

# ***Discover!* Kindergarten Bible Story Booklet**

## Mary Says Yes to God



A long time ago, in a town called Nazareth, lived a young woman named Mary. She was very good and very holy. She loved God very much. One day, God sent an angel to visit her. The angel had an important message for her. The angel said,

“God has chosen you to be the mother of his Son. You will give birth to a baby and name him Jesus.”

He will be called the Son of God. He will be the king of a kingdom that will never end!”

Mary said, “Yes! I am the servant of the Lord. May this happen to me, just as you have told me.”

And the angel left.

Based on **Luke 1:30-33, 38**

# The Angel Gabriel

Color this picture of the angel Gabriel.





## Jesus Is Born



A long time ago, an emperor named Caesar Augustus wanted to count all the people in his kingdom, so Joseph and Mary had to travel to Bethlehem, which was Joseph's hometown.

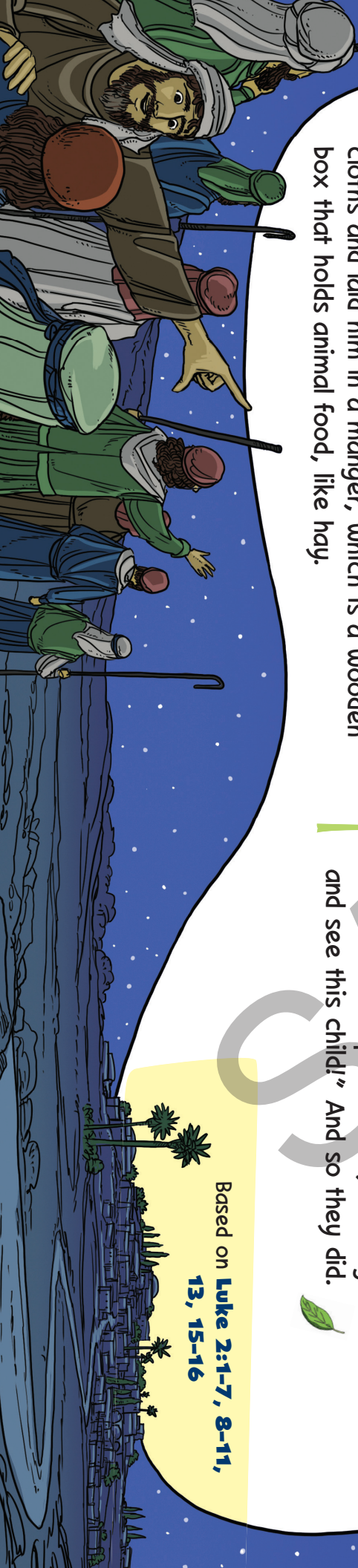
Mary was about to give birth to Jesus, so Mary and Joseph looked for a place to stay in Bethlehem. No rooms were available, but an innkeeper offered them a stable, where animals are kept. And there, in the stable, Jesus was born. Mary wrapped him in clean cloths and laid him in a manger, which is a wooden box that holds animal food, like hay.

Meanwhile, shepherds were watching their sheep by night. An angel appeared to the shepherds. They were very afraid at first! But the angel said to them: "Don't be afraid! I have good news! It will bring joy to all people! This very day, in Bethlehem, Christ the Lord is born!"

Suddenly the sky filled with angels, all singing praises to God.

One of the shepherds said, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this child!" And so they did.

Based on **Luke 2:1-7, 8-11,**  
**13, 15-16**





# The Story of Jesus' Birth

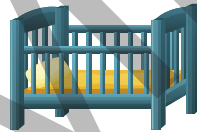
1. Circle the way Joseph and Mary might have traveled to Bethlehem.



