

THE CHARACTERS OF CHRISTMAS

LESSON 2: THE DISTRACTED INNKEEPER ☆

Lessons in this series: [1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [Overview](#)

In this lesson, the children will learn about the Innkeeper. We will discuss some of the distractions that can get in the way of focusing on Jesus as we celebrate Christmas.

by Lauren Shelnett

TOPICS

Birth of Jesus, Christmas, Priorities

AS KIDS ARRIVE (10 MINUTES)

Gifts for Jesus (Activity) [Click here](#)

WORSHIP TIME (5 MINUTES)

Further info? [Click here](#)

BIBLE VERSE (5 MINUTES)

"Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things." Colossians 3:1-2 NIV

This verse tells us that we need to look to Jesus and things of God and watch out for being distracted by things in our world.

Act out the verse for the children using the following motions:

Set your minds (*point to your temple and tap*)

on things above (*point up to the sky*),

Not on earthly things. (*Sweep your palms out to your sides one at a time*)

BIBLE STORY (15 MINUTES)

Introduction:

The Christmas story is all about the birth of Jesus Christ and it is one of the most important stories in the Bible. But, when we read from the Gospel of Luke, we learn details about where Jesus was born, and He was not born in a hospital like most babies today are. And He wasn't born at home either. Since Mary and Joseph were traveling, you would think Jesus was born in an inn or hotel but He was not born in one of these places either. Listen to our Bible passage for today and how the innkeepers might have been part of Jesus' birth story.

Read Luke 2:1-7

Discussion Questions:

1. Who decrees that a census needs to be taken in the entire Roman world? (*Caesar Augustus.*)
2. Why do Joseph and Mary have to travel to Bethlehem? (*It was Joseph's hometown and they had to register there.*)
3. Why does Mary travel with Joseph? (*Mary is pledged to be marry to Joseph.*)
4. How do you think Mary and Joseph feel after all the traveling they did? (*Answers will vary. Very tired, worn out, Mary probably felt uncomfortable.*)
5. While they were there in Bethlehem, what happens? (*The time comes for baby Jesus to be born.*)
6. When the baby is born Mary wraps Him in cloths and places Him in a manger. What is a manger? (*A place where animals eat food from, like a trough.*)
7. Why is Mary using a manger as a crib for baby Jesus? (*There was no guestroom available for them.*)

Conclusion: The Bible doesn't tell us much about the innkeepers, but we know they did not have room for Jesus that very special night. Maybe they did not have any rooms available for Jesus. Maybe the innkeepers were too busy helping other people to notice Mary and Joseph and how much they needed a place to stay. But, when we look at this story, we must realize that sometimes we get so caught up in all the exciting things that go on around Christmas, we forget to "make room" for the whole reason we have to celebrate—God's gift of Jesus. Jesus was not just a baby! Jesus was God's one and only Son! He deserves to be at the center of everything we do at Christmas. It is His birthday! We will celebrate Him today!

FUN TIME (10 MINUTES)

Birthday Party for Jesus (Object Talk) [Click here](#)

ALTERNATE FUN TIME (15 MINUTES)

A Manger for Jesus (Craft) [Click here](#)

PRAYER/SNACK (10 MINUTES)

Further info? [Click here](#)

For today's snack, you can have Hershey's Kisses®. While eating, discuss what kind of gifts the children would give Jesus for His birthday. The Kisses, wrapped in shiny foil can represent the kinds of presents that the wise men brought to Jesus so long ago.

CLOSING ACTIVITY (5 MINUTES)

Eyes on Jesus (Coloring Page) [Click here](#)

NEXT WEEK

We will continue in our series the Characters of Christmas and discuss "The Religious Leaders."

TAKE HOME PAGE

Give one copy to each child at the end of the class to take home [PDF]. [Click here](#)

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A MANGER FOR JESUS ☆

Children will construct a manger and "baby Jesus" out of graham crackers, chocolate and marshmallows.

by Lauren Shelnutt

TOPICS:

Birth of Jesus, Christmas

MATERIALS:

Graham crackers, vanilla icing
Paper plates, plastic knives
Chocolate Bar
Chocolate Chips
Marshmallows



[Click here visual instructions](#)

DURATION:

Approximately 15 minutes

PREPARATION:

Snap one graham cracker into two halves. Then, take one square and break it in half. This should be done for each child in the class. Put a small dab of icing on each plate with the graham crackers. Each child will need two squares of a chocolate bar. (*Many chocolate bars are divided into eight pieces.*)

WHAT YOU WILL SAY:

Today, we are reminded that Christmas is always about Jesus. We can be distracted by all the busy things we do getting ready for this wonderful holiday season. However, we must focus our minds on Jesus because He is the whole reason for the season. Today's snack is a reminder of Jesus' humble beginnings in a manger. Follow my directions closely and we will have a delicious snack that looks like the manger.

WHAT YOU WILL DO:

1. Pass out paper plates with icing and graham crackers to each child.
2. Take the square cracker and cover the center in a thick stripe of icing.
3. Take some icing and spread it on the edge of the two quarter pieces of cracker. Then, combine them to make a ninety-degree angle. Then, place the angled pieces on the strip of icing on the bottom square graham cracker.
4. Take the squares of chocolate and cover the backsides with icing. Place one piece of chocolate on each side of the angled graham crackers to support them.
5. Take a large marshmallow and rip it in half. Use this half to make a baby shape and place it in the "manger."
6. Place a chocolate chip on the top half of the marshmallow to represent the face of baby Jesus.

