

Sunday School Holiday Lesson Plans

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Palm Sunday

2-5 Years:

Opening Prayer: To welcome the start of the class. For example:

"Dear God. As we once again come together, help us to learn more about your work and how we can be better Christians. Amen"

Bible Story:

Tell the story of how Jesus made his entrance into the city of Jerusalem on a donkey on Palm Sunday. Tell of how the people put their cloaks over the donkey's back for Jesus to sit on, and branches down onto the road for the donkey to walk on. If you can't find an illustrated copy of this in the library for use in your class, use the bible but translate the bible story into a simple language that the little ones can understand.

Activity 1:

Create "donkey" by using a push-along animal toy, or hobby horse, or even a stool. Have a couple of the children use their coats (or any clothing/fabric you have available) to cover the "donkey's" back. Ask one child to be Jesus (nominate one if no-one comes forward) and have him/her sit on the "donkey". The other children should be given some green construction paper cut into palm leaf shapes of a size that will be seen on the floor when they lay them down. Divide the children into two groups which should each stand in a line facing each other.

"Jesus" and the "donkey" should move between the two lines and the children should be encouraged to shout "Hosanna" and to put their "palm branches" down for the donkey to move over.

Song: (to the tune of "Kumbaya")

Jesus came to town, Hosanna
Jesus came to town, Hosanna
Jesus came to town, Hosanna
Hosanna, Jesus came.

On a donkey rode, Hosanna
On a donkey rode, Hosanna
On a donkey rode, Hosanna
Hosanna, Jesus rode

All the people cheered, Hosanna
All the people cheered, Hosanna
All the people cheered, Hosanna
Hosanna, hear them cheer

Jesus came to town, Hosanna
Jesus came to town, Hosanna
Jesus came to town, Hosanna
Hosanna, Jesus came



Activity 2: This is a variation of the party game pin the tail on the donkey.

Prepare a large outline of a donkey on a large piece of paper and pin this to the wall at a height suitable for the children to be able to reach. Have a separate "cloak" that you want the children to stick on the donkey. This should have some way of being stuck to the donkey such as low-tack tape. Use a scarf to blind-fold the first child, take them to the picture, hand them the "cloak" and ask them to put the cloak on the donkey. Do this with each child in turn.

Closing Prayer: Thanking God for his son, Jesus Christ and for the fun of learning new things.
For example:

"Dear God, thank you for sending your son, Jesus Christ to walk among us. Thank you also for the fun of learning new things about his life. Amen."

6-8 Years:

Opening prayer: To welcome students to class and introduce the theme. Keep the prayer simple and easy for the children to learn so that it can be said as a group prayer rather than one that the leader says. For example:

"Dear God. We thank you for the chance to meet once again in your presence. Help us to learn more about your work and to understand how we can follow in your footsteps. Amen"

Bible Story:

Tell the story of Jesus entering Jerusalem on Palm Sunday to the children in the class. A picture book version isn't necessary but a simplified version of the story will put it into the understand level of the age group. If you have a children's bible that you use with your class, then this ought to be appropriate.

Drama:

Have the children act out the scene. Don't give them any formal script for this. Instead give them a sheet of paper with a list of "parts" and ask for a volunteer to "direct" the scene. Choose an older child for this role, someone who is good at organizing people, and then appoint yourself as deputy director and help your director to create his drama. The director will need to consult his cast about speaking parts and general casting, as well as keep to the plot - the bible story you told them earlier. Allow them enough time to organize, practice and then perform their scene. If time and physical constraints allow - consider letting them perform this for the younger children in the Sunday School.

Craft:

Draw a picture of a donkey onto a large piece of paper. Have the children color the picture using a mosaic style of clipping bits of colored paper. Guide them to put palm branches below the donkey's feet.

Closing Prayer:

Thanking God for his son, Jesus Christ and for the fun they have had recreating this story in his life. For example:

"Dear God, thank you for sending your son Jesus Christ to show us how we should live as Christians. Thank you also for the fun we have had today, recreating this story from Jesus' life. Amen."

9-11 Years:

Opening prayer: To welcome students to class and introduce the theme. Keep the prayer simple and easy for the children to learn so that it can be said as a group prayer rather than one that the leader says. For example:

"Dear God. We thank you for the chance to meet once again in your presence. Help us to learn more about your work and to understand how we can follow in your footsteps. Amen"

Bible Story:

From bible read about Jesus and his triumphant entry into Jerusalem. Next talk about the events of the rest of the week. If you have a book that condenses the week down into events happening each day - this would work best and would help with the activity.

Discussion: Talk about the importance of this week. Make sure that this is one class where the students leave understanding the Christian events rather than the contemporary parallels. As you go over the events that happened in the days leading up to the crucifixion, ask questions about the story you are telling to make sure that the students understand. You might want to think about the quiz activity so that you cover the answers to the questions that will be asked.

Activity 1: Have a large sheet of paper for named each day of the week from Palm Sunday to Good Friday. Split the students into groups and depending on the size of the class; give each group one or two sheets of the paper. In their groups have them write, or draw, (or both), the events that they remember happened on those particular days. If you have more 9 than 11 year olds in the class, you might want to give them a "master list" of events which have no day allocated on them, so that the students are reminded which events they need to have on the sheets when they are complete.

When all the groups are finished, pin all the sheets of paper on the wall and ask the class to check that the events are all listed in the right days - move those which aren't. Add any events that have been completely missed off.

Activity 2: Quick Quiz

Split the room into two groups of equal size. Give the following rules:

1. 2 points for a correct answer.
2. First answer counts.
3. No calling out the answer until you're asked or the other team gets the points.

Quiz Questions

1. What was the city called where Jesus entered triumphantly?
2. What did he enter it on?
3. What did the people call out as he passed?
4. Where did Jesus overturn the tables?
5. What kind of tree was withered by the side of the road?
6. What should be given to Caesar?
7. Who betrays Jesus?
8. How much was he paid?
9. How many disciples were at the last supper?
10. Who denied Jesus 3 times before the cock crowed?

To end the quiz ask the following question:

Who ordered that Jesus be crucified? Ask each of the students individually - some will say Pontius, and some will say the people. Allocate 1 point to each person in each team that gets the answer right.

Total up the scores and proclaim one team the winner.

Closing Prayer: Thanking God for sending his only son so that our sins might be forgiven. For example:

"Dear God, thank you for our fellowship today, and for what we have learned about Jesus' life. Thank you for sending your only son so that our sins may be forgiven. Amen."

12-14 Years:

Opening prayer: To welcome students to class and introduce the theme. Keep the prayer simple and easy for the students to learn so that it can be said as a group prayer rather than one that the leader says. For example:

"Dear God. We thank you for the chance to meet once again in your presence. Help us to learn more about your work and to understand how we can follow in your footsteps. Amen"

Bible Reading:

From Bible select a number of readings that tell the story of the week of events leading from Palm Sunday to Good Friday. Have each of the readings read by a different student, and ask if there is anything that the student's don't understand before going on to the next reading.

Discussion:

Have a timeline prepared of the major events that happened that week from the time that Jesus rode triumphantly into Jerusalem, to the time he was crucified on the cross. Go through this with the students. If possible, copy the timeline for each student as they will need it and a bible for their activity.

