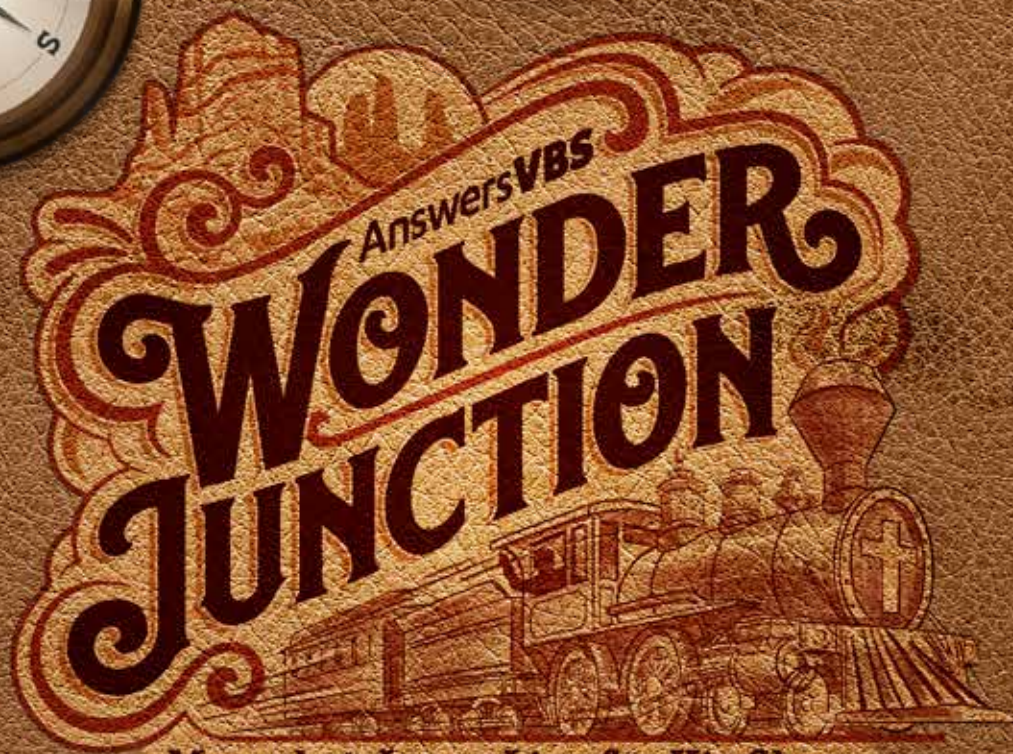


HIGH POINT BIBLE TIME  
**TODDLER**



*Marvel at Jesus, Live for His Glory*

**TEACHER  
GUIDE**

# COURSE OVERVIEW

Theme Verse: Psalm 113:3

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	
	The <b>Wonder</b> of His Birth	The <b>Wonder</b> of His Childhood	The <b>Wonder</b> of His Ministry Years	The <b>Wonder</b> of His Death & Resurrection	The <b>Wonder</b> of His Return	
<b>Title</b>	Jesus Is Born	Jesus at the Temple	Jesus Does Wondrous Things	Jesus Dies and Lives Again	Jesus Is Coming Back	
<b>Bible Passages</b>	Matthew 1–2; Luke 2	Luke 2:39–52	Selections from the book of Mark	Select verses; Matthew 27–28	Select verses; Matthew 25:14–29	
<b>Lesson Focus</b>	The baby King's birth was a wonder. What amazing happenings surrounded it?	The young King's childhood was a wonder. What was he like as a child and teen?	The grown-up King's ministry years were a wonder. What astonishing things occurred?	The risen King's death and resurrection were a wonder. How were they like no other?	The return of the King of kings will be a wonder. What should we be doing in the meantime?	
<b>Apologetics Content</b>	Is Jesus the most important person ever born?	Is Jesus God or man—or both?	Has anyone else had the power to raise himself from the dead?	Was Jesus completely dead?	How will Jesus return?	
<b>Gold Mine Memory Time</b>	John 1:14	Luke 2:52	John 21:25	John 20:31	Matthew 6:10	
<b>Names of Jesus</b>	Creator, Immanuel	Carpenter	Almighty	Savior	King of Kings	
<b>Animal Pals</b>	Tiny the Cougar Kitten	Junior the Wolf Pup	Mighty the Bison	Champ the Grizzly Bear	Mission the Horse	
<b>Exploration Stations</b>	<b>Discovery Center</b>	Special Birth Seek & Find	My Family	Power over Sickness/Sight	Remember Jesus Play Dough	Count & Sort
	<b>Wet Touch Table</b>	Wash the Babies	Family Trip	Power over Nature	Easter Eggs	Practicing Kindness
	<b>Dry Touch Table</b>	Christmas Fun	Build-It-Yourself Woodworking	Power over Death	Snakes in the Sand	Coming in the Clouds
	<b>Dramatic Play</b>	Old West Dress-Up	Old West Dress-Up	Old West Dress-Up	Old West Dress-Up	Old West Dress-Up
	<b>Coloring Corner</b>	John 1:14	Luke 2:52	John 21:25	John 20:31	Matthew 6:10
<b>Carpenter Joe's Crafts</b>	Wonder Locomotive Tiny the Cougar Coloring Sheet	Old West Vest/ Sheriff Badge Junior the Wolf Coloring Sheet	Stormy Miracle Boat Mighty the Bison Coloring Sheet	Sunset Painted Cross Champ the Grizzly Coloring Sheet	Giddyup Horse Puppet Mission the Horse Coloring Sheet	
<b>Gallopin' Gabe's Games</b>	Happy Birthday, Jesus Pin the Star	Baby, Boy, Man Where, Oh Where Did My Stuffed Animal Go?	Action Name Game Run to the Store	Sleeping Bear Tag Sad News, Glad News	Sheriff Says Riding the Range	
<b>Sweet Sadie's Snacks</b>	Cougar Claws Biscuit Baby	Wolf Puppy Chow Carpenter Scraps	Bison Bites Mini Flapjacks	Bear Face Breadstick Rattler	Horse Feed Pizza Wheels	
<b>Cool Contests</b>	Guess the Gold Coins	Spirit of the West Day	Old West Dress-Up Day	Names of Jesus Challenge	Mission Money Mania	

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## Toddler Teacher Guide

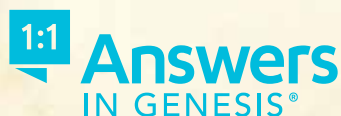
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# HANDY HELPS

## YEE-HAW!

Howdy, Partners!

Look to your left—do you see the cattle over yonder stampeding across the plains? Look to your right—can your eyes make out the sun-covered buttes of the desert? Look behind you—the brand-new transcontinental railroad is rumbling along the tracks! From the Badlands of South Dakota to the high peaks of the Rockies, there is wonder to be discovered everywhere we turn in the Old West!

Join us as we gallop through the wonder-filled West, where our friends at Wonder Junction will teach us about the grandest wonder of all—Jesus Christ. Each day we'll dig deeper into who this awe-inspiring Jesus is, answering questions such as:

- What amazing things happened surrounding Jesus' birth?
- What was Jesus like as a child and teen?
- What wonders occurred during Jesus' ministry years?
- How were Jesus' death and resurrection like no other?
- What should we be doing as we wait for Jesus' return?

Wonder and amazement await us each day at Wonder Junction, where kids will gather at the **All Aboard Assembly**, a high-energy beginning that includes wacky intros, lively songs, a Missions Moment, and prayer.

Then the toddlers head back to their own room to have their own schedule that includes:

**High Point Bible Time**, where God's Word is taught in creative, hands-on ways.

**Carpenter Joe's Crafts**, where kids get hands-on time to make fun crafts that will remind them of the wonders of Jesus they heard about during their week at VBS.

**Sweet Sadie's Snacks**, where kids munch on some down-right tasty, home-cooked vittles.

**Gallopin' Gabe's Games**, the rambunctious rec time where kids might just get plumb tuckered out.

Finally, everyone is rounded up to head back to the **All Aboard Assembly** for the closing, where there's more singing, contest results, and the highly anticipated daily drama that highlights the shenanigans of two bumbling

bandits who are transformed after learning about the wonderful life of Jesus Christ.

So dust off your boots, grab your bandana, and get ready for a rootin' tootin' good ol' time at Wonder Junction!

### Our Goal

We are so thankful for how God has chosen to use the Answers VBS programs over the past years! But why did we decide to embark on such an undertaking in the first place, and why are we still at it, by God's grace?

Our primary goal has always been to bring God glory by boldly and unashamedly proclaiming him to a strategic group—young people! From both a biblical and statistical point of view, young people are a big deal. They're not only awesome—we love 'em!—but they're also dearly cherished by our Lord and tend to be softhearted toward spiritual things. Researchers generally agree most people become Christians when they're children, so it's apparent this age group is a huge mission field!

Children are loved by their Creator, and Jesus said to let them come to him (Luke 18:16). We want children to come to Christ and not be hindered in any way from doing so. To that end, we combine a biblically rich VBS with off-the-chart, irresistible fun. In a day and age when content sometimes suffers, we don't want to sacrifice rich teaching. But it's also crucial that the most exciting book in the world not come across as boring or irrelevant. We want to reflect our creative, inspiring, joy-giving God who made laughter and fun.

So why do we do it? We want kids around the world to hear about and personally meet our awesome God and understand how they can receive eternal life through repentance and faith in Christ Jesus. We believe VBS is a great way to introduce them to God, as it is one of the biggest outreaches of the year for most churches.

