

# Jesus' Birth

Through hundreds of years of suffering, captivity, and persecution, the Hebrews waited in hope of God's promised Messiah proclaimed by the prophets. "Be strong, and do not fear, for your God is coming...He is coming to save you" (Isaiah 35:4). Yet who would have thought God would send a mere infant to save humanity from its sins? Before Jesus was born, Mary and Elizabeth knew this baby was a special gift from God. Even the shepherds who worshipped at the lowly manger bed understood the significance of the miraculous infant. And the wise men who traveled from the East came seeking a baby who would be king. All these people knew that this child, born in Bethlehem, would save people from their sins.

Most 5- and 6-year-olds eagerly make Christmas lists, detailing the toys and gadgets they'd like to find under the tree. It's important to help them see that God sent the most perfect gift when he sent Jesus to save us from sin. In this module, children will rediscover the true reason for Christmas—the birthday of God's Son! The five lessons in this module will begin with the anticipation of God's promised one announced by Isaiah. They will then lead children through Gabriel's announcements to Mary and Zechariah and to Jesus' Bethlehem birth. Children will learn about the angels' announcement to the shepherds and the wise men's search for the newborn king. They'll discover the events of Jesus' birth and celebrate the good news that Jesus came to save them.

## Five Lessons on Jesus' Birth

Lesson	Bible Point	Page	Bible Basis
<b>1</b>	We are happy that Jesus came to save us.	15	Isaiah 11:1-6; 35:3-10
<b>2</b>	Mary and Elizabeth knew that Jesus came to save us.	29	Luke 1:26-56
<b>3</b>	Jesus came to save us and was born in Bethlehem.	43	Luke 2:1-7
<b>4</b>	The angels and the shepherds wanted everyone to know that Jesus came to save us.	57	Luke 2:8-20
<b>5</b>	The wise men knew that Jesus came to save us.	71	Matthew 2:1-13

## Time Stretchers

### ■ *What's Missing?*



Form a circle and spread the *nativity kit figures* from the Learning Lab in the middle of the circle. Have children close their eyes while you remove one figure and hide it in your lap or behind your back. Allow children to open their eyes. Start the *timer*, and have children raise their hands to guess which figure is missing before the sand in the timer runs out. Let the child who guesses correctly share why that character is important to the Christmas story. Then replace the figure and play again.

### ■ *Bethlehem Barnyard*

Form a circle. Have each child think of an animal that might have been in the stable where Jesus was born. Explain that there could have been sheep, donkeys, horses, cows, or chickens. On your signal, have children make the noise their animals would make. As children are creating their “Bethlehem barnyard,” quietly say to a child near you, “Jesus came to save us. Pass it on!” Have that child stop making the noise and then whisper the message to another student. As the message is passed along, the room will become quiet. After the last child has passed the message to you, have everyone shout, “Jesus came to save us.”

### ■ *Jesus Saves Us*

Help children remember that Jesus came to save us by singing “Jesus Saves Us” to the tune of “Jesus Loves Me.” This song is not on the *CD*.



**SING**

**God promised to send his Son  
To bring his love to everyone.  
Jesus is God's promise true;  
He can save both me and you.**

**Yes, Jesus saves us.  
Yes, Jesus saves us.  
Yes, Jesus saves us.  
He came for everyone.**

## Remembering God's Word

Each four- or five-week module focuses on a key Bible verse. The Bible verse for this module is “The Savior...has been born today in Bethlehem” (Luke 2:11a).

This module's Bible verse will teach children that Jesus came to save us. Have fun using the following ideas any time during the lessons on Jesus' birth.

## ■ Echo Song

Gather children and read the key verse to them. Explain that Jesus is our Savior—God’s Son who was sent to save us from sin. Then say the verse, and have children repeat it. Form two groups, and lead children in singing the “Echo Song” to the tune of “Frère Jacques.” Have Group 2 echo Group 1 in words and motions.



### SING

**Baby Jesus** (*pretend to rock small baby*),  
**Baby Jesus** (*pretend to rock small baby*),  
**Born today** (*set imaginary baby in crib/manger*),  
**Born today** (*set imaginary baby in crib/manger*),  
**In the town of David** (*point to something far away*),  
**In the town of David** (*point to something far away*),  
**Came to save** (*hug a friend*),  
**Came to save.** (*Hug a friend.*)

**Baby Jesus** (*pretend to rock baby in arms*),  
**Baby Jesus** (*pretend to rock baby in arms*),  
**God’s own Son** (*point to heaven*),  
**God’s own Son** (*point to heaven*),  
**Born on earth to save us** (*extend arms to heaven*),  
**Born on earth to save us** (*extend arms to heaven*),  
**Everyone, everyone.** (*Everyone make large circle with arms.*)

Lead children in saying the key verse once more.

## ■ Rescue Mission

Read **Luke 2:11a** aloud, and have children repeat it after you. Say: **We’re going to play a game where you’ll have a chance to save others.** Choose one child to be “It” and another child to be the Rescue Train Leader. **“It” will tag as many of you as possible. If you’re tagged, freeze right where you are. Meanwhile, the Rescue Train will be coming around to save you! If the Rescue Train Leader tags you, link arms and join the Rescue Train. You’ll get to help save other frozen children. We’ll play until everyone has joined the Rescue Train. Ready? Go!**

When everyone (except “It”) has joined the Rescue Train, have them link arms with “It” and sit down together. Read the key verse again and say: **Jesus was born to save us from the bad things we do. We call those things sin. Jesus came to rescue us from sin!** Have children join hands and repeat the verse after you.


