

JESUS IS BORN!

BIG IDEA

Gift giving started with God. God wrapped his best gift, Jesus, in a human body and gave him to the world. The wise men brought gifts to Jesus. And we give gifts at Christmas – to celebrate the best gift ever!

PREP *(Kids can help!)*

Buy 10 candy canes

Find some gold coins, perfume and incense/ointment (vapor rub will do!)

Gather pencils and paper

Put everything into the Faith Box before you start



INTRO

Because this session is so close to Christmas Day you may like to have it around your Christmas tree by candlelight and SHARE Christmas mince pies with a special Christmas drink as part of your family time.

TAKE OUT THE CANDY CANES and tell everyone that these are not just a yummy Christmas treat. They are also a way to remember that the birth of the baby we celebrate at Christmas is so amazing... because this baby Jesus grows up to offer himself to us as the most wonderful gift ever!

GAME

CANDY CANE RELAY

DIVIDE THE FAMILY INTO PAIRS. Use the candy cane as a baton for the relay. A child from each pair starts by passing the candy cane under a chair to their partner who then runs the relay course and back, before passing the candy cane under the chair to the next person to run the course.

PRAY

GIVE EVERYONE A CANDY CANE TO HOLD while you use one as a demonstration.

Turn the candy cane upside down and ask the children what letter it makes.

The J is for Jesus... God's Son, born at Christmas. Christmas is Jesus' birthday!

Turn it back the other way and ask what it looks like now... You may want to give some clues (like 'baaa'; that it is needed for a job; It is like a shepherd's crook). This reminds us that Jesus is called the Good Shepherd; the one who looks after us, his sheep, guiding us and helping us if we get lost.

Now ask what colour the cane mostly is...

It is mostly white. White is a symbol of purity, reminding us that Jesus was without sin and so forgives our sins when we say sorry.

The red stripes remind us that before he was crucified, Jesus was beaten with a whip which made blood-red stripes across his back. Jesus was born for us and died for us so we can live forever!

THE CHILDREN CAN EAT THEIR CANDY CANE WHILE YOU READ.



Now several wise men who knew how to study the stars came to Jerusalem from a land in the east. “Where is the child who is king of the Jews?” they asked. “We have seen his star and have come to worship him.”

When Kind Herod heard them asking about a new king, he began to worry. He was the king, and he didn’t want anyone else to have his job! He called for some teachers who had spent their lives studying the Scriptures. Then he asked them if the Bible said where the new king would be born.

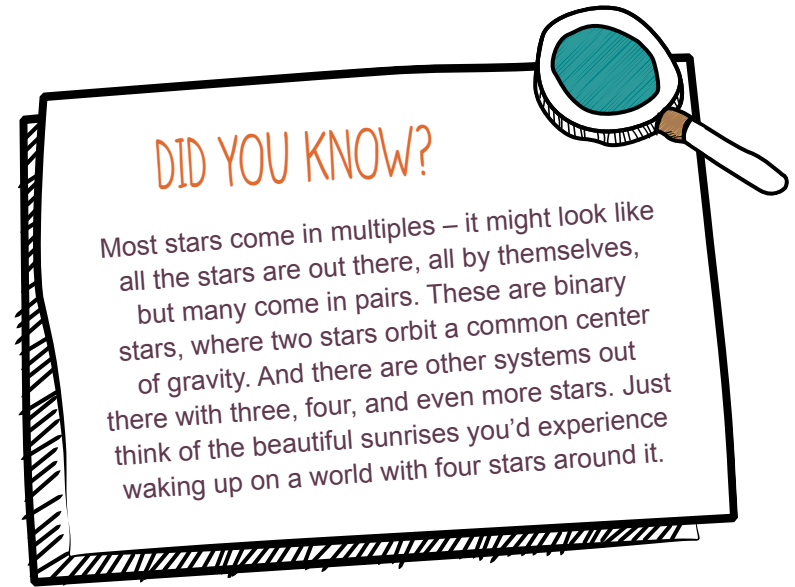
“Yes,” they replied. “One of the prophets wrote that it would be in the city of Bethlehem.”

So Herod said to the wise men, “Go to Bethlehem and look for the child. When you find him, come back and tell me so that I can worship him too!”

