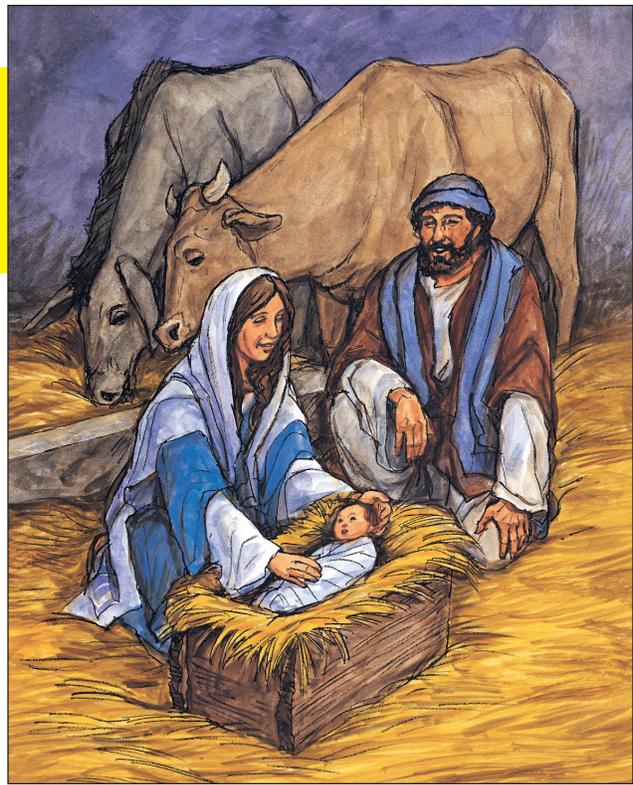


The Savior Is Born

Luke 2:1-7



Overview

Aim

What happened in a stable in Bethlehem

Truth

Jesus was born in a stable in Bethlehem.

Application/Appropriation

Jesus was born to be our Savior.

Materials Needed

- ❑ For *Introduction and Letter*: (optional) stable from nativity set or picture of a stable; letter from Joseph (see Copy Master 1)
- ❑ For *Sharing God's Word, Option 1*: nativity set stable with figures of Mary, Joseph, the manger, baby Jesus, and (optional) animals such as a sheep, a donkey, and a cow
- ❑ For *Sharing God's Word, Option 2*: flannelboard; Betty Lukens' flannelgraph pieces: water and sky scene with hillside overlay; 21—Joseph (facing left and right); 103—Mary; 154—donkey; 260—water jar; 332—bundle; 202—inn; 28—innkeeper; indoor scene; 199A, 199B—stable posts; 129—sheep; 238A—cow and donkey feeding in stable; 230A—stable window with night scene; 233—stool for Mary; 238—manger; 111—baby Jesus
- ❑ For *Applying God's Word*: brightly wrapped gift box with a picture of baby Jesus in the manger inside and with a gift tag on the outside that says "To You, From God"



Lesson

Beginning the Lesson

Opening Statement

We begin in the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Introduction and Letter

(Optional: display stable from nativity set or picture of a stable.) Do you know what a stable is? (Allow students to respond.) A stable is like a barn. It is a building for animals. Farmers often keep their sheep, cows, and other animals in a barn or stable at night to keep them safe and warm.

Did you know that long ago something very wonderful happened in a stable? Today we're going to hear what happened when Mary and Joseph spent the night in a stable. We're going to pretend that Joseph wrote you a letter. *(Distribute copy of the letter to each student, or display one enlarged letter.)* Let's read his letter. *(Read letter.)*

Listen carefully to today's Bible lesson to find out **what happened in a stable in Bethlehem.**

Sharing God's Word

Option 1

Mary knew that she would soon have a baby, just as an angel had told her. She and Joseph looked forward to the day when the Savior would be born. *(Display Mary and Joseph.)*

Mary and Joseph lived in a land ruled by a great king named Caesar Augustus. One day this king said, "I want to know how many people live in my land. Each of you must go back to the town your family came from and put your name on a list. Then I will know how many people I rule."

