’s gift.**
- Place Cuddles out of sight so the children won’t be distracted by him during the next activity.



teacher tips

The Lesson at a Glance chart gives you a quick overview of the lesson and lists the supplies you’ll need for each activity. Most of the supplies are items you may already have in your home or classroom. Simplify your preparation by choosing which Arrival Activities and For Extra Time activities (found at the end of the lesson) you’ll use.

Option 1: Wrapped in Love

SUPPLIES: baby-in-a-blanket pattern (p. 23), crayons, scissors, stickers

Before class, photocopy the baby-in-a-blanket pattern. Cut out a paper baby for each child in class.

Set out paper babies, crayons, and tiny dot or star stickers. As children arrive, invite each of them to make a “baby in a blanket.” Let toddlers scribble-color the paper babies and blankets. Then help each child fold the corners of the “blanket” across the “baby.” (Do not tape the folded blanket in place.) Let children use stickers to decorate the baby blankets.

Invite children to fold and unfold the paper blankets and “tuck their babies in bed.” Make comments such as “We love babies and want them to be snuggly and warm” and “Jesus was born on Christmas.” Mention that Jesus is God’s Son. Tell children that they’ll hear a story about the night baby Jesus was born and that ► Jesus is God’s gift.



Option 2: In a Stable

SUPPLIES: blanket, small box, newspaper, stuffed animals

Drape a blanket over a table or a few chairs to create a “stable.” Scatter a few stuffed animals around the stable. Provide a small box filled with crumpled newspaper “hay” for a “manger.” Encourage children to make believe they’re animals such as donkeys, sheep, or cows, and let them pretend to eat hay from the manger. Explain that a manger is where animals eat and that when Jesus was born, he slept in a manger. Point out that even though Jesus was born in a stable and slept in a manger, ► Jesus is God’s gift.

Pick-Up Time

SUPPLIES: CD player



As Arrival Activities draw to a close, gently mention that it will soon be time to clean up. Encourage children to help you pick up things in the room as you lead them in singing “Let’s Pick Up All Our Things” (track 2). Use the CD and sing the song to the tune of “Looby Loo.”

BIBLE POINT

teacher tips

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



SING

Let's pick up all our things.
 Let's pick up all our things.
 Let's pick up all our things
 And put them all away.

Everyone here can help.
 Everyone here can help.
 Everyone here can help.
 Let's put it all away.

Let's pick up all our things.
 Let's pick up all our things.
 Let's pick up all our things.
 It's time to stop our play.

Bible Story Time

■ Bible Song

SUPPLIES: Bible, CD player

BIBLE VERSE



track 3

Say: **Who is God's gift to us? ► Jesus is God's gift. How do we know that? The Bible tells us.** Show children the Bible. **The Bible is God's special book. The Bible tells us about God. Let's learn a song about the Bible.** Using the CD, lead children in singing "God's Special Book" (track 3) to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat."



SING

This is God's special book.
 Yes, it's God's book you see!
 I learn about all God has done
 And his love for me!

(Repeat.)

Bible!

teacher tips

Safety is essential when working with young children. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission suggests craft supplies and toys should be no smaller than a 50-cent piece (to avoid choking). Make sure electrical outlets are covered, electrical cords are hidden, and all chemicals are out of reach of the children.



■ Bible Story: Jesus Is God's Gift

SUPPLIES: CD player



track 4

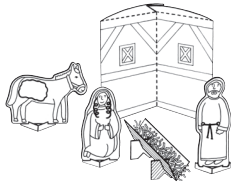


Before class begins, prepare your StoryBoard figures by following the assembly instructions included in the Learning Lab. The purpose of the StoryBoard figures is to provide an interactive, sensory learning opportunity for your toddlers and 2s. Please attach the StoryBoard figures' sensory items securely so the children can touch them

without danger of pulling the items off or putting them into their mouths.

Before this activity, add a bit of straw from Sensory Packet 1 to the StoryBoard manger.

Panel 1



Place the StoryBoard figures and the star behind you. Cue the CD player to track 4 and set it beside you. Say: **We're going to hear a Bible story about a very special birthday, and we'll learn that ► Jesus is God's gift.** Set the figures of Mary, Joseph, and the donkey on the floor. **A long time ago, there was a man named Joseph and a woman named**

Mary. Can you say "hello"? Pause. They were excited because Mary was going to have a special baby! Mary rode on the donkey while Joseph walked beside them. They wanted to find a place for the baby to be born. Let's pet the nice donkey. We can touch Mary's pretty hair and Joseph's belt, too.

Ask: • **What is Mary's hair like?** (Long; soft; brown.)

• **What is Joseph's belt like?** (Rough.)

• **How does the donkey feel?** (Soft; nice.)

