



Bible Point ▶

# Jesus is God's special gift.

## Bible Verse

“Jesus was born in Bethlehem” (Matthew 2:1a).

## Growing Closer to Jesus

- Children will
- see how Jesus' birthplace was different from where babies are born today,
  - count and take a “census” in the classroom,
  - hear how Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem, and
  - thank God for sending Jesus.

## Teacher Enrichment

### Bible Basis

#### ■ Jesus is born.

**Luke  
2:1-7**



When we think of Mary and Joseph traveling to Bethlehem, we often picture Mary riding on a donkey and Joseph walking along beside. However, the Bible says nothing about a donkey, and Joseph was probably not wealthy enough to have owned one. Most likely they both had to walk and to carry with them any clothing and supplies they needed. The distance from their home in Nazareth was around 60 miles—a very long trek for a woman nearly nine months pregnant! However, they dutifully made the trip to obey the decree of the Roman emperor.

Imagine how Mary must have felt at the end of that long trip, with no bed of any kind for her to lie down on! But Mary and Joseph were rewarded for their diligence when Jesus was born to them in a stable—what we would probably call a barn—there in Bethlehem.

Jesus' birth was an exciting event at the end of a grueling trip for Mary and Joseph. In the midst of the excitement over gifts and parties, it would be easy for your preschoolers to miss the excitement of celebrating Jesus' birth. Use this lesson to help children get excited about God's most special gift to them.

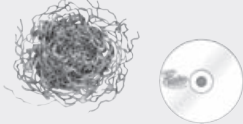



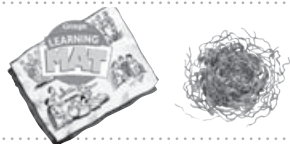



### Prayer

- Read Matthew 1:22-23. What additional excitement does this passage add to the event of Jesus' birth?
- How can you better enjoy the celebration of Jesus' birth this year?
- Pray: God, help me help my preschoolers get excited about Jesus' birth as we...

### Before the Lesson

- Collect the necessary items for the activities you plan to use, referring to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies listed in the chart on the next page.
- Make photocopies of the “Today I Learned...” handout (at the end of this lesson) to send home with your children.
- Pray for the children in your class and for God's direction in teaching the lesson.

# This Lesson at a Glance

	What Children Will Do	Classroom Supplies	Learning Lab Supplies
<b>Welcome Time</b>	<b>Welcome!</b> —Receive name tags, and be greeted by the teacher.	"Angel Name Tags" (p. 23), scissors, marker, safety pins or tape	
<b>Let's Get Started</b>  Direct children to one or more of the optional activities until everyone arrives.	<b>Option 1: Classroom Register</b> —Take a classroom "census," and hear how Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem to be counted.	Newsprint, markers	
	<b>Option 2: Away in a Manger</b> —Compare Jesus' birthplace to where babies are born today.	CD player, baby blanket, diaper, box, doll, strips of cloth	
	<b>Option 3: Animals in the Stable</b> —Set up a pretend stable, and hear how Jesus was born in a stable.	Blanket, table, stuffed animals	
	<b>Pick-Up Time</b> —Sing a song as they pick up toys and gather for Bible Story Time.	CD player	
<b>Bible Story Time</b>	<b>Setting the Stage</b> —Praise baby Jesus with animal sounds.	CD player	
	<b>Bible Song and Prayer Time</b> —Sing a song, bring out the Bible, and pray together.	Bible, CD player	
	<b>Hear and Tell the Bible Story</b> —Hear Joseph's story about traveling to Bethlehem.	Bible, crayons, markers, glue, fabric scraps	
	<b>Do the Bible Story</b> —Guess who's who as they dress like characters from the Bible story.	Bible-times clothing (robes, bedsheets, fabric belts)	
 <b>Closing</b>	<b>No Room</b> —Help Whiskers get over being mad that "his" room at Cousin Joey's will be taken over by a new baby.		
	<b>Passing Prayers</b> —Pass around a wrapped doll, and thank God for sending Jesus.	Wrapped doll from Let's Get Started	

\*See the end of this lesson for extra-time ideas and supplies.

