

# Itsy Bitsy Christmas

## LESSON 4

### *I Give Jesus My THANKS*



#### **THEME:**

I give Jesus the gift of my THANKS.



#### **BIG IDEA FROM BOOK:**

“God sent Jesus to love us, help us, and save us.”



#### **KEY VERSE:**

Luke 2:20

Then the shepherds went back to their sheep, praising God and thanking him for everything that they had seen and heard. It was just as the angel had told them.



#### **KEY VERSE FOR PRESCHOOL:**

Luke 2:20

Then the shepherds went back to their sheep, praising God and thanking him.

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## LESSON OUTLINE:

- WELCOME:** Coloring Sheet. . . . . 5 minutes
- STORY:** Read *Itsy Bitsy Christmas*, or the story text for twos and threes . . . 10 minutes
- SONGS:** “*I’m Gonna Wrap Up Myself for Christmas*”  
and “*O Come, Let Us Adore Him*” . . . . . 5 minutes
- LESSON:** God gave us the gift of Jesus to love us, help us,  
and save us. We thank him by not only saying it but by giving  
ourselves to him in return. . . . . 10 minutes
- CRAFT:** The Thankful Tree . . . . . 5 minutes
- GAME:** Wrap Up Myself for Christmas . . . . . 10 minutes
- ACTIVITY:** Thank You, Jesus. . . . . 5 minutes

### Materials Needed:

- WELCOME:** Coloring sheet (1 per child) and crayons
- STORY:** Copy of *Itsy Bitsy Christmas* and doll wrapped up in a blanket
- SONGS:** Songs downloaded to a media player with portable speakers
- SNACK:** Triangular crackers or tortilla chips
- LESSON:** Bible
- CRAFT:** Giving Tree craft sheet (1 per child), 6-inch length of yarn (1 per child), hole punch, stickers, sequins, glue, and black marker
- GAME:** Toilet paper (1 roll per team), doll wrapped up in a blanket, and (optional) media player with speakers
- ACTIVITY:** No materials needed

## WELCOME

5 MINUTES

### Materials Needed:

- Coloring sheet (1 per child)
- Crayons

As children enter the classroom, offer them an *Itsy Bitsy Christmas* coloring sheet and crayons while they wait for other friends to arrive. Greet each child and start talking about ways to trust God.



## STORY

10 MINUTES

### Materials Needed:

- Doll representing Jesus, wrapped in a blanket
- *Itsy Bitsy Christmas* book

### Preparation:

- Hide the doll and the story book in the area where the story time will take place (try to hide it in a different place each week—perhaps just facing a different direction if a different location is not an option).

Gather the children for the story by first taking them on a hunt for the King, replicating the hunt Itsy and Bitsy go on to find the King in our story. This week emphasize being thankful for God's gift while you are searching. Say, **Before we can hear our story, we are going on a journey to find the King. He has a wonderful gift in store for us!** Lead the children to a place in the classroom or on the way to your large group gathering and look for the King. Look in different locations than last week, or in a different sequence. **Well, he's not here, but we'd love to have his gift, so let's keep looking!** Lead the children to another location and search for the King. **Oh no! He's not here either! We have to find out the gift he gave us. Let's look over there!** Lead the children to today's story location. Take out the doll and the book. Have the children sit. **Do you think this is the gift God wanted us to find? Yes! What is the gift?** Baby Jesus. **Does anyone know why baby Jesus is a gift to us? In our story,**

**Itsy and Bitsy learn that God sent Jesus to love us, help us, and save us. Can you say that with me? Love us (love us), help us (help us), and save us (save us). What do we say when someone gives us a gift? Thank you. Let's read our story and hear how Itsy and Bitsy find God's gift.**

Read *Itsy Bitsy Christmas*.

*Read Itsy Bitsy Christmas in its entirety every week, showing the pictures in the book as you read. Following are two lists. The first list contains one participation idea for every page of the book to use when appropriate to engage the children in the telling of the story. The second list is an abbreviated script that can be used to tell the story to twos and threes.*

