

Unit 4 The Christmas Story

Information for Leaders

Bible Reference:

Main Teaching Points

- Jesus had a huge impact on the lives of those he came into contact with from the very beginning
- Many people pointed to Jesus as someone very special.
- Not everyone liked Jesus being around -he was unpopular with some people from the beginning and this is still true today.

The **Introductory activities** in this unit helps introduce the children to a theme in the story and relate the story to the children's own lives.

The **Story** is told via short, animated videos. There is also interactive storytelling PowerPoints in week 1 and 4

The **Challenges, Crafts, Games** and **Songs** are fun activities with a link to the story.

The **Quizzes** give the children an opportunity to show what they know and help reinforce the biblical story.

The **Prayer activities** give the children a chance to reflect on what they have heard and to respond to God.

Additional discussion questions

Ages 4-7

What big surprise did Mary get one day as she was doing her chores at home?

Why did Mary and Joseph have to go on that big journey to Bethlehem?

What did the shepherd do after seeing the angels?

Why did the Wisemen go home a different way?

Ages 7-11

How much disruption did Jesus cause for the following people just by being born?

Mary? Joseph? the shepherds? King Herod? the wisemen?

Does Jesus cause a disruption in your life?

What special signs from the story showed that Jesus was someone very special?

Can you think of some people who didn't like Jesus when he was on earth?

Week 1 Mary and Joseph

Intro Idea

I wonder how many ways you can think of for sending a message to someone. Have a think about it and see how many you can think of in a minute!

Examples are text, WhatsApp, Messenger, Twitter, email, letter, post card, phone call, video call, morse code, smoke signals. That's 10 -how many can you think of?

Share together everyone's ideas by writing them up on a whiteboard or similar.

God wanted to get a message to a young girl called Mary, but he didn't use any of these methods – instead he sent an angel. We don't really know what the angel looked like, but we do know that Mary was very surprised to see the angel and to hear what the angel had to say.

Storytelling Video

You will need

Saddleback Kids video [The Story of Christmas \(Mary and Joseph\)](#) (See digital resources)

Data projector/TV screen

Quiz

You will need

Christmas story Quiz video – Mary and Joseph (see Digital resources)

Data projector/TV screen

What to do

Encourage the children to take part in this interactive quiz by calling out their answers.

PowerPoint - It Begins in Bethlehem – Mary and Joseph

You will need

PowerPoint It Begins in Bethlehem -Mary and Joseph (see digital resources for PPT and actions)

Data projector/TV screen to show visuals

What to do

This is an interactive retelling of the story of the angel announcing the news of Jesus' birth to Mary and how Joseph reacted.

Gather your group together with everyone standing so they can see the visuals. Practise the actions a couple of times and then a leader reads out the text and everyone joins in with the actions.

Prayer Activity

You will need

Count your blessing prayer activity sheet (See Resources)

What to do

As a group, discuss the things we have to be thankful for. Give everyone a chance to write or draw some ideas. When finished stand in a circle and each person calls out one thing from their list in turn really quickly. You can go around the circles as many times as you like. Shout a big 'THANK YOU LORD!' at the end!

Craft Activity -Easy Pipe Cleaner Angels

You will need

2 sparkly pipe cleaners

Demo video -Angel Craft with Pipe Cleaners (see digital resources)

What to do

Watch the video or follow the instructions below.

Cross the two ends of one of the pipe cleaners to make a small X. Then twist those ends together. You should have a large circle shape. Place one of your fingers inside the large pipe cleaner circle. Pull the pipe cleaner around your finger then twist it twice to hold it together. When you remove your finger, you should have a small circle the size of your finger. This will be the angel's halo. To make the angel's head, place your finger through the pipe cleaner right next to the first small circle. Twist the pipe cleaner around your finger twice. When you pull your finger out you should have two small circles and one larger oval shape. Bend the top circle forward to a 90-degree angle so it sits over top of the second circle - the head - like a halo. Bend the large oval-like shape below the head and halo into a long triangle shape. It should have two long sides and a short bottom, so it looks like the angel's dress. To make the wings, grab the second pipe cleaner and cross the two ends and twist them in place to make another large circle shape. Bring the opposite sides of the circle shape together until they meet in the middle. It should resemble a "squished" circle. Slip the "squished" circle over the angel. Centre it just under the angel's head where the "neck" would be. Twist the pipe cleaners twice, as close to the angel's "neck" as you can on both sides of the angel. Open up the pipe cleaner wings on both sides of the angel and bend them into wing shapes. They should look like sideways hearts. Add some string so you can hang it on the Christmas tree!