So the wise men went to Bethlehem. On the way they were very happy when the star they had seen before came to them again. It went ahead of them and stopped right over a house. They went in and saw the young child with Mary his mother.

They bowed low before him, worshiping him. They gave presents to the new little king – special gifts of gold and spices. Afterward they returned to their own country. But they didn’t go through Jerusalem, because in a dream God warned them not to tell King Herod where Jesus was. Herod wanted to kill the child so Jesus would never be able to take the King’s place.))

Pages 166-168 Classic Bible Story Book, Kenneth Taylor Tyndale Publishers, Matthew 2.



DID YOU KNOW?

Most stars come in multiples – it might look like all the stars are out there, all by themselves, but many come in pairs. These are binary stars, where two stars orbit a common center of gravity. And there are other systems out there with three, four, and even more stars. Just think of the beautiful sunrises you'd experience waking up on a world with four stars around it.

EXPLORE

Give the demonstration candy cane to the youngest child. Ask them to share one present they are hoping to get for Christmas, then pass the cane for the next person to share.

Now pass the candy cane around again and have each person think of a present that was given to Jesus after he was born.

TAKE OUT THE COINS, PERFUME AND INCENSE/OINTMENT.

These were special presents that recognised who Jesus is. There was gold because Jesus is the King of kings; there was incense because he is Lord and incense is used for worship; and there was myrrh which was used to perfume dead bodies. It reminds us that Jesus died for us all.

QUESTIONS

Who were the people who brought these presents to the baby Jesus?

The wise men were probably astronomers from Persia. In addition to being skilled in the science of the heavens and stars, they were also learned in philosophy, natural science, and medicine. They were clever enough to know when an extra star appeared in the sky. And they also recognised its significance and were wise enough to follow it!

Sometimes we know things but don't put them into action. Wisdom is when we put the things we know into action.

Can you think of some people in history who were wise?

Who do you know about today who is wise?

Christmas is a time to open our hearts to God and his gifts.

PRAY

Can you remember the Advent candles so far? *(Hope, Peace and Joy) Light the candles as the children remember them, including the 4th one of Love.* Jesus was the way God showed us how much he loved his world and everyone single person in it. *On Christmas Eve, light the centre candle – the Christ candle.*

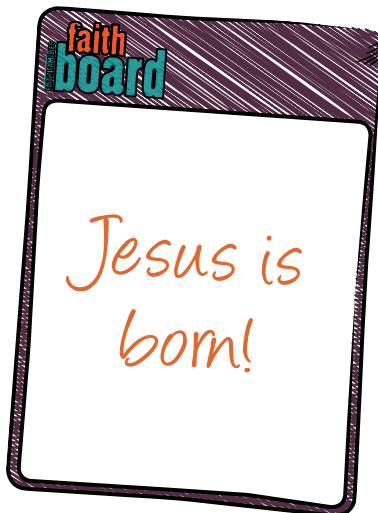
Lord, thank you for sending your son Jesus Christ, who brings Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. We celebrate his birth at Christmas. Amen.

Sing 'Happy Birthday' to Jesus or sing another carol that you know.

LIVE

On Christmas Eve set up your Nativity Scene with an empty manger. Place the baby Jesus in the manger before the children come running out in the morning. Make sure they notice Jesus in the manger. Then say together "The Saviour is born!"

FAITH BOARD



OTHER IDEAS

1 Giving is an important thing for us to learn more of at Christmas. Giving doesn't have to cost a lot, but it will take some time and energy. You could try making your own Christmas coupons for gifts (e.g. cards that read "This coupon is good for one breakfast in bed/ help cleaning the car/ tidying my bedroom" etc).

2 A lovely simple gift for a child can be made with candy canes. Candy canes make cute mouse tails if poked into a felt mouse shape with 2 slits cut in the tummy.

3 On the days leading up to Christmas you might like to cover the table with brown paper or newsprint and put a tub of crayons or felt tips in the centre of the table. Allow everyone to draw pictures of Christmas images that remind them of Jesus' arrival in the world.

BUY FOR NEXT SESSION

- A packet of wrapped lollipops or sweets