



Infant & Toddler



Curriculum

My Friend Jesus

Mission Bible Class



Theme Overview:

My Friend Jesus



Infants and Toddlers Bible Lessons

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 had to be taught to feed himself, crawl and walk. He experienced the human senses of taste, touch, hearing, sight and smell.

In this series, infants and toddlers are introduced to Jesus and relate to him through various everyday 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 Theme

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

John 15:15

I don't call you servants now. A servant does not know what his master is doing. But now I call you friends because I have made known to you everything I heard from my Father.

Lessons in this series:

Infants and toddlers enjoy repetition so there is no need for teachers to rush to the next lesson. Each lesson can be successfully taught at least two times before moving to the next.

- Cherished Baby: Expressing love through protection and tender care.
- Time to Celebrate: The joy of giving, receiving and celebrating.
- Helper at Home: Being part of a family by sharing responsibilities at home.
- Worship and Praise: Being part of a community of worshippers.
- Growing and Learning: The satisfaction of maturing and moving forward.
- My Best Friend: Feeling the comfort, love and affection found in a relationship with Jesus.

Lesson 1:

Cherished Baby



Summary

The theme for this lesson is relating to Jesus by 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

Ephesians 4:32

Be kind and loving to each other. Forgive each other just as God forgave you in Christ.

Luke 2:6-7

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.

(Quoted from the Holy Bible, International Children's Bible® Copyright© 1986, 1988, 1999, 2015 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission.)

Materials

When possible, use items that seem more natural instead of cartoonish ones. For example, a little brown mouse is preferable to a Micky Mouse that wears clothes and shoes.

- Large pictures or figurines of a nativity set. Items might include baby Jesus, Mary, Joseph, animals, shepherds or angels.
- If a nativity set is not available, then you can make your own stand-up figures of Joseph, Jesus and Mary and various animals. Simply colour and cut out figures on thick paper. Use rolled tape or sticky-tac on the back of each figure and attach them to upturned plastic cups. The cups will support the figures, allowing you to move them around as you re-enact the story.
- Picture books or other illustrations depicting the scenes around Jesus' birth. Choose realistic illustrations over cartoonish ones.
- Life-size infant doll (Jesus).
- A 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.
- Items to pretend to care for a baby:
 - Blankets, nappy/diaper, baby powder, bottles
- Simple "viewing tubes" made from cardboard or metal cylinders. These can be lined with black paper. Children look through them to see an illustration at the other end. 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.

Class Schedule: 45 minutes

- Welcome Time: 15 minutes
- Bible Time & Lesson: 20 minutes
 - Bible Time
 - Lesson
 - Craft
 - Snack
- Closing Time: 10 minutes

Vocabulary & Sensory Experiences

Vocabulary: Daddy, mummy/mommy, baby, Jesus, bed, manger, tender, love

Sensory: Prickly hay or straw, soft blanket, singing a lullaby

Welcome Time

(15 minutes of free play on the floor or mat)

Children gather and settle in so they feel welcome, comfortable and safe. This gentle transition time can include free play, choosing favourite toys, music or singing. Casually steer conversations toward the subject in today's Bible lesson when appropriate.

Today, focus the conversation on affection, affirmation and love.

- Take extra time to play with baby dolls today.
- Welcome each child by name
- Mirrors, Peep Tube, Vehicles
- Bell to indicate class is about to start



Table Time

(20 minutes sitting at a table)



Helpers move the children to seats at a table and then quietly step back. The teacher sits across from the children and begins to immediately engage them in the lesson activities. Infants and toddlers will enjoy following the lead of the teacher for the Bible theme of the day. This time passes quickly, so crafts are optional.

Bible Time

(About 5 minutes)

Time for children to handle and "read" from little Bibles. These may be kept in a special box or basket so children look forward to them each week. You will guide infants and toddlers to handle the bibles carefully, but expect them to be torn or chewed in the process. You should guide instead of "scold", so choose Bibles that you accept will become well-worn.

When you move to the table, spend these first 5 minutes in normal Bible time routines that you and the children enjoy.

- Pat the bible
- Place small pictures between the pages of the bibles so the children can discover them.
- Find a Jesus picture in the bible. Take time to talk about Jesus as our friend. (A sticker depicting Jesus can be placed in the Bibles and "found" each week.
- Help the children point to bible pages and "read"- God loves ____.
- Sing the song: B-I-B-L-E



Bible Lesson

(About 10 minutes)

A simple thought or truth from the Bible. This is presented in a way that relates to an infant or toddler's world. Allow the children to engage through sensory activities (hearing, touching, tasting, seeing and smelling). If the children want to linger on something they enjoy, then there is no need to rush.



Explain and show that Joseph and Mary protected and tenderly cared for Jesus when he was a baby. Use a manger or crèche nativity set to tell the story of Jesus' birth in a simple way. You will need at least the figures of Joseph, Mary and baby Jesus. If the set has additional and appropriate pieces, then you may choose 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.

Guide the children in experiencing the textures, sounds, tastes and smells of a baby Jesus and of parents caring for babies.

- Use a baby doll to pretend as Joseph and Mary taking care of Jesus. Pretend that baby Jesus is crying, hungry, burping or needing his nappy/diaper changed.
- Talk about how sleepy the baby is and that there is no place to sleep.
- Let the children feel hay or straw and then help you place it in a manger. A make-shift 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 talk about how Joseph and Mary might have expressed love to each other and to the baby. They might have said, "I love you" and given hugs and kisses.

Craft Suggestions

(As time allows)

If you choose to do crafts, keep them very simple. Label crafts with the child's name and the date. Also, writing "God made the sun" might help parents later recognise a yellow scribble that their toddler drew.

Provide a simple illustration of an infant Jesus. Children can glue straw or hay around the baby. Shredded brown paper makes good hay for this purpose.



Prayer and Snack

(About 5 minutes)

Lead the children in prayer before the snack. Some children will repeat after you or fold their hands together.

Considering choking hazards and allergies, food items should be cleared with parents before serving. These might include fruit, vegetables or plain crackers. Children can help the teacher "clean the table" at the end.

Prayer:

Fold hands and close eyes to pray. Thank God Mary and Joseph and how they took care of Jesus. Thank God for the food today.

Snack:

Any healthy fruits, vegetables or crackers.



Time to Settle

(10 minutes back on the floor or mat)

Children can give cuddles or feed bottles to baby dolls. Quiet music or nature sounds help settle and calm the children before their parents arrive to pick them up from class. This enables a positive transition.

Guide children in cuddling the baby dolls and singing a lullaby or kissing them goodnight as they put them to bed. The children may also enjoy “feeding” the dolls a bottle or pretending to feed them food with a spoon.



Suggested Songs and Poems for this Lesson



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.

