Group

Teacher Guide

TODDLERS & 2s

Winter

Teach as Jesus Taught!®

Toddlers & 2s

Teacher Guide • Winter

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Group
Real. Bold. Love.

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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Contents

Understanding Your Toddlers and 2s 4

Welcome to the Adventure! 5

Making the Most of Your Hands-On Bible Curriculum® 6

Introduction 7

The Lessons

Module 1 Jesus Came as a Baby 9

* **Lesson 1** Luke 2:1-20 11

Lesson 2 Luke 2:1-20 25

Lesson 3 Luke 2:1-20 39

Lesson 4 Luke 2:1-20 51

Lesson 5 Luke 2:1-20 63

Module 2 Jesus Is Our Friend 75

Lesson 6 Mark 5:21-24, 35-42; Luke 17:11-19; John 6:1-13 77

Lesson 7 Mark 5:21-24, 35-42; Luke 17:11-19; John 6:1-13 89

Lesson 8 Mark 5:21-24, 35-42; Luke 17:11-19; John 6:1-13 101

Lesson 9 Mark 5:21-24, 35-42; Luke 17:11-19; John 6:1-13 113

Module 3 Jesus Loves Us 125

Lesson 10 Mark 10:14-16 127

Lesson 11 Mark 10:14-16 139

Lesson 12 Mark 10:14-16 151

Lesson 13 Mark 10:14-16 163

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

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.

Whenever you see this allergy alert icon, stop and think about allergies your children might have.

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.

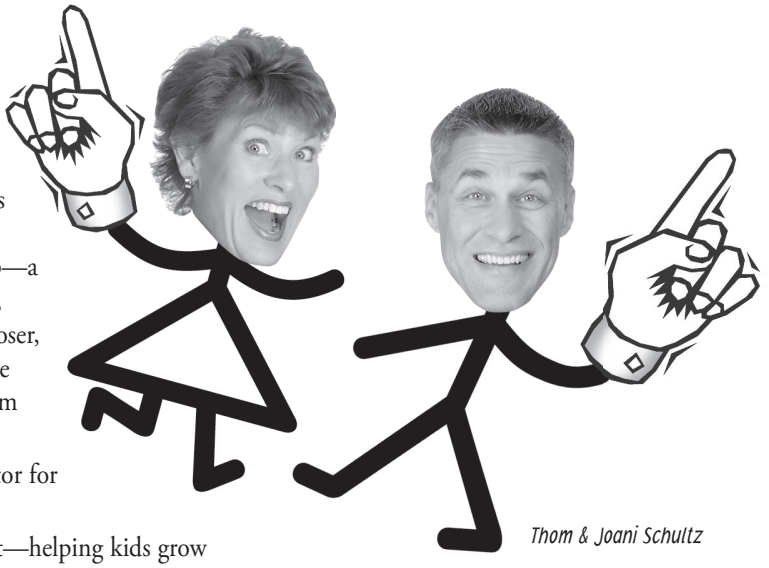
In Luke chapter 10, Jesus visits the home of Mary and Martha. As Martha worries about preparing dinner and being a busy servant, she gets upset because Mary isn't helping. But Jesus tells her, "There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away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