We pray you will find that every prayer prayed, every minute invested, every dollar spent, and every word spoken will bring God glory as you reach kids for Christ. Just remember—VBS is worth it. May God richly bless your VBS. We're praying for you!

# YOUR ROLE

Your role as the Truth Teacher is outlined in the following pages. This is your guide. Read it carefully and prayerfully, using our suggestions combined with the ideas the Holy Spirit brings to your mind.

So get ready! Get set! God is about to use you and your church to impact lives.

## Truth Teacher

Best fit for this job: Someone who enjoys teaching children and does the following:

- Plans and prepares the daily lessons for VBS
- Enthusiastically engages in delivery of the lessons during VBS week
- Prays over all aspects of this job

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The content of *Wonder Junction* may be new to you. For a list of helpful articles on the topics covered in this VBS program, please visit [AnswersVBS.com/wonderfaq](http://AnswersVBS.com/wonderfaq).

# TERMS TO KNOW

Throughout the VBS curriculum, various terms will be used. Here is a list of some of the most common terms to know.

**Partners (as in, "Howdy, Partners!"): Groups of children (individual classes) named after Old West people, such as Miners, Ranchers, Blacksmiths, and Homesteaders.**

**Group Guides:** Group leaders who lead the partners from place to place during VBS. No teaching is required of this position.

**High Point Bible Time:** Bible and apologetics lesson time happening at the High Point Chapel.

**Truth Teachers:** Teachers of the High Point Bible Time.

**Carpenter Joe's Science and Crafts:** Rotation site where crafts are made and science experiments are explored.

**Sweet Sadie's Snacks:** Indoor or outdoor location where snacks are served.

**Gallopin' Gabe's Games:** Indoor or outdoor site (outdoor is preferred) for recreation time.

**Miss Millie's Missions, Music, and Memory Verses:**

Rotation sites where kids can spend additional time learning songs, memory verses, and missions.

**Gold Mine Memory Time:** Daily Bible verse to learn.

**Animal Pals:** Our friendly animal mascots that remind us of the main themes of each day.

**Toddlers:** 2–4-year-olds.

**Pre-Primaries:** 4–6-year-olds or children ages 4 through those who have completed kindergarten.

**Primaries:** 6–9-year-olds or children who have completed grades 1–3.

**Juniors:** 9–12-year-olds or children who have completed grades 4–6.

For multi-age K–6 groups, we recommend using the material for the Primaries.

# TOP 20 TODDLER TEACHING TIPS

1. Pray and study God's Word. That is your most important preparation. God has entrusted you with the awesome privilege of opening his Word and sharing it daily with the children, so be well prepared. Acts 6:4—"We will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word."
2. Read through all your lesson plans well in advance and become familiar with the resources at . Begin to pray and plan now, then continue to pray during and after VBS.
3. Attend the Teacher Workshop and the Gospel Workshop. Be prepared to share the good news of salvation!
4. In this guide:
  - » Teaching Tips are marked with a ★.
  - » Materials for each activity are listed next to the activity.
  - » The "teacher says" portion is bolded.
5. If possible, gather all the supplies for the Exploration Stations and lessons before the week begins. It's particularly helpful to organize them by station and by day so they are ready to easily be switched out.
6. Ask leaders to help man the Exploration Stations each day. Post the directions and Teaching Tie-Ins at each station every day as an easy reference for your helpers.
7. Modify the Exploration Stations as your situation warrants. Set them up as suggested or incorporate one or more ideas into the lesson time to do with the whole group together.
8. A puppet is used each day at some point during the lesson. It may also be used to welcome the children, sing a song, or review the lesson or memory verse. The puppet comes up from the puppet stage if there are two of you to do the puppet skit. Or, if you're working alone, the puppet can come up from behind a trunk that is flipped open. (See Decorating Decisions.)
9. Dress in Old West period clothes, such as a vest and cowboy hat or a prairie costume. You can also wear the T-shirt, hat, and vest available from the Resource Catalog. Take on a persona to bring lessons to life. Some teachers enjoy making up a fun name or adding something new to their "costume" each day, such as a small stuffed animal to their vest pockets. Teach in a way that makes you feel comfortable.
10. Call the children by name as you interact with them. Name tags help with this.
11. Think safety. Read the Child Safety Precautions file at for more information.
12. Children will be at various levels of spiritual comprehension. Pray for the Lord to take the message and do with it as he wills in the heart of each child.
13. Use your Bible throughout the lessons at the appropriate times. Bookmark the passages for quick access.
14. Show the importance of the Scriptures through your facial expressions and your actions.
15. Show love. All children, regardless of age or appearance, need to be loved. Greet them warmly each day and always be ready with smiles, encouraging words, and appropriate hugs. Be aware of your church's appropriate touching policies.
16. Be all there. Try to leave behind whatever is currently going on in your life and focus your attention on the children under your care.
17. Notice the good. Children want attention and will sometimes resort to acting up in an effort to receive even negative attention. Be proactive by noticing and praising the things they do right. Be an encourager.
18. Children generally rise to the level expected of them, so challenge them to work on memory verses and complete their take-home Student Guides.
19. Use brown lunch bags labeled with each child's name to send everything home each day.
20. Have fun! Teaching should be a joy for you. "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

# TIPS FOR MANAGING A GROUP OF KIDS

Kids are fun, and kids have energy! Prepare to confidently lead them using the following strategies.

## Attention-Getters

**Call and Response**—Teach the kids that when a teacher says something, they should reply with something else. Practice the following ideas so kids know your expectations for responding:

- **Teacher:** Gotta go  
**Kids:** Buffalo
- **Teacher:** Better shake  
**Kids:** Rattlesnake
- **Teacher:** Chugga, chugga, chugga, chugga  
**Kids:** Choo choo
- **Teacher:** Crisscross (as they sit and cross legs)  
**Kids:** Big trail boss
- **Teacher:** Jesus loves me  
**Kids:** This I know  
**Teacher:** For the Bible  
**Kids:** Tells me so

**Train's a Comin'**—Make the sound of an oncoming train. Start softly and slowly with the sound (chugga-chugga-choo-choo) while making circles with your arms as wheels. Gradually get louder and faster as the train approaches, then reverse the motions and sounds to finish with everyone sitting quietly.

**Horse Gallop**—Check online for how to use finger snaps and claps to make it sound like a horse galloping. Begin slowly, then speed up.

**Rhythm Claps**—The teacher claps a little rhythm, and the kids clap the exact rhythm back. Vary the clapping patterns.

**Countdown**—Hold up five fingers and count down from five to one. By the count of one, kids should be completely quiet.

**Soft Talk**—Start talking about something important very softly or in a whisper. Kids will often quiet down to hear what you are saying. Or say, "If you can hear me, clap once." Continue softly with other commands.

**Flash the Lights**—This is a good signal to listen up.

## Lining Up to Walk Through the Building

**If You . . .**—For lining up, call out fun categories, such as the following:

- "If you are wearing green like a cactus, line up. Now, if you're wearing brown like a grizzly bear, line up."
- "If your birthday is during the summer, line up. Now, if your birthday is during the school year, line up."
- "If you have a dog, line up. Now, if you have a cat, line up. Now, if you have no pets, line up."
- "If you are quiet, line up."

## Proactive Tips

**Be Prepared**—One of the best ways to ward off discipline problems is to be prepared. Think through and organize your day, leaving no downtime. Keep things moving! This takes more effort on your part, but it's worth it.

**Active Participation**—Keeping kids actively engaged in the lesson is perhaps the best thing you can do to keep the class from getting rowdy. The lessons are written to be creative, fun, and full of active participation. Play the games, act out the Bible accounts, and do the other ideas listed. Occupy kids' minds and attention with good stuff!

**Helpers**—Involve the kids. Let them be helpers. Some kids just want to feel needed, so giving them a responsibility is a way to show you trust them. Try putting them in charge of a simple task, such as helping others learn memory verses, passing out papers, or holding a poster for the teacher. Sometimes a simple task can keep them busy and make them feel important!

**Use Humor**—Kids of all ages love to laugh! Have fun together. If you see a situation is getting tense or a child is getting upset for some reason, try thinking of a way to lighten the mood with humor.

## Calming Rowdiness

**Don't Yell**—Kids may respond at first if someone yells, but they eventually dismiss it. Try some of these other ideas instead.

**Separate Kids**—Separate kids who misbehave around each other but encourage problem-solving when possible. "What are some things we could do to help you and \_\_\_ get along?"

**Give Choices**—Avoid power struggles by giving choices. If a child is resistant to doing something you've asked, try your command another way. "You can either sit with the rest of the group and listen or sit with \_\_\_ (leader's name) at the back of the room."

**Praise in Public, Correct in Private**—If someone does need correction, be careful not to embarrass him in front of his peers. If you need to talk to a child about a misbehavior, pull him aside while the rest of the group is distracted. Kids will be less defensive if they don't feel they have to "save face" in front of their peers—and if they feel you really care and aren't just coming down on them.

**Know Church Policies**—Know your church's policy for severe behavior issues. Do you take the child to your VBS director? Do you alert the child's parents? Do you involve other staff members? Be prepared.

# AGE-LEVEL CHARACTERISTICS

Kids are awesome! Each one is a unique and special creation from the hand of our amazing Creator. With all their uniqueness, however, kids often share some common characteristics. Use the following guidelines as a benchmark when looking at characteristics of children as a whole. Seeing how God has wired different age groups can help us be more effective in teaching and interacting with our students.

