


the
Jesus 
Storybook
Bible
Curriculum

He's here!

The Nativity, from Luke 1–2

☉ Please see the curriculum Introduction .pdf for more guidance on praying with your group and on Scripture memory.

☉ The total allotted time per lesson is 45 minutes. This is the minimum amount of time it would take to complete the whole lesson. The time can easily be extended to increase the lesson to as much as 1.5 hours. If you have more than the allocated 45 minutes, please use the extra time to extend the time for activities, to learn the memory verse, and to pray.

☉ The “Notes for Teachers on the Text” section is intended as explanation of the Bible text and advance preparation for you only; it is not expressed in terms or language the children could understand.

The Jesus Storybook Bible Curriculum
By Sally Lloyd-Jones and Sam Shammas

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Welcome

3 min. 

- ☉ Welcome the children and ask them to sit in a circle.
- ☉ Say: “Last time we read our last story from the Old Testament. Remember the Old Testament tells us all about what happened before Jesus was born.”

- ☉ Ask: “As we turn to the New Testament, what do you think the stories are going to be about? Yes, Jesus’ birth and everything that happened after Jesus was born.”

Activity Introducing the Story

10 min. 

Aim: To expend energy and become familiar with the names of the books of the New Testament.

Materials: 27 large cards with the name of a book of the New Testament written/printed on each.

1. Place the cards in a pile in the center of the circle, making sure they are in order with Matthew at the top. As you do so, say: “I am going to place these cards in the center of the circle. Each card has the name of a book of the New Testament on it. When I tap you on the shoulder, walk quickly to the center of the circle, take a card, read the name of the book of the New Testament that is on the card, and then quickly take the card back to your place and sit down.”
2. Tap the children quickly on the shoulder in a random order as you walk around the circle. If they cannot read or pronounce the name on the card, help them out.
3. Once all the cards have been picked up, say: “You may have already memorized them at home, but those are the names of the books of the Bible in the New Testament. We are going to play a game. When I call out the name of a book that you have on one of your cards, jump up, hold the card so others can see it, repeat the name of the book out loud, and sit down again. Look carefully at the cards you have. Ready?”
4. Quickly read out the names of the New Testament books in order, allowing the child with the card to stand and repeat the name before moving on.

5. Repeat this exercise, but this time say you all need to go faster. Also announce that they need to remember the order because soon they will do this on their own without you announcing the names.
6. Repeat again going even faster, reminding them to remember the order.
7. Repeat again, but this time announce that you will not be calling out the names. They need to stand and call out the names themselves in order from memory. Prompt as necessary. Repeat if needed.
8. Announce that you will do this one last time, but this time they should go to the center of the circle and place the cards in the center so that at the end you have a pile of cards in the correct order.
9. If you have the time and can find a song that teaches the names of the books of the New Testament, it would be good to learn that here too, but this is optional.
10. Put the cards away. Say: “The first four books of the New Testament — Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John — are biographies of Jesus. All four of them tell us the story of Jesus’ life. We’re going to start with Luke’s book because he tells the most detailed story of Jesus’ birth. Ready?”

For larger groups: You may want to divide the group into smaller circles, each with a teacher and a set of cards. This way the children each have a number of cards and are standing up and sitting down more often.

Story Time

7 min. 

Join the children in the circle and announce the title of the story. Read aloud pages 176–183 from *The Jesus Storybook Bible* or listen to CD2 track 8.

Notes for Teachers on the Text

Luke 1:1–4 is a remarkable claim of careful historical research. How did Luke come to know and record the events of Jesus' life, or as he puts it in chapter 1, verse 1: "the things that have been fulfilled among us"? He says there were three stages.

☉ First, there were "eyewitnesses" who carefully guarded and "handed down" (Luke 1:2) the accounts. So here Luke acknowledges his dependence on eyewitnesses (as any historian would).

☉ Second, Luke was not the only one to make an orderly account from this eyewitness material. He adds in verse 1 that "many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things." So by the time Luke was writing, 25–30 years after Jesus' death, there were already other written records of Jesus' life.

☉ Third, Luke claims that "I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning ... that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught" (Luke 1:3–4). Luke is here claiming that he did not rely on one eyewitness but compared all his sources and "carefully investigated" them. This would have been quite possible for Luke, who personally knew many of the apostles and other eyewitnesses. He would also have been in a position to check the accounts through interviews with many others.

Luke tells us his method. He used both historical accounts and eyewitness material, which he carefully compared and investigated with his own personal research. His goal was that readers would "know the certainty" of the events they had learned about. Also, as a doctor, Luke was an educated person. The Greek of the books of Luke and Acts is stylish and that of a cultured person of the time.

It means that we cannot read Luke and say, "These are legends that grew up about Jesus—some of them are true, but many of them are embellished." Luke's language is not that of a compiler of stories or myths. He most emphatically denies that he was doing that. He says he wrote nothing down unless it was historically checked and certain. Luke is then making a very direct claim to painstaking historical accuracy in his account of Jesus' life.

Understanding the Story

15 min. 

Aim: To understand how and why Jesus was born.

Materials: 2 large poster-size papers; child-safe glue; decorating items, e.g., stickers, pieces of colored paper, tin foil, etc.; crayons; copies of the handout (the last page of this document).

