

Today's Bible Story: The Greatest Gift (Jesus Is Born) • *Luke 2:1-7*

Today's Bottom Line: Jesus is the greatest gift.

Monthly Memory Verse: *Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord.* Luke 2:11 (NirV)

Monthly Virtue: Christmas—Celebrating Jesus, God's greatest gift

Basic Truth: I can trust God no matter what.

Video (Media Package): Theme Loop

Leader enters, carrying the large prop box with wrapping supplies.

Video (Media Package): Countdown

Video (Media Package): Theme

OPENER

LEADER: "Merrrrrry Christmas, everyone! I know Christmas Day is technically still a week away, but it FEELS like Christmas, doesn't it? Besides, Christmas is more than just a day—it's a SEASON!

"There's so much to love about Christmas time, but THIS is the reason for all the celebration.

Video (Media Package): Theme Transition to Virtue

"Christmas is about **celebrating Jesus, God's greatest gift!**

Video (Media Package): Virtue Transition to Theme

"One of the reasons we give gifts at Christmas is to remember that Jesus came to be the greatest gift we could ever receive.

"Now, we've been working on our wrapping skills this month, and I've got a real doozy of a wrapping job for you today! Let's split into teams, and I'll pick two volunteers who don't mind getting a little 'wrapped up.'

Divide the room into two groups, making sure the kids are evenly dispersed by ages in the groups. Pick one kid from each group who will get wrapped up. (These should be older kids who you know can handle being the center of attention.)

"Now that you have your groups, here's your challenge. I want you to use the supplies in this box to wrap up your teammate before time runs out. Get that paper wrapped tightly, and be sure to use tape to

hold it in place. Just make sure you don't wrap above their shoulders. And don't forget the ribbons, too! Any questions?

Give each group their half of the supplies.

"Time to wrap! Let's get one minute on the clock. Three . . . two . . . one . . . go!

Video (Media Package): Countdown (60 Sec)

If you're not using a screen countdown, set a 60-second timer on your phone.

Offer guidance as the kids are wrapping their teammates. Make sure they're being safe and not too rough.

"All right, STOP! Hands in the air!

Video (Media Package): Theme Loop

Have the kids all sit down, and bring the wrapped kids up front where everyone can see them well. Walk around and examine the wrapping job.

"This is mighty impressive. But now it's time to see who REALLY did the best job of wrapping. Because now is when this game gets REALLY fun. *(to the two wrapped kids)* [Kids' names], let's see which of you can get UN-wrapped the fastest. When I say 'Go,' you'll try to bust out of your wrapping and tear off all the paper and tape completely. The first person to be completely unwrapped is the winner!

"Time to unwrap! Three . . . two . . . one . . . go!

AUDIO: Fun Christmas music

Comment on the action as the kids unwrap themselves. (This probably won't take very long!)

Get the kids to help you clean up the wrapping paper afterward.

Video (Media Package): Theme Loop

"That was some seriously impressive wrapping—and unwrapping! Now let's keep getting wrapped up in Christmas as we sing and worship God. Everyone on your feet!"

WORSHIP

LEADER: “It must have been such an amazing sight when the angel told the shepherds about Jesus. Do you remember what the angel said to them? It’s in Luke 2:11, our memory verse for this month.”
Let’s all say it together!

SLIDE: Memory Verse

LEADER and KIDS: “Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord.” (Luke 2:11, NIV)

LEADER: “Let’s celebrate, because the joy that Jesus brought to the world is with us now! Sing with me.

Video: “Joy to the World (Glory to the King)”

Video (Media Package): Theme Loop

“Before we keep worshipping, have a seat and check out this video.

Video (Media Package): Live Loud Video from Get Reel

Video (Media Package): Theme Loop

“The good news about Jesus’ birth is SO good that we should share it with others. We can tell people how amazing it is that Jesus, God’s Son, was born to save the world. We can share Jesus’ love with the way we treat others, too. Let’s stand and sing and share the good news that Jesus is born!

Video (Media Package): “Go Tell It” Dance Moves Music Video

Video (Media Package): Theme Loop

“That was so fun! Great singing, everyone. You can have a seat.”