Mary and Joseph knew they must obey the king. They left their home in Nazareth and began their trip to Bethlehem, the town their families had come from. It took a long time for them to get to Bethlehem. *(Move Mary and Joseph to make them "travel.")* When they arrived, Joseph looked for a place where they could stay.

Joseph asked the man who took care of the inn, "Do you have room for us inside your inn tonight?"

But the man said, "No, I don't have any room for you." The inn was already filled with people.



Mary and Joseph needed a place to rest. They spent the night in a stable where cows and other animals were kept. (*Display stable. Place Mary, Joseph, and optional animals inside.*) In this stable were boxes of hay, called mangers, which the animals ate from. (*Add manger.*)

During the night God's promise to send a Savior came true! God's Son was born to Mary. Mary and Joseph named him Jesus. Mary wrapped Jesus in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger. (*Place baby Jesus in manger.*)

Option 2

Mary knew that she would soon have a baby, just as an angel had told her. She and Joseph looked forward to the day when the Savior would be born.

Mary and Joseph lived in a land ruled by a great king named Caesar Augustus. One day this king said, "I want to know how many people live in my land. Each of you must go back to the town your family came from and put your name on a list. Then I will know how many people I rule."

Mary and Joseph knew they must obey the king. They left their home in Nazareth and began their trip to Bethlehem, the town their families had come from. (*Display water and sky scene with hillside overlay. Add Joseph facing left and Mary on donkey, holding water jar and bundle.*) It took a long time for them to get to Bethlehem. When they arrived, Joseph looked for a place where they could stay.

(*Add inn and innkeeper.*) Joseph asked the man who took care of the inn, "Do you have room for us inside your inn tonight?"

But the man said, "No, I don't have any room for you." The inn was already filled with people.

Mary and Joseph needed a place to rest. They spent the night in a stable where cows and other animals were kept. (*Remove previous pieces. Put up indoor scene; add stable posts, sheep, cow and donkey feeding, window, Mary sitting on stool, Joseph facing right.*) In this stable were boxes of hay, called mangers, which the animals ate from. (*Add manger.*)

During the night God's promise to send a Savior came true! God's Son was born to Mary. (*Put baby Jesus in Mary's arms.*) Mary and Joseph named him Jesus. Mary wrapped Jesus in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger. (*Move baby Jesus to manger.*)

Checking for Understanding

Mary and Joseph lived in a land ruled by a great king named Caesar Augustus.

1a. What did Caesar Augustus want to find out? (how many people lived in his land)

1b. Did Caesar Augustus want to find out how many people lived in his land? (yes)

2a. Where did Mary and Joseph need to go? (Bethlehem)

2b. Did Mary and Joseph need to go to *Jerusalem*? (no)



- 3a. Why couldn't Mary and Joseph stay at the inn in Bethlehem? (The inn was already filled with people.)
- 3b. Was there room for Mary and Joseph to stay at the inn? (no)
- 4a. Where did Mary and Joseph spend the night? (in a stable)
- 4b. Did Mary and Joseph spend the night in a stable? (yes)
- 5a. What happened during the night? (God sent the Savior. A baby boy was born to Mary.)
- 5b. Was the Savior born in the stable? (yes)
- 6a. What name did Mary and Joseph give the baby? (Jesus)
- 6b. Did Mary and Joseph name the baby *Caesar*? (no)
- 7a. In what did Mary wrap her baby? (strips of cloth)
- 7b. Did Mary wrap her baby in strips of cloth? (yes)
- 8a. Where did Mary lay baby Jesus? (in a manger)
- 8b. Did Mary lay baby Jesus in a *crib*? (no)

Truth (a): What happened in a stable in Bethlehem?

