

Itsy Bitsy Christmas

LESSON 1

I Give Jesus My LOVE



THEME:

I give Jesus the gift of my LOVE



BIG IDEA FROM BOOK:

“This King comes for everyone, big and small.”



KEY VERSE:

Luke 2:7

[Mary] gave birth to her first son. There were no rooms left in the inn. So she wrapped the baby with cloths and laid him in a box where animals are fed.



KEY VERSE FOR PRESCHOOL:

Luke 2:7

Mary wrapped the baby with cloths and laid him in a box where animals are fed.

LESSON OUTLINE:

WELCOME: Coloring Sheet 5 minutes

STORY: Read *Itsy Bitsy Christmas*, or the story script for twos-threes. 10 minutes

SONGS: *I'm Gonna Wrap Up Myself for Christmas, Away in a Manger* 5 minutes

LESSON: King Jesus came to us as a baby so we would know he came for everyone, big and small. We want to show him we love him. 10 minutes

CRAFT: I Give Jesus My LOVE. 5 minutes

GAME: Make Room for Baby Jesus 10 minutes

ACTIVITY: Baby Jesus Goes to Sleep 5 minutes

Materials Needed:

- WELCOME: Coloring sheet (1 per child), crayons
- STORY: Copy of *Itsy Bitsy Christmas*, doll wrapped up in a blanket, open box
- SONGS: Songs downloaded to a media player with portable speakers
- SNACK: Raisins on celery
- LESSON: Bible
- CRAFT: I Give Jesus My LOVE Craft Sheet (1 per child), blue felt, white glue, crayons
- GAME: *Preschool Variation*: Doll wrapped up in a blanket, open box (one box per 6-8 children), hay or representation of animals' food
Elementary Variation: Open box (2 boxes per 6-8 children), packing popcorn (enough to fill half of the boxes), paper cups (1 per child)
- 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 love Jesus.



STORY

10 MINUTES

Materials Needed:

- Doll representing Jesus, wrapped in a blanket
- Box with no top to place the doll in
- *Itsy Bitsy Christmas* book

**Preparation:**

- Hide the doll and the story book in an open box, and place it in the area where the story time will take place (try to hide it in a different place each week)

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. In future weeks, the children will know the story and will understand the purpose of the hunt, but today, the hunt can just be a fun game. Say, **Before we can hear our story, we have to find the King! Let's go find him! Is he over here?** Lead the children to a place in the classroom or on the way to your large group gathering and look for the King – in a bin or a cupboard. **Maybe he is over there.** Lead the children to another location and search for the King – behind a door or high on a shelf. **How about here?** Lead the children to one more place and search for the King. **I know! The King is there!** Lead the children to today's story location. Take out the doll and the book. Have the children sit. **Does this look like a King? No! This looks like a baby! In our story today, Itsy and Bitsy are looking everywhere to find a big King, and they are surprised when the King turns out to be a very special Christmas baby.**

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 daaaaay innnndeeeee."
3. This week's Big Idea from the book is on this page. Have the children stand and say, using hand motions, "This King comes for everyone, big and small." Repeat a few times.
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!"
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.
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.” “Itsy, we need to tell our friends!”
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 baaaahed. “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.”
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, help us, and save us.”
15. “Who would have thought? **This King comes for everyone, big and small!** *Have children stand and repeat the last line with hand motions a few times, which is today’s Big Idea from the book.*

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

Psalty's Family Singalong Christmas

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

Teach this song to the children, as it will be sung every week. For twos and threes, teach the chorus only, and sing the verse and bridge for them. As the weeks progress, you will be teaching the meaning of this song and explaining words like “primp and fuss,” but this first week just focus on learning the song.

—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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AWAY IN A MANGER

A manger is the name of the box where animals are fed. *Have the children sing this song to your baby Jesus doll laying in its box. OPTION: Just sing the first verse.*

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
 The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
 The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
 The little Lord Jesus asleep in the hay.

OPTIONAL

Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask you to stay
 Close by me forever, and love me, I pray.
 Bless all the dear children in your tender care,
 And bring us to heaven, to live with you there.