Thom & Joani Schultz

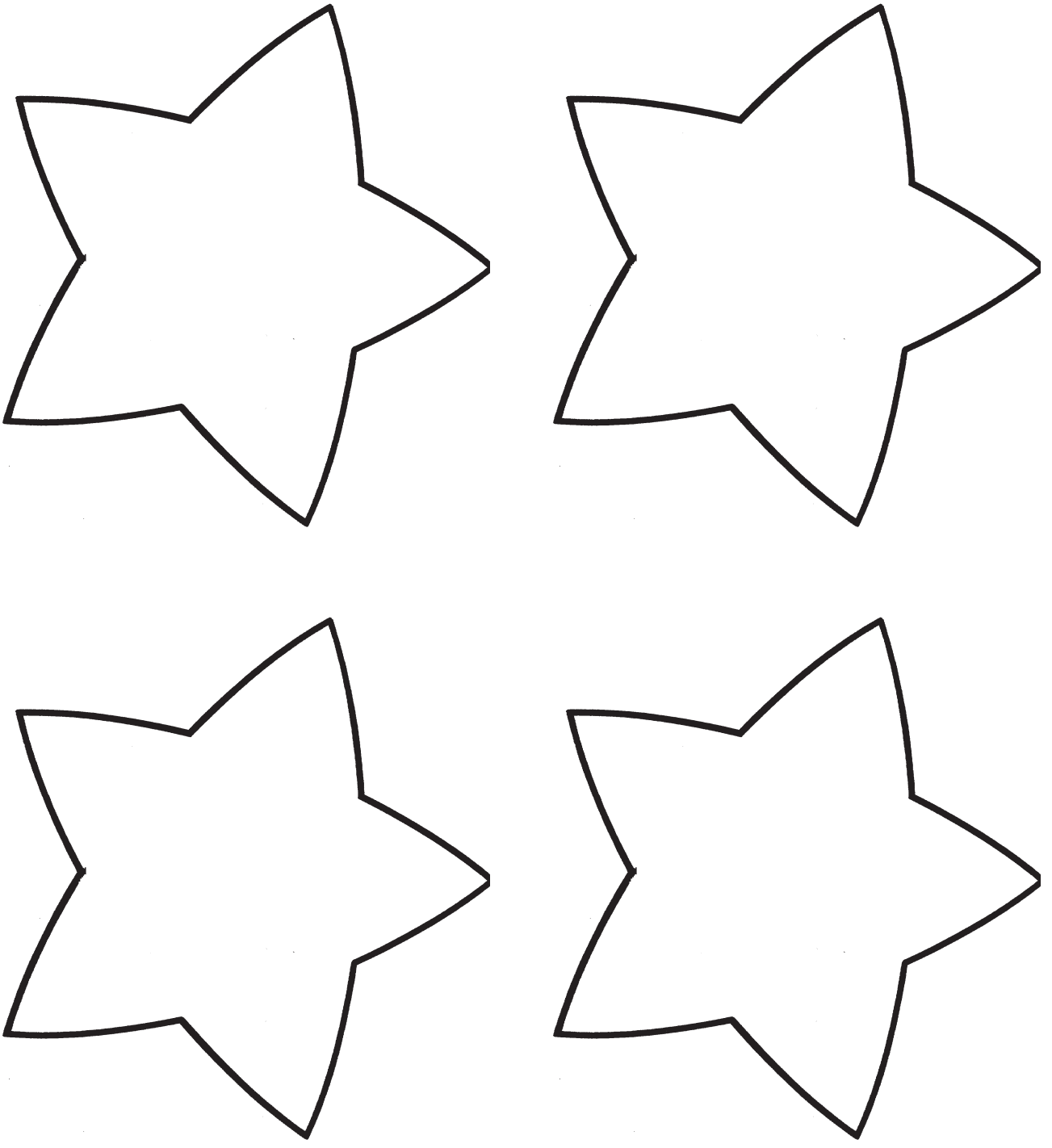
How can we build a church that becomes an incubator for a one-thing relationship, for *real* friendship with Jesus?

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.

Name Tag Pattern

Photocopy and cut out the star name tags.



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Jesus Came as a Baby

Bible Basis: Luke 2:1-20

Why do you suppose God sent a host of heavenly beings to announce the birth of God's Son to a bunch of shepherds? Why not to kings and royalty? Why not to the priests and religious leaders? Shepherds were about the lowliest class of people in the culture. Tending animals kept them from strictly observing religious laws regarding ceremonial cleanliness, and they had a reputation for being thieves! Again, why shepherds?

We really don't know why, but we can probably assume that these shepherds were not like the stereotype. God likely chose a group of shepherds who were faithful in following him. And just maybe God chose to announce Jesus' birth to them because these common folk would be more likely to receive him wholeheartedly than anyone else. Perhaps they were the ones who needed Jesus most!

Like the shepherds needed Jesus, so do the children in your class. They, too, can rejoice with the angels that God sent his Son, Jesus, into the world to live as an example for us and to die for our sins.

Jesus Came as a Baby

Lesson	Emphasis	Page
1	Jesus was born in a stable.	11
2	The animals gave Jesus a bed.	25
3	The shepherds came to visit Jesus.	39
4	Jesus was born on a special night.	51
5	Wise men brought gifts to Jesus.	63

Parent Page

Jesus Came as a Baby

For the next five weeks, your child will be learning about the birth of baby Jesus. Toddlers and 2s will see that Jesus was a real baby who grew just as they are growing. Use these ideas at home to help reinforce the point that Jesus came as a baby.

Tips for Ts and 2s

As a parent in a society that puts so much emphasis on the commercial aspects of Christmas, look for opportunities to celebrate the birth of Jesus this month. Very young children love to hear about animals, receiving special visitors, giving gifts, seeing a special star, and baby Jesus. Let the enthusiasm of your toddler bring excitement to the Christmas activities your family has already planned, and remember to emphasize that Jesus came as a baby.

Together Time

- Purchase or make a Nativity set that is safe for your child to handle. Talk about each character, and ask questions to help your child remember the details of the Christmas story.
- Let your child help make star-shaped Christmas cookies. Talk about the bright star that guided the wise men to baby Jesus.
- Sing this song from class with your toddler:

Bright Star

(sung to the tune of "The Mulberry Bush")

The star was shining in the night,
In the night, in the night.
The star was shining in the night.
It was a pretty sight!

In the manger the baby slept,
The baby slept, the baby slept.
In the manger the baby slept
All through the night.

In the sky the angels sang,
The angels sang, the angels sang.
In the sky the angels sang
About the baby Jesus.

