

WEEK 4 LESSON GUIDE



BIG IDEA

Jesus is God's greatest gift.

BIBLE

Jesus Is Born:
Luke 2:1–20

ABOUT THIS WEEK

Some of the best gifts can appear in unexpected packages, which was undoubtedly the case for Jesus. This week, we'll hear the joyful news that Jesus was born and see how the shepherds came to celebrate. While details around his birth aren't exactly what you would expect, the way people from all over came to worship makes it clear that **Jesus is God's greatest gift.**

WELCOME TIME

ACTIVITY | Find The Gift

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, prepare [five Christmas boxes](#) with lids and assorted toys that might fit inside any boxes. Have everyone close their eyes or turn around. Place one toy in one of the five boxes. Invite kids to guess which box contains the toy. Repeat using a different toy and choose one of the kids to hide the toy this time.
- Christmas is here! Most people look forward to Christmas because that means we get to open gifts. But in today's Bible story, we'll learn about the greatest gift of all.

ACTIVITY | Tagged With A Bow

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play a "Freeze Tag" type game where the kid who is "it" tags the other kids with [large bows](#) (pro tip: stick double-sided tape on top of the stickers so you can reuse the bows afterward!). Keep going until most of the kids have bows on and are "frozen" and sitting on the ground. Repeat with different kids being "it." If you have mostly older preschoolers, you can teach them to "unfreeze" a friend by taking off their bow.
 - ✂ **TODDLER HACK:** Peel off all the backing from the bows in advance and provide safe surfaces on which toddlers can stick the bows—including leaders for some silly fun! As an added precaution, snip off the corners of the adhesive on each bow, as they can be rather sharp and poke your littles.
- You were wrapped with a bow, just like a gift! And to your parents, grandparents, people close to you, and everyone here, it's true ... you are a gift. Ever since you were born.
- In today's Bible story, Mary and Joseph receive a baby as a gift, too. This baby is the greatest gift there ever was.

STORY TIME

SCRIPTURE | Luke 2:1–20 (Jesus is Born)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Teach this Scripture passage by reading from a preschool-friendly Bible translation, Bible

storybook, or using the talking points provided below! Use the props from previous weeks for Mary and baby Jesus. Add new ones for Joseph and shepherds. Show each figure when talking about them in the Bible story. Consider sitting on a rug with kids in a half circle to make this more cozy.

- Welcome back to the Joy Story corner! We're going to learn all about why the birth of Jesus gives us so much joy.
- **How do you move your body when you are filled with joy?**
- Today's Joy Story is about the day the most joyful event happened. Mary and Joseph were about to be parents.
 - An angel told Mary that she would have a baby boy. His name would be Jesus and he was God's own son.
 - **Rock your arms back and forth like you're carrying a baby.** That's so sweet!
- Before Jesus was born, Mary and Joseph had to travel to Bethlehem, where Joseph was from.
 - The king wanted everyone to go to their hometowns so he could count everyone who lived in the kingdom.
 - **Let's count everyone in this room together.**
- When Mary and Joseph finally got to where they were going, they could not find a place to stay for the night, and Mary was about to give birth to baby Jesus. They needed a place to rest and fast. So they ended up sharing a room with animals!
 - **What kind of animals do you think were there?**
 - **Let's make some animal noises together.**
- It was probably a smelly and noisy place for a baby, but this was where Jesus was born. Mary placed baby Jesus in a manger, where they put the animal food. God's promise came true. What a joy to all of the world!
 - **Let's clap as loud and hard as we can. Yay! Jesus was born!**
- Just like an angel delivered a message to Mary, angels delivered a message to the shepherds nearby. They were watching their sheep when suddenly, angels appeared in the sky and told them that Jesus, the savior, was born! So the shepherds went to meet Jesus, too.
 - **Let's tiptoe quietly and pretend to look at baby Jesus.**
 - Shh! He's sleeping peacefully in the manger!
- This is why we celebrate Christmas. We celebrate Christmas because God sent us Jesus. Jesus is the most amazing gift because he has the power to save us and bring us to God.

BIG IDEA | Jesus is God's greatest gift.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Prepare five wrapped boxes in advance, each containing a different toy with a Big Idea tag attached (use one of the Big Idea graphics provided or write your own). Label each box with a number corresponding to the week. This week, invite a couple of kids to unwrap box #4. If you have a [recordable plush](#) available, you could record yourself saying the Big Idea in advance, reset it each week, and gift wrap it in the box again. Once unwrapped, say the Big Idea aloud for the kids (or squeeze the tummy if using a recording) and have kids follow along with the motions below.
- What's the Big Idea of today's Joy Story?
 - **Jesus** ("[Jesus](#)" in ASL)
 - **is God's** (Point up.)
 - **greatest** (Spread out arms wide.)
 - **gift** (Hold out palms together like you're holding something.)

