MAIN IDEA
People in Bible times waited with anticipation for the coming of the Savior. During Advent, we wait and prepare to celebrate the birth of the promised Savior, Jesus. The coming of Jesus is the gift of Christmas, something we can remember and celebrate all year.

OBJECTIVES
Children will
- prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus;
- hear that Old Testament prophets foretold the coming of the Messiah;
- hear that as Christians, we believe that Jesus is that Messiah;
- recognize Advent as the name of a special time in the church year;
- hear that as Christians, we recognize Jesus as God’s greatest gift to all people;
- be able to locate the account of Jesus’ birth in Luke;
- hear and be able to tell the biblical story of Jesus’ birth;
- discover what it means to say that God is with us.
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* be able to locate the account of Jesus’ birth in Luke;
* hear and be able to tell the biblical story of Jesus’ birth;
* discover what it means to say that God is with us.

FOR ALL YOUR VOLUNTEERS

Photocopy these sections for ALL your volunteers:
* Main Idea; Objectives (page 3)
* Bible Story (page 4)
* Bible Background (page 5)
* Check Your Facts (page 6)
* Shepherd Tips (page 8)
BIBLE STORY

Micah 5:2-5a
The Old Testament prophet states that Bethlehem, one of the smallest cities in Judah, will be the birthplace of a great ruler of God’s people. A young woman will give birth to a son who will unite God’s people and bring peace.

Luke 2:1-21
In those days, Emperor Augustus ordered a census to be taken of all the people in the Roman Empire. According to tradition, each man returned to the town of origin of his family or clan. As a descendant of David, Joseph went from Nazareth to Bethlehem to be registered, since Bethlehem was the birthplace of David. Joseph took Mary, to whom he was engaged, with him. Mary was pregnant and due to give birth at any time.

When they arrived in Bethlehem, Mary gave birth to a son. She wrapped the baby in swaddling cloths as was the custom, and laid him in a feeding trough because there was no room for them in the inn.

Nearby, shepherds were watching their flocks of sheep that night, when the sky was filled with the light of the Lord and an angel appeared.

The angel said, “Do not be afraid; for see—I bring good news of great joy for all the people; to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord” (Luke 2:10-11).

The angel told the shepherds to go and look for a baby who was wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. The sky was then full of angels singing praises to God.

The shepherds left their flocks in the field and went in search of the child. They found Mary and Joseph and the baby in the manger. When they saw them, they went and told all who would listen, and people were amazed by what the shepherds said.

Mary kept these memories and thoughts in her heart. The shepherds then came back praising God and offering glory for all they had seen and heard.

Eight days later, the baby was circumcised and given the name Jesus, the name given to him by an angel before he was born.
BIBLE BACKGROUND

The story of Jesus’ birth is a story remembered and celebrated every year in the life of the church. Almost all of us have a vivid memory that comes to mind when we hear the Bible Verse for the lesson: “To you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord” (Luke 2:11).

Whether it is a memory of a child in a pageant, a Christmas Eve service, a parent reading the story around a fire, or Linus from the video A Charlie Brown Christmas, those words have the power to take us back to memories of Christmas days long ago.

The Journey to Bethlehem has many roads. The path of a young couple, going about the tasks of their lives, awaiting the birth of a first child winds through the hills and valleys on the weeklong trek from Nazareth to a simple birth in Bethlehem. The hurried sprint of shepherds still reeling from the sight of angels filling the sky finds its end beside a manger where the new baby has been laid. The later travels of scholarly minds from the East find a small toddler growing in the streets of this small town. The words of Old Testament prophets wind their way across parchment and scrolls to spring to life in the manger. There is no one single journey to Bethlehem; there are many journeys along many roads.

Each year, millions of us prepare our hearts and minds to take the journey back into the story of the birth of Jesus, God with us here on Earth.

It is a journey to a small town, with humble people.

It is a journey to find a poor family away from home.

It is a journey to see a newly born baby, wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.

It is a journey to the time when God, the all powerful, Creator of all, the great I Am, became one of us.

While there is much in the history of the story to be discussed and debated, the details of the Christmas story are not what keep us coming back year after year. The reason we journey to Bethlehem every year during the season of Advent is to remember the heart of the story: The Messiah, our Savior and God’s Son, Jesus was born! The greatest story ever told began with the simplest beginning ever imagined:

- The anticipation of the young couple
- The joy of the new mother
- The excitement of the shepherds
- The promise of the prophets
- The image of a baby who brings peace to us all
These are the parts of the story that sweep us away and carry us along the road to Bethlehem year after year.

