



Advent 3: Jesus Is Born

Lesson Aim: To see God has specific plans for how He comes near to us.

THE WORSHIP

Who God is: The God Who Comes Near

THE WORD

Bible Story: Luke 2:1-7; John 1:1-2

What He has done: Jesus was born.

Key Verse: Luke 2:7

THE WAY

Christ Connection: 1 Kings 19:11-13

BIBLE MEMORY VERSE

"I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord. Glory to God in the highest." Luke 2:10b, 11, 14a

Unit 10: The God Who Comes Near			
	Bible Story	What He Has Done	Lesson Aim
48	Advent 1: Gabriel Visits Zechariah, Luke 1:5-25, 62-65	God sent His angel Gabriel to tell Zechariah the good news.	To look for ways God comes near to us and to find ways to come near to Him.
49	Advent 2: Angel Visits— Mary and Joseph, Luke 1:28-37; Matthew 1:20-21	God sent His angel Gabriel to prepare Mary for the birth of Jesus.	To remember that nothing is impossible with God.
50	Advent 3: Jesus Is Born, Luke 2:1-7; John 1:1-2	Jesus was born.	To see God has specific plans for how He comes near to us.
51	Advent 4: An Angel Visits the Shepherds, Luke 2:8-18	God sent an angel to announce the birth of Jesus to the shepherds.	To know the good news of Jesus' birth is for all people.
52	Following the Star, Matthew 2:1-12	God sent a star to guide the Magi to Jesus.	To know God leads all of us to Jesus.

TEACHER'S ENCOURAGEMENT

This week, read Philippians 2:5-11. Please join us in praying, "Thank You, Lord, for coming to earth as a baby so we can know You in a way that is familiar to us. Help the children understand You are always near them. Amen."



Segment	Minutes	Activity	Supplies
THE WELCOME	Up to 15	Meet & Greet	None
		Game: Near and Far	None, optional: candy or a Christmas-related surprise
THE WORSHIP	Up to 20	Worship Sheet music and recordings for Bible Memory Verse Songs available at ResourceWell.org	Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse Song: "I Bring You Good News" Other Bible Memory Verse Song Suggestions: "Search Me, O God" "For God So Loved the World" "You Will Seek Me" Additional Hymn Suggestions: "O Come, All Ye Faithful" "Angels We Have Heard on High" Additional Song Collection Suggestions: Worship Jamz Christmas—Worship Jamz Shout Praises Kids Christmas
		Worship Scripture Reading: Luke 2:6-7	Bible, Advent wreath with candles. See THE WORSHIP for other supplies.
		Offering	Baskets
		Worship Illustration	Lesson 50 High Seas Adventures script or storybook
THE WORD	Up to 10	Read the Word: Luke 2:1-7; John 1:1-2	Map—Israel, Town of Bethlehem, Bibles, Bible Story Scripture reference poster, highlighters
THE WAY	Up to 25	Discussion	Treasure treats (Strip of soft pastel-colored cloth), Bibles, Christ Connection Scripture reference poster, highlighters
		Christ Connection: 1 Kings 19:11-13	
		Golden Bowl	
	Final 5	Final Five Minutes	Treasure Treat—Strip of soft pastel-colored cloth, W's, paper, pencils, crayons or markers, Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse Song "I Bring You Good News," CD player
GOT TIME?	Up to 10	Snack: Manger Snack	Shredded coconut, vanilla frosting, graham crackers, plastic knives
	Up to 10	Game: Census	Bible turned to Luke 2:1-3
	Up to 10	Craft: Baby Blanket	12-inch square of pastel-colored soft fabric, pencils, markers (or paint and brushes), newspapers, masking tape, optional: fine point marker
	Up to 5	Discussion: God Comes Near	Bible
	Up to 10	Bible Memory Verse Activity: Appearing Angel	Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse poster, dry erase board and marker (or chalkboard and chalk or large piece of paper and pencil)
	Up to 5	Bible Memory Verse Activity: Memory Verse Circle	Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse Song "I Bring You Good News," CD player
	Up to 5	Bible Timeline Review	Timeline

RESOURCES: Supplemental materials are available at ResourceWell.org.



Getting started

THE WELCOME

To spark anticipation, encourage arriving children to meet and greet one another with today's question.