## Welcome Time

**SUPPLIES:** “Angel Name Tags” (p. 23), scissors, marker, safety pins or tape

- Kneel down and make eye contact with children as they arrive.
- Greet each child individually with an enthusiastic smile.
- Thank each child for coming to class today.
- As children arrive, ask them about last week’s “Today I Learned…” discussion. Use questions such as “What did you tell your family about Mary’s surprise?” or “How did your family surprise each other this week?”
- Say: **Today we’re going to learn that** ► *Jesus is God’s special gift.*
- Hand out the angel name tags children made during Lesson 1, and help children attach the name tags to their clothing. If some of the name tags were damaged or if children weren’t in class that week, have them make new name tags using the photocopyable handout.
- Direct children to the Let’s Get Started activities you’ve set up.



It’s important to say the Bible Point just as it’s written in each activity. Repeating the Bible Point over and over throughout the lesson will help kids remember it and apply it to their lives.



## Let’s Get Started

Set up one or more of the following activities for children to do as they arrive. After you greet each child, invite him or her to choose an activity.

Circulate among the children to offer help as needed and direct children’s conversation toward the point of today’s lesson. Ask questions such as “Tell me about the best Christmas present you ever got” or “What would it be like to be born in a barn?”

### ■ Option 1: Classroom Register

**SUPPLIES:** newsprint, markers or crayons

Set a sheet of newsprint on a table or work area. Set out markers or crayons, and let children “sign” their names on the paper. Some children may be able to write their own names; others may need adult help. Encourage children to “write” or scribble their own names unless they ask for help. Or invite them to create a handprint “signature” by tracing around their hands.

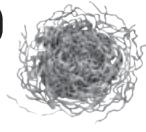
Stop occasionally and have children help you count the signatures on your newsprint. Encourage everyone to sign the “register.” If you wish, count the children in the class and see if the number of children matches the number of signatures on the paper.

As children work, talk about how Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem to be counted. They had to sign their names, and when all the names were counted, the government knew how many people there were. Explain that Jesus was born while Mary and Joseph were in Bethlehem. Remind children that ► *Jesus is God’s special gift.*



## ■ Option 2: Away in a Manger

**SUPPLIES:** CD player, baby blanket, diaper, box, doll, strips of cloth



Before class, borrow a blanket and diaper from your church's nursery. You'll also need *manger hay* or shredded newspaper, a medium-sized box, a doll, and strips of cloth (enough to wrap the doll).

Hold up the diaper and the blanket, and explain that we take care of babies today by making sure they have dry diapers and by wrapping them in warm blankets. Tell children that the Bible says Jesus was wrapped in strips of cloth. Use the strips of cloth and the doll to demonstrate how Mary and Joseph might have wrapped up baby Jesus. Let the children try wrapping up the doll.

Then show children the box and the *manger hay*. Invite them to tell you what kinds of beds babies sleep in today, and then explain that baby Jesus slept in a manger—an animal feeding box.

When children have all had a turn to wrap the doll and lay it gently in the manger bed, have children sit in a circle as you sing “Away in a Manger” (track 7) together with the CD.



**SING**

**Away in a manger,  
No crib for a bed,  
The little Lord Jesus  
Laid down his sweet head.**

**The stars in the sky  
Looked down where he lay.  
The little Lord Jesus  
Asleep on the hay.**

*(Repeat.)*

“Away in a Manger” by John Thomas McFarland and James R. Murray

## ■ Option 3: Animals in the Stable

**SUPPLIES:** blanket, table or chairs, stuffed animals

Invite children to help you make a pretend stable by putting a blanket over a classroom table or chairs. Bring in a variety of stuffed animals, and talk about what animals might have been in the stable when Jesus was born. Discuss what would be good about having animals in the place where a baby would be born, and what would be bad. Let children play with the animals in the stable you've set up. Encourage them to take turns being Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus. As they play, remind them that Christmas is the time we celebrate Jesus' birth and that ► Jesus is God's special gift.