The following songs and poems are just suggestions. What songs do children sing where you live? Using or adapting local and traditional children’s songs will be more meaningful for families and the church community.

Away in a Manger (song)

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.

Tune: Traditional

Note: 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. Tunes for this song vary by geographical location.

This is the Way (song)

This is the way we clean the table.
Clean the table. Clean the table.
This is the way we clean the table.
To help in bible class.

Tune: This is the Way We Wash the Clothes

Action: Sing as you and the children do the tasks together.

To Adapt: Substitute any baby care activity (such as “rock the baby” or “fold the nappy”)

Night-Night Little _____ (song)

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

Tune: The first lines of 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 (poem)

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? (song)

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.



Lesson 2:

Time to Celebrate



Summary

The theme for this lesson is relating to Jesus by experiencing the joy of giving, receiving and celebrating together. Angels sang and rejoiced as they announced the birth of Jesus. Shepherds rushed to see the baby. Wise men came from far to bring gifts and worship this little king. Infants and toddlers can relate to the joy of celebration through cheering, singing and gift-giving just like at a birthday party.

Scripture

Luke 2:8-15

That night, some shepherds were in the fields nearby watching their sheep. An angel of the Lord stood before them. The glory of the Lord was shining around them, and suddenly they became very frightened. The angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, because I am bringing you some good news. It will be a joy to all the people. Today your Savior was born in David's town. He is Christ, the Lord. This is how you will know him: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a feeding box."

Then a very large group of angels from heaven joined the first angel. All the angels were praising God, saying: "Give glory to God in heaven, and on earth let there be peace to the people who please God."

Then the angels left the shepherds and went back to heaven. The shepherds said to each other, "Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened. We will see this thing the Lord told us about."

Matthew 2:10-11

When the wise men saw the star, they were filled with joy. They went to the house where the child was and saw him with his mother, Mary. They bowed down and worshiped the child. They opened the gifts they brought for him. They gave him treasures of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Materials

When possible, use items that seem more natural instead of cartoonish ones. For example, a little brown mouse is preferable to a Micky Mouse that wears clothes and shoes.

- Nativity set. Today, you will need angels, shepherds and wise men in the set.
- If a nativity set is not available, then you can make your own stand-up figures of the characters. Simply colour and cut out figures on thick paper. Use rolled tape or sticky-tac on the back of each figure and attach them to upturned plastic cups. The cups will support the figures, allowing you to move them around as you re-enact the story.
- Picture books or other illustrations depicting the scenes around the announcement of Jesus' birth. Choose realistic ones over cartoonish if possible.
- Life-size infant doll (Jesus)
- A star wand or a star glued to a stick
- Birthday party items:
 - Cake (a round cardboard "box" makes a great play cake), candles for the cake. These can be pretend candles or battery operated tea lights, party hats, toddlers might enjoy little party horns or noise makers, gift bag and tissue paper, baby toys to wrap as gifts for Jesus, shiny "gold" gift objects would be a great addition

Class Schedule: 45 minutes

- Welcome Time: 15 minutes
- Bible Time & Lesson: 20 minutes
 - Bible Time
 - Lesson
 - Craft
 - Snack
- Closing Time: 10 minutes

Vocabulary & Sensory Experiences

Vocabulary: Happy Birthday, shepherd, angel, sing, celebrate, wise men, star, gifts

Sensory: Clapping hands to celebrate, singing “Happy Birthday”, crinkly wrapping paper, shiny star, sweet taste of a birthday cupcake or cookie

Welcome Time

(15 minutes of free play on the floor or mat)

Children gather and settle in so they feel welcome, comfortable and safe. This gentle transition time can include free play, choosing favourite toys, music or singing. Casually steer conversations toward the subject in today’s Bible lesson when appropriate.

Today, as the opportunity arises, focus the conversation on celebrating the birth of Jesus.

- Welcome each child by name
- Mirrors, Peep Tube, Vehicles
- Bell to indicate class is about to start
- Sing “Happy Birthday” and pretend to blow out candles on a cake
- Make a star out of shiny paper and play an obvious game of “hide and seek” with it so the children can find it.



Table Time

(20 minutes sitting at a table)



Helps move the children to seats at a table and then quietly step back. The teacher sits across from the children and begins to immediately engage them in the lesson activities. Infants and toddlers will enjoy following the lead of the teacher for the Bible theme of the day. This time passes quickly, so crafts are optional.

Bible Time

(About 5 minutes)

Time for children to handle and “read” from little Bibles. These may be kept in a special box or basket so children look forward to them each week. You will guide infants and toddlers to handle the bibles carefully, but expect them to be torn or chewed in the process. You should guide instead of “scold”, so choose Bibles that you accept will become well-worn.

When you move to the table, spend these first 5 minutes in normal Bible time routines that you and the children enjoy.

- Pat the bible
- Place small pictures between the pages of the bibles so the children can discover them.
- Find a Jesus picture in the bible. Take time to talk about Jesus as our friend. (A sticker depicting Jesus can be placed in the Bibles and “found” each week.
- Help the children point to bible pages and “read”- God loves ____.
- Sing the song: B-I-B-L-E



Bible Lesson

(About 10 minutes)

A simple thought or truth from the Bible. This is presented in a way that relates to an infant or toddler's world. Allow the children to engage through sensory activities (hearing, touching, tasting, seeing and smelling). If the children want to linger on something they enjoy, then there is no need to rush.



In the lesson, share how angels, shepherds and wise men joyously celebrated the birth of Jesus. Use a nativity set as a visual aid to tell the story of the angels singing and the shepherds listening in amazement. The shepherds rushed to Bethlehem to see the baby. The wise men celebrated the birth of Jesus by bringing him gifts.

Reflect the excitement of this event:

- Be a little dramatic with the shepherds' fear and then the angel's happy announcement.
- Robustly sing the first lines of "Joy to the World" to show the angels' joyous singing.
- "Rush" the shepherds and a few sheep to Bethlehem to see the baby. "Ooh" and "Ahh" over the cute baby.
- Move a star around the area and show the wise men following it.
- Bow the wise men very low in worship of this king.

Guide the children in experiencing the textures, sounds, tastes and smells involved in celebrating a birthday. This birthday party is for Jesus.

- Allow them a chance to wrap the crinkly paper around a gift or place it in a gift bag.
- Prepare the "cake" and "light" the candles.
- Sing "Happy Birthday" to Jesus and let him "blow out the candles and open the gifts." Some children might want to repeat this over and over.
- Enjoy a small cupcake for the snack today.

Craft Suggestions

(As time allows)

If you choose to do crafts, keep them very simple. Label crafts with the child's name and the date. Also, writing "God made the sun" might help parents later recognise a yellow scribble that their toddler drew.