First, you'll see general characteristics of children and then specific characteristics of Toddlers (ages 2–4).

## CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN

Children have some common characteristics:

- They are born sinners.
- God has given each a conscience, and they generally want good to win over evil.
- God has shown himself to all children through his creation, making it obvious that there is a Creator.
- Children enjoy active learning by moving around; seeing, touching, smelling, and hearing things; and being involved.
- Children need to be loved, encouraged, and praised.
- Children are rapidly growing and changing.
- Children trust the adults who are responsible for them.
- Children can get discouraged with criticism and failure.
- Children are eager to learn and are curious about the world and about God.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF TODDLERS

### Physical Characteristics

Toddlers are active! They're on the move, running, climbing, and exploring. They're beginning to perform simple tasks, like using scissors. They can easily get hurt as they are rapidly developing physical skills but don't have wisdom to know when to stop running, climbing, etc.

### Takeaways for Us

- Keep toddlers moving. Engage them actively as much as possible. Have them do motions to songs and actions to Bible accounts.
- Supervise them carefully.
- Provide chunky, nontoxic supplies.
- Intersperse periods of sitting with something active.

## Emotional/Social Characteristics

Toddlers want to do things by themselves, such as picking out their clothes and dressing. They like imaginative, dramatic play. They're testing their powers and saying "no" a lot. They often want to please adults and try to mimic their behaviors. They're affectionate toward others. Toddlers are fearful of things that are loud and out of the ordinary.

### Takeaways for Us

- Let toddlers be helpers. Give them simple one-step jobs to do. Have them help pick up things and straighten the room at the end of the lesson. Let them know they've done a good job.
- Be consistently present all week; establish routines and stick with them.
- Be consistent in discipline. Let your "yes" be "yes" and your "no" be "no."
- Give them opportunities to dress up and play imaginatively.
- Adults—don't dress in elaborate costumes that may seem unfamiliar and scary.
- Be careful to walk worthy—act and speak in godly ways. Little eyes are watching and will want to imitate you!

## Spiritual/Mental Characteristics

Toddlers are curious and want to touch, smell, feel, see, and experience their world. They have short attention spans and learn/communicate in short sentences. They understand short and simple directions. They believe what you say. Their attitude toward God and others is in the process of being formed during these years.

### Takeaways for Us

- Involve toddlers' senses in learning! The more they can touch, smell, see, taste, and feel, the better!
- Give clear, simple directions.
- Keep activities and lessons short. Toddlers' attention spans are only a few minutes long before they need to switch to something new, so keep it moving!
- Be careful to speak accurately and truthfully.
- Show care and respect for your Bible, and help them see your love for it and for the Lord.



# TODDLER SCHEDULE

When working with this age group, flexibility is key. In some cases, they are dropped off early and picked up late by parents who have VBS responsibilities. It may be important to revamp the schedule as necessary by removing some activities and allowing for more rest and free play.

Be aware that young ones get tired as the day wears on—even more so as the week wears on. The schedule may work fine at the beginning of the day or week, but toward the end, less is often better.

## Exploration Station Time

There are five Exploration Stations: Discovery Center, Wet Touch Table, Dry Touch Table, Dramatic Play, and Coloring Corner. These stations should be set up at the end of the room opposite where the lesson time is held or in an adjoining room. See the Exploration Stations Supply List on the back cover for all the supplies needed each day.

If stations aren't possible, simply choose one or more of the station activities to incorporate somewhere in your lesson as a group activity.

Children may rotate together through each station every few minutes, or they may independently move from one station to another, which is what our test churches do. They don't need to do every station each day, although the coloring page should be sent home daily—colored or uncolored. Many of these stations are big hits and can be repeated on other days.

For the Touch Tables, use small wading pools or large, clear, under-the-bed storage containers partially filled with water or other materials. Place them on a plastic tarp or tablecloth to catch the spills. Check the decorating section for more specifics on setting up the Dramatic Play area as the inside of an Old West clapboard house and the Coloring Corner to look like an Old West train.

Post the signs with each station's name. Also, consider posting the directions and Teaching Tie-In for each station so leaders can share the main point with the kids.

## Lesson Time

The lesson time (High Point Bible Time) is divided into three sections:

- Introduce It!
- Teach It!
- Apply It!

The lesson time works well with a two-person team. One person serves as Teacher One and the other as Teacher Two or Teaching Assistant. If team teaching, decide ahead of time who will do what. The lesson can also be taught alone, but find someone, such as a group guide or other staff person, to help when you need an extra set of hands, especially during Puppet Pal time.

Check the Resource Catalog for a fun T-shirt and hat to wear while you teach!

Below is a sample schedule with descriptions of each time period. Check with your director for a copy of your specific schedule and room assignment.

## Sample Schedule

### Based on a 3-hour VBS

Note: This schedule reflects a 30-minute period before VBS begins to accommodate VBS parents' schedules.

8:30–9:00	Arrival/Free Play Morning VBS Program—Breakfast Snack
9:00–9:15	All Aboard Assembly—Opening
9:15–9:40	Exploration Stations (Session 1)
9:40–10:05	High Point Bible Time
10:05–10:30	Gallopin' Gabe's Games
10:30–10:45	Carpenter Joe's Crafts (Session 1)
10:45–11:00	Exploration Stations (Session 2)
11:00–11:20	Sweet Sadie's Snacks and Rest Time
11:20–11:35	Carpenter Joe's Crafts (Session 2)
11:35–11:55	All Aboard Assembly—Closing
11:55–Noon	Return to Room/Dismissal

- Arrival** In some cases, children in this age group will arrive earlier than the rest of the VBS children. Therefore, make sure you're there early, as well! Be ready to greet your little ones with smiles, hugs, and love. Follow your church's check-in procedures and safety precautions.
- Free Play** Provide inviting toys ready for free play. Help kids become familiar with their VBS space.
- Sweet Sadie's Snacks:  
Breakfast Snack** If you are running a morning VBS, offer a small snack. This helps the children get used to their setting as they focus on food rather than being dropped off at the nursery! See page 21 for snack ideas or choose mini muffins, fruit, or another light breakfast item.
- All Aboard  
Assembly—Opening** Walk the children to the opening assembly. Request to be seated in the front on small chairs or in a special spot so the children can see. Plan to leave before or during the last song so you are back in your room before the other children leave.
- Exploration Stations  
(Session 1)** Allow the children to explore the stations or participate in free play during this time. See the Resource Download for patterns.
- High Point Bible Time** This is the heart of the day. If some of the other activities need to go, make sure this one *does* happen! Present the lesson early before fatigue sets in. At the same time, if you notice the kids are especially antsy or tired, remain flexible and switch activities. You can come back later to finish the lesson, or you can break it up and finish it the next day.
- Gallopin' Gabe's Games** Play inside or outside. Just spend time playing! Young children learn as they explore their world. See page 15 for game ideas.
- Carpenter Joe's  
Crafts (Session 1)** Toddlers and young preschoolers need simple crafts. Gluing sensory items (cotton balls, fabric, sandpaper, etc.) onto papers, attaching stickers, and coloring are always a hit. See page 18 for craft specifics.
- Exploration Stations  
(Session 2)** Allow the children to continue exploring the stations.
- Sweet Sadie's Snacks  
and Rest Time** Make sure all snacks are bite-sized and not choking hazards. Be alert to any allergies children may have.
- Carpenter Joe's  
Crafts (Session 2)** If the children seem up for it, try a second craft before heading out to the closing assembly.
- All Aboard  
Assembly—Closing** Take the kids to the closing assembly, once again sitting close to the front. Leave five minutes early so they are back in their room when VBS is dismissed. Follow your church's safe dismissal procedures.

# MEMORY VERSE SONGS

We have partnered with Seeds Kids Worship and Majesty Music to create songs for each of the memory verses. They feature the full verses. (Pre-Primaries and Toddlers are taught condensed versions of these verses.) Singing scripture is an excellent way for children to learn their Bible verses easily. If you choose to use these songs (either video or audio), use them during the memory

verse time in each lesson. The Music Leader Download comes with the purchase of a Super Starter Kit and can also be purchased separately. You can also stream the songs from any major streaming platform. Student CDs in packs of 10 are also available if you would like each student to have a copy of the songs (1220610 or 1220620).

## STUDENT EXTRAS

Check with your VBS director and choose one or more of these fun optional materials to give to your students so they can take home a review of the daily lesson content.

**Simple Songs:** The songs referenced throughout this guide that are for Pre-Primaries and Toddlers are available on the Resource Download (you'll need to upload them to an MP3 player) and on a separate *Simple Songs for Kids* CD (1221410) that you can play in a CD player. You may want to purchase one of the CDs for each child.

**Student Guides:** These age-appropriate guides feature a lesson review on the front of each daily take-home paper, as well as the memory verse and a suggested verse review game. The "Go and Do" section on the back parallels the Apply It! part of the lesson. You can either go over these during class time or send them home to be completed with a parent or caretaker, which is what our test churches do.

The student guides are available in packs of 10.

- Toddler ESV—1220740
- Toddler KJV—1221350

**All Aboard Adventure Journals:** These fun interactive booklets feature the daily memory verses, animal pals, stickers, and a place to stamp (1220930) for attendance. They can receive them at any time during the first day (preferably as they arrive), and you can review them with the kids during the Apply It! section of the lesson. These are available in packs of 10.