When everyone has arrived and you're ready to move on to Bible Story Time, encourage the children to finish what they're doing and get ready to clean up.



**BIBLE POINT** ►

## ■ Pick-Up Time

SUPPLIES: CD player



Lead children in singing “Come Along With Me” (track 2) with the CD to the tune of “Come and Go With Me.” Encourage children to sing along as they help clean up the room.



Remember to establish guidelines for acceptable behavior. Rules that work well with this age group include: Use quiet voices, work together, help each other, and say nice words to others.



**Come along with me and pick up all our things,  
Pick up all our things,  
Pick up all our things.  
Come along with me and pick up all our things  
So our room will be clean.**

(Repeat 2x.)

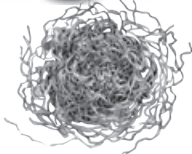
## Bible Story Time

### ■ Setting the Stage

SUPPLIES: CD player



Before class, put the *manger hay* from the Learning Lab inside the *gift box*. Set the manger box from Let’s Get Started in the story area, or set out a chair to represent the manger. Have the CD ready to play the “Animal Sounds” segment (track 6).



Tell children you’ll clap three times to get their attention. Explain that when you clap three times, the children are to stop what they’re doing and repeat the clap. Practice this signal a few times. Encourage children to respond quickly so you’ll have time for all the fun activities you’ve planned.



Gather the children in an area other than your story area, and ask:

- **What did you make or do when you came to our class today?** (Signed my name on the paper; wrapped up baby Jesus; played in a pretend stable.)

Say: **Some of you signed your names on our class register. Some of you learned about the different clothes and bed baby Jesus had. And some of you played in our pretend stable. You were all learning important things about our Bible story. If you signed your name on our classroom register, clap your hands and count to five with me.**

Clap your hands, count to five with the children, and then continue: **If you wrapped up a doll in pieces of cloth and put it in our manger box, raise both hands in the air; and then put them down.** Pause. **If you played in the stable with the animals, moo like a cow, and then be quiet as a mouse.**

Bring out the *gift box* with the *manger hay* inside. Hold the box up, and ask: **Look at this pretty gift box. There’s something inside this box that has to do with our Bible story. Let’s open it and see what it is.**

Ask a child to open the box and hand you the *manger hay*. Hold it up, and ask:

• **What could this hay have to do with our Bible story?** (Jesus slept in a manger with hay in it; there was hay in the stable.)

Say: **This hay reminds me of the stable where Jesus was born. That's what our Bible story is about. Today we'll be learning that ► Jesus is God's special gift, and we'll hear how he was born in Bethlehem. We're going to use this hay in a little while when we're finished hearing our story.**

Set the *manger hay* aside, and ask:

• **Who likes to eat hay?** (Animals; cows; not me.)

• **What animals do you think were in the stable where Jesus was born?**  
(Cows; sheep; donkeys.)

• **What do you think it was like in the stable with all those animals?** (Noisy; stinky; fun.)

Say: **Let's pretend to be animals and go to the stable. We can praise Jesus with our animal noises when we get there. Think of an animal you want to be.**

Lead children to the stable area, and then invite them to tell you what animals they've chosen. Then say: **Let's all pretend to be the animals we've chosen. I'm going to play some animal sounds. Let's join those animals and make our own animal sounds. We can pretend to welcome baby Jesus.**

Play the "Animal Sounds" segment (track 6) from the *CD*. As you listen to the sounds, lead children in imitating the animals in movement and sound. Circle around the room a few times in an animal "parade," and then stop, arriving at your story area.

When everyone has arrived, stop the *CD* and say together: ► Jesus is God's special gift.