Meet & Greet Question: What is your favorite thing about babies?

GAME: NEAR AND FAR

Purpose: Children will work together in teams to play a variation of the game "Hot and Cold."

Supplies: None, optional: candy or a Christmas-related surprise

Teacher Tip: Hide candy or a fun Christmas surprise in various spots around the room. Guide teams to find the hidden items. For a competitive game, time each team to see which is the fastest.

In today's story, we will discover how God came near to us in the form of a baby. Let's play a game called "Near and Far" to help us think about God coming near to us. You will need to work together as a team and listen to the clues to find special objects in this room.

Directions:

1. Form teams of 3-5 children. Choose a team to play first.
2. Ask the team to stand side-by-side ("near" each other) and link arms through the elbows. Or, if your space is limited, have the children form a straight line and hold onto each other's shoulders.
3. Silently choose an object in the room for the team to find. Secretly tell everyone, except the team playing, what the object is. Remind them not to tell the team that is searching what the object is.
4. On your signal, the team moves through the room while the rest of the class tells them whether they are getting "near" or "far" from the object you selected. Encourage the class to cheer for the team that is playing.
5. When the team finds the object, they must all touch it.
6. Repeat the game 6 until each team has a turn.



The God who comes near

THE WORSHIP

Teacher Tip: To help children identify time set aside for worship, designate a special corner or area for singing, collecting offering, and watching the worship illustration. Play music as children move to the designated area.

In preparation for Advent Candle Lighting, light the first two candles on the Advent wreath.



Today, we worship the God who comes near. He came near to us by sending His Son to be born in a manger. A manger is a wooden box that holds hay or other food for stable animals. By choosing a manger, God came near to us in a way we could all come near to Him. Even shepherds and stable animals could see Jesus. It is a picture of the way anyone can now come near to Him. While collecting the offering, sing "O Come, All Ye Faithful."



Advent Candle Lighting Ceremony: The Bethlehem Candle

Advent Wreath: 4 candles set in a wreath of greenery

At Christmas time, we get our hearts ready to celebrate the coming of Jesus by lighting the candles on the Advent wreath. Advent means coming—the coming of Jesus. Our Advent wreath is round; it has no end just as God's love for us has no end. Each candle on the Advent wreath stands for one of the four Sundays before Christmas.

Today, we light the third candle of Advent: the Bethlehem candle. The God who comes near chose a stable in the small town of Bethlehem for His birthplace. This time, He did not come in the form of a burning bush or a pillar of fire and cloud. Instead, He came as a tiny baby born in a manger. The candle lighting takes place during the performance of High Seas Adventures script or after reading the storybook version.



Before we light the Bethlehem candle, let's see what's happening on the High Seas. Perform High Seas Adventures script or read storybook: God of Wonders Unit 10, Lesson 50. If you chose to read the storybook, choose one child to light the third candle on the Advent wreath now and read Luke 2:6-7.



Sing Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse Song: "I Bring You Good News." You may choose to sing other songs that focus on the birth of Christ.



Jesus is born

THE WORD

Teacher Tip: As you move from worship to instruction, change rooms or locations within a room to help redirect the children's focus to the Bible story. During this transition time, have each child write his or her name on a card and place it in the Golden Bowl.

Before we read God's Word, let's go over our Class Covenant. A covenant is an agreement. Just as God made a covenant with His people, I ask each of you to make this covenant promise with me today. Listen as I read our Class Covenant: "I will keep my eyes on my teacher, my mouth in control, my ears on God's Word; knowing God is my goal."

Last time, we learned God sent His angel Gabriel to prepare Mary for the birth of Jesus. If a Bible Timeline is available, point to Jesus on Earth (Circa 1-33 A.D.). For a Bible Timeline Review activity, see the GOT TIME? segment of this lesson. Today, we will hear how Jesus came into the world as a baby with a humble birth in a manger.

Jesus was born in a small town in Israel called Bethlehem. If a map is available, point to Bethlehem. This story may be familiar to you. If so, as we read the story, look for something new that God might show you about Jesus' birth.



