

# 34. Messiah



## BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

Luke 1:26-45, Luke 2:1-35, Matthew 2:1-12

Jesus is born



## AIMS

To help the children understand the significance of Jesus' coming, for the Israelites then, and for us now. (Since this session will probably take place well before Christmas, it is a good chance to focus on the story of Jesus' birth and its significance without the other distractions of that time of year.)

**Jesus was born, but he was no ordinary baby. He was the promised Messiah. The people's wait was finally over.**



## PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passages for this session and reflect:

- What circumstances surrounding Jesus' birth marked it out as special?
- What do these passages teach us about God?
- Why is Jesus' birth so significant for us today?

Take some time to pray for your group.



## GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

*be a Christmas decoration or simply a star shape cut out of cardboard)*

Ask for a volunteer to hunt the star. Get that child to stand outside the room for a moment while the other children hide the star somewhere in the room.

Choose one of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

### ▶ Stuck In The Mud

For this game, you will need a large space for the children to run about. Depending on the size of your group, choose one or two children to be the chasers – they will try to catch the other children. If a child is caught, they have to stand with their arms out, and they are unable to move until one of the other children runs around them in a circle, going under both arms, to set them free.

Get the child to come back in and hunt for the star. To help them, get the rest of the children to repeat the word "star" over and over, very quietly when the person hunting is far away from the star, and getting gradually louder as they get closer.

Once the star has been found, choose another child to be the hunter, and repeat.

### ▶ Hunt The Star

*You will need: a star (this could*

### ▶ Musical Tableaux

*You will need: equipment to play music*

This game is an adapted

version of Musical Statues. Divide the children into groups of about three. While the music is playing, they should dance or move around the room. When the music stops, they have to work in their groups to make a tableau of a part of the Christmas Story.

Tell them before starting the music each time which part of the story you want them to make when the music stops.

Some suggestions are:

The angel appearing to Mary

The journey to Bethlehem

Jesus is born

The angels and the shepherds

The wise men following the star

The wise men worshipping Jesus



### ▶ Recap/Intro

**Last time we heard that the people of Judah were settled back into their own land but that things still weren't right. God had promised the Messiah, a special king who was going to come and save the people, but after the last time we hear of God speaking in the Old Testament they had a long time to wait. Does anyone remember how long? 400 years.**

You could refer back to last week's session and see if the children remember any of the specific prophecies that were given about Jesus.

**Finally, at the start of the New Testament, the wait is over, and this is the event that Christians remember at Christmas.**

**It's probably a familiar story to**

**many of you, but we are going to think today about why it is so important.**

### ▶ God's Story Video

*You will need: equipment to play video, three wrapped gifts representing the wise men's gifts (you could use chocolate coins as gold, spices as frankincense, and perfume as myrrh)*

Watch this short video (around 4 minutes) from Crossroads Kids' Club to tell the story:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nk58bHnJLD4>

**It's always good news when a baby is born, but there were lots of things there that pointed to the fact that Jesus' birth was extra special. Can you remember some of the things from the video?**

**Angels visiting people, a special star, Elizabeth's baby jumping in her womb, Simeon recognising Jesus as the Messiah...**

**We heard a bit in the video about some wise men who travelled a long way to visit Jesus after he was born. They brought three special gifts that also pointed to the fact that Jesus was someone special. Normally if you go to see a baby you might take them a toy or a book or something to wear, but the wise men's gifts were different.**

**Get three of the children to open the gifts, and discuss their significance:**

**Gold – Gold is a gift fit for a king. The wise men were recognising Jesus as someone who would be a ruler, and as the special king God promised through the prophets.**

**Frankincense – This is something that was used in worship to God. It is sap that is taken from trees, which is**

**dried, and which was burned in the Temple as part of the people's worship to God, so it pointed to the fact that Jesus was someone people would worship.**

**Myrrh – This was a really strange gift. It is a spice that was used to embalm a dead body. Why would you give that to a baby? I don't know how much the wise men really understood, but it seems to point to the fact that Jesus' death was going to be especially important. That was what was going to sort out the problem of sin and make a way for people to be friends with God.**

### ▶ Christmas Pairs

*You will need: pictures printed out (from additional document: Pairs Game) - print two or three copies of each picture depending on which option you use, items for each part of the story (optional): baby doll, angel ornament or decoration, walking stick, star ornament or decoration, crown, chocolate coins, spices, perfume)*

As an alternative to using the video, you could talk about the story using a pairs game.