The shepherds went to see the child,
See the child, see the child.
The shepherds went to see the child
And bowed on their knees.

The wise men brought their gifts to him,
Gifts to him, gifts to him.
The wise men brought their gifts to him—
All the way to Jesus.

Jesus, we're so glad you're here,
Glad you're here, glad you're here.
Jesus, we're so glad you're here.
We want to give you love.

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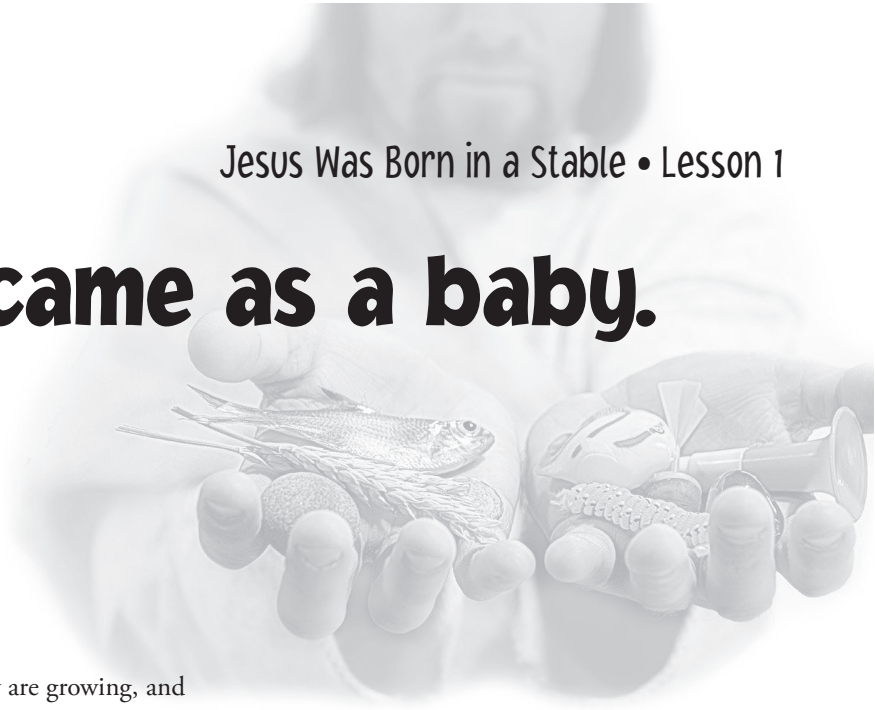


Bible Point ► Jesus came as a baby.

Bible Verse

Jesus was born (adapted from Luke 2:6).

Growing Closer to Jesus

Children will
- learn that baby Jesus was born,
- learn that Jesus grew just as they are growing, and
- thank God for Jesus.

Teacher Enrichment

Bible Basis

■ **Jesus was born in a stable.**

Luke 2:1-20

In today's passage, we witness the birth of the baby Jesus and the announcement of his birth to shepherds on the hillside outside of Bethlehem. What a wonderful, marvelous event that must have been! God himself came down to earth to live as a human and die as a sacrifice for our sins. What a gift! This Christmas season, celebrate with your class as you thank God together for all he's done for us through Jesus.

Prayer

- Read Isaiah 9:6-7.
- What do the names for Jesus in this passage mean to you?
- How can you grow closer to the Prince of Peace this Christmas season?
- Pray: Lord, help me to make Christmas more meaningful this year by…

teacher tips

Repeating the Bible Point over and over will help the children remember it and apply it to their lives. Help children learn one point that will stay with them for days and even years to come.

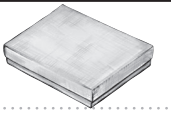
teacher tips

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.

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), marker, tape or safety pins, CD player	
	Option 1: Caring for Baby—Dress and rock dolls.	Dolls; doll clothes, beds, blankets; child-sized rocker	
	Option 2: Star Shapes—Cut out star shapes from modeling dough.	Yellow modeling dough made from water, salt, oil, alum, yellow food coloring, and flour (see recipe on p. 13); resealable bag; star-shaped cookie cutters of various sizes	
	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 Came as a Baby—Interact with sensory items as they hear the Christmas story from Luke 2:1-20 and Matthew 2.	Bible, CD player	
	Bright Star—Sing a song about Jesus' birth.	CD player	
Bible Activities	**Follow That Star!—**Follow stars to baby Jesus.	Unbreakable Nativity set, construction paper or aluminum foil, scissors, perfume	
	Interactive Bible Bulletin Board—Review the Bible story with Cuddles the Lamb as they create a bulletin board together.	Mary, Joseph, baby Jesus, and star patterns (p. 23); small shallow box; scissors; brown and dark blue construction paper; tape; stapler	
	Sing It Out—Sing a song about the night Jesus was born.	CD player	
	Bible Craft—Make sparkly stars.	Yellow or white poster board, large star pattern (p. 23), scissors, hole punch, crayons, glitter glue, yarn	
	Bible Game—Learn a fun finger play about Jesus' birth.		
Closing	**Thankful Hearts—**Say a prayer, make a snack, and decide who they'll tell about baby Jesus.	Heart-shaped cookie cutters, plastic knives, softened cream cheese, strawberry jam, paper plates, napkins, bread	

