

Teachers Dig In

Dig In to the Bible

- Read: Luke 2:1-20
- In This Passage: Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem for a census. There is no room in the inn, so Jesus is born in a manger. Angels proclaim the good news to a field of shepherds, who run to see the baby—God’s love in human form.
- Bible Point: God loves you.
- Summary Verse: “For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).

Dig Deeper

- You’ll Be Teaching: *God loves you.* God’s love had never been more apparent than that first Christmas night when he sent his Son, Jesus, to earth as a baby. But the Christmas message can lose its power in the midst of all the seemingly more exciting Christmas festivities. Use this lesson to capture kids’ sense of wonder that God—Creator and ruler of the universe—came in the form of a tiny little baby because of his great love for us.
- Think About: What aspects of Christmas fill you with wonder?

Dig In to Prayer

- Ask God to get kids’ attention with his love—which is greater than any light display or giant present under the tree.

Quick Tip

- Christmas is loud, busy, and full of activity. For adults, that can be stressful. For kids, it’s fun! But still, a change of pace from frenetic to quiet may be just what they need to capture their attention this week.

This Lesson at a Glance



MUSIC VIDEO

Kids sing songs of praise to God.

Supplies

- “Angels We Have Heard on High” (watch or download [here](#))
- “Silent Night” (watch or download [here](#))
- “O Come, All Ye Faithful” (watch or download [here](#))



TALK-ABOUT VIDEO

Kids watch a video and discuss the Bible point.

Supplies

- “Carl’s Christmas” teaching video (watch or download [here](#))



OPENING

Kids share about a topic related to the lesson.

Supplies

- Bible



CORE BIBLE DISCOVERY

Kids do an obstacle course, experience aspects of Jesus’ birth scene, worship God, and share the good news.

Supplies

- Bible
- classroom furniture
- yellow raffia
- flashlight
- worship music
- music player

Easy Prep

- Use the classroom furniture to set up an obstacle course kids can make their way through when their names are called.
- Spread raffia on the ground on one end of the room.



LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

Kids receive a heart sticker and a blessing.

Supplies

- heart stickers



OBJECT LESSON

Kids watch as light refraction through water flips the focus of an image.

Supplies

- “What’s Christmas About?” handout (1 copy) (download [here](#))

- tall, cylindrical, clear glass vase

Easy Prep

- Fill the vase with water, and make sure the outside is very clean and easy to see through.
- Practice with the handout and the vase of water by holding the handout behind the vase so you're looking through the vase to see the person figure. Adjust the distance between the handout and the vase until you see the direction the person is facing flip so it looks like it's facing baby Jesus—roughly 6 inches or a little more. This is the distance you'll need to hold the paper when you show the kids.



DEEPER BIBLE

Kids grapple with why Jesus had to come to earth as a baby.

Supplies

- Bibles*
- paper
- markers



HIGH-ENERGY GAME

Kids run to share the news of Jesus' birth.

Supplies

- chairs (at least 4)
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

Easy Prep

- Place a chair in each corner of the room. If you have a large room, you may want to add a couple of extra chairs along the sides.



LOW-ENERGY GAME

Kids play a drawing version of Telephone.

Supplies

- upbeat music (optional)
- music player* (optional)



CRAFT

Kids make candy-cane mangers.

Supplies

- full-sized candy canes (1 per child)
- Glue Dots
- raffia or yellow paper shreds
- wooden ice cream spoons or clothespins
- permanent markers
- crepe paper
- foam star stickers
- chenille wires

Easy Prep

- Make a sample craft to show kids.

**TAKE-HOME**

Kids receive a take-home page about the lesson.

Supplies

- this week's "Dig In @ Home" handout (1 per child) (download [here](#))

Easy Prep

- Add your church announcements to the "Dig In @ Home" handout.

**Marked supplies can be reused from Core Bible Discovery*

Let's keep kids safe! You can help by using supplies as instructed for only ages 3+, purchasing child-safe items, and being aware of allergy concerns.



MUSIC VIDEO

Angels We Have Heard on High

[10 min]

Supplies

- “Angels We Have Heard on High” (watch or download [here](#))
- “Silent Night” (watch or download [here](#))
- “O Come, All Ye Faithful” (watch or download [here](#))

Tip

- Don't have internet in your classroom? That's okay! You can choose your own worship songs from our Best Of Dig In Music DVD [here](#).

