

# The Best Gift

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My youngest grandson turned four years old this week. Before opening his gifts there was much curiosity about what was inside each one. If he had not been such a busy four year old he would probably have guessed what was inside by simply listening to all the clues that were floating around among the grown-ups.

The time of year is fast approaching when many of us wrap up surprises and place them under a Christmas tree to be unwrapped by family and friends. Aren't you a little curious about what is inside that package with your name on it?

God so loved the world that he gave us the gift of his Son. As I was looking over the lesson [Prophecies Fulfilled in Jesus](#) I was reminded once again about the number of clues God gave about the coming of the Messiah.

I love talking to children about this!

## God Kept His Promises!

God sent all of these messages before Jesus was even born. God promised over and over that he would send Jesus. And guess what.

- Jesus was Abram's great, great, great.....grandson-just like God had promised.
- Jesus was a special child born to a special mother. Just like God told Isaiah.
- Jesus was born in the city of Bethlehem. Just like God told Micah.
- Mary had a baby and named him Jesus. Just like the angel said.
- Joseph married Mary and took care of Jesus. Just like the angel told him to.

For help teaching this lesson and links to download the pictures [click here](#).

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## Oh, Baby!

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## My Friend Jesus (6 Lessons)

After a long delay between lessons the “My Friend Jesus” series for Babies and Toddlers is now complete. Hopefully, it will help parents and teachers share the story of Jesus with little ones.

In this series infants and toddlers are introduced to Jesus and relate to him through various common experiences of childhood (celebration, helping, community, worship and growth). Role-play and sensory activities are used to express a growing relationship and friendship with him.

The first breath Jesus took on this earth was as a fragile newborn infant. The One who would save the world had to have his nappies/diapers changed. He learned to feed himself, crawl and walk. He experienced the human senses of taste, touch, hearing, sight and smell.

Infants and Toddlers can know that Jesus is special, experience affinity with Jesus through role-play and sensory activities. They can learn practices that express friendship, affection, obedience, respect and worship.

## Lessons in this Series:

### 1. Cherished Baby

Expressing love through protection and tender care.

### 2. Time to Celebrate

The joy of giving, receiving and celebrating.

### 3. Helper at Home

Being part of a family by sharing responsibilities at home.

### 4. Worship and Praise

Being part of a community of worshippers.

### 5. Growing and Learning

The satisfaction of maturing and moving forward.

### 6. My Friend, Jesus

Comfort, love and affection in a relationship with Jesus.

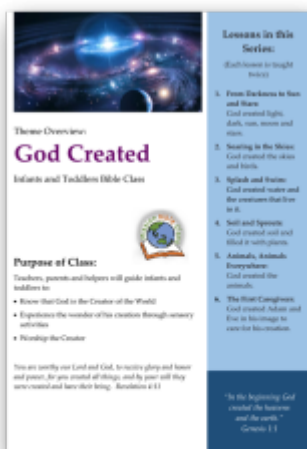


My Friend Jesus  
(6 Lessons)

[Download the complete set here.](#)

[Go to the "My Friend Jesus page on this website.](#)

## Additional Infant and Toddler Lessons



God Created  
(6 Lessons)



God is With Me  
(6 Lessons)

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# What Every Child Wants to Hear

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A couple of weeks ago I taught a group of 5-8 year olds about the [Baptism of Jesus](#).

In the days leading up to the lesson I contemplated [Matthew 3:13-17](#) and asked myself how the event might be viewed from a child's perspective. What is it about this part of God's Word that "makes sense" to a child? What is it about the baptism of Jesus that helps a child relate to God?

And then it struck me. It was not just "God's Word" in a general sense that was impacting. It was, quite literally, God's words. Words spoken directly from heaven and in relation to his son. Words of approval. Words of affirmation for a good choice made. Words from a proud father claiming a son as his own and expressing love for him. These are the words every child wants to hear.

Unlike the crowds flocking to hear John's preaching, Jesus was not baptised because he had done something wrong. Jesus was baptised because he wanted to do everything that was right. God responded immediately...

*And a voice spoke from heaven. The voice said, "This is my Son and I love him. I am very pleased with him." Matthew 3:17 (ICB)*

As for the children in my class, they related perfectly to Jesus at that moment. They understood how much this declaration must have meant to Jesus.

After we talked about how proud God was of Jesus I took the lesson to the next level. The children were not aware that I had previously collected words of affirmation from their own parents. You could have heard a pin drop as, one by one, I read these messages aloud to the class. Tears came to my eyes as I watched the way the children hung on each word.

- Ezekiel, you are my son. I love you. I am proud of you. You have been very brave about leaving your pre-school and starting at a new school.
- Mylah, you are my daughter. I love you. I am proud of you. You are always so kind to people and take the time to thank people for their good deeds.
- Gurshan, you are my son. I love you. I am proud of you. You have practiced faithfully in Tae Kwon Do and have earned a place beyond what is usual for your age group.
- Caleb, you are my son. I love you. I am proud of you. You are a good big brother and set an example for your younger brother to follow.