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:

- Celery and raisins
- Bible

Preparation:

- Chop celery into sticks (1 celery stick per child)



Start by reviewing the story, *Itsy Bitsy Christmas*.

Who were Itsy and Bitsy looking for? The King.

Where was the King when they finally found him? In their stable, in a manger.

Did the King look like the kind of king they were looking for? No.

What did the King look like? A baby.

Do you know who that baby was? Jesus.

Yes, that baby was Jesus. Soon it will be Christmas, and Christmas is the time we remember that Jesus, who was King in heaven, came to us as a baby. The Bible tells us the true story of what happened when Jesus' mommy and daddy, Joseph and Mary, had their baby.

Read Luke 2:6-7 from a Bible:¹

While Joseph and Mary were in Bethlehem, the time came for her to have the baby. She gave birth to her first son. There were no rooms left in the inn. So she wrapped the baby with cloths and laid him in a box where animals are fed.

LUKE 2:6-7

Pray and thank God for our snack, then distribute celery sticks and 5-6 raisins to each child. While children are eating, talk about the lesson.

Where did Mary put her baby? In the feeding box for the animals.

Pretend your celery is the feeding box for the animals. Put your raisins inside the feeding box (demonstrate putting raisins into the trough of the celery stick). This is just like baby Jesus, snuggled into the box. That was a funny place to put a baby wasn't it?

While children eat, continue the lesson.

Jesus wasn't always a baby. Before he was a baby, he was a King in heaven! But, he didn't come to us looking like a King, did he? No! If he had come to us as a King, we would have thought he only came for important people, or big people. But he came to us as a baby, so we know he came for us!

¹ All Scripture text in this curriculum is quoted from the International Children's Bible, and the discussion questions are based on the wording of the ICB. If possible, read passages to the class from a copy of the International Children's Bible. If you do not have a copy of the ICB, you may read from the text in the lesson plan. If you read from another version of the Bible, you will need to adjust some of the discussion questions to fit the wording of the Bible version you chose.

Remember what Itsy and Bitsy discovered? “The King comes for everyone, big and small!”

Since King Jesus came here as a baby, and he came just for us, what do you suppose we should do — when someone comes especially to see you, what do you do? Hug them, welcome them, make a place for them to sit down. How does it make you feel when someone comes just for you? I feel special, I feel loved, I want to love them back.

Let’s bow our heads and talk to God. Dear God, thank you that you came to us, and you came as a baby so we would know you came for everyone, big and small! Help us now to practice loving you. In Jesus’ name, amen.

CRAFT: I GIVE JESUS MY LOVE

5 MINUTES

Materials Needed:

- I Give Jesus My LOVE Craft Sheet (1 per child)
- 1 square of blue felt (1 per child)
- White glue
- Crayons



Preparation:

- Cut the blue felt into 3” x 3” squares

Distribute the I Give Jesus My LOVE craft sheets and crayons. Have children color the picture. After the picture is colored, distribute the squares of blue felt, and help them glue the felt onto their papers, placing it on the swaddled part of the baby. Talk to the children about how we are showing love to the baby by taking care of him, keeping him warm, and making a comfortable place for him to sleep.

GAME: MAKE ROOM FOR BABY JESUS**10 MINUTES****ELEMENTARY VARIATION****Materials Needed:**

- Box with no top (2 boxes for every 6-8 children)
- Packing popcorn, enough to fill half of the boxes
- Paper cups (1 per child)

Preparation:

- Fill half of the boxes with packing popcorn. Set up the filled boxes across the far end of the room, and the empty boxes in a row opposite. Divide children into teams of 6-8, and line them up behind the row of empty boxes. Assign each team a different animal to portray (cows, sheep, goats, chickens, etc.)

I'm going to read you our Bible story again.

While Joseph and Mary were in Bethlehem, the time came for her to have the baby. There were no rooms left in the inn. So she wrapped the baby with cloths and laid him in a box where animals are fed.