Come as we follow the shepherds to the side of the manger. Join the Journey to Bethlehem once again!

CHECK YOUR FACTS

- Micah predicted that the Messiah would come from Bethlehem in Micah 5:2.
- The Bible says that the Messiah would come from the line of David.
- Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem to register in a Roman census.
- Nazareth to Bethlehem is more than seventy miles, a four- to five-day journey over rough terrain. Since Mary was nine months pregnant, it probably took more than a week to walk.
- Mary might have ridden part of the way on an animal, but the Bible makes no mention of one. Since Mary and Joseph were poor, Mary most likely walked from Nazareth to Bethlehem.
- Baby Jesus was born soon after Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem.
- Mary wrapped Jesus in yards of swaddling cloths as was the custom for babies at that time.
- Some cultures still swaddle newborn babies.
- The Bible says Mary placed Jesus in a manger, a feeding trough for animals.
- The Bible does not say where the manger was. Tradition says the manger was in a cave, but it could have also been in a stable or a courtyard.
- In biblical times, babies often were born in places that seem unusual to us in modern times.
- The area around Bethlehem is known for its fertile hills and valleys.
- It was in the hills and valleys that the shepherds had their flocks.
- When King David was a child, he was the shepherd over his family’s sheep in the hills surrounding Bethlehem.
- Shepherds would sometimes sleep outside with their flocks in nice weather.
- The presence of the shepherds in the fields makes some scholars think that Jesus was actually born in the spring instead of the winter.
God chose to announce the birth of the Messiah to shepherds, who were considered by many to be poor and on the outside of society.

Some scholars say that it only makes sense that God would announce the Messiah from the line of David to the shepherds first.

Advent is a special season in the church year when we prepare for the coming of the Messiah.

Advent is defined as the arrival of something momentous.

Advent prepares us to remember the birth of Jesus and the arrival of the Messiah in the world.

Advent prepares us to welcome the presence of Jesus into our hearts.

Advent prepares us to look forward to the time when Jesus will come again.

ABOUT THE CHILDREN

Younger Children
Advent is a time when children are filled with the anticipation of Christmas. No month is longer for a child than the days in between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Children seem to almost vibrate with excitement.

Be extremely patient with younger children during this time. Allow yourself to be caught up in their excitement. Help them to connect to the story of the shepherds, who were so excited about the good news of the angels that they dropped everything they were doing, left their sheep in the fields, and ran into Bethlehem to find the baby. Encourage the children to share stories about their excitement over Christmas. Encourage them to imagine how they would have felt if they had been there among the shepherds that first Christmas.

Older Children
Advent is often a stressful time for adults who get caught up in the hurried expectations of the Christmas season. In many ways, older children can be filled with similar anxieties during this time. Family stresses in terms of relationships, finances, and the loss of loved ones all become more visible and deeply felt during the Christmas season.

Older children pick up on these stresses, and often assume the worry for a whole host of problems during the holiday season. Be supportive of the children. Remind them of the promise of peace that comes with Christmas. Help them to see the stresses that had to be overcome by the people in the Christmas story. A young pregnant woman traveled many miles. A father searched for a dry warm place for the baby to be born. The shepherds were terrified by angels
appearing in the night sky. Most of the people in the Christmas story faced difficulty and stress. Still, for all of them, the story finds peace in the comforting sounds of a newborn baby lying in a manger. Help the children find their own sense of peace in the midst of the stress they face during the Christmas season.

**SHEPHERD TIPS**

- Pray each week for the children under your care.
- Model the behavior you want from the children.
- Assist the station leader as needed.
- Make sure the children use tools and equipment in a safe manner.
- Talk to the church school superintendent or coordinator if you have any questions or concerns about the children in your care.
- If you do not have a Gathering Time, consider using the Gathering Time devotionals as an opening with your groups in the stations.

**Greet the Children**

Help with nametags.

Thank the children for remembering to bring their offerings. Have the children place their offerings in the offering basket.

Take attendance. Note any children who are absent. Make plans to send absent children a note or card. Record names, addresses, and phone numbers of any children who are attending for the first time, and plan to call them or to send a welcoming card.

Read the **Talk Tips** in each of the station plans and support the station leader in helping the children explore the ideas of the unit.

