

Year 4, Rotation 3

Christmas Through The Eyes Of...

Overall Objective

The children will understand the story of the First Christmas from the perspective of the angels, the shepherds, the innkeeper, the wise men, and Mary.

Biblical References

Luke 2: 4-7 and 7-14

Matthew 2: 1-14

Memory Verse

“Do not be afraid; for see- I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people.” Luke 2:10

Biblical Background — Shepherds

The Gospel of Luke tells the wondrous story of how a group of every day people heard of and witnessed the birth of the Babe of Bethlehem. Shepherds watching their sheep are visited by angel messengers with the news of the coming Messiah. The long awaited Savior’s birth was good news of great joy. The shepherds rushed to Jesus’ birthplace and after giving thanks went out glorifying God.

The story of the coming of a Savior is a story for all people. Luke tells of every day, average working people in the midst of doing their jobs receiving the greatest news from God, news that would change their lives, change the world. The story shows God breaking in with joyful messengers. The shepherds’ response, after the glory of the moment, is the decision to go and see for themselves. After witnessing the miracle of Jesus’ birth, the shepherds spread the news. Then they returned to give God the Glory.

Biblical Background — Angels

The bible tells us many times when God sent angels to help people and to bring them messages.

Genesis 16:7-10 (Help and Bring messages)

In this story of Hagar, the angel of the Lord came to her when she was afraid and sad. She was leaving the only home she had ever known to travel across the desert with her son. She had no one but God to help her.

Sometimes angel came to serve people.

1Kings 19:5-7 (serve)

Elijah was tired and he did not want to go on, but God still had work for Elijah to do. So when Elijah fell asleep, an angel woke him up and told he must continue to serve God.

Sometimes God sent angels to protect people.

Daniel 6:22 (protect)

Here we have Daniel who had served God over the king. He did what was right but refusing to worship the King even though it was the law. So he was thrown into a lion's den. And here the angel closed the lion's mouth so Daniel would live.

Sometimes angels give guidance

Matthew 1:20-21 (guide)

Joseph did not know what to do, but an angel came while Joseph was sleeping. The angel told Joseph that he should marry Mary.

In the following passages, angels bring messages in the form of an announcement:

Luke 1:11-19 (announcements)

Here the angel tells Zechariah his wife was going to have a child, and he did not believe so the angel made it so that Zechariah could not speak until after the child was born.

Luke 1:26-33 (another announcement)

Here the angel tells Mary that she will give birth to a son. And that her son would be called Son of the Most High

Luke 2:8-14 (announcement)

Here an angel tells the good news of Jesus birth to the shepherds.

In the story of Christmas, we've heard of angels many of times. Many angels may live in heaven. God created the angels to deliver messages, to protect people, and to encourage people.

Biblical Background — Mary

What do we know about Mary? Surprisingly little. She was a young, Jewish girl of the first century AD, living under Roman occupation, betrothed to Joseph. Women in Mary's day had it hard. Parents wanted boys. Girls born to poor families were often abandoned and left to die either at birth or as small children; they could also be sold as slaves. Both Roman and Jewish law forbid this practice and yet it went on. This led to a shortage of marriageable women (age 12 or older) so by this point in her life, Mary would have been a valuable commodity. Her father would ask a bride price for her, considered compensation for the expense of raising a daughter. A man who had been saving money for years would pay the bride price and the couple would be considered betrothed. Such marriages could be arranged through a matchmaker, or between the groom and a male relative of the bride. Often when the betrothal took place, the girl would go to live with members of the man's family until she was of age to marry. This period also ensured that she was not pregnant before the marriage. At any time during the betrothal, a woman could be dismissed by the groom. If she was dismissed for cause, the money would be returned to the groom. If it was simply his whim, the woman's family would keep the money already paid. A woman did not have the right to end the relationship. Joseph's decision to "dismiss her quietly" might indicate that he was willing to dismiss Mary without naming a reason and thereby forfeiting the dowry money he had paid.