Any craft relating to angels, shepherds or a birthday party would be appropriate today.



Prayer and Snack

(About 5 minutes)

Lead the children in prayer before the snack. Some children will repeat after you or fold their hands together.

Considering choking hazards and allergies, food items should be cleared with parents before serving. These might include fruit, vegetables or plain crackers. Children can help the teacher "clean the table" at the end.

Prayer:

Fold hands and close eyes to pray. Thank God for Jesus and his birthday. Thank God for the snack food today.

Snack:

Healthy fruits, vegetables and foods are always good, but today might be the day for a cupcake or birthday cookie.



Time to Settle

(10 minutes back on the floor or mat)

Children can give cuddles or feed bottles to baby dolls. Quiet music or nature sounds help settle and calm the children before their parents arrive to pick them up from class. This enables a positive transition.

- As you settle down, hide the star in the pillows again and let the children find it.
- Quietly read a book about the birth of Jesus, shepherds, angels or wise men.
- Guide children in cuddling the baby dolls and singing a lullaby or kissing them goodnight as they put them to bed. The children may also enjoy “feeding” the dolls a bottle or pretending to feed them food with a spoon.



Suggested Songs and Poems for this Lesson



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.

The following songs and poems are just suggestions. What songs do children sing where you live? Using or adapting local and traditional children’s songs will be more meaningful for families and the church community.

Joy to the World (song)

Joy to the world! The Lord is come
Let earth receive her King!
Let every heart prepare Him room
And heaven and nature sing
And heaven and nature sing
And heaven, and heaven and nature
sing

Tune: If you don’t know the tune for this traditional Christmas song, then search online for an example. There are a variety of versions.

To Adapt: These are traditional words for the first verse. If the children are interested sing it happily and robustly and repeat. If they aren’t interested, just sing the first line or two.

Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star (song)

Twinkle, twinkle little star.
God has made you like you are.
Up above the world so high.
Like a diamond in the sky.
Twinkle, twinkle little star.
God has made you like you are.

Tune: Twinkle, twinkle Little Star

Action: Spread and retract fingers as you sing the first two lines. Point one or both index fingers up for God and for “world so high.” For the diamond, make a diamond shape with your fingers. Finish with spreading and retracting your fingers again for the your fingers again and then point up for God.

Star Light Star Bright (poem)

Star light, star bright
First star I see tonight.
I know that God, in all his might.
Has made the stars I see tonight.

Action: Recite while viewing pictures or cut-outs of stars. Another idea is to cut out a star and mount it on a craft stick. Children can wave the stars as you say the poem.

Happy Birthday to You (song)

Happy Birthday to you.
Happy Birthday to you.
Happy Birthday, dear Jesus.
Happy Birthday to you.

Tune: traditional

Actions: Sing just before blowing out the candles on the cake.

Clean Up! Clean Up! (song)

Clean Up! Clean Up!
Everybody, Everywhere
Clean Up! Clean Up!
Everybody do your share

Tune and Lyrics: Barney's World

https://youtu.be/IPgrZoT-Jl8?si=SMH8KdoRSiYN_b3h

Actions: Sing as you clean up after the birthday party.



Lesson 3:

Helper at Home



Summary

The theme for this lesson is about being a part of a family and sharing responsibilities at home. Jesus was part of a family. He would have helped his mother, Mary, in the house and learned to be a carpenter like his earthly father, Joseph. He would have played and lived side by side with the other children in the household. Infants and toddlers can relate to Jesus in the way that they obey their parents and help at home.

Scripture

Luke 2:51-52

Jesus went with them to Nazareth and obeyed them. His mother was still thinking about all that had happened. Jesus continued to learn more and more and to grow physically. People liked him, and he pleased God.

Ephesians 6:1

Children, obey your parents the way the Lord wants. This is the right thing to do.

Matthew 13:54-56

He went to the town where he grew up. He taught the people in the synagogue, and they were amazed. They said, "Where did this man get this wisdom and this power to do miracles? He is only the son of the carpenter. And his mother is Mary. His brothers are James, Joseph, Simon and Judas. And all his sisters are here with us. So where does this man get all these things?"

Materials

When possible, use items that seem more natural instead of cartoonish ones. For example, a little brown mouse is preferable to a Micky Mouse that wears clothes and shoes.

- Stand up figures of Mary, Joseph, Boy Jesus. You can make your own stand-up figures of the characters. Simply colour and cut out figures on thick paper. Use rolled tape or sticky-tac on the back of each figure and attach them to upturned plastic cups. The cups will support the figures, allowing you to move them around as you re-enact the story.
- Doll family to act out helping situations.
- Items to use in guided play for helping at home:
 - Modeling-dough for creating food items. Children enjoy using rolling pins. Rolling out green peas is one easy food item for little hands.
 - Plastic plates to use for setting the table. You can add a cup, plastic fork and spoon. A placemat or tablecloth would also be good.
 - Toy or real food items
- Cleaning items for helping:
 - Small dusters, spray bottle of water and cloth to clean with, small rubbish bin and crumpled paper, various cloths to use in "cleaning"
- Toys to share
- Items to use in guided play for helping in a carpenter's shop:
 - Toy tools and workbenches, wooden blocks or wood to handle, count and "build" with, dustpans and brushes

Class Schedule: 45 minutes

- Welcome Time: 15 minutes
- Bible Time & Lesson: 20 minutes
 - Bible Time
 - Lesson
 - Craft
 - Snack
- Closing Time: 10 minutes

Vocabulary & Sensory Experiences

Vocabulary: Daddy, Mummy/Mommy, Jesus, help, obey, listen, good job! please, thank you

Sensory: Various soft and bristly cleaning cloths, mist of water from spray bottle, rough wood, sounds of hammering and sawing

Welcome Time

(15 minutes of free play on the floor or mat)

Children gather and settle in so they feel welcome, comfortable and safe. This gentle transition time can include free play, choosing favourite toys, music or singing. Casually steer conversations toward the subject in today's Bible lesson when appropriate.

Today, as the opportunity arises, focus the conversation on helping and sharing.

- Welcome each child by name
- Mirrors, Peep Tube, Vehicles
- Bell to indicate class is about to start



Table Time

(20 minutes sitting at a table)



Helps move the children to seats at a table and then quietly step back. The teacher sits across from the children and begins to immediately engage them in the lesson activities. Infants and toddlers will enjoy following the lead of the teacher for the Bible theme of the day. This time passes quickly, so crafts are optional.

Bible Time

(About 5 minutes)

Time for children to handle and "read" from little Bibles. These may be kept in a special box or basket so children look forward to them each week. You will guide infants and toddlers to handle the bibles carefully, but expect them to be torn or chewed in the process. You should guide instead of "scold", so choose Bibles that you accept will become well-worn.

