



The Preparation of Christmas

God prepared for the messenger and the place of Jesus' birth.

Lesson Focus

God sent an angel to prepare the parents of John, who would be the prophesied messenger to come before Jesus. God told Joseph to take Mary as his wife because her baby was from the Holy Spirit and would be the Savior. Then God arranged for Joseph and Mary to travel to Bethlehem where Jesus was born.

Key Passages

Luke 1:11–13, 1:19–20, 2:6–7

Memory Verse

Luke 2:10–11 And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”

Prepare to Share

Scriptural Background

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the key passages for this lesson along with this background.

A lot of preparation goes into the Christmas holiday: decorating, shopping, cooking, baking, and wrapping. It is easy to get overwhelmed by everything we think needs to be done. But we can simplify things by focusing on the real reason we celebrate Christmas—to remember the greatest gift God has given in his Son, Jesus. God prepared many details and people for the birth of Jesus.

The prophet Malachi wrote that a messenger would come before the Lord to prepare the way (Malachi 3:1). The messenger would be a prophet like Elijah and preach to the hearts of the people (Malachi 4:5–6). The Israelites had these prophecies as well as those given by Isaiah about the child who would be born to inherit the throne of his father David (Isaiah 9:6–7).

About 400 years after the last prophecies recorded by Malachi, God began preparing people. He sent the angel Gabriel to the priest Zechariah in the temple to tell him that he and his wife Elizabeth would have a child who would be filled with the Holy Spirit. This child would “make ready for the Lord a people prepared” (Luke 1:11–17). Gabriel quoted from Malachi 4:5–6 so there was no doubt this child would be the promised messenger. Zechariah was told to name him John. Because he and Elizabeth were old, Zechariah doubted the angel’s promise and was made mute until the day everything was fulfilled just as the angel said.

Elizabeth was related to Mary (probably through Mary’s mother since Mary’s father was a descendant of David), and Mary came to visit her before their sons were born. Upon Mary’s arrival, Elizabeth gave praise to God for the Messiah, and her baby leaped for joy in her womb (Luke 1:39–45). Mary responded

with a song of praise, which reveals her knowledge of God’s promises and her heart of gratefulness (Luke 1:46–55). Mary returned home after about three months. Elizabeth gave birth to a son, and Zechariah wrote that his name was John. Then Zechariah was no longer mute, and he blessed God (Luke 1:63–64).

When Joseph found out Mary was expecting, he planned to secretly divorce her and end their betrothal. The law permitted stoning of a woman caught in adultery, but Joseph was a just and merciful man (Matthew 1:19). When Joseph considered divorce, God sent an angel to him in a dream and told him to take Mary as his wife for her baby was from the Holy Spirit. Joseph was to name him Jesus. When Joseph awoke, he obeyed the Lord. He took Mary as his wife, or brought her into his home, but he did not consummate the marriage until after Jesus was born (Matthew 1:20–25). These details are important to establish that Jesus was born of a virgin without a human father (Isaiah 7:14).

Another important detail God prepared was the birthplace of Jesus. According to the prophet Micah, the ruler would be born in Bethlehem in Judea (Micah 5:2). The prophecy specifies “Bethlehem Ephrathah” to differentiate it from the Bethlehem in Galilee. The distance between where Joseph and Mary were living in Nazareth to Bethlehem in Judea was about 70 miles, a journey of at least four days of walking. In Luke 2:1–7, Caesar Augustus ordered that all the world be registered. This census required men to return to their ancestral towns, which for Joseph as a descendant of David was the town of Bethlehem. Joseph and Mary traveled to Bethlehem, and Jesus was born in the city of David just as the prophet Micah had said. God prepared everyone and everything according to his sovereign plan. There can be no doubt that only God could orchestrate the fulfillment of these prophecies.

Historical/Apologetics Background

Many misconceptions have developed regarding the details of Jesus’ birth, so it is important to examine the details we are given in Scripture. One common misconception is that Jesus was born among the animals in a stable because there was no room for Mary and Joseph at the local inn. This is

based on Luke 2:7, which mentions a manger used as Jesus’ bed and no place for them at the inn. However, the Greek word *kataluma*, which is translated “inn,” can give modern readers the wrong idea. The Greek language actually has a specific word for hotel or inn, which is used in the parable of the Good

Samaritan (Luke 10:34), but this word is not *kataluma*. Instead, *kataluma* would be better translated as “guest room.” It is the same word Jesus used in Luke 22:11 to refer to the guest room where he and his disciples had the last supper, the meal before Jesus’ crucifixion. A guest room also fits what we know about first century homes in Judea, which typically had an upper level as a guest room, a raised lower level as the family’s living and dining area, and the lowest level as an area where animals were brought in at night to protect them. In this context, Mary and Joseph were likely staying in a relative’s home. But the guest room (*kataluma*) was full, so they stayed on the lower level where there was a manger for the animals that were brought inside. After wrapping Jesus in cloths, Mary laid him in the manger, which made a convenient and sturdy baby’s bed.