In addition to having low status as a poor woman, Mary faced was oppression from the government. Judea was a Roman colony, although most of the problems they faced didn't come directly from the emperor. Rather, the emperor appointed local leaders who were the true oppressors. As long as they carried out the wishes of Rome, they were free to govern as they will. In the case of Herod, that meant heavy, heavy taxation so he could build glamorous palaces and great public works. Ridiculous taxes were expected from all people. If you couldn't pay your taxes, you would have to sell all or part of your land, or be sold yourself into slavery, often forced military service. Families lost the farm and became day laborers, free people became slaves, and families that once had lived in the same place for generation after generation became fragmented and sent all over the kingdom. Joseph's position as a carpenter did not signify a well-paid, high-skilled craftsman as it does today. Rather it was an indication that he was landless and forced to work for wages.

Biblical Background — Wisemen

We celebrate the birth of Jesus, the promised Son of God, our Savior from sin, at Christmas time. We think of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, and we have scenes showing baby Jesus in the manger with Mary and Joseph near by, and just to include everybody, shepherds, sheep, and three wise men also adore baby Jesus in our Christmas scenes.

The gospel of Matthew, however, makes a slight correction in our understanding of the Christmas scene. It says that “Magi came from the east [to worship him]” (Matthew 2:1), but it doesn’t say how many Magi (or wise men) came, where they came from, nor when they came, except that, as the story states, Jesus was with Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem, (Matthew 2:9 – 11), and “on coming to the house they saw the child with his mother Mary and they bowed down and worshipped him.” (Matthew 2:11) So a person is left looking for clues about the scene. The story continues that King Herod decreed that all boys age two and under were to be killed (Matthew 2:16), implying that Jesus may have been as old as two, rather than an infant.

So what are “Magi” and why did they come to worship baby Jesus? How long did it take them to find Jesus? What was the star, the sign of Jesus’ birth? Why do we often picture the wise men as “kings”?

The New Compact Bible Dictionary defines “magi” as “originally a religious caste among Persians” devoted to astrology, divination, and the interpretation of dreams, and explains that by Jesus’ time the term “magi” was used for anyone who practiced these things. Halley’s Bible Handbook gives the “magi” a little more respect, saying that they “came from Babylon” and “[were] a learned class, advisers of kings” who probably knew the Old Testament Scriptures, and would have been aware of the prophecies of a coming Jewish Messiah/King. Numbers 24:17 says, “...A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel.” Bible Study Fellowship’s Study of Matthew says that the historian Tacitus and other Roman writers wrote that at the time of Jesus’ birth people “all over the world and especially in the East” expected the birth of the Messiah, and that perhaps God prepared these wise men to find what to them was a “sign” of Messiah’s birth, the “star”.

The wise men told King Herod “We saw his star in the East [or “at its rising”] and have come to worship him.” (Matthew 2:1) We don’t really know exactly what the star was. Some astronomers have figured out that there was an unusual grouping together or “conjunction” of the planets Jupiter and Saturn in 6 BC, and they suggest that this was the sign the wise men saw. But Matthew says “the star went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was” (Matthew 2:9), so the star seems to have been a special sign from God (maybe angels?) sent to guide these sincere seekers to His Son, Jesus. What is important is that the wise men continued to seek for Jesus until they found Him. The same is true spiritually, because in one of our memory verses, Jeremiah 29:13, God promises,

“You will seek me and you will find me when you seek me with all your heart.” So the wise men are a wonderful example to us of “walking in the light” because they followed the small amount of “light” (the Bible prophecies) that they had from God until they found Jesus.

Interestingly also, the visit of the wise men is celebrated in many churches as “Epiphany” on January 6th. The word “epiphany” means “manifestation” or “appearance”, and one definition of “light” is that it is “that which makes things known or apparent”, so we see that the wise men’s obedience to God’s leading meant that Jesus was “apparent” to them. In John 15:21 Jesus promises that if we love Him and keep His commands, He will love us and show Himself to us. As for “how long” it took the wise men to travel to find baby Jesus, we don’t know that either, but since Herod ordered that “all boys two and under” were to be killed, it may be that Jesus was almost two years old. Maybe it took the wise men many months to reach Jerusalem and then go to Bethlehem.

