

DAY 1

TRUTH: JESUS CAME AS GOD PROMISED

BIBLE STORY

Jesus Was Born
Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:2;
Matthew 1:18–2:6

BIBLE VERSE

You will find Me when you search
for Me.
Jeremiah 29:13 (paraphrase)

TODAY'S POINT

Jesus is the Son God promised.

TEACHER DEVOTION

When my husband and I attended Bible college, we were blessed to travel to Israel with a few of our professors and classmates. I'll never forget the daily experience of "THIS IS REAL" that saturated that trip. Seeing the water lap at my toes along the Sea of Galilee, standing on the Mount of Olives, walking along the pavement in Jerusalem,—the Bible came alive for me. Decades later, those experiences are just as profound. Sadly, we cannot whisk everyone to Israel for the day. However, this year's biblical content is deliberately and carefully crafted to help people of all ages experience the "THIS IS REAL" truth from God's Word.

You will notice that each day's Scripture passages include both Old and New Testament sections. We want learners to discover that there is a solid connection between what God promised in the Old Testament, what Jesus fulfilled in the New Testament, and what we can see today as evidence that it is all true. It really happened!

I want to challenge you to stop right now, open your Bible, and read the passages listed for today (if you haven't already). Did you notice that the Matthew passage quotes the exact Isaiah and Micah verses that are part of the passages for today? In the very first chapter of the New Testament, God shows us the connection of the words written by the prophets hundreds of years before to events as they were happening. When Jesus was born it was on God's timetable and everything happened just as He promised.

An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. Jewish betrothals (or engagements) were as binding as marriage vows, though the couple did not engage in marital relations. They used that time to prepare their household. Joseph was committed to Mary and planned to marry her. It still boggles my mind to think that Joseph accepted the miraculous announcement by the angel. I can only think that when God delivers the unbelievable, He also provides the ability to believe it. Joseph did what

the angel told him. He married Mary and took care of her. A government mandated census prompted Joseph to travel with Mary to Bethlehem, which put them in the exact place prophesied by Micah. In Bethlehem, Jesus was born.

Later, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem. They had seen the star that heralded His birth and came looking for this promised King. King Herod was not happy to hear of a potential threat to his throne. He asked the Jewish chief priests and scribes where the baby would be born. "In Bethlehem," they replied, because they knew what the prophets had said.

This week, may we approach the Bible study with excited and expectant hearts like the wise men. As we connect the dots from the Old Testament to the New Testament that reveal God's amazing truth, may we share that excitement with the ones we teach. This is not just "another Christmas story," it is the moment when Jesus came down from heaven, entered the world as a human baby, and began His mission of being God with Us, our Savior.

FACTS AND ARTIFACTS

In addition to connecting Old Testament prophecies with New Testament fulfillments, this week of VBS links each day to real archaeological finds that further emphasize the reality of what we read in the Bible.

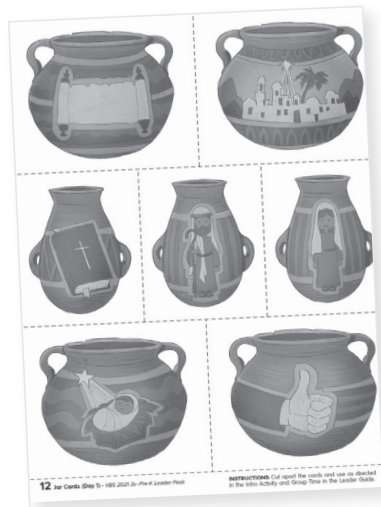
TODAY'S ARTIFACT: QUMRAN JAR

In the late 1940s a shepherd made an exciting discovery, a cave containing what appeared to be ancient scrolls. Others soon began to explore the caves located amid the limestone cliffs along the northwestern rim of the Dead Sea. This amazing collection, known as the "Dead Sea Scrolls," not only includes a few near-complete scrolls, but also tens of thousands of scroll fragments from every book of the Old Testament except for the book of Esther. The collection includes more than 900 different texts in various languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek).