2. Circle the person who helped Mary and Joseph find a place to stay.



3. Circle the place where Jesus was laid.



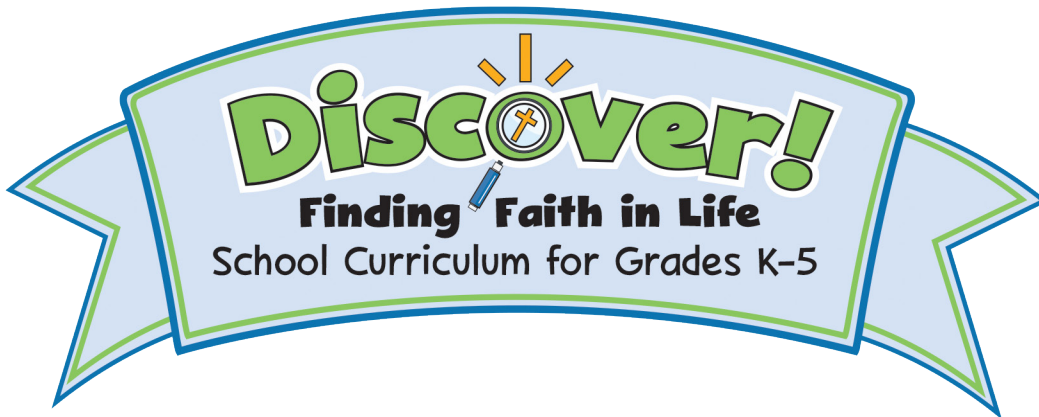
4. Circle the group who heard the news of Jesus' birth first.



5. Circle the group who sang praises to God.



Answers: 1. donkey; 2. innkeeper; 3. manger; 4. shepherds; 5. angels



# ***Discover!* Kindergarten Teacher Guide**



# Discover!

**Finding Faith in Life**

## Teacher Guide



### **Don't Miss This!**

Handouts and other teaching resources  
are available online at  
[www.smp.org/discover\\_kinderschool](http://www.smp.org/discover_kinderschool).



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# Welcome

**Welcome to *Discover! Finding Faith in Life*.** This exciting program is designed to help children fully engage in the process of discovering and growing in the richness of their Catholic faith, making deep faith a central part of their everyday lives.

The lessons within are designed to foster a clear understanding of the concepts presented through an active-learning approach. This method brings lessons to life in a fun and memorable way through experiential and interactive processes. Core principles of faith are introduced in a manner that allows children to discover meaning and develop understanding while being immersed in solid Catholic teaching and in the prayers and practices that build Catholic identity.

Scripture stories are at the center of this program, rooting the key concepts of each chapter throughout the series to important Scripture passages. This promotes biblical literacy and an in-depth familiarity and knowledge of key Scripture stories throughout the Old and New Testaments, as well as their meaning for us today.

*Discover! Finding Faith in Life* is a program like no other. We are confident that by using this program, you will experience faith coming to life for children in an exciting way. May we all continue to discover more deeply the riches of our Catholic faith and so help others find the saving message of the Good News at the center of their lives.

With hopes and prayers for every blessing,

The Publishing Team at Saint Mary's Press



# Program Highlights

## **Scripture Stories Are Central**

*Discover! Finding Faith in Life* immerses the children in Scripture by anchoring each lesson to a particular Scripture story. This unique feature promotes biblical literacy and an in-depth familiarity with and knowledge of key Scripture stories.

## **Based on Principles of Engaged, Active Learning**

The lessons are designed to foster a deep understanding of the concepts presented through an active-learning approach. Experiential and interactive processes create energy and excitement for both the catechist and the children, and activities and activity options throughout the program help catechists build a meaningful lesson in a creative and fun way.

## **Child-Centered Design**

Information and activities are presented using the language and experiences of the child to create an environment for real, engaged learning. The program relays core information through activities and discussions that will make sense to the learners in their everyday lives, thus conveying deep meaning and touching their hearts and minds in a significant way.