Activity: It's in the News!

This activity requires the students to put some modern thinking into events that happened all those years ago. Their activity is to create a newspaper front page as if they were a reporter at the time.

Provide each student with a sheet of paper, the timeline (if you're feeling generous, put the appropriate bible verse reference next to each item!) and a bible. Some colored pencils, pens and rulers should also be supplied if possible.

Using your timeline, they should choose an event, a day, or a summary of the week - reporting perhaps from the scene of the crucifixion and looking back over the week. Allow as much time as possible for this project.

Discussion:

Have each student show their "front page". If there's time, let the students each read their "scoop" report. If there's not, quickly go around the class and ask each student what event they chose, and what their opening headline is.

Closing Prayer: Thanking God for sending his only son so that our sins might be forgiven. For example:

"Dear God, thank you for our fellowship today, and for what we have learned about Jesus' life. Thank you for sending your only son so that our sins may be forgiven. Amen."

Mother's Day

2-5 Years:

Opening Prayer: To welcome the start of the class. For example:

"Dear God. As we once again come together, help us to learn more about your work and how we can be better Christians. Amen"

NOTE: Before starting today's lesson, if you have any children in your class who are without a mother that you make reference throughout the lesson to anyone who plays the mother's role - such as step moms, foster moms, grandmothers, aunts, and even single parent dads.

Story:

Today's theme is Mothers. Choose a story to read to the class that has a mother as the central character. Remind the children of Mary, the mother of Jesus.

Discuss:

What is a mother? What does a mother do? What makes a mother special? Ask the children to each tell you what they love most about their mother.

Game: ("Momma Says" - usually known as "Simon Says")

Stand all of the children in front of you so that you are facing them. You are "Momma". Give the children instructions such as "Momma says jump up and down" and the children are follow the instruction. However if "Momma" just says "jump up and down" the children should ignore the instruction and remain perfectly still. You can do this and have the children who move when they shouldn't sit down until you have a winner, or you can just keep going with the whole class for a specific period of time.

Song: (To the tune of "I love the sun that shines on me")

I love my mom, she cares for me,
God made my mom, and God made me.

I love my mom, she cooks for me,
God made my mom, and God made me.

I love my mom, she plays with me,
God made my mom, and God made me.

I love my mom, she prays with me,
God made my mom, and God made me.



Activity 2:

Make a card for Mom. You will need to supply construction paper folded into a card shape and onto which you have written the word "MOM" across the center. The children may find this easier if you draw a box around the word so that they know not to glue anything over the line. You will also need pictures of flowers/flower shapes that have been cut out of colored paper or magazines, glue, and a pen.

Give each child a card and place the craft supplies in the center of the table, but keep the pen! Use this to go around each child individually and either write for them, or help them write, their name inside the card.

Closing Prayer: Thanking God for mothers. For example:

"Dear God thank you for my mom who loves me and keeps me safe. Thank you for making sure she cares for me. Amen."

6-8 Years:

Opening prayer: To welcome students to class and introduce the theme. Keep the prayer simple and easy for the children to learn so that it can be said as a group prayer rather than one that the leader says. For example:

"Dear God. We thank you for the chance to meet once again in your presence. Help us to learn more about your work and to understand how we can follow in your footsteps. Amen"

NOTE: Before starting today's lesson, if you have any children in your class who are without a mother that you make reference throughout the lesson to anyone who plays the mother's role - such as step moms, foster moms, grandmothers, aunts, and even single parent dads.

Bible Verse:

Today is Mother's Day. Recite Exodus 20:12 to the class as here, or from your class bible:

"Honour your father and your mother so that you may live long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you."

Discussion 1:

What's special about mothers? Why should there be a Mother's Day? What do mother's do? Prompt a discussion about the importance of a mother's role within the family but allow the children to feed their thoughts into the chat. Try to ensure that all of the children have some input.

Drama:

Charades. Have each member of the class in turn mime one thing that a mom does.

Discussion 2:

Ask the class who the most important mother in the Bible is - you are looking for Mary, mother of Jesus, but acknowledge any reasonable answers (such as Eve) that you are given.

Ask what is special about each child's mother. What is the one thing that stands out from all of the other things that their mother does for them?

Activity:

Give each child a piece of construction paper that has been folded in half to create a card. You should also give them a heart shape that has been cut out of pink paper and is large enough to almost cover the front of the card. You will need to supply some glue to stick the hearts into place, and pens for the children to write with.

You should make one of these beforehand to show the class how to space out their writing so that the heart fits under the heading.

Ask the children to write at the top of the card: I love You Mom Because....

Then onto the heart they should write as many reasons as they can fit into the space available. Then they should stick the heart under the heading at the top of the card. Have them write "Happy Mothers Day Mom" and their name inside the card.

Closing Prayer: Thanking God for mothers (remember to make reference to other maternal people if you have anyone in your class that this would apply to). For example:

"Dear God, thank you God for creating mothers to love us. Thank you that we have someone to watch over us here on earth as you do from heaven. Amen"

9-11 Years:

Opening prayer:

To welcome students to class and introduce the theme. Keep the prayer simple and easy for the children to learn so that it can be said as a group prayer rather than one that the leader says. For example:

"Dear God. We thank you for the chance to meet once again in your presence. Help us to learn more about your work and to understand how we can follow in your footsteps. Amen"

NOTE: Before starting today's lesson, if you have any children in your class who are without a mother that you make reference throughout the lesson to anyone who plays the mother's role - such as step moms, foster moms, grandmothers, aunts, and even single parent dads.

Bible Verse:

Today is Mother's Day. Recite Exodus 20:12 to the class as here, or from your class bible:

"Honour your father and your mother so that you may live long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you."

Discussion 1:

What is a mother? What makes a mother special?

Activity 1:

Supply construction paper and art materials for the students to make a poster - they should write the words "Mothers are Special People" or "Thanks for Caring" in large letters as the centre of their poster and should create a frame around it with the art materials.

Discussion 2:

A mother nurtures. What does nurture mean? Who else plays a nurturing role? Family? Professionals? In what way do these people care for us?

Activity:

Print out the following word search so that each student has a copy. You will need to supply a pen/pencil to each student also.

Mother's Day Word Search

All of the words in the puzzle are things that can be associated with mothers. Can you find them all?

B	G	N	I	R	A	C	O	O	K
Y	R	D	N	U	A	L	X	R	N
T	H	P	K	T	D	E	E	J	U
C	G	M	P	C	V	A	R	U	R
N	U	R	M	E	I	N	A	I	T
S	H	O	P	P	C	A	H	T	U
L	C	O	O	S	E	B	S	R	R
U	A	D	O	E	V	O	L	U	E
S	E	S	I	R	P	R	U	S	T
F	T	V	E	E	W	K	Q	T	L

Advice
Caring
Clean
Cook
Hug
Laundry
Love

Nurture
Respect
Share
Shop
Surprises
Teach
Trust

Closing Prayer: Thanking God for those who nurture us. For example:

Dear God, thank you for creating moms to love and nurture us. Thank you also for others who help to take care of us, whether they are family members or professionals such as doctors and nurses. Teach us how we can learn from them so that we may care for others around us. Amen"

12-14 Years:

Opening prayer: To welcome students to class and introduce the theme. Keep the prayer simple and easy for the students to learn so that it can be said as a group prayer rather than one that the leader says. For example:

"Dear God. We thank you for the chance to meet once again in your presence. Help us to learn more about your work and to understand how we can follow in your footsteps. Amen"

NOTE: Before starting today's lesson, if you have any children in your class who are without a mother that you make reference throughout the lesson to anyone who plays the mother's role - such as step moms, foster moms, grandmothers, aunts, and even single parent dads.