Sing Songs to God

Sing the three songs in any order.



TALK-ABOUT VIDEO

Carl's Christmas

[10 min]

Supplies

- “Carl’s Christmas” teaching video (watch or download [here](#))

Tip

- Don’t have internet in your classroom? That’s okay! You can download the videos before class using the “download” button at the link provided, or purchase DVDs [here](#).

Discuss and Watch “Carl’s Christmas”

Say: **We’re learning that God loves you. God loves you so much that he sent his Son, Jesus, to earth as a baby! That’s what we celebrate at Christmas: Jesus’ birth and God’s love. We do a lot of things to celebrate Christmas!**

Ask: • **What are some things you like to do to celebrate Christmas?**

Say: **It’s not bad to do those things, but it becomes a problem if it takes our focus off Jesus. Let’s see what happened when our friend Carl got his Christmas priorities a little bit out of whack.**

Watch “Carl’s Christmas.”

Ask: • **In your opinion, what’s the best Christmas present Carl got?**

- **What’s a present you’re hoping to get for Christmas?**
- **What can you learn from Genesis about how to appreciate God’s love even more than presents?**

• **Carl gave Genesis his favorite Christmas gift. What’s one thing you can do to show God’s love this Christmas?**

Say: **God loves you, and that’s the greatest gift ever. It’s better than a remote-control car or even...cheesy poofs! As you enjoy your fun Christmas celebrations and any gifts you receive, don’t forget that the greatest gift is God’s love, wrapped up as tiny baby Jesus. And the best way to celebrate Christmas is to share that love with others!**



OPENING Welcome

[5 min]

Supplies

- Bible

Welcome

- Thank kids for coming.
- Just for fun, have kids give a fist bump to four friends.
- Make announcements.
- Introduce new kids.
- Celebrate birthdays by lining up kids who have birthdays this month and having everyone else run by to high-five them.
- Collect the offering.

Introduce the Lesson

- Say: **Today we'll learn God loves you. We'll hear how God showed his love for us when he sent Jesus to earth to be with us. That's why we celebrate Christmas! Let's start today by talking about some Christmas ornaments or decorations we like.**

Share

- Share about a special Christmas ornament or decoration *you* have.
- In small groups, have kids share about a Christmas ornament or decoration that is special to *them*.
- After small groups have discussed, have a few kids share with the whole group what they talked about in their small groups.

Summarize

Open a Bible, and say: **It's so wonderful to celebrate Christmas because it's when we remember that God sent Jesus to be our friend! God loves us so much. We'll learn more about that today.**

Pray, thanking God for loving you.



CORE BIBLE DISCOVERY

Jesus Is Born (Luke 2:1-20)

[20 min]

Supplies

- Bible
- classroom furniture
- yellow raffia
- flashlight
- worship music
- music player

Easy Prep

- Use the classroom furniture to set up an obstacle course kids can make their way through when their names are called.
- Spread raffia on the ground on one end of the room.

Tip

- You can purchase downloadable music and other items to enhance your DIG IN program [here](#).

Travel Through an Obstacle Course

Have kids sit on the end of the room opposite the raffia, while you stand on the side with the raffia. Say: **Today you'll find out God loves you. That's why we celebrate Christmas—because God loves us so much that he sent his Son, Jesus, to earth to be with us.**

Show the Bible. Say: **The Bible tells us *how* Jesus came to earth to be with us. It says God made Mary pregnant with baby Jesus, and Joseph was going to be Jesus' dad. One day when Mary was still pregnant, she and Joseph traveled to a town called Bethlehem.** Lead kids in patting their legs slowly like they're walking a long way and are tired.

Say: **There was a census, which is a little bit like when someone counts to be sure everyone is there. I'll call your name now to make sure you're here today.**

Have kids travel through the obstacle course individually as you call their names to join you on the side with the raffia. If you have more than 10 kids, have other leaders join you in calling kids over.

Say: **Mary and Joseph had to travel on a long, hard journey—even longer and harder than the obstacle course you just went through. Mary and Joseph had to travel for days and days to get to Bethlehem. How long can you pretend to travel before you get tired?** Lead kids in marching in place at different speeds until they get tired.