When you move to the table, spend these first 5 minutes in normal Bible time routines that you and the children enjoy.

- Pat the bible
- Place small pictures between the pages of the bibles so the children can discover them.
- Find a Jesus picture in the bible. Take time to talk about Jesus as our friend. (A sticker depicting Jesus can be placed in the Bibles and "found" each week.
- Help the children point to bible pages and "read"- God loves ____.
- Sing the song: B-I-B-L-E



Bible Lesson

(About 10 minutes)

A simple thought or truth from the Bible. This is presented in a way that relates to an infant or toddler's world. Allow the children to engage through sensory activities (hearing, touching, tasting, seeing and smelling). If the children want to linger on something they enjoy, then there is no need to rush.



Even as a young boy, Jesus modeled what it means to obey his parents and live in harmony at home.

The bible does not give details about Jesus' childhood other than that he obeyed his parents and grew in the normal way. As the oldest child he would have helped his mother with younger siblings. He would have helped around the house. He would have learned the family carpentry trade.

Talk and act through a day that Jesus would have spent as a child. Children can relate by joining in role-playing scenarios of helping and obeying.

Guide the children in experiencing the textures, sounds, tastes and smells of a home and then of the carpenter shop where Jesus would have likely helped Joseph. Use guided play to learn how Jesus might have helped his mother and family at home. We can help at home too.

- Making the bed and getting dressed in the morning.
- Helping prepare breakfast, use manners and clean up.
- Playing cheerfully and sharing with brothers and sisters. This involves good manners, taking turns and sharing.
- Helping around house by dusting, picking up toys or taking care of a baby.
- Use the spray bottle to spray a little water on the table so the children can "clean" it with a cloth.

Again, use guided play to experience what it would have been like for Jesus to help his earthly father, Joseph, in a carpenter shop.

- Use toy hammers and other tools to hammer nails and saw wood.
- Stack wood or counting supplies.
- Being careful to listen to and follow instructions. This provides the opportunity to use encouraging words like "good job" and "thank you for being my helper."

Craft Suggestions

(As time allows)

If you choose to do crafts, keep them very simple. Label crafts with the child's name and the date. Also, writing "God made the sun" might help parents later recognise a yellow scribble that their toddler drew.

Before the session break coloured chalk into small chunks and then soak in water. For the craft provide each child with a small hammer. Place the chalk chunks on the paper and show the children how to tap the chalk with their hammers. Soaking the chalk helps it stick to the paper. Alternatively, do the same activity but place small dots of paint on the paper to tap.

Prayer and Snack

(About 5 minutes)

Lead the children in prayer before the snack. Some children will repeat after you or fold their hands together.

Considering choking hazards and allergies, food items should be cleared with parents before serving. These might include fruit, vegetables or plain crackers. Children can help the teacher "clean the table" at the end.

Prayer:

Fold hands and close eyes to pray. Thank God for giving us food. Ask God to help us obey our parents and be helpers in our family.

Snack:

Any healthy snacks like fruits, vegetables or crackers can be served. Today, pay special attention to ways the children to help serve and clean up.

Time to Settle

(10 minutes back on the floor or mat)

Children can give cuddles or feed bottles to baby dolls. Quiet music or nature sounds help settle and calm the children before their parents arrive to pick them up from class. This enables a positive transition.

- As you settle down, hide toys among the pillows and let the children find them.
- Guide children in cuddling the baby dolls and singing a lullaby or kissing them goodnight as they put them to bed. The children may also enjoy “feeding” the dolls a bottle or pretending to feed them food with a spoon.



Suggested Songs and Poems for this Lesson



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.

The following songs and poems are just suggestions. What songs do children sing where you live? Using or adapting local and traditional children’s songs will be more meaningful for families and the church community.

I Live in a House (song)

I live in a house of wood or rock.
Stand at the door and knock-knock-knock
Inside you will find my family
Right in the middle you’ll find ME.

Tune: I’m a Little Teapot

Action: (toddlers might join you)

Line 1 form your hands like a rooftop. When you say knock-knock-knock rap your knuckles on the table to make the sound. Point to yourself when you say “ME”.

To Adapt: Substitute another building material instead of wood if appropriate to where the children live.

We Say Kind Words (song)

In our house we say kind words.
In our family.
In our house we say kind words.
In our family.
With a *thank-you here and a thank-you there.
Thank-you, thank-you everywhere.
In our house we say kind words.
In our family.

Tune: Old McDonald Had a Farm

Action: Use this song in various scenarios as the doll family mimics home life. For example: Mummy says “thank-you” when child sets the table. Child says “excuse me” if parents are talking and child wants to interrupt.

Adapt: Substitute “excuse me” or “I’m sorry” or “Yes-Please” or “No-thank-you” or phrases appropriate to where you live.

Be So Kind and Helpful (song)

Dust, dust, dust the table
Dust, dust, dust the table
Dust, dust, dust the table
To be so kind and helpful.

Wash, wash, wash the toy
Wash, wash, wash the toy
Wash, wash, wash the toy
To be so kind and helpful.

Tune: "Skip to my Lou"

Action: Sing as you perform the motions.

Adapt: Substitute other phrases but always end with the "To be so kind and helpful." Try: "Fold, fold, fold the clothes." "Pick up, pick up rubbish." Or "Stack the wood"

Note: This song was adapted from a hand-washing song from Health Education To Villages

This is the Way (song)

This is the way we clean the table.
Clean the table. Clean the table.
This is the way we clean the table.
To help in bible class.

Tune: This is the Way We Wash the Clothes

Action: Sing as you and the children do the tasks together.

To Adapt: Substitute any helping task (set the table, wash the dishes, fold the clothes, etc.)

My Loving Family (poem)

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.

Clean Up! Clean Up! (song)

Clean Up! Clean Up!
Everybody, Everywhere
Clean Up! Clean Up!
Everybody do your share

Tune and Lyrics: Barney's World
https://youtu.be/IPgrZoT-Jl8?si=SMH8KdoRSiYN_b3h

Actions: Sing as you do any clean-up activity

A Helper I Will Be (song)

A helper I will be. A helper I will be.
I'll help the teacher clean the table.
A helper I will be.

Tune: Farmer in the Dell

Action: Sing together as you and the children wipe the table or clean up.

To Adapt: Substitute any helping task like set the table, wash the dishes, nail the nail, saw the wood.



Lesson 4:

Worship and Praise



Summary

The theme for this lesson is relating to Jesus by experiencing worship with others in a community of believers. The majority of Jesus' childhood was spent in the small village of Nazareth where his family would have taken part in the Jewish community and worship. Infants and toddlers can feel love and acceptance as part of a church family today. They can relate to observing others worship God and learning to be part of a church community who worships together.