LUKE 2:6-7

Say, **After Mary had the baby, she wrapped him with cloths. Where did she put the baby? In a box. Was that box the kind of box you're supposed to put a baby in? No! What was that box for? Feeding the animals. When Mary put the baby in the box, what did the animals have to do? Stop eating. Wasn't that nice of the animals to stop eating so the baby could go to sleep? I think even the animals were being kind to Jesus.**

Let's pretend the box at the end is for the animals' food, and let's pretend you are the animals! Remind the children which animals their team is assigned to be, and have them get on all fours and make the sound of their team's animal. Distribute the paper cups, and show the children how to carry

their cup in their mouth by biting on the edge of the cup. **Now, you are going to empty your feeding boxes to make room for Baby Jesus.** Instruct the children to crawl on their hands and knees to their team’s feeding box carrying their cup in their mouth; using their hands, they dip their cup into the box and fill it as full as they can with packing popcorn; then, holding the filled cup in their mouth, they turn and crawl back to their team’s empty box and using only their mouths, dump the popcorn out of their cup into the box. Then it’s the next team member’s turn. While team members are waiting their turn, remind them to keep making their animal’s sound. Continue for the allotted time, or until everyone has had two turns. **Thank you for emptying your food boxes to make room for the Baby Jesus!**

PRESCHOOL VARIATION

Materials Needed:

- Doll representing Jesus, wrapped in a blanket
- Box with no top (one box for every 6-8 children)
- Hay, or shredded paper, or packing popcorn, to represent the animals’ food



Preparation:

- Place box in the center of the room, on the floor. If using more than one box, place them far enough apart for children to have space to surround the boxes. If using hay or some other representation of the animals’ food, place it in the bottom of the box.

I’m going to read you our Bible story again.

Mary wrapped the baby with cloths and laid him in a box where animals are fed.

LUKE 2:7

Say, After Mary had the baby, she wrapped him with cloths. Where did she put the baby? In a box. Was that box the kind of box you're supposed to put a baby in? No! What was that box for? Feeding the animals. When Mary put the baby in the box, what did the animals have to do? Stop eating. Wasn't that nice of the animals to stop eating so the baby could go to sleep? I think even the animals were being kind to Jesus.

Let's pretend this box is for the animals' food, and let's pretend you are the animals! First, let's pretend to be cows. Have the children get on all fours, and moo, and pretend to eat food from the box. When they have "eaten" for a short time, announce, Baby Jesus is tired now, and he needs to go to sleep. Have the "cows" back away from the box and whisper their mooing, and place the baby in the box. Say, You are such kind cows! You made room for the baby in your food box, and he is having such a good sleep. Thank you for showing your love to Jesus by giving up your food.

The children continue their whispered mooing until you announce that the baby has woken up. Remove the doll from the box and have the children pretend to be another animal and start eating again. If using more than one box, move from box to box, placing the baby in the box and having those "animals" back away and make room for the baby while the children at the other boxes continue "eating." Continue having the children be the different animals found in *Itsy Bitsy Christmas*, such as sheep, horses, and donkeys. When the baby is in the box, affirm the children for loving the baby, taking care of him, being kind to him, making room for him, giving to him, being quiet for him, etc.

ACTIVITY: BABY JESUS GOES TO SLEEP

5 MINUTES

From www.prekfun.com

LEADER: It's late at night on the day Jesus was born. Mary holds baby Jesus and rocks him. She says, "Hush, hush, little baby; go to sleep."

Fold arms as if rocking a baby.

CHILDREN: Hush, hush, little baby; go to sleep.

Copy actions of leader.

LEADER: The cows mooed softly. They said, "Moo, moo, little baby; go to sleep."

Get down on hands and knees and moo.

CHILDREN: Moo, moo, little baby; go to sleep.

Copy actions of leader.

LEADER: The shepherds tiptoed in. They said, "Shh, shh, little baby; go to sleep."

Tiptoe in place and put fingers on lips.

CHILDREN: Shh, shh, little baby; go to sleep.

Copy actions of leader.

LEADER: The sheep baaed quietly. They said, "Baa, baa, little baby; go to sleep."

Get down on hands and knees and baa.

CHILDREN: Baa, baa, little baby; go to sleep.

Copy actions of leader.

LEADER: They all sing to Jesus. They sing, "Go to sleep, little baby; go to sleep."

