

JESUS IS CHRISTMAS
Following are notes to staff and lesson plans
for a 9 week Christmas series based on nativity figures.

Notes to staff

CHRISTMAS is for GIVING. YOU are a GIFT from God to the parents and children you will be influencing through your involvement. Your WORK and WILLINGNESS are GIFTS to God from you. All gifts deserve a THANK YOU, and we do thank you!

We are entrusted with the safety and well-being of children. This is an area that we want to be "above reproach" in. Please place a priority on knowing where children are, what they are doing, and who is watching out for them. We need to note a few particular safety/etiquette rules:

- 1) No one is ever "alone" with a child.
- 2) If a child is young enough that they need help in a bathroom, the door of the bathroom should be left open.
- 3) All children and parents should enter and leave through the door in the registration (lobby) area.
- 4) No child should leave their last center without their parent or one of the staff being responsible for them. (Note: Some of our children may have court placed "custody" conditions that effect who they can be picked up by.)
- 5) Don't interrupt a center when kids are present unless you HAVE to. This helps us focus on kids.

We do have children from all walks of life and must be both observant and aware without being paranoid. We'll try to let you know anything of specific concern. Please let us know of any concerns you may have so we can have good communication with both staff and parents.

Our sessions go well when we work both independently and yet together. We all need to be well prepared for our own leadership responsibilities, yet be ready to step in and help one another. Some examples of this would be:

During any "together" times you will probably be needed to either supervise kids or to chat with kids (especially those who have yet to make new friends), distribute items, keep an eye out for potential problems and seating arrangements that need changing.

At any time you may be needed to help hold a child, escort them to the bathroom, remind someone of a time/center change, etc.

Also, please use these as a time of building relationships. Talk to kids and their parents. (Note: If you are having a problem with a child, please talk to us before talking with a parent so that we can all be on the same page.) Our talk and attention should be focused on the kids whenever they are present.

All staff should try to arrive early and be prepared to stay late. This allows us to be ready to focus on kids while they are present.

Here is a current listing of our learning centers, with brief descriptions of how they will function:

CRAFTS CENTER: We'll be making gifts. This center will be available for kids who arrive early as well as those who are picked up late. Kids may return to this center whenever they have extra time. (We'll call this the "mayhem" center!) Kids should choose who they are giving a craft to before beginning work on it. (Together you can talk about the person, how the gift could be used, etc., while they make it!) Remember: God gave His best gift (Jesus) and we want to give our best too! Emphasize quality over speed! Keep gifts well marked (Post-its? Boxed?) so they can go home when

completed or be delivered at the end of the sessions. (15 min.)

CRAFT CENTER IDEAS:

- Suncatcher &/or wind chimes - using metal coat hangers
- Cards and wrapping paper -
- Birdhouse decor - using scrap wood and paints
- Mini Shelves - using scrap wood and paints
- Potholders - fabric scraps, old towels
- Cross necklaces
- Candle lights – using old crayons & candles, wicks, and small pots or cans
- Kitchen magnets - using magnet strips, fabric paints, felt, cardstock, beads, etc.
- Heart wallhanging - shaped metal hanger and fabric scraps
- Tote bags -
- Barrette holders -
- Sunglass cords, friendship bracelets - using embroidery floss and rubber bands
- Ornaments

ACTIVITIES/STORY CENTER: This center may let out early, but each child/group must be on time for this center so they won't miss the story. (Stories and activities noted below in lesson plans.) It would be good to have a completed nativity set to use in this center. You could also do some memory verse work during this center.

PROGRAM/MUSIC CENTER: This center will prepare for our Christmas program, and may vary as to how many kids it keeps each session because of individual/group needs for rehearsal. (See CHRISTMAS PROGRAM/MUSIC OPTIONS for program ideas.) You could also do some memory verse work during this center.