Song Keepy Uppy Christmas Song (Pizza Hut tune)

You will need

Keepy Uppy Part 1 Christmas song video (see digital resources)
Data projector/TV screen

What to do

Either use the video or teach the song and actions yourselves and sing together. You don't need any music. Once everyone has learned the words and actions repeat getting faster and faster.

It's good news, it's good news (*thumbs up*),
a visit from an angel (*cross hands, link thumbs and wiggle fingers*)
and it's good news (*thumbs up*).
It's good news, it's good news (*thumbs up*),
a visit from an angel (*cross hands, link thumbs and wiggle fingers*)
and it's good news (*thumbs up*).
A Saviour, a saviour (*hand out and pull back as if rescuing someone*)
a visit from an angel (*cross hands, link thumbs and wiggle fingers*)
and it's good news (*thumbs up*).
A Saviour, a saviour (*hand out and pull back as if rescuing someone*)
a visit from an angel (*cross hands, link thumbs and wiggle fingers*)
and it's good news (*thumbs up*).

Week 2

Jesus is born

Intro Idea

You will need

Pop out surprise joke toy
Christmas wrapping paper

What to do

Show great excitement about getting a present and spend a bit of time wondering what it is. Say it is an unexpected treat. Decide to leave it until Christmas before you open and then decide you can't wait, and you are going to have to have a peek. Open up the present and jump out of your skin when the joke toy pops out. As you calm down say that you have been well caught – you just weren't expecting that to happen!

Explain that in the bible story today something even more unexpected happens that will change the lives of the people in the story forever. We are going to be hearing about how Mary heard that she was going to be the mother of God's son Jesus. This true story changes everything for us too.



Storytelling Video

You will need

Saddleback Kids video [The Story of Christmas \(Jesus is born\)](#) (See digital resources)

Quiz

You will need

Christmas story Quiz video – Jesus is born (see Digital resources)

Data projector/TV screen

What to do

Encourage the children to take part in this interactive quiz by calling out their answers.

Prayer Activity

Word Made Flesh

You will need

PVA glue
Strips of newspaper
Roll of bandages or crepe paper

What to do

Soak lots of 'words' (newspaper strips) in a bowl of watered down PVA glue using a wooden spoon. Once it is soft and swishy, take a handful out and mould it into a sausage shape. Wrap one extra dry layer of newspaper round your sausage shape so that there are words visible. Next wrap bandages/strips of crepe paper around it to make a baby Jesus wrapped in swaddling clothes, leaving a gap for the baby's face. Leave to dry. Use the little figure as a focal point to pray.



Younger Children (3-6yrs)

Heavenly Father thank you for cards and presents

But most of all Thank You for Jesus

Heavenly Father thank you for decorations and Christmas trees

But most of all Thank You for Jesus

Heavenly Father thank you for time spent with my family and friends

But most of all Thank You for Jesus

Heavenly Father thank you for turkey, ham, roast potatoes and gravy!

But most of all Thank You for Jesus

Amen

Older children (7-11yrs)

Read these words slowly as you focus on the little figure of Jesus.

Read John 1 v 3 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

18 No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

Quietly give thanks for the coming of Jesus into the world as a tiny baby and for all he did for us when he was on earth.

Game Flap the Donkey Race

You will need

Donkey picture (see resources)

Magazine or folded newspaper

Sheets of paper

What to do

Print out the donkey and if you wish, colour it in. Cut it out. On one sheet of paper write Nazareth and on the other write Bethlehem. Decide on the location of your race e.g. the hall. Put 'Nazareth' at the starting line and Bethlehem at the finish line.

The aim is to get your donkey from Nazareth to Bethlehem in the quickest time by flapping your magazine/newspaper to create wind and blowing your donkey along. Race against at least one other person or if space is limited, have timed races, and try to beat each other's time.