- Pre-Primary/Toddler ESV—1220900
- Pre-Primary/Toddler KJV—1221380

**Wonder Junction Map and Sticker Sets:** Use these sticker sets as a fun review of each day's teaching.

- 1220780, pack of 10

**Bookmarks:** These are available in packs of 10 and can be passed out at the end of class or at the end of the day.

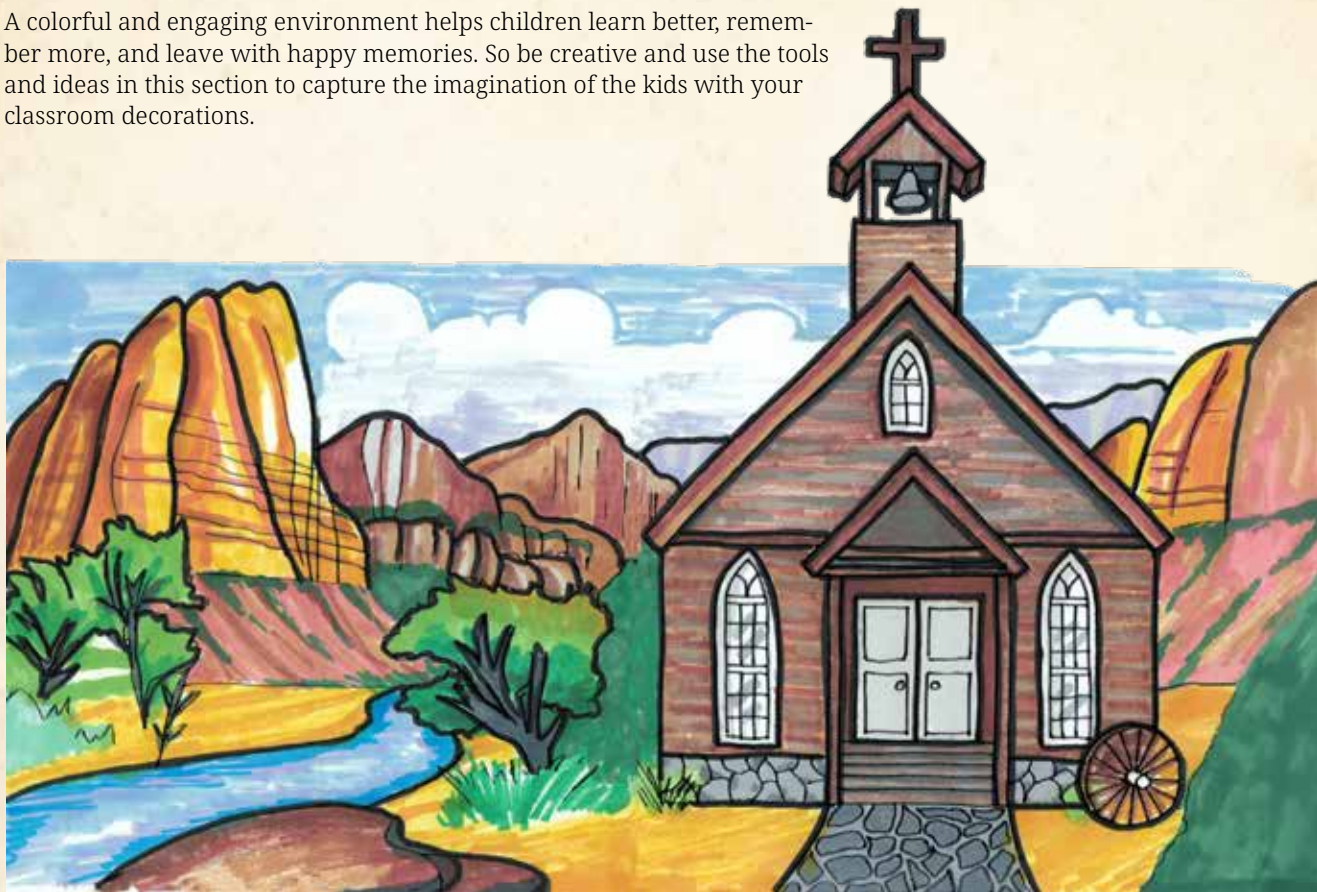
- Gospel—1220760—Day 4 or 5
- Names of Jesus—1220770—Day 5

## SPECIAL NEEDS

The *Special Needs Teacher Supplement* (1220530) can help you accommodate and modify these lessons for those who need it, either in your regular classroom or in a self-contained classroom.

# DECORATING DECISIONS

A colorful and engaging environment helps children learn better, remember more, and leave with happy memories. So be creative and use the tools and ideas in this section to capture the imagination of the kids with your classroom decorations.



## KEY DECORATING ELEMENTS

### High Point Chapel

To serve as a focal point for the teaching, the *Wonder Junction* classroom backdrop features an Old West country chapel in a southwestern desert setting. You can create your own artwork or see the Resource Download for clip art images of the chapel scene. Use an overhead projector to enlarge and transfer the images onto corrugated cardboard sheets, foam insulation board, or roll paper, then prop them up or mount them on a wall. You can feature the entire scene or keep it simple with just the chapel against a background of sky blue roll paper or plastic tablecloths.

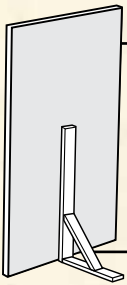
### Classroom Scene Setter

As a quick and easy alternative to making your own classroom backdrop, a scene setter is available for purchase (1221260) from the Resource Catalog. Simply mount the panels onto a rigid material using double-sided carpet tape, clear packing tape, or staples, then prop them up with wooden supports (jacks). Or you can attach them directly to a wall with mounting putty, Mavalus tape, or double-sided tape on top of painter's tape.



## Resource Posters

Contained in the Teacher Resource Kit are the teaching, memory verse, and animal pal posters. These are important visuals for the kids and should be displayed in an organized fashion on a wall (or walls) adjacent to your backdrop.



Prop up your set, and any free-standing decorations, with wooden jacks made from 2 x 4, 2 x 3, or 2 x 2 boards, according to the size of your decorations. If necessary, jacks can be weighted down with bags of sand or road salt.

### HOW TO ENLARGE AND TRANSFER CLIP ART

1. Photocopy the clip art onto transparencies.
2. Place roll paper or a rigid material against a wall.
3. Using an overhead projector to enlarge the clip art, shine the image onto the paper or rigid material, adjusting it as necessary for the size desired.
4. Trace the image outlines onto the paper or rigid material.
5. Paint the image, if necessary, and cut out.

## Other Props, Tips & Miscellaneous Ideas

- Place a rug, or raised platform, in front of your backdrop to create a stage effect.
- Faux wood crates made from boxes, cardboard wagon wheels, coils of hemp rope, metal lanterns, and stuffed burlap sacks can be set around in groupings to fill empty spaces.
- Painted cardboard clouds, rocks, and tufts of grass can add a nice touch.
- Kids love animals, so be sure to include some in your decorating. See the Resource Download for clip art images or use a variety of stuffed animals.
- Add a thin (1/2-inch) black border to your painted props. This helps them stand out better and makes the colors appear more vibrant.
- Because corrugated cardboard tends to curl when only one side is painted, first apply a quick single coat of paint to the back.
- Don't forget to dress the part with Old West attire.

## Puppet Stage

Because puppets are used daily in the Primary, Pre-Primary, and Toddler classrooms, you will need a puppet stage. Use the chapel for this purpose by cutting a small opening in one of the windows or doors or have the puppet appear from behind an outcropping of rocks. You can also make a freestanding puppet stage out of a large cardboard box or a trifold display board. Cut out a rectangular hole in the box or display board, cover the hole with fabric, and then paint or decorate the outside.

Check out [Pinterest.com/answersvbs](https://www.pinterest.com/answersvbs) for colorful photos of decorations from our test churches!  
Visit [YouTube.com/answersvbs](https://www.youtube.com/answersvbs) for how-to decorating videos!

# EXPLORATION STATIONS

Toddler classes enjoy Exploration Stations, which include a dramatic play area, a touch table with water, a touch table with dry materials, a discovery center, and a coloring corner. Further information about these stations can be found in the lessons but check below for details on how to set up the dramatic play area and coloring corner.

## Old West Dress-Up

Your Old West dress-up area should resemble the inside of a house in the Old West. First, designate a corner of your room, then cover the walls with brown roll paper, wood grain plastic tablecloths, or a wood wall scene setter. On one wall, add a fireplace or a pot-bellied stove made from cardboard boxes painted black. On the other wall add a window or two. Windows can be made by hanging squares of blue roll paper or poster board, framing them with curtains or white or brown scalloped

bulletin board trim (available at teacher supply stores or online), and adding grids made from strips of white poster board. In the center of your house, add a child's table and chairs with place settings, a centerpiece, and play food. Finish the room with various props such as an old-fashioned broom, a faux rug, stuffed burlap sacks, a wooden cradle, baskets, and a good supply of dress-up clothes.

## Train Coloring Corner

In another corner of your room, fashion a train from large boxes, then paint or wrap the engine and railcars in a variety of fun colors. Add a set of tracks at each end with colored masking tape. Position the train so that it encloses an area with a table and chairs for the children to spend time coloring and learning their memory verses.