Bible Verse:

Today is Mother's Day. Recite Exodus 20:12 to the class as here, or from your class bible:

"Honour your father and your mother so that you may live long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you."

Discussion 1:

Today is Mother's Day. Discuss first of all the importance of a mother, or maternal influence in our lives. Lead the discussion to how a mother provides for and nurtures her children.

Activity 1:

Give each student a piece of paper and either have the letters A-Z already written down the side, or ask them to write them before you start the activity.

The students should write down one word next to each letter - a word that describes something that a mother is, or usually does. Time the activity (5-10 minutes) and see who has the most letters covered when the time is up.

Discussion 2:

Focus the students firstly onto the nurturing role played by those around them - such as teachers, doctors - even farmers and other people involved in the food production industry. Then take the discussion more global and look at the role of organizations who provide a nurturing role to children on a worldwide scale - organizations such as UNICEF, Oxfam, Save the Children etc who provide food, shelter and clothing where possible to children who are living in poverty both in the US and overseas.

Activity 2:

Using publicity material and things printed from the Internet about the role of international organizations have the class create a poster which shows the nurturing role they play in our world. Pin the poster to the wall to remind the class that there are people who work to try and protect the children of the world from the social environment in which they live.

Closing Prayer: Thanking God for those who nurture and protect us. For example:

"Dear God, thank you for those in our world who nurture and protect us. Whether they are our mothers and family members who raise us, the doctors and teachers who take care of us, or the international organizations who try to make a difference in the lives of those children living in poverty, help them in their work so that they may continue to make the world a better place. Amen"

Easter Sunday

2-5 Years:

Opening Prayer: To welcome the start of the class. For example:

"Dear God. As we once again come together, help us to learn more about your work and how we can be better Christians. Amen"

Set up your room before your class arrives. Your theme this Easter Sunday is to great a party - a celebration - to emphasize the happiness that we feel now that the Lord has risen. Hang balloons, banners, etc. Create a festival atmosphere.

Bible Story:

This morning, either use a bible story book appropriate for this age group to tell the story of why Christians are so happy on Easter Sunday, or tell the story in your own words that a Sunday School class in this age group will understand. If you use a book where this is not the case, make sure that you emphasize the joy that we have on this day.

Activity: Play a few games - for example:

Stick the tail on the bunny - draw an outline of a rabbit and pin it on the wall at an appropriate height for the children to reach. Have a ball of tissue paper ready to use as the tail and then blind-fold each child in turn, take them to the drawing, give them the tissue paper tail, and have them stick it on where they think the tail is.

Treasure hunt - hide a few Easter related items, such as small decorative chicks or rabbits, or paper shaped as Easter eggs, etc around the room and have the children find them. Make sure these are not in obvious places that would be seen before the children were told to look for them. The child who finds the most should be awarded with a small prize such as bookmark.

Pass the parcel - you will need to have some music for this game such as a CD or tape player, and a small parcel that's wrapped. You can either wrap up something you will give as the prize to the winning child, or you could give something such as bookmark to whoever is left not holding the parcel at the end of the game.

Have the children sit in a ring. Give the parcel to one child and start the music. The children should pass the parcel from one to the other around the ring. When the music stops, whoever has the parcel in their hands is out and must leave the ring. Encourage those who are out to clap along

in time to the music. When it comes to the last two children, the winner is the child not holding the parcel.

Discussion:

After the games, settle the children down again and tell them once more about why we, as Christians, rejoice on Easter Sunday.

Song: This should be sung to the tune of "what shall we do with a drunken sailor"

Let's have a party, the Lord is risen,
Let's have a party, the Lord is risen,
Let's have a party, the Lord is risen,
On this Easter Morning!

Hooray, my heart rejoices,
Hooray, my heart rejoices,
Hooray, my heart rejoices,
On this Easter Morning!

Let's have a party, the Lord is risen,
Let's have a party, the Lord is risen,
Let's have a party, the Lord is risen,
On this Easter Morning!

Any other Easter song traditionally sung in your Sunday School would also be appropriate to sing here - you could also sing during the games to reinforce the party theme.



Closing Prayer: To thank God for the joy of Easter Sunday. For example:

"Dear God, thank you for your son Jesus Christ, and for the joy of this Easter Sunday morning. Amen."

6-8 Years:

Opening prayer: To welcome students to class and introduce the theme. Keep the prayer simple and easy for the children to learn so that it can be said as a group prayer rather than one that the leader says. For example:

"Dear God. We thank you for the chance to meet once again in your presence. Help us to learn more about your work and to understand how we can follow in your footsteps. Amen"

Bible Story:

Tell the story of Easter Sunday morning to the class.

A picture book version isn't necessary but a simplified version of the story will put it into the understand level of the age group. If you have a children's bible that you use with your class, then this ought to be appropriate.

Drama: Have a small group of the students re-enact the scene where it's discovered that Jesus has disappeared from the tomb. You could provide a small script with parts for the two Marys, the angel, Jesus and a narrator - or you could ask students to volunteer for these roles, and using the bible, act the scene as it is written in Matthew 28:1-10. The narrator should tell the story as the others act it out - but the students playing a role should speak the words said by the person they are portraying.

Discussion: Discuss the importance of Easter Sunday in the Christian calendar.

Song: To the tune of "Jesus loves me, this I know"

Jesus Christ is risen today,
All my sins he's took away.
Crucified cos he loves me,
But today his spirit's free.

Yes Christ is risen,
Yes Christ is risen,
Yes Christ is risen,
Today his spirit's free.



Craft: Easter Bookmarks

You will need the following supplies:

Plain construction paper cut into the shape of a cross that can be used as a bookmark; art and craft supplies as available that the children can use to decorate their bookmarks.

Give each child a plain bookmark and access to the supplies so that they can decorate it as they wish and take it home to remind them of this Easter Day.

Closing Prayer: Thanking God for his son, Jesus Christ, and for the joy of this Easter Day. For example:

"Dear God, thank you that we have come together in your name on this happy day. Thank you for your son Jesus Christ who loves us all. Amen."

9-11 Years:

Opening prayer: To welcome students to class and introduce the theme. Keep the prayer simple and easy for the children to learn so that it can be said as a group prayer rather than one that the leader says. For example:

"Dear God. We thank you for the chance to meet once again in your presence. Help us to learn more about your work and to understand how we can follow in your footsteps. Amen"

Bible Story:

From bible read about the resurrection - Matthew 28:1-10 Go around the class with each child reading a verse in turn until the end of the reading.



Matthew
28:1-10

Discussion:

Why is today special to Christians? What do the students understand by the word "resurrection" - demonstrate this using a candle that relights itself when blown out (you'll need a cup of water ready to place it in to make sure it does go out when you're finished with it!), like the candle Jesus light never dies.