**teacher tips**

Make a versatile bulletin board to last the entire module. Add a new item each week to hold your students' interest. Begin by covering the bulletin board with newsprint. Then add construction paper letters that spell out "Happy Birthday, Jesus!" across the top.



## Story Enhancements

Make Bible stories come alive in your classroom by bringing in Bible costumes, setting out sensory items that fit with the story, or creating exciting bulletin boards. When children learn with their five senses as well as with their hearts and minds, lessons come alive and children remember them. Each week, bring in one or more of the following items to help involve and motivate children in the Bible lessons they'll be learning. The following ideas will help you get started.

### ■ Lesson 1

- Bring in binoculars for children to use. Talk about how binoculars make faraway things seem close up. Tell children that just as the binoculars help us see things that are far away, God helped his people know about the future by telling Isaiah about Jesus.
- Have children cut out balloon shapes from brightly colored construction paper and write their names on them. Then help children tape a length of colored ribbon to their balloons and staple them to the bulletin board. Talk about the celebration you're preparing for!

### ■ Lesson 2

- Bring in an audio recorder. Let children take turns singing and recording praise songs to God. Tell children that Mary and Elizabeth praised God for his plan for them. They rejoiced because they were part of God's plan to bring Jesus to save us.
- Bring in a tub of damp sand, twigs, rocks, and plastic spoons. Explain that Mary traveled from Galilee to the hills of Judea as she went to Elizabeth's. Direct children to make hills in the sand and smooth out a road through the hills for Mary to walk on. Children can place rocks and twigs to complete the scene.
- Have children cut confetti from brightly colored construction paper. Allow each child to glue a handful of the confetti to the bulletin board. Explain that we use confetti to celebrate, and we're excited to celebrate Jesus' birthday!

### ■ Lesson 3

- Have each child bring in a baby picture. Arrange pictures on a table for children to see. Compare different pictures, and see how each child has grown. Remind children that Jesus was once a baby, too.
- Bring in baby foods such as baby teething biscuits, cereal, and jars of fruit for children to taste. Also provide baby items such as powder and lotion for children to smell and use on their hands and arms. Remind children that Jesus came to earth as a baby to save us.
- Have children color newsprint and then cut it into thin strips. Show them how to curl the strips around pencils or markers to make curly streamers. Help them staple the streamers around the bulletin board.



## ■ Lesson 4

• Tell children that shepherds watched over goats as well as sheep! The goats provided milk for the shepherds and their families. Cheese and kefir (yogurt-like food) were made from the milk curds. Bring in cheese, cottage cheese, and yogurt for children to taste.

• Bring in items made from different types of wool. Have children feel the items and discover how sheep provide warm clothes for us. Discuss how the shepherds had an important job to do as they watched the sheep.

• Give children small, wrapped candy canes and narrow ribbon. Let them wrap ribbon around the candy canes to make shepherds' staffs. Staple the staffs to the balloon ribbons on the bulletin board.



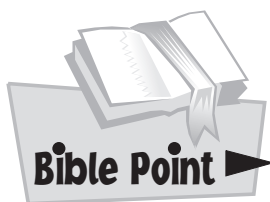
## ■ Lesson 5

• Bring in spices such as ginger, cinnamon sticks, whole cloves, and nutmeg to smell. Explain that in Jesus' time, spices were used not only to season food, but also to heal.

• Set out several heavy items, such as a large dictionary, a large rock, or a 5-pound bag of flour, and explain that gold would have been heavy for the wise men to take on such a long trip. Talk about what a special gift that was!

• Bring in different-sized squares of wrapping paper. Allow children to fold and tape the paper around scraps of cardboard, decorate the "gifts" with ribbon, and add their names to gift tags. Help children staple their gifts to the bulletin board as gifts to Jesus.





**Bible Point** ▶

# We are happy that Jesus came to save us.

## Bible Verse

“The Savior...has been born today in Bethlehem” (Luke 2:11a).

## Growing Closer to Jesus

- Children will
- learn of Isaiah’s message from God,
  - tell why they’re happy that Jesus came to save us,
  - understand the importance of Jesus’ birth, and
  - share God’s promise with Pockets.

## Teacher Enrichment

### Bible Basis

#### ■ God tells Isaiah that a Savior will come.



The passages we’re looking at today were written around 700 years before Jesus was born. The coming of a savior who would bring salvation to Israel was a long-anticipated event. The coming of the Messiah would usher in a time of peace and safety (Isaiah 11:6). It would be a time when righteousness would prevail, the needy would be cared for, and the wicked would be judged (Isaiah 11:4). The blind would see, the deaf would hear, and the disabled would be whole (Isaiah 35:5-6). Deserts would be watered by streams and springs, and we wouldn’t even have wild animals to fear (Isaiah 35:6-7, 9). It would be a time of joy and gladness, free from worry and sorrow (Isaiah 35:10)!

So why didn’t all this happen when Jesus came? Because he’s not finished yet! He finished his work of providing salvation but didn’t finish all that he’s going to do. He’s coming again to complete that work! His first coming laid the groundwork for his coming in judgment and power!