**Staff Meeting**

Provide Christmas cookies and tea and lemonade as a snack.

Welcome the staff leaders to the meeting and encourage them to get refreshments.

Welcome the staff members.

Introduce the unit.

Sing “Emmanuel” (*Journey to Bethlehem CD*).


Introduce the information found in Bible Background for Leaders (page 5), Check Your Facts (pages 6–7), and About the Children (pages 7–8).
Say: Christmas is a hectic time for adults and children alike. As exciting and wonderful as the season of Advent is, all of the preparations and tasks can overwhelm us and overshadow the real story of Christmas.

Our goal is to create a getaway from the rest of the Christmas rush. During these next several weeks, we will be taking a Journey to Bethlehem to remember the mystery and wonder of the first Christmas. In the Storytelling Station, the children will be building imaginary machines designed to transport them back to Bethlehem at the time of the birth of Jesus. Throughout the stations, we will be finding ways to include the children in the story of Christmas.

Consider this your getaway, as well. Lead the children by example. Jump wholeheartedly into the activities and allow yourself to journey beside them as we all prepare to remember and celebrate the blessing of Bethlehem, Jesus Christ, God’s greatest gift to the world.

Read the book *Wombat Divine* by Mem Fox, recommended in the Storytelling Station.

Ask: What is Wombat’s goal in the story?

Does he reach his goal right away?

What do Wombat’s friends do in the story?

Say: Our goal is to find ways for every child to find his or her special place in the sharing of the Christmas story. Some children may be like Wombat, and will have a difficult time connecting at first. Our role as leaders is to offer the children reassurance and support as we accompany them on the journey to find their own places around the manger of Jesus.

Note: If this book is not available, select another resources from the Storytelling or Video Station.)

Review the stations to be used in this unit. Discuss any issues or questions the staff members may raise.

Close with a prayer for the children.
Reflection Week

Begin by singing “O Little Town of Bethlehem” (*Journey to Bethlehem CD*).

Announce the results of the Census Data Collection from the Science Station.

Have a series of four stations for the children to visit and enjoy:

- Create a live Nativity area. Use the characters from Gathering to create a live Nativity Scene. Allow the children to interact with and ask questions of the characters.
- Contact your local Future Farmer’s of America, and see if you can rent some animals to add to your live Nativity. Sheep, lambs, goats, cattle, and donkeys may have all been present. Have a Nativity petting zoo area for the children to enjoy.
- Have the floor map from the Games Station in one area and play the Nazareth to Bethlehem Hop.
- Decorate Chrismon Cookies from the Creative Cookery Station in one area.

Close by singing “Bethlehem” (*Journey to Bethlehem CD*).
If you use Gathering Time each week, plan a way for the children to form groups as they arrive. Ask the shepherds for each group to sit in the same area of the gathering place each week. Each group should have a different color flag, sign, or carpet square for identification. Ask the shepherds to visit with the children as they arrive, making them welcome and reminding them to stay with the group.

If you do not have a Gathering Time, review the activities suggested for these times as possibilities for additional activities in your stations.

SETTING THE STAGE

**Note:** You will need the following adult characters and costumes: *Francis of Assisi* – brown or beige alb or robe with rope tie; *Mary* – blue tunic dress and head covering; *Joseph* – brown or beige tunic or robe with rope tie; *Innkeeper* – brown or beige tunic or robe with rope tie; *Angel* – white tunic or alb and gold rope tie; two or three *shepherds* – brown or beige tunic or robe with rope tie. At the front of the room, create a manger setting for a live Nativity. Paint a stable scene onto the tarp, or use a stable backdrop or frame that you already have. Place a manger in the middle of the area with hay bales around the manger. Break up some of the hay from the bales and spread it around the floor of the area. For Week 5, wrap a baby doll in swaddling cloths following the directions for “Swaddling the Baby” found in the Science Station (page 65). For Weeks 7 and 8, place a stepladder at the back of the stable scene for the angel.

**Each Week**

Invite adults who enjoy doing dramatic presentations to be Francis, Mary, Joseph, Innkeeper, the Angel, and two shepherds. Provide them with costumes and the suggested scripts for their characters. Provide the lyrics to the children.
Gathering Activities

Week 1

◆ Sing “O Little Town of Bethlehem” (Journey to Bethlehem CD).

◆ Francis enters at the end of the song, looking concerned. He walks to the manger area and examines the empty Nativity scenery.