Experience Jesus' Birthplace

Say: **When Mary and Joseph made it to Bethlehem, there were so many people there! There weren't any hotels or places for them to stay, so they had to stay in something like a barn.** Lead kids to lie in the raffia. **It might've had a grassy or straw-covered floor.** Lead kids to feel the raffia beneath them.

Say: **Animals lived there.** Have kids take turns making barn animal noises as the other kids guess.

Say: **While Mary stayed there, she gave birth to baby Jesus, God's very special Son!**

Ask: • **What would it be like to be born with animals all around you?**

Worship With the Angels

Say: **At the same time, there were some shepherds in a field not far away.** Lead kids to travel to an adjacent area of the room, and have them gather close together.

Say: **Shepherds are people who look after sheep.** Dim the lights, and have kids lie on the floor and pretend to rest. **While the shepherds rested in the field at night, something surprising happened.**

Turn on the flashlight and shine it on the kids. **A bright light appeared, and angels came to talk to the shepherds. It was a little scary for the shepherds because the angels looked so amazing.** Have kids show what their faces would look like if they saw an angel.

Say: **But then the angels told them not to be afraid. They said, "God's Son, Jesus, was born!" They told the shepherds exactly how to find Jesus.**

Then they sang a worship song to God to show their thankfulness that God sent Jesus. Turn on a worship song such as "Silent Night," and lead kids in singing.

Say: **It's great to worship God. He loves you and loves to hear you sing to him. He loved to hear the angels sing to him, too. And after the angels sang praises to God, the shepherds rushed to find Jesus.** Lead kids in running in place.

Tell About It

Say: **They found Jesus exactly where the angels said he'd be! And they knew Jesus was God's Son and that God loves us because he sent Jesus to earth to be friends with us. The shepherds went to tell everyone about Jesus!**

Let's see how many people we can tell about Jesus. Lead kids in rushing to tell as many friends in the class as they can that "Jesus is born!" as you count to 30.

Say: **Jesus' birth shows us God loves us because God sent his Son, Jesus, so we can be friends with him! That's why Christmas is so special—it reminds us God loves us.** Lead kids in hugging themselves as a reminder of God's love for them.



LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

God Loves You

[5 min]

Supplies

- heart stickers

Give Blessings

- Hand each child a heart sticker as you say this blessing: [Name of child], **God loves you and sent Jesus for you.**
- Continue until everyone has a sticker.
- Pray: **God, thank you that you love us. We looked for your love earlier, but now we can see it all around us in every person in this room; everyone here is a person you love. Thank you. In Jesus' name, amen.**
- Thank kids for coming, and encourage them to come back next week.



OBJECT LESSON

Flip the Focus

[10 min]

Supplies

- “What’s Christmas About?” handout (1 copy) (download [here](#))
- tall, cylindrical, clear glass vase

Easy Prep

- Fill the vase with water, and make sure the outside is very clean and easy to see through.
- Practice with the handout and the vase of water by holding the handout behind the vase so you’re looking through the vase to see the person figure. Adjust the distance between the handout and the vase until you see the direction the person is facing flip so it looks like it’s facing baby Jesus—roughly 6 inches or a little more. This is the distance you’ll need to hold the paper when you show the kids.

Tip

- The glass vase should also be smooth glass without any ridges or other decorative embellishments.

Watch What Light Refraction Does to an Image

Say: **Today we’re learning that Christmas is about how much God loves you. God loves you so much he sent his only Son, Jesus, to earth to do something very special.**

Christmas has been celebrated all over the world for a *long* time, and people have added many different ways to celebrate. That’s why we see things like Christmas trees and lights during Christmas—those weren’t part of the first Christmas when Jesus was born.

Ask: • **What are other things you see at Christmastime?** If needed, share another example or two such as gingerbread houses or holly wreaths hung on doors. Take a few responses.

Say: **Let’s do a little hunt around the room for things that remind us of things we see at Christmas.**

- Have leaders help kids search the room for things that remind them of Christmas. They could choose toys that remind them of gifts they get for Christmas or toy trains that might go around a Christmas tree. If you have some Christmas decorations up, kids could choose those, too.
- Allow a few minutes for kids to make their choices; if no one chooses anything that represents baby Jesus, that only helps make the point.
- Have everyone bring their choices to the center of the room and sit together. Invite everyone to tell why the item they chose reminds them of Christmas, and take a few responses.

