

3. Jesus Is Coming (Luke 2:1-5)

The angel said, “Don’t be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people.” (Luke 2:10)



PLAN

Session Outline

1. Gather

Greeting
Nativity Dress Up: Animals
Bethlehem Maze
Transition to Explore

2. Explore

Sacred Conversations
Hear and See the Bible Story
Interact with the Bible Story
Say the Bible Verse
Transition to Respond

3. Respond

Loving God,
Loving Neighbor
Sandal Ornament
Christmas Caroling
Transition to Bless

4. Bless

Inviting
Praising
Blessing
At Home with God

Supplies

Basic Supplies: Tape | Stickers | Markers | Crayons | Pencils | Glue | Paper | Scissors

Gather: “Angels” basket | “Mary and Joseph” basket | Laundry basket or other large basket | Animal costume headbands and tails for sheep, donkeys, cows, or other animals

Explore: No additional supplies needed

Respond: Battery-operated tea light candles | Adhesive craft dots (optional)

Bless: Heart-shaped ink stamp or stickers

Before You Teach

Each year during the Christmas season, we journey to Bethlehem. Not literally, of course, as few of us could afford the time or expense to travel to Bethlehem annually. However, in order to meaningfully celebrate Christmas, we can place ourselves in the story, reading the familiar words that lead us to Bethlehem.

Bethlehem is where Jesus’ birth takes place. In a small town that was relatively unimportant at that time, God’s Son was born to a couple from Nazareth. Joseph and Mary both journeyed to Bethlehem in response to a decree from Caesar Augustus. At the time of Jesus’ birth, the world was dominated by the Roman Empire, and Caesar Augustus was the most powerful ruler. Therefore, when Emperor Augustus decided everyone needed to travel to their hometowns to be registered, that was what happened. It didn’t matter if the journey required over sixty miles of travel by foot or donkey. (This was a much longer journey in comparison to our modern-day, one-hour ride by automobile.) And it did not matter if the woman to whom you were engaged was about to have a baby. Emperor Augustus had decreed the entire empire would be registered so they could be made to pay taxes... so the entire empire obeyed.

As we hear the story of Jesus’ birth, we are reminded that many years ago in this small, ordinary town, God did something extraordinary. A baby was born, God’s Son, who would be a different kind of ruler—a baby who would change the world forever.

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GATHER

Greeting

Before class: Display the Attendance Chart (Class Kit—pp. 15–18) at eye level. Put together the model of the school and the figures of Mr. Maxwell, Rachel, and Armen (Class Kit—p. 9).

- Play, “Come to Us, Emmanuel” (Annual Music CD or Adventure DVD) as you welcome each child.
- Show the children where to place their offerings.
- Help each child mark the Attendance Chart with a sticker or permanent marker.
- Place the Deep Blue Shores Map (Class Kit—p. 11) and the school and the Mr. Maxwell, Rachel, and Armen figures (Class Kit—p. 9) on a table or on the floor for the children to play with and explore. If available, add the Deep Blue Shores Maps, buildings, and figures from previous quarters.

TIP: *Have a quiet space in your room with books and soft toys for children who are not quite ready to join in an activity when they arrive.*

A—Nativity Dress Up: Animals (Dramatic Play)

Before class: Gather animal costume headbands and tails, and other animal dress up materials in a laundry basket or other large basket. You may want to provide items for the children to pretend they are sheep, donkeys, and cows. However, any animals will be work. Label the basket, “Animals.”

- Place the “Angels,” “Mary and Joseph and “Animals” baskets in the center of the play space.
- Invite the children to explore and play with the costume items.
- Encourage the children to dress up and pretend to be angels, Mary, and Joseph, and animals.

TIP: *You will add to the Nativity Dress Up Center each week. Return the items to the correct baskets, and save your “Angels,” “Mary and Joseph,” and “Animals” baskets for next week.*

OR

B—Bethlehem Maze (Puzzle)

Before class: Make a copy of “Bethlehem Maze”(p. 24) for each child.

- Give each child a copy of “Bethlehem Maze” (p. 24).
 - Invite the child to help Mary and Joseph find their way through the maze by following the letters that spell their destination, *Bethlehem*, by first tracing the correct path using his or her index finger.
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Transition to Explore

Before class: Display “Singing Together” (Class Kit—p. 31) on a wall or bulletin board.

- Have the children help you clean up. Sing together, “We’re Going on a Journey” as the children move with you to the story circle.

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EXPLORE

Sacred Conversations

SAY: This month we are hearing the stories of Jesus’ family and his birth. I am excited to celebrate and learn with you.

ASK: I wonder:

- How many friends are here with us today? Who is missing?
 - How do you feel today?
 - What’s one thing that happened in your community this week that you really liked?
-

Hear and See the Bible Story

SAY: Today our Bible story is about a very long journey that Mary and Joseph took to a town called Bethlehem. I wonder why they were traveling there. Let’s find out.