Ask the children to tell you what they already know about the Christmas Story. Hopefully they will come up with the basic facts such as Mary and Joseph travelling to Bethlehem, Jesus being laid in a manger, and the shepherds and wise men coming to visit.

**While the birth of a new baby is always something to celebrate, the birth of Jesus was extra-special and there were lots of signs that pointed to this. We are going to play a game to look at some of them.**

Lay two copies of each of the picture cards (from additional document: Pairs Game) out in a grid, face-down. Divide the

children into teams (probably two, three or four teams depending on your numbers). Let each team in turn choose two cards to turn over. If the cards match, they take them from the grid, and they have another go. If the cards don't match, they turn them face-down again and the next team takes their turn. Once all the pairs have been matched up, the team with the most cards wins.

You can then use the cards to point to the different signs that showed Jesus' birth was something extra-special.

If you want to get the children moving around a bit more, you could have an extra copy of the cards from the game stuck around the room beforehand with an item representing that part of the story beside them. You could move around the room with the children going to each item in turn and talking about that part of the story. Suggested items are listed at the end of each section in the script below.

**Pregnant lady - Mary's pregnancy was something very special. She hadn't even married Joseph yet when an angel came and told her she was pregnant! Shortly after that, she went to visit her cousin, Elizabeth, who was also pregnant, and when they met, Elizabeth's baby jumped for joy inside her.** (Suggested item: baby doll)

**Angel - Angels appear a lot in the story - giving a message to Mary, reassuring Joseph that the baby was from God, announcing to the shepherds on the hillside that Jesus had been born.** (Suggested item: angel ornament or Christmas tree decoration)

**Old man - A man called Simeon had been waiting for years for the Saviour God had promised to send. God had promised**

**Simeon that he would get to see the Saviour before he died. After Jesus was born, his parents took him to the Temple and Simeon was there. He recognised Jesus as the one God had sent.** (Suggested item: walking stick)

**Star- A special star appeared in the sky over Bethlehem - a sign that a new king had been born.** (Suggested item: star ornament or Christmas tree decoration)

**Crown - Wise men saw the star and travelled on a long journey to find the king. They arrived in Jerusalem at King Herod's palace. When Herod found out that a baby king had been born, he was angry and jealous, and he made plans to kill Jesus. Fortunately, God helped Jesus and his family to escape.** (Suggested item: crown (this could be cut from cardboard))

**The final three cards represent the gifts the wise men brought to Jesus. They were not the normal kind of gifts you might give to a baby, but each of them had a special meaning.**

**Gold - a gift fit for a king. The wise men were recognising Jesus as someone who would be a ruler, and as the special king God promised through the prophets.** (Suggested item: chocolate coins covered in gold foil)

**Frankincense - This is something that was used in worship to God. It is sap that is taken from trees, which is dried, and which was burned in the Temple as part of the people's worship to God, so it pointed to the fact that Jesus was someone people would worship.** (Suggested item: jar of spices)

**Myrrh - This was a really strange gift. It is a spice that was used to embalm a dead body. Why would you give that to a baby? I don't know how**

**much the wise men really understood, but it seems to point to the fact that Jesus' death was going to be really important. That was what was going to sort out the problem of sin and make a way for people to be friends with God.** (Suggested item: perfume)



## REFLECT & RESPOND

### ▶ Christmas Card

You will need: coloured card, selection of art materials

Give the children card and art materials such as pens, glitter, glue, sequins or other things to stick on. Get them to design a Christmas card that tells something about why Jesus' birth is so important to Christians.

(If you are following One Big Story as it is released, this session should take place around the start of November. You may want to keep the Christmas cards for the children for a few weeks and give them out for them to pass on to a family member or friend closer to Christmas.)

### ▶ Prayer Activity

You will need: slips of paper, pens, box, gift wrap, scissors, tape

**At Christmas, we can often be distracted from thinking about Jesus' birth by all the parties and presents. Christians believe that God sending Jesus was the greatest gift of all.**

Give the children slips of paper to write or draw prayers thanking God for sending Jesus. You could put the slips in a box and gift-wrap it. Then keep it until your last session before Christmas when you can get the children to open it again and remember what you reflected on in this session.