Say: **We have a lot of fun at Christmas with so many ways to celebrate! Sparkling and bright Christmas trees, presents wrapped in shiny paper, Christmas cookies and other treats—there’s so much fun at Christmas!**

- Hold up the “What’s Christmas About?” handout.
- Draw attention to the figure of the person in the middle of the handout, and explain that while it’s okay to enjoy all the special fun of the Christmas season, we can make sure we also celebrate what Christmas is really all

about.

- The person on the handout is so focused on the Christmas tree and presents that his or her back is turned to baby Jesus.

Ask: • **What are things you can do or already do with your family to remember Christmas is about Jesus?** Share an example of your own, such as going to church, always setting out a nativity scene with your Christmas decorations, or reading story books or from the Bible about Jesus' birth and the first Christmas.

- Set the vase on a table or chair so everyone can see it. Then slide the handout behind the vase the way you practiced earlier so that kids are looking through the vase at the handout.
- Repeat sliding the handout behind the vase a few times if kids haven't caught what's happening to the person figure yet.

Say: **The person on the page switched directions! Even with all the other stuff you do to celebrate Christmas, you can switch and remember that Christmas is really about Jesus coming to earth to show you that God loves you.**



DEEPER BIBLE

Why Did Jesus Have to Come to Earth as a Baby?

[15 min]

Supplies

- Bibles*
- paper
- markers

Set It Up

Say: **At Christmas, we celebrate that God loves us and showed it by sending Jesus to us. But why did Jesus have to come to earth as a *baby*? Let's dig in to that.**

Draw a Picture

Distribute paper, and set out markers to share.

Say: **I want you to draw a picture of a forest. But before you start, there's something special about this drawing. You're going to imagine you're an ant. What do you see from your tiny point of view?**

Allow time for kids to draw and show off their drawings.

Ask: • **How did you try to see things like an ant does?**

• **How correct do you think your drawing is?**

Say: **We can try to imagine what it's like to be a tiny ant, but it's hard to really understand what they see. We don't know if their eyes even see colors and shapes the way ours do! And do they see more out to the side or more to the front, like we do? The only way for us to really understand what it's like to be an ant would be to become an ant.**

And that's like what Jesus did. He lived in heaven and had only experienced what it was like to be God. But then he came to earth as a human so he could experience what it's like to be *us*. Jesus is fully God, but he *also* became fully human. Let's see what the Bible has to say about how Jesus can relate to us.

Dig Deeper

Say: **As you hear these verses, think about how they answer our question: Why did Jesus have to come to earth as a baby?**

Read Hebrews 2:17-18.

Ask: • **How do these verses answer why Jesus had to come to earth as a baby?**

• **Why is it important that Jesus was made like us?**

Say: **Let's read another passage and again think about how it answers our question: Why did Jesus have to come to earth as a baby?**

Read Hebrews 4:14-16.

Ask: • **How do these verses answer our question?**

• **How do you feel knowing Jesus understands what you go through?**

Say: **Jesus had to become a human—a baby, just like we all started out as—so he could identify with us and ultimately die for us. That means when we're lonely, sad, rejected, or tempted, Jesus understands just how we feel! He lived a whole life on earth just like we do—start to finish. Except Jesus never did anything wrong; he's perfect! God loves us so much, and he wanted to be friends with us. He sent Jesus as a baby to show his love.**



HIGH-ENERGY GAME

Share the News

[10 min]

Supplies

- chairs (at least 4)
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

Easy Prep

- Place a chair in each corner of the room. If you have a large room, you may want to add a couple of extra chairs along the sides.

Tip

- You can purchase downloadable music and other items to enhance your DIG IN program [here](#).

Share the Good News

Say: **When the shepherds heard the good news of Jesus' birth, they ran around telling everyone. I wonder if they had to wait for some people to wake up before could they tell them. Let's play a game and tell our friends the good news as soon as they wake up.**

- Ask an adult or teen helper to sit in each chair and pretend to sleep. If you don't have enough helpers to fill all the chairs, ask willing kids to take turns.
- Encourage the helpers to "wake up" at random intervals and stand up in front of their chair.
- When they do, direct kids to run to them and shout, "**Jesus is born!**"
- After hearing the news, the helpers can pretend to sleep again.
- Helpers can "wake up" at any time, even if another helper is also awake. Encourage them to wake up fairly regularly to keep the kids moving quickly from one helper to another.
- Continue playing as time allows.
- If you'd like, play upbeat music while kids play.