1. At the end of the story, say: “God has come to live with us. God promised from the beginning that he was coming to rescue his people and here he is! But it is not what anyone expected. There are some surprising things that happen in this story. Let’s look at it in more detail.”
2. Divide the circle into two groups, each with a teacher. Give each teacher a large paper, crayons, and decorating items. The paper should be large enough to allow everyone in the group to draw on it at the same time.
3. Each teacher should divide the paper into two parts by drawing a thick line across the middle, and then write and announce the words “Jesus could have been born here ...” on the top half of the paper. Then they should say to their group: “Let’s draw together a poster of where Jesus could have been born.”
4. Prompt the group with a series of questions and get them to draw or write down the things they mention on the top part of the poster, e.g.:

QUESTIONS	TOP PART OF THE POSTER
Do you remember some of the names of Jesus from the Old Testament?	Get answers like: Rescuer, Prince of Peace, King, etc. Write them down on the poster.
If Jesus is a king, where would a king be born?	Get answers like: palace and castle. Get the group to draw palaces and castles on the poster. Each child can draw one or they can help one another and draw a large picture together.
What does the bed of a king look like?	Get answers like: big, comfortable, covered in jewels, etc. Get each child to draw such a bed on the piece of the poster nearest to them.
What sorts of colors shall we use to decorate the palaces?	Get the group to use rich colors — gold, silver, red, purple, etc. — to decorate the top half of the poster.

5. Each teacher should then say to their group: “What is surprising is that Jesus is not born in a palace or a castle.”

6. The teacher should write and announce the words “Instead Jesus is born here ...” on the bottom half of the poster. Then prompt the group with a series of questions and get them to draw or write down the things they mention on the bottom part of the poster, e.g.:

QUESTIONS	BOTTOM PART OF THE POSTER
Can anyone remember the name of the place where Jesus was born? Correct, Bethlehem. Which Old Testament king also came from Bethlehem? Correct, King David. Jesus and David are connected.	Write the word Bethlehem on the poster. Say: “Jesus is the great-great-great-great-great-great-grandson of David. All God’s promises about his Rescuer are coming true!”
Instead of being born in a palace or a castle, where was King Jesus born?	Get answers like: in a stable; surrounded by animals; etc. Each child can draw a stable and some animals or they can help one another and draw a large picture together.
What did Jesus’ bed look like?	Get answers like: small, an animal’s feeding trough, lots of straw, etc. Get each child to draw such a bed on the piece of the poster nearest to them.
What sorts of colors shall we use to decorate the stable?	Get the group to use duller colors — yellow, brown, etc. — to decorate the bottom half of the poster.

7. Toward the end of the allocated time, ask the children to help you put away the decorating items and to sit back down in the circle. Display the posters at the center of the circle for everyone to see.

8. Say: “You’ve done a great job on your posters of showing the difference between where Jesus could have been born and where Jesus actually was born. It is surprising. Even though Jesus is King, he wasn’t born like other kings. He wasn’t born in a palace or a castle; he was born in a stable. He didn’t have a nice bed; he had an animal’s feeding trough. It is also surprising that God would come as a baby. God, who made the universe with just a word, came to earth as a little baby.”

9. Give each child a copy of the handout and a crayon. Say: “Each cloud on your paper has two things written in it about Jesus. As I read them aloud, circle the ones that are true about Jesus. Remember both answers may be true.”

10. Read the possible answers aloud, prefacing each with the words: “Jesus is ...” Give time for the children to circle the correct answers. Ask them what they circled. Comment appropriately. You may need to explain that Jesus is both God’s Son and Joseph’s son.

For larger groups: You may want to divide up the circle further and make multiple posters.

Drawing the Story to a Close

1 min. 

Say: "In a stable, in Bethlehem, Jesus, the Rescuer, the King, is born."

Say: "God has come to live with us. God's Son, Jesus, is born."

Jesus in the Story

2 min. 

Ask: "What did we discover about Jesus from today's story?"

Get a few children to share their answers aloud, commenting appropriately; then ask everyone to write an answer in the space on their handout.

Praying about the Story

5 min. 

Pray aloud, thanking God for the birth of Jesus and that he came to live with us.

Ask the children to pray, thanking God for Jesus' birth.

A Verse from the Story to Learn at Home

2 min. 

☉ Introduce the verse: "In our story today Jesus, the Rescuer, the King, is born. Luke writes a great verse about that."

☉ Announce the verse: "So, your verse to learn at home is Luke 2:11 — 'Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.'"

☉ Read the verse out loud together as a group. Explain that "Messiah" is the Hebrew word that means Christ and refers to the King; it is another name for Jesus.

☉ Remind the children to give the handout to their parents and to memorize the verse for next time.



Jesus is ...

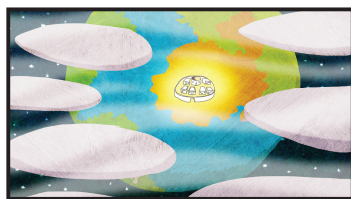


- a) God's Son.
- b) Joseph's son.

- a) Emmanuel.
- b) Gabriel.

- a) God come to punish us.
- b) God come to live with us.

☺ Jesus in the Story



What did you discover about Jesus from this story?



Jesus

☺ A Verse from the Story to Learn at Home

Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you;
he is the Messiah, the Lord. (Luke 2:11)

Matthew

Mark

Luke

John

Acts



Notes for parents: From the story we learned that Jesus, the King, God's Son, was born in a stable in Bethlehem. Please help your child to memorize the verse and the Scripture reference for next time. Please review with them the place of the book of Luke, using the diagram above. www.jesusstorybookbible.com