_____ was _____ in a stable in Bethlehem. (Jesus, born)

Truth (b): Was Jesus born in a stable in Bethlehem? (yes)

Yes, **Jesus was born in a stable in Bethlehem.**

4 Applying God's Word

(Show brightly wrapped package, prepared as described in Lesson Materials.) It is fun to receive presents at Christmas time. It is also fun to give presents to our family and friends. But this is not what makes Christmas so special. The real joy of Christmas come from knowing that on that first Christmas Day, God gave us and all people the best gift of all.

Look! The tag on this package says, "To You, From God." Let's open the present together. (Help the students open the package and discover the picture of baby Jesus in the manger inside.) What gift did God give us on the first Christmas? (his own Son, our Savior Jesus) God's Word tells us, "A Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord" (Luke 2:11). God sent his Son Jesus to earth so that we could be saved. We and all who believe in Jesus will live in heaven one day. There is no better gift that we could ever receive than the gift of our Savior.



When you give or receive presents this Christmas, remind those around you that Jesus is our greatest gift, and that it is his birthday we are celebrating. Then show your joy and happiness by singing songs of praise and thanks to God!

5 Closing the Lesson

Song

“Away in a Manger” (*Everyone Sing & Sign*, Northwestern Publishing House)

Prayer

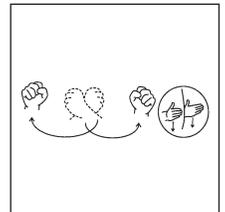
Dear God, we are filled with joy because you have given us the best gift of all—the gift of the Savior. Thank you for your love. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Bible words to Remember

A Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. (Luke 2:11)

1. Savior—cross fisted hands in front of chest; then bring fists outward by twisting wrists away from each other (the sign for “save”); finally bring open palms down along both sides of body

1



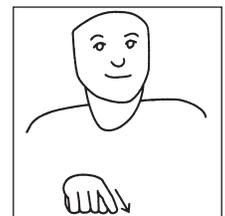
2. born—place left bent hand in front of body, palm in; then touch right fingers and thumb together and move through, under, and in front of left hand, ending with right palm facing front

2



3. you—point outward with right index finger

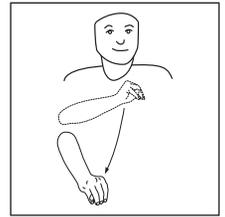
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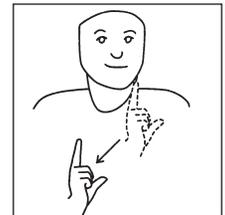
4. Messiah—make “M” shape with right hand; then move “M” hand from left shoulder to right hip

4



5. Lord—make “L” shape with thumb and index finger of right hand, and touch the thumb to left shoulder; then move the “L” hand to right hip

5



Activities



1. Letter Writing

Write a letter responding to the one from Joseph by completing the letter on Copy Master 2. You could give each student a letter to complete individually by inserting words or pictures, with help from a teacher as necessary. Or you could display an enlarged copy of the letter and fill in the entire group's responses. (Possible answers/pictures: stable, baby, manger, Jesus [cross—explain to students who draw pictures as answers that from now on they should draw a cross whenever the missing word is “Jesus”].)

2. Activity Sheet

Provide duplicates of Copy Master 3 for the students to complete on their own or with assistance as needed. (Option: Provide this sheet as a take-home activity.)

3. Craft Projects

Assist the students as necessary in completing one or more craft projects following these steps:

- ❑ *Heart and Manger*
 - ~ Photocopy Copy Master 4 onto white card stock.
 - ~ Help the student cut out the pieces and glue the heart to the top of the manger.



❑ *“God’s Gift” Card*

- ~ Fold in half a 9" x 12" sheet of construction paper, short ends together.
- ~ Help the student decorate the front of the card to look like a gift. You could glue on a piece of wrapping paper or simply add a ribbon or a bow. Print “God’s Gift” on the front of the card.
- ~ Inside the card, write “Jesus.” The student could also draw a cross or attach a Jesus sticker.