Say: **It was fun to pretend to welcome baby Jesus with animal sounds. Now let's praise Jesus with people sounds by singing a song to worship Jesus and tell him we love him.**

Lead the children in singing "Away in a Manger" (track 7) with the *CD*. If children don't know the song, have them listen the first time, and then sing along on the repeat.



### SING

Away in a manger,  
No crib for a bed,  
The little Lord Jesus  
Laid down his sweet head.

The stars in the sky  
Looked down where he lay.  
The little Lord Jesus  
Asleep on the hay.

(Repeat.)

"Away in a Manger" by John Thomas McFarland and James R. Murray



### BIBLE POINT ►



### BIBLE POINT ►

## ■ Bible Song and Prayer Time

*SUPPLIES: Bible, CD player*



tracks 3, 4

Say: **Now it's time to choose a Bible helper to bring me the Bible marked with today's Bible story. As we sing our Bible song, we'll pass around our special Bible. The person who's holding the Bible when the music stops will be our Bible helper today. Remember that each week one of you will get to be the Bible helper.**

Lead children in singing "I'm So Glad for the Bible" (track 3) with the *CD* to the tune of "Give Me Oil in My Lamp." As you sing, pass around the special Bible.



**SING**

**I'm so glad for the Bible.  
Keep me learnin', learnin', learnin'.  
I'm so glad for God's book today.  
I'm so glad for the Bible.  
Keep me learnin', learnin', learnin'.  
Keep me learnin' all about his way.**

**Let me hear 'bout God's love—  
Keep me learnin', learnin', learnin'.  
Let me hear 'bout God's love for me.  
Let me hear 'bout God's love—  
Keep me learnin', learnin', learnin'.  
Let's shine the light for all to see.**

*(Repeat first verse.)*

When the music stops, invite the child who's holding the Bible to bring it to you. Stamp the child's hand with the *angel stamp*, and thank him or her for bringing you the Bible. Then stamp the other children's hands. Return the *angel stamp* and *ink pad* to the Learning Lab.

Say: **I'm thankful for [name of child who brought the Bible], and I'm thankful for everyone in our class today. Let's thank God together for all our friends in this class.**

Lead children in singing "I'm So Glad We're Together" (track 4) with the *CD* to the tune of "Give Me Oil in My Lamp."



**SING**

**I'm so glad we're together.  
Keep us prayin', prayin', prayin'.  
I'm so glad we're all here today.  
I'm so glad we're together.  
Keep us prayin', prayin', prayin'—  
Prayin' for each other every day.**

Lead children in folding their hands and bowing their heads as you continue to sing.

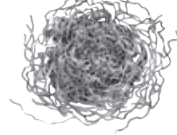
**Thank you, Lord, for each one.  
Keep me thankful, thankful, thankful.  
Thank you for everyone who's here.  
Thank you, Lord, for each one.  
Keep me thankful, thankful, thankful—  
Thankful for our friends both far and near.**

This Bible story is featured in *My First Hands-On Bible*. Order several now for your ministry at [group.com](http://group.com).



## ■ Hear and Tell the Bible Story

**SUPPLIES:** Bible, crayons, markers, glue, fabric scraps



Before class, fold the *Learning Mat* so that only the first panel is showing. Hang the *Learning Mat* on a wall near your story area.

Open your Bible to **Luke 2**, and show the passage to the children. Say: **Our Bible story comes from the book of Luke in the Bible. Our Learning Mat shows us pictures of our Bible story.**

Point to the picture of the angel that children decorated last week.

Ask: • **Who is this with the sparkling clothes?** (An angel.)

• **What is the angel doing?** (Talking to Mary; he's telling Mary she's going to be Jesus' mother.)