We also don’t know how many wise men came to see Jesus; people assume there were three because Matthew 2:11 says “Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh.” There were also many stories told about the wise men after the first century; many of the stories were fanciful and inaccurate. There was a sixth century story that is still told today that gave the wise men the names “Casper, Melchior and Balthazar”, assuming there were three of them. Halley’s Bible Handbook points out, however, that the thousand mile journey of the wise men would have been very difficult and unsafe and would have probably required a large entourage of wise men and their servants. Halley also mentions that the wise men seem to have attracted some attention in Jerusalem, and that that they might have been ignored if there had only been a few of them. They were asking, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?” (Matthew 2:2). King Herod, who wanted to be the only king and didn’t really care about God’s choice of king, heard about the wise men’s question, and summoned the chief priests and teachers of the law. They informed him that Micah 5:2 said “But you, Bethlehem...out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times [or from the days of eternity].” Herod pretended to also want to worship Jesus, and asked the wise men to report back to him when they found “the king of the Jews” in Bethlehem. God protected Jesus and His family, however, and the wise men, who really were wise, did not tell Herod where Jesus was.

Maybe the rich gifts the wise men gave to Jesus make people think of the wise men as “kings”. Gold was a gift for a king; it was regarded as most precious. Frankincense, made from a tree resin, was used in the worship of God (Leviticus 2:1). It is mentioned in Revelation 8:3 as a symbol of prayer also. Myrrh was a pungent smelling gum used for perfume and for embalming; it may symbolize death and resurrection. The precious gifts of the wise men foretold Jesus’ life, death and resurrection.

Isaiah 60:3 seems to predict the worshipful visit of the wise men; it says “Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.” The wise men faithfully followed the “light” God gave them as they sought for the “king of the Jews”, the promised Son of God, who would be our Savior from sin. They gave their best gifts to Jesus. We too will find Him if we seek Him with all our will and strength and desire, and God asks us to give ourselves totally to Him in loving obedience.

Biblical Background — Innkeeper

Luke 2: 4-7 is the only place in the Bible that mentions the role of the inn or the innkeeper. There have been many stories about what people have "guessed" must have gone on the night Joseph and Mary came into Bethlehem looking for a place to stay.

There are even some cultures that have a special traditions to highlight this small, ambiguous part of the story. For example, The Mexican culture participates in the ritual of La Posadas. Beginning on December 16th, and continuing through the next eight evenings until Christmas Eve, they reenact the Holy Family’s search for shelter (La Posadas literally meaning, "inns"). In each of the first eight La Posadas family members, representing innkeepers and pilgrims, play out the story of frustration on the road to Bethlehem. To Joseph’s every inquiry comes the same answer, "No room at the inn." But then, miraculously on Christmas Eve, the final innkeeper recognizes the holy couple and joyfully offers them shelter. In some parts of the country the "pilgrims" travel from house to house, visiting friends and asking the traditional La Posadas question: "Who will give shelter to those travelers who come with their songs of walking the roads?" In either case, the ritual ends on Christmas Eve, with song, celebration, and –to the great delight of children from Mexico City to Santa Fe—the game of the piñata.

Workshop Overview

GARDEN OF EATIN'

OVERVIEW

The children will listen to a book recounting the Nativity story from the angels' point of view, then make angel cut-out Christmas cookies

MATERIAL LIST

- Angel costume (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Bright Christmas, An Angel Remembers by Andrew Clements (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Baking sheets (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Roll of ready-made Pillsbury sugar cookie dough (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Angel cookie cutters (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Pam cooking spray (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Spatula (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Colored sprinkles (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Paper plates and napkins (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Rolling pin (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Bibles (children to bring)

ROOM SET-UP

This rotation is conducted in the church kitchen.

TABERNACLE

OVERVIEW

The children will understand Mary's account of the first Christmas by listening to a story told by first-person "Mary" and by making a box filled with symbols of the first Christmas.