Francis: (Shakes head and looks discouraged) Empty. Christmas has become so empty. They just don’t get it. The people don’t understand. (Notices the crowd of children) Oh, hello there. I didn’t see you out there. Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Francis and I live in the town of Assisi in Italy in the year of our Lord, 1223. I am a monk, and I am afraid I have a bit of a dilemma. You see, I have been trying to get people excited about Christmas, but nobody knows the real story of Christmas anymore. As often as I tell the story or read the Scriptures, people just don’t seem to understand what I mean. They have no way to relate to a story that happened over 1200 years ago. It is almost as if they can’t imagine what it might have been like on that very first Christmas night.

Hmmm. Imagine what it must have been like... That gives me an idea. Maybe there is a way to go back in time on a Journey to Bethlehem. What a great idea! Maybe just maybe, I can make this happen. Well, I must be off to see how I can bring this new idea to life. Until next time my friends, may the blessings of Bethlehem grow in your heart.

Dismiss the children to go to their Stations.

Week 2

◆ Sing “O Little Town of Bethlehem” (Journey to Bethlehem CD).

◆ During the singing, Mary enters and sits silently on a hay bale next to the manger in the stable scene. She bows her head.

At the end of the song, Francis runs in excitedly, stops in front of the manger area, and turns to address the children.

Francis: (Excited) I’ve got it! I’ve got it! I know how to put the life in Christmas! I will make Assisi see the true meaning of Christmas! I will bring Christmas to life! (Raises arms in triumph) I will make the Nativity scene come to life and then people will understand. I can almost hear Mary now...

Mary: (Raises head and looks at the children) I will never forget this night as long as I live. Joseph and I are so tired. We have traveled for many days from Nazareth to Bethlehem, and all we want is to find a nice quiet place to rest. Being pregnant, I was not able to travel as quickly as some of the other people and Joseph and I lagged to the back of the caravan. When we got into town, Joseph tried the inn, but it was full with all the people who got here before us. Joseph told me to wait here. He has gone to find some help for me. We think the baby may come tonight. I’m just glad that the baby didn’t come while we were on the road. To be honest, I’m a little scared, but I know God is with us. God led us to this safe warm place; God will keep us safe. (Mary bends her head down again as if in prayer.)

Francis: Yes! That will help them understand. The sight and words of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, will help people remember. Well, there is more work to be done. So, goodbye for now and may the blessings of Bethlehem grow in your heart.

Dismiss the children to go to their Stations.
Week 3

- Sing “O Little Town of Bethlehem” (Journey to Bethlehem CD).
- During the singing, Joseph enters and sits beside the manger. After sitting, he bows his head as if in prayer.

After the song, Francis walks in humming the tune of “O Little Town of Bethlehem.” He stops in front of the manger scene and turns to face the children.

**Francis**: Francis of Assisi here, and I’m honored to see you all again. I almost feel as if we are traveling companions journeying back to Bethlehem together every time we meet. Which reminds me, I think Joseph needs to have a voice in our story. His role as the earthly father of Jesus is so often overlooked and misunderstood. People don’t remember nearly enough about him.

**Joseph**: (Stands) Hello, I’m Joseph. And I have an amazing story to tell you. Tonight Mary is back there with the midwives giving birth to a baby, a son actually. You’re wondering how I know it’s a boy when he hasn’t even been born yet. You see, an angel told me! The angel said the baby will be the Messiah, God’s one true son. I am to name him Jesus. He will be Immanuel, God with us here on Earth. (Sits down and ponders) Now that’s amazing.

**Francis**: (Looks up as if making a mental list in his head) Mary, check. Joseph, check. The soon to be baby, yes. Okay who else? Who else will we need? This is going to be great. The people of Assisi will never forget this Christmas. Well, I’m off to find more characters for my Nativity. Until next time my friends, may the blessings of Bethlehem grow in your heart.

- Dismiss the children to go to their Stations.

Week 4

- Sing “O Little Town of Bethlehem” (Journey to Bethlehem CD).
- At the end of the singing, Francis wanders in as if deep in thought. He stops in front of the manger scene and turns to face the children.

**Francis**: Greetings, friends. It is Francis of Assisi again. One part of the Christmas story has always bothered me. What type of person would turn away a young woman who was about to give birth to a child? Surely the person could have found some way to bring the young couple into his inn, don’t you think? Hmm, I wonder...