# WONDER JUNCTION LINGO

## OLD WEST

Yea or neigh	Yes or no	Get a wiggle on	Hurry up
Necessary	Outhouse	Apple-pie order	In top shape
Poppycock or skittles!	Nonsense	Higgledy-piggledy	In confusion
Togs	Clothing	Granger	Farmer
Right as rain	Fine	Hither and yon	Here and there
Tuckered out	Tired	Lickety-split	Fast
Shindig or hoedown	Party or celebration	Heap	A whole lot
Hobble your lip	Be quiet	On the fence	Undecided
Yarn	A story	Do-si-do on over	Come on over
Grand	Beautiful, excellent	Poppet	Term of endearment
Fetch	Bring	Stumped	Confused
Pony up or fork it over	Pay it out	Dude	An Easterner, someone in fancy clothes rather than work clothes
Trounce	Beat	Calaboose	Jail
Small fry	Children		
Hightail it	Leave quickly		

## FOOD

Cackleberries	Eggs	Goober peas	Peanuts
Skunk eggs	Onions	Wet your whistle	Drink something
Mysteries	Sausages	Snatch	A snack
Sinkers	Biscuits	Grub or chuck	Food
Cookie	Camp cook	Soft tack	Bread
Slapjacks	Pancakes	Brown gargle	Coffee

# GALLOPIN' GABE'S GAMES

Playing is what this age group does best! While they're playing, they're learning. These games are an important part of the teaching process because they help to cement the lessons into the kids' minds in a fun way.

Consider having an outdoor playtime if you have a good space for it. It's nice to break up the day and have a new location to explore. The outdoor location should be enclosed so no one wanders off. If you don't have a safe area, use tarped hay bales or snow fencing to create one. Ask church families to bring in plastic slides, big wheel riding toys, and other age-appropriate outdoor equipment. Make sure they're labeled so they can easily be returned after VBS.

You may also want to consider having wading pools with a small amount of water for outdoor playtime. (Supervise carefully.) Make sure parents are notified ahead of time to bring swim floats, a swimsuit, a towel, and extra clothes for their child. Ask if it's okay to put sunscreen on their child and apply it at least 10 minutes before going outside. If possible, place the pools in a shady area.

For game time, use the following suggestions or other options from the *Game Guide*. Some of the Pre-Primary games can work for Toddlers. Also, it's fun to repeat favorites throughout the week.

If you have kids with disabilities, be sensitive and adapt so they can participate as much as possible.

## THEMATIC GAME IDEAS

### Day 1

#### Happy Birthday, Jesus

*Ahead of time*, gather a gift box with a removable lid and a baby doll that fits inside.

*During the game*, place the baby doll inside the box and put the lid on top. Have children sit in a circle. For larger groups, prepare multiple gift boxes and divide into multiple circles. The children will pass the box around the circle as they sing "Happy Birthday." Whoever is holding the gift box when the song ends gets to open it. Have the child rock the baby doll and say, "Jesus is the greatest gift!" After everyone has had a turn, share the Teaching Tie-In.

#### TEACHING TIE-IN

Christmas is when we celebrate Jesus' birthday! Jesus is God who came to earth as a little baby. Jesus came from heaven to save us from our sins. We give gifts to each other at Christmas to remind us that Jesus is the greatest gift of all.

#### Pin the Star

*Ahead of time*, print and cut apart the [Star Cards](#) (one per child). Tape the [Pin the Star Poster](#) pieces together. Attach the poster to the wall within the children's reach. Gather a bandana, a marker, and tape.

*During the game*, pass out one STAR CARD to each child and write their name on the front. Share the Teaching Tie-In, then have the children gather near the PIN THE STAR POSTER. Choose a child to begin. Place a piece of tape

on the back of his star. Tie the bandana on as a blindfold, turn him around once or twice, then direct him toward the poster. Help him tape his star on the poster. See who can get their star closest to the top of the house where the wise men found Jesus.

#### TEACHING TIE-IN

Some wonderful things happened after Jesus was born. One of those things is the special star that God put in the sky. The wise men followed that star until it stopped above Jesus' house. The wise men were so happy they found Jesus, and they gave him gifts and worshipped him.

### Day 2

#### Baby, Boy, Man

*Ahead of time*, mark a start and finish line with cones.

*During the game*, share the Teaching Tie-In, then have everyone line up at the start line. Tell students to crawl when you call "baby," run when you call "boy," and walk on tiptoes (making themselves as tall as they can) when you call "man." Make the calls in order at first as students move from the start line to the finish line and back, then mix up the calls.

#### TEACHING TIE-IN

Jesus came down from heaven as a baby. He grew to be a boy. Then he grew to be a man. He was born as a real person so he could die for sinners. Let's play a game to help us remember that Jesus grew from a baby, to a boy, then to a man.



# CARPENTER JOE'S CRAFTS

(Simple. Simple. Simple. Young children need simple crafts that are fun to touch and explore. More prep needs to take place so the children are left with simply decorating, attaching stickers, and gluing. This hands-on fun time helps kids really connect with what they're learning.

As with all other items used with the toddlers and young preschoolers, watch carefully that items are not choking hazards and that all items are nontoxic. Use

chunky crayons. Remember to put names on all crafts as children work on them.

Plan two craft times a day, but be prepared to skip one or both if the children need more rest time. Decide who will be in charge of preparing the craft materials (craft leaders, toddler teachers, or someone else). Whatever ideas you choose, have fun and use the crafts to reinforce the big themes of the week.

## THEMATIC CRAFT IDEAS

*Some basic items will not be listed in supply lists below, such as an office paper cutter, scissors, glue, stapler, ruler, and a pen or pencil.*

*For gluing, pour a small amount of glue into a plastic bowl or plate for children to share. Provide small paintbrushes or cotton swabs for spreading.*

### Day 1

#### Session 1—Wonder Locomotive

*Gather the following supplies:* [Locomotive Pattern](#), 8 ½ x 6-inch foam sheet cut into 6 x 4½ inches (two per child), 1 x 3-inch yellow office labels cut in half, 1-inch and ¾-inch circle labels, plastic stirring straws, and cotton balls. Optional: You may want to glue on the labels if they are not sticky enough.

*Ahead of time*, cut the yellow labels in half. Make a locomotive and train car for each child. To do so, fold each 6 x 4½-inch foam piece in half widthwise. Place the **LOCOMOTIVE PATTERN** with the dotted line on the fold of one foam piece. Trace around the pattern, then cut out the shape. For the train car, trim the second folded foam piece on both sides, starting at the bottom edge, leaving a ¼-inch overhang at the fold to look like a roof. Slide the stapler over the fold about a ½ inch down and staple once in the front and back of the locomotive foam piece and in the center of the car foam piece.

*During class*, let children choose one locomotive and one train car. Slide a stirring straw through the space between the fold and the staples to attach the locomotive to the car. Children will add one yellow label to the locomotive and three labels to the car for windows. Remind them to press and rub hard. Next they will add one or two

large circle labels, plus two or three smaller circles for wheels on the locomotive. Then add two small circles to the train car. Gently stretch out a cotton ball, then glue one end onto the smokestack of the locomotive. Flex the foam pieces near the bottom to make the train stand up. You may want to allow children to decorate both sides of their train.

#### TEACHING TIE-IN

Long ago, in the Old West, a train was a wonderful new thing. People were excited to ride on a train. But there's nothing more exciting than Jesus! We're learning today that Jesus is wonderful. Jesus is God. He came from heaven and was born as a baby. When you play with your train, remember that Jesus is a wonder.

#### Session 2—Tiny the Cougar Coloring Sheet

*Gather the following:* [Day 1 Animal Pal Coloring Sheets](#) and crayons. Optional: yellow and brown tissue paper and large plastic wiggle eyes. You'll also need the [Day 1 Animal Pal Poster](#).

*Ahead of time*, print one coloring sheet for each child. Optional: Cut small pieces of yellow and brown tissue paper and pour glue into bowls for kids to share.

*During class*, children will color their coloring sheet. Optional: Glue small pieces of yellow tissue onto the body and brown pieces for the kitten's spots, then add large wiggle eyes.

#### TEACHING TIE-IN

Refer to the [DAY 1 ANIMAL PAL POSTER](#). What's the name of our animal pal today? Take responses. Continue discussion about the pal and its significance.

**Check [Pinterest.com/answersvbs](https://www.pinterest.com/answersvbs) or the craft guide for colorful photos of the toddler crafts!**

# SWEET SADIE'S SNACKS

Yum! Snacks are always a hit. But with this age group, it is especially important to find out from parents about food allergies. Toddlers may not be able to communicate this information. If you are choosing other snack options, be mindful of small foods that may be choking hazards (e.g., hot dogs, nuts, marshmallows, raisins or dried fruits, hard or very chewy candies, chunks of cheese or fruit,

and popcorn). Some “big kid” snacks are safe for toddlers. You may want to serve smaller portions of those. See the snack guide for more details.

Decide who will prepare the snacks—teachers or the snack team—and decide if you are serving one or two snacks per day. And, of course, remember to wash hands and pray before eating.

## THEMATIC SNACK IDEAS

### Day 1

#### Cougar Claws (per person)

- 1 oz. Cheetos Paws or Chester's Paws
- Cup or bowl for serving
- Optional: Use cheese curls and call them Cougar Tails



Place approximately 1 oz. portions of paw-shaped cheese snacks into bowls or cups for each child. Optional: Decorate containers using a paw print or cat stamp, drawing your own design with a permanent marker, or applying stickers.

#### TEACHING TIE-IN

Today we're learning about our animal pal, Tiny the cougar kitten. What sound do you think a cougar makes? *Take responses.* Cougar kittens are baby cougars, which remind us of how Jesus was also little when he came to earth. He was born as a baby even though he was God!