MATERIAL LIST

- Mary costume (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Mary's Treasure Box, by Carolyn Walz Kramlich (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Bibles (children to bring)
- Cardboard craft boxes; one per child (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Straw; 3 pieces per child (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Bag of cotton balls (workshop coordinator to provide)
- White fabric square; one per child (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Gold coins; one per child (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Toy Flute; one per child (workshop coordinator to provide)

- Treasure Box Contents List; one per student (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Scotch tape (workshop coordinator to provide)
- CD of “Mary Did You Know?” song, by Eden band. (workshop coordinator to provide)
- CD player (workshop coordinator to provide)

ROOM SET-UP

This rotation will take place in the Tabernacle room.

PRAY PER VIEW

OVERVIEW

The children will listen to a story and watch a video about the shepherd’s response to Jesus’ birth.

MATERIAL LIST

- Shepherd costume (workshop coordinator to provide)
- The Shepherd’s Christmas Story, by Dandi Daley Mackall (workshop coordinator to provide)
- TV/VCR
- Video-“Christmas Is”, by Vision Video (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Popcorn already popped (provided in room)

ROOM SET-UP

Theater seating in Pray Per View room

THOU ART

OVERVIEW

The children will listen to the story of the Wise Men to understand why we give gifts at Christmas. They will make gift certificate booklets and gift bags to remind them to share their gifts with others.

MATERIAL LIST

- Wiseman costume (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Bibles (children to bring)
- Colored 3x5 index cards; 4 per student (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Colored markers (teacher to provide from supply closet)
- White craft bags; one per student (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Do-A-Dot markers (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Glitter (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Elmer’s Glue (teacher to provide from supply closet)
- Chart Paper (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Hole punch (workshop coordinator to provide)

- Yarn (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Scissors (teacher to provide from supply closet)

ROOM SET-UP

Tables with plastic tablecloths in Thou Art room

OUR ACTS

OVERVIEW

The children will re-enact the story of the innkeeper using a script.

MATERIAL LIST

- Copies of script for “The Innkeeper’s Busy Night”; one copy per child (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Highlighters (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Costumes: Mary, Joseph, Shepherds, Innkeeper, Kings (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Props: two adult size blankets, one pillow, one sleeping bag, one baby blanket, large yellow cardboard star, baby doll, wooden manger (workshop coordinator to provide)

ROOM SET-UP

Room with tables and chairs

GARDEN OF EATIN'

OBJECTIVE:

- The children will understand the Nativity story from the angel's point of view by baking angel cut-out Christmas cookies
- The children will listen to an "angel" tell the story of the First Christmas.

MATERIALS:

- Angel costume (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Bright Christmas, An Angel Remembers by Andrew Clements (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Baking sheets (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Roll of ready-made Pillsbury sugar cookie dough (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Angel cookie cutters (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Pam cooking spray (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Spatula (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Colored sprinkles (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Paper plates and napkins (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Rolling pin (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Bibles (children to bring)

LESSON:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees before class begins.

Roll out cookie dough before class begins.

Teacher needs to dress in the angel costume before children arrive.

Welcome the children and ask:

- Who am I dressed as today?
- What important job did the angels have on the night Jesus was born?
- What do you think it would be like to BE an angel?

Say: Today we are going to imagine what it was like to be an angel on that very special night when Jesus was born. Let's open our Bibles and read Luke's version of what happened that night.

Read: Luke 2: 7-14.

Say: Now we are going to bake angel cookies to help us remember the angel's important role in the First Christmas.

Have children wash their hands.

Let children take turns cutting out an angel cookie out of cookie dough. (one per child)

Let children put sprinkles on their cookie.

Spray the baking sheet lightly with Pam, then bake the cookies for 10 minutes in the 350 degree oven.

Have the kids wash up and then sit on the floor to hear a story.

Read: Bright Christmas, An Angel Remembers to the class.

Ask:

- Would you have liked to have been an angel on that special night?
- The angels sang, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace." Name three things you can do this week to act like an angel and be a peace maker.
- How would this make God happy?

After the cookies are baked, let them cool, then let the children eat and enjoy.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Dear God, Thank you for the message of the angels on that special night when Jesus was born. Help us to spread your message of peace and love. Amen.

