

Lesson: **Born in a Manger**

Background Scripture : **Luke 2:1-7**

YOU WILL NEED: *Signs for Jesus, Forgive, Criminals, Remember, Promise, Empty, Love, Extreme Obedience*

BIBLE LESSON

Choose a boy and girl volunteer—Give the girl the **Mary** sign. Give the boy the **Joseph** sign.

SAY: Everybody say, “Hello, Mary and Joseph,” (*Kids: Hello, Mary and Joseph!*) And congratulations, you’re still not married!

SAY: God chose Mary and Joseph to be the earthly parents of Jesus, and while Mary was expecting to give birth, they both had to travel to Bethlehem, their hometown, for the census.

Ask the students—**How do you think Joseph felt?** His wife is expecting to give birth at any time, and they have to travel several days, through the weather, probably by donkey or by walking over rough ground. There were also many robbers in that day who would attack people on the roads outside the cities.

Ask the students—**Do you think Joseph might have been scared?**

Choose a volunteer—Give him/her the **Inn Keeper** sign.

SAY: When they finally arrived at Bethlehem, all the inns were full.

Have the Inn Keeper volunteer say, “We don’t have any room for you.”

Ask the students—**How do you think Joseph felt?**

SAY: And then when the inn keeper let them stay in the stable, do you think he might have been concerned about a newborn baby being around all those animals? (*These are rhetorical questions. Don’t take answers. You want to keep the story moving quickly.*)

SAY: I need some volunteers to add sound effects to our story. Mary and Joseph (refer to your volunteers) are in the stable. Now in Jesus’ time a stable wasn’t like a barn, but it was the lower floor of the inn. Inns back then were usually cut out of stone, like a huge cave. The upper levels would have large holes cut into the sides for rooms. They didn’t even have doors. The stable was the bottom part where all the animals stayed. So I need some animal sound effects.

Choose volunteers— for the following sound effects (more than one person can have the same sound.) Give as many parts as you have volunteers, even if it is every student in the class.

Sound effects:

Donkey—There were probably many of these.

Horse—There would have been a few of these.

Dogs—Wild dogs would hang around the stables in hopes of getting left-over food. Sometimes these wild dogs would even attack people.

Goats—It is possible that some people would have a goat with them.

Sheep—Most sheep were kept in the pasture in large flocks although some might have been in the stable.

SAY: On the count of three I want you to make your noise and keep going until I say, “Jesus was born!” Ready... 1-2-3...Go! (Encourage kids to be louder and to keep going.)

SAY: In the middle of all of this, JESUS WAS BORN!
(Kids should stop their noise; if not, say, “STOP!”)

SAY: Let’s try that again. 1-2-3...Make your noise. In the middle of all of this, JESUS WAS BORN!

SAY: Joseph trusted God and God took care of them, and you can trust God too.

CONTROL TOOL

Any time I say, “When you’re afraid, what should you do?” Everybody say, “Trust God!”

Practice a few times.

SAY: Later on something happened that probably really scared Joseph. (Ask your Joseph volunteer to lay down on the ground and pretend to be asleep.) After the shepherds came and worshipped Jesus, Mary and Joseph probably stayed in Bethlehem for a year or two. During this time the Magi or wise men came bringing gifts, but after they left, Joseph had a dream from God.

Choose a volunteer—Give him/her the **Angel** sign.

SAY: An angel appeared to Joseph and said, “Get up.” (Have the volunteer repeat after you.) “Go to Egypt because King Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.”

Ask the students—**How do you think Joseph felt when he heard that the king was going to try to kill Jesus?** (Answer: Probably afraid.)

Ask the students—**So what do you think Joseph did?** (Answer: He obeyed God and trusted him. Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus went to Egypt until God told them it was safe.)

CONTROL TOOL

Leader: When you’re afraid, what should you do? (Kids: Trust God!)
(Practice once more.)