Our Savior has come, still lives in us, and will be coming again to fulfill all that has been prophesied about him. These are thoughts that the children in your class can begin to understand as you cover them in this lesson.

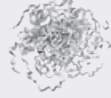
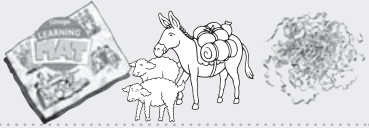






### Prayer

- Read Revelation 22:1-6. What do you look forward to about Jesus’ second coming?
- What difference does the second coming of Jesus make as we celebrate his first coming?
- Prayer: God, help me lead my class to an excitement about both comings of Jesus as we...

### Before the Lesson

- Collect the necessary items for the activities you plan to use. Refer to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies columns to determine what you’ll need.
- Make photocopies of the “Today I Learned...” handout (at the end of this lesson) to send home with your children.
- 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
<b>Welcome Time</b>	<b>Welcome!</b> —Receive name tags, and be greeted by the teacher.	“Star Name Tags” (p. 26), markers, pins or tape	
<b>Let’s Get Started</b> Direct children to one or more of the optional activities until everyone arrives.	<b>Option 1: Wolf and Lamb Puppets</b> —Make puppets to illustrate Isaiah’s prophecy.	“Wolf and Lamb” handouts (p. 27), paper lunch sacks, glue sticks, markers, newspapers	
	<b>Option 2: A Stable Home</b> —Prepare the <i>Learning Mat</i> stable for Jesus’ arrival.	Brown crayons, cotton balls, glue, gray yarn	
	<b>Option 3: A Special Gift</b> —Decorate a gift box for use later in the lesson.	Large box, squares of gift wrap, safety scissors, glue, ribbon, markers	
	<b>Pick Up Our Toys</b> —Sing a song as they pick up toys, and gather for Bible Story Time.	CD player	
<b>Bible Story Time</b>	<b>Setting the Stage</b> —Play Tag using wolf and lamb puppets.	Wolf and lamb puppets from Option 1	
	<b>Bible Song and Prayer Time</b> —Sing a song, bring out the Bible, and pray together.	Bible, construction paper, scissors, basket or box, CD player	
	<b>Hear and Tell the Bible Story</b> —Talk about God’s promise of a Savior in Isaiah 11:1-6; 35:3-10.	Bible, wolf and lamb puppets from Option 1	
	<b>Do the Bible Story</b> —Create heart necklaces to remember God’s promises.	Bible, yarn, markers, scissors, hole punch	
<b>Closing</b> 	<b>Wolves’ Howl!</b> —Teach Pockets about God’s promise to send Jesus.	Wolf and lamb puppets from Option 1	
	<b>The Greatest Gift</b> —Share reasons they’re glad Jesus came to save us.	Gift Box from Option 3, Life Savers candies, bowl	

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

## Welcome Time

### Welcome!

**SUPPLIES:** “Star Name Tags” handout (p. 26), markers, pins or tape

- Kneel down to make eye contact with children as they arrive.
- Greet each child individually with an enthusiastic smile.
- Thank each child for coming to class today.
- Say: **Today we’re going to learn that ► we’re happy that Jesus came to save us.**
- Give each child a photocopy of a star name tag. Help children write their names on their name tags, and pin or tape them to their clothing. You may wish to cover the name tags in clear adhesive paper so they will last for the entire module.
- Direct the children to the Let’s Get Started activities you’ve set up.

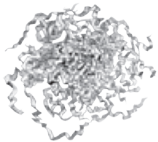
## Let’s Get Started

Set up one or more of the following activities for children to do as they arrive. After you greet each child, invite him or her to choose an activity.

Circulate among the children to offer help as needed and direct children’s conversation toward today’s lesson. Ask questions such as “What’s the best news you’ve ever heard?” or “Has anyone ever saved you from a scary situation?”

### Option 1: Wolf and Lamb Puppets

**SUPPLIES:** “Wolf and Lamb” handouts (p. 27), paper lunch sacks, glue sticks, markers, newspapers



Before class, make several photocopies of the “Wolf and Lamb” handout. Cut apart the wolf and lamb faces, and place them in two separate piles. You’ll need one puppet for each student and approximately the same number of wolves and lambs.

Cover a table with newspapers, and set out the handouts, paper lunch sacks, *springfill*, markers, and glue sticks. Let children choose to make a wolf or lamb puppet. Have each child use markers and *springfill* to decorate a puppet face and then glue the face to the bottom of a lunch sack. Show children how to use the puppets.

As children work, ask them what would happen if wolves and lambs lived in the same place. (They wouldn’t get along peacefully!) Tell children that Jesus came to show us God’s love and to bring peace. That’s why ► we’re happy that Jesus came to save us.

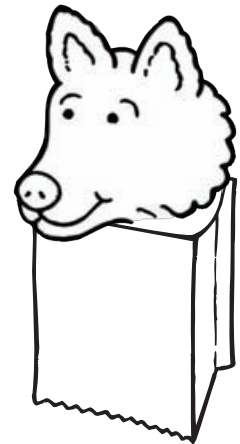


### BIBLE POINT



### 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.



### teacher tips

If some students choose not to make puppets, ask volunteers to make extras. You’ll need one puppet for each child for activities in this lesson.