TABERNACLE

OBJECTIVE:

- The children will understand Mary's perspective of the First Christmas.
- The children will listen to a story told by "Mary", then will create Mary's treasure box.

MATERIALS:

- Mary costume (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Mary's Treasure Box, by Carolyn Walz Kramlich (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Bibles (children to bring)
- Cardboard craft boxes; one per child (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Straw; 3 pieces per child (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Bag of cotton balls (workshop coordinator to provide)
- White fabric square; one per child (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Gold coins; one per child (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Toy Flute; one per child (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Treasure Box Contents List; one per student (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Scotch tape (workshop coordinator to provide)
- CD of "Mary Did You Know?" song, by Eden band. (workshop coordinator to provide)
- CD player (workshop coordinator to provide)

LESSON:

Welcome the children. Speak in the first person. You ARE Mary!

Ask:

- Who am I?
- What do you already know about my (Mary's) part in the Christmas story?
- How do you think I felt when I found out I was going to be the mother of Jesus?
- Does anyone know where in the Bible we should turn to read about the time when the angel Gabriel told me I was going to be the mother of Jesus?

Have a volunteer read Luke 1: 26-33 to the class.

Say: I have another story to read to you. This is about my treasure box, which is full of reminders of Jesus and the First Christmas. After I am done reading, you are going to make your own treasure box to take home with you.

Read: Mary's Treasure Box to the class. Pass around the straw, white fabric, cotton, gold coins, and toy flute as they are mentioned in the story.
Say: We are now going to make our own treasure boxes.

Give each child one box and one table of contents sheet. Review the meaning of the items that will go inside the treasure box.

Pass around scotch tape so children can tape the table of contents inside the box lid.

Pass around the straw, cotton balls, fabric squares, gold coins, and plastic flutes.

Have the children fill their boxes with treasure that will remind them of the First Christmas. (Each child should take 2-3 pieces of straw, 2 cotton balls, 1 fabric square, 2 gold coins, and 1 plastic flute.)

*Optional: Play CD of "Mary Did You Know?" song as children are compiling their treasure chests.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Dear God, thank you for Mary, the mother of Jesus. As we take home our treasure boxes and prepare for Christmas, help us to be reminded of the miracle of Jesus' birth. Amen.

Treasure Box
Table of Contents

STRAW...To remind me of Jesus' manger bed

COTTON...To remind me of the shepherds, who heard the message, believed it,
then looked for and found Jesus.

WHITE BLANKET...To remind me of the special baby born on Christmas

GOLD COINS...To remind me of the wise men, who traveled a long way,
following a star.

FLUTE...To remind me of the shepherd's gift of music

PRAY PER VIEW

OBJECTIVE:

- The children will watch a video & listen to a story about the shepherds
- The children will discuss the importance of the shepherds in bringing the message of the birth of Jesus to the world.

MATERIALS:

- Shepherd costume (workshop coordinator to provide)
- The Shepherd's Christmas Story, by Dandi Daley Mackall (workshop coordinator to provide)
- TV/VCR
- Video-"Christmas Is", by Vision Video (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Popcorn already popped (provided in room)

LESSON:

Teacher puts on shepherd costume prior to class. Teacher pops popcorn prior to class.

Welcome the children and ask:

- Who am I dressed as today? What is a shepherd?
- What important job did the shepherds have on the First Christmas?
- What do you think it would have been like to be out in a field and have an angel appear? What would you be thinking?

Say: Today we will be watching a video about a boy who didn't want to be a shepherd in a Christmas play. He didn't think the shepherds were very important. In a dream he is able to go back in time 2000 years to the night when Jesus was born. Let's see if he learns just how important the shepherds really were.

Show the video. (22 minutes long) Pass out popcorn during the movie.

Ask:

- What did Benji learn about the role of the shepherds?
- How did Benji act like a modern day shepherd? (He told his friend to come and see the play)
- What does this story tell us about how to be a good shepherd?