### Page-by-Page Participation Ideas

1. Have children call out, "BITSY, WATCH OUT!"
2. Have children say very slowly, "Biiiiig daaaaaay innnndeeeee.".
3. Remind children of Week 1's Big Idea from the book. Have the children stand and say, using hand motions, "**This King comes for everyone, big and small.**" Then remind them of Week 2's Big Idea on the facing page. Have children turn to the person next to them, cup their hands around their mouths, and say, "We need to tell our friends!"
4. Have children use hand motions to act out the mice dashing between feet (hands slapping legs like running feet), rolling wagon wheels (rolling hands), scurrying under the gate (crouch down and run fingers on the ground), climbing up the post (climbing hands), and onto the rafter ("ahhhh!" they take a breath).
5. Have children call out, "COCK-A-DOODLE-DOOOO!"
6. Have children make animal sounds to react to the news (snort, baa, neigh, moo).
7. Have children call out, "WE ARE GOING TO FIND THE KING!" Remind them this was last week's Big Idea.
8. At the end of the page, ask, "Is the King at the city gate?" Have children call out, "NO!"
9. At the end of the page, ask, "Is the King at the camel corral?" Have children call out, "NO!"

10. After reading each paragraph, ask, “Is the King on the main street?” “NO!” “Is the King at the hotel?” “NO!” “Is the King in the city market?” “NO!”
11. Have children rub their eyes as if they are crying.
12. Have children pantomime coming up empty-handed (shrug shoulders, open palms).
13. Have children hold finger to their mouth and quietly say, “Shhhh!”
14. Pick up the doll and rock it as you read. **Here is this week’s Big Idea:** “God sent Him to love us (love us), help us (help us), and save us (save us).” Say it again, having children repeat “love us,” “help us,” and “save us” as you say it to them. Do this a few times.
15. Have children stand and say, “HE CAME EVEN FOR A LITTLE ONE LIKE ME!”

**Option: Read *Itsy Bitsy Christmas* to twos and threes.**

*When reading *Itsy Bitsy Christmas* to a group of preschool children only, choose one line per page to read. The following list is the recommended line or adaptation of the line to read from each page. Optional pages are indicated, which can be skipped to shorten the story further. Engage the children in this version of the story using some of the same ideas from the full-length version.*

**Page-by-Page Story Text for Twos and Threes**

1. **OPTIONAL:** “Be careful, Bitsy. You don’t want to get run over.”
2. “This is a big day for Bethlehem,” said the donkey.
3. “The King is coming to Bethlehem.” **“We need to tell our friends!”**  
**Remind the children of Week 2’s Big Idea. Have children cup their hands around their mouths and say it to the person next to them.**
4. **OPTIONAL:** The mice dashed to the stable to tell their friends Ruthie the horse, Rowdy the rooster, Charlie the cow, and Grumpy the goat.
5. Itsy and Bitsy squeaked, “We have big news!” but no one listened. So Rowdy helped them by saying, “Cock-a-doodle-dooooo!”

6. "Itsy and I have big news! A King is coming to Bethlehem. To us!" All the animals laughed.
7. **OPTIONAL:** The sheep baaed. "This isn't an important place." Grumpy snorted. "Mice aren't important people." Ruthie neighed. "No king would care about us." "Well . . . Bitsy and I are going to find the King." Remind children of last week's Big Idea, **"WE ARE GOING TO FIND THE KING!"**
8. Mr. Owl said, "You won't find a King here."
9. Mr. Camel said, "Kings don't come to little places like Bethlehem."
10. **OPTIONAL:** Did they find the King on the busy street? Did they find the King at the sleepy hotel? Did they find the King at the city market?
11. "Let's go home, Bitsy. No King is coming for us."
12. When they got to the stable, they told the donkey, "We have looked all over town for the King. We couldn't find Him."
13. "Well," said the donkey, "you just did."
14. "His name is Jesus. God sent Him to **love us** (love us), **help us** (help us), and **save us** (save us)." Here is this week's Big Idea. Say it again, having children repeat "love us," "help us," and "save us" as you say it to them. Do this a few times.
15. "Who would have thought? **This King comes for everyone, big and small!**" Have children stand and repeat Week 1's Big Idea using hand motions.



SONGS

5 MINUTES

**Materials Needed:**

- Media player with speakers

**Preparation:**

- Download songs to the media player. Set up media player and speakers.

**“I’M GONNA WRAP MYSELF UP FOR CHRISTMAS”<sup>1</sup>**

Psalty’s Family Singalong Christmas<sup>2</sup>

We learned in our story how God gave Jesus to us as a gift. God sent him to love us (love us), help us (help us), and save us (save us). When we receive a gift, what do we say? Thank you. One way we can show we are thankful is by giving a gift in return. That’s what our song is about. What does our song say we are giving to Jesus? Ourselves. We want to give a gift to God because of how much he has given to us. And what is the gift he wants the most? Us! You and me! Let’s sing about that.