## ■ Option 2: A Stable Home

**SUPPLIES:** brown crayons, cotton balls, glue, gray yarn



Set out the *Learning Mat: Nativity* and the sheep and donkey from the *nativity kit figures*. You'll also need *springfill*, glue, cotton balls, gray yarn, and brown crayons. Allow children to glue *springfill* "straw" to the floor of the stable and to the manger. Invite them to color the stable walls on the *Learning Mat*. Have children glue cotton balls on the sheep and gray yarn on the donkey's tail and mane.

While children work, tell them that long ago God promised Jesus would come. Explain that God's people waited hundreds of years for Jesus' birth. Tell children that each week you'll be preparing the *Learning Mat* for the Christmas story and looking forward to Christmas, just as God's people looked forward to Jesus' birth. When children are done, return the *springfill* to the Learning Lab for use in a later lesson.

## ■ Option 3: A Special Gift

**SUPPLIES:** large box, squares of gift wrap, safety scissors, glue, ribbon, markers



Set out a large box, along with scraps of gift wrap, safety scissors, markers, glue, ribbon, and the *angel stamp* and *ink pad*. The box needs to be large enough for children to stand in. Allow children to decorate the Gift Box creatively in a patchwork style. Explain that Jesus came as a special gift from God and that's why ► *we're happy that Jesus came to save us.*

When children have finished decorating, gather up the *Learning Lab* items, and set the box aside for use later in the lesson.

When everyone has arrived and you're ready to move on to the Bible Story Time, encourage the children to finish what they're doing and get ready to clean up.

## ■ Pick Up Our Toys

**SUPPLIES:** CD player



Lead children in singing "Pick Up Our Toys" (track 2) with the *CD* to the tune of "Skip to My Lou." Encourage the children to sing along as they help clean up the room.

You'll be using this song each week to alert children to start picking up. At first they may need a little encouragement. But after a few weeks, picking up and singing along will become a familiar routine.

If you want to include the names of all the children in your class, sing the song without the *CD*, and repeat the naming section. If you choose to use the *CD*, vary the names you use each week.



**SING**

**We will pick up our toys.  
We will pick up our toys.  
We will pick up our toys  
And put them all away.**

**There's [name] picking up toys.  
There's [name] picking up toys.  
There's [name] picking up toys,  
Putting them all away.**

(Repeat.)

**teacher tips**

If the *ink pad* is dry, moisten it with three to five drops of water.



**BIBLE POINT** ►

# Bible Story Time

## ■ *Setting the Stage*

**SUPPLIES:** *wolf and lamb puppets from Option 1*

Tell the children you'll clap your hands to get their attention. Explain that when you clap, children are to stop what they're doing, raise their hands, and focus on you. Practice this signal a few times. Encourage children to respond quickly so you'll have time for all the fun activities you've planned.

Give each child a wolf or lamb puppet from Option 1. Send the Wolves to one side of the room and the Lambs to the other.

Ask: • **Do these two animals get along very well? Explain.** (No, wolves eat lambs; no, lambs are afraid of wolves.)

• **What might happen if they were near each other?** (The lambs would all get eaten; the lambs would all run away; it would be scary!)

Say: **You're right! These animals don't get along at all! Let's play a game to show what might happen if they were together. When I say "Go!" you Wolves chase the Lambs by taking teeny, tiny steps. Remember to howl while you're chasing them! The Lambs will run away by taking giant steps. Lambs, remember to say "Baaaa" while you're escaping! If a Lamb gets tagged by a Wolf, he or she must come sit against this wall and wait for the game to end. Ready? Go!**

Be sure children travel around the room as you've told them to and play gently. When the last Lamb has been tagged, have children switch puppets and play again. Then have the Wolves sit on one side of the room and the Lambs on the other.

Say: **These animals are natural enemies. But the Bible tells us that Jesus can help everyone be at peace with each other—even wolves and lambs. That's why ► *we're happy that Jesus came to save us.* When we have Jesus' love in our hearts, we can even love our enemies. To see how nice this would be, let's have each Wolf come and find a Lamb partner to sit with while we sing and pray.**

Have children form Wolf and Lamb pairs before you move on to the next activity. If you have an uneven number of children in your class, form one trio.

## ■ *Bible Song and Prayer Time*

**SUPPLIES:** *Bible, construction paper, scissors, basket or box, CD player*



track 3

Before class, make surprise cards for this activity by cutting construction paper into 2x6-inch slips. Prepare a surprise card for each child plus a few extras for visitors. Fold the cards in half, and then stamp the *angel stamp* inside one of the surprise cards. Bookmark **Isaiah 11:1-6; 35:3-10** in the Bible you'll be using.

Have the children sit in a circle. Say: **Each week when we come to our circle for our Bible story, I'll choose someone to be the Bible helper. The Bible helper will bring me the Bible marked with our Bible story for that week. Before I choose today's Bible helper, let's sing our Bible song. As we sing, I'll pass out the surprise cards. Don't look inside your card until the song is over.**



Choose a Bible you'll use for this section of the lesson each week. A children's Bible or an easy-to-understand translation such as Group's *Hands-On Bible*® works best. Some of the children in your class may be reading. If children can understand the words in the Bible, they'll have more interest in reading it—and they'll learn more from it.

Lead children in singing “Read God’s Book” (track 3) with the *CD* to the tune of “The Muffin Man.” As you sing, pass out the folded surprise cards.