Talk About Good News

Say: **In our game, we told our friends the good news that Jesus was born. Hearing good news makes me happy and excited!**

Share an example of some good news *you've* been told, such as news that your best friend is getting married, your sister is going to have a baby, or your grandma is coming for a visit.

Ask: • **What good news have you heard?** Kids may say they've been told they're going on a special trip, a friend is coming for a playdate, or their favorite uncle is coming for a visit.

Say: **That's all great news. But the best news ever is that God loves you! Jesus was born to share that news with us all.**



LOW-ENERGY GAME

Christmassy Greetings!

[10 min]

Supplies

- upbeat music (optional)
- music player* (optional)

Tip

- You can purchase downloadable music and other items to enhance your DIG IN program [here](#).

Play a Drawing Version of Telephone

Say: **Today we're exploring some good news: God loves you! Let's see what a game of Christmassy Greetings might tell us about that.**

- Divide kids into a boy group and a girl group. If you have a large group, divide boy and girl groups into smaller groups of about 6-8 kids each. Have each group sit in a circle and determine which person is wearing the most blue.
- Whisper to the Blue Person in each group a Christmas symbol, such as a star, a baby, a candy cane, a manger, or a present, and have that child draw the symbol with a finger on the back of the person sitting to his or her left. That person will do the same with the person on his or her left, continuing around the circle. Your last symbol should be a heart to represent God's love.
- Kids may not talk about the message or gesture to give away what it is.
- Once the message has traveled around the circle, everyone will repeat what they felt drawn on their back. See what changed—and what stayed the same!
- If you'd like, play upbeat music as kids play.
- Play as many rounds as you'd like, as long as you finish with the heart symbol.

Talk About It

Ask: • **How clear were the drawings you received?**

• **How clear is God in showing that he loves you?**

Say: **Let's talk about that last picture you passed around: a heart for**

God loves you!

Ask: • **In what ways did you see that message shared during the first Christmas in Bethlehem?**

Say: **It's true that God loves us—and he sent us that message by sending Jesus!**



CRAFT Candy-Cane Mangers

[20 min]

Supplies

- full-sized candy canes (1 per child)
- Glue Dots
- raffia or yellow paper shreds
- wooden ice cream spoons or clothespins
- permanent markers
- crepe paper
- foam star stickers
- chenille wires

Easy Prep

- Make a sample craft to show kids.



Make Candy-Cane Mangers

Show kids the sample craft you made. Give each child a candy cane and a wooden ice cream spoon or clothespin. Set out the remaining supplies to share, and lead kids through these directions to make candy-cane mangers.

- Turn the candy cane upside down so it makes a “J.”
- Stick Glue Dots all over the curved part.
- Cover the Glue Dots with raffia or paper shreds.
- Wrap a clothespin or ice cream spoon in crepe paper so just a little bit of it sticks out one end.
- Draw a baby face on the part that sticks out.
- Put a couple more Glue Dots on top of the raffia or paper shreds.
- Stick the baby onto the raffia.
- Wrap a chenille wire around the other end of the candy cane and shape it into an ornament hook.
- Add a foam star sticker on top of the chenille wire.

Talk About It

Ask: • **Which ornaments on your tree show Jesus or something about his birth?**

• **What does this ornament show you about Jesus and his love?**

Say: **Our trees might have ornaments like snowmen and Santas, but the most important ornaments are the ones that show God's love. God loves us, and he showed it when he sent us baby Jesus! Hang this ornament somewhere everyone will see it so they know how much God loves them.**

Have kids take ornaments home and display them, telling their friends and families about God's love through baby Jesus. Make sure kids know to hang the ornament out of the reach of pets, as candy canes can be dangerous to animals.



TAKE-HOME Dig In @ Home

[0 min]

Supplies

- this week's "Dig In @ Home" handout (1 per child) (download [here](#))

Easy Prep

- Add your church announcements to the "Dig In @ Home" handout.

Distribute a copy of the "Dig In @ Home" handout to kids as they leave, or email it to parents during the week.