- Tell the children the story, “Jesus Is Born” (*Deep Blue Bible Storybook*—p. 304).
- Watch the Deep Blue Adventure for Session 3 (Adventure DVD) with the children.

ASK: Christmas caroling reminds us of the journey Mary and Joseph took to Bethlehem. What is your favorite Christmas carol?

Interact with the Bible Story

- Give each child a copy of “Jesus Is Coming” (Bible Story Sheets—Session 3).
 - Read the story with the children, encouraging them to read the words in blue.
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Say the Bible Verse

Before class: Post the Bible Verse Poster—Unit 1 (Class Kit—p. 3) on a wall or bulletin board.

- Point to the Bible Verse Poster. Say the Bible verse for the children, and then repeat it together.
 - Teach the children signs from American Sign Language for some of the words in the Bible verse (Leader Guide—p. 91 and www.deepbluekids.com/This-Sunday).
 - Watch the Unit 1 Bible Verse video (Adventure DVD) with the children.
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Transition to Respond

Before class: Display “Singing Together” (Class Kit—p. 31) on a wall or bulletin board.

- Sing together, “We’re Going on a Journey” as the children move to the next activity.

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RESPOND

Loving God, Loving Neighbor

Before class: Post “All Are Welcome” (Class Kit—p. 2) on a wall or bulletin board. Locate the “Advent Wreath” (Class Kit—p. 27) and three battery-operated tea light candles.

- Play, “All Are Welcome” (Annual Music CD or Adventure DVD). Sing along and dance to the music.
- Place the “Advent Wreath” (Class Kit—p. 27) in the center of the circle or on a table.

SAY: Today is the third Sunday of the season of Advent. During Advent we prepare for Jesus to be born on Christmas. Each week we will add and light a new candle on our “Advent Wreath” and say a prayer. This week our prayer is about joy. What is joy? (*Give some time for the children to answer.*)

- Turn on three battery-operated tea light candles and place two on the purple candles (weeks 1 & 2) of the “Advent Wreath” and one on the pink candle (week 3). Read the prayer for Week 3: Joy.
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A—Sandal Ornament (Activity Sheets)

- Give each child a copy of Activity Sheets—Session 3.
- Encourage the children to create sandal ornaments according to the instructions.

TIP: Use adhesive craft dots instead of glue to tape.

OR

B—Christmas Caroling (Movement)

Before class: Separate the “Christmas Carols” leaflet from the Bible Story Sheets for each child.

- Give each child a copy of Bible Story Sheets—“Christmas Carols.” Show him or her how to fold it in half to create a book.
- Introduce and sing each song together.
- Sing the songs in the “Christmas Carol” books as you go Christmas caroling together throughout the church.

TIP: Make sure to let your pastor or another church leader know that you will be doing this. Other age levels may be doing this activity as well. You may wish to coordinate with them.

Transition to Bless

Before class: Display “Singing Together” (Class Kit—p. 31) on a wall or bulletin board.

- Have the children help you clean up. Sing together, “We’re Going on a Journey” as the children move with you to the story circle.

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BLESS

Inviting

Before class: Cut out the mural pieces from the bottom of the Unit 1—Bible Story Mural (Class Kit—p. 19) and place them in an envelope or zip-top bag. Post the Unit 1—Bible Story Mural on a wall or bulletin board.

- Gather the children around the mural. Invite a child to tape the donkey image to the mural.

ASK: What do you remember about the Bible story we heard today? What do you think we can learn about community from this story?

Praising

Before class: Separate the “Christmas Carols” section from the Bible Story Sheets for each child.

- Pass out a “Christmas Carol” songbook to each child (Bible Story Sheets—“Christmas Carols”).
- Teach the children the song, “O Come, All Ye Faithful,” phrase by phrase. Sing a phrase, then have the children sing the phrase back to you. Then sing the song together.

TIP: If time permits, allow the children to choose other Christmas carols to sing.

Blessing

- Invite the children to sit in a circle with you. Hold the heart-shaped ink stamp or some heart stickers in your hand.
 - Turn to the child on your left and place a heart ink stamp or sticker on his or her hand.
 - Say to the child, “God is with you on your journey.”
 - Give the heart ink stamp or stickers to the child, and invite him or her to repeat the blessing to the next child in the circle.
 - Continue around the circle in this way until the last child receives a blessing and gives one to you.
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At Home with God

ASK: What’s one thing about our time today that you can tell your family?

- Give each child a copy of Bible Story Sheets—Session 3. Look at “Family Faith Activities” together.

ASK: Which of these activities are you most excited to try this week?

- Send home the Bible Story Sheets—Session 3 and Bible Story Sheets—“Christmas Carols” with each child.

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Bethlehem Maze



Start