## **Rooted in a “Discover” Approach**

The name of this program speaks to an energy and excitement that are infused in the learning process designed for this guide. The content helps the children make connections with previous experiences and knowledge and invites them to deepen both as they discover new concepts and practices in the Catholic Tradition. Core concepts are structured in such a way that the children can discover meaning for themselves while being immersed in solid Catholic teaching and exposed to the prayers and practices that build Catholic identity.

## **Clear and Practical Structure**

Each grade level is structured in the same manner: four units with five chapters in each unit. Each grade has twenty core chapters plus eight liturgical season lessons, which can be incorporated into the flow of the year according to each particular program’s schedule and needs.

Of the five chapters in each unit, four of them focus on the four pillars of the *Catechism*. A fifth chapter introduces a foundational concept related to one of the seven Catholic social teaching principles.

The unit structure for all grades is as follows:

First chapter	<b>Believe</b> (First <i>Catechism</i> pillar)
Second chapter	<b>Celebrate</b> (Second <i>Catechism</i> pillar)
Third chapter	<b>Live</b> (Third <i>Catechism</i> pillar)
Fourth chapter	<b>Live: Catholic Social Teaching</b> (Third <i>Catechism</i> pillar / Catholic social teaching)
Fifth chapter	<b>Pray</b> (Fourth <i>Catechism</i> pillar)