Craft: Easter Bookmarks

You will need the following supplies:

Plain construction paper cut into the shape of a cross that can be used as a bookmark; art and craft supplies as available that the children can use to decorate their bookmarks.

Give each child a bookmark. Tell them that on the bookmark they should write the words "And surely I am with you always." - with the reference (Matthew 28:20) below it, somewhere on the front of their bookmark and then decorate it as they desire.

Activity: Egg Hunt

Hide a number of Easter egg shapes cut out of construction paper around the room. Have the students look for these. The student who finds the most should get a small prize such as a bible verse card, pencil or other item, as appropriate for your Church.

Closing Prayer: Thanking God for giving his son Jesus Christ to the world, and for Jesus giving his life that our sins will be forgiven. For example:

"Dear God, thank you for the fun we've had this Easter Day. Thank you for giving your son Jesus Christ to the world, and for Jesus loving us so much that he gave his life so our sins will be forgiven. May his light continue to shine in me. Amen."

12-14 Years:

Opening prayer: To welcome students to class and introduce the theme. Keep the prayer simple and easy for the students to learn so that it can be said as a group prayer rather than one that the leader says. For example:

"Dear God. We thank you for the chance to meet once again in your presence. Help us to learn more about your work and to understand how we can follow in your footsteps. Amen"

Bible Reading:

From Bible: Matthew 28:1-20 Have the students take this in turns to read. Tell them that they will need to remember the events that happen as they are needed for the activity they will be doing later.



Matthew
28:1-20

Discussion:

General discussion about the events from Good Friday to Easter Sunday - the crucifixion to resurrection. Answer any questions that the students have about the Easter story. Discuss forgiveness and ask for examples of things that they have done which they were sorry for or what others had done to them that they ought to forgive.

Activity: You have to Write it to Read it!

This activity requires the students to put some modern thinking into events that happened all those years ago. Their activity is to create a newspaper front page as if they were a reporter at the time covering the story from the area beside the tomb. What do they see? What do they hear?

Provide each student with a sheet of paper, and a bible. Some colored pencils, pens and rulers should also be supplied if possible.

Remember to remind them they are reporters at the time - they don't know what happened nextbut like all reporters, what they don't know, they should speculate on!

Discussion:

Have each student show their "front page". If there's time, let the students each read their "scoop" report. If there's not, quickly go around the class and ask each student to read their opening sentence/paragraph.

Closing Prayer: Thanking God for his son Jesus who gave up his life so that our sins would be forgiven. For example:

"Dear God, thank you for your son Jesus Christ who gave up his life so that our sins will be forgiven. Teach me how to show forgiveness to those around me. Amen."

Harvest Time

2-5 Years:

Opening Prayer: To welcome the start of the class. For example:

"Dear God. As we once again come together, help us to learn more about your work and how we can be better Christians. Amen"

This morning set up your room so that you have a loaf of bread, and some fruit/vegetables displayed on a desk where the children can see it as they enter. If possible, display some seeds that match the fruit or vegetables so the children can see where they come from.

God in Action:

It's harvest time. What is a harvest? Use picture books to ask the children to identify different kinds of fruits and vegetables. Talk about wheat and how it grows in the field, and eventually becomes the bread that sits on the table beside you.

Now ask the children who likes rain. Tell them that the rain is God helping to provide food. The seeds (show the seeds) need water into which to grow into the produce on the table. Explain that we should always remember to thank God when the rain comes instead of complaining because it stops us playing outside.



Art:

Provide paper and crayons so that the children can draw a picture of a plant - or seed - with the rain coming down.

Activity:

Find pictures in magazines, on the Internet, or draw them yourself of basic, easily recognized fruit and vegetables. There should be two images of each fruit and/or vegetable. Using small index cards, place both images on opposite edges of the same side of the cards. Cut the cards in half. You now have a memory game.

Place the cards image side down on a table. In turn ask the children to turn over two cards looking for two of the same type of fruit or vegetables (ie 2 apples, 2 pears, 2 cabbages). The person with the most "pairs" when all cards have been removed is the winner.

Song: (To the tune of Twinkle Twinkle Little Star)

Raindrops falling in the night
Feeding seedlings out of sight
Beneath the ground they sit so small
Hardly even there at all
Thirsty seedlings lift their heads
Thanking God for being fed



Closing Prayer: Thanking God for helping with the harvest. For example:

"Dear God, thank you for sending the rain that feeds the seeds that the farmers plant in the ground. Thank you for the good things we are now harvesting. Thank you also for watching over me, as like the plants, I grow. Amen."

6-8 Years:

Opening prayer: To welcome students to class and introduce the theme. Keep the prayer simple and easy for the children to learn so that it can be said as a group prayer rather than one that the leader says. For example:

"Dear God. We thank you for the chance to meet once again in your presence. Help us to learn more about your work and to understand how we can follow in your footsteps. Amen"

God in Action:

Today discuss the idea of a harvest. What is a harvest. Who does the harvesting? What is harvested? How does the weather influence the harvest - briefly touch on the lives of the farmers who depend upon the weather to grow their produce so that they can pay their bills at the end of the harvest.

Where does the weather come from. The answer you are looking for is "God". What does God send that helps the harvest? What do the growing seeds need in order to grow?

Movement:

Split the group into two halves. One half will be the seeds, the other the rain. Have the seeds curl up very small on the floor, then have the "rain" sprinkle amongst them (stepping carefully among the seeds waving their arms gently up and down as if being rain). As the rain comes down, have the seeds start to grow, uncurling very slowly until they are standing upright.

Craft: Small harvest basket.

Supply each child with a small basket and some marzipan in different colors. Provide pictures of various fruits and vegetables.

The children should use the marzipan to make small fruits and vegetables that they place in the baskets. They can take the baskets home at the end of the class.

Discussion:

Why do the children think that the harvest is important in the Church? (Important to give thanks to the Lord for the food he has provided from the earth).



Art: Harvest Bowl Picture

Make a large bowl shape out of newspaper, brown packaging paper, or construction paper and glue this to a slightly larger sheet. Supply construction paper in various sizes, scissors and glue. The children should each draw and cut out 2 or 3 fruit or vegetable shapes that are then glued into the harvest bowl. Or,

Alternatively you could scale this down so that the children create their own harvest bowl picture.

Closing Prayer: Thanking God for taking care of the crops so that the harvest was good. For example:

"Dear God, thank you for sending the rain, and the sunshine that the crops needed to grow. Thank you for the fruit and vegetables that the farmers are now harvesting. Amen."

9-11 Years:

Opening prayer: To welcome students to class and introduce the theme. Keep the prayer simple and easy for the children to learn so that it can be said as a group prayer rather than one that the leader says. For example:

"Dear God. We thank you for the chance to meet once again in your presence. Help us to learn more about your work and to understand how we can follow in your footsteps. Amen"

God in Action:

What can the class tell you about a harvest? Show them a packet of seeds, take one out and place it in your hand. Ask them to tell you what will happen to that seed once it's planted into the earth.

Ask the class to tell you what the seed will need in order to grow. What happens if it doesn't get these things? As Christians concerned about our neighbor, what can we do if the harvest isn't as plentiful as it should be?