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

Arrival Activities

Welcome Time

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

- Play "Away in a Manger" (track 4) from the *CD* as children are arriving. The music will soothe them as they adapt to their new surroundings.
- 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 came as a baby.***
- Place Cuddles out of sight so the children won't be distracted by him during the next activity.

teacher tips

Consider laminating the name tags after the first week so they'll last an entire quarter. You may want to put name tags on children's backs because the children will be playing on the floor. You'll find yourself referring to the name tags often.

Option 1: Caring for Baby

SUPPLIES: *dolls; doll clothes, beds, blankets; child-sized rocker*

Set out dolls and doll clothes and blankets. Arrange a child-sized rocker and doll beds nearby. Encourage children to dress and cuddle the dolls as if they were caring for babies. Talk with the children about how to care for and love babies.

As the children play with the dolls, remind them that they were once babies and that their parents loved them and took care of them. Tell the children that ►*Jesus came as a baby.* His parents took good care of him and loved him, too.

Option 2: Star Shapes

SUPPLIES: *yellow modeling dough, star-shaped cookie cutters*

Set out yellow modeling dough (see recipe in the margin) and various sizes of star-shaped cookie cutters. Help the children flatten out the dough with their hands and cut out star shapes.

Tell children that ►*Jesus came as a baby.* Mention that a bright star shone over the stable where Jesus was born. Wise men from far away followed the star to find baby Jesus. Talk about who made the stars. Let children wave their stars in the air as you lead them in singing "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" without the *CD*.

Modeling Dough

Heat to almost boiling 1½ cups water and ½ cup salt. Remove from heat, and add 2 tablespoons vegetable oil, 2 tablespoons alum (in spice aisle at your grocery store), and yellow food coloring.

Cool mixture until it is easy to handle. Knead in 2 to 3 cups of flour. Continue to knead until smooth. Store in a resealable bag.

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." Use the *CD* (track 2) and sing the song to the tune of "Looby Loo."

teacher tips

Have your Arrival Activities ready to go before children arrive. That way, you can warmly greet each child and direct children immediately to the activities.

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.

Children learn from their play, but it's important to have an adult present to guide their conversation and to reinforce the Bible Point of each learning activity.

Bible Story Time

■ *Bible Song*

SUPPLIES: *Bible, CD player*

Say: ►***Jesus came as a baby.*** **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* (track 3), lead the children in singing "God's Special Book" to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat."

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!

■ *Bible Story: Jesus Came as a Baby*

This Bible story is featured in *My First Hands-On Bible*™. Order several now for your ministry at group.com.

SUPPLIES: *CD player, Bible*

Before class begins, prepare your StoryBoard by following the assembly instructions provided in the Learning Lab. The purpose of the StoryBoard is to provide an interactive, sensory learning opportunity for your toddlers and 2s. Please attach the sensory items securely so the children can touch them without danger of pulling the items off or putting them into their mouths.

Panel 2

Hold the StoryBoard so that Panel 2 is revealed and Panels 1 and 3 are folded back. Open your Bible to Luke 2, and show children the chapter. Say: **We're going to hear a Bible story about when ►*Jesus came as a baby.* In Chapter 2 of the book**

◄BIBLE VERSE

of Luke in the Bible, we learn that ►Jesus was born as a baby.

Baby Jesus was born a long time ago. His mommy, Mary, and his daddy, Joseph, were traveling and didn't have a place to stay when it was time for Jesus to be born. So they stayed in a stable, which is where animals live. Jesus didn't have a crib, so Mary and Joseph put baby Jesus in a manger. A manger is a place to feed animals, and it's full of hay. Let's sing "Away in a Manger" and pretend to rock a baby. Using the *CD*, lead children in singing "Away in a Manger" (track 4).

SING

Away in a manger,
No crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus
Laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the sky
Looked down where he lay.
The little Lord Jesus,
Asleep on the hay.

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

When you're finished singing, whisper: **Jesus must have slept, but I wonder if a manger was very comfortable.**

Ask: • **Can you find the manger and hay?** Let children find and touch the hay in the manger.

• **How does the hay feel?** (Scratchy; rough.)

Say: **The hay was rough and scratchy, so his parents wrapped baby Jesus in a blanket to protect him and to keep him warm.** Have children touch the blanket.

Ask: • **How does the blanket around baby Jesus feel?** (Soft; smooth.)

Say: ►***Jesus came as a baby.*** **His parents loved him and were excited that he was born. Let's see who else was excited that Jesus was born.**

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 hidden, and all chemicals are out of reach of the children.