Let's play Find It First! Bring out your Bible; keep it right in front of you. Hand out spare Bibles. Today's Scripture verse is behind the curtain (or secret door, secret window, etc.). Child reveals the Bible Story Scripture reference: Luke 2:1-7; John 1:1-2. Let's see who can Find Luke 2:7 First. Ready? Set? Go! Children race to find it first. The winner helps others find it. Let's highlight our Key Verse: Luke 2:7.

Before we read, let's stand and ask God to open our eyes, ears, hearts, and minds to His Word today. Who would like to pray that for us? Child prays aloud. Be seated.

Listen carefully as I read the story of how God came to earth as a baby. Read Luke 2:1-7. Jesus lived in heaven before He was born. Let's find out when life began for Jesus. He is also named the Word. Read John 1:1-2.



Jesus comes near to you

THE WAY

Additional Supplies: Treasure treats (Strip of soft pastel-colored cloth)

What makes a baby special? (Children respond.) **Jesus was special in all those ways. In what ways was His birth different than the birth of other babies?** (ie. born in a stable, angels announced His birth, Son of God, star over His birthplace.) **When does the Bible say life began for Jesus, the Word?** (Before the beginning of creation.) **Unlike other babies, Jesus lived before He was in His mother's womb. He has been alive since before the creation of the heavens and earth. Who is Jesus' father?** (God.) **Unlike other babies, He had no earthly father.**

Why did Joseph and Mary have to travel to Bethlehem? (They had to be counted there for the Roman census.) **A census is an official count of people. This census was a way for Caesar to know how many people were in his kingdom. Before Caesar ordered the census, Mary and Joseph probably thought their child would be born in Nazareth in a home surrounded by family. What might Mary and Joseph have thought when the baby was due and they heard they had to travel to Bethlehem?** (Children respond.) **How might they have felt when it was time for the baby to arrive and there was no room in the inn?** (Children respond.)

It may have seemed to Mary and Joseph that their plans were failing, but in reality, according to God's plan, everything was happening perfectly. **Have you ever felt as if everything was going wrong or that your plans were failing?** (Children respond.) **How can this story help you trust that God uses all situations in our lives to get us in just the right place at the right time to draw us closer to Him?**



Connecting the Old Testament, the New Testament, and Us

CHRIST CONNECTION

How would you expect our powerful God to come into the world? (Children respond.) **God has come near to others in the Bible through angels, clouds, smoke, lightning, and even trumpets. Why do you think He chose such a quiet, humble way to come near us with the birth of Jesus?** (Children respond.) **God comes in many ways. Check out the quiet way He came near to Elijah over 800 years before He came quietly to Bethlehem as a baby.**



FIND IT FIRST> Everyone, place your Bible closed on your lap. Choose a child to reveal the Christ Connection Scripture reference: 1 Kings 19:11-13. **Let's see who can Find It First! Ready? Set? Go! Find it and highlight it.** Read 1 Kings 19:11-13.

Elijah heard God's voice in the gentle whisper. Sometimes, we feel nearest to God when we see His majestic creation or His powerful acts of nature. Sometimes, we feel nearest to Him in still quiet moments of prayer. When do you feel God is near? (Children respond.)

THE WAY *continued...*



Revelation 5:8

GOLDEN BOWL

Teacher Tip: Write the names of classmates, local church leaders, children in other nations, or others who need prayer on small pieces of paper. Place the papers in a golden bowl.

Revelation 5:8 says our prayers are like sweet smelling incense in the golden bowls at God's throne. I will lift each one of your names to God's throne as you pray for each person silently. Then, we will pray the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) aloud together. Let's pray.

Lord God, we lift up to Your throne the name of each child here. We trust You to watch over us and our needs, the ones we say aloud and the ones hidden in our hearts. First, we lift up to You ____, ____, ____. Read names in Golden Bowl.

Now, we pray the prayer Your Son taught us: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.



When only 5 minutes remain, begin this segment.

FINAL FIVE MINUTES

TREASURE TREAT: Today, your Treasure Treat is a strip of soft cloth to tie on your wrist. Let this cloth remind you of the way Jesus came near to us as a baby.

W³: Take home today's W³ Journal Entry as your personal devotional study. Keep your journal entries together in a notebook or in your Bible. Distribute W³ Journal Entry #50. Complete this at home and let God speak to you through His own words in the Bible!

OFFERING OF ART: Until it is time to be dismissed, let's make an Offering of Art. For your offering, draw a picture of Jesus lying in the manger. The Offering of Art can be finished at home or given as an offering for the teacher to display.