Have some fruit cut up into small bite sized pieces to share around during this morning's activity session.

Activity Puzzle 1: Remove the numbers from the puzzle to reveal a bible verse:

"3489T432h4e7n 09I4245 9w32i5l9l01 s342e3n3d4 9r20a491i9n 4o29n1 943y42o4u27r 4la5n754d3
4i42n8 26i7t64s482 s210e4a320s3o8n2, 410b4o3t5h6 42a5u527t98u3m14n5 a32n684d3
5s232p6r7i34n6g1 45r6a762i54n1s, 4s653o6 7t54h1a87t8 02y4o420u3 40m4a67y4
7g841a43t5h567e1r5 28i9n1 5y9o76u245r1 g4r57a899i1n2, 8n341e2w45 78w3i421n4e432
48a092n12d3 456o6i7l97. 346l74 651w6i543l6l6 7p5r345o6v76i6d7e34 543g56r872a6s356s9
i3n142 47t2h861e3 54f53i62e6l6d980s5 f5o423r1 4y654o8u09r32 43c5a457t6t87l9e1 1a356n76d2
7y62o1467u3 5w634i2l556l98 43e5a1t6 2a45n6d64 6b764e4 5s769a4t422i487s09f873i879e317d2."
0D39e7u698t33e6r14o4n689o87m6y5 11:14-15

"Then I will send rain on your land in its season, both autumn and spring rains, so that you may gather in your rain, new wine and oil. I will provide grass in the fields for your cattle and you will eat and be satisfied." Deuteronomy 11:14-15

Activity Puzzle 2: Solve the anagrams to read the bible verse

eh liwl soal dnes uoy ianr rfo het dese uoy wso ni eth dourgn, dna eth odof ttha meco morf eth
dnal lwil eb hric dan fillptneu. ni atha ruoy tatce lwil zegar ni aordb sowmeda. sahaii 30:23

he will also send you rain for the seed you sow in the ground, and the food that comes from the land will be rich and plentiful. in that your cattle will graze in broad meadows. Isaiah 30:23

Discussion:

How can God in action shine through us? Discuss this leading up to the following idea:

With the harvest upon us, ask that each student bring one item of food produce (canned) to class next week. Nominate two class members to accompany you (or another Church member) to a local shelter and donate the food to the homeless.

Closing Prayer: Thanking God for the harvest and having enough to eat. For example:

"Dear God. Thank you for our harvest and for you love and care. We pray for those whose harvest isn't so plentiful and ask that you send your bounty to them. Amen."

Assignment: Remove all of the numbers from the puzzle below to reveal a secret bible quote. Write the bible quote you uncover below the puzzle:

"3489T432h4e7n 09I4245 9w32i5l9l01 s342e3n3d4
9r20a491i9n 4o29n1 943y42o4u27r 4la5n754d3 4i42n8
26i7t64s482 s210e4a320s3o8n2, 410b4o3t5h6
42a5u527t98u3m14n5 a32n684d3 5s232p6r7i34n6g1
45r6a762i54n1s, 4s653o6 7t54h1a87t8 02y4o420u3 40m4a67y4
7g841a43t5h567e1r5 28i9n1 5y9o76u245r1 g4r57a899i1n2,
8n341e2w45 78w3i421n4e432 48a092n12d3 456o6i7l97.
346I74 651w6i543l6l6 7p5r345o6v76i6d7e34
543g56r872a6s356s9 i3n142 47t2h861e3 54f53i62e6l6d980s5
f5o423r1 4y654o8u09r32 43c5a457t6t87l9e1 1a356n76d2
7y62o1467u3 5w634i2l556l98 43e5a1t6 2a45n6d64 6b764e4
5s769a4t422i487s09f873i879e317d2."
0D39e7u698t33e6r14o4n689o87m6y5 11:14-15

Hidden Bible Quote:

Assignment:

Solve the anagrams to read the bible verse

eh liwl soal dnes uoy ianr rfo het dese uoy wso ni eth
dourgn, dna eth odof ttha meco morf eth dnal lwil eb
hric dan fillptneu. ni atha ruoy tatlce lwil zegar ni aordb
sowmeda. sahaii 30:23

Hidden Bible Quote:

12-14 Years:

Opening prayer: To welcome students to class and introduce the theme. Keep the prayer simple and easy for the students to learn so that it can be said as a group prayer rather than one that the leader says. For example:

"Dear God. We thank you for the chance to meet once again in your presence. Help us to learn more about your work and to understand how we can follow in your footsteps. Amen"

God in Action:

Rather than a bible reading today discuss the global harvest. The rain and sun from God helps the seeds to grow into the produce that feeds us. The rain also replenishes our water supply. The clean water we drink, like that which feeds the seeds, helps nourish us and helps us to grow healthy. Now have the students discuss what they know about other countries where the harvest is not so good. What can we as Christians do to help our neighbors who are without sufficient food and fresh water?

Now think about the farmers in our own country. They work to make the harvest bountiful. They pray for the rain and the sunshine, and yet still it sometimes isn't enough as crops are devastated by other means - such as? (fire, insects, etc). What happens when there is a bad harvest? Some produce is limited, prices are high, lower income families unable to afford the produce - and what of the farmers themselves, some of them use the money from one harvest to pay the next.

The harvest is vital to our society. This is why it is important that we give thanks to God for his help in raising the crops.

Activity 1:

Make a diagram that shows the cycle of the rain coming down, the seeds growing, and the produce being harvested.

Now make a diagram showing a field of corn with no rain coming down, what happens to the corn? What is left to harvest?

Activity 2:

Show God in action through you.

Have the students brainstorm a fundraising event - such as a sponsored silence, or sponsored spell, something they could do during the next Sunday School class, or giving up their pocket money for a week, or a percentage of their babysitting/newspaper delivery money for one week - organize and hold the event, and then give this to your Church to donate, on behalf of your class, to an interna-

tional Christian organization helping people in countries where a poor harvest has created famine conditions.

Closing Prayer: Thanking God for the abundance in our lives, for the food at our harvest, and the joy of being able to help others who are less fortunate. For example:

"Dear God, thank you for bringing an abundance of food into our lives. We thank you for our harvest, and ask that you continue to bless our farmers as they work with you to bring the produce to our table. Thank you for the opportunity to be able to show your work in action as we plan our fund raising event - shine your blessing upon it that we may help others less fortunate than ourselves. Amen."

Thanksgiving

2-5 Years:

Opening Prayer: To welcome the start of the class. For example:

"Dear God. As we once again come together, help us to learn more about your work and how we can be better Christians. Amen"

Story:

Tell the story of the first thanksgiving in American in a basic language that this age group can understand. If you can't find an illustrated copy of this in the library for use in your class, use the bible use simple language.

Discuss:

The pilgrims came from a land far from America and were thankful to God for a place where they could live and worship as they wished. What kind of things are the children in your class thankful for?

Activity 1:

You will need to draw an outline of a turkey for this activity. It should be on construction paper that you can pin to the wall when the activity is complete. You will also need to pre-cut some "feathers" about the size of a normal gift tag that you can write on before sticking onto the "turkey". Glue will also be needed to stick the feathers onto the "turkey", and pins to attach the completed picture to the wall.

