

DAY 1 TRUTH: JESUS CAME AS GOD PROMISED

BIBLE STORY

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

TODAY'S POINT

Jesus is the Savior God promised.

BIBLE VERSE

You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart. *Jeremiah 29:13*

And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. *Jeremiah 29:13 (KJV)*

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.



In this session, you will teach kids about when 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 enraged 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 prophet Micah 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 kids we teach. This is not just “the Christmas story.” This 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).

THINK ABOUT IT:

What are some “THIS IS REAL” moments you have had as you studied God’s Word?

BONUS VERSE

For a child will be born for us, a son will be given to us.
Isaiah 9:6a

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.
Isaiah 9:6a (KJV)

TEACH THE BIBLE STUDY (30 MINUTES)

START IT PREP

- Leader pack items 1, 2, 3
- Cover 10 potato chip cans with brown paper to look like the jars that held the Dead Sea Scrolls.
- Cut apart “Famous Sites” (pack item 3) and place one card inside each potato chip can.
- Yarn

LEARN IT PREP

- Leader pack item 4
- White pieces of paper—Write the following words with white glue (one word per page): *prophets, angel, star, Savior*. Allow the glue to completely dry.
- Crayons with no wrapper
- Small stone
- Potato chip cans from Start It (You will use these again on Day 5.)

START IT (4 MINUTES)

1. As the kids come into the room, lead them to gather around the jars.
2. Say: “Inside these ancient jars you will discover some historic sites that you may recognize.” Choose volunteers to come up one at a time to reveal what is inside each jar. Allow the kids to discuss each site for a moment, sharing what they know about it.
3. Say: “Each one of the places that we’ve discovered today are real places. You could get on a plane and go visit them today.”
4. Separate the cards that show Bible history sites. (Sea of Galilee, Mount Sinai, Jordan River, Egyptian Pyramids) Say: “These sites are special because they are places mentioned in the Bible. The Bible is about real people and real places, and you can even go and visit places where these events in the Bible took place, just like you can go and visit the Grand Canyon.”
5. Say: “Jesus really walked on the earth. He had friends and ate meals and said and did a lot of things while He was here. But did you know that God promised that Jesus would come long before He was born in a manger?”
6. Show the kids the “Destination Dig Banner” (pack item 1). Tape the Day 1 “Banner Add-on” (pack item 2) to the wall and tape a piece of yarn stretching from the add-on to the number 1 on the banner.

LEARN IT (10 MINUTES)

1. Display the “Day 1 Bible Story Picture” (pack item 4).
2. Say: “When archaeologists are working at a dig site, they sometimes discover artifacts with writing on them that is difficult to read. Today we’re going to uncover some mystery words that are hard to make out at first, but they’ll give us hints about today’s Bible story.”
3. Give one of the kids the paper that says “prophets.” Guide him to rub a crayon across the page until the word becomes visible.
4. Ask: “Does anyone know what a prophet is?” (*Someone who got a special message from God and told the people what God said.*)
5. Say: “Prophets wrote about Jesus coming hundreds of years before He arrived. Their books are important, because when the things they wrote came true, it proved that God keeps His promises!”
6. Read the Bible story printed on the back of the “Day 1 Bible Story Picture” (pack item 4). Using the Bible story as a guide, pause before each new section to guide kids to reveal the next three mystery words (*angel, star, Savior*). Ask kids to predict what each word has to do with the next part of the story.

Jesus Was Born


Hundreds of years before Jesus was born, God told prophets about His plan to send His Son to be our Savior. The prophet Isaiah wrote that God's Son would be Immanuel, which means "God with us." The prophet Micah wrote that God's Son would be born in Bethlehem.

Just as God promised, at exactly the right time, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. Joseph was engaged to a young woman named Mary. The angel told Joseph that Mary would have a baby. The baby would be God's Son. They were to name the baby Jesus. Jesus was coming to be the Savior. He would be "God with us."


Joseph did what the angel said. He married Mary and took care of her. They had to go to Bethlehem to be registered for taxes. While they were there, Jesus was born. Some time later, wise men from the east arrived in Jerusalem looking for the baby King. They had seen His star and came to worship Him. King Herod was disturbed by the news. He asked the Jewish chief priests and scribes where the promised Messiah would be born. "In Bethlehem," they told the king, "because that was what was written by the prophet."

