



Jesus Before the Manger

Jesus is eternal—he always was and always will be.

Lesson Focus

Jesus is eternal; he always was and always will be. He was present at creation and appeared to people throughout the Old Testament. But he left heaven and was born as a baby to fulfill God's promise to send a Savior. Jesus lived a perfect life and died on the cross to save us from our sins. He conquered death and returned to heaven where he is preparing a place for God's children.

Key Passages

Genesis 1:1–2; Colossians 1:16–17; Exodus 3:1–2; Matthew 1:20–21

Memory Verse

Colossians 1:16–17 All things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Prepare to Share

Scriptural Background

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

Even though today we would (and should) scoff at someone staking a claim to deity, Jesus Christ was the real deal. He was the Creator incarnate, the God-Man, the one who came to save his people from their sins, fulfilling the promises God had made since the beginning of time. In fact, he is the creator of time itself and exists outside of time. He didn't begin as a babe in a manger—he has existed from all eternity, calling the worlds into being, fashioning the planets and stars, speaking life into a lump of dust, and planning his entrance into time and his subsequent death from the very beginning. We see God the Son not only as Savior but as Creator in Colossians 1:16–20:

For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Historical/Apologetics Background

Mary and Joseph weren't the first human beings to see Jesus Christ. In fact, that common perception reflects a deep misunderstanding of the Son of God's central role throughout history.

When unbelievers think of Jesus, many think of a baby in a manger or a man who lived about 2,000 years ago. Sadly, many Christians adopt this same thinking. But when we do, we unwittingly devalue who Jesus really is.

Christ is fully man and yet fully God (Hebrews 1; Colossians 1; John 1). He is preeminent in all things, even time and space that he created (John 1:1–3; Colossians 1:16–18). The one true God is triune in nature, eternally existing in the co-equal persons of God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy

Spirit. So, all three persons of the Trinity were present at creation: God the Father and the Holy Spirit in Genesis 1:1–2 and God the Son (Jesus, the Word) in John 1:1–3. God's plan to send a Savior is first seen in Genesis 3:15 when he promised an offspring who would bruise the head of Satan. As God sovereignly worked throughout history to fulfill his plan, he appeared to people in Old Testament times in human form. These appearances of God on earth (the angel of the Lord) are called *theophanies*. The angel of the Lord must be distinguished from *an* angel of the Lord, which is one of God's created angels. We see the angel of the Lord appearing to Moses and giving him his calling to lead the Israelites out of slavery (Exodus 3) and to Gideon, emboldening him for battle against the Midianites (Judges 6).

God had promised that the Savior (the Messiah) would come from the descendants of Abraham (Genesis 22:17–18). This promise was fulfilled at the birth of Jesus, who came from the line of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, and David (Matthew 1). Before Jesus' birth, God sent an angel to Mary and Joseph to tell them to name the baby Jesus, which means "God our Savior." When Jesus was born, he was fully God and fully man, which is why he's the only one to ever live a perfect life without sin. He became the final, perfect sacrifice for our sin when he willingly died on the cross. He then conquered death by rising on the third day.

Spirit (Isaiah 45:18; Deuteronomy 6:4; Malachi 2:10; James 2:19).

The point is that Jesus Christ has been actively involved in the world from the very beginning. So the question arises, "Do we see Jesus anywhere in Genesis?" We do! These preincarnate appearances of Christ are called *theophanies* (from two Greek words meaning "appearance [*phaneia*] of God [*theos*]"), or more specifically *Christophanies*. They are generally believed to be appearances of the Son of God prior to his coming "in the flesh" 2,000 years ago (1 John 4:2).

Genesis employs very personal language describing God's creation of Adam and Eve. This language could indicate the Son's direct presence, especially when the Lord "brought her to the man" (Genesis

2:7–8, 2:18–22). Then after Adam and Eve sinned, “they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden.” They hid, only to be confronted for their sin (Genesis 3:8–24).

Other passages throughout the Old Testament might also be Christophanies. Consider these passages in Genesis, some of which are more certain than others: Genesis 4:4–15, 7:16, 11:5–9, 18:1–33. The Lord appeared to Abraham and Moses several times in Genesis 17:1, 18:1; Exodus 3; Numbers 12:5–8; and other passages.

