

## WE CELEBRATE THE BIRTH OF JESUS

All Activity Sheets

### KEY WORDS

INCARNATION INCARNATE

### BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Luke 1:26-49; Matthew 1:18-25 and John 1:1-18.

### LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help students understand what the incarnation means, thank God for what he did by identifying with us and saving us, and receive Jesus' forgiveness for their sins

### MEMORY VERSE

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14, NIV\*).

### PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

If you ask them: "What makes Christmas special?" most of the preadolescents who attend church will answer: "That Jesus was born." But if you keep asking: "Why was the birth of Jesus truly special" you may get no response or the answer "I do not know." This lesson will help our preadolescents answer this question.

As the Son of God became man and lived here on earth, he experienced what happens to us. He knows what love, friendship, and having good times are. He also knows what pain, hunger and suffering are. And he knows how we can resist temptation. In today's terms, we could say that: "He already went through life's experiences and overcame sin."

That's an important truth that the preadolescents can agree with. They're beginning to discover what independence means—to make some choices and their own decisions. They're struggling to understand who they are and want someone to understand what happens to them.

A Christian song says: "No one understands us like Jesus." Our preadolescents need to know the God who understands emotions and thoughts. That person is Jesus, who was man and God at the same time. He did not come only to experience human life, but to change people's lives. He came to give us salvation, help us overcome sin, and restore our relationship with God.

## BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

The incarnation is one of the greatest mysteries of the Christian faith for two reasons:

“Incarnation” means that Jesus “became flesh.” Therefore, the first mystery is to understand how someone who was totally God could at the same time become totally human, without diminishing any of his divine qualities.

Likewise, it is equally difficult to understand why the Almighty God lowered himself to the condition of a humble human being. The only answer is his great love for the world. It is something we can accept only by faith, not by reason.

What would it have been like to be the parents of Jesus, the God-Man? It certainly would not have been easy. Nevertheless, Joseph and Mary accepted the challenge and became the earthly parents of the One who came to save his people from their sins.

Read Luke 1:26-49. Joseph and Mary were engaged to marry. The engagement commitment at that time was very significant and created great bond. Often, many months passed between engagement and marriage. In addition, the commitment could only be broken by divorce.

Mary was perplexed at the angel Gabriel’s message that she (Mary) was going to have a baby. She knew she was a virgin. How could she be a mother? The angel told her that the baby would be conceived by the Holy Spirit. It is possible that Mary knew the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14: “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son.” Thinking of that verse surely would have comforted her. The fact that a virgin would be the mother of the Messiah was a clear sign that truly that child was the Messiah. Regardless, Mary trusted God and submitted to his plans, even though it could spoil her future marriage, causing her public shame and even death. Later, filled with the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth, a cousin of Mary, confirmed God’s message to her. She responded with a song of praise to God for his power, his holiness, his mercy, and his faithfulness to her and her people.

Read Matthew 1:18-25. Imagine Joseph’s feelings when he discovered that Mary was going to have a baby. He knew he was not the father. However, he knew Mary. How could this have happened? Joseph could decide to shame Mary publicly or divorce her secretly. But he had compassion and decided on the second option. However, before he could carry out his plan, an angel assured him that Mary’s son had been conceived by the Holy Spirit. Like Mary, Joseph also accepted God’s assignment for him: to be the earthly father of the Savior, the “God with us.”

Read John 1:1-18. Jesus Christ is God incarnate, God made flesh. We only know from God what he wanted to reveal to us. Jesus Christ reveals to us the heart and character of God. In A Dictionary of the Bible & Christian Doctrine in Everyday English incarnation is “the event of God becoming man. The eternal Son of God entered into history in the person of Jesus. Still he continued to be God. Jesus Christ is fully God and fully human.” Becoming incarnate, Jesus Christ is our perfect teacher. He showed us how God thinks and how Christians should think. He is also our perfect example and model of living. He gave his life as the perfect sacrifice and made the removal of our sins possible.

Personal reflection: During this week, think about all the circumstances that we must go through, both good and bad. Reflect on the fact that the Son of God chose to live in that condition with everything included, except sin, to redeem us from our sins. Then, express your gratitude to God for being “God with us,” our Savior.

## INTRODUCE THE LESSON

### How are your preparations going?

Before the session, write the name of each of your students on small pieces of paper. Then fold them and put them in a container, for example, gift bag, paper bag, box, bowl, etc.

In the group, say: “Last week we promised to focus our Christmas preparations on Jesus. Let me tell you what we’ll do now.”

Give the container to one of the students. Ask the student to take out a paper and read the name that appears there. That person should tell how preparations are going in placing Jesus as the most important thing. Reaffirm the efforts that the student has made, and allow others to make suggestions to help. Then, that student will be the one to take out the next name. Continue that way, until everyone has had the opportunity to participate.

Clarify: “We have all made efforts to focus on Jesus in our Christmas preparations. Surely we discovered that it was not an easy task. But the good news of Christmas is that Jesus lived as a human being. He knows exactly what we can do and what we cannot do. What would have happened if Jesus had not come into the world?”

Divide into four groups.

Pass out Student Activity Sheet #415-A.

Each group will discuss one of the following questions. Give several minutes for discussion. Then, get back together and have each team talk about their answers.

Ask: "What do you think the world would be like if Jesus had never come?" (There would not be any Christians; we would not be forgiven; there would not be any crosses or any other Christian symbols; there would not be any churches; Christmas would not be celebrated, there would not be a New Testament, etc.)