NATIVITY CENTER: This center will keep kids current on the making of the pieces for Nativity sets, and reinforce the cue words for each piece. Children may be taken from or returned to the crafts center to keep them current. Each week work on parts of a nativity set. (Keep the pieces together, in their own (perhaps to be the stable?) box to be worked on when there is extra time, and send them home after the Community Christmas Program with the Christmas Advent book, telling how & when & why to set up each nativity piece.) **EACH SESSION REPEAT ALL WORD CUES TO DATE** (listed below)



The main pieces are:

- session 1 - manger (empty) - HE'S COMING (but he's not here yet!)
- session 2 - star - ARE YOU READY?
- session 3 - angel - GOOD NEWS
- session 4 - Mary - A WILLING SERVANT - & Joseph - THE ADOPTING FATHER
- session 5 - stable - A DIFFERENT KIND OF KING - & animals
- session 6 - baby Jesus - THE BEST PRESENT OF ALL
- session 7 - shepherd(s) - SPREAD THE NEWS - & sheep JESUS, LAMB OF GOD
- session 8 - wisemen – HONOR HIM WITH GIFTS - & camels WE SEEK HIM TOO!
- session 9 - make-ups and rehearsal

SNACKS: Snacks can be during assembly/welcome time while going over nativity cues and parts for the program. You can also use this time to introduce songs and memory verses and to encourage progress through your goals for the sessions.

LESSON PLANS FOR STORY/ACTIVITY CENTER

session 1 - CREATION, THE FALL, AND GOD'S PROMISE (Genesis 1-3)

REVIEW NATIVITY CUES TO DATE:

(1) empty manger - HE'S COMING (but he's not here yet!)

KK STORY/ACTIVITY CENTER

Some helpful questions in pursuit of the lesson aim....

Where did the world come from?

How many things can you name that God created in the beginning?

Why do you think God made these things?

Why didn't God make robots instead of people?

How do we know right from wrong?

Why did Adam and Eve have to leave the garden?

What did God promise Adam and Eve?

God knew we would need both a Savior and a Friend, so He planned to send Jesus.

Make paper plate snakes (From a dot in the center of paper plate, draw a spiral out to edge. Cut lines to form snake. Use markers to draw eyes. Glue on a tongue. Optional bell put on for "rattle".) to remind the kids WHY God was going to send Jesus.

Who ended up with the longest snake? The shortest?

Memory verses

Play Jesus Christmas Bingo

session 2 - THE PROPHETS

(such as Malachi 4:5&6; Jeremiah 23:5; Isaiah 9:6&7; Micah 5:2; Hosea 3:5; Amos 9:8)

REVIEW NATIVITY CUES TO DATE:

- (1) empty manger - HE'S COMING (but he's not here yet!)
- (2) star - ARE YOU READY?

KK STORY/ACTIVITY CENTER:

Some helpful questions in pursuit of the lesson aim....

What is prophecy?

How is it like binoculars? (show binoculars)

How is it not like throwing dice? (roll dice)

Put pictures (find on net?) up around the room and walk from one to the next, describing what God, through the prophets, told us would happen. Add more or use less than....

1) Picture of Adam and Eve and snake in the tree from last week. -Genesis 3:15 - God created man to be like Him. While man was sinless he could enjoy God's company. When man sinned, God promised a Savior.

Galatians 4:4&5 - Jesus, our Savior, has died so that we can be a part of God's family and enjoy His company.

2) Picture of Abraham - Genesis 12:3;18:18; 22:18 - God promised to bless the whole world through Abraham's children. Luke 3:24; Matthew 1:2; Acts 3:25; Galatians 3:16 - Jesus was a descendant of Abraham and was sent to save the whole world.

3) Numbers 24:17-19 - God promised that a leader would come from Jacob's family. Luke 3:34; Matthew 1:2 - Jesus was a descendant of Jacob

4) Genesis 49:10 - God promised that one of Judah's children would be God's leader. Luke 3:33; Matthew 1:2 - Jesus was a descendant of Judah.