God promised He would send His Son, and He did. God even gave details about where Jesus would be born, and they happened just as He said. Jesus is the Savior God promised. When God makes a promise, He keeps it!

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

7.  Ask: "Why did we need God to send a Savior?" (*We are sinners. We disobey God.*)
8. Say: "It's amazing to know that God had a plan from the very beginning to rescue us from our sins."
9. Guide kids to form two groups and give each group a Bible. Ask group one to find Isaiah 7:14 in their Bible and group two to find Micah 5:2. Ask volunteers from each group to read the verses aloud.
10. Say: "These verses were written hundreds of years before Jesus was born. And look at how perfectly they describe how and where He came! One reason we know these verses were written before Jesus' birth is because of archaeologists. (*Archaeologists are people who learn about human history by studying artifacts.*)"
11. Set up the potato chip cans from Start It. Say: "It's believed that a shepherd was the one who discovered some ancient jars in 1947. He was searching for a lost goat when he saw a mysterious cave. He picked up a stone and threw it into the cave, and he heard the sound of pottery breaking!"
12. Give a child a small stone and allow him to try to knock over the potato chip cans.
13. Say: "He had no idea that inside the old jars were fragments of the Bible! And parts of these two books you just read from, Isaiah and Micah, were included in the jars. Archaeologists studied the fragments and figured out that some of them were copied hundreds of years before Jesus was born! This helps to prove that God promised Jesus' birth long before it happened, and it happened exactly as God said!"

SHARING THE GOSPEL

The  identifies an opportune time to share the gospel as led by the Holy Spirit.

TEACH THE BIBLE STUDY (30 MINUTES)

KNOW IT PREP

- Leader pack item 5
- Write the words of Jeremiah 29:13 on a piece of paper and cut the words apart.
- Hide the words around the room.

LIVE IT PREP:

- Cut jar shapes out of heavyweight paper (about 3" tall, one per kid).
- Pens
- VBS 2021 Kids Activity Book*
- VBS 2021 Kids Memory Maker* (005826995)


FINISH IT PREP

- Daily Tag and Logo Tag for Memory Maker
- Option:* Use the Mega Carabiner to gather kids' Memory Makers.

KNOW IT (6 MINUTES)

1. Display the "Jeremiah 29:13 Poster" (pack item 5).
2. Say: "Archaeologists search carefully for clues about the past. Today you are going to be archaeologists, searching for fragments of this week's verse."
3. Guide the kids to search the room for the words. Allow them to use the verse poster to help them piece the verse together.
4. Say: "This week we're going to seek Jesus together."

LIVE IT (8 MINUTES)

1. Give the kids activity books. Allow them to write their names on the covers.
2. Guide them to find the Bible story on page 2. Ask a volunteer to describe what happened in today's story.
3.  Say: "God promised that Jesus would come, and He did. He came just like God said He would. Look at page 3 and work with a partner to write some things God promised about Jesus' coming. Then, write down how God kept those promises."
4. Ask for volunteers to share their answers with the group.
5. Point out the Qumran Scrolls facts and photos.
6. Give each child a jar shape. Lead him to write *God keeps His promises* on the front of the jar and his name on the back, and then ask him to put it in his Memory Maker bag.
7. Say: "Throughout the week you'll be getting some reminders of what we studied. At the end of the week, you can take these home to help you remember all you learned at VBS!"

FINISH IT (2 MINUTES)

1. Give each child a Day 1 Tag to add to her Memory Maker. Give each child a marker and ask her to write her name on her Memory Maker bag.
2. Gather the kids' Memory Makers to save until tomorrow.
3. Encourage the kids to share with someone what they learned today about God's promises.
4. Pray for them as they consider why the baby in a manger really came. Pray that God will open their eyes and ears this week to hear His truth.