(The Innkeeper enters carrying a tray filled with bread, cheese, grapes, and a pitcher with two mugs. He hurries over to the empty manger scene.)

**Innkeeper**: (Softly) Hello? Hello? Is anyone here? (Looks around the manger) Perhaps they have fallen asleep. They must have been very tired. I wish I could have given them a better place to stay, but there were already three other families staying in our family quarters at the Inn. I don’t know how I could have made more room.

I heard they called for the midwives earlier. Perhaps the young one has been born. I won’t bother them now. I will leave this food for them, here and check on them again in the morning. (Innkeeper leaves quietly.)

**Francis**: Yes, there is so much about this story we don’t know. But perhaps it is time for all of us to go and learn more about the things the Bible does say about that night. I have more people to find for my big scene. So until next time my friends, may the blessings of Bethlehem grow in your heart.

- Dismiss the children to go to their Stations.
Week 5

- Sing “O Little Town of Bethlehem” *(Journey to Bethlehem CD).*

- During the singing, Mary and Joseph enter. Mary is carrying a baby swaddled in cloths. Francis is right behind them, also singing. They all walk to the manger scene. Mary lays the baby in the manger and sits down on one of the bales. Joseph helps Mary and then sits down on the other side of the manger. Francis stands at the back of the manger. Francis speaks to the children.

  **Francis:** *(Stretches arms out toward the Holy family.)* So, pretty impressive, don’t you think? How could anybody look at a scene like this and not get the message of the Christmas story? A young woman, a young man, a simple place, and a beautiful child—this is the image of Christmas. *(Looks at Mary, Joseph, and the baby)* As the angel said to the shepherds, “To you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.” *(Looks around at the rest of the empty stable)* Angles? Shepherds? We are not done yet! There is still more to add. The angels, the shepherds, the excitement and joy of that night need to be here as well. I have more work to do. Come, my friends, let us go. Until we meet again, may the blessings of Bethlehem grow in your heart.

  *(Joseph stands and helps Mary to stand. He picks up baby Jesus from the manger and hands him to Mary. Mary, Joseph and Francis exit.)*

- Dismiss the children to go to their Stations.

Week 6

- Sing verse 1 of “Running to Bethlehem” *(Journey to Bethlehem CD).*

- Francis enters during the singing and goes to stand by the manger. Francis speaks to the children as the song ends.

  **Francis:** Greetings friends. You remember me, right. Yes, Francis of Assisi. I believe I have found the way to bring in the rest of the Christmas story. Last week, I showed you the beautiful Holy family with Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus, but I realized there was more to the story. While the Holy family was in the stable, there was a group of shepherds in the fields nearby.

  *(Shepherds walk in and sit on the ground off to one side.)*

The shepherds were sleeping in the fields watching their flocks by night, when suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared.

  *(The angel enters and goes to where the shepherds are. The shepherds back away from the angel in fear.)*

The shepherds were afraid, but then the angel spoke and gave the shepherd good news of great joy.

  **Angel:** *(To shepherds)* Do not be afraid of me; look at me—I am God’s messenger, bringing you good news of great joy for all the earth; to you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you. You will find the baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace to all God’s people. *(Angel exits)*

  **Francis:** Then the angel disappeared and the shepherds were left stunned and amazed. In their excitement, they abandoned their fields and ran off to find the Messiah, Mary’s baby is born in Bethlehem.

  *(Shepherds exit with excitement.)*

Yes, the angels and the shepherds have to have a place in the Nativity. Now, however,
it is time for you to be off again to learn more about the Journey to Bethlehem. For now, my friends, may the blessings of Bethlehem grow in your hearts.

* Dismiss the children to go to their Stations.

** Week 7 **

* Sing “O Little Town of Bethlehem” *(Journey to Bethlehem CD).*

* Mary and Joseph enter with the swaddled baby. They too are singing. Mary places the baby in the manger. Joseph and she take their seats by the manger. The shepherds and the angel enter, singing also. The shepherds go to the manger and kneel down before the baby. The angel goes and stands on a stepladder at the back of the stable scene. Francis enters, singing. He goes and stands in the middle of the stable scene behind the manger.

** Francis:** *(To children)* Well, friends, what do you think? I have successfully brought to life a scene portraying the night of the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Surely, the people of Assisi will be able to understand the story of Christmas now! No one will dare say that the Christmas story is an empty, meaningless story! Everyone will be able to experience the excitement, the mystery, and the awe of that wonderful night so many years ago. I can hardly wait to see how the town reacts to it all. Somehow, I think even the voices of heaven would approve of what we have done.