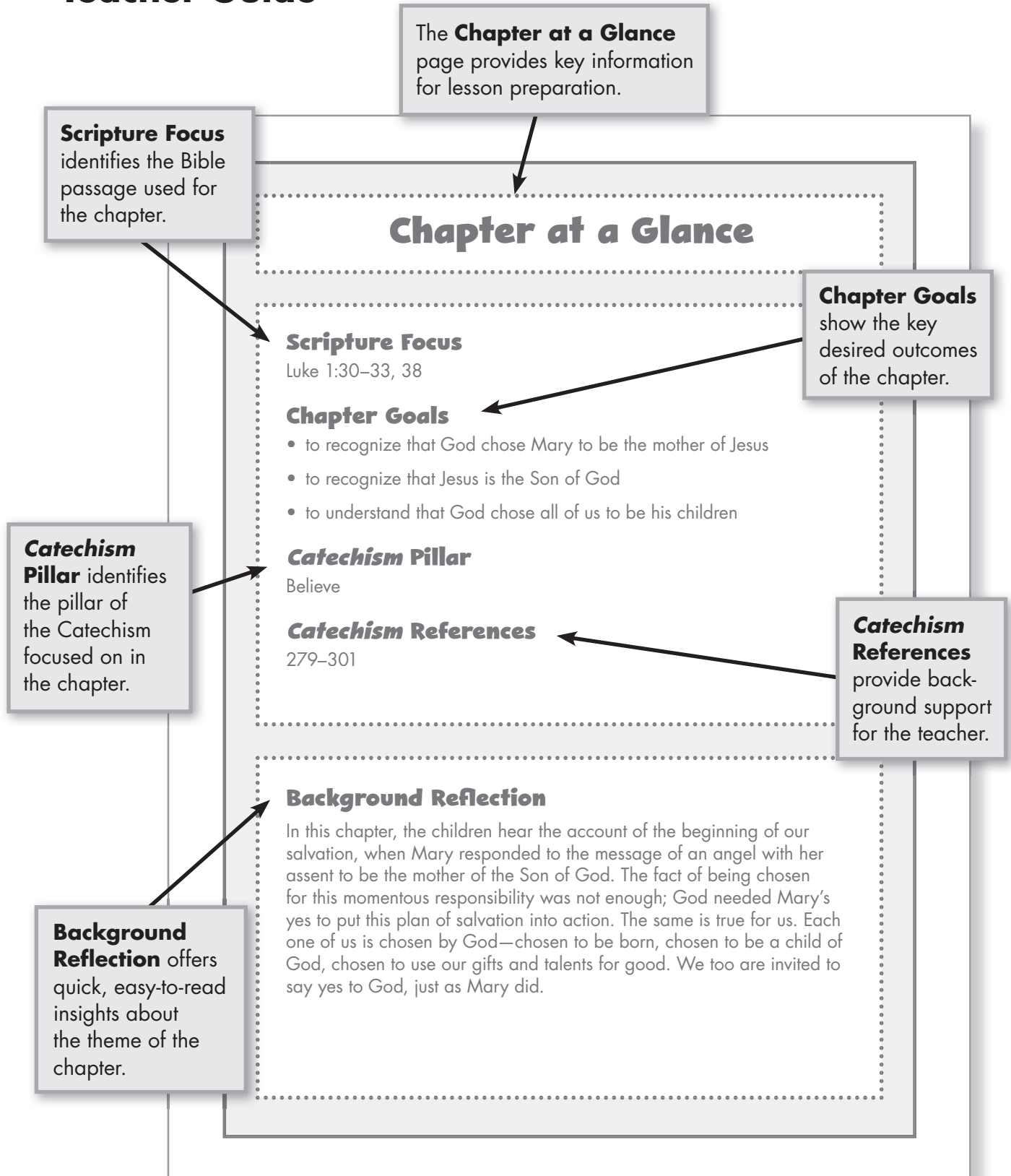
## Family Support

The program is designed to extend beyond the classroom and into the home. Each lesson includes a family page that helps families follow along with the Scripture story and the core concepts presented in the current lesson.\*

\*Spanish versions of all family pages are available online at [www.smp.org/discover\\_kinder-school](http://www.smp.org/discover_kinder-school).

# Understanding the Components

## Teacher Guide





The **Day 1—Get Ready!** lesson begins with an optional Bible procession, a question or two that will spark interest and curiosity in the children, and some initial predictions about the Bible story.



**Day 1—Get Ready!**

**Materials Needed**

- a classroom Bible *(optional)*
- a large bookmark or ribbon *(optional)*
- a designated prayer table or Bible stand *(optional)*
- recorded music and appropriate equipment for playing it *(optional)*
- the chapter 1 child's page, removed from each Bible story booklet
- a statue or picture of Mary, Mother of God

**Opening Prayer**

- Take time to review how to make the Sign of the Cross.
- Ask the children to repeat each phrase after you, and then demonstrate the hand gesture that goes with each phrase.
- Accept their efforts at this point. Refinements will come later, after you reinforce this during each session.

**Bible Procession (optional)**

- Prepare by placing a bookmark or ribbon in the Bible at Luke 1:30–33, 38.
- Explain to the children that they will begin the new week and the new Bible story by having a Bible procession, which will involve processing, or walking, with the Bible to the prayer space. Remind them that we give special honor to the Bible because it is God's message of love to us.
- Invite the children to gather at the back of the room. Arrange them in one or two lines as appropriate. Begin playing music if desired.
- Lead the children to the prayer space, carrying the closed Bible with two hands at waist level with the front cover facing forward. (You may choose to designate one child to carry the Bible in this way.)

The **Day 2— Dive In!** lesson invites the children to engage with the Bible story and to learn core teaching points.



**Day 2 - Dive In!**

**Materials Needed**

- the chapter 2 child's page, one for each child
- a manger scene, preferably in the prayer corner, with a figure of the infant Jesus in the manger

**Opening Prayer**

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Pray this short prayer:
  - Dear God, thank you for bringing us together to learn more about the birth of Jesus. Amen.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

**Engage**

- Distribute the child's page, and ask the children to turn to the side where the Bible story appears.
- Invite them to review the pictures to consider what the Bible story might be about.
- Ask them to put their finger on the angel in the picture, and then to put their finger on the shepherds.



**Bible Story**

- Read the Bible story to the children slowly, stopping briefly after each sentence. If the children are readers, invite them to follow along. If not, invite them to look at the main picture as you read.
- Collect the child's page for use on day 4.