INTRO ACTIVITIES

ROOM PREPARATION

- Prepare pack items 1, 6–10, 11a, and 12–14 according to the instructions printed on each item.
- Attach the “Focal Wall Poster” (pack item 6) to the wall.
- Gather the *VBS 2021 Preschool Activity Book* (005825709) (1 per child)—If it is not possible to provide one for each child, purchase a few for the room to use during VBS.
- See page 46 for a decorating idea that will enhance learning. Place backpacks, shovels, flashlights, and magnifying glasses around the room.



UNDER THE SURFACE

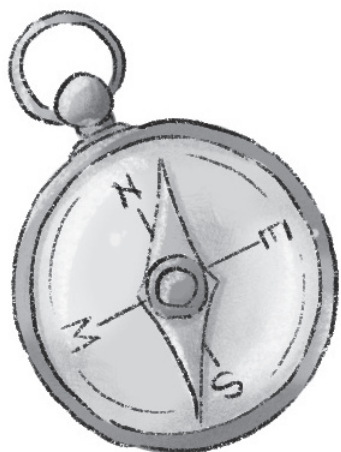
SUPPLIES: “Jar Cards” (pack item 12), large plastic bin filled with sand, 7 craft sticks, scissors, several sets of plastic tongs, 2 colanders, 2 plastic plates, plastic tablecloth

- Before the session, cut one craft stick in half. Discard one half and place the other half in the sand with the remaining six craft sticks.
- Place the plastic tablecloth on the floor.
- Hide the “Jar Cards” in the sand and set the plastic bin on the floor in the middle of the tablecloth.
- Set each colander on a plastic plate. Place the two colanders side by side.
- Invite kids to use tongs to gently sift through the sand.
- Lead kids to pick up the items found and place the “Jar Cards” in one colander and the sticks in the other colander.
- Explain that the pictures on the “Jar Cards” are parts of today’s Bible story.
- Ask kids to look at the pictures and guess the story.
- Set aside the colanders and craft sticks to use in Group Time.

FILL TO THE LINE

SUPPLIES: colored pom-poms (4 colors), 4 plastic jars, painter’s tape, spoons, shoebox

- Before the session, place a different colored pom-pom in the bottom of each plastic jar. Place the remaining pom-poms in the shoebox.
- Place a strip of tape around each jar at different heights.
- Invite kids to use the spoons to place the pom-poms in the correct jar.
- Guide them to place all of one color in each jar.
- Explain that kids should only fill the jar until the pom-poms reach the taped line.
- Comment that jars are one item that are often found at dig sites.
- Share that people use jars every day. Comment one type of jar is for baby food.
- Share that today’s Bible story is about a baby.



TOOLS OF THE TRADE

- Welcome kids to Destination Dig® VBS.
- Share that people who work at dig sites search for things that are old and buried deep in the ground. Hold up a shovel and share that archaeologists, or people who work at dig sites, use shovels to remove dirt.
- Pass the other items around the circle for kids to examine as you explain there are several other tools the workers use.
- Invite kids to stand and pretend to use each tool as they normally would, and then as an archaeologist would.
 - spoon (*to eat—to dig*)
 - paintbrush (*to paint—to brush away dirt*)
 - plastic knife (*to cut—to scrape*)
 - ruler (*used in both to measure*)
 - magnifying glass (*used in both to look at something closely*)
 - trowel (*used in both to dig*)
 - twine (*to tie—place in grids*)

- Comment that during the week kids will learn more about the tools as they unearth and discover truths about Jesus.
- Show kids the jar from the “Artifact Cards” (pack item 9). Explain that in Bible times jars were used to carry water and other things.

INTRODUCE THE BIBLE STORY

- Encourage kids to reach in the sensory box and touch the item.
- Guide kids to guess what they feel.
- Remove the item from the box.
- Lead kids to think of the story they hear every year at Christmas.
- Share that today’s story is about when Jesus was born.

TELL THE BIBLE STORY

- Place the two colanders on the floor.
- Pick up each “Jar Card” as indicated in the parentheses as you tell the story.
- Open the Bible to Matthew 1 and tell the story.