** Angel:** Glory to God in the highest! Peace on earth to all God's people. To you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.

** Francis:** Next time, my friends, I will tell you how the people of the town reacted to our beautiful Nativity. Now, however, you all must be going once again on a Journey to Bethlehem of your own. I will see you again soon, and may the blessings of Bethlehem grow in your heart.

Dismiss the children to go to their Stations.

** Week 8 **

Sing “O Little Town of Bethlehem” *(Journey to Bethlehem CD).*

* Characters enter in the same order as during Week 7.*

** Francis:** Well, my friends, the live Nativity was a great success! The people of Assisi were amazed by what we have done. The entire town gathered around the Nativity in wonder and sang songs about the birth of Jesus. What a wonderful night it was! I have decided that as long as I live, I, Francis of Assisi, will host a live Nativity every year. Some of the carpenters and artisans in town were so taken with the scene that they said someone should carve small statues to represent the different people of the Nativity and put them together in a set for people to have in their homes. Can you imagine that? Families in the church could someday have a Nativity set in their home to remind them of the story of Jesus’ birth. Wouldn’t that be wonderful! And all of it would be because we had the idea to put a little life into the Christmas story.

I cannot tell you what an honor it has been to travel with you back to the manger in Bethlehem. Do not forget the journey you have made, and wherever you go and whatever you do, my friends, may the blessings of Bethlehem grow in your hearts.

* Dismiss the children to go to their Stations.
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<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>People in Bible times waited with anticipation for the coming of the Savior. During Advent, we wait and prepare to celebrate the birth of the promised Savior, Jesus. The coming of Jesus is the gift of Christmas, something we can remember and celebrate all year.</td>
<td>Learning preference: logical physical verbal visual social</td>
<td>Mapping Christmas Journeys Caring for Baby Mapping the Journey 2 Collecting Census Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storytelling</td>
<td>People in Bible times waited with anticipation for the coming of the Savior. During Advent, we wait and prepare to celebrate the birth of the promised Savior, Jesus. The coming of Jesus is the gift of Christmas, something we can remember and celebrate all year.</td>
<td>Learning preference: verbal visual social</td>
<td>Nativity Tales Journey to Bethlehem Story Wall All Aboard to Bethlehem Wombat Divine Black Snowman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video</td>
<td>People in Bible times waited with anticipation for the coming of the Savior. During Advent, we wait and prepare to celebrate the birth of the promised Savior, Jesus. The coming of Jesus is the gift of Christmas, something we can remember and celebrate all year.</td>
<td>Learning preference: visual verbal social independent</td>
<td>A Charlie Brown Christmas Breaking News Christmas Is The Gift Music Video Select Your Own Video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Plan Ahead Supplies</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bibles</strong></td>
<td>□ posterboard □ markers and pencils (see station) □ paper (see station) □ table or desk □ Stop sign □ Nativity sets □ paints (see station)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pictures of abstract art by Wassily Kandinsky or Henri Matisse</td>
<td>□ brushes □ smocks □ crayons or colored pencils □ scissors □ lights (see station) □ brushes □ table coverings □ plastic tubes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Night of the Child by Robert Benson</td>
<td>□ smooth-sided, thick, column-shaped white candles □ paper towels □ pushpins □ candles (see station) □ newsprint/marker or chalkboard/chalk</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Polar Express by Chris Van Allsburg</td>
<td><strong>Symbols of Faith</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journey to Bethlehem</td>
<td><strong>Bibles</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Symbols of Faith</strong> by Marcia Stoner</td>
<td>□ computer □ printer □ pencils □ paper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Charlie Brown Christmas by Marcia Stoner</td>
<td>□ Internet access □ posterboard □ markers □ table or desk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The MESSAGE</strong></td>
<td>□ Stop sign □ CD player □ birth certificate paper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Black Snowman by Mem Fox</td>
<td><strong>Bibles</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wombat Divine by Mem Fox</td>
<td>□ world map □ map of North America</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journey to Bethlehem</td>
<td><strong>Abingdon’s Reproducible Maps</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbols of Faith by Marcia Stoner</td>
<td>□ table or desk □ Stop sign □ markers □ baby items (see station) □ construction paper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journey to Bethlehem</td>
<td>□ scissors □ transparency sheet □ cloth tarp □ tape or tacks □ pencil</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abingdon’s Reproducible Maps</td>
<td>□ permanent marker □ posterboard □ ruler □ 2 small rocks or stones □ index cards</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbols of Faith by Marcia Stoner</td>
<td><strong>Bibles</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journey to Bethlehem CD</td>
<td>□ CD player □ posterboard □ markers □ several hymnals □ several clean, small</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journey to Bethlehem sheet music</td>
<td>□ plastic soda bottles □ rolls of electrical tape in assorted colors □ several plastic beads □ scissors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journey to Bethlehem lyrics</td>
<td>□ carpet square for each child (if carpet squares are not available, use chairs)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Abingdon’s Reproducible Maps</strong></td>
<td>□ globe and map □ posterboard and cardboard □ table or desk □ Stop sign □ grass mats or blankets □ logs □ flashlight</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>map of North America world map</td>
<td>□ cellophane paper (see station) □ stool or fake boulder □ costume (see station) □ sticky gum or wall hangers □ pushpins □ string □ calculators and rulers</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wombat Divine by Mem Fox</td>
<td>□ 3’ by 3’ strips of muslin □ dolls □ olive oil and salt □ bowls □ soap □ baby blankets □ pencils (see station)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Black Snowman by Phil Mendez</td>
<td><strong>Bibles</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bible for Children</td>
<td>□ posterboard □ markers □ pencils □ table or desk □ Stop sign □ Nativity sets □ basket □ paper □ plastic tarp</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The MESSAGE by Eugene Peterson</td>
<td>□ appliance boxes □ cardboard tubes □ clean, recyclable plastic bottles of various sizes □ chenille sticks □ tissue paper □ wallpaper samples □ construction paper □ fabric scraps</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbols of Faith by Marcia Stoner</td>
<td>□ glue □ tape □ paper fasteners □ colored pencils □ mirrors on stands □ hole-punch □ yarn</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Bible</td>
<td>□ television □ VCR □ posterboard □ markers □ paper □ pencils □ table or desk □ Stop sign</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Charlie Brown Christmas VHS</td>
<td>□ Nativity sets □ colored pencils □ scissors □ tin lids or circles □ nails □ hammers □ Bible-times costumes □ costumes for reporters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Starlight Escape” from The Storykeepers Collection, Volume 2 DVD</td>
<td><strong>Bibles</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas Is DVD</td>
<td>□ DVD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Gift DVD</td>
<td>□ Journey to Bethlehem CD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journey to Bethlehem</td>
<td>□ station) □ log □ grass mats or blankets □ Stop sign □ table or desk □ posterboard and cardboard □ bowls □ plastic tins □ table coverings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ heart-shaped cookie cutters □ wooden stir sticks □ small paper cups □ new paint brushes □ smocks □ weathered pieces of wood</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Plan Ahead Supplies</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RESOURCES