— Chorus —

I’m gonna wrap myself up for Christmas,  
And tie me with a big red bow;  
That’s what I’m giving to Jesus,  
It’s a present He’ll like, I know!

— Verse —

My mama keeps trying to tell me,  
“It won’t do any good to primp and fuss,  
‘Cause Jesus doesn’t look at the wrapping,  
He’s looking for a heart that trusts!”

— Bridge —

I tried to think of all kinds of presents  
That would be good to give to a King;  
I thought real hard and then I decided  
That the present He’d like best is me!

— Chorus —

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.psalty.com/track/689089/i-m-gonna-wrap-myself-up-for-christmas>

**“O COME, LET US ADORE HIM”**

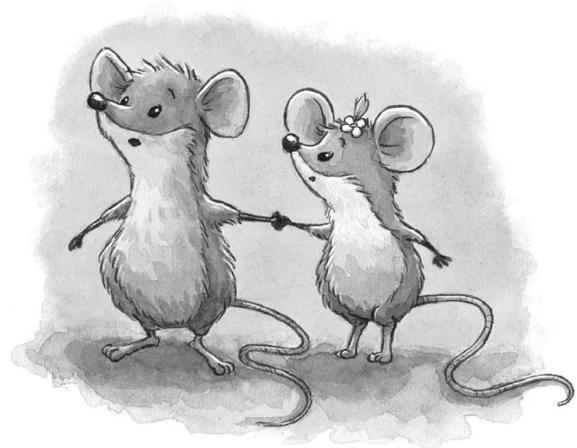
We are going to sing a favorite Christmas song that has some special words in it that remind us of our lesson today. We are learning that God gave Jesus to us as a gift. God sent him to love us (love us), help us (help us), and save us (save us). When we receive a gift, what do we say? Thank you.

O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
Christ the Lord.

You love us, help us, save us  
You love us, help us, save us  
You love us, help us, save us  
Christ the Lord.

For all your gifts we thank you  
For all your gifts we thank you  
For all your gifts we thank you  
Christ the Lord.

O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
Christ the Lord.



## SNACK/LESSON

10 MINUTES

*The purpose of the lesson is to connect the story of Itsy and Bitsy with God's story. If you serve snacks in your classroom, the snack can be used as an object lesson to help children understand the lesson theme.*

**Materials Needed:**

- Triangular crackers or tortilla chips
- Bible



Start by reviewing the story *Itsy Bitsy Christmas*.

**Itsy and Bitsy learned that God gave Jesus to us as a gift. God sent him to do what for us?** Love us, help us, save us.

**What are some ways God helps you?** (We're talking about this idea first, as it is the easiest for children to answer.) He listens to me, he helps me with my problems, he takes care of my needs.

**What are some ways God loves you?** (It might be hard for children to differentiate between helping and loving, but encourage them to think about ways God feels about us, not just does things for us.) He made me, he knows me, he cares about my life, he is with me all the time.

**What does it mean to say God saves you? Your mom and dad have probably saved you when you were about to get hurt, like keeping you from walking out into the street or touching a hot stove. Can you think of anyone else who saves people? Fireman, policeman. That's right. God saved us from living our lives without knowing him. If you couldn't know God, how would you feel?**  
Sad, lonely.

**How should we respond to these gifts God is giving us?** Thank him, and receive the gifts.

Pray and thank God for the snack, then distribute the crackers or chips. While children are eating, continue teaching the lesson.

Our snack today reminds us of the shape of a Christmas tree. What do we find under a Christmas tree? Presents. When we open a present, what should we say to the person who gave it to us? Thank you. The Bible tells us the true story of what the shepherds did after they found the baby Jesus in the feeding box. Let's read what happened.

Read Luke 2:17–20 from a Bible.

And the shepherds saw the baby lying in a feeding box. Then they told what the angels had said about this child. Everyone was amazed when they heard what the shepherds said to them. Mary hid these things in her heart; she continued to think about them. Then the shepherds went back to their sheep, praising God and thanking him for everything that they had seen and heard. It was just as the angel had told them.

LUKE 2:17–20

When the shepherds went back to their sheep, what were they doing?

Praising God and thanking him for everything they had seen and heard.

Do you think God liked hearing their praises and thanks? Yes.

Let's think a little more about what happens around the Christmas tree.

Let's say your grandma gave you a toy, and you thanked her for it. How is your grandma going to know that you are really thankful for the toy? I'll play with it. If you don't play with the toy Grandma gave you, what is she going to think? I don't like it. And if you don't play with it, she'll feel sad that you didn't really like her present, wouldn't she? Yes.