Scripture

Matthew 18:19-20

"Also, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about something, then you can pray for it. And the thing you ask for will be done for you by my Father in heaven. This is true because if two or three people come together in my name, I am there with them."

Hebrews 10:24-25

Let us think about each other and help each other to show love and do good deeds. You should not stay away from the church meetings, as some are doing. But you should meet together and encourage each other. Do this even more as you see the Day coming.

Colossians 3:16

Let the teaching of Christ live in you richly. Use all wisdom to teach and strengthen each other. Sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

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Materials

When possible, use items that seem more natural instead of cartoonish ones. For example, a little brown mouse is preferable to a Micky Mouse that wears clothes and shoes.

- Keep in mind that these teaching items will vary and reflect worship in your own church.
- In addition to the normal small Bibles the children handle, show a "big" bible more similar to what grownups would carry. If it is your Bible then talk about why you like it.
- Picture books or other illustrations depicting people in worship.
- Photos of members of your church family.
- Church hymn books. Alternatively, make song booklets.
- Items similar to those used when taking up the collection at church. These will be used to role-play giving. Infants love putting coins in a container and hearing them clank and rattle around.
- Large "coins". Actual coins are a choking hazard so use something like large plastic poker chips.
- Doll family that can be used to act out going to church and sitting together in worship

Class Schedule: 45 minutes

- Welcome Time: 15 minutes
- Bible Time & Lesson: 20 minutes
 - Bible Time
 - Lesson
 - Craft
 - Snack
- Closing Time: 10 minutes

Vocabulary & Sensory Experiences

- **Vocabulary**: God, church, Bible, sing, pray, give, worship
- **Sensory**: Hearing the singing of songs (loud, soft, fast, slow), clanging of coins in a cup, touching Bible pages

Welcome Time

(15 minutes of free play on the floor or mat)

Children gather and settle in so they feel welcome, comfortable and safe. This gentle transition time can include free play, choosing favourite toys, music or singing. Casually steer conversations toward the subject in today's Bible lesson when appropriate.

Today, as the opportunity arises, focus the conversation on "going to church."

- Welcome each child by name
- Mirrors, Peep Tube, Vehicles
- Little cars can be used to pretend to drive to church.
- Bell to indicate class is about to start



Table Time

(20 minutes sitting at a table)



Helpers move the children to seats at a table and then quietly step back. The teacher sits across from the children and begins to immediately engage them in the lesson activities. Infants and toddlers will enjoy following the lead of the teacher for the Bible theme of the day. This time passes quickly, so crafts are optional.

Bible Time

(About 5 minutes)

Time for children to handle and "read" from little Bibles. These may be kept in a special box or basket so children look forward to them each week. You will guide infants and toddlers to handle the bibles carefully, but expect them to be torn or chewed in the process. You should guide instead of "scold", so choose Bibles that you accept will become well-worn.

When you move to the table, spend these first 5 minutes in normal Bible time routines that you and the children enjoy.

- Pat the bible
- Place small pictures between the pages of the bibles so the children can discover them.
- Find a Jesus picture in the bible. Take time to talk about Jesus as our friend. (A sticker depicting Jesus can be placed in the Bibles and "found" each week.
- Help the children point to bible pages and "read"- God loves ____.
- Sing the song: B-I-B-L-E



Bible Lesson

(About 10 minutes)

A simple thought or truth from the Bible. This is presented in a way that relates to an infant or toddler's world. Allow the children to engage through sensory activities (hearing, touching, tasting, seeing and smelling). If the children want to linger on something they enjoy, then there is no need to rush.



In the lesson today help children participate in worship activities that are familiar to them when they worship with the church.

- Guide children in worship by helping them act out various aspects of a normal worship assembly. Be prepared to do much of this while they watch but include the children as much as possible:
- Open with a greeting. Shake each child's hand while saying how happy you are that they came to church today.
- Read from a "big" Bible.
- Sing songs from a songbook. You might call out a song number and let them "look it up" before singing.
- Take part in a monetary collection. One at a time let children drop coins into a container. Coins can be a choking hazard so handle with care.
- Lead a prayer and have the children repeat after you.
- Clap in praise to God.
- One at a time show photos of members of your church that children know. Each time ask the children the name of the person and then say "Yes, _____ is in our church family!"

Guide the children in experiencing the textures, sounds, tastes and smells of the time when the church gathers together in worship. Again, these will vary according to what the children experience at your church.

- The clasping of hands in greeting.
- The sounds of hymns and songs.
- The clanging sound of coins landing inside a plate or bucket.
- The feel of pages when carefully handling a "big" Bible.

Craft Suggestions

(As time allows)

If you choose to do crafts, keep them very simple. Label crafts with the child's name and date. Also, writing "God made the sun" might help parents later recognise a yellow scribble that their toddler drew.

Draw a simple shape of a church building and then guide children in sticking smiley faces or people stickers on it. As the children do this you can name various people in your church that the children know. A title for this artwork might be "My church family."



Prayer and Snack

(About 5 minutes)

Lead the children in prayer before the snack. Some children will repeat after you or fold their hands together.

Considering choking hazards and allergies, food items should be cleared with parents before serving. These might include fruit, vegetables or plain crackers. Children can help the teacher "clean the table" at the end.

Prayer:

Fold hands and close eyes to pray.
Thank God for our church family.
Thank God for giving us food.

Snack:

Any healthy snack will work for this lesson. This might be fruit, vegetables or crackers. Include water to drink.



Time to Settle

(10 minutes back on the floor or mat)

Children can give cuddles or feed bottles to baby dolls. Quiet music or nature sounds help settle and calm the children before their parents arrive to pick them up from class. This enables a positive transition.

Quiet worship songs would be a good way to settle the children down today. Guide children in cuddling the baby dolls and singing a lullaby or kissing them goodnight as they put them to bed. The children may also enjoy “feeding” the dolls a bottle or pretending to feed them food with a spoon.



Suggested Songs and Poems for this Lesson



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.

The following songs and poems are just suggestions. What songs do children sing where you live? Using or adapting local and traditional children’s songs will be more meaningful for families and the church community.

Any simple worship or chorus song that the children are familiar with can be used in this lesson. Even singing a few lines of a song will help the children recognise it the next time they hear it.

This is the Way (song)

This is the way we read our Bible.
Read our Bible. Read our Bible.
This is the way we read our Bible.
To worship our God.

Tune: This is the Way We Wash the Clothes

Action: Sing as you and the children do the tasks together.

To Adapt: Substitute other aspects of worship. Examples might be sing a song, give to God or greet our friends.

God is So Good (song)

God is so good. God is so good.
God is so good. He’s so good to me.

I praise his name. I praise his name.
I praise his name. He’s so good to me.

Tune: This is the first part of the simple worship hymn by Paul Makai © 1970. If this song is not in your church hymnal then search online to hear the tune.