From the conversation that you have just had with the children, write down one thing that each child is thankful for on a separate "feather". Once each child has a feather, supply some glue and help the children to stick their feathers of thankfulness onto the outline of the turkey. Once complete and dry, pin this to the wall.

Activity 2:

For this activity you will need construction paper at half page (A5 size), small feathers and leaves that are cut from construction paper of other colors (Fall colors would work well), and glue. Supply each child with a piece of construction paper. In the centre of each piece of paper you should write the words "Thank You God!". Help the children to decorate their picture with the small cut

outs. The children should be able to take the finished pictures home as a reminder of today's lesson.

Song: (To the tune of "London Bridge is Falling Down" - you can add verse that match with the items the children are thankful for in the activity above if you prefer)

Thank you God for this fine day
This fine day
This fine day
Thank you God for this fine day
This fine day

Thank you God for moms and dads
Moms and dads
Moms and dads
Thank you God for moms and dads
Moms and dads

Thank you God for food and drink
Food and drink
Food and drink
Thank you God for food and drink
Food and drink

Thank you God for all my friends
All my friends
All my friends
Thank you God for all my friends
All my friends

Thank you God for everything
Everything
Everything
Thank you God for everything
Everything



Closing Prayer: Thanking God for everything he has created (again use examples supplied by the children where possible), and for a country where we can worship as we choose. For example:

"Dear God, thank you for everything that you have created, our parents, our homes, the food we eat, the world in which we live. Thank you for a country where we, as the Pilgrims before us, may worship you as we wish. Amen"

6-8 Years:

Opening prayer: To welcome students to class and introduce the theme. Keep the prayer simple and easy for the children to learn so that it can be said as a group prayer rather than one that the leader says. For example:

"Dear God. We thank you for the chance to meet once again in your presence. Help us to learn more about your work and to understand how we can follow in your footsteps. Amen"

Story:

Tell the story of the first Thanksgiving to the children in the class.

A picture book version isn't necessary but a simplified version of the story will put it into the understand level of the age group.

Drama:

Choose some of the children to play the principle parts in the story you have just told. Have them act out the story as you retell it to the class.

Discussion 1:

Why did the Pilgrims come to America? Why did they need to leave their own country?

Activity 1:

Give each child a piece of paper with the word "Thanksgiving" at the top of it. Then ask the children to write as many words as they can find using only the letters contained in that word for example "thanks" "ink" etc. Set a timer for 5 or 10 minutes depending on your time constraints.

Discussion 2:

What are the children thankful for? Take answers. Make sure that the students also think about things that they take for granted such as sunshine, water, people who care, medicine, etc.

Activity:

Supply a large piece of construction paper that can be pinned to the wall when complete. Write the words "Thank you God" across the center of this. Also supply smaller gift tag pieces of paper, some art supplies and glue. The children should write down something they are thankful to God for, and then decorate their tag before gluing it to the larger picture. Pin this to the wall when complete.

Closing Prayer: Thanking God for all he has supplied, and for a country where we are free to worship as we choose. For example:

"Dear God thank you for all that you have created for us. Thank you also for bringing our ancestors to this country where we are free to praise your name as we choose. Amen."

9-11 Years:

Opening prayer:

To welcome students to class and introduce the theme. Keep the prayer simple and easy for the children to learn so that it can be said as a group prayer rather than one that the leader says. For example:

"Dear God. We thank you for the chance to meet once again in your presence. Help us to learn more about your work and to understand how we can follow in your footsteps. Amen"

Story:

Today, tell the story of the Pilgrims. Not just the first thanksgiving, but also why they left England.

Discussion 1:

Do the students understand what the right to choose religion means? Discuss how it would be to be in a country where you are told which religion you must be, and to believe something else. Put this into a context that they will understand - perhaps going to an extreme - for example, what if you were told that you could only wear orange clothes; all of your clothes had to be orange, every-day. What if you had to eat food that you hated but there was nothing else that you could eat without breaking a law and going to prison?

Activity 1:

Give each student a piece of paper and ask them to write down why Thanksgiving is important - and why it is more than just a day when families get together to eat turkey and watch football.

Discussion 2:

Thanking God for guiding the Pilgrims to America is only one thing that we ought to thank God for. What other things are your students thankful for? How do we thank God for these things (prayers, taking care of things, walking a Christian path)?

Activity 2:

Give each student a piece of paper with the word "Thanksgiving" at the top. Tell them they have a time limit of 5 or 10 minutes depending on your remaining time constraints, and have them write as many words that they can find within the word "Thanksgiving" - for example "kin" "van", etc.

Closing Prayer: Thanking God for all that he has provided, and also for living in a country where we have religious freedom. For example:

"Dear God, thank you for all that you have created. Teach me to appreciate your gifts and to respect the things you have provided. Thank you for leading the Pilgrims to a place where we might worship you in a way that we believe best and not fear persecution by those who believe differently. Amen."

12-14 Years:

Opening prayer: To welcome students to class and introduce the theme. Keep the prayer simple and easy for the students to learn so that it can be said as a group prayer rather than one that the leader says. For example:

"Dear God. We thank you for the chance to meet once again in your presence. Help us to learn more about your work and to understand how we can follow in your footsteps. Amen"

Story:

For today's lesson you will need to bring a version of the first Thanksgiving and a story that recounts why the Pilgrims chose to come to America. Either tell this yourself, or ask a student(s) to read them to the class for you.

Discussion 1:

What does the class understand about the reasons the Pilgrims left their home country - leaving their families, friends, homes, a way of life that was familiar to them - and taking what was then a dangerous, hazardous journey to a new country which was little more than a wilderness? Have the students think of themselves in a situation where they did not choose to worship God in a way that was law in their home country and so rather than do what they did not believe, they chose to move to a new land - remembering that this was in a time before fast transportation and very limited communication.

Activity 1:

With this in mind, give each student a piece of paper and have them choose one of two options.

You are a reporter standing on the beach as the Pilgrims start to disembark. What do the Pilgrims tell you of their reasons for leaving England and their journey to this new land?

Or

Write a letter home to a family member left behind explaining why you have chosen to make this journey across the ocean.

Discussion 2:

What is religious freedom? Do we really have it? What about other countries in the world. Although many countries now have the same religious freedom as America has, there are still some which persecute people who do not follow the same religion as their country has decided all citizens must follow. What must it be like to live in such a country today - knowing that around the

world, this is not the case for the majority of other people? Do the students think that those people who, for example, are Christians living in a Muslim country and who make the decision to move to a predominantly Christian country, or at least a country that allows religious freedom, face a similar kind of experience today as the Pilgrims experienced all those years ago? Do any of the students have a family experience of this kind, or know someone at school who is an immigrant to America on religious grounds?

Activity 2:

From the library, or the Internet, find some maps of the world that show the countries where religion is decided by the leaders and to worship differently is against the law. If you have access to the Internet, find some news stories where religion is an issue. Show these to the class. Place a large piece of construction paper with an outline of the US flag in the center, on the table, and write the words "Religious Freedom" across the center of the flag. Next have the students create a montage by using copies of the maps and articles and cutting out phrases, or paragraphs, or images and gluing these to the construction paper around the outside of the flag being careful not to overlap it in anyway. Pin this to the wall as a reminder that outside of the US there are people who are not allowed the luxury of being able to thank God for what he has created without fear of being put in prison.