A closer look at Luke 2:6 also indicates that Jesus was not born the very night they arrived in Bethlehem since it says, “While they were there, the time came for her to give birth.” With relatives in town and the hospitality of the culture, it is highly unlikely the people of Bethlehem would let a couple remain out in the cold, especially an expectant mother.

While it is helpful to clear up any misconceptions surrounding Jesus’ birth, the main point of the account is that Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became a descendant of Adam so he could take our place on the cross. Because of Jesus’ death and resurrection, we, descendants of Adam, can be saved from an eternity separated from God. This Christmas let us remember to celebrate and share this truth about God’s great love for us.

Unit 19 Grace Group (Sunday School) & Children's Church Activities

3s-K Grace Groups, 3s-2nd Grade Children's Church

Date & Lesson	Grace Group Activity Options	Children's Church Activity Options
November 23, 2025 Thanksgiving Lesson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pass the Pumpkin Echo! Echo! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turkey Hunt Review Game Thank You Candle
November 30, 2025 Advent Lesson?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBD
December 7, 2025 Christmas 1A Lesson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bag of Bows Review Game Gift Go Around 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Echo! Echo! Christmas Bingo
December 14, 2025 Christmas 1B Lesson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Freeze! Ornament from Oriental Trading (see below) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quick Christmas Cleanup Christmas Poster
December 21, 2025 Christmas Lesson 2B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Game Cards Missing Gift Game Gift Certificate (from Christmas Lesson 2A) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Popcorn Memory Verse Game Decoration Dash
December 28, 2025 Christmas Lesson 2A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christmas Card Match <i>Another activity to be provided</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pass the Present <i>Another activity to be provided</i>

December 14 Grace Group Crafts:



3s-2nd Grade



3rd-5th Grade

Memory Verses For Children's Church (November-December 2025)

*Verses are in ESV Translation

Date	3's-PreK	Kindergarten	1 st Grade	2 nd Grade
Nov 23	Psalm 100:4 "Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!"	Psalm 100:4 "Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!"	Psalm 100:4 "Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!"	Psalm 100:4 "Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!"
Nov 30	Psalm 4:8 "In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety. "	R 2.1-2 "For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it."	Psalm 23:6 "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever."	Isaiah 9:6 "For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."
Dec 7	Genesis 9:13 " I [God] have set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and the earth."	R 2.3 "...Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved..." 1 John 4:14 "... The Father has sent His Son to be the Savior of the world."	Mark 16:15 "And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.'"	1 John 4:15 "Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God."
Dec 14	Luke 2:11 " For unto you is born this day...a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."	R 2.4 "... These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ..."	1 Peter 1:25 "But the word of the Lord remains forever..."	Romans 5:8 "But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
Dec 21	Luke 2:10-11 And the angel said to them, "...Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."	Luke 2:10-11 And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."	Luke 2:10-11 And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."	John 1:1 Luke 2:10-11 And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."
Dec 28	Luke 2:10-11 And the angel said to them, "...Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."	Luke 2:10-11 And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."	Luke 2:10-11 And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."	Luke 2:10-11 And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

Quick Christmas Cleanup

Materials

- ☐ Bag(s) of cotton balls or large red and green pom-poms
- ☐ Container for each team
- ☐ Optional: Timer

Instructions

*In an open area, spread the cotton balls (or pom-poms) all over the floor. Explain that you all need to prepare the classroom for Christmas by tidying up. **It looks like we had a snowball explosion, and we need to clean them up as fast as we can.** (If using pom-poms, it could be a Christmas ornament explosion.)*

Divide into teams and have each team collect the cotton balls, using only one hand, and put them into a team container. Use a timer or have a race until all the cotton balls are collected and then see who has the most in their container.

Relay option: Divide class into teams. Use tape to make a start line and place a container on a chair across the room for each team. Students will run to the cotton balls on the floor, collect as many as they can using only one hand, run to put them into their team's container, and return to the start. The team with the most cotton balls after everyone has gone wins.

Suggested Discussion

- ?** We've been talking about preparing for Christmas, and cleaning up is just one thing most people have to do. What else does your family do to prepare for Christmas? *Allow answers.*

Most families prepare for Christmas by decorating their home, baking cookies, wrapping gifts, setting out a nativity, putting up a Christmas tree, and cleaning up for visitors. We do all these things to get ready to celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Savior.