### SING

**Now it’s time to read God’s book,  
Read God’s book, read God’s book.  
Now it’s time to read God’s book.  
Let’s hear a Bible story.**

**Now it’s time to read God’s book,  
Read God’s book, read God’s book.  
Now it’s time to read God’s book.  
Let’s hear a Bible story.**

*(Repeat.)*

After the song, say: **You may look inside your surprise cards. The person who has the angel stamped inside his or her card will be our Bible helper for today.**

Identify the Bible helper, and then have the rest of the children clap for him or her. Ask the Bible helper to bring you the Bible. Assist the Bible helper in opening the Bible to the marked place, and show the children where your story comes from. Then have the Bible helper sit down.

Say: [Name] **was our special Bible helper today. Each week we’ll have only one special Bible helper, but each one of you is a special part of our class! Today we’re all learning that ► we are happy that Jesus came to save us.**

**Let’s say a special prayer now and ask God to help us learn why Jesus came to save us. I’ll pass around this basket. When the basket comes to you, put your surprise card in it and say, “God, thank you for sending Jesus to save us.”**

Pass around the basket or box. When you’ve collected everyone’s surprise card, set the basket aside for use next week, and pick up the Bible. Lead children in this prayer: **God, thank you for the Bible and all the stories in it. Teach us today that ► we’re happy that Jesus came to save us. In Jesus’ name, amen.**



### BIBLE POINT ►



### BIBLE POINT ►

## ■ Hear and Tell the Bible Story

**SUPPLIES:** Bible, wolf and lamb puppets from Option 1

Children should still have their wolf and lamb puppets from “Setting the Stage.” Form a circle and say: **Long ago, when God first made the world, everything was good and beautiful and peaceful. But sin came into the world when Adam and Eve disobeyed God. God’s perfect world was ruined.**

Ask: • **What is sin?** (Disobeying; doing bad things; not being nice.)

• **What kinds of bad things go on in our world today?** (People hurt each other; people get sick; things aren’t fair; people are mean sometimes.)

Say: **Those things are all because of sin! When sin entered the world, people started doing bad, mean things. God’s people did bad things—they worshipped idols and disobeyed God.**

Ask: • **How do you think God felt when his people sinned?** (Sad; mad; upset; not good.)

Say: **That's right. So finally, God let an army from Assyria fight against the Israelites, tear down their cities, burn their houses, and make them slaves. God scattered his people all over the country. Let's scatter like the Israelites.** Have children scatter all over the room, away from each other.

Ask: • **What would it be like to live far away from your friends and family?** (Yucky; lonely; boring; scary.)

Say: **When the Israelites scattered, it became easy for other nations to take over. Soon their land was under attack! That must have been scary! The people longed for God to save them from their enemies, even though they had sinned. So God told Isaiah, a prophet, that he would send a Savior—someone to forgive his people for their sins and bring them back together.**

**Let's gather our lambs back together.** Have Lambs form a circle near you. **The Bible tells us that when the Savior comes, he'll save everyone who believes in God!** Read **John 10:16** aloud from an easy-to-understand version of the Bible.

Ask: • **What do you think God means by "other sheep"?** (Other people; people from other countries; people from all over the world.)

Say: **Yes! Jesus wants everyone to come to him so he can take away their sins. Lambs, go find a Wolf partner, and bring him or her back to our circle to sit with you.** When everyone is back together, say: **God told them what life would be like when their Savior came.** Read **Isaiah 35:3-10** aloud from an easy-to-understand version of the Bible. Then ask:

• **What would life be like when the Savior came?** (Good; happy; fun; exciting; wonderful.)

• **How do you think the Israelites felt when they heard that?** (Excited; happy; glad.)

• **When do you think they wanted the Savior to come?** (Right away; soon.)

Say: **Well, God's people had to wait 700 long, long years for the Savior to come. Imagine how happy they were when an angel finally announced that ►"the Savior...has been born today in Bethlehem"! Do you know who that Savior was? Pause for children to respond. It was Jesus! That's why ►we're happy that Jesus came to save us! When we ask Jesus to forgive us, he'll take away all the bad things in our hearts and give us peace and joy. When we're filled with Jesus' love, we can be at peace with everyone—even our enemies.**



**Let's practice being at peace. Pretend that the person sitting next to you made you mad for some reason. Make a silly mad face! Now take turns saying, "Let's be at peace with each other," and shake hands. Then give each other a big smile!**

Let children repeat this a few times with different partners.

Say: **Doesn't it feel better to be friends instead of enemies? Let's thank Jesus for being our peaceful Savior.**

Pray: **Dear God, we're so glad that you sent Jesus to be born in Bethlehem to save us and bring us peace and joy. Help us to bring peace to each other so that we can be more like you. In Jesus' name, amen.**

Say: **Since our wolves and lambs aren't enemies anymore, it's safe to put them away together so we can play a game.**

Collect the wolf and lamb puppets, and put them out of sight.

## ■ Do the Bible Story

**SUPPLIES:** Bible, yarn, markers, hole punch, scissors



Hold your Bible up, again showing the passage from Isaiah to the children.

Say: **Today we learned that God promised to send a Savior into the world. ► I'm happy that Jesus came to save us, aren't you?**

Ask: • **What are some other things that make you happy?**  
(Christmas presents; my puppy; playing with my friends.)