Panel 1

Reveal Panel 1 of the StoryBoard, which shows the shepherds tending their flocks of sheep. Say: **When Jesus was born, shepherds were out in the fields taking care of their sheep. Let's touch the sheep.**

Have the children touch the sheep.

Ask: • **How does the sheep feel?** (Soft; fuzzy.)

• **What sound do sheep make?** (Baa, baa.)

• **Who takes care of the sheep?** (Shepherds.)

Say: **The hillside where the shepherds were watching their sheep was dark and quiet. But suddenly, there was a bright light in the sky! Angels came to tell the shepherds that Jesus was born! Let's touch the angel's robe.** Let children touch the angel's robe.

Ask: • **How does the angel's robe feel?** (Soft; smooth.)

Say: **The shepherds were surprised to see the angels. The shepherds**

knew that angels bring messages from God. The angels told the shepherds where to find baby Jesus. The shepherds were excited that ►*Jesus came as a baby.* They hurried to see baby Jesus.

Have an adult helper assist in choosing two children to put star stickers on Panel 3. Use two stickers for each lesson.

Panel 3

Now show Panel 3 of the StoryBoard, which shows the wise men and camels.

Say: **When Jesus was born, a big shiny star appeared in the sky.** Point out the star.

Ask: • **How does the star look?** (Shiny; sparkly.)

• **When can we see stars?** (At night.)

Say: **Let's put stars on the StoryBoard.** Have two children place star stickers from Sensory Packet 1 in the sky. **Stars are twinkly. Let's wiggle our fingers like twinkly stars and sing "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" again.** Without using the *CD*, lead children in singing and opening and closing their fingers.

The wise men knew that ►*Jesus came as a baby.* They wanted to visit him and to bring him gifts. Let's see what the wise men brought Jesus. Have children take turns peeking in the gift boxes on Panel 3. Encourage children to sniff the felt and tea bag.

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

Ask: • **How do the gifts smell?** (Good; nice.)

• **What's the best gift you ever received?** (A new doll; a puppy; a train.)

Say: **The wise men knew that Jesus was very special, just as the shepherds and angels knew. Let's play a game. I'll say the name of someone or something in the Bible story, and then you point to that picture on the StoryBoard.** Be sure each child finds at least one story picture. Have children find the

• angels,	• big star,	• shepherds,
• stable,	• sheep,	• cow, and
• camels,	• manger,	• baby Jesus.

Say: **The angels, shepherds, and wise men were glad that ►*Jesus came as a baby.* We're glad, too! Let's tell God thank you for sending baby Jesus.** Lead children in a short prayer thanking God for sending Jesus. **Now let's sing a song to help us remember everything we've just learned.**

■ *Bright Star*

SUPPLIES: *CD player*

Using the *CD*, lead children in doing the motions and singing "Bright Star" (track 5) to the tune of "The Mulberry Bush."

The star was shining in the night *("twinkle" fingers in the air)*,
In the night, in the night. *("Twinkle" fingers in the air.)*
The star was shining in the night. *(Twinkle" fingers in the air.)*
It was a pretty sight! *(Cup hands next to eyes.)*

In the manger the baby slept *(rest head on hands)*,
The baby slept, the baby slept. *(Rest head on hands.)*
In the manger the baby slept *(rest head on hands)*
All through the night. *(Pretend to rock a baby.)*

In the sky the angels sang *(cup hands next to mouth)*,
The angels sang, the angels sang. *(Cup hands next to mouth.)*
In the sky the angels sang *(cup hands next to mouth)*
About the baby Jesus. *(Pretend to rock a baby.)*

The shepherds went to see the child *(walk in place)*,
See the child, see the child. *(Walk in place.)*
The shepherds went to see the child *(walk in place)*
And bowed on their knees. *(Bow on one knee.)*

The wise men brought their gifts to him *(extend hands in front)*,
Gifts to him, gifts to him. *(Extend hands in front.)*
The wise men brought their gifts to him *(extend hands in front)*—
All the way to Jesus. *(Pretend to rock a baby.)*

Jesus, we're so glad you're here *(clap hands to left and right)*,
Glad you're here, glad you're here. *(Clap hands to left and right.)*
Jesus, we're so glad you're here. *(Clap hands to left and right.)*
We want to give you love. *(Cross hands over chest.)*

Say: ►***Jesus came as a baby,*** **and we're so glad he did! The wise men followed a bright star to find baby Jesus. Let's follow some stars, too!**

teacher tips

You may want to place a cloth over the Nativity set so children won't be distracted by it before the "Follow That Star!" activity.

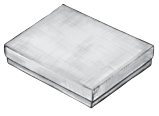
teacher tips

If you don't have a Nativity set, use the patterns for Mary, Joseph, baby Jesus, the shepherds, the animals, and the wise men on pages 23, 37, 50, 73, and 74. Tape the figures to blocks or boxes.