**This Chapter's Bible Story**

**Jesus Is Born**

A long time ago, an emperor named Caesar Augustus wanted to count all the people in his kingdom, so Joseph and Mary had to travel to Bethlehem, which was Joseph's hometown.

Mary was about to give birth to Jesus, so Mary and Joseph looked for a place to stay in Bethlehem. No rooms were available, but an innkeeper offered them a stable, where animals are kept. And there, in the stable, Jesus

*(continued on next page)*

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Ask the children  
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t something

The **Day 3— Discover!** lesson reinforces key concepts through a learning activity.

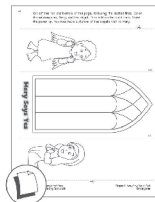
**Day 3—Discover!**

- Materials Needed**
- copies of the handout “Mary Says Yes,” on page 42 of the teacher guide, one for each child
  - scissors, one pair for each child

- Opening Prayer**
- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
  - Continue with this prayer:
    - Mary, our Mother, help us say yes to God, as you did. Amen.
  - End with the Sign of the Cross.

- Engage**
- Begin with a brief review of the Bible story or a few key points from the core teaching on day 2.
  - Invite the children to retell the Bible story to the best of their recollection, and then continue with the following points:
    - In the Bible story, we heard about the visit of an angel to a young woman named Mary. Who sent the angel to visit Mary? (*God*)
    - What was the angel’s message to Mary? (*God has chosen you to be the mother of his Son.*)
    - What was Mary’s answer to the angel? (*Yes!*)

- Learning Activity**
- Mary and the Angel**
- Distribute the handout and scissors. Invite the children to cut along the dashed lines. Be ready to assist children who may need extra help cutting.
  - Ask the children to color in the pictures of the windowpane, the angel, and Mary.
  - Show the children the solid fold lines on the handout, and demonstrate how to fold the handout so that it will stand.
  - Help the children fold their handout, even if they have not finished coloring.
  - Assure the children that they can finish coloring their handout when they get home.
  - Remind the children to stand the picture on their dresser or in another place in their home.
  - Explain that the picture will remind them to ask Mary to bless them and their family.



Also available at [www.smp.org/discover\\_kinderschool](http://www.smp.org/discover_kinderschool)

- Additional Activity Options**
- If this learning activity would not work w choose to use any of the additional activ guide in its place.

- Closing Prayer**
- End the lesson by leading the children
  - Invite them to fold their hands, close th hearts. Then pray this short prayer:
    - Dear God, we know you chose Ma We know you chose us to be your Mary did. Amen.
  - Close with the Sign of the Cross.

**Day 4—Go!**

- Materials Needed**
- the chapter 1 child’s page, one for each child
  - copies of the chapter 1 family page, on page 43 of the teacher guide, one for each child

- Opening Prayer**
- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
  - Continue with this prayer:
    - Mary, our Mother, help us say yes to God as you did. Amen.
  - End with the Sign of the Cross.

- Engage**
- Begin with a brief review of the learning activity from day 3.
  - Invite the children to share what they remember from the activity and what they might have learned. Then continue with the following points:
    - In the last lesson, we made a picture of Mary and the angel talking together. We talked about the conversation Mary had with the angel.
    - What did the angel tell Mary? (*that God had chosen her to be the mother of his Son*)
    - What did Mary say to the angel? (*Mary said yes!*)

The **Day 4— Go!** lesson invites the children to hear the Bible story again, complete an activity, and recall everything they have learned throughout the chapter.

Mary Says Yes to God 39

**Family Page**

Handwriting the page: \_\_\_\_\_

Family member: \_\_\_\_\_

Handwriting the page: \_\_\_\_\_

Family member: \_\_\_\_\_

Also available in full color in both English and Spanish at [www.smp.org/discover\\_kinderschool](http://www.smp.org/discover_kinderschool)

- Distribute the family page, and encourage the children to share it at home. You may want to staple the child's page and the family page together as the children are getting ready to leave.