5) Psalm 132:11; Jeremiah 23:5;33:15; Isaiah 11 - The special King that is coming will come through David's children. Matthew 1:6; Luke 1:32-33; Romans 1:3; Acts 2:30 - Jesus was a descendant of David.

6) Isaiah 7:14 - The Messiah would be born of a virgin and his name will be Immanuel (God with us).

Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-35 - Mary was a virgin until she gave birth to Jesus.

7) Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:3-7; John 7:42 - The Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. Matthew 2:1; Luke 2:4-7 - Jesus was born in Bethlehem

8) Isaiah 9:6-7 - **The Messiah will be God.** Isaiah 41:4; 44:6; 48:12; John 1 and John 8:58; John 17:5; Colossians 1:15-20 - The prophets said God would come, Jesus claimed to be God, Jesus' followers believed Him to be God.

9) Deuteronomy 18:15-22 - God promised to send prophets that would tell the word of God. Matthew 21:11; John 6:14; John 1:45; Acts 3:22-23; John 1:1+ - The people believed that Jesus was God's prophet and Jesus' followers said that Jesus was the WORD that God had promised them.

God himself planned to be both our Savior and our Friend, and He told us what would happen.

For older kids, use some of the above scriptures as a "Bible Drill". Have them read the scripture and then comment on it as it relates to prophecy before going on to the next one.

For younger kids, describe the pictures to the kids as you go around the room.

Make binoculars (from toilet paper rolls) to take home.

Memory verses

Play Jesus Christmas Bingo

session 3- GOD IS READY (Luke 1:26-37; Matthew 1:19-23)

REVIEW NATIVITY CUES TO DATE:

- (1)empty manger - HE'S COMING (but he's not here yet!)
- (2)star - ARE YOU READY?
- (3)angel - GLORY TO GOD

KK STORY/ACTIVITY CENTER:

What are angels? God's angels are His messengers. They do and say what God wants them to. God sent His angel to get things ready for Baby Jesus to be born.

How good are you at taking and passing on messages? Do you answer the phone, and later tell Mom/Dad who called and what they wanted? Do you ever make mistakes when you tell the message? Let's see how good you are at messages.... (Have kids whisper "Glory to God", or "call the baby Jesus", or something harder!! around to each other in a circle and see what message gets to be when the last in line says it out loud.) Do you suppose God's angels make mistakes? No!

An angel (Gabriel) came to Mary and said, "You have pleased God. You will have a baby and will name him Jesus. He will be the Son of God." What would Mary do? (We'll find out next week!)

Mary was going to marry Joseph. Joseph didn't know what to think when Mary told him she was going to have a baby. He prayed about it, and an angel came to talk to him. The angel said, "Don't be afraid to marry her. The baby is God's Son. You will name the baby Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins." What would Joseph do? (We'll find out next week!)

God himself planned to be both our Savior and our Friend, and He told us what would happen.

Have older kids read these parts of the Christmas story from their Bibles.

Play some more "pass the message" around your circle.

How do we deliver messages today? Play a "deliver the mail" relay.

Memory verses

Play Jesus Christmas Bingo

session 4- MARY AND JOSEPH ARE READY (Luke 1:26-55; Matthew 1:19-24:)

REVIEW NATIVITY CUES TO DATE:

- (1)empty manger - HE'S COMING (but he's not here yet!)
- (2)star - ARE YOU READY?
- (3)angel - GLORY TO GOD
- (4)Mary - A WILLING SERVANT
- (5)Joseph - THE ADOPTING FATHER

KK STORY/ACTIVITY CENTER:

Remember our story from last week? Who came to talk to Mary? Who came to talk to Joseph?

An angel came to Mary and said, "You have pleased God. You will have a baby and will name him Jesus. He will be the Son of God." Mary was happy to do what God wanted. She even sang a song of joy!

Mary was going to marry Joseph. Joseph didn't know what to think when Mary told him she was going to have a baby. He prayed about it, and an angel came to talk to him. The angel said, "Don't be afraid to marry her. The baby is God's Son. You will name the baby Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins." Joseph was happy to do what God wanted. He and Mary got married, and Joseph took good care of Mary. Together they got ready for God's Son to be born.