Storytelling Resources
- 9780664221089  *The Family Story Bible* by Ralph Milton. $24.95.
- 9780395389492  *The Polar Express* by Chris Van Allsburg. $18.95.
- 9780687094752  *Symbols of Faith: Teaching Images of the Christian Faith* by Marcia Stoner. $18.00.
- 9780152020965  *Wombat Divine* by Mem Fox. $7.00.
- 9780687026159  *Abingdon’s Reproducible Maps*. $15.75.
- 9780835809481  *The Night of the Child: Photographs From the Upper Room Museum Nativity Collection* by Robert Benson. $25.00. (while copies last)

Music Resources
- *Journey to Bethlehem* music (CD, 9780687041619, $10.50).
- *Journey to Bethlehem* lyrics and sheet music.

Computer Resources
- 9780970206008  *Walking in Their Sandals 2.0* (CD-ROM). $32.00.
- *Word processing software* (available from your local computer store).
- X519559  *Christian ClickArt Deluxe* (CD-ROM) $32.00.
- 705381321798  *Kid Pix 4* (CD-ROM) $25.00.

Video Resources
- *A Charlie Brown Christmas* (VHS) (available at your local video rental store or public library).

Resources are constantly changing and going out of print. Websites are also constantly changing. Although all websites were checked at the time this unit was developed, you should double-check each site to verify that it is still live and that it is still appropriate for children before using it in an activity.

Go to [www.powerxpress.com](http://www.powerxpress.com) for any updated information and alternative activities.

*(Prices subject to change without prior notice.)*