USE YOUR HEAD

(Application Activity #1—10 minutes)

Prep

- Leader pack item 6

1. Place the “Use Your Head Game Cards” (pack item 6) in a pile with the archaeological tools facedown.
2. Choose kids to come up one at a time and draw a card. It’s important that they don’t look at the cards. Direct each child to choose a card from the pile and hold it to his forehead so that everyone else can see the archaeological tool.
3. Guide the rest of the kids to describe the tool in a way that helps the player guess what it is.
4. After playing several rounds, say: “Did you notice as we played that each player was relying on your descriptions of the tools? They were counting on you to tell the truth about what was on their cards. That’s exactly what God did through His prophets. He inspired them to write descriptions of Jesus’ birth, and we were blessed to see that their words were true when everything happened just like God said it would. We can count on the Bible!”



Pack Item 6

KID CENSUS

(Application Activity #2—10 minutes)

Prep

- Prepare index cards with the following categories: Name, Boy or Girl, State You Were Born In, Age.

- Cut a piece of brown craft paper into the shape of a stone tablet and tape it to the wall. Write the categories from the index cards on the paper.

1. Say: “Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem to be counted. Each person was required to return to his place of birth to register. This was called a census. It’s believed that the idea of the census has been around for about 6,000 years! Archaeologists believe that as far back as around 4000 BC the Babylonians were recording this type of information on stone tablets.”
2. Give each child an index card and a pen. Say: “Today we’re going to take a census in our group. Fill out the index card with your information and then bring it to the front of the room.”
3. Guide the kids to compile the information from the group, use a marker to write it on the craft paper stone tablet for everyone to see. Ask kids to discuss what they notice about the results.
4. Say: “God’s timing is so perfect that He brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem at just the right time to be counted. He knew that Jesus would be born while they were there, which would fulfill the promise He made to the prophet Micah hundreds of years earlier.”

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY OPTIONS

PASS IT DOWN

(Bible Skills Activity—10 minutes)


Prep

- Leader Pack Item 5
 - Write the words of Jeremiah 29:13 on index cards, one word per card. Attach the words in order to a foam board or poster board using sticky tack.
1. Display “Jeremiah 29:13” (pack item 5). Lead the kids in saying the verse together.
 2. Guide kids to place their chairs in a circle. Hand one child a Bible.
 3. Say: “The Bible has been preserved and passed down to us through hundreds of generations. Imagine how much time and determination it must have taken for people to hand copy the Bible over and over again. God made sure that His Word would reach us so that we could know Him.”
 4. Say: “Today we’re going to pass the Bible! I am going to remove one word from our theme verse. If the Bible stops on you, you have until it comes around the circle again to tell me which word is missing from the verse.”
 5. Turn the foam board around while you remove a word from the verse.
 6. Say: “Go!” and allow the Bible to make a full turn around the circle. Say: “Stop!” The child holding the Bible is the guesser. Say, “Go!” again to start the Bible around the circle. The child has until the Bible reaches him again to name the missing word.
 7. *Option:* Offer a small prize to kids who can say the word in time.

SHINE-A-PENNY

(Bonus Verse Activity—10 minutes)

Prep

- Leader Pack Item 7
 - A dirty old penny for each child
 - White vinegar
 - Salt
 - Small plastic cups
 - Plastic spoons
 - Water
 - Paper towels
1. Display the “Isaiah 9:6a Poster” (pack item 7).
 2. Give each child a penny, two plastic cups, a plastic spoon, and a paper towel.
 3. In one cup, add 4 T of white vinegar and 1 T of salt. In the other cup, add 2 T of water.
 4. Say: “Archaeologists sometimes find coins at dig sites. They can learn a lot about a culture by studying its money. But ancient money has usually been buried for a long time, so they have to clean it up before they can get clues about the people who made it.”
 5. Guide the kids to drop their dirty pennies into the vinegar/salt solution. Allow them to use their spoons to move the coins around gently. After a few moments, ask the kids to use their spoons to move the coins to the water cups. Then lead them to shine the coins with paper towels.
 6. Say: “Imagine an archaeologist dug up your coin thousands of years from now. What do you think she could learn about us?” (*Some of our leaders, national monuments, the date the coin was made, “In God we trust.”*)
 7. Refer to Isaiah 9:6a. Say: “What do you think Isaiah means when he says that Jesus was born ‘for us’?”
 8.  Explain that Jesus came because we are sinners. We are stained with sin just like our dirty pennies, but Jesus came for us, to give us His perfect life. The Bible tells us that when we trust in what Jesus has done for us, we get a new life, and He erases the stain of sin forever. He makes us shiny and new!