#### Biscuit Baby (per person)

- 1 shortcake or biscuit
- 1 t. apple butter or strawberry preserves/pie filling
- Sprinkles
- Whipped topping
- Small plate for serving

See p. 10 in the *Snack Guide* for directions and the Teaching Tie-In. Adjust serving size as needed for younger children.

### Day 2

#### Wolf Puppy Chow (per 10 half-cup servings)

- 2 c. Chocolate Chex cereal
- ½ c. M&M's
- 3 c. Cheerios
- Cups or bowls for serving

See p. 14 in the *Snack Guide* for directions but make this simplified version. Adjust serving size as needed for younger children.

#### TEACHING TIE-IN

Today our animal pal is a wolf. Do any of you have a dog at home? *Take responses.* A wolf is like a dog, but it lives in the wild, not in a house. Our pal, Junior the wolf pup, is a young wolf who will grow up to be a big wolf. Junior reminds us that Jesus was young once too. How old are you? *Take responses.* Even though he's God, Jesus knows what it's like to be your age because he was little just like you when he lived on earth.

#### Carpenter Scraps (per person)

- 1 pretzel rod
- 2 pretzel sticks
- 1–2 rectangular graham crackers
- 6 pieces of Honeycomb cereal
- 6 chocolate chips
- Zippered baggie for serving

See p. 12 in the *Snack Guide* for directions and the Teaching Tie-In. Adjust ingredients and serving size as needed for younger children.

### Day 3

#### Bison Bites (per 14 bites)

- 2 c. chow mein noodles
- 1 c. butterscotch chips
- ½ c. milk chocolate chips
- Wax paper
- Cupcake liners for serving



Melt butterscotch and milk chocolate chips in the microwave at 15- to 30-second intervals, stirring in between. Pour melted chips over chow mein noodles and form into small “haystacks” by dropping spoonfuls onto wax paper.



DAY 1

# THE WONDER OF HIS BIRTH

## BIBLE PASSAGES

Jesus Is Born  
Matthew 1–2; Luke 2

## LESSON FOCUS

The baby King's birth was a wonder. What amazing happenings surrounded it?

## APOLOGETICS CONTENT

Is Jesus the most important person ever born?

## MEMORY VERSE

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. John 1:14

## NAMES OF JESUS

Creator, Immanuel

## ANIMAL PAL

Tiny the Cougar Kitten

## Today's Exploration Stations

- Discovery Center: Special Birth Seek & Find
- Wet Touch Table: Wash the Babies
- Dry Touch Table: Christmas Fun
- Dramatic Play: Old West Dress-Up
- Coloring Corner: John 1:14

## Today's Lesson at a Glance

### INTRODUCE IT!

- Wonder Junction Train Depot and Chapel

### TEACH IT!

- Puppet Pal—Wonder of Jesus' Birth
- Song 1: "Twinkle, Twinkle, Jesus' Star"
- Song 2: "Go Tell It on the Mountain"

### APPLY IT!

- Part 1: Animal Pal Review
- Part 2: Gold Mine Memory Time
- Part 3: Go and Do

## Preparing for the Lesson

- Read Matthew 1–2 and Luke 2 several times.
- Read this lesson several times and prepare the materials.
- For more information on Jesus' birth, visit [AnswersVBS.com/wonderfaq](http://AnswersVBS.com/wonderfaq).
- Pray.



# DEVOTION I: TREASURE JESUS

*Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Isaiah 7:14*

Imagine your young daughter comes to you one day after finishing her chores and making the daily bread. She says, “Dear parents, as you know, our people have been promised a savior for hundreds of years. Even from the beginning, Yahweh has promised that he would send one to save his people from their sins. Today, an angel told me I would bear the Promised One! Mom, Dad—our Savior is coming! And it’s true what our prophet Isaiah said over 700 years ago—I have known no man, yet I am with child.”

Would you think she was crazy? Would you call to mind all the promises from the Law and the Prophets you’ve been taught since your childhood, mulling over each one, waiting to see if more than this one spoken by Isaiah would come to pass through your daughter and her child? Would you tick each one off your mental checklist?

- He was the child of a woman (Genesis 3:15). Check.
- Micah said he would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). Check.
- Solomon said kings would worship him (Psalm 72:10–11). Check.
- Hosea said he would be called out of Egypt (Hosea 11:1). Check.

Is it really possible that one child could fulfill all these promises? Was your daughter telling the truth those many months ago? Could this child, whose name means “the Lord saves,” really be the promised one?

Those shepherds who came to visit the baby, wanting to see the Savior that had been born to us, Christ the Lord—did they really know what they were talking about? Is it our Savior? . . . This is our Savior!

As you read the passages revealing the events surrounding the birth of Christ for the umpteenth time, meditate on the events that set his birth apart from all others—the fulfillment of prophecy, the worship of shepherds and kings, the lowly manger cradling the King of kings. As you share the good news of the Creator who stepped into history as a baby, make sure your children know that this was no ordinary baby. This is Immanuel, God with us.

May we pray as the Puritans did:

O God, take me in spirit to the watchful shepherds, and enlarge my mind;  
Let me hear good tidings of great joy, and hearing, believe, rejoice, praise, adore,  
My conscience bathed in an ocean of repose, my eyes uplifted to a reconciled Father;  
Place me with ox, ass, camel, goat, to look with them upon my redeemer’s face,  
And in him account myself delivered from sin;  
Let me with Simeon clasp the new-born child to my heart, embrace him with undying faith, exulting that he is mine and I am his.  
In him thou hast given me so much that heaven can give no more.

—Arthur Bennett, *The Valley of Vision*  
(The Banner of Truth Trust, 2005), 16.

# EXPLORATION STATIONS

## Discovery Center: Special Birth Seek & Find

### MATERIALS

- [Nativity Cards](#) or nativity set pieces (a manger, shepherds, angel, star, and wise men)
- Three small boxes to cover nativity pieces

### PREP

Place the nativity pieces and the three boxes on the table. If using the [NATIVITY CARDS](#), print and cut one set.

### DIRECTIONS

Ask the children to choose one nativity piece. Cover it with one box, then line up all three boxes. Slide each box around a few times, keeping them on the table. Ask the children which box has the chosen object. Lift the box they choose to see if the object is there. If not, give one more guess. Play several times, using each of the objects.

### TEACHING TIE-IN

Jesus' birth was different than anyone else's birth. [Point to each item on the table.](#) He had angels, shepherds, wise men bringing gifts (after he had grown a little), and even a star! It was so special when Jesus was born because Jesus is God. He was in heaven—a beautiful, perfect place, but he wanted to come to our world because he loves us.

## Wet Touch Table: Wash the Babies

### MATERIALS

- Touch table with tarp underneath
- Water
- Waterproof dolls and baby bath supplies such as plastic cups, play soap or baby bath, bath toys, washcloths, and towels

### PREP

Partially fill the touch table with water. Add the items to the touch table.

### DIRECTIONS

Students enjoy giving the babies a bath.

### TEACHING TIE-IN

Do you think Jesus ever needed a bath when he was a baby? [Pause for responses.](#) Jesus got dirty just like we do, because he was not only God but also a person, just like us. We all were babies at one time and so was Jesus! But there's one big difference. He was the most special baby ever born because he is also God!

## Dry Touch Table: Christmas Fun

### MATERIALS

- Touch table with tarp underneath
- Generic filler (crinkle shred or Easter grass—red and green would be fun today)

- Plastic, safe Christmas items such as plastic nativity pieces, nonbreakable ornaments, Christmas cookie cutters, etc.

### PREP

Put the filler in the table along with the Christmas items.

### DIRECTIONS

Students play with the Christmas items.

### TEACHING TIE-IN

When do we use these items? [Christmas.](#) At Christmas! But what does Christmas have to do with Jesus? [Pause for responses.](#) We celebrate Jesus' birthday at Christmastime. It's a wonder that God came down to earth in the form of a person, Jesus!

## Dramatic Play: Old West Dress-Up

### MATERIALS

This station can be as simple or elaborate as you like. Leave it set up all week. Add in new items each day. Choose from the following or add in your own ideas. Make sure all items are safe for toddlers.

- Clapboard house interior backdrop as listed in [Decorating Decisions](#)
- Old West house items (e.g., small wooden table and chairs, barrels, baskets, lanterns, play food [eggs, cheese, bread, etc.], stick horses, tin plates, bowls, cooking utensils, broom, blankets, play tools, family Bible—note: it could get damaged)
- Old West dress-up items (e.g., bandanas, boots, cowboy hats, flannel shirts, pioneer bonnets, dresses, aprons, vests (see toddler crafts for vest instructions))
- Day 1 items: baby cradle, baby dolls, and old-fashioned baby supplies

### PREP

Set up the area to look like the inside of an Old Western house. Add some Old West house items, dress-up items, and Day 1 items.

### DIRECTIONS

Dress up and pretend to be living in the Old West. Provide dolls to play with today to coordinate with the teaching.

### TEACHING TIE-IN

Jesus came to earth as a baby. Do any of you have baby brothers or sisters? What do you need to do to take care of them? Jesus had to be fed and rocked and cared for, too, even though he was God! What a wonder!

## Coloring Corner: John 1:14

### MATERIALS

- [Day 1 Memory Verse Coloring Sheet](#)

- ❑ Decorating supplies to make a train as listed in Decorating Decisions
- ❑ Markers or crayons in small galvanized buckets
- ❑ Optional supplies: glue sticks, stickers, and items to glue onto the coloring sheet (e.g., cotton balls, pom-poms, feathers, sandpaper, and tissue paper)

#### PREP

Set up the Old West train decorations. Print the **MEMORY VERSE COLORING SHEET**, 1 per child. Gather the decorating supplies and set them out to use all week.