Bible Activities

■ *Follow That Star!*

SUPPLIES: *Nativity set, construction paper or aluminum foil, scissors, perfume*



Before class, set up an unbreakable Nativity set somewhere out of the way, such as in a corner of the room. Also cut out about 10 large stars from construction paper or aluminum foil, and create a meandering trail leading up to the manger. Take the cotton from the *gift box* and spray it with the perfume, then return the cotton to the *gift box.* (You will discard the cotton after this lesson.)

Remind the children that the wise men found baby Jesus by following a bright star God had placed in the sky. With the *gift box* in hand, lead children along the trail leading to the Nativity set.

Once the children have arrived at the manger, say: **The wise men followed a bright star in the sky to find baby Jesus.** Point to the manger in the Nativity scene. **We followed some stars to find baby Jesus, too, didn't we? The wise men brought their gifts to Jesus.** Point to the wise men figures. **And we've brought a pretend gift to baby Jesus, too, haven't we?** Hold up the Learning Lab *gift box* filled with the scented cotton.

Say: **Some of the gifts the wise men brought to baby Jesus smelled so beautiful! Let's see if the gift we brought smell beautiful, too.**

Hold up the *gift box*, and then take the cotton out of the box. Wave the cotton around to allow the perfume smell to fill the area. Let each child take a turn smelling the cotton.

Ask: • **Which would you rather receive—a gift that smelled beautiful or a gift that smelled yucky? Why?** (One that smelled beautiful, because they smell pretty.)

• **What was it like following the stars to find baby Jesus?** (Fun; good.)

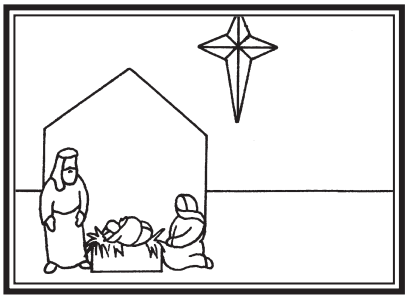
• **How do you think the wise men felt when they found baby Jesus? Why?** (Happy, because they had looked a long, long time; excited, because they wanted to give him his gifts; happy, because they loved Jesus.)

BIBLE POINT►

Say: **The shepherds and wise men were happy that ►*Jesus came as a baby.* We're happy, too! Let's tell our friend Cuddles all we've learned about baby Jesus.**

■ Interactive Bible Bulletin Board

SUPPLIES: *star and people patterns (p. 23), scissors, stapler, tape, dark blue and brown construction or craft paper, small shallow box*



Before class, cover two-thirds of your bulletin board with dark blue construction paper to represent the nighttime sky and one-third with brown paper to represent the ground. Photocopy, cut out, and color the large star, Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus patterns on page 23. Photocopy and cut out a small star pattern for each child. You'll also need to cut out a simple brown construction paper stable (as shown at left). Attach the stable to the bulletin board. You'll also need a small shallow box for the manger.

teacher tips

The Interactive Bible Bulletin Board is a simple device that offers so much that young children need: routine and familiarity, opportunities for creative expression, and visual reminders of previous lessons. If you haven't used this idea, give it a try!

Bring out Cuddles the Lamb, and go through the following script. When you've finished, put Cuddles away out of sight.

Cuddles: Hi! I'm so glad to be here. What did you learn today?

Help children tell Cuddles about baby Jesus and the star.

Teacher: We learned that ►*Jesus came as a baby*. We're going to put some pictures on our bulletin board to remind us of the story of when baby Jesus was born. Can you help us?

Cuddles: I love to help! What's the big star for?

Teacher: A big star was shining in the sky when baby Jesus was born. Let's put the stars up in the night sky.

Hand the large star cutout to a child to tape on the bulletin board. Let the other children tape their smaller stars in the sky on the board.

Cuddles: Where's baby Jesus?

Teacher: Let's put Mary and Joseph in the picture first.

Hand the figures of Mary and Joseph to two children to tape on the bulletin board.

Teacher: Children, can you tell Cuddles who Mary and Joseph were?

Wait for children to tell Cuddles about Mary and Joseph.

Cuddles: Where's baby Jesus?

Teacher: Just a minute, Cuddles. Let's get a bed ready for baby Jesus. What did Jesus sleep in?

Children: A manger.

Hand the small shallow box to a child to place on the bulletin board. Help the child tape or staple the "manger" in place.

Cuddles: Where's baby Jesus?

Teacher: Here's baby Jesus! Cuddles, you can put him in the manger. *(Have Cuddles tape the figure of baby Jesus in the manger.)* ►Jesus came as a baby.

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■ Sing It Out

SUPPLIES: CD player

Say: **Now let's sing our song about the night baby Jesus was born.**

Using the *CD*, lead children in singing "Bright Star." Lead children in the motions, and point to each item on the StoryBoard that's mentioned in the song.

teacher tips

Whenever possible, have Cuddles ask questions and encourage the children to give the answers. It's a great way to review the Bible story.