Then ask: "How would that affect your faith in God?" (We would not have the teachings of Jesus to help us understand the greatness of God's love for us. Our beliefs would be more similar to those of the Old Testament people. We probably would not believe in God as our "Father.")

Ask: "What would life be like in your country?" (No one would be a Christian, we would all belong to other religions. The laws of the country would not be influenced by Christians. Our country would be an even more dangerous place to live.)

Ask: "What would your personal life be like?" (Accept their answers.)

Say: "I'm sure we agree that our lives would be totally different if Jesus had not come to earth that first Christmas. The word we use to describe what Jesus did when he came to earth as a baby is 'incarnation.' Incarnation means that he became a human. The Son of God always existed and will always exist, but at one point, he came to earth as a human. This event changed history in many ways, more than we can imagine. This is very important for each of us. We'll discover more about this in our Bible study today."

## TEACH THE LESSON

### The miracle of the incarnation

Think about different ways you can present today's Bible study. Distribute Student Activity Sheet #415-B and #415-C.

#### In small groups

Divide into three groups. Ask one of them to dramatize Luke 1:26-49 from the second student activity sheet for this session. If possible, provide costumes typical of biblical times, or they can bring them from their homes.

Have a second group read Matthew 1:18-25.

Give the groups time to prepare before presenting it to the rest of the group.

Assign roles in the dramatization of Luke 1:26-40 from the second student activity sheet to different students. (You'll need four volunteers to act as narrator, angels, Mary and Elizabeth.)

After they perform the drama, ask the students to read the other two passages mentioned (Matthew 1:18-25 and John 1:1-5, 10-14).

Use these questions regardless of the option you have chosen (small groups or a single group).

After the dramatization of Luke 1:26-40, say:

"According to this passage, how can we know that Jesus Christ is God?" (He was called "Son of the Most High" and "Son of God." Elizabeth called Jesus: "my Lord." Mary said: "God is my Savior.")

Ask: "How can we know that Jesus was also human?" (He was born of a human mother.)

After reading Matthew 1:18-25, ask:

"What two names did the angel give Mary for the child that would come?" (Jesus and Immanuel). "Jesus" means "the Lord saves," and Immanuel means "God with us."

Ask: "How was 'God with us' when Jesus came to earth?" (The Son of God lived with people as a human).

After reading John 1:1-5, 10-14, ask:

"Is there any information about Jesus in this passage that surprised you?" (Perhaps that Jesus was present at the creation of the world.) Remind the students that before coming into the world as Jesus Christ, the Son of God, he lived with God and participated in everything he did.

Ask: "How else can we state 'The Word became flesh and dwelt among us'?" (The Son of God became man and lived with us.)

End by saying: "The title of this Bible study today is 'The miracle of the incarnation.' Considering what we have read and talked about, what was the 'miraculous' fact that the Son of God became man and lived on earth?" (Accept the answers of the students. Since Jesus became a man, he knows what it is like to be human, and understands what happens to us. But since he is also totally God and never sinned, he can bear our sins and help us live for God.)

## CONNECT THE LESSON

### Did Jesus experience it?

Before the session, write the following actions on small pieces of paper, one per paper. Fold them and put them in a container:

Being hungry / Playing with other children / Getting tired / Getting dirty / Loving mom and dad / Helping with household chores / Crying / Getting hurt / Rejoicing / Offending parents / Listening to and reading the Torah (Jewish Bible) / Going to school / Being tempted to do something wrong / Worship God / Getting along with siblings / Being discouraged.

In the group, have the students take turns in taking one paper out of the container and saying if it is something that Jesus experienced as a human being when he lived on earth. Then tell them that Jesus experienced all these things, he was even tempted to sin - but he did not do anything sinful (like disobeying parents or God).

Finish this activity by asking the students to tell you why Jesus is our perfect Savior. (His life shows us that we can love and obey God and overcome temptation, without doing bad things. He knows God and can reveal him to us. In heaven, he prays for us.) Jesus is our perfect Savior because he is God and man at the same time.

Encourage the children to write a letter to a friend telling about what God did when he came to earth as a man (Jesus Christ) and why that is important for them and for others.

## PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

[Download Suggestions for Bible Memorization PDF](#)

If the students did not make the star billboard last week, let them do it now. Practice this game so you can learn the unit verse. Choose one of them to participate first. While the rest close their eyes, she will take two stars off the billboard. She will then tell the group to open their eyes and identify the two missing words. Then they will say the verse together. Then, that student will give the stars to another person. After the group closes their eyes, he will place one of the stars back on the bulletin board in the right place and take out another. Then, the others must identify which word was replaced and which word was removed. Then say the verse together again. Continue to do so as long as time permits or until everyone has had the opportunity to take out and change stars.

Say: "The word that sums up what this verse says about Jesus is 'incarnation.' Let's repeat this word together (incarnation). Incarnation means that 'he became flesh,' or in other words: 'he became human.' Through the incarnation, Jesus, who was God, became man. He was completely God, but now he had also become completely man. We cannot understand this mystery, but we believe it by faith."

## WRAP-UP

### Pray

Take some time to pray for the students. Ask God to help them understand the mystery of the incarnation, with the sole purpose of giving each of us his great love.

### Encourage

Say: "The second week of Advent reminds us of God's love. He loved us so much that he sent his only Son to earth as a man to show and tell us about his love. Christmas is a special time to delight in God's love and enjoy it with others. During this week, let's think about the love of God and the sacrifices Jesus made when he came to earth as a man. Let's not forget to talk about this great love to the people around us."

### Invite

Before they depart, encourage the students to attend the next session by telling them something interesting about it. Encourage

them to invite visitors.