#### DIRECTIONS

Color the sheet. Add additional supplies if desired.

#### TEACHING TIE-IN

Practice saying the memory verse on the sheet. Discuss its meaning.

#### Additional Exploration Station Ideas

- ❑ **Campfire Reading**—Make a fake campfire with seating around it. Place a basket or pail nearby with a variety of children’s books, including children’s picture Bibles and accurate books about creation, Jesus, and the Old West.
- ❑ **Old West Animals**—Borrow or buy stuffed or plastic animals and free play with them. See a possible list on the Old West A to Z page in the Director Guide.
- ❑ **Flannel Board Fun**—Provide a flannel board with people and items from each day’s Bible lesson, along with animals and Old West items.
- ❑ **Panning for Gold**—Place a wading pool with a tarp underneath on the floor. Add play sand, gold coins, and other trinkets. Have kids “pan for gold” using sand sifter/sieve beach toys.
- ❑ **Weigh the Gold**—Gather various gold and silver items, such as play coins, painted rocks, jewelry,

etc., along with a pan balance (available online or at teacher stores or search online for “how to make a balance scale”). Kids have fun weighing items and trying to get them to balance.

- ❑ **Texture Trays**—Provide various textures for kids to trace words or pictures with their fingers. Use key words of Bible concepts they’re learning about. Possible textures include shaving cream or hair gel in zippered baggies (duct-taped shut), burlap, trays of salt, thick fleece, magic slates, or chalkboard and chalk. Supervise carefully and make sure they know not to put their hands in their mouths. You may want to put out different textures on different days. Provide wipes for cleanup.
- ❑ **Play Dough**—Play dough is always a favorite, so feature a station with it all week, adding thematic supplies (e.g., cookie cutters and plastic toys) that have to do with the day’s teaching, such as nature items on Day 1 (Jesus is Creator); construction items on Day 2 (Jesus is a carpenter); boats, fish, and storm/weather items on Day 3 (Jesus is almighty); hearts and crosses on Day 4 (Jesus is Savior); and crowns on Day 5 (Jesus is King of kings).

#### PLAY DOUGH RECIPE

- |                        |                     |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| ❑ 2 c. flour           | ❑ 2 t. oil          |
| ❑ ½ c. salt            | ❑ Food coloring     |
| ❑ 2 c. warm water      | ❑ Optional: glitter |
| ❑ 4 t. cream of tartar |                     |

Mix the first five ingredients in a saucepan. After blended, mix in food coloring. Stir over low to medium heat until the dough is formed and is no longer sticky. Remove from the pan and knead until smooth, adding the glitter if using it. After it has cooled, store in an air-tight container.

# INTRODUCE IT!

## Wonder Junction Train Depot and Chapel

At the start of each lesson, you will introduce the kids to a new place in Wonder Junction, using the **WONDER JUNCTION POSTER**.

**Prep:** Print the **OLD WEST PICTURES**. Prepare your costumes. Hide the baby doll so it is partially visible.

**Teacher 1:** Well howdy, y'all! It sure is good to meet ya. I'm \_\_\_\_, and this here is \_\_\_\_. This week we're going to pretend we're living in the Old West. Let's think about what the Old West was like.

**Teacher 2:** Show the **OLD WEST PICTURES**. There were small towns with houses and stores. There were cowboys and big farms with lots of cows. A lot of people went there to look for gold.

**Teacher 1:** Yes, and most towns had a sheriff to catch the bad guys who tried to *steal* the gold.

**Teacher 2:** People used horses and wagons to go places. They didn't have any cars back then.

**Teacher 1:** But they did have trains! Let's all pretend to take a ride on the train to a town called Wonder Junction.

**Teacher 2:** Next stop, Wonder Junction! Have everyone line up. Say, "All aboard!" and chug around the room, blowing the train whistle if you have one, and coming to a screeching halt in front of the puppet stage, where they can sit down.

**Teacher 1:** We're here, way out west in Wonder Junction. Look at the map of the town. Show the **WONDER JUNCTION POSTER** and point to the train depot. This is where the train let us off. Isn't it nice?

**Teacher 2:** Yes, it is. But why is it called Wonder Junction? What does *wonder* mean?

**Teacher 1:** We use the word *wonder* when we talk about something that is surprising, awesome, amazing, or wonderful.

**Teacher 2:** So something that's a wonder might make me say, "Wow"?

**Teacher 1:** Yep! Kids can you say, "Wow"? Have them do so, then continue to say it along with you.

**Teacher 2:** Wow! It's a wonder to see new places in the West with all its gold and beautiful land.

**Teacher 1:** But you know what? We're gonna be talkin' about something that's even more wonderful, the wonder of Jesus!

**Teacher 2:** Have y'all ever heard of Jesus before? Pause for nods. Our first wonder about Jesus is that he is God.

**Teacher 1:** Another wonder of Jesus is that he came to earth as a baby. Look around the room. Can you find a baby doll? Have them point to it. Get the doll and hold it up.

**Teacher 2:** You mean Jesus is God, but he became a little baby who cries and needs to be fed and changed and cared for?

**Teacher 1:** Yes, siree! It's a wonder, for sure.

**Teacher 2:** Jesus was a baby and God at the same time. Wow! Looking around. Hey! I think I hear my friend Sam. Maybe he's in there. I'll go see. Move to the back of the puppet stage, calling for Sam and prepare the puppet.

**Teacher 1:** Calling out to Teacher 2. Did you find your friend?

**Teacher 2:** Yep, sure did. But I'm trying to get him to come out and say howdy to y'all. He's kinda shy.

**Teacher 1:** Kids, maybe we should invite Sam out here. Let's say, "Please come out, Sam!" Do so.

- Wonder Junction Poster
- Old West Pictures
- Bible
- Old West costumes for teachers
- Mounting putty or tape for posters
- Optional: train whistle
- Baby doll



★ Think of fun names for yourselves: Cactus Kate, Cowboy Joe, Prospector Pete, Rattlesnake Rachel, or Doc Henry.

★ The Bible is listed just once daily in the supply list but is used throughout, so keep it handy and marked to the correct passages ahead of time.

★ Be familiar with the lesson, but don't memorize it. Place it on a clipboard to use as a reference.

★ If working as co-teachers, decide daily which parts of the lesson each of you will be responsible for.

★ The mounting putty is listed just once in the supply list but will be used whenever you hang up posters. Hang them up as you talk or just hold them up while teaching and hang them up after class.

★ Download from [AnswersVBS.com/](http://AnswersVBS.com/).

◆ Find in your teacher kit.

- ❑ Wonder-Filled Birth Poster
- ❑ 4 sheets of copy paper and tape
- ❑ 2 copies of Day 1 Puppet Script
- ❑ Boy or girl puppet and clipboard
- ❑ Mini pickax or shovel

# TEACH IT!

## Puppet Pal—Wonder of Jesus' Birth

**Prep:** Cover each picture on the **WONDER-FILLED BIRTH POSTER** with sheets of copy paper. Tape one **PUPPET SCRIPT** inside the puppet stage and attach the other copy to a clipboard for reference. Tape the mini shovel or pickax to the puppet's hand. Dress the puppet in either a VBS T-shirt (see Teaching Tip in the sidebar) or in an Old West costume such as a mini vest and a little bandana. Cover each section of the poster with a sheet of copy paper.

Each day, the puppet pal will teach part of the lesson, so try to include it even if you have to cut something else.

Decide which of you will be the puppet and take note of the instructions to leave the previous teaching so you will be positioned in time for the start of the puppet pal time.

If you don't have a teaching assistant or co-teacher, enlist someone ahead of time to work the puppet each day. If you're alone, have the puppet come up from behind a suitcase with the lid flipped up or just stand and work the puppet. (It's fine if your lips move. No need to be a ventriloquist.)

You can use either a boy or a girl puppet named Sam (short for Samuel or Samantha). Use a consistent voice for the puppet all week. Speak clearly and exaggerate words and expressions. For instance, draw out certain words for emphasis or make an exaggerated action for things like groaning, turning its head, or sneezing. Use your free hand to do things with the puppet's hands or arms. For example, if the puppet is "thinking," put the puppet's hand on its chin. When the puppet is talking, make sure the mouth is open. (This is the opposite of what people often do!) In other words, the mouth should be open on most syllables. You don't have to open very wide, which will help you move the mouth faster and more naturally.

Your puppet should come up in the chapel window or from an outcropping of rocks. (See Decorating Decisions.) When the puppet is entering, hold your arm back and down and have the puppet take three steps up, getting higher each time, until the puppet is out and visible. When exiting, turn the puppet toward you and take three steps down until out of sight.

**Puppet:** Come out acting dejected with a mini tool taped to the hand.

**Teacher:** Well, hello there. You must be Sam.

**Puppet:** Acting sad. Yup, that's me. I'm Sam. It's short for Samuel (Samantha).

**Teacher:** Is something wrong? You seem sad.

**Puppet:** My friend was supposed to go digging for gold treasure with me at the gold mine. But now he's too busy.

**Teacher:** Oh, I'm sorry to hear that.

**Puppet:** He *promised* he'd come.

**Teacher:** That's bad news. People should keep their promises. But sometimes they don't. But I can tell you some wonderful news!

**Puppet:** Acting more excited. Really? Did you find gold treasure?

**Teacher:** Nope, I found a treasure much better than gold. It's someone who always, always, always keeps his promises. His name is Jesus, and he's a treasure for sure.