GROUP TIME SUPPLIES

- Bible
- “Bible Story Picture 1” (pack item 1)
- “Focal Wall Poster” (pack item 6)
- “Focal Wall Add-on” (pack item 7)
- “Bible Verse Pieces” (pack item 8)
- “Artifact Cards” (pack item 9)
- “Bible Verse Marker” (pack item 10)—Place in the Bible at Jeremiah 29:13.
- “Day 1 Teacher Tips” (pack item 11a)
- “Jar Cards” (pack item 12)
- VBS 2021 *Preschool Memory Maker* (005826996) with Day 1 tag
- VBS 2021 *Preschool Activity Book* (005825709) (1 per child)
- tools: shovel, spoon, paintbrush, plastic knife, ruler, magnifying glass, trowel, twine
- colorful tissue paper
- large cardboard box—To make a sensory box, see directions on the “Day 1 Teacher Tips.”
- Small Christmas item such as a small tabletop Christmas tree, tinsel, or Christmas ornament—Place the Christmas item inside the sensory box.
- Christmas wrapping paper—Wrap “Bible Story Picture 1” in the wrapping paper. Cut additional 2-by-2-inch squares of the paper (1 per child).
- colanders, craft sticks, and tongs from Intro Activities
- CD and CD player



JESUS WAS BORN

Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:2; Matthew 1:18–2:6

A long time before Jesus was born, a prophet named Isaiah wrote (*scroll*) about God’s plan to send His Son, Jesus. Another prophet named Micah wrote that God’s Son would be born in Bethlehem. (*Bethlehem*) God told

these men what to write and these words are in the Bible. (*Bible*)

Many years later, an angel appeared to Joseph (*Joseph*) in a dream. The angel told Joseph that Mary (*Mary*) would have a baby. The baby would be God’s Son. The angel said they were to name the baby Jesus.

Joseph and Mary had to go to Bethlehem to be registered for taxes. Just as God promised, while they were there, Jesus was born. (*baby Jesus*)

God promised He would send His Son, and He did. God even told where Jesus would be born, and that happened just as He said. Jesus is the Son God promised. When God makes a promise, He keeps it! (*thumbs up*)

GROUP TIME

RECALL THE BIBLE STORY TIP

Consider covering the wrapping paper in clear contact plastic or laminating a page of it before cutting small squares to give to the kids.

MEMORY MAKER

Find more information about the Memory Maker on page 7.

TRANSITION TO BIBLE-LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Explain each activity.
- Invite kids to pretend to use a shovel to dig as they walk to their choice of activity.



RECALL THE BIBLE STORY

- Ask kids to recall the people in today's story.
- Use the seven craft sticks to make a nativity scene. Use two for the walls, two for the roof, one for Joseph, one for Mary, and the half craft stick for baby Jesus.
- Scatter and turn the "Jar Cards" upside down on the floor.
- Invite kids to use a pair of tongs to turn the cards over.
- Encourage kids to recall how the picture or words on the cards relate to the Bible story.
- Display the wrapped "Bible Story Picture 1" and invite kids to predict what might be on the picture.
- Lead kids to gently unwrap the picture.
- Help kids understand that Jesus is the Son God promised.
- Distribute a wrapping paper square to each child. Say: "Today you can take home a piece of this wrapping paper to help you remember our story."
- Lead kids to add the paper to their memory makers.

- Share that we can find and learn things about God when we listen to Bible stories and talk to God.
- Invite (but do not force) kids to pray and thank God for keeping His promise to send His Son.

SING AND MOVE

- Say: "Our Bible verse this week tells us that we can find and know God. Let's sing the verse together."
- Lead kids to stand and sing "You Will Find Me" (track 2).

DISCOVER THE POINT

- Point out the "Focal Wall Poster" and invite a child to lift up the Point for Day 1.
- Invite kids to repeat the Point. Say one word at a time and lead them to repeat it after you.
- Share that God promised to send His Son Jesus and remind kids how He kept His promise.

PUT THE VERSE TOGETHER

- Open the Bible to the marker at Jeremiah 29:13 and read the VBS Bible Verse paraphrase to the kids.
- Display the "Bible Verse Pieces."
- Invite kids to use the tongs to move and put the pieces together.
- Lead kids to say the verse paraphrase together—*You will find Me when you search for Me. Jeremiah 29:13*



MAKE A MEMORY

- Show the Day 1 tag and tell how the picture of the baby can help remind us of baby Jesus in today's Bible story.
- Lead kids to place the tags in their memory maker bags.
- Turn to pages 2–3 in the *VBS 2021 Preschool Activity Book* and invite kids to trace the path from Nazareth to Bethlehem.
- Remind kids that Jesus is the Son God promised.