PRAYER REQUESTS: As children work on their Offering of Art, ask how you can pray for them this week. Write requests in a prayer notebook.

BIBLE MEMORY VERSE SONG: Play the Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse Song, "I Bring You Good News," in the background as children wait to be dismissed.



If time remains, choose from the connected activities below.

GOT TIME?

SNACK: MANGER SNACK

Purpose: To enjoy a snack that reminds the children of the manger in Bethlehem.

Snack Suggestion: Shredded coconut, vanilla frosting, graham crackers, plastic knives

Teacher Tip: If these food items are not available, look for snack foods with the shredded appearance of hay to substitute for the coconut or give the children a snack of pretzels.

Today, we learned how God came near to us as baby Jesus. Where did baby Jesus sleep after He was born? (A manger.) A manger is a box filled with hay or other food for animals. Let's make a manger snack. As we work, let's consider where baby Jesus should have laid down to sleep.

Directions:

1. Children spread some frosting on the cracker (manger) and then sprinkle coconut (hay) on top.
2. Ask a child to pray and thank God for the snack.
3. Ask the Snack Discussion Question: **Where do you think baby Jesus should have laid down to sleep?**

GAME: CENSUS

Purpose: To help children understand the meaning of the census mentioned in Luke 2:1-3.

Supplies: Bible

Read Luke 2:1-3. **A census is an official count of people. This census was a way for the Caesar (a Roman emperor) to know how many people were in his kingdom. Joseph was a great, great, great, etc. grandson of King David, the second king of God's people. Because King David had been born in Bethlehem, Joseph had to go and be counted there. Let's have our own census! When I say, "Go," I want you to see if you can find others in our class from the town or city in which you were born. Stand together as a group if you find others from your town. Then count how many are in your group.**

Directions:

1. Help the children form groups according to their hometowns.
2. Assign someone in each group to be the census taker who counts how many are in his or her group. Ask the census takers to announce the number of children from their hometown.
3. **Caesar grouped the people according to their hometown. Let's group the people in our room another way. This time, when I say, "Go," I want you to find others who have the same hair color as you.**
4. Have each group count and report the number of children in their group.
5. Play as many times as you like using characteristics such as eye color, birth month, age, gender, number of siblings, etc.

GOT TIME? *continued...*

CRAFT: BABY BLANKET

Purpose: Children will create a baby blanket and think how God came near to them as baby Jesus.

Supplies: 12-inch square of pastel-colored soft fabric, pencils, markers (or paint and brushes), newspapers, masking tape, optional: fine point marker

Prepare: Protect the work area with newspapers.

Today, we discovered God came near to us as baby Jesus. Perhaps He came as a baby because we understand babies and He wanted to help us understand who He is. Let's each make a baby blanket to help us remember baby Jesus came to be near us.

Directions:

1. Tape the corners of a cloth square to the newspaper to keep the cloth from shifting.
2. Draw and color a picture of Jesus in the manger.
3. Optional: Write the Bible Memory Verse or part of the Bible Memory Verse on the cloth.

Alternate Craft: Make a class baby quilt. Collect the finished squares and sew, tape, or pin them together. Hang the finished quilt in your classroom or where others in your church can enjoy it.

DISCUSSION: GOD COMES NEAR

Purpose: To think of other times God came near to His people.

Supplies: Bible

God wants us to know He is near us. Today, we discovered He came near to us as baby Jesus. Before Jesus was born, God came near and showed Himself to some of the people we have learned about this year. Can you name some of the times or some of the people God came near? (Children respond.)

Below are a few examples you can read:

- God breathed life into Adam and created Eve: Genesis 2:7, 21, 22.
- God made a promise to Abraham: Genesis 12:1-3.
- God appeared to Jacob in a dream about a ladder: Genesis 28:12, 13, 15.
- God talked to Moses in a burning bush: Exodus 3:2-4.

GOT TIME? *continued...*



BIBLE MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITIES

"I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you;
He is Christ the Lord. Glory to God in the highest." Luke 2:10b, 11, 14a

GAME: APPEARING ANGEL

Purpose: Children learn the meaning of the Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse: Luke 2:10b, 11, 14a.