If time permits, conclude the class by reading the book The Shepherd's Christmas Story.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Thank you God for the shepherds who brought the great message of Jesus to the world. Help me to be a good shepherd and share the news of Christ. Amen.

THOU ART

OBJECTIVE:

- The children will listen to the story of the Wise Men to understand why we give gifts at Christmas.
- The children will make gift certificate booklets and gift bags to remind them to share their gifts with others.

MATERIALS:

- Wiseman costume (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Bibles (children to bring)
- Colored 3x5 index cards; 4 per student (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Colored markers (teacher to provide from supply closet)
- White craft bags; one per student (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Do-A-Dot markers (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Glitter (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Elmer's Glue (teacher to provide from supply closet)
- Chart Paper (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Hole punch (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Yarn (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Scissors (teacher to provide from supply closet)

LESSON:

Teacher needs to dress in the Wiseman costume prior to the lesson.

Welcome the students and ask:

- Who am I dressed as today?
- What do you already know about the Wise Men?
- Why do we give gifts at Christmas?

Say: Let's open our Bibles to Matthew Chapter 2. This is the only book of the Bible that tells the story of the wise men.

Read together: Matthew 2: 1-14.

Ask:

- What were the very first Christmas presents that the wise men gave to Jesus?
- Do presents have to be things that we buy?
- Can you think of some ways you can give a gift to others without spending any money?

Write on chart paper: Ideas of non-monetary gifts. (set the table for a whole week, make your bed without being asked, send a note/picture to your grandparents, share toys with your sister/brother)

Say: Today we are going to make gift certificate booklets to give as Christmas presents to our loved ones. We are going to decorate gift bags and place our completed booklets inside the bags.

Show examples of completed gift certificates and completed bags.

A sample certificate might say:

"I will make my bed for one whole week without being reminded."

Or: "I will share my Legos with my sister for one hour after lunch each day."

At tables: (Make sure tables are covered with tablecloths)

Half of the students can decorate the white gift bags with glitter and dot markers. The other half of the class can start on their gift certificates.

Once students have written four certificates, punch a hole in the corner of each index card and tie the cards together with yarn.

Make sure that all students have a chance to make both the gift certificates and the gift bags.

Students should place their completed booklets inside their decorated gift bags and take them home to give as a Christmas gift.

If time permits, ask children to share their completed booklets with the class.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Dear God, Help us to share our gifts with others. Just as you showed the wise men the way to Jesus, show us the way to give the gifts of time and love this Christmas. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

OUR ACTS

OBJECTIVE:

- The children will re-enact the story of the innkeeper using a script.

MATERIALS:

- Copies of script for “The Innkeeper’s Busy Night”; one copy per child (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Highlighters (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Costumes: Mary, Joseph, Shepherds, Innkeeper, Kings (workshop coordinator to provide)
- Props: two adult size blankets, one pillow, one sleeping bag, one baby blanket, large yellow cardboard star, baby doll, wooden manger (workshop coordinator to provide)

LESSON:

Welcome the children. Explain that they are going to act out the night that Mary and Joseph came to Bethlehem looking for a place to stay.

Say: What book of the Bible tells the story of the innkeeper?

Have students find Luke 2: 4-7 in their Bibles. Read the scripture together.

Say: This is the only place in the Bible that mentions the role of the innkeeper. There have been many stories about what people have “guessed” must have gone on the night Mary and Joseph came into Bethlehem. Today we are going to act out our own “drama” of a possible exchange between the innkeeper and the visitors who came to see the baby Jesus.

Distribute scripts and assign parts. Pass out highlighters so students can highlight their parts so it will be easy to follow along.

Have the entire group practice making the sound effects before beginning to read.

Distribute costumes.

Act out the play!

Discuss what seems realistic and what doesn’t about the play.

CLOSING PRAYER:

God, thank you for the First Christmas and the gift of your Son Jesus. Help us to make room in our hearts for the message of Christmas. Amen.