God himself planned to be both our Savior and our Friend, and He told us what would happen.

Bring an assortment of baby things and talk about how they are used to care for the baby.

Play a memory game with the items by removing one and see if the kids can tell you what's missing.

Pack a suitcase relay – Do a relay to pack a suitcase with things that Mary and the baby will need.

Memory verses

Play Jesus Christmas Bingo

session 5 – WHERE!?! (Luke 2:1-7)

REVIEW NATIVITY CUES TO DATE:

- (1)empty manger - HE'S COMING (but he's not here yet!)
- (2)star - ARE YOU READY?
- (3)angel - GLORY TO GOD
- (4)Mary - A WILLING SERVANT
- (5)Joseph - THE ADOPTING FATHER
- (6)stable - A DIFFERENT KIND OF KING

KK STORY/ACTIVITY CENTER:

Talk about barns or stables and what they would be used for. What kind of animals would be in them? What sounds would those animals make? What would it smell like? Would it be warm or cold? Would they like to live there? Camp there?

The Bible says that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem. Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth. How do you suppose God got them to go all the way down there when Mary was supposed to have her baby any day?.....Joseph and Mary had to go to Bethlehem to pay their taxes. The city was crowded with people, and they couldn't find a room to stay in. So, they stayed in the stable with the animals.

God himself planned to be both our Savior and our Friend.

Deal with the expectation that Jesus would be born in a palace vs. His humble beginning in the stable.

Take a census, so that the kids will know what it is. How old are they? What color of eyes do they have? What kind of shoes are they wearing? etc.

Memory verses

Play Jesus Christmas Bingo

session 6 - HE'S HERE! (Luke 2:1-7)

REVIEW NATIVITY CUES TO DATE:

- (1)empty manger - HE'S COMING (but he's not here yet!)
- (2)star - ARE YOU READY?
- (3)angel - GLORY TO GOD
- (4)Mary - A WILLING SERVANT
- (5)Joseph - THE ADOPTING FATHER
- (6)stable - A DIFFERENT KIND OF KING
- (7)baby Jesus - THE BEST PRESENT OF ALL

KK STORY/ACTIVITY CENTER:

Review story from last week on how Mary and Joseph got to Bethlehem.

Baby Jesus was born there. Mary wrapped Him in clean cloths. His first crib was a manger, the place where the animal's hay was kept. What do you think Mary did for Jesus when he was born? What do you think Joseph did?

Jesus came to be our Savior and lives to be our Friend.

Illustrate swaddling clothes on a doll.

Make a door knob knocker that says "Please come in" on one side and "Quiet, sleeping" on the other.

Have a "crying baby" contest.

Memory verses

Play Jesus Christmas Bingo

session 7 - HE'S HERE! AND WE'RE GLAD (Luke 2:8-20)

REVIEW NATIVITY CUES TO DATE:

- (1)empty manger - HE'S COMING (but he's not here yet!)
- (2)star - ARE YOU READY?
- (3)angel - GLORY TO GOD
- (4)Mary - A WILLING SERVANT
- (5)Joseph - THE ADOPTING FATHER
- (6)stable - A DIFFERENT KIND OF KING
- (7)baby Jesus - THE BEST PRESENT OF ALL
- (8)sheep - JESUS, LAMB OF GOD
- (9)shepherds - SPREAD THE NEWS

KK STORY/ACTIVITY CENTER:

Have you ever woke up at night and been scared? Heard a noise? What was it like?
What would you have done/felt like if you had been one of these shepherds?

The Bible tells us that a group of shepherds were staying with their sheep in a field. It was night, and quite dark. All of a sudden, there were a lot of bright lights, and they were scared!

An angel said to them, "Don't be afraid. I have good news for everyone! Today, in Bethlehem, God's Son was born. You will find him wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Then the sky was filled with angels that were praising God.

