

Christmas Theme: The Real Meaning of Christmas

OVERVIEW

Key Point: ⇒ Christmas is all about Jesus.

Bible Story: Jesus is born
Bible Reference: Luke 2:1-20

Challenge Verse: “But when the fullness of time came, God sent His Son.” Galatians 4:4

Younger option: “God sent His Son.” Galatians 4:4

ITEMS NEEDED

Memory Verse Sign

Slips of Paper for Christmas Chains

Blank white paper

Markers / Crayons / Pencils for each class that doesn't have any

Glue and scotch tape

Signs for *Mary, Joseph, Inn Keeper*

Construction paper to make a “Happy Birthday, Jesus” manger scene or some kind of “Happy Birthday, Jesus” ornaments—These can be made by the kids or inexpensive kits can be ordered from www.orientaltrading.com.

BEFORE CLASS

- Put on some Christian Christmas music to set the mood.
- Put up the Bible Verse Poster for today.
- Set out any items you need for today's lesson
- Pray for each student by name.

AS STUDENTS ENTER

- Greet each student by name as they enter.
- Give each student an attendance sticker for the attendance chart.
- Get to know any guests.

OPENING ACTIVITY

As students arrive, give them each a piece of blank paper and ask them to draw or color a picture of what Christmas means to them.

SAY: Christmas may mean a lot of things to a lot of different people—Some of you may have drawn Christmas trees or gifts or food or family, but for the next few weeks we are going to be celebrating the Real Meaning of Christmas.

*Ask the students—***What is the real meaning of Christmas?** (Jesus' birth. Everything else about Christmas is fun and great—seeing family, eating together, opening presents, and so forth, but these aren't the heart of Christmas.)

*Ask the students—***What does it mean to you that Jesus was born?** (If Jesus hadn't come to earth to live a perfect life and die and rise again, none of us could be forgiven or go to heaven.)

Control Tool

Anytime you say, "What's Christmas all about?" students should shout back, "It's all about Jesus!" Feel free to have a boys vs. girls or a side vs. side competition to see who can say it the loudest. And remember that students are going to mimic how you say it--so be excited.

Leader: What's Christmas all about? / Students: It's all about Jesus!

SAY: After everything I say, say NO!

Is Christmas about eating Turkey? NO!

Is Christmas about buying presents? NO!

Is Christmas about ribbons and bows? NO!

Is Christmas about family coming to town!? NO!

Is Christmas about egg nog and cranberry sauce? NO!

Is Christmas about getting out of school for almost two weeks? NO!

Is Christmas about the North Pole? NO!

Control Tool

Leader: What's Christmas all about? / Students: It's all about Jesus!

BIBLE LESSON

SAY: Get your Bibles ready for a Bible Drill.

Ask the students—**Who knows an easy way to find the Gospels?** (Turn to the middle of the Bible—You’ll probably find Psalms. Then turn halfway through the section to your right. You’ll usually end up in the Gospels.)

Ask the students—**What four books make up the Gospels?** (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.)

*Ready...Luke 2:1...Go!
Read the verse.*

Read Luke 2:1-7 from your Bible.
(Be sure to mark this in advance.)

Ask the students—**Why did Mary and Joseph need to go to Bethlehem?** (Because they were from the line of David and the Roman Caesar had made a command for everyone to return to their hometowns and be registered.)

Ask the students—**Do you think this was scary, traveling like this with Mary getting ready to give birth and then not being able to find any place to stay?** (Probably so, but both Mary and Joseph had heard from God through an angel. Like them, you can always trust God.)

Ask the students—**Why did Mary put the baby Jesus in a feeding trough?** (Lots of other people were traveling too and there was no room for them in the Inn. So they stayed where the animals stayed. God’s Son wasn’t born in a castle or a palace. He was born in a stable with a bunch of dirty animals!)

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, to register.

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?

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.

LESSON ACTIVITY

Make Your Own Manger

(or make your own ornament activity)

Use construction paper for making a “Happy Birthday, Jesus,” manger scene. While you do this discuss with your children the characters that you typically see in a Christmas manger scene.

Also, take time to talk again about the different aspects of Jesus' birth while your kids are putting their crafts together.

CHALLENGE VERSE ACTIVITY

SAY: Get your Bibles ready for another Bible Drill, but first let's have someone show us where the book we are going to find is. It's the book of Galatians.

Ask the students—**Does anyone know who wrote the book of Galatians?** (Paul the apostle. It is a letter that Paul wrote to the people who lived in Galatia.)

Ask the students—**Is it in the Old Testament or the New Testament?** (New Testament.)

Ready...Galatians 4:4...Go!

(For younger kids or unchurched guests you might want to re-explain what the 4:4 means. Also, if you ever have a student who doesn't own a Bible, we want to give them one. Extra Bibles are located in the 100s Office.)

Read the verse.

Ask the students—*(Refer to your challenge verse poster.)* **What do you think the “fullness of time” means?** (It means at just the right time—when everything was ready.)

SAY: At the right time, God sent His Son. It wasn't an accident that Jesus was born in a stable. It wasn't bad timing. Jesus came at just the right time in just the right way. He came to save you and me and to make a way for us to be forgiven and to go to heaven.

CHRISTMAS CHAINS

Give the students slips of paper. Tell them to write on them things they want for Christmas and to make them into chains. (*NOTE: For younger students, you can have them draw a picture of these and then explain them to the class.*)

[NOTE: We will keep building onto these chains throughout December, so keep them in your room.]

PRAYER TIME & WRAP UP

Control Tool

Leader: *What's Christmas all about?* / Students: *It's all about Jesus!*

Pray and thank Jesus for coming at the just the right time.

List Prayer Requests Here

Be sure to pray specifically for each request above.

EXTRA TIME

Use any extra time to:

- Help your students memorize the verse for today
 - Fill out CROSSwalk Point cards
- Practice extra Bible Drills. Here are some examples that we will be looking at this month:

Ready...Luke 2:11...Go!

Ready...Matthew 1:20-23...Go!

Ready...Galatians 4:4...Go!

(This would also be a good time to show the kids the section of the Bible that contains the General Epistles. Epistles means “letters.” These are the letters that Paul wrote to the people who lived in Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, Colossae.)

Ready...Philippians 2:15...Go!

Ready...1 John 4:14...Go!

(This would also be a good time to explain and show on the Bible Book Chart that there is a Gospel of John, which Jesus’ disciple John wrote, but there are also three short letters that John wrote: 1 John, 2 John and 3 John.)



“But when the fullness of time
came, God sent His Son.”
Galatians 4:4



“God sent His Son.”
Galatians 4:4