Jesus Is Born

Grades 3-4

HOPE

LUKE 2:1-20

What's happening in this story?

The Israelites were desperately looking for a messiah when Jesus was born because they had lived under oppression for hundreds of years. They had revolted unsuccessfully several times and needed someone to help them restore Israel. In the birth of Jesus, the glory of God is revealed to poor shepherds, who share the good news with others. This news gives the people hope against tyranny and oppression. We too find hope that we are not alone. God knows us, understands us, and lives among us.

What does this story mean for kids?

Since Genesis, the world has been waiting for the salvation found in Jesus Christ. In this story, kids begin to see not only the story of God coming to the earth as a vulnerable baby to experience life as a human but, ultimately, the big story of God's redemption of the world. Through Christ, we see what love and life really look like.

Why this theme?

Jesus. Immanuel. God *with* us. This is a story so full of hope that we can know we are never alone. God is with us—on Christmas and always—through Jesus, who came to us as a little baby.

AGE LEVEL TIP

Pad the walls! It's likely the level of energy kids bring with them today will be off the charts. Use that energy to fuel discussion! Redirect as often as you need.

GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Pens
- Markers

LESSON SUPPLIES

- Mural paper
- Roll of toilet paper
- Chart paper

WHIRL SUPPLIES • WHIRL KIDS STUDY BIBLES • DVD • WALL CHART • LEAFLETS

WELCOME 15

Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

Have markers and mural paper spread out on the table when kids arrive. They can draw Christmas scenes or write the words of favorite Christmas songs.

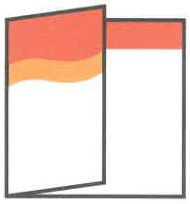
Circle up with kids for an opening conversation.

Let's go around the circle and each name one emotion we are feeling today and why. Give kids time to share. **At Christmas, we experience lots of excitement, energy, and fun. But we also experience hope. God sent Jesus as a tiny baby to be our savior and king and to teach us about God's love. Jesus brings us hope!**

Pray together: **Dear God, thank you for sending Jesus to bring us hope. Help us remember his message of love and peace for all. Amen.**

Pass out leaflets and pens.

We've all made Christmas lists before. Let's make a different kind! Write down some of the things you *gave* someone else this year. Give kids time to make their list in the blank space on the leaflet. Invite kids to share their lists. **Was anyone surprised by your gifts?**



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

What's more Christmassy than babies? Nothing, if you ask Mimi. Let's find out how her Christmas goes in their church nursery.

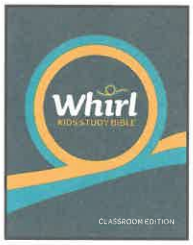
View Episode 4, "Babies," on the Year Gold Winter Grades 3–6 DVD.

Ask kids these questions about the video:

- **How was Mimi's experience in the nursery different from what she expected?**
- **What's amazing about Jesus coming into the world as a baby?**
- **What do you think Jesus was like as a baby?**
- **When have you spent time with babies?**
- **Who do you know who is great at caring for babies?**

HEAR 15

Open your Whirl Kids Study Bibles.



Today's passage is in the book of Luke. It's in the New Testament in the Gospels and Acts section of the Bible. If this is your first time reading from Luke, invite kids to check out the book introduction and comic on page 1225.

People who believed the Messiah was coming believed that he would bring justice and fairness to people who were treated unfairly. This included people who were poor, hungry, and hurting. That's why people were filled with hope and joy when Jesus was born. The Messiah had arrived to bring peace and love to everyone.

Help kids find Luke 2:1-20 and read it in this creative way together: Provide a roll of toilet paper for your group. Take turns reading the verses. After verse 7 is read, tell kids to wrap a volunteer with the toilet paper to "swaddle" them. When they read verses 13 and 14, have kids shout with you, **"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"**

Invite kids to check out what Leo says about Luke 2:6-7.

Ask these questions after you read the story:

- **What is your favorite part of the Christmas story?**
- **What part do you find most unusual?**
- **What does it mean that Jesus came to be with us?**
- **How does your family celebrate Christ's arrival?**
- **Why do you think God chose to first share the good news of Jesus' birth with poor and lowly shepherds instead of powerful kings?**

Make your mark on the Wall Chart.

Look at the chart and find the theme for today. Give kids time to find the word *Hope*. Invite a couple of volunteers to draw shepherds' crooks in the box by *Hope*. **Like the shepherds, we're celebrating Jesus' arrival in our world.**

BIBLE BIT

The Messiah is someone set apart by God to lead or save the people of God. The Israelites had been politically oppressed for years and dreamed of a coming Messiah.

WATCH IT AGAIN

If you watch the video again, pay attention to Gabe at the end! What does he say about the importance of Jesus being such a *real* baby?

OUR CHURCH

Who *does* take care of the babies? Take a field trip to the nursery and say, "Thanks!" to the wonderful people watching the little ones today.

RESPOND 10

Open leaflets and pass out markers.

Tear off leaflet square.

1. Draw a line down the middle of a piece of chart paper. On one side, write "First Christmas." On the other side, write "Our Christmas." **What do you think the first Christmas looked, sounded, and smelled like?** Record ideas in the "First Christmas" column. **What does Christmas look, sound, and smell like in church and at your home?** Record ideas in the "Our Christmas" column.
2. **What we call the "first Christmas" was unbelievably different from any Christmas we've ever experienced. Our Christmas celebrations today help us remember and honor that very first Christmas.**
3. **Think about your Christmas celebration. Who usually comes? Is it just family, or do friends come too? Are there guests you don't know? Inside the barn, draw what it looks like at *your* Christmas celebration.**
4. Allow time for kids to share their drawings and trade Christmas stories.
5. **Is there anyone in your drawing who was surprised by something during your Christmas gathering this year?**
6. **Think back to the text we read from Luke. Do you think there was anyone in that story who was *not* surprised by the coming of Jesus?** Have kids name some of the characters and talk about the story. **Even Mary probably couldn't have guessed where and when Jesus would be born.**

LAUNCH 10

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

What a day of celebration! How can we show our thankfulness to God? Take time to hear kids' responses. **It is *so* important to pause from the rush of this time of year to remember *why* we celebrate.**

Return to the leaflet panels and pass out markers.

When Jesus was born, Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds were surprised, excited, and probably nervous. But more than anything, they were filled with hope. What's one thing you have hope for in your life? Write your response in the beam of starlight.

Send kids out with a blessing.

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.

 © 2016 Sparkhouse. All rights reserved. May not be reproduced.