I use the term "God's Word" quite often because I believe the Bible to be inspired by God. In sharing lessons from the Bible I am imparting truths from God. However, in the story of the [the Baptism of Jesus](#), the literal words spoken by God were the ones most profoundly impacting on each child.

Just like the children, don't we also crave these words from our father? Through Christ, I want to make God proud. I want him to say, "Mary, you are my daughter. I love you. I am very pleased with you."

This is what every child wants to hear.

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# 'Tis the Season to Teach Infants and Toddlers

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The first breath Jesus took on this earth was as a fragile newborn infant. The One who would save the world had to have his nappies/diapers changed. He learned to feed himself, crawl and walk. He experienced the human senses of taste, touch, hearing, sight and smell.

"My Friend Jesus" is a series of lessons created especially for children under the age of three. In this series infants and toddlers are introduced to Jesus and relate to him through various common experiences of childhood (celebration, helping, community, worship and growth). Role-play and sensory activities are used to express a growing relationship and friendship with him.

# Purpose of Class:

In these lessons teachers, parents and helpers will guide infants and toddlers to:

- Know that Jesus is special.
- Experience affinity with Jesus in a variety of situations through role-play and sensory activities.
- Learn practices that express friendship, affection, obedience, respect and worship.

*And Jesus said, "No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you". John 15:15, CEV*

## "My Friend Jesus" Download Page

Downloads include:

### **My Friend Jesus\_Theme Overview**

#### **Lesson 1: Cherished Baby** (Click here to view or print lesson)

Expressing love through protection and tender care.

#### **Lesson 2: Time to Celebrate**

The joy of giving, receiving and celebrating.

#### **Lesson 3: Helper at Home**

Being part of a family by sharing responsibilities at home.

#### **Lesson 4: Worship and Praise**

Being part of a community of worshipers.

#### **Lesson 5. Growing and Learning**

The satisfaction of maturing and moving forward.

#### **Lesson 6. My Friend, Jesus**

Comfort, love and affection of a relationship with Jesus.

### **Infant and Toddler Teaching Instructions**

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# I Have Skeletons in My Closet

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I have to be honest, Halloween is not exactly my favourite holiday. But one thing I really like about it is what happens afterwards. After the big rush (and sometimes even before) there are all sorts of skeletons on sale!

Why is this a good thing, you might ask? Why would I need to stock up on skeletons and stow them away in my closet?

It's simple...I'm a Bible teacher!

## Ezekiel and the Valley of Dry Bones

Bones and skeletons are great visual aids and conversation starters for the story of [Ezekiel and the Valley of Dry Bones](#) from [Ezekiel 37:1-14](#).

I love to tell this story of hope. This vision has the vital elements needed for a dramatic story. The kids love the “creepy” image of dry bones lying all over a valley. They can relate to how Ezekiel must have felt when the bones began rattling and coming together.

Tendons and flesh formed on them and finally God breathed his spirit into them. If Ezekiel was hopeless because his people were in captivity he could finally understand how God had the power to bring a nation back to life.

## Teaching Items in Post-Holiday Sales Bins

As a teacher I am always on the lookout for items that will help me share God's Word in ways children can best relate to. No one has to spend a lot of money or buy new things to teach children about God. But if you live in a place where after-holiday sales provide extremely cheap items then this may be a great opportunity. What are the holidays where you live?

### After Christmas

- Creche and manger scenes (angels, wise men, animals, Joseph, Mary, Jesus, the manger itself), pictures of Jesus as a baby, stars and spices like the wise men brought. The obvious uses are for stories such as [The Birth of Jesus](#) and [Wise Men and a Star](#).

- Gaudy plastic strings of gold and silver garland can make great “treasure” when you later tell the [Parable of a Treasure & a Pearl](#).
- Greenery, artificial trees, candles and even twinkling lights bought in after-Christmas clearance sales really come in handy for costumes and acting out Bible stories later on.
- You’re going to enjoy pulling twinkling lights out of storage when you tell the story of [Jesus Teaches about Salt and Light](#).

## After Valentines Day

- Heart decorations of all kinds. These could be used when talking about the heart.
- Stories that come to mind are [Let My People Go!](#) , [John the Baptist](#) and [The Parable of a Sower and the Seeds](#)

## After Easter

- This is the obvious time to find things like books and figurines to help you later tell the story of the [Burial and the Resurrection of Jesus](#).
- Since I teach infants and toddlers I sometimes use the little wind-up bunnies when I teach about [Day 6-God Created Animals & People](#).
- And I like to have a few plastic eggs on hand throughout the year so I can put verses or pictures inside and let the children hunt for them. They are also great for telling the story of death, burial and resurrection of Jesus with [Resurrection Eggs](#).

## After Halloween

- Skeletons for teaching about [Ezekiel & the Valley of Dry Bones](#)
- Candy and lollies if you use those as game prizes.

## After Thanksgiving

- We can give thanks throughout the year so I’ve sometimes used items on sale after this holiday to teach stories such as [Jesus Heals Ten Lepers](#).
- And all of plastic fruit comes in handy for teaching about [The Fruit of the Spirit](#).

Happy Teaching!

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