God gave us a very special gift, didn't he? The shepherds didn't find it under a Christmas tree, did they? Where did they find it? In the feeding box. And this gift, the King Jesus, does a lot of things for us. What does he do? Loves us, helps us, and saves us. Now, if we are thankful to God for his gift, how will he know—what kinds of things can we do to show him we are thankful? (If children have difficulty answering this, remind them of how

they show Grandma they are thankful—by playing with the toy.) When we use what we are given, we show how much we appreciate it. God has given us so much love, and we love him back by loving other people. We appreciate him helping us so much that we thank him by helping someone else. We thank him for saving us by sharing the good news of his gift with others.

Let's bow our heads and talk to God. Dear God, we want to tell you how thankful we are that you gave us the gift of Jesus to love us, help us, and save us. Help us now to practice showing you how thankful we are. In Jesus' name, amen.

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## CRAFT: THE THANKFUL TREE

5 MINUTES

### Materials Needed:

- Thankful Tree craft sheet, photocopied onto red card stock (1 per child)
- 6-inch length of yarn (1 per child)
- Hole punch
- Stickers, sequins, and glue
- Black marker



### Preparation:

- Cut out the tree and punch a hole at the top. String the yarn through the hole and tie it into a loop so the tree can be hung up.

Distribute the Thankful Trees. Have children decorate their trees with stickers and sequins. Write their name and the year on the back of their tree with the black marker. Talk with the children about saying thank you when they receive a gift, and about ways they can show they are thankful (by receiving, giving, sharing, helping, loving, appreciating, etc.).

# GAME: WRAP UP MYSELF FOR CHRISTMAS

10 MINUTES

## Materials Needed:

- Roll of toilet paper (1 per team)
- Doll representing Jesus, wrapped in blanket
- **OPTIONAL:** Media player and speakers

## Preparation:

- Place the doll at the far end of the room, on a chair or table where it can be seen. Divide the children into teams of 4 to 6, and give each team a roll of toilet paper. **OPTIONAL:** Play the song “I’m Going to Wrap Up Myself for Christmas” during this game.

Point to doll. I see a gift over there. Who knows what that gift is? Jesus. Who gave that gift to us? God. What do we say to God about his gift to us? Thank you. That’s right. We tell God thank you, and we can show God we are thankful. One way to show we are thankful is to give him a gift. But what kind of gift can we give to Jesus? Does anyone remember what our song says?

I tried to think of all kinds of presents

That would be good to give to a King;

I thought real hard and then I decided

That the present He’d like best is \_\_\_\_\_! (me)

For our game, we are going to pretend we are wrapping ourselves up as a present and giving ourselves to Jesus! Our pretend wrapping paper is going to be this toilet paper. Help each other wrap one of your teammates with the paper. Demonstrate how to do so by having one child hold the roll so it can spin on their fingers, another child pulling a length of paper from the roll, and you wrap the paper around a child’s shoulders and head. For preschoolers, the children may just be able to drape a length of paper on the child’s head. Once you are wrapped up, you are a “present,” and you can give yourself to Jesus. Walk over to the baby Jesus and

**touch him, then walk back and help your teammates wrap up the next person.**

Play the game until all children have had a chance to be a present.

**That was fun to pretend we were presents! Jesus loves it when we give ourselves to him by loving people, helping people, and sharing his good news with our friends.**

## ACTIVITY: THANK YOU, JESUS

5 MINUTES

This closing activity is a review of all four of our lessons. Have children form a circle, hold hands, and walk around in the circle while singing. At the words “on Christmas Day,” stop and lift up both hands (still holding hands with your neighbors) and put them back down in time to the music. On the next verse, reverse direction.

Sing to the tune of “London Bridge Is Falling Down.”

Thank you, Jesus, for your love, for your love, for your love

Thank you, Jesus, for your love, on Christmas Day.

I can't wait to share my joy, share my joy, share my joy

I can't wait to share my joy, on Christmas Day.

God is happy when I trust, when I trust, when I trust

God is happy when I trust, on Christmas Day.

For God's gift I tell him “Thanks,” tell him “Thanks,” tell him “Thanks”

For God's gift I tell him “Thanks,” on Christmas Day.



**DISMISSAL: You did a great job listening today and learning how to say thank you and to show you are thankful. Show your family you are thankful by loving them, obeying them, being helpful, and saying thank you for all the wonderful things they give you!**