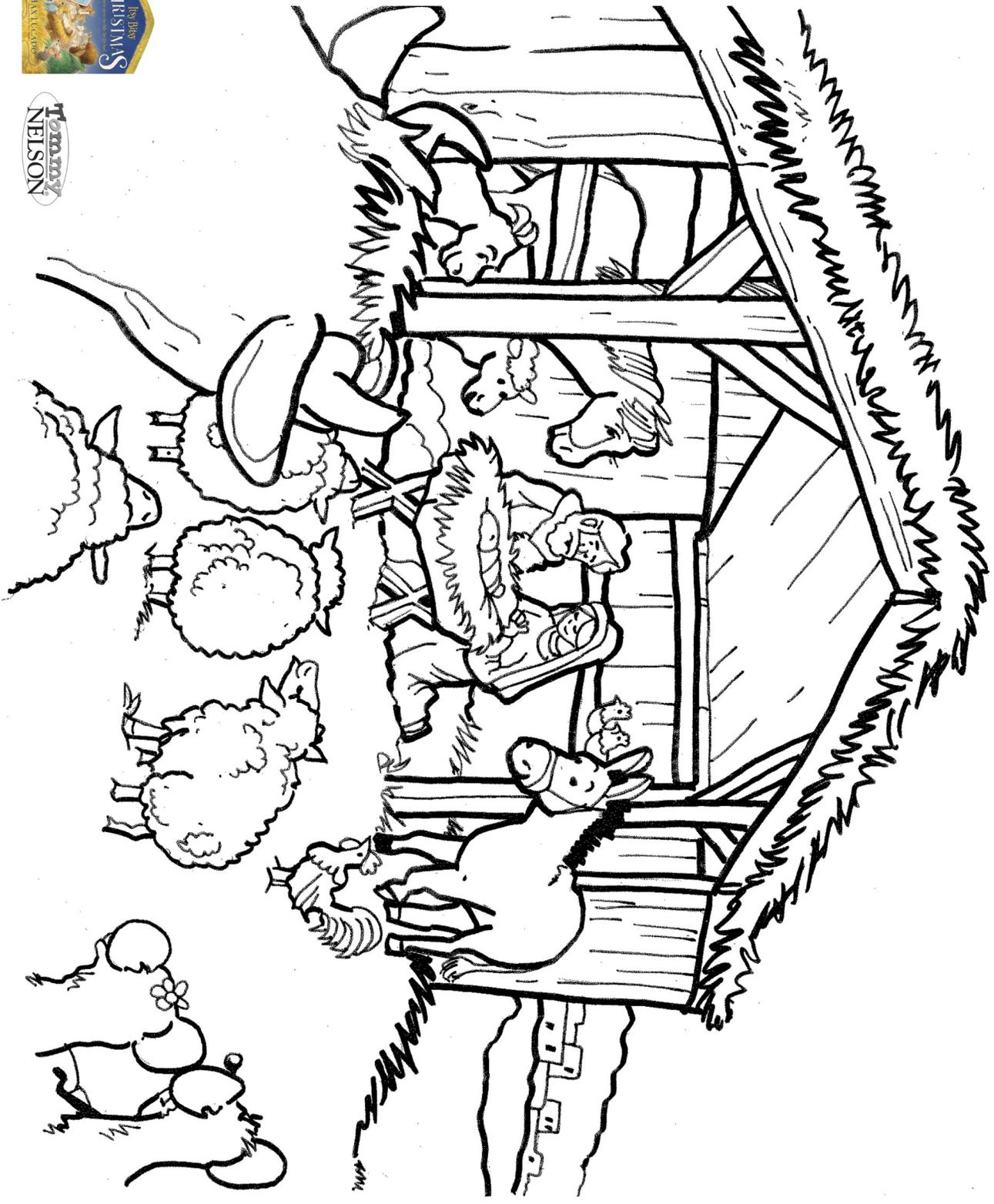
Fold arms as if rocking a baby.

CHILDREN: Go to sleep, little baby; go to sleep.

Copy actions of leader.



DISMISSAL: You did a great job listening today and learning how to give LOVE by taking care of others and being kind. Tell your family about how Jesus came here as a baby, because he came to everyone, big and small!





I Give Jesus My LOVE

Mary wrapped the baby with cloths and laid him in a box where animals are fed.

LUKE 2:7