Action: Children can sit and listen as you sing, open a hymn book and sing or any posture that seems contemplative and worshipful.

Are You Singing? (song)

Are you singing? Are you singing?
Little one. Little one.
Listen to our singing. Listen to our singing.
Sing to God. Sing to God.

Tune: Frere Jacques/Are Sleeping, Brother John.

Action: Use this song as you guide the children in worship.

Adapt: Substitute other aspects of worship. Examples might be singing or praying.

Yes Jesus Love Me

Jesus loves me this I know
For the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to him belong.
They are weak but he is strong.

Tune: Traditional

Action: Use this song as you guide the children in singing from the hymnal

Here is the Church (poem and game)

Here is the church (Action: Fold your hands with fingers on the outside of knuckles)
And here is the steeple (Action: Put index fingers up to form the steeple of the church)
Open the doors (Action: Move your thumbs apart)
Where are the people? (Action: The fingers are outside so there are no people)

Here is the church (**Action:** This time around fold your hands with fingers on the inside.)
And here is the steeple (**Action:** Put index fingers up to form the steeple of the church)
Open the doors (**Action:** Move your thumbs apart)
Here are the people! (**Action:** The fingers are inside so wiggle them around for effect)

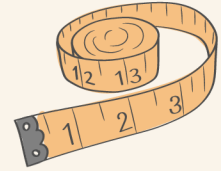
Note: A “church” is represented by clasped fists with the two thumbs representing the door. The two index fingers can be lifted together to form the steeple. When the fingers are on top of the knuckles then the inside of the church appears empty. When the fingers are clasped under the knuckles then they form the “people” inside the church.

Online instructions and photographs for this traditional and simple finger play can be found at <http://www.wikihow.com/Create-a-Church-With-Your-Fingers>



Lesson 5:

Growing and Learning



Summary

The theme of this lesson celebrates the stages of maturing and moving forward. One reason Jesus is so relatable to children of all ages must be because he grew through each stage of development himself. Infants and toddlers can relate to getting bigger and growing. They can know that God and Jesus love them at each stage of their lives.

Scripture

Luke 2:39-40

Joseph and Mary finished doing everything that the law of the Lord commanded. Then they went home to Nazareth, their own town in Galilee. The little child began to grow up. He became stronger and wiser, and God's blessings were with him.

Luke 2:52

Jesus continued to learn more and more and to grow physically. People liked him, and he pleased God.

1 Timothy 4:12

You are young, but do not let anyone treat you as if you were not important. Be an example to show the believers how they should live. Show them with your words, with the way you live, with your love, with your faith, and with your pure life.

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Materials

When possible, use items that seem more natural instead of cartoonish ones. For example, a little brown mouse is preferable to a Micky Mouse that wears clothes and shoes.

- A doll family:
 - Father, mother, grandparents, children, babies
- Illustrations showing Jesus at various ages including infancy through adult.
- Pictures of children at various ages including infancy through adult.
- Stand up figures of Mary, Joseph, and Jesus at various ages. You can make your own stand-up figures of the characters. Simply colour and cut out figures on thick paper. Use rolled tape or sticky-tac on the back of each figure and attach them to upturned plastic cups. The cups will support the figures, allowing you to move them around as you re-enact the story.
- Objects and toys of various sizes to depict increasing growth in size. These might include items such as building blocks, balls, toys, cups, Matryoshka nesting dolls or stuffed animals.
- Clothing and shoes of various sizes to talk about what a baby wears and what older children wear. Be sure and include a nappy/diaper and bib.

Class Schedule: 45 minutes

- Welcome Time: 15 minutes
- Bible Time & Lesson: 20 minutes
 - Bible Time
 - Lesson
 - Craft
 - Snack
- Closing Time: 10 minutes

Vocabulary & Sensory Experiences

- **Vocabulary**: Small and smaller, little, big and bigger, grow, growing, baby, child, grownup
- **Sensory**: Various weights of small and big items, textures and shapes of the toys used, tones and sounds of a baby voice, child's voice and a deeper grownup voice.

Welcome Time

(15 minutes of free play on the floor or mat)

Children gather and settle in so they feel welcome, comfortable and safe. This gentle transition time can include free play, choosing favourite toys, music or singing. Casually steer conversations toward the subject in today's Bible lesson when appropriate.

Today, as the opportunity arises, focus the conversation on growing and maturing. Remind children that they can now do things that they could not do when they were younger. For example, "Theo, you are such a big boy the way you turn the pages of the book so carefully."

- Welcome each child by name
- Mirrors, Peep Tube, Vehicles
- Bell to indicate class is about to start



Table Time

(20 minutes sitting at a table)



Helps move the children to seats at a table and then quietly step back. The teacher sits across from the children and begins to immediately engage them in the lesson activities. Infants and toddlers will enjoy following the lead of the teacher for the Bible theme of the day. This time passes quickly, so crafts are optional.

Bible Time

(About 5 minutes)

Time for children to handle and "read" from little Bibles. These may be kept in a special box or basket so children look forward to them each week. You will guide infants and toddlers to handle the bibles carefully, but expect them to be torn or chewed in the process. You should guide instead of "scold", so choose Bibles that you accept will become well-worn.

When you move to the table, spend these first 5 minutes in normal Bible time routines that you and the children enjoy.

- Pat the bible
- Place small pictures between the pages of the bibles so the children can discover them.
- Find a Jesus picture in the bible. Take time to talk about Jesus as our friend. (A sticker depicting Jesus can be placed in the Bibles and "found" each week.)
- Help the children point to bible pages and "read"- God loves ____.
- Sing the song: B-I-B-L-E



Bible Lesson

(About 10 minutes)

A simple thought or truth from the Bible. This is presented in a way that relates to an infant or toddler's world. Allow the children to engage through sensory activities (hearing, touching, tasting, seeing and smelling). If the children want to linger on something they enjoy, then there is no need to rush.



Infants and toddlers grow at an incredible rate. Celebrate this growth and relate it to how Jesus grew from a baby to an adult during his lifetime.

- Show illustrations of Jesus in various stages of growth (baby, toddler, boy, youth, man). As you show each picture say, “Did Jesus love God when he was a *baby? Yes, he did!” After you show illustrations of the growth stages, pause and then lead everyone in applause for Jesus and his love for God.
- Repeat the same activity using pictures of other children at various stages of growth.
- Use doll families to show younger and older family members. Use imaginary play to role-play various situations where older family members help younger.
- Using a doll show how your “big” students can help a “little” baby. For example:
 - Feeding a bottle to a baby.
 - Running and getting a nappy/diaper so the parent can change it for a fresh one.
 - Singing songs or saying soothing words to a baby.