Song Keepy Uppy Christmas song (Pizza Hut tune)

You will need

Keepy Uppy Part 2 Christmas song video (see digital resources)

Data projector/TV screen

What to do

Either use the video or teach the song and actions yourselves and sing together. You don't need any music. Once everyone has learned the words and actions repeat getting faster and faster.

Stable door, stable door (*make a door shape with arms in front of you*),

A baby in a manger (*rock a baby in arms*)

and a stable door (*make a door shape with arms in front of you*).

Stable door, stable door (*make a door shape with arms in front of you*),

A baby in a manger (*rock a baby in arms*)
and a stable door (*make a door shape with arms in front of you*).
It's Jesus, it's Jesus (*point to ceiling*)
A baby in a manger (*rock a baby in arms*)
and a stable door (*make a door shape with arms in front of you*).
It's Jesus, it's Jesus (*point to ceiling*)
A baby in a manger (*rock a baby in arms*)
and a stable door (*make a door shape with arms in front of you*).

Week 3 The shepherds

Intro Idea

What was life for the shepherds like?

At the time when Jesus was born, shepherds were seen as having little value by other people. Shepherds stood on the bottom rung of the social ladder. They were seen as having the same value as tax collectors (who were hated by everyone) and dung sweepers....

The shepherds probably lived their lives just barely above destitution, in other words they would only make enough money to scrape by. They worked outside, for long stretches of time. They didn't get a wash very often, so it is certain that they were very smelly. The religious leaders in Israel had banned shepherds from looking after their sheep and goats in most places apart from the desert plains. It was forbidden for people to buy wool, milk or a kid (young goat) from a shepherd because it was taken for granted that it would be stolen property' Shepherds were officially labelled 'sinners'—and were despised.

Storytelling Video

You will need

Saddleback Kids video [The Story of Christmas \(Jesus and the Shepherds\)](#) (See digital resources)

Data projector/TV screen

Minute to Win it Challenge Catch a sheep

You will need

A small white or coloured pompom or cotton ball

Black card, fun foam, or felt

50 cm length of ribbon

Vaseline

Glue dots or sticky tape



What to do

Set up:

Make a sheep by cutting a sheep face and sheep feet from the black card or equivalent and sticking it to your pompom or cotton ball. Cut a strip of ribbon approximately 50 cm long and attach it to the feet of the sheep. Cover the pompom with Vaseline.

Instructions:

Put one end of the ribbon in your mouth and using your mouth only, you must toss your sheep on your nose so that it sticks and stays there. The aim is to complete the challenge in 60 seconds.

Prayer Activity Hands Prayer

You will need

Hands Prayer sheet (see resources)

What to do

Choose one or more words from the sheet. Think about how you could be deliberately kind, with one or more of these words in the Christmas season. For example, 'prefer' could mean letting someone else go first in a queue. Pray asking for God's help as you try to show God's love to those around you.

Science craft

Flying Angels

You will need

- 2 Polystyrene cups per person
- Elastic bands
- Sticky tape
- Marker pens/glitter etc for decoration
- Flying angels video (see digital resources) and the means to show it

What to do

- Draw angels on both cups and decorate with pens/paints/glitter etc.
- Tape your cup together so that the two bottoms of cups are together.
- Watch the video for how to make your angel fly through the air using elastic bands.

Song Keepy Uppy Christmas song (Pizza Hut tune)

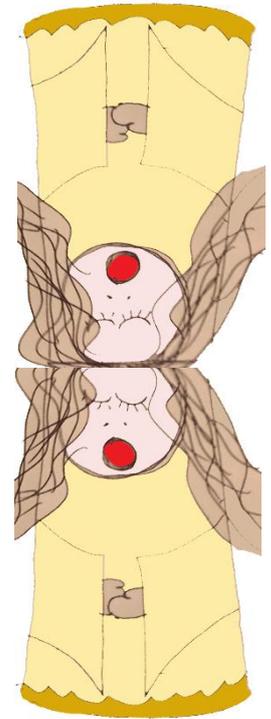
You will need

- Keepy Uppy Part 3 Christmas song video (see digital resources)
- Data projector/TV screen

What to do

- Either use the video or teach the song and actions yourselves and sing together. You don't need any music.
- Once everyone has learned the words and actions repeat getting faster and faster.