THE INNKEEPER'S BUSY NIGHT

Characters:

Narrator 1

Mary & Joseph

Narrator 2

Shepherds

Innkeeper

Kings

Sound effects:

KNOCK DOOR SHUTS DOOR SLAMS

COVERS SWISH BED CREAKS SINGING

STAIR STEPS SNORING "Glo-ooo-ooo-ria"

FLAPPING NOISES DOOR CREAK

MATCH STRIKE CURTAINS SWISHING

FOOTSTEPS Groggy People/Rejoicing People

Narrator 1: There was nothing the innkeeper liked more than a good night's sleep.

Innkeeper: (Yawns.)

Narrator 2: But one night there was a knock at the door. Sound effect: KNOCK

Narrator 1: The innkeeper got out of bed, Sound effect:COVERS SWISH

Stumbled down the stairs, Sound effect: STAIRSTEPS

Lit his lamp, Sound effect: MATCH STRIKE

And opened the door. Sound effect: DOOR CREAKS

Mary & Joseph Hello, sorry to bother you, but we're in desperate need of a place to stay the night.

Innkeeper: No room.

Mary & Joseph: But we're tired and have traveled through night and day.

Innkeeper: There's only the stable around the back. Here's two blankets. Sign the register.

Narrator 2: So they signed it.

Mary & Joseph: Mary and Joseph.

Narrator 1: The innkeeper shut the door, Sound effect: DOOR SHUTS

Climbed the stairs, Sound effect: STAIR STEPS

Got into bed, Sound effect: BED CREAKS
and went to sleep. Sound effect: SNORING

Narrator 2: But then later, there was another knock at the door. Sound effect:
KNOCK

Narrator 1: The innkeeper got out of bed, Sound effect: COVERS SWISH
Stumbled down the stairs, Sound effect: STAIRSTEPS
Lit his lamp, Sound effect: MATCH STRIKE
And opened the door. Sound effect: DOOR CREAKS

Joseph: Excuse me. I wonder if you could lend us another, smaller blanket?

Innkeeper: There. One smaller blanket.

Narrator 1: The innkeeper shut the door, Sound effect: DOOR SHUTS
Climbed the stairs, Sound effect: STAIR STEPS
Got into bed, Sound effect: BED CREAKS
and went to sleep. Sound effect: SNORING

Narrator 2: But then, a bright light woke him up.

Narrator 1: He went downstairs, Sound effect: STAIR STEPS
opened the door, Sound effect: DOOR CREAKS
walked outside, Sound effect: FOOTSTEPS
and looked up.

Innkeeper: (surprised) What in the--?

Narrator 2: Up in the sky was the biggest, brightest star that the world has ever
known. It was as light as day.

Innkeeper: Great. That's all I need!

Narrator 1: Then he shut the door, Sound effect: DOOR SHUTS
Climbed the stairs, Sound effect: STAIR STEPS Drew the curtains, Sound effect:
CURTAINS SWISHING Got into bed, Sound effect: BED CREAKS
and went to sleep. Sound effect: SNORING

Narrator 2: But then there was another knock at the door.
Sound effect: KNOCK

Narrator 1: The innkeeper got out of bed, Sound effect: COVERS SWISH
Stumbled down the stairs, Sound effect: STAIR STEPS
Lit his lamp, Sound effect: MATCH STRIKE
And opened the door. Sound effect: DOOR CREAKS

Shepherds: We are three shepherds.

Innkeeper: Well, what's the matter? Lost your sheep?

Shepherds: We've come to see Mary and Joseph.

Innkeeper: AROUND THE BACK.

Narrator 1: Then he shut the door, Sound effect: DOOR SHUTS
Climbed the stairs, Sound effect: STAIR STEPS Got into bed, Sound effect: BED
CREAKS
and went to sleep. Sound effect: SNORING

Narrator 2: But then there was yet another knock at the door. Sound effect:
KNOCK

Narrator 1: The innkeeper got out of bed, Sound effect: COVERS SWISH
Stumbled down the stairs, Sound effect: STAIRSTEPS
Lit his lamp, Sound effect: MATCH STRIKE
And opened the door. Sound effect: DOOR CREAKS

Kings: We are three kings. We've come---

Innkeeper: AROUND THE BACK!!!