Closing Prayer: Thanking God for all that he has created and for the right to be able to worship him in the way they believe. For example:

"Dear God thank you for all things that you have created. Thank you for the Pilgrims who made that hazardous journey in order that we may worship you in a way that we believe right. Protect those who worship you in secret, in fear of persecution because the laws of their land forbid it. Amen"

Christmas Story

2-5 Years:

Opening Prayer to open the session. For example:

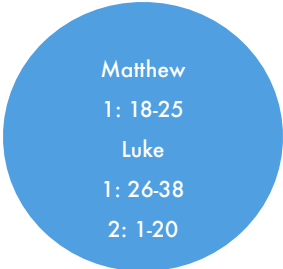
“Dear God, thank you for bringing us all together today. Please help us learn more about you and your son Jesus. Amen.”

Discussion:

Talk about birthdays. Ask the children why we celebrate birthdays. Ask them what they do to celebrate their birthdays.

Bible Story:

Tell the story of Jesus’ birth. In the bible it is found in Matthew 1: 18-25, Luke 1: 26-38 and Luke 2: 1-20. You can use an illustrated children’s book, children’s bible or tell the story in such a way that this age group can understand it.



Matthew
1: 18-25
Luke
1: 26-38
2: 1-20

Activity:

Show the children a birthday cake. Have them sing Happy Birthday to Jesus, then let them eat a piece of cake.

Craft:

Make a Birthday card for Jesus. Give the children each a piece of card stock and fold in half for them. Let them decorate the paper. Help them write Happy Birthday to Jesus.

Song:

Sing the song Silent Night

Silent Night,
Holy Night,
All is calm,
All is bright,
Round yon virgin,
Mother and child,
Holy Infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in Heavenly Peace,
Sleep in Heavenly Peace.



Closing Prayer to thank God for sending his son Jesus. For example:

“Dear God, thank you for sending your son Jesus to us. Thank you for your love. Keep us safe in your care. Amen.”

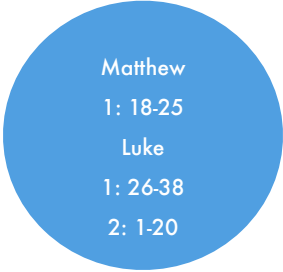
6-8 Years:

Opening Prayer to open the session. For example:

“Dear God, thank you for bringing us together again on this day. Help us to learn from your words and to follow in your footsteps. Amen.”

Bible Story:

Tell the story of Jesus’ birth. In the bible it is found in Matthew 1: 18-25, Luke 1: 26-38 and Luke 2: 1-20. You can use an illustrated children’s book, children’s bible or tell the story in such a way that this age group can understand it.



Matthew
1: 18-25
Luke
1: 26-38
2: 1-20

Drama:

Have the children act out the story of Jesus’ birth with the children taking on the roles of Mary, Joseph, the three wise men, and the three shepherds. Have a baby doll as baby Jesus.

Discussion:

Talk about birthdays and why they are important. Emphasize to the children that at Christmas we are celebrating Jesus’ birthday.

Activity:

Give the children paper, markers and crayons. Let them make a birthday card for Jesus.

Activity:

Have a birthday cake. Show it to the children and have them sing Happy Birthday to Jesus. Then let them eat the cake. After they eat the cake, have them share the birthday cards they made with the class.

Song:

Sing the song Away In a Manger

Away in a manger,
No crib for His bed,
The little Lord Jesus lay down his sweet head,
The stars in the bright sky looked down where He lay,
But little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.



Closing Prayer to ask thank God for sending His son Jesus. For example:

“Dear God, thank you for sending Jesus to earth for us. Please help us to remember that Jesus birth is why we are celebrating Christmas. Help us to follow in our footsteps and keep us safe this week. Amen.”

9-11 Years:

Opening Prayer to open the session. For example:

“Dear God, thank you for bringing us together to fellowship with each other once again. Please help us to learn from your words and do the things you want us to do. Amen.”

Discussion:

Ask the students why we celebrate Christmas.

Bible Story:

Have the students read from the following passages about Jesus’ birth:

Matthew 1: 18-25

Luke 1: 26-38

Luke 2: 1-20

Matthew

1: 18-25

Luke

1: 26-38

2: 1-20

Several students can read until the passages have been read. Talk about the Christmas story so that you can make sure that they have understood what they have read.

Discussion:

Ask the students what the real reason is behind the Christmas celebration. Talk about ways that they can give to others, besides getting presents for their friends and family members. Encourage them to do the things that they suggest.

Craft:

Give each student paper, markers, crayons, scissors and glue. Have them each make a Christmas card for the older people in your church or for residents of a nursing home. Then mail the cards or deliver them to the recipients.

Song:

Have the students choose a few Christmas songs to sing.



Closing Prayer to thank God for sending his son Jesus to us. For example:

“Dear God, thank you so very much for the best gift of all, Jesus’ birth. Please help us to give to others during this Christmas season as you have given to us. Please keep us safe in your care. Amen.”

12-14 Years:

Opening Prayer to open the session. For example:

“Dear God, thank you for bringing us together once again to worship you. Please help us to be open to learning more about you. Help us also to follow in your ways. Amen.”

Bible Reading:

Have the students read from the following passages about Jesus’ birth:

Matthew 1: 18-25

Luke 1: 26-38

Luke 2: 1-20

Matthew

1: 18-25

Luke

1: 26-38

2: 1-20

Several students can read until the passages have been read. Talk about the Christmas story so that you can make sure that they have understood what they have read.

Discussion:

Ask the students how they celebrate Christmas at their homes. Ask them what the real reason is behind the Christmas celebration. Have them think about their celebrations at home and the true reason for the Christmas season. Ask them if their celebrations at home really show that they are celebrating the birth of Jesus. Discuss things that they can add to their celebrations at home to remember the true reason of Christmas and encourage them to have their parents help them implement some of the ideas that they generated.

Song:

Have the students choose a few Christmas songs to sing.



Closing Prayer to ask God for help in remembering the true reason for the Christmas season. For example:

“Thank you Lord for your son Jesus’ birth. Please help us to remember that Jesus’ birth is what we are celebrating throughout this season. Help us to show others that is why we celebrate Christmas. Keep us safe in your name. Amen.”

The First Christmas

2-5 Years:

Opening Prayer: To welcome the start of the class. For example:

"Dear God. As we once again come together, help us to learn more about your work and how we can be better Christians. Amen"

Bible Story:

Tell the story of The First Christmas in basic language that this age group can understand. If you can't find an illustrated copy of this in the library for use in your class, use the bible use simple language.

Discuss:

Why do we celebrate Christmas? Bring the children from the excitement of longed for toys and games to the magic of that first Christmas when Jesus was born.

Tableau:

Rather than try and act out the nativity with this age group, create a tableau instead. Be prepared with fabrics so that you can create the central characters and dress the children so that they look their part. If you have more children than parts, a host of Angels at the back of your tableau will be a great effect so you would need plenty of white sheets!

Allocate a part to each child, dress them simply, and then move them into the right position in your tableau. If you find it easier, use a book illustration of the nativity as your tableau foundation and just adjust the amount of people depending on the amount of children in your class.

