



IDEAS IN

# ChildhoodMinistry

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## How to Teach Children the Christmas Story

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Sharing the Christmas story with preschoolers and children should be a wonderful experience. As you think about the age of your child or the children you teach at church, think about the facts you should share that are appropriate for that age child. Consider the following suggestions for each age group:

### Babies, Ones, and Twos

Younger preschoolers are learning and growing at a fast rate. All of their experiences are new and exciting. These preschoolers are just beginning their discovery of everything! Say the name of Jesus often to babies, ones, and twos. Say simple, factual statements about Jesus' birth: Jesus was born. Mary was Jesus' mother. Joseph took care of Mary and baby Jesus. Provide hands on experiences for younger preschoolers. They can touch a non-breakable manger scene as you talk about Jesus' birth. They can shake bells as you sing a simple Christmas song about Jesus. Simple Bible truths will build strong biblical foundations in their young lives.

### Threes and Fours

Help threes and fours discover more about the events of Jesus' birth. Preschoolers can hear that an angel told Mary that Jesus would be born. They can understand that God planned for Joseph to be part of Jesus' family. They can learn more about the shepherds who came to see baby Jesus and wise men who brought gifts to the child. They can also begin to understand that Jesus was sent by God. Simple Bible verses such as "Jesus was born in Bethlehem" (Matthew 2:1) will help threes and fours know that the story of Jesus' birth is in the Bible. Emphasize that Jesus' birth is the reason for Christmas.

### Kindergartners

Kindergartners' knowledge is expanding rapidly in all areas. They will ask many questions, maybe questions you find difficult to answer. Answer questions simply and encourage a child to inquire further if needed. Kindergartners can learn more about Christmas and Jesus' birth. They can begin to understand that God planned for Jesus to be born. Introduce the word *prophet* to a kindergartner. Say "A prophet told God's message. Isaiah was a prophet. He told that Jesus would be born." Kindergartners are forming foundations about God and Jesus; they can begin to understand that Jesus is God's Son and that God sent Jesus to earth because He loves them. They cannot yet grasp the full meaning of Jesus' birth; however, you can develop foundations for later understanding.



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### **First and Second Graders**

Six and seven year olds are like sponges soaking up new information. As they begin to learn to read, give them opportunities to read the Christmas story from their own Bibles. Make sure that your first and second graders know that God sent Jesus to earth because He loves them. Help their young minds to know that Jesus' birth was part of God's plan from the beginning. Guide them to discover through Old Testament prophecy that hundreds of years before His birth, prophets told of this event.

### **Third and Fourth Graders**

As children grow older, they become more aware of why God sent Jesus to earth. The true story of Christmas is more than the birth of a baby . it is the birth of God's only Son. Jesus came to earth in human form, born as a baby, and grew to know what it truly means to be a human. Help third and fourth graders know that Jesus can relate to their lives, struggles, temptations, hopes, and dreams.

### **Preteens**

Preteens are able to understand more complex concepts of Jesus' birth. Not only was Jesus born and able to understand what it was to be human, Jesus is God in human form. Preteens are also able to understand the miracle of Jesus being born of a virgin. God's plan for human redemption was placed in motion on that day in human history. Guide your preteens to understand that they, too, are part of God's holy plan.

No matter the age of your child, Christmas will always be an exciting time. Help your child focus on the truths of the Christmas story in ways that will be the most meaningful to him. Consider ways to incorporate the story of Christmas into your family devotions. If you are not currently doing a family devotion, consider Christmas as a time to begin a family worship time that will help bring your family into a close understanding of the truths that God daily reveals in His word.

