



LOW-ENERGY GAME

A Gift Given, Not Earned

[10 min]

Supplies

- box
- Christmas wrapping paper*
- tape
- pair of oven mitts
- pair of dice
- candy or fun Christmas-themed gifts that will fit in the box (1 per person)
- upbeat Christmas music (optional)
- music player (optional)

Easy Prep

- Place the gifts in the box, and tape the box closed.
- Wrap the box with the Christmas paper using 1 layer of paper per person, plus a few extra.
- Place the pair of dice in your pocket or somewhere you'll be able to access them quickly and easily (but out of reach of curious younger hands).

Tips

- If you have more than eight kids, consider wrapping multiple boxes and splitting into smaller groups so kids won't have to wait so long for their turns. Don't forget the extra oven mitts!
- If you don't want to use candy for the gift, you can often find seasonal pencils or pens at dollar stores or even budget-friendly miniature snow globes. Have fun selecting a gift kids will enjoy, but make sure everyone gets the same thing and that you have enough for everyone.

Try to Unwrap a Gift While Wearing Oven Mitts

Say: Today we've been learning what Christmas is really all about and why we celebrate it. Christmas is a joyful reminder that Jesus came to earth for us. Let's play a fun gift game to explore how Jesus is a gift for everyone.

- Have everyone sit in a knee-to-knee circle.
- You'll choose a person to begin the game, and he or she will try to unwrap the gift while wearing both oven mitts.
- A couple of ground rules for trying to open the gift:
 - No punching the gift to try to rip through layers of the wrapping—the unwrapping has to be done gently so the gift doesn't get broken.
 - The gift must immediately be passed to the next person when you call out, "Pass!"

- Once the first person begins unwrapping, you'll start rolling both dice. Every time you roll doubles (the same number on both dice), you'll call out "Pass!" This is simply a way to randomize the length of time each person gets with the gift.
- Each person can unwrap as much as possible until you call out "Pass," and then he or she will pass the gift to the right.
- Place the gift in front of the first person while he or she puts on the oven mitts.
- If you'd like, start playing Christmas music to cue the beginning of the game.
- The person who reaches the completely unwrapped box can open it to reveal the gift, and then he or she can help you distribute the gift to everyone.

Talk About It

Ask: • **What made this gift hard to open?**

Say: **Sometimes in our lives we feel like we have to earn every good thing, even gifts at Christmas. You might feel like you deserve good Christmas gifts only if you're well-behaved.**

Ask: • **What's a gift you had to earn?** Share an example of your own, such as earning a special treat for good grades in school.

Say: **Jesus is a different kind of gift. The gift of Jesus doesn't depend on our abilities—like being able to open a wrapped box while wearing oven mitts—or any other skills. Jesus came to earth to be the most amazing gift for *all of us*, and there's nothing we have to do to earn his gift.**



TALK-ABOUT VIDEO
A Gift for You

[10 min]

Supplies

- “A Gift for You” teaching video

Discuss and Watch “A Gift for You”

Say: **We’re learning that Jesus came to earth for us. Let’s watch what happened!**

Watch “A Gift for You.”

Ask: • **Why is Jesus a good gift?**

• **If you were writing a thank-you note to God for the gift of Jesus, what would you say in it?**

Say: **Jesus came to earth for us. He loves you so much that he gave up heaven to become a human baby on earth! Jesus wanted to bring you joy, peace, and friendship. What an amazing gift!**



DEEPER BIBLE

If Christmas Is About Jesus, Why Do We Do All This Other Stuff?

[15 min]

Supplies

- Bibles
- “Christmas Traditions” handout (1 per child)
- construction paper
- scissors
- glue
- string
- tape
- markers
- strand of Christmas lights (optional)

Set It Up

Say: **We’re learning about the true meaning of Christmas: Jesus came to earth for us. But you know, there are a lot of other things we do to celebrate Christmas—things that don’t seem to have anything to do with Jesus!**

Ask: • **What are some things you see at Christmastime?**

• **Imagine it was your birthday, but everyone gave presents to each other instead of you and didn’t pay attention to you. How would you feel?**

Say: **So if Christmas is about Jesus, why do we do all this other stuff?**

Let’s dig in to that.