SING

The star was shining in the night *("twinkle" fingers in the air)*,
In the night, in the night. *("Twinkle" fingers in the air.)*
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Jesus, we're so glad you're here *(clap hands to left and right)*,
Glad you're here, glad you're here. *(Clap hands to left and right.)*
Jesus, we're so glad you're here. *(Clap hands to left and right.)*
We want to give you love. *(Cross hands over chest.)*

BIBLE POINT►

Say: **Thanks for that wonderful singing! I'm so glad that ►*Jesus came as a baby!* Let's make something to help us tell others about baby Jesus.**

■ Bible Craft

SUPPLIES: *large star pattern (p. 23), yellow or white poster board, scissors, hole punch, yarn, crayons, glitter glue*

Before class, cut out large stars from yellow or white poster board using a copy of the large star pattern as a guide. Punch a hole in one point of each star. Loop a length of yarn through the hole in each star, and tie the ends together.

BIBLE POINT►

Give each child a star. Let the children decorate their stars with crayons and then spread glitter glue on them. As children work, compliment them on the bright, shiny stars they're making. Remind them that ►*Jesus came as a baby* and that God sent a star to shine over where Jesus was born.

When children have finished with their stars, let them hold the stars in the air and gently wave them back and forth as you repeat with them the first stanza of "Bright Star" (see p. 19).

BIBLE POINT►

Say: **Take your stars home with you so you can tell your family that ►*Jesus came as a baby.* Right now, let's learn a finger play about that special night when Jesus was born.**

■ Bible Game

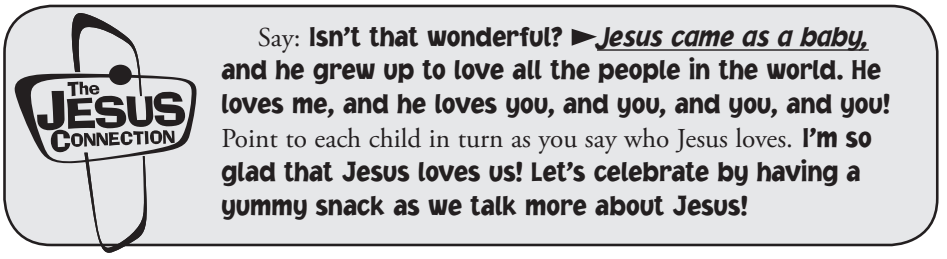
SUPPLIES: *none*

teacher tips

Children learn by imitation. Let the children repeat a prayer after you. Then encourage them to think of other words to add to the prayer.

Teach the children the Baby Jesus Finger Play below. Introduce one line at a time, and demonstrate the hand motions. Then do the whole finger play with the children.

A baby was born long ago. *(Fold arms as if rocking a baby.)*
Mary and Joseph loved him so. *(Cross arms across chest.)*
Shepherds came to worship and pray. *(Fold hands as if in prayer.)*
Wise men brought gifts from far away. *(Hold out hands as if carrying a gift.)*
This little baby was Jesus, you see. *(Point up.)*
He came from heaven for you and me. *(Point to children and then to yourself.)*



Say: **Isn't that wonderful? ►*Jesus came as a baby,* and he grew up to love all the people in the world. He loves me, and he loves you, and you, and you, and you!** Point to each child in turn as you say who Jesus loves. **I'm so glad that Jesus loves us! Let's celebrate by having a yummy snack as we talk more about Jesus!**

◄BIBLE POINT

Closing

■ *Thankful Hearts*

SUPPLIES: *heart-shaped cookie cutters, plastic knives, softened cream cheese, strawberry jam, paper plates, napkins, bread*

Gather children at the snack table. Say: **We've been learning that ►*Jesus came as a baby.* Let's thank God for sending Jesus to love us.** Fold your hands. Pray: **Dear God, thank you for the gift of baby Jesus. We love Jesus so much! Amen.**

◄BIBLE POINT

Set out heart-shaped cookie cutters, plastic knives, softened cream cheese, and strawberry jam. Give each child a paper plate, a napkin, and a slice of bread. Help children use the heart-shaped cookie cutters to cut heart shapes from their bread. Then have them spread softened cream cheese and strawberry jam on the hearts.

See page 5.

When children have finished enjoying their treats, have them throw away the napkins and paper plates in the wastebasket. Then have children retrieve the glittery stars they made earlier.

Remind children to take their glittery stars home with them. Every time they look at the star they can remember that ►*Jesus came as a baby!* Tell children to use their stars to tell someone else about Jesus. Ask each child to name one person they can tell about baby Jesus this week.

◄BIBLE POINT

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.