BIBLE-LEARNING ACTIVITIES

FOSSIL IMPRINTS

SUPPLIES: Bible; “Day 1 Teacher Tips” (pack item 11a); homemade soft dough; variety of baby items such as: rattle, comb, brush, cup, bottle, baby doll, plastic baby food jar and lid; plastic spoons, forks, and knives; rolling pins

- Before the session, follow the instructions on the “Day 1 Teacher Tips” to make the dough.
- Place the dough on the table.
- Invite kids to flatten out a piece of dough and use a baby item to make imprints on it.
- Suggest that kids press the baby food jar around the dough to see how the bottom, sides, and top make an impression in the dough.
- Comment that people who work at dig sites often find old jars in the dirt. Share that the jars make imprints in the sand and dirt, like the imprints made in the dough.
- As kids use the baby items, talk about how Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Comment that baby Jesus was the Son that God promised.
- Share that when God makes a promise, He keeps it!

EXTEND THE ACTIVITY

Lead kids to turn around while a teacher or a child imprints the dough with one item. Ask the rest of the kids to guess which item was used.

★ KID CONNECTION

Jesus is God’s Son.



REHEARSE THE VERSE

SUPPLIES: Bible, “Verse Circles” (pack item 13), paper plates (3), glue, hole punch, yarn, tape

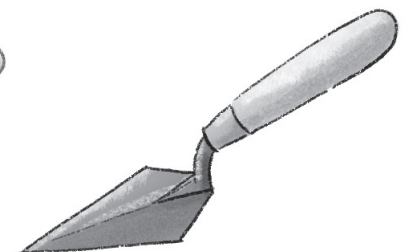
- Before the session, cut out the “Verse Circles” and glue one in the middle of each of the paper plates.
- Punch out eight holes around the plate as indicated by the lines on the circles.
- Cut a 5-foot length of yarn and thread it up through the first hole. Tape the end of the yarn to the back of the plate to secure it in place. Wrap a piece of tape on the other end of the yarn to be used as the “needle.”
- Open the Bible to Jeremiah 29:13 and read the verse or say the paraphrase to the kids.
- Invite kids to count the number of dots and lace the yarn in and out of the holes in order.
- Help kids say each word of the verse paraphrase as they lace around the plates.
- Share how the Bible tells us that we will find God when we look for Him. Explain how that means we can know that God is with us when we need Him.

EXTEND THE ACTIVITY

Provide additional paper plates for kids to print words from the verse or draw something they remember from the Bible story.

★ KID CONNECTION

I can remember that Jesus is the Son God promised.



BIBLE-LEARNING ACTIVITIES

BONUS ACTIVITY

- ❑ Baby dolls
- ❑ Baby items such as a blanket, rocker, diapers, baby clothes
- Encourage kids to take care of baby dolls. Lead kids to pretend to feed the dolls, burp them, and change their clothes.
- Lead a child to sing a lullaby as she pretends to rock the doll to sleep. Talk about how Mary and Joseph took care of Jesus when He was born.

GUESS WHAT TIP

If each child has his own hat or head wrap, attach the card to the hat or wrap.

TRANSITION TO ROTATIONS

- Assist children as they clean up the activity areas.
- Ask kids to line up to take a restroom break.
- Place a teacher at the front and the back of the line for safety.
- Encourage the children to quietly walk in the hall as you travel to each rotation site.
- Take a list of children's names with you for emergency info and check at each rotation to account for each child.