Dig Deeper

Have kids form up to six groups. It’s okay if you don’t have enough kids to form six groups, but make sure each group has at least two kids. Assign each group one of the following topics, skipping some if you don’t have enough groups.

- Christmas trees
- candy canes
- Christmas presents
- Christmas lights
- stars
- gingerbread men

Give each child a “Christmas Traditions” handout, and set out the craft supplies and Bibles to share. Have kids follow the instructions on their handouts and then share what they’ve learned.

Ask: • **What surprised you about how these fun Christmas traditions connect to Jesus?**

Say: **Not all of these traditions started as a way to celebrate Jesus, but we can use them that way! Every one of them can remind us that Jesus came to earth for us. We can do these fun things and still keep the focus on Jesus. Because remember, Jesus is what Christmas is all about.**

Read Luke 2:10-12.

Pray: **Jesus, thank you for coming to earth for us! In your name, amen.**



LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

Glory to God

[5 min]

Supplies

- Bible

Praise Like Angels

Say: **Let's close by praying the same prayer of praise that the angels prayed when they announced Jesus' birth.**

- Read Luke 2:14.
- Have kids repeat the verse a couple of times until they know it well.
- Have kids say Luke 2:14 in a shouting voice.
- Have kids say Luke 2:14 in an opera voice.
- Have kids say Luke 2:14 in a high-pitched squeaky voice.
- Have kids say Luke 2:14 while dancing around.

Wrap Up

Pray: **Jesus, thank you for coming to earth for us. We're so glad you came! We praise you and give you glory, and we ask for peace on earth this Christmas season. In your name, amen.**

Thank kids for coming, and encourage them to come back next week.



ACTIVITY PAGES WITH A POINT

Heaven and Earth

[10 min]

Supplies

- “Christmas” Coloring Page
- pencils
- crayons

Older Kids: Do an Activity Page

Say: **At Christmas we celebrate that Jesus came to earth for us. He gave up heaven to come as a baby boy in a barn! Let’s think about the differences between heaven and earth.**

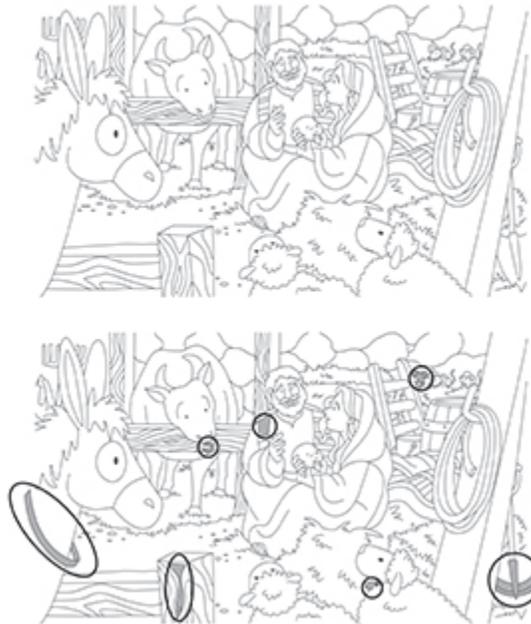
Distribute the activity pages and pencils. Kids will find the differences between the two pictures.

Ask: • **What differences did you notice?**

• **How do you think earth is different *because* Jesus came?**

Say: **Jesus gave up so much when he came to earth for us! Heaven is a perfect place where no one ever gets hurt or feels sad. It’s always bright and beautiful there. Earth is quite different! But when Jesus came to earth, things got brighter here. He brought joy and hope to our world! Jesus came to earth for us.**

ANSWER KEY:



Younger Kids: Color a Coloring Page

Distribute the coloring pages and crayons. Say: **At Christmas, we celebrate that Jesus came to earth for us. Jesus came as just a little baby, born in a barn. Let's color that.**

Allow time for kids to color.

When kids finish coloring, three-hole-punch their pages and put them into binders, if desired.