Say: **God has given us so many things to be happy about. Let's make some happy hearts to praise God for his promises in today's Bible story.** Bring out the *heart stencils* from the Learning Lab, and have kids help you punch them out. Give each child one of the hearts.

Say: **I'm going to mention different things that God promised. If I say a promise that makes you happy, lightly toss your heart into the air, clap your hands in thanks to God, and then try to catch your heart before it touches the ground. Let's practice that one time before we begin.** Have kids move at least one arm's distance from each other, and let them practice this once or twice as they are sitting on the floor.

Read the following statements to the children. Pause after each one while children toss the hearts, clap, and catch them.

### God promised

- to send Jesus as our Savior,
- that we would have peace,
- to help us not be afraid,
- that blind eyes will see and deaf ears will hear, and
- that sadness will go away.

Say: **There are so many reasons ► to be happy that Jesus came to save us! Find a partner now, and let's share the news of God's promise to send Jesus.**

Have kids find partners, and give each child a length of yarn and a marker. Punch a hole in each heart. Have them each draw a happy face inside the heart and thread the yarn through the hole. Help them tie the ends of the yarn to make a necklace.

When kids are finished, have them exchange necklaces with their partners and stand facing each other.

Say: **Each of you will take turns putting your partner's necklace around your partner's neck. As you place it on your partner say, ► "I'm happy that Jesus came to save us!" Then give your partner a high five, and gather in a circle so that I can return your wolf and lamb puppets.**

### teacher tips

Use a hole punch to make a hole in each of the hearts.

If you have more than 20 kids, trace extras ahead of time on poster board, and cut them out. You'll need one heart for each child.



### BIBLE POINT ►



### BIBLE POINT ►

## Closing

### Wolves' Howl!

**SUPPLIES:** wolf and lamb puppets from Option 1

Distribute the lamb and wolf puppets. Bring out Pockets the Kangaroo, and go through the following puppet script. When you finish the script, put Pockets away and out of sight.

Direct children to put on the puppets and happily howl and “baaaa” until Pockets appears.



**Pockets:** What’s all the noise? (*Sees wolves and is frightened.*) Are those WOLVES?

**Teacher:** Don’t be afraid, Pockets! Yes, those are wolves and lambs!

**Pockets:** Wolves and lambs—together! Hey, you lambs better run away before those wolves eat you! Shoo! Go on, shoo! I’m afraid of wolves—why aren’t these lambs afraid?

**Teacher:** Well, you don’t have to be afraid of these wolves! These are puppets! We’re celebrating God’s promise!

**Pockets:** What’s that?

**Teacher:** Today we learned about a very special promise God made to Isaiah and to all his people. Who can tell Pockets about God’s promise?

*(Allow children to share what they’ve learned about God’s promise that Jesus came to save us.)*

**Pockets:** Oh, I know about Jesus. My mom told me about him! She said all creation—everything God made—looked forward to Jesus’ coming!

**Teacher:** What else did your mom say?

**Pockets:** Well, she said Jesus came to save us from sin and make us clean inside so we can live in heaven with him.

**Teacher:** That’s right, Pockets! Today we’re celebrating because ► we’re happy that Jesus came to save us. And we can share that happiness with others by telling them about God’s promise!

**Pockets:** I want to celebrate, too! (*Sings and dances as she leaves.*) Let the wolves howl, let them growl! God’s promises are true. He takes care of me and you! Goodbye, everyone!

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## ■ *The Greatest Gift*

**SUPPLIES:** Gift Box from Option 3, Life Savers candies, bowl

Form a circle, and place the Gift Box from Option 3 in the center of the circle. Place a bowl of Life Savers candies in the box. Say: **Because God sent Jesus, we can have a new life with God. You might say that Jesus is our lifesaver! Let's share some reasons why** ► *we're happy that Jesus came to save us.*

Have children take turns standing in the box, taking a candy, and sharing a reason they're happy Jesus came to save us. When each child has shared, pray: **Dear God, thank you for sending Jesus to save us and give us new life. Thank you for loving us and wanting us to be with you forever. In Jesus' name, amen.** Save the Gift Box for use in next week's lesson.



### **Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.**

Photocopy the "Today I Learned..." handout (at the end of this lesson) for this week, and send it home with your children. Encourage parents to use the handout to plan meaningful family activities to reinforce this week'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.

### ■ Lively Learning: Lifesavers!



Form pairs and have children line up opposite the Gift Box. Give the first child in line the *plastic ring* from the Learning Lab. Send his or her partner to stand beside the Gift Box. Say: **Toss the *plastic ring* into the box. If it looks like you're going to miss, your partner will catch the *plastic ring* and put it in the box for you. Once your partner has saved you by catching the ring, hold up your arms and say, ► "*I'm happy that Jesus came to save me!*"** Then switch places with your partner.

When everyone has had a turn, put the *plastic ring* away and out of sight.

### ■ Make to Take: Pine Cone Advent Calendars



Give each child a pine cone and several 2-foot lengths of colored ribbon. Allow children to decorate their pine cones with glitter glue. Then help them glue three or four ribbons to the pine cone so they stream from the top or bottom. Explain that children can tie a knot in the ribbons each day until Christmas to help them prepare for Jesus' birth.