❑ *Christmas Card Ornament*

- ~ Use a cookie cutter as a stencil to cut out a picture from the front of a used Christmas card. Then cut an identical shape from construction paper.
- ~ On the construction paper shape write a message such as “Jesus is born!” or “Jesus is our Savior!”
- ~ Help the student glue the two shapes together back to back. If you wish, help the student glue glitter (or use a glitter glue pen) around the border of one side of the ornament. Let dry. Then punch a hole in the top of the shape and tie on a piece of ribbon for hanging.

4. Song/Action Rhyme

Teach the student the following verse. It may be sung to the tune of “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” or used as an action rhyme. (Option: Do the actions as you sing the song.)

Jesus, born on Christmas Day, (*Pretend to rock baby.*)

Came to take our sins away. (*Make a cross with index fingers.*)

He is God’s great gift of love. (*Make fists and cross arms over chest.*)

He came down from heav’n above. (*Raise arms, then slowly lower them.*)

Jesus, born on Christmas Day, (*Pretend to rock baby.*)

Came to take our sins away. (*Make a cross with index fingers.*)

5. Service Project

Arrange for the students to visit a nursing home to sing Christmas songs for the residents. The students could also distribute Christmas cookies, candies, or handmade Christmas cards or ornaments (see Activity 3, “Craft Projects”).

Dear Christian Friend,



Have you ever been inside a stable or barn? I have. My name is Joseph. Mary

and I once needed a place to stay while we were in Bethlehem. The only place we



could find was a stable. This stable had no soft bed to sleep in. It wasn't very warm.



It even smelled like animals because cows, sheep, and donkeys ate and slept there.



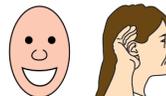
But we were happy to have found a place where we could spend the night.



1



Our night in this stable turned out to be one of the most special nights of our lives.



Something happened there that filled us with great joy. Listen to today's lesson to find



out why our stay in the stable was so wonderful.

Your friend,



Joseph



Dear Joseph,



Today I learned that you and Mary traveled to Bethlehem. When you got there, you



couldn't find a place to stay. At last you found a _____ where you could spend



the night.



That night something special happened in the stable. Mary had a _____.



This baby was God's Son and the Savior of the world! You and Mary named the



baby Jesus. Mary wrapped Jesus in strips of cloth and laid him in a _____. You



and Mary were very happy!



I also am happy to know that _____ was born. I know that he came to earth



to take away my sins and the sins of all people. All who believe in him will be saved.

Your Christian friend,

John's Birth

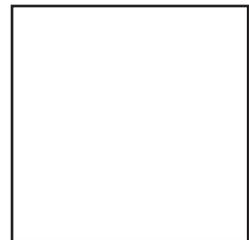
Directions

Cut out the boxes at the bottom of the page and glue each one after the correct question.

1. Who went to Bethlehem with Mary?



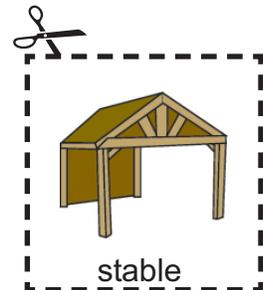
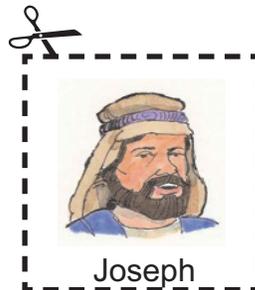
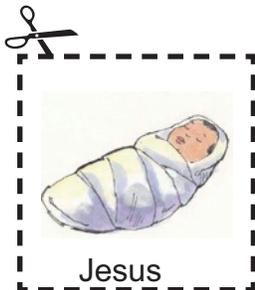
2. Where did Mary and Joseph spend the night?



3. Who had a baby named Jesus?



4. Who was born to be our Savior?



Heart and Manger