**Closing Prayer**

- End the lesson by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Invite them to fold their hands, close their eyes, and open their ears and their hearts. Then pray this short prayer:
  - > Dear God, we know you chose Mary to be the mother of your Son, Jesus. We know you chose us to be your children. Help us say yes to you, like Mary did. Amen.
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.

**Day 5—Discover More! (optional)**

The following suggestions can be used alone or in combination to create an additional lesson for day 5. Choose the suggestions that best fit with your particular schedule or any specific objectives you might have.

**Artistic Reflection**

Encourage the children to share significant learnings or key points through art, skills, or other forms of creative expression.

**Child's Page Activity**

If the children did not complete their child's page activity on day 4, instead of sending it home that day, use day 5 to have them complete it.

**Additional Activity Options**

Use any of the additional activity ideas on page 40 to reinforce the core learning goals of the chapter.

**Liturgical Readings**

Read through the Gospel for the upcoming session. The readings can be found by using the calendar on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' website ([usccb.org](http://usccb.org)). Invite the children to share a message. You do not need to provide lengthy readings; rather, encourage the children to open their hearts and hearts. If time is short, encourage the children to open their hearts by saying to them. Use this as a time for prayer.

The **Day 5—Discover More!** lesson is offered for schools that have five rather than four days for religion class. Options for extending the chapter to a fifth day are included here. These ideas can also be used as extension activities on other days during the week.

40 Unit 1: We Meet Jesus

Chapter 1

**Activity Ideas**

**Materials Needed**

- none

**Conversation: Talking and Listening**

- Introduce this activity as a game of talking and listening.
- Explain that you will call on several children and ask them a question.
- Encourage the group to listen carefully to the answers.
- Announce a simple question to the group, like, "What will you do after our session today?"
- Call on someone to answer the question. Remind the group to listen carefully to their answer.
- Try this format:
  - > Johnny, what will you do after our session today? (*My mom is taking me to the park.*)
  - > Johnny is going to the park after our session today!
  - > Sally, what will you do after our session today? (*I will go home and eat lunch.*)
  - > Did everyone listen to Johnny and Sally? What will Johnny do after our session today? (*He will go to the park.*) What will Sally do after our session today? (*She will go home and eat lunch.*)
- Continue in this way until several children have answered a question.
- Repeat as time permits, announcing another simple question. Here are a few sample questions:
  - What do you do after you get up in the morning?
  - What is your favorite thing to do on Saturdays?
  - What is your favorite food?
- Review each question and answer briefly to help the children remember the answers.
- Congratulate the children on being good talkers and good listeners!

The **Activity Ideas** are options for the learning activity that is part of the day 3 lesson. These may also be used to extend or supplement the lessons as needed.

The **Family Page** for each chapter in the program offers ideas for bringing the lesson to life at home. Full-color versions and Spanish versions of all family pages are available online at [www.smp.org/discover\\_kindergarten\\_s](http://www.smp.org/discover_kindergarten_s).

## Family Page

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### Understanding the Scripture

In this Bible story, Mary was just a teenager when the angel Gabriel appeared to her. He told her that God chose her to be the mother of Jesus, his Son. He told her that Jesus would be a great king. His Kingdom would last forever.

This was a great responsibility for Mary to accept. She did not understand how it could even happen. But Mary knew that God was good and loving. Calling herself God's servant, Mary put herself in his hands and said, "Yes." Because Mary trusted God, Jesus came to Earth and saved us all. When we say yes to God like Mary did, we can also expect good things to happen. We celebrate Mary's yes to God on the Feast of the Annunciation, March 25.

### Your Growing Child

In conversations, both talking and listening are important. It is important to talk with your child to share information and ideas with them. It is also important to listen to your child, to help them share their own thoughts and ideas.