Guide the children in experiencing the textures, sounds, tastes and smells of infancy and childhood.

- Show and compare baby and children’s clothing to compare what babies wear and what big children wear. Be sure and include bibs and nappies/diapers.
- Provide or display measuring cups, stacking toys, Matryoshka nesting dolls or any objects that show incremental size increases. Allow children to explore how the objects feel in their hands. Depending on the objects you display you can guide discussion about their sizes, weights or developmental differences. No need to rush this. Allow children time to look and feel and discover the differences on their own when possible.
 - Wooden blocks or stacking toys sort from little to big.
 - Teddy bears to show growth from baby to big “daddy bear”.
 - Stones to notice the light weight of little stones and heavy weights of bigger ones.

Craft Suggestions

(As time allows)

If you choose to do crafts, keep them very simple. Label crafts with the child’s name and the date. Also, writing “God made the sun” might help parents later recognise a yellow scribble that their toddler drew.



Provide a simple cutout drawing of a child but elongate the legs by folding paper in an accordion style. Children can decorate the picture and then enjoy making the child “grow” by stretching the legs.

Prayer and Snack

(About 5 minutes)

Lead the children in prayer before the snack. Some children will repeat after you or fold their hands together.

Considering choking hazards and allergies, food items should be cleared with parents before serving. These might include fruit, vegetables or plain crackers. Children can help the teacher “clean the table” at the end.

Prayer:

Fold hands and close eyes to pray. Thank God that we can grow bigger. Thank God for giving us food.

Snack:

If possible, serve a snack that shows increment sizes. If the snack is small, medium and large crackers then make a point to show these one at a time before eating. As you serve water to toddlers in sipper cups point out that the children are big to drink out of cups instead of bottles.



Time to Settle

(10 minutes back on the floor or mat)

Children can give cuddles or feed bottles to baby dolls. Quiet music or nature sounds help settle and calm the children before their parents arrive to pick them up from class. This enables a positive transition.

Guide children in cuddling the baby dolls and singing a lullaby or kissing them goodnight as they put them to bed. The children may also enjoy “feeding” the dolls a bottle or pretending to feed them food with a spoon.



Suggested Songs and Poems for this Lesson



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.

The following songs and poems are just suggestions. What songs do children sing where you live? Using or adapting local and traditional children’s songs will be more meaningful for families and the church community.

I Love God (song)

I love God. I love God.
I love him every day.
When I hear the name of God
I say a big “hooray!”

Tune: Chorus of Jingle Bells

Action: At the end of the song clap or raise your hands in the air for “hooray!” In today’s lesson sing it as you show illustrations of Jesus and children in various stages of development. For example, after showing a picture of baby Jesus ask the children if baby Jesus loves God. Then sing “I love God”. Show a picture of Jesus as a child and ask the same question and then sing again. Children will love the repetition.

Little Children Grow and Grow (poem and action song)

Little children
grow and grow
Sometimes very
very slow.
They start out to
be so small
Then they grow up
ohhhh, soooo, tall!

Tune: Sing up the eight notes of a scale like do-re-me. Each line is one note.

Action: Begin by crouching down like a small child and then slowly rising as you sing the lines. Sing the last line with gusto as you dramatically “strain” to stretch your hands far above your hands to make yourself tall. Toddlers might join you.

Clean Up! Clean Up! (song)

Clean Up! Clean Up!
Everybody, Everywhere
Clean Up! Clean Up!
Everybody do your share

Tune and Lyrics: Barney's World

https://youtu.be/IPgrZoT-Jl8?si=SMH8KdoRSiYN_b3h

Actions: Sing as you do any clean up activity.

A Helper I Will Be (song)

A helper I will be. A helper I will be.
I'll help the teacher clean the table.
A helper I will be.

Tune: Farmer in the Dell

Action: Sing together as you and the children wipe the table or clean up.

To Adapt: Substitute any helping task (set the table, wash the dishes, fold the clothes, etc.)

Night-Night Little _____ (song)

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

Tune: Bah-bah Black Sheep

Action: Sing this when the "big" children are taking care of the "little babies".

Adapt: Fill in the blank with any creature you are singing to. For example, night-night little lamb.

Jesus Was a Baby (poem and hand motions)

See-the-baby. See-the-baby.
Jesus was a *baby.
See-the-baby. See-the-baby.
Then he grew up.

Poem: Like traditional Pat-a-Cake.

Action: Clap hands as in the traditional Pat-a-Cake but then point fingers up at the end when you say "up".

Sing this song as you show illustrations of Jesus as he grew up.

Adapt: Instead of "baby" substitute words that suit the various illustrations you are showing. For example: toddler, child, big boy, young man or big man.



Lesson 6:

My Best Friend



Summary

Infants and toddlers can experience the comfort, love and affection found in a relationship with Jesus. They can experience this relationship from a very young age. The friendship only grows deeper over their lifetime. Thinking that he was too busy, Jesus' companions tried to keep children away from him. But Jesus welcomed them and interacted with them. He loved and accepted children. Infants and toddlers can relate to the fact that Jesus wants relationship with them. He wants to be their friend.

Scripture

Mark 10:13-16

Some people brought their small children to Jesus so he could touch them. But his followers told the people to stop bringing their children to him. When Jesus saw this, he was displeased. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me. Don't stop them. The kingdom of God belongs to people who are like these little children. I tell you the truth. You must accept the kingdom of God as a little child accepts things, or you will never enter it." Then Jesus took the children in his arms. He put his hands on them and blessed them.

John 14:20-21

On that day you will know that I am in my Father. You will know that you are in me and I am in you. He who knows my commands and obeys them is the one who loves me. And my Father will love him who loves me. I will love him and will show myself to him."

John 15:15

I don't call you servants now. A servant does not know what his master is doing. But now I call you friends because I have made known to you everything I heard from my Father.

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Materials

When possible, use items that seem more natural instead of cartoonish ones. For example, a little brown mouse is preferable to a Micky Mouse that wears clothes and shoes.

- Picture books or other illustrations depicting the scenes of Jesus and children together. Choose realistic ones if possible.
- Doll family to role-play family affection and friendship.
- A large mirror and a cloth or paper to cover it. The teacher will cover the mirror and say "Who does Jesus love?" before uncovering it say, "Jesus loves ____!" Insert each child's name in the blank. This is sort of like peek-a-boo.
- Puppets of little children. Your students will hold these while you sing "Jesus Loves the Little Children of the World". Simple puppets can be made by drawing faces on the back sides of plastic spoons.
- Illustrations depicting Jesus alone and Jesus with children. Try to keep these realistic and not cartoon pictures. Large pictures are better than small pictures.
- "Huggable" stuffed animals to practice giving hugs.