**Puppet:** I've read about Jesus in the Bible. Will you tell us the wonders of Jesus?

**Teacher:** First of all, the Bible tells us that Jesus is God. He's the Creator who made the whole world.

**Puppet:** You mean Jesus made the whole world and the sun and moon and stars? Be ready to make noises for each creature mentioned next.

**Teacher:** Allow time for the puppet to make noises as you name each creature. Yes. He made everything, like birds, fish, frogs, sheep, monkeys, dinosaurs, and people. Then, many years later, Jesus came down from heaven to *live* with us.

★ The puppet can be dressed in a small VBS T-shirt. To make a small T-shirt, print, cut out, and laminate a color copy of the **logo** and tape it to a baby-sized T-shirt.

★ If you want to get snazzy, use a quick musical introduction and exit when it's time for the puppet to come and go.



**Puppet:** Wow! That is a wonder! I know a name for Jesus that means “God with us.” It’s Immanuel. Say that with me, kids. *Do so.*

**Teacher:** Jesus came from heaven, and some wonderful things happened when he was born.

**Puppet:** I love to hear about Jesus being born. My family even has a big party at Christmas to celebrate his birthday.

**Teacher:** Lot’s of people celebrate Christmas. But I’m going to tell you some special wonders about Jesus’ birth.

**Puppet:** Ooh, great!

### Wonder 1. Angel

**Teacher:** First, an angel came to a young woman named Mary. Can you imagine all of a sudden if an angel from heaven was in a room with you?

**Puppet:** Yikes! I think I’d be scared. What about you kids? Show us your scared face. *Do so.*

**Teacher:** The angel told Mary not to be afraid because God had chosen her to be Jesus’ mother. *Uncover the WONDER-FILLED BIRTH POSTER: ANGEL.*

**Puppet:** Wow! What a wonder!

**Teacher:** Mary and her husband, Joseph, went to a city called Bethlehem. While they were there, it was time for baby Jesus to be born.

**Puppet:** Because their family’s home was filled with people, they were given an area in the lower level of the home that sometimes had animals in it. Let’s make sounds like donkeys and goats. *Do so.*

**Teacher:** Baby Jesus was born, and Mary laid him in the animals’ feeding stand—called a manger.

### Wonder 2. Shepherd

**Puppet:** Tell us what happened to the shepherds that were taking care of the sheep.

**Teacher:** It’s the most exciting thing that’s ever happened to any shepherd!

**Puppet:** Let’s make an excited face, kids. *Do so.*

**Teacher:** The night Jesus was born, the shepherds were out in the fields watching over their sheep, when suddenly there was an angel. He said that Jesus, the Savior, was born!

**Puppet:** Let’s clap and shout, “Hooray!” *Do so.*

**Teacher:** Then guess what happened next? *Uncover the WONDER-FILLED BIRTH POSTER: SHEPHERDS.* A whole bunch of angels filled the sky, celebrating Jesus’ birth! What a wonder!

### Wonder 3. Wise Men and a Special Star

**Puppet:** I know another wonder about Jesus when he was young. Some wise men came from far, far away to visit Jesus.

**Teacher:** God put a special star in the sky. When they saw it, they followed it, and that star moved right over the house where Jesus was so they could find him.

**Puppet:** Wow! The wise men worshipped Jesus and gave him gifts. *Uncover the WONDER-FILLED BIRTH POSTER: WISE MEN WITH GIFTS/SPECIAL STAR.*

**Teacher:** Jesus was a very special baby. He even had his own special star!

**Puppet:** Hey kids, let’s sing a song about that. *Lead the kids in singing and dancing.*

### Song 1: Twinkle, Twinkle, Jesus’ Star

Twinkle, twinkle, Jesus’ star  
(Wiggle fingers above head.)

Wise men followed from afar  
(Walk in place.)

Up above the world so high  
(Raise arms in a circle.)

Like a diamond in the sky  
(Raise loose fist, then point up.)

Twinkle, twinkle, Jesus’ star  
(Wiggle fingers above head.)

Wise men followed from afar  
(Walk in place.)

Repeat



- “Twinkle, Twinkle, Jesus’ Star” song
- “Go Tell it on the Mountain” song
- MP3 download or *Simple Songs* CD (1221410)
- Device to play songs

## Wonder 4. Jesus Came!

**Puppet:** Great singing! When Jesus was born, it was different than anyone else's birth. He had angels, shepherds, wise men bringing gifts, and even a star.

**Teacher:** It was so special because God himself, Jesus, wanted to come. Remember, he was in heaven in a beautiful, perfect place, and he left that for our world. [Uncover the WONDER-FILLED BIRTH POSTER: MANSION.](#)

**Puppet:** He came because he loves us, right?

**Teacher:** Right. Jesus cares about us, and he never fails. People may let you down, like your friend who didn't keep his promise. But Jesus always keeps his promises.

**Puppet:** Wow! Jesus is a much better treasure than finding gold.

**Teacher:** He's the greatest treasure of all—because he loves each one of us. Jesus is a wonder.

**Puppet:** I'd like to go tell my friends about Jesus' wonderful birth. Let's sing about that.

## Song 2: Go Tell It on the Mountain

### CHORUS

Go tell it on the mountain  
(Make a mountain shape with arms.)

Over the hills and everywhere  
(Move hand up and down over hills.)

Go tell it on the mountain  
(Make a mountain shape with arms.)

That Jesus Christ is born (Rock a baby.)

### VERSE 1

While shepherds kept their watching  
(Put flat hand above eyes as if searching.)

Over silent flocks by night (Put finger to lips and turn head back and forth.)

Behold throughout the heavens  
(Raise arms up and open wide.)

**Puppet:** That was wonderful singing! Well, I think I'm going to try to dig up some gold treasure on my own just for fun. But I'll remember—Jesus is the best treasure ever. He's a wonder!

**Teacher:** Bye for now, Sam! See you tomorrow.

**Puppet:** Bye y'all. Exit.

## APPLY IT!

### Part 1: Animal Pal Review

Take a couple minutes to summarize the lesson today using the **DAY 1 ANIMAL PAL POSTER**, using any or all of the questions below. Pass out the Wonder Junction Maps and Tiny stickers (available to purchase from [AnswersVBS.com](#)), one set per child. This week, children will add one animal pal each day as they learn about them.

Let's take a look at our animal pal poster to remember what we talked about today. What kind of animal is our animal pal? *Cougar kitten*. Cougars are a kind of wildcat. What's our cougar's name? *Tiny*. She's a tiny baby, isn't she? We talked about a tiny, baby person today. Who was that? *Jesus*. Because Jesus is God, what special things happened when he was born? *Answers will vary.*

Continue reviewing with the following questions. Be sure to give the correct answer for any "no" questions. Have the kids meow like a cougar kitten if the answer is yes and pretend to sleep if it is no.

★ There are two songs introduced in each lesson. If some of the songs seem too long, or you're running short on time, you may want to repeat the favorites. Also consider playing the songs in the background during other activities so they become familiar.

- Day 1 Animal Pal Poster
- Wonder Junction Maps and Tiny stickers (1220780), 1 per person

★ If you don't have time to play the review game, skip to the Nugget of Truth question, ending with this important thought. Try to include it even if you must cut something else.



1. Is Jesus God? Yes—meow.
2. Did Jesus make the world? Yes—meow.
3. When Jesus came from heaven to be born as a baby, did angels tell the shepherds about it? Yes—meow.
4. When the wise men came to see Jesus, did they follow the moon in the sky? No—sleep. They followed a star.
5. Does Jesus keep his promises? Yes—meow.

### Nugget of Truth

Ready for an important question? Yes or no: Should we always be in wonder when we think of Jesus? Yes! Jesus is amazing! He knows exactly how many hairs are on your head right now! He knows what you'll be doing when you're five years old! He knows how you'll be feeling tomorrow morning. You can talk to him. He is with everyone that trusts in him. Remember, the name Immanuel means "God with us."

### Part 2: Gold Mine Memory Time

**Today's Verse:** And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. John 1:14

Practice the verse several times by using the **DAY 1 MEMORY VERSE POSTER** as a reference and the Memory Verse music if you have it. You might want to make up simple hand motions to teach the children.

**Challenge:** Move like a baby while saying the verse. First, roll over and over and over while saying it, then crawl around while saying it.

Try the challenge again, this time with tomorrow's verse. You may also want to practice the week's theme verse, using the **THEME MEMORY VERSE POSTER** as a reference.

### Part 3: Go and Do

In the remaining time, complete one or more of the following ideas in class. These are also on the *Toddler Student Guides* and can be done at home.

1. Jesus is Creator of the universe. Go on a walk with a grown-up and find at least five things Jesus created. What a wonder!
2. Ask a grown-up who has taken care of babies (maybe even you!) what they needed to do to care for the babies. Isn't it a wonder to think of the care Jesus would have needed as a baby, yet now he cares for you and the entire universe?
3. Thank Jesus for leaving heaven and coming to earth as a person yet still God. Thank him for loving you that much.
4. With someone's help, check [AnswersVBS.com/wonderkids](http://AnswersVBS.com/wonderkids) for more fun information!

Ask yourself this question: What is my favorite part about Jesus' birth?

- Theme and Day 1 Memory Verse Posters
- Optional: Memory Verse music and player
- Optional: Student Guides
- Supplies for "Go and Do" activities



★ The front page of each day's student guide is an overview of today's lesson. The back page matches this section.