VIDEO | Joy Story, Episode 4

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play this week's episode of [Cali's World](#).

ACTIVITY | Manger Relay

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Prepare yellow or brown crinkle paper or basket filler and separate them into two grocery bags or buckets. Divide groups into teams and provide a pair of [jumbo tweezers](#) for each team. Set two shoeboxes at the opposite end of the room. Have one player from each team grab as much of the “hay” (paper) with the tweezers and take it over to the shoebox. Then, they can return and pass the tweezers to the next player. Keep going until both “mangers” (shoeboxes) are full. Remind kids to walk throughout this relay so they don’t accidentally poke themselves or someone else with the tweezers.
 - **TODDLER HACK:** Toddlers have not fully developed the motor skills for using tweezers yet but you can allow them to pick up the paper with their fingers. Provide a baby doll they can take turns holding and placing in the newly-prepared “manger.”
- Thanks for helping me get these mangers nice and fluffy. Even so, this is probably not the best place for a baby to sleep, right?
- But Jesus was born and placed in a manger. It shows us not all good gifts come in pretty wrapping paper. Even though Jesus wasn’t born in a palace and didn’t have a comfortable crib, it doesn’t change that **Jesus is God’s greatest gift!**

PRAYER

- Dear God, thank you for giving us Jesus! We look forward to getting presents at Christmas, but help us remember Jesus is your greatest gift.

SHARING TIME**SNACK | Yummy Gift Box**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Make snacks that resemble gift boxes (like [this image](#)). You can use crackers spread with cream cheese or cheese squares with pretzels or string cheese as bows. For a sweeter option, you can use toaster pastries and icing or candy ropes.
 - ✂ **TODDLER HACK:** Prepare toddler snacks inside fun [Christmas-themed cookie boxes](#). Toddlers will have a blast opening their own gift box to munch on what’s inside!
- **What is the one gift you got that you loved? What made it so special?**
- **Was there a gift you loved giving to someone else?**

ACTIVITY | Circle Time

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Pass around a customizable snow globe (choose from [classic globes](#), [mason jar kits](#), and [plastic kits](#)). Each week, you can insert a picture of anything you’d like—a small toy, a laminated photo of one of the kids in your ministry, a photo of you or one of your volunteers as a preschooler, or even hand-drawn pictures of your kids made! Invite kids to shake the globe each time it’s passed to them. After it’s passed around the circle once, ask one of the questions and invite the kids to call out their responses.
- **Where did Mary and Joseph travel to before Jesus was born?** Bethlehem.
- **When Jesus was born, where did Mary place him?** In a manger.
- **Who heard about Jesus being born from angels?** Shepherds nearby.
- **Who is God’s greatest gift to us?** Jesus! **Jesus is God’s greatest gift!**
- **Who can you share the greatest gift with?**

ACTIVITY | Joy Tree Ornament

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Each week, invite the kids to create a paper ornament to represent what they learned. The kids will create their joy tree ornament using the provided [ornament template](#), a hole puncher, and ribbon or

twine. You may choose to have leaders write the Big Idea on the ornament for them. This week, have kids cover their ornament with liquid glue and cover it with pieces of different colors of yarn or scraps of colorful tissue paper. Have kids write their names on the back and hang it up on a tree in your space (it can be a tree outline with green tape on a wall), or take it home! Consider printing on cardstock or laminating their finished work to make them last longer.

- This ornament can hang on a tree—or anywhere we want—to help us remember our Big Idea: **Jesus is God's greatest gift.**

MEMORY VERSE | Luke 1:46–47 (NIV)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Help kids learn this month's memory verse by setting the words (and the Scripture reference) to the tune of "We Wish You A Merry Christmas." You can also have kids repeat the verse after you in small chunks, say them using silly voices, or create simple hand motions for keywords.
- **"My soul glorifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior."**

PLAY TIME

ACTIVITY | Coloring Page

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Print and distribute [the coloring page](#) along with crayons or markers. You can review today's Bible story, Big Idea, and memory verse as the kids color.

ACTIVITY | Gift Wrap Design

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Lay out long sheets of butcher paper. Provide markers, crayons, stamps, glitter, stickers, and other art materials, and have kids design their wrapping paper. Prepare some items you could wrap with their newly designed paper. For a take-home option, provide plain [paper gift bags](#) that kids can decorate in the same way!

ACTIVITY | From The Joy Box

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Each week, provide a box of different toys kids can play with. You can guide them to use the toys to build something they remember or reenact parts of the Bible story. This week, provide a toy nativity set kids can play with. If you don't have one available, provide magnet tiles or Lego Duplo blocks kids can create their own nativity with.

✂ **TODDLER HACK:** Toddlers love simple, repetitive tunes. Sing simple Christmas songs like "Away in a Manger" and "Jingle Bells" as you play with your toddlers. You'd be impressed with how quickly they pick it up!