Class Schedule: 45 minutes

- Welcome Time: 15 minutes
- Bible Time & Lesson: 20 minutes
 - Bible Time
 - Lesson
 - Craft
 - Snack
- Closing Time: 10 minutes

Vocabulary & Sensory Experiences

- **Vocabulary**: Jesus, friend, love
- **Sensory**: Hugs, handshakes, clapping hands, grasping and holding a puppet, soft fur of stuffed animals

Welcome Time

(15 minutes of free play on the floor or mat)

Children gather and settle in so they feel welcome, comfortable and safe. This gentle transition time can include free play, choosing favourite toys, music or singing. Casually steer conversations toward the subject in today's Bible lesson when appropriate.

how much Jesus loves us. Show special affection to the children today. You might do this with thoughtful words, hugs, high fives or fist bumps.

- Welcome each child by name
- Mirrors, Peep Tube, Vehicles
- Bell to indicate class is about to start



Table Time

(20 minutes sitting at a table)



Helpers move the children to seats at a table and then quietly step back. The teacher sits across from the children and begins to immediately engage them in the lesson activities. Infants and toddlers will enjoy following the lead of the teacher for the Bible theme of the day. This time passes quickly, so crafts are optional.

Bible Time

(About 5 minutes)

Time for children to handle and "read" from little Bibles. These may be kept in a special box or basket so children look forward to them each week. You will guide infants and toddlers to handle the bibles carefully, but expect them to be torn or chewed in the process. You should guide instead of "scold", so choose Bibles that you accept will become well-worn.

When you move to the table, spend these first 5 minutes in normal Bible time routines that you and the children enjoy.

- Pat the bible
- Place small pictures between the pages of the bibles so the children can discover them.
- Find a Jesus picture in the bible. Take time to talk about Jesus as our friend. (A sticker depicting Jesus can be placed in the Bibles and "found" each week.
- Help the children point to bible pages and "read"- God loves ____.
- Sing the song: B-I-B-L-E



Bible Lesson

(About 10 minutes)

A simple thought or truth from the Bible. This is presented in a way that relates to an infant or toddler's world. Allow the children to engage through sensory activities (hearing, touching, tasting, seeing and smelling). If the children want to linger on something they enjoy, then there is no need to rush.



Infants and toddlers enjoy affection and security but have not yet entered into stages of development where friendship is featured. Even so, we can point them to Jesus because he will offer them a lifetime of acceptance, love, security and affection. Jesus is, even now, the best friend that they will ever know. In today's lesson let your conversation fully be about Jesus. Talk about how good he is, that he listens to us and helps us. Point out that he was affectionate toward children and took them in his arms.

- Display a book or a large illustration of Jesus interacting with children. Talk about what is happening. Note relatable specifics in the pictures like children sitting in his lap. Jesus smiling or giving big hugs.
- Sing "Jesus Loves Me".

Guide the children in experiencing the security of Jesus and his love.

- In turn, encourage the children to express love. Bring out soft stuffed toys and guide the children in giving them cuddles.
- Cover a mirror and then hold it in front of your face so that the children can see both your face and the mirror. Say, "Who does Jesus love?" before uncovering it saying "Jesus loves ME!" Now that they understand what is happening, repeat this version of 'peek-a-boo' for each child. Each time you reveal be sure and say their name "Jesus loves _____!".
- Sing "Jesus Loves the Little Children" while the infants and toddlers hold puppets depicting children of the world.

Craft Suggestions

(As time allows)

If you choose to do crafts, keep them very simple. Label crafts with the child's name and the date. Also, writing "God made the sun" might help parents later recognise a yellow scribble that their toddler drew.

Provide an illustration of Jesus and guide children in placing heart stickers on it. Make a group craft by using paint to make handprints around an outline of a cross or the letter J-E-S-U-S spelled out.



Prayer and Snack

(About 5 minutes)

Lead the children in prayer before the snack. Some children will repeat after you or fold their hands together.

Considering choking hazards and allergies, food items should be cleared with parents before serving. These might include fruit, vegetables or plain crackers. Children can help the teacher "clean the table" at the end.

Prayer:

Fold hands and close eyes to pray. Thank God for giving us food. Thank God that Jesus is our friend.

Snack:

Serve water and any healthy snack like fruit, vegetables or crackers.



Time to Settle

(10 minutes back on the floor or mat)

Children can give cuddles or feed bottles to baby dolls. Quiet music or nature sounds help settle and calm the children before their parents arrive to pick them up from class. This enables a positive transition.

As you settle be sure and remind the children that Jesus loves them and so do you. Guide children in cuddling the baby dolls and singing a lullaby or kissing them goodnight as they put them to bed. The children may also enjoy “feeding” the dolls a bottle or pretending to feed them food with a spoon.



Suggested Songs and Poems for this Lesson



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.

The following songs and poems are just suggestions. What songs do children sing where you live? Using or adapting local and traditional children’s songs will be more meaningful for families and the church community.

Jesus is My Best Friend (song)

Jesus is my best friend.
My best friend. My best friend.
Jesus is my best friend.
He’s always there for me.

Tune: You can listen to the tune on <https://youtu.be/tER4Jx6LyZk> "My Best Friend" by Little Praise Party

Action: Sing as you talk about Jesus, when the children “read” the Bible or when you show pictures.

Adapt: To keep it simple for shorter attention spans just sing this first part.

Jesus is My Best Friend (song)

My best friend. Jesus is my best friend.
Jesus is my best friend. I am not alone.
No, I am not alone.
My best friend. Jesus is my best friend.
Jesus is my best friend. I am not alone.

Tune and Lyrics: Traditional

Adapt: This song has many other verses. To keep it simple for shorter attention spans just sing this first part.

Jesus Loves the Little Children (song)

Jesus loves the little children,
All the children of the world.
Red, brown, yellow, black and white
They are precious in his sight.
Jesus loves the little children of the
world.

Tune: Traditional

Action: Guide children in holding up
puppets of children while you sing this
song.

Adapt: Make simple puppets by
drawing faces on the back side of
plastic spoons. Alternatively, you could
draw faces on the pads of the
children's index fingers and they could
hold them up.

Jesus Loves Me (song)

Jesus loves me this I know.
For the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to him belong.
They are weak but He is strong.
Yes, Jesus loves me (repeat this line
3 times)
The Bible tells me so.

Tune: Traditional

Action: Sing while children are
looking through their Bibles. A
picture sticker of Jesus inside the
front cover gives children a fun
thing to look for in their Bibles. It
also gives them an opportunity to
say the name of Jesus.

Thank You God (song)

Thank you God for my friend, Jesus.
My friend, Jesus. My friend, Jesus.
Thank you God for my friend, Jesus.
I love him, oh so much.

Tune: Mary Had a Little Lamb

Action: Sing as you show illustrations
of Jesus.