I'm Growing

Use a bathroom scale to weigh the children, and measure their heights with a yardstick taped to the wall. Talk about how they were once babies, and how they're growing. Remind children that ►*Jesus came as a baby.* Write each child's weight and height on a paper star. Punch a hole on top of the star, and put a 20- to 25-inch length of yarn through the hole and tie the ends. Let the children wear their star necklaces home.

Nativity Play

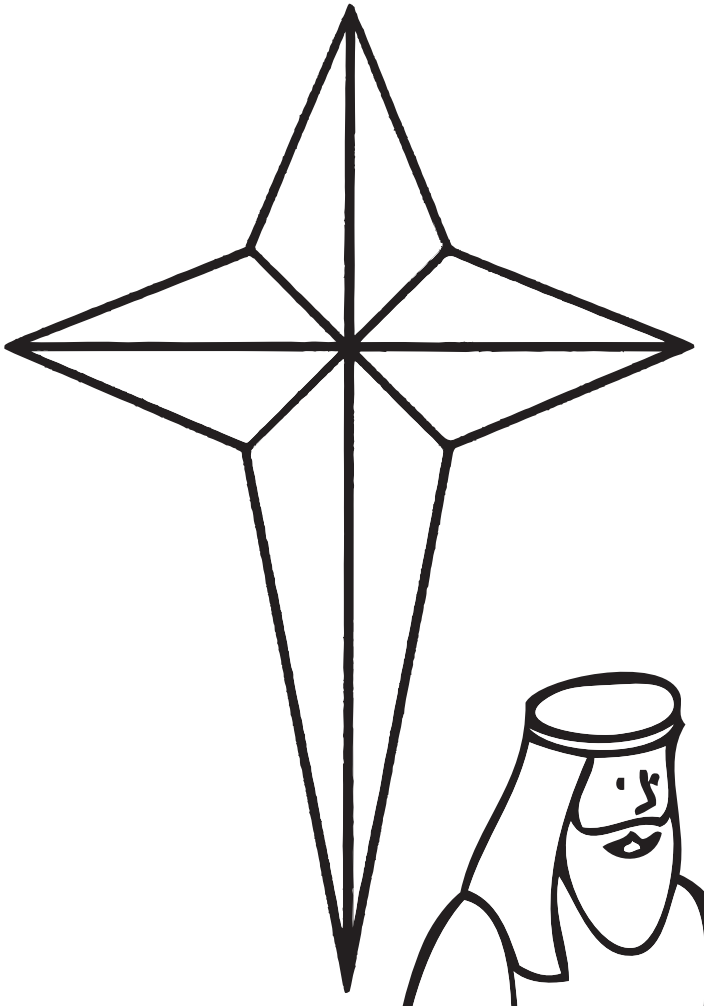
Let children play with the Nativity set used in the lesson. Encourage them to make the sounds the animals in the stable might have made on the night Jesus was born. Review with children the characters involved in the story of Jesus' birth. Use this Nativity set throughout this module for hands-on learning and review!

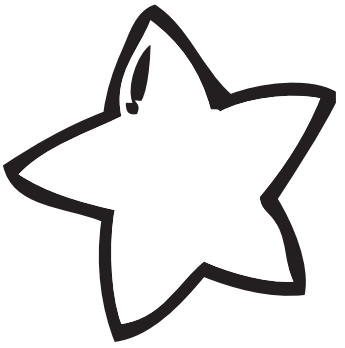
Baby Pictures

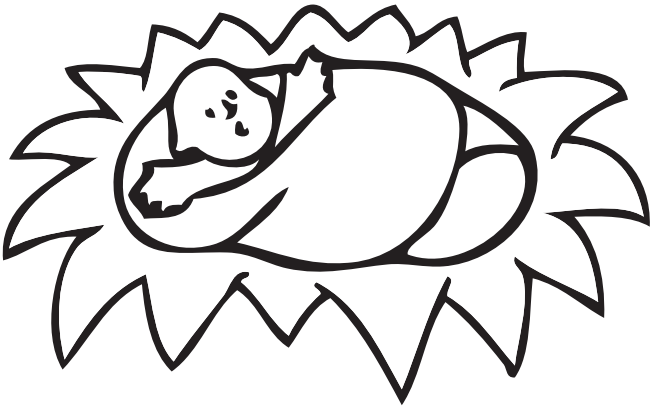
Bring pictures of yourself or your children as babies. Encourage the children to look at the pictures with you, and to talk about how much you've grown. Remind children that ►*Jesus came as a baby* and that he grew up just as they're doing.

Patterns

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







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Teacher Guide

TODDLERS & 2s

Winter

Teach as Jesus Taught!®

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Luke 2:1-20	Jesus came as a baby.

MODULE 2

Mark 5:21-24, 35-42; Luke 17:11-19; John 6:1-13	Jesus is our friend.

MODULE 3

Mark 10:14-16	Jesus loves us.

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MY FIRST HANDS-ON BIBLE™ FOR PRESCHOOLERS

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