Say: **Last week we learned about the angel that told Mary that Jesus would be born. Do you remember our Bible verse from Matthew 2:1? It tells us that ►“Jesus was born in Bethlehem.” This week we're going to pretend we're Joseph, and we'll hear how Joseph and Mary traveled to Bethlehem. Can you find Mary and Joseph on our Learning Mat?**

Let children point out the picture of Mary and Joseph traveling. Then say: **Let's all stand up while we hear their story. I'll say and do something, and then you say and do it after me.**

**I'm Joseph.** (*Point to self.*)

**My wife, Mary, is going to be Jesus' mother.** (*Pretend to cradle a baby.*)

**That makes me happy!** (*Smile.*)

**But first we have to travel far, far away.** (*Point thumb over shoulder.*)

**C'mon, it's time to go!** (*Make a beckoning motion.*)

**We walk and walk and walk.** (*Walk in place.*)

**It's a long way to Bethlehem!** (*Nod head.*)

**Finally we're there! Phew!** (*Wipe hand across forehead.*)

**We need a place to sleep.** (*Put hand above eyes, searching.*)

**So I knock on the door of an inn.** (*Make knocking motion.*)

**“No room!” shouts the owner.** (*Cup hands around mouth.*)

**So I knock on another door.** (*Make knocking motion.*)

**“Full up!” yells the innkeeper.** (*Cup hands around mouth.*)

**“But the baby..” I say.** (*Cradle arms.*)

**“Did you say ‘baby?’”** (*Point finger toward someone.*)

**“Yes, my wife, Mary, is about to have a baby.”** (*Cradle arms.*)

**“Come this way,” he says.** (*Beckon with hand toward self.*)

Open the *Learning Mat* so children can see the picture of the stable on the second panel, and then continue.

**He takes us to a stable.** (*Walk in place.*)

**It's warm and dry.** (*Wrap arms around self.*)

**We can rest here for the night.** (*Lay head on hands.*)

**Late in the night, I hear a baby cry!** (*Cup hand over ear as if listening.*)

**It's Jesus! He's here!** (*Spread arms out wide.*)

**We're so happy!** (*Jump up and down.*)

**Mary wraps Jesus in pieces of cloth.** (*Make wrapping motions.*)

**She lays him in a box where animals eat.** (*Pretend to lay baby down.*)

**It's OK that we don't have a real bed!** (*Nod head.*)

### BIBLE VERSE ►



**Jesus is here!** (*Spread arms out wide.*)

**That's what matters!** (*Nod head.*)

**Jesus is God's special gift!** (*Clap.*)

Have children sit down.

Ask: • **Where was Jesus born?** (In a stable; where animals live; in Bethlehem.)

Say: **That's right.** ▶ **“Jesus was born in Bethlehem,” in a stable where the animals lived.**

• **How do you think Mary and Joseph felt about having their baby born in a stable?** (They were happy Jesus was going to be born; scared.)

Say: **Mary and Joseph trusted God. They were happy that Jesus was going to be born. They knew that** ▶ ***Jesus is God's special gift.*** That was the most important thing of all.

◀ **BIBLE VERSE**

◀ **BIBLE POINT**



Say: **We've talked about how Jesus was born in a stable a long, long time ago, but do you know what? He still lives for you and for me! Jesus is with us always! That's why he's such a special gift.**

Ask the children to fold their hands as you pray:

**Thank you, Jesus, for being with us every minute. We're so glad that you are the surprise God gave us. We love you, Jesus. Amen.**

Gently take down the *Learning Mat*, and set it on the floor or on a table. Give children crayons or markers to color the picture of Mary and Joseph traveling to Bethlehem. Then bring out the *manger hay* from the *gift box* you opened during Setting the Stage. Help children spread glue on the manger and stable floor and glue down bits of *manger hay*. Have a piece of fabric available to glue on baby Jesus as swaddling clothes.

When children finish decorating the stable scene, let them color it. Fold the mat so panels one and two are showing, and then put it back on the wall. Return any remaining *manger hay* to the *gift box*. Congratulate children for their good work, and then invite them to join you in the story area.

## ■ Do the Bible Story

**SUPPLIES:** *Bible-times clothing (robes, bedsheets, fabric belts)*



Before class, gather robes, gowns, bedsheets, and other Bible-times costumes and props. You will also need the *farm animal masks*.