BIBLE STORY

SETTING UP THE STORY

Leader starts by putting on the apron and baker's hat, then pulling the cookie decorating items out of the box. If needed, the Leader can place the printed script on the table for reference.

LEADER: “Welcome to the [your environment’s name] baking show! I’ve always wanted to have my own baking show. So I figured, what better time to do it than today? I thought I could tell the story of Jesus’ birth by decorating some Christmas cookies.

Hold up the undecorated Mary cookie.

“I’ll get started with Mary while we remember where we’ve been so far.

Begin decorating the Mary cookie throughout this next section. (Make sure to make eye contact with the kids from time to time as well.)

“We’ve seen how, way back in the beginning, God made an amazing world. When people turned away from God, the world was broken. But God made a plan to bless the whole world through the Israelites.

“Over and over again, God’s people kept turning away from God. Things got so bad that eventually, other nations invaded and captured the Israelites. The people must have wondered if God still loved them and had a plan for them. And God DID have a plan. God spoke through people called prophets, who told of the Savior who was to come.

“And when the time was right, God sent an angel to a young woman named Mary.

Hold up the finished Mary cookie to show the kids, then put it against the backdrop.

“The angel told Mary that she would have a very special baby!”

THE CENSUS

During this section, decorate the Joseph cookie.

LEADER: “At this time, the Jewish people were living under Roman rule. The Roman leader, Caesar Augustus, commanded that everyone should be counted so they could pay taxes. That meant everyone had to go to their hometown to be listed.

“In Nazareth, there was a man who was engaged to marry Mary. He was a carpenter named Joseph.

Hold up the finished Joseph cookie, then place it against the backdrop.

During this section, decorate the angel cookie.

“Both Joseph and Mary had been born into the family line of King David. So they would have to make the week-long journey to Bethlehem, the Town of David, in order to be counted. This was more than a little inconvenient, as Mary was already pregnant—with a baby whose birth had been announced by an angel!

Hold up the finished angel cookie, then place it against the backdrop.

“Do you remember what the angel said to Mary?

Open the Bible to Luke 1:31-32 (NIRV) and read.

“You will become pregnant and give birth to a son. You must call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God.”

Set down the Bible.

During this next section, decorate the animal(s) and Baby Jesus cookies.

THE JOURNEY

LEADER: “The trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem was about 70 miles, which would have taken a whole WEEK for Joseph and Mary to travel on foot or by donkey.

“When they finally arrived in Bethlehem, they found that lots of other people had come to be counted as well. There was no guest room where Joseph and Mary could stay. They finally found a place . . . with the animals.”

Hold up the finished animal cookie(s) then place them against the backdrop.

THE BIRTH

LEADER: “While Mary and Joseph were there in Bethlehem, the time came for the baby to be born. They named Him Jesus, just as the angel had said.

Hold up the finished Baby Jesus cookie, then place it against the backdrop (between Joseph and Mary).

During this next section, decorate the cross cookie.

“Mary wrapped Jesus in strips of cloth to keep Him warm and cozy. There was no crib or cradle, so she placed him in a manger—the feeding trough for the animals. God’s Son, the best gift ever, came into the world in the most unexpected way!”

WRAPPING UP THE STORY

LEADER: “No one understood it then, but this tiny baby would grow up to teach, heal, and show people what God is like. And then Jesus would choose to lay down His life and die on a cross—for you and me and the whole world.

Hold up the finished cross cookie and then place it against the backdrop.

Video (Media Package): Bible Story (StoryLab)

Video (Media Package): Theme Loop

“Because of Jesus, we can have a relationship with God that will last forever!”

SLIDE: Bottom Line

[Bottom Line] “Jesus is the greatest gift.

“Let’s thank God for the gift of Jesus!”

Video (Media Package): Theme Loop

PRAY

LEADER: “Dear God, thank You so much for sending Jesus to be our Savior! The fact that You would send Your Only Son to die for us . . . it’s the MOST incredible gift! As we celebrate Christmas, help us remember that Jesus came to be our Savior. In the midst of the presents, the food, the lights, and the carols, let our minds always return to that baby born in the manger, sent to be a gift for each of us. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.”