Supplies: Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse poster, dry erase board and marker (or chalkboard and chalk or large piece of paper and pencil)

Prepare: Display the Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse poster.

Directions:

1. From the list below, choose one of the phrases of the Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse.
2. Draw one line for each letter in the phrase. Leave a blank space between each word.
3. Choose a volunteer to guess a letter.
 - a. If the letter is found in the phrase, write it on every blank where it belongs.
 - b. If it is not in the phrase, draw one part of an angel (Head, robe, hands, feet, eyes, nose, mouth, hair, etc.) The goal is to guess all the letters before completing the angel.
4. Choose another volunteer to guess a letter.
5. Continue playing until all the letters are revealed or until the angel drawing is complete.
6. Read the phrase to the class and use the description below to explain that part of the verse.
7. If time allows, play again using another phrase.

Phrase

"I bring you good news of great joy."
"That will be for all the people."
"Today in the town of David,"
"A Savior has been born to you."
"He is Christ the Lord."
"Glory to God in the highest."

Description

The angel brought an announcement from God.
The announcement was for everyone.
Both Jesus and King David were born in Bethlehem.
Jesus came to save the world.
Jesus is the Lord Himself, the Messiah.
The heavenly host praised God with these words.

GAME: MEMORY VERSE CIRCLE

Purpose: Children memorize the Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse.

Supplies: Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse poster, Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse Song "I Bring You Good News," CD player

Directions:

1. Practice the verse together a few times.
2. Play the Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse Song and sing along.
3. Children sit on chairs or kneel in a circle.
4. Pick one child to stand and say the first word of the Bible Memory Verse, "I."
5. The next child stands and says "bring." Continue around the circle until the Bible Memory Verse has been completed.
6. Play as often as you like. Challenge the children to see how fast they can say the verse or try reversing directions.

GOT TIME? *continued...*



BIBLE TIMELINE REVIEW

God of Wonders Part Two studies the miracles and stories of the Bible from Genesis through Joshua. Review recent Bible stories to see the continuing story of who God is and what He has done.

Joshua (Circa 1450 B.C.) Who replaced Moses as the leader of the Israelites? (Joshua.) How did Rahab help the two spies Joshua sent to Jericho? (She hid them and helped them escape.) What was God's plan for conquering Jericho? (The Israelites marched around the city with the ark for six days. On the seventh day, after a long trumpet blast, everyone shouted and the wall crumbled to the ground.)

John the Baptist (Circa 1 A.D.) Who did God send to prepare Zechariah for the special son he and his wife Elizabeth would have? (The angel Gabriel.) What happened to Zechariah when he didn't believe Gabriel? (He could not speak until the baby was born.) Who was the baby? (John the Baptist.) John prepared people for the coming of Jesus, our Savior.

Jesus on Earth (Circa 1 A.D.) A.D. stands for Anno Domini, which means "in the year of our Lord." A.D. begins with Jesus' birth and continues until the end of time. Everything written in Genesis through Malachi led up to the birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The books of Genesis through Joshua are filled with miracles from the God of Wonders. His greatest miracle of all was announced by angels to Zechariah, Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds. In this miracle, God gave Jesus, His only Son, so that whoever believes in Him will have life forever close with God.

How to create a Bible Timeline from Genesis through Joshua:

1. Print each scroll on sturdy paper.
2. Choose a wall or other visible location to display the timeline.
3. Before each lesson, add the scroll for that lesson to the Bible Timeline using the list below. Add the two Unit 10 cards for God of Wonders Advent: Lessons 48-52.
4. To review the Bible Timeline, ask the corresponding questions as you point to the associated scroll.

Genesis through Joshua: Creation > Adam and Eve > Cain and Abel > Noah (Circa 2350 B.C.) > Tower of Babel > Abram (Circa 2100 B.C.) > Hagar and Ishmael (Circa 2065 B.C.) > Abraham and Isaac (Circa 2050 B.C.) > Isaac and Rebekah > Jacob and Esau (Circa 1900 B.C.) > Joseph (Circa 1850 B.C.) > Moses (Circa 1500 B.C.) > Joshua (Circa 1450 B.C.)

Unit 10: John the Baptist (Circa 7-2 B.C.) > Jesus on Earth (Circa 2 B.C.-33 A.D.)