Set out the stable. Say: **Mary and Joseph came to a town called Bethlehem. But there was no room to stay in. No room at all!** Say the following action rhyme, and then encourage children to slowly repeat the rhyme with you a few times.

No room, no room, where could they stay? (*Shake your head and finger.*)

In a little stable filled with animals and hay! (*Make a "roof" over your head with your arms.*)

Mary and Joseph stayed in the stable and waited for the special baby to be born. What animals were in the stable? Let's listen! Use the CD and listen to the "Animal Sounds" (track 4). Pause the CD after each sound, and encourage children to identify the animal and then imitate its sound. Stop the CD player after the sheep sounds.

Set the manger by the stable. Say: **The animals ate hay from the manger. See the hay inside?** Let children peek in the manger. **While the animals ate, Mary and Joseph waited for a special gift from God. Do you know who that gift was? Close your eyes, and we'll find out!**

Panel 2



While children's eyes are closed, lay the figure of baby Jesus in the manger. Say: **One...two...three...open your eyes. What do you see? The special baby! Jesus was the special baby who was born! Let's clap to show how glad we are that ► Jesus is God's gift!** Lead children in clapping. **You can hold the pretend baby very carefully and say, "I love you, Jesus."** Help each toddler hold the figure of baby Jesus and lead him or her in saying, "I love you, Jesus."

When everyone has had a turn, lay the figure of baby Jesus in the manger. Set the shepherd and the sheep a little ways from the story area. Say: **Out in the fields, shepherds watched their flocks of sheep. We can touch the shepherd's staff and pet the sheep.** Invite children to each pet the sheep and touch the wooden staff.

Suddenly, angels appeared. Set the angel next to the shepherd. **An angel said that Jesus had been born and that ► Jesus is God's gift!** Let's be like angels and tell someone that Jesus is born. Hand the StoryBoard angel to a child; then help him or her pass the angel to someone and say, "Jesus is born."



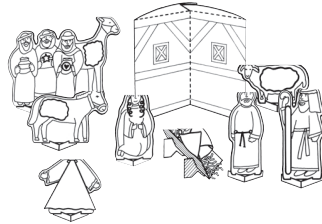
Try one or more of the following techniques if children in your class experience separation anxiety.

- Allow the child to bring a security object from home.
- Invite one of the parents to help in the classroom for a couple of weeks.
- Have parents tell the child matter-of-factly when they will return and then leave promptly.
- Have one of the adult helpers pick up the child and get him or her involved immediately in one of the Arrival Activities.



After everyone has told about Jesus' birth, say: **Then the shepherds came to see baby Jesus.** Set the sheep, shepherd, and angel by the stable. **It was a special birthday party, wasn't it? Who else came?**

Panel 3



Place the figure of the wise men to one side of the stable. Say: **Look! Three wise men heard the good news about Jesus' birthday. They love Jesus and want to see him, but how do they find Jesus? Look!** Hold the star over the stable. **They're following a bright star to find Jesus. They're also riding on camels. We can pat the camel.** Let children pat the figure of the camel.

Camels are bumpy to ride. Let's go for a pretend camel ride. Have children sit in a line, one behind the other with their legs on either side of the person in front. Sway back and forth and "bounce" up and down as you say: **Bounce, bounce, up and down! We're on a camel ride! Up and down, back and forth, bumpity, bumpity, bump! Whoa, camel, let's stop.** Have children return to their places. **That was fun!**

Ask: • **What are the wise men carrying?** (Presents; gifts.)

Say: **It's Jesus' birthday, and the wise men are bringing gifts. Let's see the gifts.** Let the children scratch and sniff the spice sticker and then touch the pretty packages in the wise men's hands.

teacher tips

Important: Put the StoryBoard away and out of reach of children.



BIBLE POINT



Say: **The wise men are bringing spices and gold and special gifts to Jesus because they love him. And God gave us a special gift because he loves us. ► Jesus is God's gift.** Jesus was a special baby because Jesus is God's Son. If we believe this, we will live in heaven someday with Jesus. Isn't that a wonderful gift? Let's learn a rhyme about our special baby Jesus.

■ Jesus Is Born (Finger Rhyme)

SUPPLIES: none

Gather children in a circle, and lead them in the following action rhyme. Say the rhyme slowly, and then encourage children to follow along. Slowly repeat the rhyme two more times.

One little baby—asleep on the hay. (*Hold up one finger, and then lay your head on your hands.*)

Two loving parents keep watch while they pray. (*Hold up two fingers, and then fold your hands.*)

Three wise men traveled on camels to find (*hold up three fingers, and then shield eyes with hand as if searching*)

One little baby—your Jesus and mine. (*Hold up one finger, and then point to yourself.*)

Say: **What a nice poem about baby Jesus! We've been learning that ► Jesus is God's gift and that he was born on Christmas. Let's find out more!**



BIBLE POINT

Bible Activities

■ Discovering Gifts

SUPPLIES: shoe box and lid, wrapping paper, scissors, tape



Before class, wrap the shoe box in wrapping paper, wrapping the lid separately so it can easily be removed. Place the *toy bear* into the wrapped shoe box. Place the wrapped lid on top of the box.