Sometimes you may feel that your child is not listening. It is important for your child to know when they must take special care to listen. Use a statement like, "This is really important and you need to listen." Then have them repeat back what you just said. Thank your child for listening, and underline your request by repeating, "This is really important."

### Family Activities

- Read together the Bible story from today's lesson, "Mary Says Yes to God." Ask your child to retell the story in their own words.
- The next time you are in church, take extra time to visit the Mary altar. You may want to pray a "Hail Mary" aloud and take a minute of quiet time together. You may also want to make a quick tour of the church to find other images of Mary in the windows or in other statues.
- Search online for images of "Mary, Mother of Jesus." Enjoy looking at the results with your child. Find one or two pictures that are appealing. If possible, print them and hang them in your child's room.

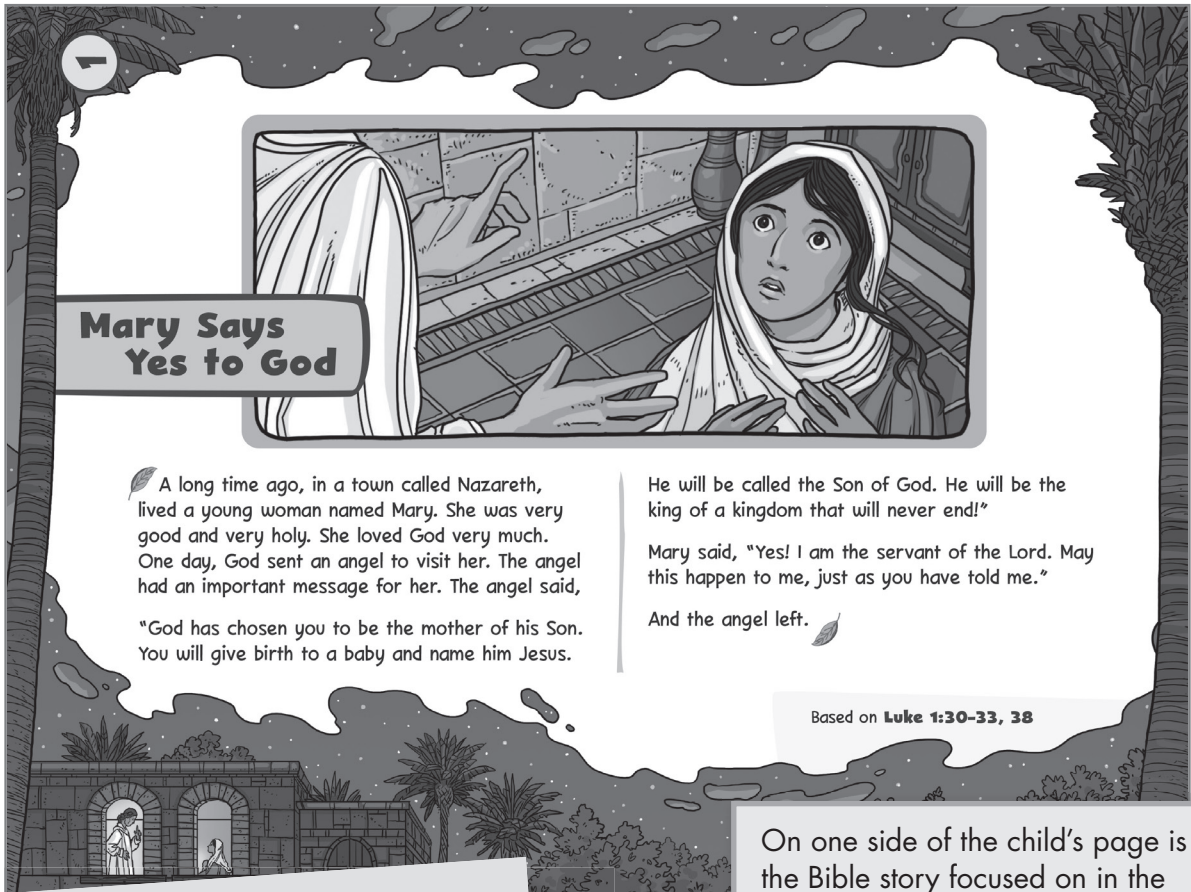
### Prayer

*Pray this prayer together as a family, beginning and ending with the Sign of the Cross:*

Loving God, you chose Mary to be the mother of Jesus. Help us become who you want us to be as we say yes to you in faith and love. We ask this in your name. Amen.