Gather the children in a circle, and sit down. Place the Bible-times costumes, props, and *farm animal masks* in the center of the circle. Encourage kids to dress up so that they can pretend to be Mary, Joseph, the innkeeper, or the animals in the stable.

Say: **Once everyone is dressed up like a character from our Bible story, we'll take turns letting others guess who we are.** Let children choose costumes and play the guessing game for about five minutes.



While children will enjoy simply dressing up and guessing, add depth to this activity by asking, "What did your character do the night Jesus was born?"

Ask: • **What do you think these characters were feeling the night that Jesus was born?** (They were happy; they were excited; they wanted to sing.)

• **How can you celebrate the gift of Jesus?** (I can decorate for Jesus; I can sing about Jesus; I can tell others about Jesus.)

Say: ► ***Jesus is God's special gift. We can celebrate Jesus at Christmas by singing to him, telling others about his birth, and even giving each other gifts! Let's put our costumes back in the center of our circle and visit with Whiskers. I'm sure he'll want to hear about Jesus' birth in Bethlehem!***

## Closing

### ■ No Room

**SUPPLIES:** none

Bring out Whiskers the Mouse, and go through the following puppet script. When you finish the script, put Whiskers away and out of sight.



**Whiskers:** (*Arms crossed, head hanging*) Humph! I'm so mad!

**Teacher:** What's wrong, Whiskers?

**Whiskers:** Oh, hi. (*Pouting*) I just got home from Cousin Joey's house. I'm not spending the night there anymore!

**Teacher:** Why not?

**Whiskers:** Well, I was supposed to stay with Cousin Joey's family while my parents were out of town.

**Teacher:** That sounds like fun. You like playing with Cousin Joey.

**Whiskers:** Yeah, but when I got to Joey's house, the playroom we always sleep in was gone!

**Teacher:** What do you mean it was gone?

**Whiskers:** I went to put my sleeping bag where I always put it, but there was a crib in the way! And a bunch of diapers and blankets and baby toys. Cousin Joey said we couldn't sleep in there anymore. And we couldn't play with any of the toys, either.

**Teacher:** Whiskers, it sounds like Cousin Joey's family is going to have a new baby! That's exciting!

**Whiskers:** Not to me it isn't! There wasn't any room for me and Cousin Joey to sleep in there. Now we have to sleep in his room with his brothers.

**Teacher:** I see. (*Pause.*) You know, Whiskers, Jesus' mother and father had trouble finding a place to sleep, too.

**Whiskers:** They did?

**Teacher:** They needed a place to stay the night Jesus was born. Children, can you tell Whiskers what happened when Mary and Joseph tried to find a place to stay in Bethlehem?

(Help children tell Whiskers how there was no room at the inn, so Mary and Joseph stayed in a stable with the animals.)

**Whiskers:** Wow, that's really something... They slept in a stable! With animals! And Jesus didn't mind being born there? Boy, they were brave!

**Teacher:** Mary and Joseph were grateful for a warm place where Jesus could be born.  
▶ *Jesus is God's special gift.*

**Whiskers:** Well, if Jesus could share a stable with animals, I suppose I should be happy sharing a room with Joey and his brothers.

**Teacher:** Besides, Whiskers, you and Joey will love that new baby so much you'll be glad for him to have that room!

**Whiskers:** I guess you're right. Now that you mention it, I am a little excited! Baby mice are really cute! (*Pauses.*) I think I need to tell Cousin Joey I'm sorry for being mad. I'll see you later! Thanks for helping me, everybody!

