



Cherished Baby

Lesson 1:

Expressing love through tenderness and care

Jesus was born the son of God and the son of Mary but God's plan was for him to begin his earthly life in a caring family situation with Joseph in the role of protective father and Mary the loving and tender mother. Infants and toddlers can relate to the love between parents and babies.

Scripture: "Be kind to one another (and) tenderhearted." Ephesians 4:32a English Standard Version

Class Schedule

45 Minutes

Welcome Time (15 minutes)

On the mat in the soft corner. Time to settle in and enjoy free play. Music or singing.

Bible Time and Lesson (20 minutes total)

At the table

- **Bible Time**
- **Lesson:** (In preparation for class the teacher should read Luke 2:1-7). In the lesson share how Joseph and Mary protected and tenderly cared for Jesus when he was a baby.
"While they were there (in Bethlehem), the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them." Luke 2:6-7 (NIV)
- **Craft:** (optional) Any craft having to do with a manger or baby
- **Snack:** Water and any simple snack will do (raisins, crackers, vegetables or fruit).

Closing (10 minutes)

On the mat in the soft corner Quiet activities to settle down. Dolls to sing lullabies to.

Teaching Items to Collect

(Some are in the Theme Boxes)

- Large picture or figurines of manger scene (Jesus, Mary, Joseph, animals, shepherds, angels)
- Picture books or other illustrations depicting the scenes around Jesus' birth. Choose realistic ones if possible.
- Life size infant doll (Jesus).
- Manger or a cardboard box that can substitute as a manger.
- Hay or straw. Shredded light brown paper can substitute if you don't have real straw.
- Dolls the children can handle and "care for".
- Baby care items
 - Blankets
 - Nappy
 - Baby powder
 - Bottles



1. Welcome Time

(15 minutes) *On the mat in the soft corner*
Time to settle in and enjoy free play.
Focus conversation on babies and caring for babies.

- Dolls
- Bubbles/toys/picture books
- Welcome each by name
- Mirrors, Peep Tube, Vehicles
- Bell to indicate class is about to start

2. Bible Time

When you move to the table spend the first 5 minutes in routines that you repeat each week.

- Pat the bible
- Find Jesus picture (sticker) in bible. Take time to talk about Jesus as our friend.
- “Read”- God loves _____. Filling the blank with the child’s name and members of his/her family.
- Sing B-I-B-L-E

Vocabulary:

- Daddy
- Mummy/Mommy
- Baby Jesus
- Bed
- Manger
- Tender
- Love

Sensory:

- Prickly hay or straw
- Soft blanket
- Singing a lullaby

3. Bible Lesson

(15 minutes) *At the table*

- Act out the story using a manger or crèche nativity set. You will need at least the figures of Joseph, Mary and baby Jesus. If the set has additional and appropriate pieces then use them to talk about the trip to Bethlehem, trying to find a place to stay and finally, using a barn as a place to stay. Any animals in the barn would help set the scene.
- To further role-play with a doll as baby Jesus:
 - Act as Joseph and Mary taking care of Jesus when he is crying, hungry, burping, needing his dirty nappy changed, etc.)
 - Talk about how sleepy the baby is and that there is no bed/cot/crib to sleep in.
 - Let the children feel hay or straw and then help you place it in a manger. A makeshift manger could be made by using a small cardboard box (like a shoe box).
 - Make a point to wrap the doll very carefully before laying it gently on the prickly hay.
 - Sing “Away in a Manger” or another lullaby to the baby.
- Provide dolls for each of the children in your class and lead them in taking care of their “baby Jesus” dolls in the same way.
- As you are caring for the baby and showing pictures make a point to explain and/or act out how Joseph and Mary might have expressed love to each other and the baby (saying I love you, giving hugs and kisses).
- Craft (optional): A baby in a manger.
- Prayer: Fold hands and close eyes to pray.
- Snack: Any healthy snack.

4. Closing

(10 minutes) *On the mat in the soft corner.* Quiet activities to settle down

- Cuddle the baby dolls and put them to bed.
- Read a book or look at pictures of manger scenes.



Suggested Songs for this Lesson:

Note: Infants and toddlers enjoy the rhythm and melody of song but they are not critics of the teacher's abilities! It's fine if you sing the same tune every time, make up your own tune or even just say the words in a poetic or fun way. Just have fun with it and put the children's needs above your own shyness.

Away in a Manger

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

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.
I love Thee, Lord Jesus,
look down from the sky
And stay by my cradle 'til morning is nigh.

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

**These are traditional words. You probably won't be able to sing all the verses before the little ones get restless but they are sweet lyrics if you have the opportunity. If you don't know the tune for the song, then search online for an example. There are a variety of versions.*

Night-Night Little _____

Night-night little baby
God loves you.
He watches over you all night through.

Tune: Bah-bah Black Sheep

Action: Use this song for putting babies to bed.
Joseph and Mary can sing this song to baby Jesus.

My Loving Family

I love Daddy. I love Mother.
I love little sister and brother.
Thank you, God, for giving me.
My loving family.

Tune: Make up your own tune or say as a poem.

Action: Sing as you show dolls or photos of family members.

Are You Sleeping?

Are you sleeping? Are you sleeping?
Little one. Little one.
Listen to our singing. Listen to our singing.
It's time to wake up! It's time to wake up!

Tune: Frere Jacques/Are Sleeping, Brother John.

Action: Use this song for putting babies to bed.
Joseph and Mary can sing this song to baby Jesus.

Then the infants and toddlers in class can mimic sleeping by yawning, covering the toy animal with a blanket. After this dramatic activity you can all "sleep" a bit and then mimic the excitement of waking up for a new day. Do this over and over if the children enjoy it. This never gets old for little ones.

Items to Use to Teach this Lesson



Stand-up figures of Joseph, Jesus and Mary and various animals. Colour and cut out figures on thick paper. Use rolled tape or blue-tack on the back of each figure and place on up-turned plastic cups. You have just created stand-up figures for telling the story.



Nativity Set.



Baby Jesus doll in manger. We are lucky to have a life-size doll that fits into a manger someone made for our class.



What a manger might look like.

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Hay. *This original photo by Horia Varlan via Flickr through Creative Commons*

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This large tin can has been decorated so that an infant or toddler can hold it up to his or her face and look through to the picture of Jesus at the opposite end. The inside of the tin is lined with black paper. The end is also black paper except that the black paper is carefully cut around the picture of the baby before it is attached. When viewed from the inside the light shines brightly through the picture. This results in a vibrant picture of the baby. Infants and toddlers love gazing at it through the dark tin can.



Dolls and baby items.