

The Birth of Jesus

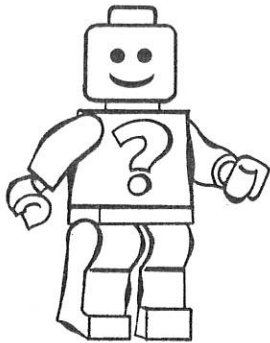
Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 2:1-20

Welcome the Group

Lay the Foundation

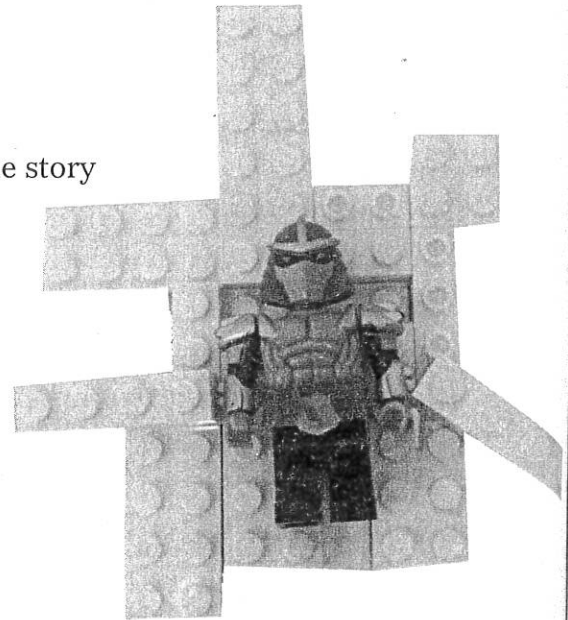
- *Where is this story found in the Bible?*
New Testament
- *What is its place in the Bible story?*
after Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem; before the flight into Egypt
- *Who is the author?*
Matthew and Luke
- *Who are the main characters?*
Jesus, Mary, Joseph, angels, shepherds, and God
- *Where in the biblical world did it happen?*
Bethlehem
- *Where is this in today's world?*
Bethlehem, West Bank

Find the full description of *Lay the Foundation* on page 15.



Did You Know?

- ✓ Only two of the four gospel writers detail the story of Jesus' birth (*Matthew and Luke*).
- ✓ The word *nativity* means the birth of someone.
- ✓ Jesus was from the family of King David.
- ✓ Jesus' name comes from the root words meaning "to rescue/deliver."
- ✓ Another name of Jesus is *Emmanuel*, which means "God is with us."



Pray

Dear God, come into our hearts with hope and joy. Let us always remember that Jesus is our greatest gift. Amen.

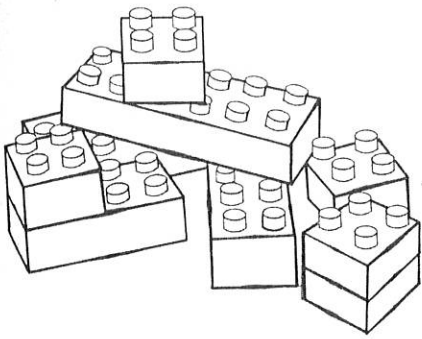
Suggested prayer methods are outlined on page 15.

Share the Story

Suggestions for storytelling are detailed on page 16.

Respond to the Story

Invite each member of the group to use bricks and figures to respond to the story. This can be done individually or in small groups. Suggestions for how to support this form of theological reflection can be found on page 16.



Ask Building Questions

- I wonder what you know about the birth of Jesus?
- I wonder if you have ever been close to a tiny baby?
- I wonder why God chose to send Jesus as a baby instead of as an adult?
- I wonder if you have more than one name?
- I wonder if you have ever been counted in a census?
- I wonder if you have ever been on a long trip?
- I wonder if you have ever had a hard time finding a place to sleep?
- I wonder what your parents thought about when you were born?
- I wonder what God was thinking on the day you were born?
- I wonder if you have ever seen an angel?
- I wonder if God has ever told you good news?
- I wonder what the shepherds thought when they met Jesus?
- I wonder what the world would be like without Jesus?
- I wonder if you have special ways to remember the birth of Jesus?
- I wonder if you have witnessed a sign from God?

Suggest Blueprints *(if needed)*

- Emperor Augustus
- Mary
- Joseph
- Jesus
- inn keepers
- shepherds
- angels
- Bethlehem
- stable
- star
- animals
- God

Share Responses to the Story

Encourage each group member to share the creations they have made in response to the story. More details about sharing can be found on page 17.

Share a Snack

- star cookies
- angel cookies
- for longer snack time, gingerbread “mangers” or “barns”

Continue the Story

One way to deepen the learning experience and create a link between group learning and faith formation in the home is to have builders show their creations to the adults who pick them up after class.

For additional study and conversation at home, consider different ways to share the Bible verses as well as some of the *Building Questions*. Possible methods of communication are texts, social media, e-blasts, website posts, or take-home sheets.