Big bright light, Big bright light, (*bring finger and thumb tips together and open and close*),
Shepherds in the night (*put hands over eyes palms facing in*)
Saw a big bright light, (*bring finger and thumb tips together and open and close*),
Big bright light, Big bright light, (*bring finger and thumb tips together and open and close*),
Shepherds in the night (*put hands over eyes palms facing in*)
Saw a big bright light, (*bring finger and thumb tips together and open and close*).
They're angels, they're angels, (*cross hands, link thumbs and wiggle fingers*)
Shepherds in the night (*put hands over eyes palms facing in*)
Saw a big bright light, (*bring finger and thumb tips together and open and close*),
They're angels, they're angels, (*cross hands, link thumbs and wiggle fingers*)
Shepherds in the night (*put hands over eyes palms facing in*)
Saw a big bright light, (*bring finger and thumb tips together and open and close*).



Week 4 The Wisemen

Intro Idea

A leader talks about gifts s/he has received and explains about a favourite gift he/she was given and why it means a lot. Allow the children to talk about their favourite gifts.

Gifts make Christmas really special. We give gifts to people we love to show them how much they mean to us. The wisemen brought gifts to baby Jesus, gold frankincense and myrrh.

The three gifts had a spiritual meaning: gold to show that Jesus was a King, frankincense (an incense) as a symbol of deity (that Jesus was God), and myrrh (an embalming oil) as a symbol of death (to show that Jesus would die).

Story

You will need

Saddleback Kids video [The Story of Christmas \(Jesus and the Wisemen\)](#)

(See digital resources)

Data projector/TV screen

Minute to Win It Challenge Christmas ornament balance

Items needed:

A box of twelve ornaments with hooks, all the same size.

An empty paper towel roll

A metre stick or piece of wood around a metre in length

Set up:

Set the paper towel roll on a table on its end. Lay the stick across the top of the paper towel roll so that it is balanced.

Items needed:

The hardest part is making sure your decorations are well balanced. Working as partners, two contestants will attempt to hang 6 ornaments each on the metre stick, 6 on a side, without tipping the yardstick over. Complete this challenge in 60 seconds or less, and don't let the metre stick fall-la-la-la.

PowerPoint - It Begins in Bethlehem – The Wisemen

You will need

PowerPoint It Begins in Bethlehem -The Wisemen (see digital resources for PPT and actions)

Data projector/TV screen to show visuals

What to do

This is an interactive retelling of the story of how the wisemen journeyed to find a new born King. They stop by at Herod's palace before eventually following the star to Bethlehem.

Gather your group together with everyone standing so they can see the visuals. Practise the actions a couple of times and then a leader reads out the text and everyone joins in with the actions.

Prayer Activity Origami boxes with lids

You will need

Squares of thin card or thick paper (21 cm²)
Glue stick
Christmas wrapping paper
Origami Gift Box video (see digital resources)
Strips of paper and pens

What to do

Follow the instruction in the video for making your gift box.

Write or draw 3 little prayers for inside your box

1. Something you want to praise God for
2. Something you are thankful to God for
3. Something you want to do for God to serve Him

Take your box home as a reminder to praise God and be thankful and to serve Him through the week.



Song Keepy Uppy Christmas song (Pizza Hut tune)

You will need

Keepy Uppy Part 4 Christmas song video (see digital resources)
Data projector/TV screen

What to do

Either use the video or teach the song and actions yourselves and sing together. You don't need any music. Once everyone has learned the words and actions repeat getting faster and faster.

Three Wise men, three Wise men, (*place both hands on head making crown shapes*),
Riding on their camels (*rock hands forward and back in front of you*)
There were three Wise men, (*place both hands on head making crown shapes*)
Three Wise men, three Wise men, (*place both hands on head making crown shapes*),
Riding on their camels (*rock hands forward and back in front of you*)
There were three Wise men (*place both hands on head making crown shapes*).
The star's there, the star's there (*pointing to ceiling*)
Riding on their camels (*rock hands forward and back in front of you*)
There were three Wise men (*place both hands on head making crown shapes*).
The star's there, the star's there (*pointing to ceiling*)
Riding on their camels (*rock hands forward and back in front of you*)
There were three Wise men (*place both hands on head making crown shapes*).