### ■ Treat to Eat: Wolf and Lamb Cookies

You'll need two cookies for each child, plastic knives, white and brown icing, coconut, and raisins. Direct children to ice one cookie with white icing and top it with coconut to make a lamb. For the wolf, have children spread brown icing and top it with coconut. Children may add raisins for eyes.



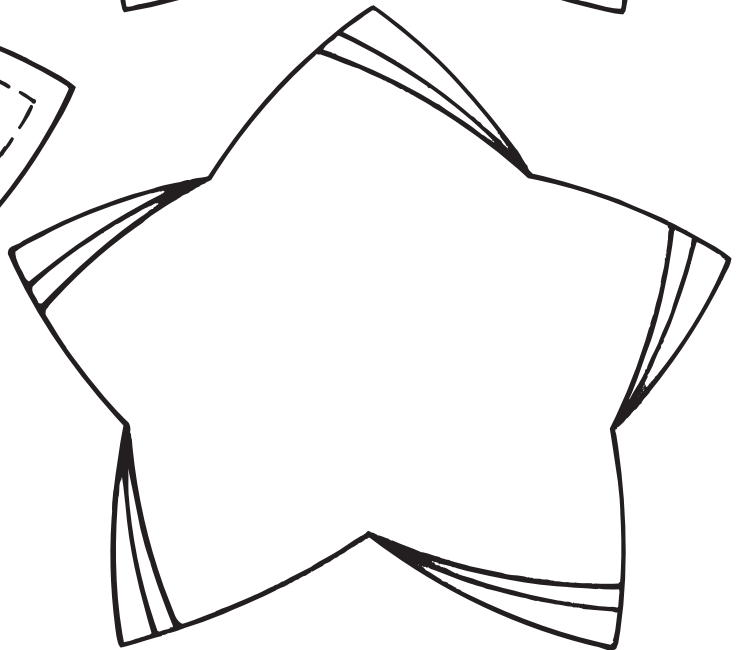
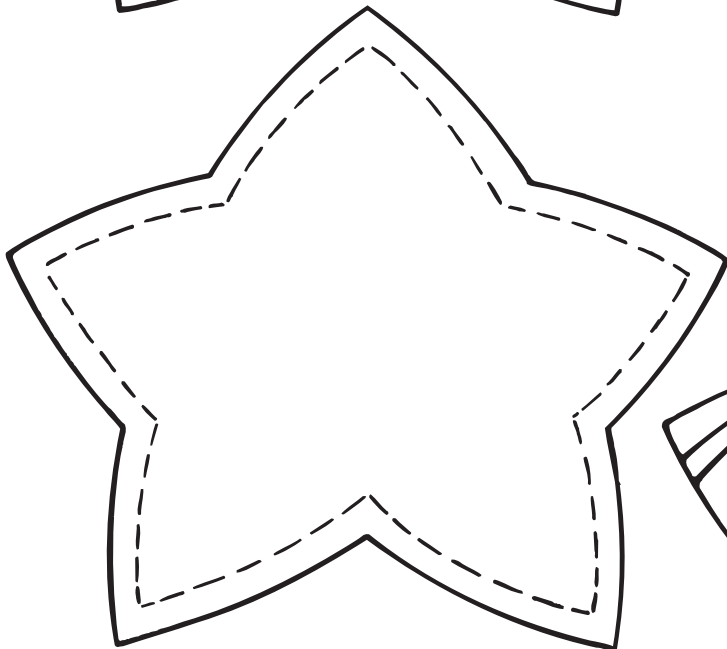
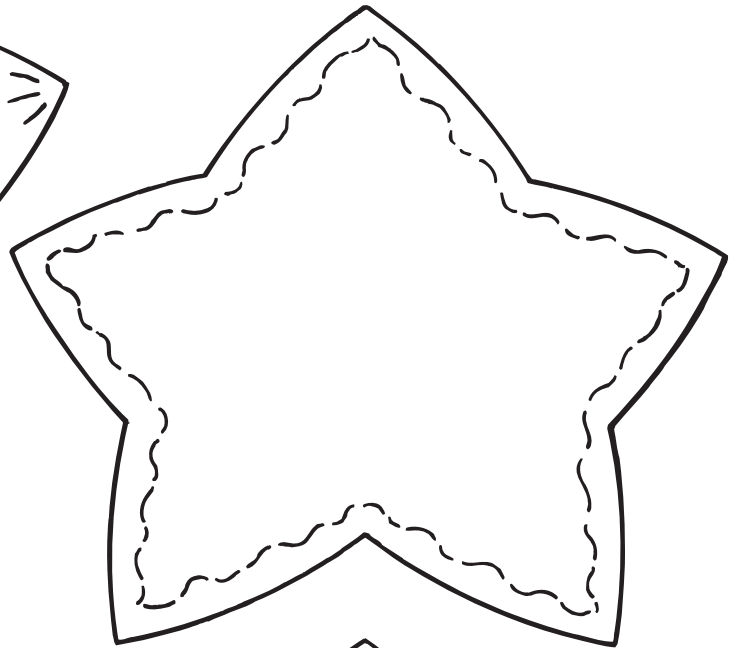
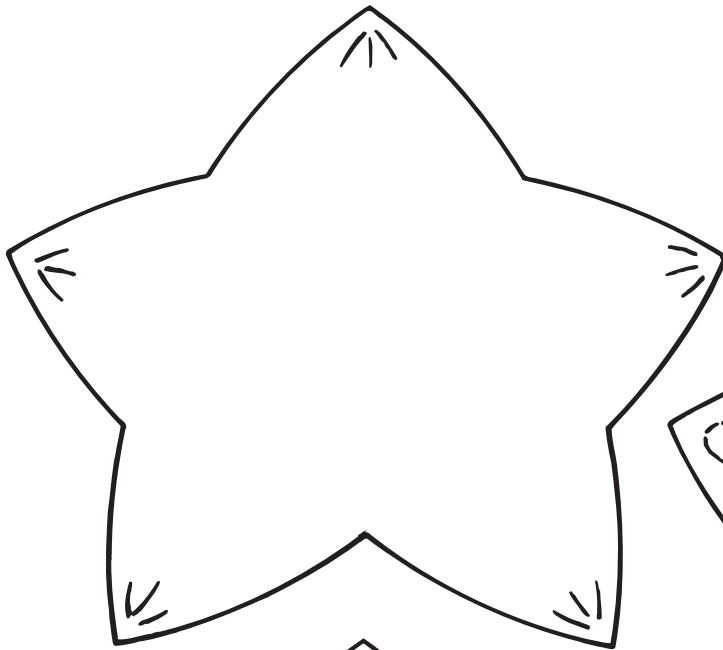
### ■ Story Picture: God's Promise

