

Jesus Is Born

JOY

LUKE 2:1-20

What is happening in this story?

The Israelites lived as slaves for hundreds of years. During the time Jesus was born, they were waiting for a Messiah—the one who would rescue them from oppression. They had revolted unsuccessfully several times, and needed someone to help them restore Israel. The glory of God is revealed to poor shepherds, who share the good news with others. This news gave hope to the Israelites against tyranny and oppression. We find hope that we are not alone. God knows us, understands us, and lives among us.

Why does this story matter for kids?

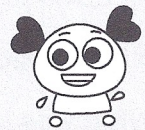
After four long weeks of Advent, Christmas is here! It's a joyous celebration that God came to earth as a tiny, vulnerable baby, to experience all that humanity has to offer—and ultimately to show us what sacrifice, love, and living are meant to look like. God is with us—not just God around us, or God among us, but God *with* us.

Why this theme?

Joy can be hard to find when our lives are difficult. But joy isn't the same thing as happiness. Joy is part of the deep trust we have that God is making all things new.

TEACHING TIP

* Don't assume that all kids know all the details of the biblical Christmas story. Even older kids may not remember everything. Teach this lesson as if they are hearing it for the very first time. Let kids be awed by the wonder of the story.



GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Pencils
- Markers
- Crayons
- Clear tape
- Scissors
- Glue sticks
- Whirl Classroom Song CD
- Music source

LESSON SUPPLIES

- Mural paper
- Flashlight
- Candy cane (full-size, 1)
- Candy canes (miniature, 3 per kid)
- Nativity scene or play figurines

WELCOME 15

DO SOME KIDS ARRIVE EARLY? TRY THIS.

Lay out a sheet of mural paper. Play "O Come, Little Children," track 18 on the Whirl Classroom Song CD. Invite kids to draw what they hear in the song.

Circle up with kids for an opening conversation.

Hold up a large candy cane. **What do candy canes have to do with Christmas?** Give kids time to respond. **Candy canes are the same shape as a shepherd's staff. Shepherds were the first people to hear that Jesus was born.** Turn the candy cane upside down. **What letter do you see? (J) Upside-down candy canes make the letter J, which is the first letter of the name Jesus and also of the word joy. When Jesus was born, people were filled with joy because Jesus brought God's light to the world.**

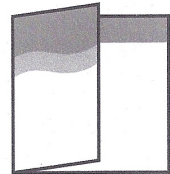
Pray together: ~~Loving God, today we are filled with joy that you sent your Son Jesus to the world because you loved us so much. Thank you for this gift. Amen.~~

Be still and
know that I
am God...

Pass out leaflets, crayons, and markers.

Help older kids find a younger buddy. **Color in the candy cane.** Give kids time to color. **Since the candy cane**

looks like the letter J, it can help us remember Jesus. Write "Jesus" on your leaflet. What other Christmas words can you think of that begin with J? (jingle bells, jolly) Write those words on the leaflet too. Collect their leaflets until Respond.



Gather kids around the screen where you'll watch the video.

The Whirl kids are decorating the church for the Christmas season. Let's see what happens as they try to build the nativity scene.

View Episode 3, "The Ultimate Nativity," on the Year Blue Winter DVD. (4 min, 20 sec)

Ask kids these questions about the video:

- What was important to Ada about the nativity scene?
- Which nativity props in the video seemed like they might not fit into the Bible story?
- How did Leo suggest that they celebrate Christmas?
- How do you decorate for Christmas at home?
- What do you think is the most important thing to remember about Christmas?

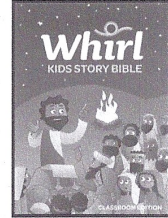


HEAR 15

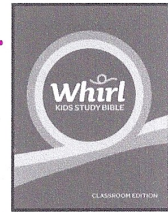
use Whirl Kids Story Bible
pg. 163

Open your Whirl Kids Story Bibles and Whirl Kids Study Bibles.