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## ■ Passing Prayers

**SUPPLIES:** wrapped doll from *Let's Get Started*

Gather children in a circle. Say: **Mary and Joseph traveled a long way to get to Bethlehem. Do you remember why Mary and Joseph had to go to Bethlehem? They went to be counted, along with lots of other people. Let's do some counting now as we take turns thanking God for Jesus.** ▶ *Jesus is God's special gift.*

Hold up the wrapped doll you used during *Let's Get Started*. Say: **We'll pretend this doll is baby Jesus. As we gently pass the doll around the circle, we'll count to three. If you're holding the doll when we count "three," it will be your turn to pray, "Thank you, God, for Jesus."**

Continue counting and passing the doll until everyone has had a chance to pray. If children are shy about praying alone, repeat the prayer together.



### Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.

Photocopy the "Today I Learned..." handout (at the end of this lesson) for this week, and send it home with the children. Encourage parents to use the handout to plan meaningful family activities to reinforce this week's topic.



## For Extra Time

If you have a long class time or want to add additional elements to your lesson, try one of the following activities.

### ■ **Lively Learning: Ride Your Donkey to Bethlehem**

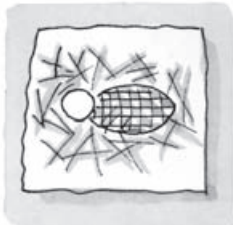
Have children line up on one side of the room. Stand across the room from the children, and tell them you're in "Bethlehem." Explain that each time you say, "Ride your donkey to Bethlehem," you'll give them instructions such as "Take two giant steps." Children are to follow your instructions until they reach "Bethlehem."

Use the following instructions, or add additional instructions of your own.

- **Take three baby steps.**
- **Twirl one time.**
- **Jump three jumps.**
- **Hop two hops.**
- **Take one step backward.**

When children reach Bethlehem, choose a child to be the leader. Let children play the game as long as they're interested. As they play, remind them that our Bible verse says that "Jesus was born in Bethlehem" and that ► Jesus is God's special gift.

### ■ **Make to Take: Craft-Stick Manger Prints**



Cover a table with newsprint, and give each child a sheet of brown construction paper. Set out pans of yellow tempera paint, and give each child a large craft stick. Show each child how to hold the stick and dip the long, thin edge into the paint and "print" with the stick edge onto the brown paper.

Explain that the yellow lines on the paper can be the hay in Jesus' manger. Show children how to make lines pointing in different directions. Let children continue printing until they're satisfied with the number of lines they've made.

Then set out construction paper circles for baby Jesus' face and fabric-scrap ovals for his body. Let children put Jesus in the manger by gluing the shapes on their papers. As children complete their pictures, remind them that ► Jesus is God's special gift.

### ■ **Treat to Eat: Chow Mein Mangers**

Give each child a wax paper square, a spoonful of softened cream cheese, and a handful of chow mein noodles. Show children how to arrange the chow mein noodles as "hay" in the cream cheese "manger." As children create their mangers, review how Mary and Joseph laid baby Jesus in a manger. Remind them that ► Jesus is God's special gift.



See page 5.

### ■ **Story Picture: Jesus Is Born**

Give each child a copy of the "Today I Learned..." handout. Set out crayons or markers, glue, and small fabric scraps. After children color their pictures, let them glue one or two fabric scraps to Jesus' blanket. As they work, review the details of today's Bible story. Remind children that ► Jesus is God's special gift.

# Today i learned..

## Jesus is God's special gift.

Help me learn this:

"Jesus was born in Bethlehem"  
(Matthew 2:1a).

Ask me:

- What kind of a place was Jesus born in?
- Tell me about a special gift you received.
- What special gifts can our family give to help us celebrate Jesus' birth?

Family Fun

- Bring out the family photo album, and look at baby pictures of each person in your family. Talk about how surprised and happy you were when you learned that your child was going to be born. Tell your child one or two things that were special about his or her birth.

**Lesson 2**  
Today your child learned that **JESUS IS GOD'S SPECIAL GIFT**. Children compared Jesus' birthplace to where babies are born today. They heard how Jesus was born in Bethlehem and thanked God for sending Jesus.

**Jesus Is Born**  
(Luke 2:1-7)