When the angels had gone, the shepherds decided to go into the city and find out what had happened. They found Mary and Joseph and baby Jesus. After they had seen Him, they went and told others about what had happened.

Jesus came to be our Savior and lives to be our Friend.

Read and act out the Bible story.

Practice making "scared" faces and poses and noises.

Play "sheep, sheep, wolf" (duck, duck goose) to illustrate what shepherds did.

Memory verses

Play Jesus Christmas Bingo

session 8 - HE'S FINALLY HERE! AND WE'RE GLAD! (Matthew 2:1-12)

REVIEW NATIVITY CUES TO DATE:

- (1)empty manger - HE'S COMING (but he's not here yet!)
- (2)star - ARE YOU READY?
- (3)angel - GLORY TO GOD
- (4)Mary - A WILLING SERVANT
- (5)Joseph - THE ADOPTING FATHER
- (6)stable - A DIFFERENT KIND OF KING
- (7)baby Jesus - THE BEST PRESENT OF ALL
- (8)sheep - JESUS, LAMB OF GOD
- (9)shepherds - SPREAD THE NEWS
- (10)camels - WE SEEK HIM TOO!
- (11)wisemen - HONOR HIM WITH GIFTS

KK STORY/ACTIVITY CENTER:

Have you ever been camping? Had to stay in your car on a trip? Remember the star (ARE YOU READY?). It's been in the sky for a long time now, and the wise men have been traveling (perhaps for years?), while following it...

Wisemen (also called Magi) had come to Jerusalem. They wanted to know where the new King was. They had been watching the stars, and had seen a very different star. They followed the star so that they could worship the new King.

Herod was the King. He didn't like hearing that there was going to be a new King. He talked to both the wisemen and his special advisors and found out that, if there was a new King, he would probably be in Bethlehem. He sent the wisemen there, after he had told them to come back and tell him what they had found.

The wisemen again found the star, and followed it all the way to Bethlehem. It stopped over the place where Mary & Joseph were staying. The wisemen were so happy to see baby Jesus. They bowed down and worshipped Him. They gave Him gifts of gold, incense, and myrrh.

When it was time for the wisemen to go home again, God warned them in a dream not to stop to see Herod on their way.

Herod had been waiting to find out from the wisemen who the new King was supposed to be. He had come up with a plan to kill him. When the wisemen didn't come, Herod sent his army to Bethlehem to kill all the baby boys younger than two years old. It was a very sad time for many families. But, Herod's soldiers didn't kill baby Jesus. God had warned Joseph, and he and Mary and baby Jesus had safely gone to another country.

Jesus came to be our Savior and lives to be our Friend.

Discuss - If they could....what is the best gift they can give? (Try to avoid the "what we can get" side of things.)

Talk about the gifts - Illustrate gold, incense, perfume.

Play "follow the star". Put a star on the leader, and have everyone follow and do what the star does.

Memory verses

Play Jesus Christmas Bingo

session 9 - make-ups and rehearsals

REVIEW NATIVITY CUES TO DATE:

- (1)empty manger - HE'S COMING (but he's not here yet!)
- (2)star - ARE YOU READY?
- (3)angel - GLORY TO GOD
- (4)Mary - A WILLING SERVANT
- (5)Joseph - THE ADOPTING FATHER
- (6)stable - A DIFFERENT KIND OF KING
- (7)baby Jesus - THE BEST PRESENT OF ALL
- (8)sheep - JESUS, LAMB OF GOD
- (9)shepherds - SPREAD THE NEWS
- (10)camels - WE SEEK HIM TOO!
- (11)wisemen - HONOR HIM WITH GIFTS

KK STORY/ACTIVITY CENTER:

If there is time for this center, "walk through" the Christmas story together, using the Christmas Advent book and the nativity set so the kids will know how to use it at home.

Memory verses

Play Jesus Christmas Bingo

**Jesus came to be our Savior and lives to be our Friend.
Jesus is the BEST PRESENT OF ALL!**