Sit in a circle with the class. Hold the box in front of you.

Say: **Opening presents is fun!**

Ask: • **Can you think of a present that you enjoyed**

opening? (My teddy bear; a new doll house; my tricycle.) Allow time for each child to share.

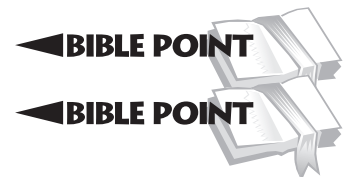
• **Why do people give each other presents?** (Because they love each other; because they want to share; because it's fun.)

• **Why do you think God gave us Jesus?** (Because he loves us; because Jesus is special; to help us.)

Say: ► **Jesus is God's gift to us, and we celebrate his birth at Christmastime! Let's pass around this box and pretend we are opening a gift from God. When we open the present, we can remember that ► Jesus is God's gift.**

Pass the box to the child on your right, and allow him or her to open the box, take out the *toy bear*, and give the bear a hug. Tell the children that hugging the bear can remind us that Jesus loves us and that we love Jesus. Then the child should replace the bear and the lid and pass the box to another child. Lead the class in saying ► **"Jesus is God's gift"** every time the box is opened. Pass the box around the circle to allow each child to open it.

After each child has had a turn, say: **That was fun to open a present! It's good to remember that ► Jesus is God's gift. Let's put a pretty Christmas tree on our bulletin board to remind us that at Christmas, we celebrate Jesus' birthday.**



■ Interactive Bible Bulletin Board

SUPPLIES: Nativity patterns (pp. 22-23), scissors, tape, evergreen branch, light blue paper



Before class, photocopy the Nativity patterns. Cut out a figure for each child in class. If you have a large class, cut out extra shepherds, angels, and sheep. Cover the bulletin board with light blue paper. Attach an evergreen branch to the center of the bulletin board or cut a large, green construction paper triangle for a tree.

During this module you'll be creating a Christmas tree and decorating it with special ornaments and gifts.



Bring out Cuddles the Lamb. When you've finished with the script, put Cuddles away, out of sight of the children.

Cuddles: Hi, boys and girls! Say...*(looking at the tree on the bulletin board)* what's a tree doing on the bulletin board?

Teacher: We're going to make it a special tree, Cuddles. We've been learning that ► Jesus is God's gift. And we've been learning that Jesus was born on Christmas. In fact, Jesus is the reason we have Christmas!

Cuddles: You mean Christmas is Jesus' birthday?

Teacher: That's right, Cuddles. And we're going to make a special Christmas tree to remind us that ► Jesus is God's gift. Would you like to help us?

Cuddles: Oh, yes! I like Christmas trees, and I like helping—and I *love* Jesus!

Have Cuddles hand each child a paper Nativity figure. Help children tape their figures to the branches of the bulletin board tree. Each time a child places a figure, lead him or her in saying the Bible Point; then have Cuddles give each child a warm hug. When all the figures have been "hung" on the tree, continue.

Teacher: My, what a special tree! Look at all the pictures from our Bible story. Let's see if you can find them.

Have children find and point to the following story pictures on the tree:

- Mary and Joseph,
- the donkey,
- the angel,
- the shepherd and the sheep,
- the manger and baby Jesus, and
- the wise men.

Teacher: You found all the pictures from our story. Now let's say our story rhyme once more to remind us that ► Jesus is God's gift.



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Sing It Out

SUPPLIES: none

Lead children in the following action rhyme. Slowly repeat the rhyme two times.

One little baby—asleep on the hay. (*Hold up one finger, and then lay your head on your hands.*)

Two loving parents keep watch while they pray. (*Hold up two fingers, and then fold your hands.*)

Three wise men traveled on camels to find (*hold up three fingers, and then shield eyes with hand as if searching*)

One little baby—your Jesus and mine. (*Hold up one finger, and then point to yourself.*)

Say: **We know that ► Jesus is God's gift. God gave us Jesus because he loves us. Let's make little mangers like the one baby Jesus slept in.**



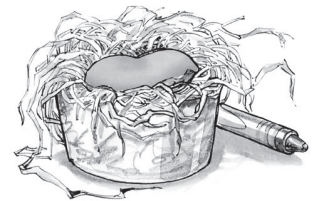
Bible Craft

SUPPLIES: paper cups, wooden ice-cream spoons, tissues, tissue paper, crayons, scissors

Before class, cut paper cups in half, retaining the bottom portions. Be sure you have a cup for each child.