For the very first Christmas, God made preparations, too. He prepared Zechariah and Elizabeth for the birth of their son, John. He prepared Mary and Joseph for Jesus' birth, and he even prepared the place they would be when Jesus was born. God's preparations were very important because he was getting ready to send his Son to be the Savior of the world.

Christmas Poster

Materials

- ☐ Butcher paper
- ☐ Crayons and markers
- ☐ Christmas stickers
- ☐ Tape or poster putty
- ☐ Optional: Individual pieces of paper

Instructions

Lay out one or more large pieces of butcher paper on the table or floor. Have students draw some of their favorite things about Christmas and add stickers. Hang the poster(s) on the wall using tape or poster putty.

Optional: If you don't have butcher paper, give each student a piece of paper to draw on and decorate then have students attach their pictures to the wall.

Suggested Discussion

Christmas is a wonderful time of year! There are many things we love about Christmas. You drew some of those things on our poster(s). *Point out some of the pictures on the poster(s).*

Thank you for helping me prepare our classroom for Christmas by decorating the wall with our beautiful poster(s).

Review Questions

K-1 Review Questions

1. Who was God going to send first to tell people about the Savior: a messenger or a warrior? *A messenger.*
2. Who appeared to Zechariah while he was burning incense in the temple? *An angel.*
3. How did Zechariah feel when he saw the angel? *Afraid.*
4. What was the good news the angel told Zechariah? *He would have a son.*
5. Who was Zechariah's wife? *Elizabeth.*
6. What were Zechariah and Elizabeth told to name their son? *John.*
7. What was John going to be: the Savior or the messenger who would tell about the Savior? *The messenger who would tell about the Savior.*
8. What happened to Zechariah because he didn't believe the angel? *He was unable to speak.*
9. When could Zechariah finally talk again? *When his baby was born and named John.*
10. Who was Mary engaged to? *Joseph.*
11. Who did God send in a dream to prepare Joseph? *An angel.*
12. What did the angel tell Joseph about Mary's baby? *The baby's Father was God; he would save the people from their sins; he was the Savior.*
13. What did the angel tell Joseph to name the baby? *Jesus.*
14. What did Joseph do after the angel spoke to him in the dream? *He took Mary as his wife.*
15. What town were Joseph and Mary living in? *Nazareth.*
16. What town did the Old Testament say the Savior would be born in? *Bethlehem.*
17. Why did Joseph and Mary have to go to Bethlehem? *The ruler said all people had to go to the town their family was from.*

18. What did Mary use as a bed for Jesus? *A manger.*
19. Why was there a manger where Mary and Joseph were staying? *Animals were let into the lower level of the house overnight, and the manger was there to feed them.*
20. In the verse we read, does the word "inn" mean a hotel or a guest room? *A guest room.*
21. Was Jesus more likely born in a cold barn or in a house? *In a house.*

Pre-K Review Questions

1. Who appeared to Zechariah while he was burning incense in the temple? *An angel.*
2. How did Zechariah feel when he saw the angel? *Afraid.*
3. What was the good news the angel told Zechariah? *He would have a son.*
4. What were Zechariah and Elizabeth told to name their son? *John.*
5. What was John going to be: the Savior or the messenger who would tell about the Savior? *The messenger who would tell about the Savior.*
6. What happened to Zechariah because he didn't believe the angel? *He was unable to speak.*
7. When could Zechariah finally talk again? *When his baby was born and named John.*
8. Who was Mary engaged to? *Joseph.*
9. Who did God send in a dream to prepare Joseph? *An angel.*
10. What did the angel tell Joseph about Mary's baby? *The baby's Father was God; he would save the people from their sins; he was the Savior.*
11. What did the angel tell Joseph to name the baby? *Jesus.*
12. What did Joseph do when he woke up from his dream? *Took Mary to be his wife.*

13. What town did the Old Testament say the Savior would be born in: Bethlehem or Nazareth? *Bethlehem.*
14. Was Jesus more likely born in a cold barn or in a house? *In a house.*
15. In the Bible verse we read, does the word “inn” mean a hotel or a guest room in a house? *A guest room.*
16. Since the upstairs guest room of the house was full, where did Mary and Joseph stay? *Downstairs in the family area.*
17. What did Mary use as a bed for Jesus? *A manger.*
18. Why was there a manger in the house where Mary and Joseph were staying? *Animals were let into the lower level of the house overnight, and the manger was there to feed them.*