So why did the Son of God “take on flesh” if he could easily appear to whomever he wanted? The Apostle Peter said it best: “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that

he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit” (1 Peter 3:18).

Christ became a man to take the punishment we deserve for sin against our Creator. He was the perfect sacrifice offered once for all sin (Hebrews 10:14–24). But he did not remain dead because he was no ordinary man! Jesus rose from the dead, conquering death, so salvation could come to mankind. Before he returned to heaven, he promised to prepare a place for those who believe in him, and he promised to come again for his followers (John 14:1–3). What great promises to give us faith and strength for each day here on earth. We have a wonderful Savior, and he is coming again!

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."

Pass the Present

Materials

- ☐ Candies or treats gift-wrapped inside a box
- ☐ Optional: seasonal or praise music

Instructions

Have students sit in a circle or at tables and pass the gift-wrapped box around until you say, "Stop the present!" or until you stop the music. The student holding the present then shares something they like about Christmas. Say "Pass the present" or restart the music to have students continue passing. Continue until all students have had a chance to share or until all students arrive. Then open the present to share the treats inside.

Review Questions

K-1st Review Questions

1. Genesis 1 begins with what words: “in the beginning” or “a long time ago”? *In the beginning.*
2. Who was there in the beginning, before creation? *God, Spirit of God, God the Son.*
3. The Trinity means one God in how many persons? *Three.*
4. What name do we usually use for God the Son? *Jesus.*
5. The memory verse says, “All things were created through him.” Who is “him” in this verse? *Jesus.*
6. What word means having no beginning or end: final or eternal? *Eternal.*
7. Who appeared to Moses out of a burning bush? *The angel of the Lord.*
8. In the Bible, who is “the angel of the Lord”? *The Son of God/Jesus.*
9. Who was engaged to Mary? *Joseph.*
10. Who delivered a message to Joseph about Mary’s baby: an angel or a shepherd? *An angel.*
11. What name was Joseph supposed to give to Mary’s baby? *Jesus.*
12. The name “Jesus” means: “God our friend” or “God our Savior”? *God our Savior.*
13. What did the angel say Jesus would save people from: their problems or their sins? *From their sins.*
14. Who disobeyed God in the garden of Eden when sin came into the world? *Adam and Eve.*
15. When Jesus died on the cross, he took the punishment for our *what?* *Our sins.*
16. What amazing thing happened to Jesus after he died on the cross? *He came back to life.*
17. Where did Jesus say he would prepare a place for those who believe in him? *In heaven.*

18. Name one of the wall signs that helped us to understand more about Jesus. *Creator, Eternal, The Angel of the Lord, Savior.*

Pre-K Review Questions

1. Who was there in the beginning, before creation? *God. Spirit of God. God the Son.*
2. The Trinity means three persons but only one *what?* *God.*
3. God is three persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy *what?* *Spirit.*
4. Who was with the Father and the Holy Spirit at creation? *God the Son/Jesus.*
5. What was created through Jesus: a few animals, some angels, or all things? *All things.*
6. Jesus is eternal. That means he has no beginning and no *what?* *End.*
7. In the Old Testament, how did Jesus sometimes appear: as the angel of the Lord or a soldier? *The angel of the Lord.*
8. The angel of the Lord appeared from a burning bush to Moses or Joshua? *Moses.*
9. Who was engaged to Mary? *Joseph.*
10. What name was Joseph supposed to give Mary’s baby? *Jesus.*
11. The name “Jesus” means: “God our friend” or “God our Savior”? *God our Savior.*
12. What did the angel say Jesus would save people from? Their *what?* *Their sins.*
13. Who disobeyed God in the garden of Eden? *Adam and Eve.*
14. What amazing thing happened to Jesus after he died on the cross? *He came back to life.*
15. Jesus promised to make a place for those who believe in him. Where is this place? *In heaven.*
16. Name one of the wall signs that helped us to understand more about Jesus. *Creator, Eternal, The Angel of the Lord, Savior.*