Give each child a photocopy of the "Today I Learned..." handout. Set out glue, cotton balls, short lengths of yellow and brown yarn, and crayons. Show children how to glue yarn to the lion's mane and calf's tail. Then have children pull cotton balls apart and glue them to the sheep. After gluing on yarn and cotton balls, children can color the rest of the picture.

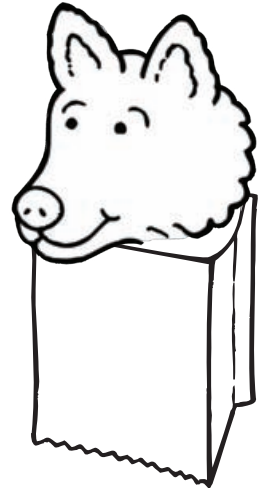
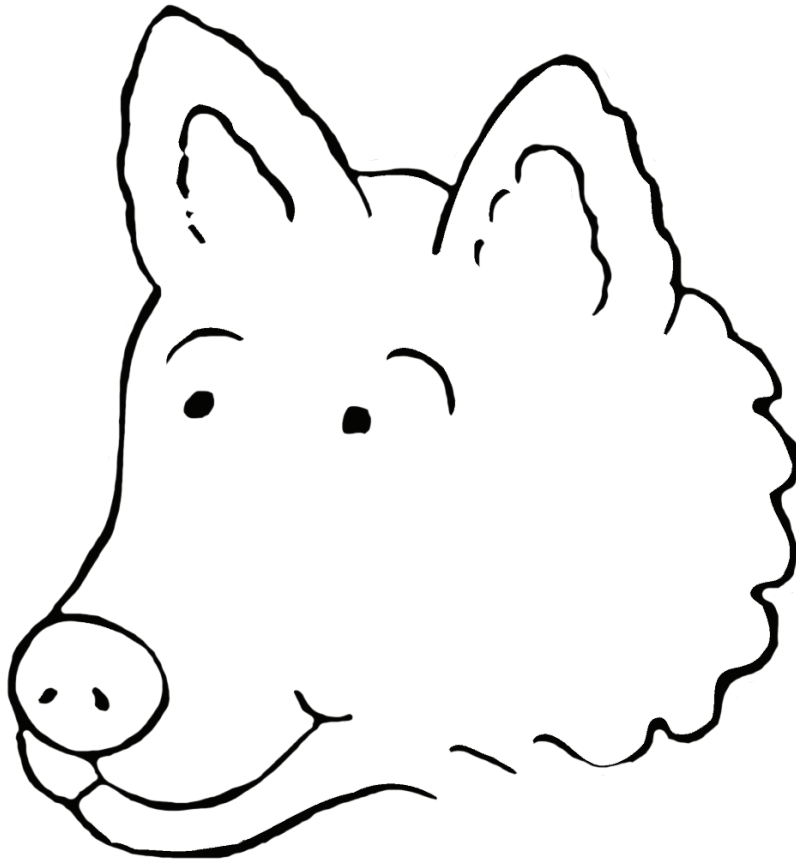


# Star Name Tags

Photocopy this page and cut out the name tags.



# Wolf and Lamb



# Today I learned...

We are happy that  
Jesus came to save us.

Today your child learned that we're happy Jesus came to save us. Children learned that God promised Isaiah and all his people that Jesus would come to save them. Children shared reasons why they're happy Jesus came.

## Verse to Learn

"The Savior...has been born today in Bethlehem"  
(Luke 2:11a).

## Ask Me...

- What special promise did God give to Isaiah and to all his people?
- Why are we glad Jesus came?
- How can our family share God's promise with others?

## Family Fun

- Make edible wolves and lambs by shaping biscuit dough. For each face, flatten and shape one biscuit. Cut small dough triangles for ears. Pull off small bits of dough for wool, and lightly place on the lambs' faces. Make eyes and noses from raisins or red cinnamon candies. After baking the biscuits, your family may wish to share them with a neighbor or friend.

## God's Promise (Isaiah 11:1-6; 35:3-10)