STEP THROUGH THE DIG SITE

SUPPLIES: Bible, “Day 1 Teacher Tips” (pack item 11a), twine, masking tape

- Before the session, set up the dig site as indicated on the “Day 1 Teacher Tips.”
- Invite kids to stand around the edge of the site. Explain that dig sites use grids so people know which area to dig or work in.
- Lead kids to stand in any spot in the grid to begin.
- Explain that you will give them a plan to follow by calling out instructions to move forward, backward, or to the side.
- Guide kids to listen and gently step from grid to grid as you call out one instruction at a time.
- Share that if kids step out of the grid, they can step back in on the next instruction.
- Challenge kids to listen as you call out a longer plan, such as: “Take three steps forward and one step to the side.”
- Comment that just as the grid helps workers plan where to dig, prophets wrote about God’s plan to send His Son.
- Talk about how Jesus was born, just as God planned.

EXTEND THE ACTIVITY

Lead kids to count how many squares are in one row. (6) Ask kids to name that many things they remember from the story.

★ KID CONNECTION

God had a plan for His Son, Jesus.

GUESS WHAT

SUPPLIES: Bible, “Guess What” (pack item 14), tape

- Invite kids to play “Guess What,” a game in which they will guess either an archaeology or baby item.
- Ask one child to stand with his back toward the group.
- Attach one card to the child's back without showing him the picture.
- Lead the child with the card attached to his back to ask questions to try and guess the object.
- Once the object has been guessed, attach a new card to another child's back.
- Play until all of the cards have been guessed.
- Talk about how Jesus was born in Bethlehem and He is God’s Son.



EXTEND THE ACTIVITY

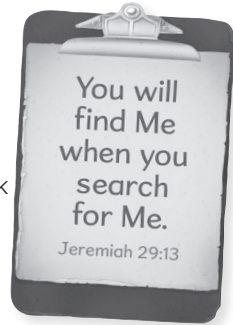
Scatter the cards on the floor and lead kids to sort them into archaeology and baby items.

★ KID CONNECTION

God sent His Son to be born as a baby.

CLOSING GROUP TIME

SUPPLIES: Bible, “Bible Story Picture 1” (pack item 1), “Bible Verse Pieces” (pack item 8), “Bible Verse Marker” (pack item 10), clothespins (1 per child), empty plastic jar, tongs, beanbag, CD and CD player



- Continue until all of the cards have been turned over and put together.
- Invite kids to say the verse together.

READ THE POINT

- Ask one child to point to the Day 1 Point on the “Focal Wall.”
- Remind kids that God promised to send His Son to earth.
- Share that God kept His promise and sent Jesus.

NAME THE FIELD CREW

- Lead kids to sit in a circle.
- Say your name and toss the beanbag to a child.
- Lead him to say his name and toss the beanbag to another child.
- Continue until each child has said his name and tossed the beanbag.
- Play again and call out the name of a child in the circle. Guide him to stand and catch the beanbag.
- Encourage the child to call the name of another child, who will stand and catch the beanbag.
- Invite kids to think of other ways to toss the beanbag as they say the names of the other kids in the circle, such as handing it behind their backs or under their legs.
- Remind kids how Mary and Joseph had a baby and they named Him Jesus.
- Continue to play until parents arrive.

DROP AND TELL

- Distribute a clothespin to each child.
- Ask kids to stand in a line behind the jar.
- Instruct the child at the front of the line to hold the clothespin at his chin when dropping it in the jar.
- Lead the child to name where he was born or where he lives as he lets go of the clothespin and tries to drop it in the jar. Continue the game to until all kids have had a turn.
- Recall how Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

SING AND MOVE

- Invite kids to stand and sing “Destination Dig” (track 1).
- Encourage kids to move as they sing.

LIFT THE VERSE

- Display “Bible Story Picture 1” and talk about how Jesus is the Son God promised.
- Open the Bible to the marker at Jeremiah 29:13 and read the paraphrase.
- Scatter the “Bible Verse Pieces” on the ground.
- Pass the tongs around the circle as you play “Jesus Is Born” (track 3) on the CD.
- Periodically stop the music and ask the child holding the tongs to turn over one of the cards.



PREP STEPS

Place the “Bible Verse Marker” (pack item 10) in the Bible at Jeremiah 29:13.

TIPS FOR DISMISSAL

- Follow your church’s plan for dismissal.
- Place each child’s personal belongings and take-home items near the door.
- Let one teacher greet parents at the door while others continue group time and games with the children.
- Thank the parents for bringing their children to VBS.
- Encourage children to return tomorrow to dig more into the truth of Jesus.