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BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR JESUS ☆

Everyday objects provide children with three gifts that they can give Jesus on His Birthday.

by Lauren Shelnutt

TOPICS:

Birth of Jesus, Christmas

MATERIALS:

Cupcake, candle, matches
 Gift bag with a tag that reads "For Jesus"
 Large heart cut from pink construction paper
 Watch or small clock, glasses or sunglasses



DURATION:

Approximately 10 minutes

WHAT YOU WILL SAY:

During the busy Christmas season, we must remember what Jesus' birthday is all about. Here I have a special gift bag. It's just for Jesus. I have something else here too, a little cake! Oh, and I brought a candle too. Can anyone guess what we might be getting ready to do? (*Allow for answers.*) That's right! We are going to have a party. But, not just any party—a birthday party for Jesus! I'm going to light the candle, and then we are going to sing happy birthday to Jesus. (*Ensure the remaining matches are placed out of reach of the children.*)

(*After singing and blowing out the candle.*)

Now I want us to give Jesus the best gifts that we can this Christmas. Let's start with our eyes. These glasses represent our focus or what we make important at Christmas. (*Place the glasses in the bag.*)

This watch represents our time. It can be hard to have time for everything at Christmas with all the things that are happening but we must make time for Jesus, by worshipping Him at church, and studying the Christmas story. Let's remember to give Jesus our time. (*Place the watch in the bag.*)

Lastly, we should give Jesus our hearts. We should love Jesus more than any toys, presents, or even friends that we have in our lives. (*Place the paper heart in the bag.*)

I pray that this Christmas you really do give these gifts to Jesus for His birthday celebration! He deserves it!

Optional:

If time allows, allow children to take turns placing the items in the bag while reciting what the items represent.:

Glasses – I will focus on Jesus.

Watch – I will make time for Jesus.

Heart – I will love Jesus.

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Name: _____

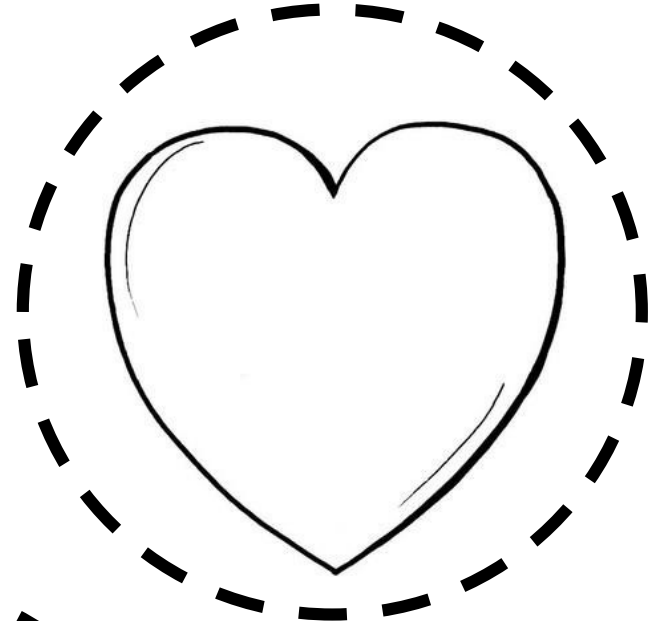
Gifts for Jesus

Directions: Color the pictures that represent gifts that you can give to Jesus below.

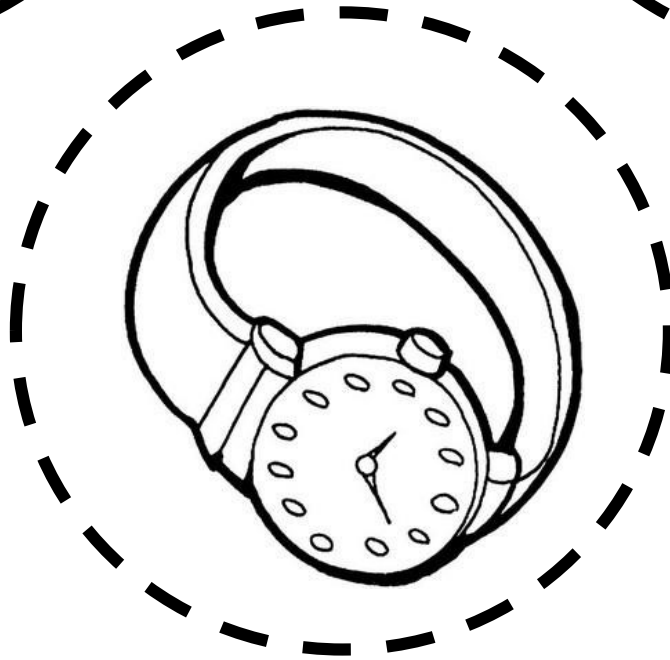


My Focus

*I CAN
GIVE
JESUS...*



My Heart



My Time

GIFTS FOR JESUS ☆

This activity provides the children with three gifts that they can give to Jesus to celebrate Him and His birthday at Christmas.

by Lauren Shelnutt

TOPICS:

Birth of Jesus, Christmas

MATERIALS:

Activity page [PDF] [Click here](#)

DURATION:

Approximately 10 minutes



PREPARATION:

Print an activity page for each child in class.

WHAT YOU WILL SAY:

Class, I would like you to color these pictures. Each picture represents gifts that we can give to Jesus as we celebrate Him and His birthday at Christmas. We want to honor Him because He is worth celebrating!

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Eyes on Jesus

Directions: Color the pictures below. Then, draw an X through the things that can distract us from the true meaning of Christmas. Circle the picture that represents the real reason we celebrate.