Narrator 1: He slammed the door, Sound effect: DOOR SLAMS
Climbed the stairs, Sound effect: STAIR STEPS Got into bed, Sound effect: BED
CREAKS
and went to sleep. Sound effect: SNORING

Narrator 2: But then, a chorus of singing woke him up. Sound effect: sing "Glo-
oooo-o-oooo-o-
oooo-o-ria!"

Innkeeper: ALL RIGHT—THAT DOES IT!

Narrator 1: So he got out of bed, Sound effect: COVERS SWISH
Stomped down the stairs, Sound effect: LOUD STAIR STEPS
Threw open the door, Sound effect: DOOR BANGS
Went around the back Sound effect: FOOTSTEPS
Stormed into the stable, and was just about to speak when....

EVERYONE (except innkeeper) SHHH!

Narrator 2: whispered everybody.

EVERYONE (except innkeeper) You'll wake the baby!

Innkeeper: Baby? Baby?!

Shepherd: Yes, a baby has this night been born.

Innkeeper: Oh? (grumbles a little)

Narrator 1: The innkeeper looked crossly into the manger.

Narrator 2: And just at that moment, suddenly, amazingly, his anger seemed to fly away.

Sound Effect: FLAPPING NOISES

Innkeeper: Oh....isn't he ...beautiful!

Narrator 1: In fact, he thought the baby was so special...

Narrator 2: He woke up all the guests in the inn.

Innkeeper: Hey, everybody, come and see, come and see... Wake up, wake up, ...come and see...

Sound Effect: Groggy People waking up, "huh? What's all the fuss, etc."

Narrator 1: He was so proud that he wanted them all to come and look at the baby, too.

Narrator 2: No one got much sleep that night.

Sound Effect: Rejoicing and singing "Joy to the World"

THOU ART

OBJECTIVE

The children will listen to the story of the Wise Men to understand why we give gifts at Christmas. They will make gift certificate booklets and gift bags to remind them to share their gifts with others.

MATERIALS

Wise Man Costume
Bibles
Coupon worksheets
Scissors
Red and green construction paper
Stapler
Crayons
Markers
White craft bags; one per student
Christmas self-inking stampers
Christmas stickers

LESSON

Teacher needs to dress in the Wise Man costume prior to the lesson.

Welcome the students and ask:

- Who am I dressed as today?
- What do you already know about the Wise Men?
- Why do we give gifts at Christmas?

Say: Let's open our Bibles to Matthew Chapter 2. This is the only book of the Bible that tells the story of the wise men.

Read together: Matthew 2: 1-14.

Ask: What were the very first Christmas presents that the wise men gave to Jesus?

- Do presents have to be things that we buy?
- Can you think of some ways you can give a gift to others without spending any money?

Write on chalkboard: Ideas of non-monetary gifts. (set the table for a whole week, make your bed without being asked, send a note/picture to your grandparents, share toys with your sister/brother)

Say: Today we are going to make gift certificate booklets to give as Christmas presents to our loved ones. We are going to decorate gift bags and place our completed booklets inside the bags.

Show examples of completed gift certificates and completed bags.
A sample certificate might say:

“I will make my bed for one whole week without being reminded.”

Or: “I will share my Legos with my sister for one hour after lunch each day.”

At tables: (Make sure tables are covered with tablecloths)

Half of the students can decorate the white gift bags with stamps and stickers.
The other half of the class can start on their gift certificates.

Once students have filled out 4-6 gift certificates, have them cut out the certificates, cut out a front and back cover out of construction paper, then staple the certificates inside the covers to make a booklet. Children can decorate the cover of their booklets with crayons, markers, or stamps.

Make sure that all students have a chance to make both the gift certificates and the gift bags.

Students should place their completed booklets inside their decorated gift bags and take them home to give as a Christmas gift.

CLOSING

If time permits, ask children to share their completed booklets with the class.

Pray: Dear God,

Help us to share our gifts with others. Just as you showed the wise men the way to Jesus, show us the way to give the gifts of time and love this Christmas.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.