Have younger kids find an older buddy. Invite them to find ~~Luke 2:1-20~~ on page 1228 of the ~~Whirl Kids Study Bible~~. In today's story, we'll hear about why Mary and Joseph had to travel when it was almost time for Jesus to be born. The emperor wanted a count of everyone, so they had to travel to Joseph's hometown to put their names on the register. Because the town was full of other people who had traveled there too, Mary and Joseph couldn't find a place to stay. And that's when something amazing happened.



~~Hand out the figurines of a play nativity set. Invite kids to use the nativity characters to act out the story while you read it aloud. Mary and Joseph, the shepherds, and the angels were filled with joy the night Jesus was born!~~



~~Read what Leo says about Luke 2:6-7 on page 1228.~~ Then read Ada and Otto's questions and comments on pages 163 and 164 of the Whirl Kids Story Bible.

Ask these questions after you read the story:

- Where were Mary and Joseph when Jesus was born? Why were they there?
- I wonder how Mary and Joseph felt when Jesus was born.
- Why do you think Jesus' birth brought so much joy?
- Share something you know about babies.
- When have you felt joyful?

Play together!

~~When Jesus was born, a bright star shone in the sky over Bethlehem. Let's play a game with light.~~

~~Clear an open area, turn off the lights, and give a flashlight to one kid. Have the group play flashlight tag, where the person who has the flashlight tries to tag other kids with the light. Play a few rounds, giving different volunteers the chance to hold the flashlight. Light brightens darkness and Jesus brings light and joy to the world, even in dark times.~~

BIBLE BIT

In Bible times, some village homes had a small lower room where animals slept at night for warmth and safekeeping. Jesus was likely laid in a manger in this part of a home.

WATCH IT AGAIN

If you watch the video again, notice how Ada keeps trying to put the baby Jesus at the very center of the nativity scene. Talk about what it means to have Jesus in the center of our lives.

OUR CHURCH

Christmas worship is a time when many visitors come to church. How can your group help make them feel welcome?

RESPOND ⑩

Pass out leaflets, ~~scissors, glue sticks, and pencils.~~

Tear off leaflet square, but DO NOT unfold it yet.

*This is like a Mad Libs activity. If the group is small, you can do this all together. (No need to use scissors or glue!)

- *1. As noted above, do not have kids unfold their leaflet squares yet.
- 2. Help younger kids find an older buddy.
- *3. We're going to retell parts of the Christmas story, but with a few silly twists. In the blank rectangles on top of your Launch panel, draw or write what I tell you. Offer examples as needed.

1) Someone's name	3) Place	5) Formal name of a place
2) Object	4) Type of animal, plural (ending in "s")	6) Action word (ending in "ing")
- ~~4. Cut out the rectangles.~~
- ~~5. Open your leaflet, and glue each rectangle in the corresponding numbered rectangle on the square.~~
- 6. With your buddy, read each of your new Christmas stories. For kids who can't read yet, the older buddy can read the words and pause for the younger buddy to fill in what they drew on their sticky notes.
- 7. If you have time, invite volunteers to share their stories with the group.
- 8. What were some silly moments in your story? What was joyful about your story? Why is Jesus' birth so important?

LAUNCH ⑩

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

The Christmas story is full of joy and reasons to celebrate. We can share that joy with others. How can you share the joy of Jesus' birth?

~~Pass out leaflet panels, miniature candy canes, clear tape, and markers.~~

~~Our leaflets say "Joy to the world! Jesus is born!" Tape two of the candy canes over the Js in "Joy" and "Jesus." Think of someone to share the joy of Christmas with. Have kids write the name of the person they choose in the blank rectangle. Give them this card next time you see them. Allow kids to keep the third candy cane as a snack if you wish.~~

Send kids out with a blessing. → Help and Thanks prayers

Circle up with kids. God blesses all of us. And that means me (place a hand on your chest). And that means you (place your other hand on the shoulder of the kid next to you). Each kid passes the blessing by repeating those words and actions. When the blessing makes it back to you, say, Go and bless the world.

Thank kids for coming today. Remind them of the Family Square on the other side of the leaflet.