Once in position take a photo of your tableau that you can print out and make into a memory card to give to each child's parents the next week.

Song: (To the tune of Jingle Bells)

All the way they came,
To Bethlehem that day
Mary had her babe
In a manger laid

Shepherds saw the star
High up in the sky
Came to see the new born babe
In a manger laid

Oh Mary's Child, Jesus Christ
Born on Christmas Day
Oh what joy in Bethlehem
In a manger laid



Activity 2:

This is to emphasize that Christmas is Jesus' birthday. With some construction paper, create card shapes for each child in your class. Across the center of the front of each card write Happy Birthday in big letters. Inside the card write in big letters - Happy Birthday Jesus. Supply stick-on shapes or stickers in any design except Christmas ones, and let the children decorate the front of their card, and then help them to put their name inside as the sender of the card.

Closing Prayer: Thanking God for his son Jesus Christ who was born on Christmas Day. For example:

"Dear God, thank you for sending us your son Jesus Christ who was born that first Christmas morning. As we open our gifts this Christmas, help us to remember the real reason for the magic of Christmas. Amen"

6-8 Years:

Opening prayer: To welcome students to class and introduce the theme. Keep the prayer simple and easy for the children to learn so that it can be said as a group prayer rather than one that the leader says. For example:

"Dear God. We thank you for the chance to meet once again in your presence. Help us to learn more about your work and to understand how we can follow in your footsteps. Amen"

Bible Story:

Tell the story of The First Christmas in a language that this age group can understand. If you prefer, use a picture book that is illustrated to show off the magic of the birth of Christ's birth rather than just reading it from the Bible.

Drama:

Have the children act out the nativity. If you wish, supply them with a "dressing up" box of assorted fabrics and clothing that they can use to look the part they are to play in the nativity.

Discussion 1:

What does Christmas mean to them? What do they do on Christmas Day?

Activity:

Provide construction paper a in folded greeting card shape for each child in your class. You will also need to provide art/craft supplies so that the children can decorate the cards.

On the front of the card, instruct your class to decorate it as if it were a gift. They could paint a ribbon on the front, and then decorate the rest of the card as if it were wrapping paper for example.

Once they is done, they should open the card and where the verse should go draw an outline of the stable with the star above it. Inside the "stable" outline they should write the words "Jesus - the greatest gift of all".

Discussion 2:

How do they think that Jesus can be remembered amidst the wrapping paper and excitement on Christmas morning in their home? What ways can they walk a Christian path at Christmas time? Have some suggestions of your own that they can discuss - for example a prayer before starting the festivities, helping others by giving to someone less fortunate, etc.

Closing Prayer: Thanking God for that first Christmas. For example:

"Thank you God for the First Christmas Day when your son, Jesus Christ was born to Mary and Joseph. Help me to remember the real reason that we celebrate this special day. Amen."

9-11 Years:

Opening prayer: To welcome students to class and introduce the theme. Keep the prayer simple and easy for the children to learn so that it can be said as a group prayer rather than one that the leader says. For example:

"Dear God. We thank you for the chance to meet once again in your presence. Help us to learn more about your work and to understand how we can follow in your footsteps. Amen"

Bible Story:

Read the story of the birth of Jesus from the bible:

Luke 2: 1-20



Discussion 1:

What does Christmas mean to you? Should there be more focus on the real reason for Christmas?

Activity 1:

Supply each student with a pencil and a piece of paper.

Ask them to fold the paper in half like a greeting card, and then to turn it a quarter turn and fold it again like a greeting card, then open it up. The fold creases should provide four boxes.

Into the boxes, the children should tell the story of the First Christmas - they can draw pictures, use "headline" type words, or write out a small amount of text that tells the story over the four pages.

Discussion 2:

What traditionally do we have around the home at Christmas - start them thinking about decorations, food, customs, etc.

What was there at the first Christmas?

Is there anything they can find that is similar (you could draw comparisons such as we have visitors at Christmas and the shepherds visited the new baby), but there aren't many. In our commercial world, how can we do better to make Jesus a priority on the day of his birth?

Activity 2:

Fill in the blanks:

In those days _____ issued a decree that a _____ should be taken of the entire _____ world. Joseph went from the town of _____ in _____ to _____ the town of _____ because he belonged to the house and line of _____. While they were there, Mary gave birth to their _____ and placed him in a _____ because there was no room at the _____.

There were _____ living out in the fields near by keeping watch over their _____ at night. An _____ of the _____ appeared to them and the _____ of the _____ shone around them. The angel said to them, "Do not be _____. I bring you great _____. Today in the _____ of _____ a _____ has been born to you; he is _____ the _____.

Choose the words from the list below - there are times when the same word appears more than once in the puzzle.

Afraid, Angel, Bethlehem, Bethlehem, Caesar Augustus, Census, Christ, David, David, Flocks, Galilee, Glory, Inn, Joy, Lord, Lord, Lord, Manger
Nazareth, Roman, Saviour, Shepherds, Son, Town.

Closing Prayer: Thanking God for the First Christmas and the birth of his son. For example:

"Dear God, thank you for the birth of your son, Jesus Christ. Help me to remember on Christmas morning that it isn't the presents I receive that are important, but rather the one you gave the world all those years ago. Amen."

12-14 Years:

Opening prayer: To welcome students to class and introduce the theme. Keep the prayer simple and easy for the students to learn so that it can be said as a group prayer rather than one that the leader says. For example:

"Dear God. We thank you for the chance to meet once again in your presence. Help us to learn more about your work and to understand how we can follow in your footsteps. Amen"

Bible Reading:

Read the story of the birth of Jesus from the bible:

Luke 2: 1-20



Discussion 1:

Christmas today. What's it all about? Is there anything about it that signifies the birth of Christ? Where can we show Christianity at work at this time of year?

Activity 1:

As a group, decide on a project that will bring joy to other people this Christmas. Whether it is everyone donating a toy (new or in new condition), book (new or in new condition) or candy to give to a local children's hospital, or refuge center - or collecting some things that could be given to a local old people's home - or perhaps sending a card to all of the leaders of your church to show you appreciate their work (each student to make one card to send to a church elder on behalf of the class) - orwhat ideas do they have? Decide on one that is feasible and set it up so that the students can carry this out the following week.

Discussion 2:

Think about where the baby was born. Mary had her baby in a stable - not very clean. She laid him in straw in a manger. Very different to how things are when babies are born in our worldor is it? Discuss what happens with newborns in our culture, and then think about how it is in third world countries. Are things all that different with how those newborns are treated? Do they go into nice clean hospital cribs? What about babies born to those in our own country where there is no medical insurance, or the mother is homeless? Solutions?

Activity 2:

Supply a pen and piece of paper to each student. They are to start their letter home with "Dear Mom, I was standing counting the sheep when all of a sudden..." then they should write an account of what happened that first Christmas when the angel appeared to the shepherds, as if they were a shepherd who was there at the time. Whether or not they were one of the three who went to see baby Jesus is up to them!

Closing Prayer: Thanking God for the birth of his son Jesus. For example:

"Dear God, thank you for the birth of your son Jesus. Help us to remember that He is what Christmas is all about. Amen."