Set out crayons, tissues, and tissue paper. Distribute the cup halves, and invite children to scribble-color their “mangers.” Let children stuff small wads of crumpled tissue paper or tufts of Easter grass into their mangers. Then hand each child a wooden ice-cream spoon. Let children wrap their spoon “babies” in tissue blankets and then lay their babies in the mangers. As they work, ask children questions such as “How would it feel to lie on hay?” and “Would a stable be a nice place to be born? Why or why not?”

Encourage children to “rock their babies” and “put them to bed” in the mangers. Say: **Our pretend babies look sleepy. Let's sing them a nice lullaby.** Whisper: **Maybe we can even sing our pretend babies to sleep!** Have toddlers use their babies to do the motions that accompany the song in the following game activity.



Bible Game

SUPPLIES: CD player, spoon babies from Bible Craft

Using the CD, lead children in singing “Away in a Manger” (track 5). Encourage children to use their spoon babies to do the motions in parentheses. On the repeat, let children pretend they are the babies “asleep on the hay.”



Away in a manger (*rock your baby*),
No crib for a bed (*shake your head*),
The little Lord Jesus (*cover your heart with your hands*)
Laid down his sweet head (*lay your baby in the manger*);
The stars in the sky (*raise your hands and “twinkle” your fingers*)
Looked down where he lay (*shield your eyes and look downward*),
The little Lord Jesus (*cover your heart with your hands*),
Asleep on the hay. (*Put your finger to your lips.*)
(Repeat.)

“Away in a Manger” by John Thomas McFarland and James R. Murray



BIBLE POINT ▶

Whisper: I think our pretend babies are sound asleep. Let's leave them here and tiptoe to the snack table. We'll have a delicious snack to remind us that ▶ Jesus is God's gift.



BIBLE POINT ▶

Closing

■ *Animals in the Manger*

SUPPLIES: animal crackers, napkins, apple juice, paper cups

Help children wash their hands. When children are gathered at your snack table, ask:

- **Who is our special gift from God?** (Jesus.)

Say: **Jesus is a very special gift. Jesus loves us and cares for us, and he is always with us. That's a fine present! Let's say a prayer and tell God thank you for Jesus. Fold your hands.** Pray: **Dear God, thank you for the gift of Jesus. We love Jesus, and we love you. In Jesus' name, amen.**

Hand each child a few animal crackers on a napkin and a paper cup half-filled with apple juice. As they enjoy their treats, encourage children to tell about the animals that were in the stable when Jesus was born. Remind children that ▶ Jesus is God's gift and that we celebrate Christmas to remember Jesus' birthday.

Have children take home their mangers and their paper babies from Option 1.



Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.

Photocopy the "Parent Page" handout (p. 10) for this module, and send it home with your children.

Encourage parents to use the handout to plan meaningful family activities to reinforce this module's topic.



For Extra Time

If you have a long class time or want to add additional elements to your lesson, try one of the following activities.

■ *Nativity Play*

Provide a shoe box, blocks, and a Nativity set for children to play with. Allow the children to arrange the figures of Mary, Joseph, baby Jesus, and the animals around the shoe box “stable” and retell the story of Jesus’ birth. You may wish to photocopy the Nativity patterns on pages 22 and 23 onto stiff paper, and then tape them to index cards that have been folded in half to make stands for the figures. Encourage children to ask questions about Jesus’ special birthday.

■ *Away in a Manger*

Without using the CD, lead children in singing “Away in a Manger.” Encourage children to do the motions in parentheses.



SING

Away in a manger (*rock your baby*),
No crib for a bed (*shake your head*),
The little Lord Jesus (*cover your heart with your hands*)
Laid down his sweet head (*lay your baby in the manger*);
The stars in the sky (*raise your hands and “twinkle” your fingers*)
Looked down where he lay (*shield your eyes and look downward*),
The little Lord Jesus (*cover your heart with your hands*),
Asleep on the hay. (*Put your finger to your lips.*)
(Repeat.)

“Away in a Manger” by John Thomas McFarland and James R. Murray

Patterns

Cut loosely around the pattern instead of cutting exactly on the outlines.



Patterns

Cut loosely around each pattern instead of cutting exactly on the outlines.





Teacher Guide

TODDLERS & 2s

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 Toddlers & 2s will learn these important Bible lessons:

***MODULE 1**

Jesus is God's gift.

Matthew 1:18–2:11

MODULE 2

Jesus loves everyone.

Luke 19:1-10

MODULE 3

Jesus helps sick people.

Luke 5:17-26

*Due to the way Christmas falls, we recommend moving the lessons as needed to line up Lesson 1 with the week of Christmas.

Also available:

MY FIRST HANDS-ON BIBLE™ FOR PRESCHOOLERS

God's Word comes alive with one-point lessons and interactive activities. It also coordinates with Hands-On Bible Curriculum!



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