# Child's Page from the Bible Story Booklet



## Mary Says Yes to God

A long time ago, in a town called Nazareth, lived a young woman named Mary. She was very good and very holy. She loved God very much. One day, God sent an angel to visit her. The angel had an important message for her. The angel said, "God has chosen you to be the mother of his Son. You will give birth to a baby and name him Jesus.

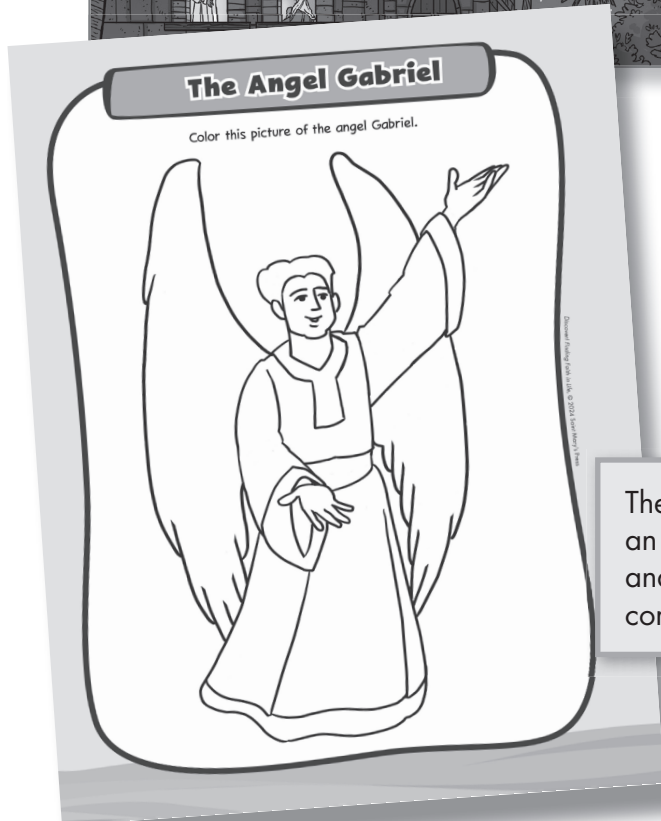
He will be called the Son of God. He will be the king of a kingdom that will never end!"

Mary said, "Yes! I am the servant of the Lord. May this happen to me, just as you have told me."

And the angel left.

Based on **Luke 1:30-33, 38**

On one side of the child's page is the Bible story focused on in the chapter. It includes beautiful imagery to create interest and a paraphrase of the Bible story that can be read to children.



The other side of the child's page is an activity related to the Bible story and chapter. This activity can be completed in class or at home.

# Key Elements of the Program

## Teacher Guide

Each chapter in this guide follows the same overall structure and timing. It will be important to assess the time frames according to your unique group makeup and time parameters. Some activities may take longer for some groups than others. Reading through each lesson will guide you in making the necessary adjustments to ensure success in your particular setting. The structure is presented as follows:



### Day 1—Get Ready!

- Opening Prayer
- Bible Procession (optional)
- Engage
- Bible Story Preview
- Closing Prayer



### Day 4—Go!

- Opening Prayer
- Engage
- Bible Story
- Child's Page Activity
- Chapter Wrap-Up
- Closing Prayer



### Day 2—Dive In!

- Opening Prayer
- Engage
- Bible Story
- Core Teaching
- Closing Prayer



### Day 5—Discover More! (optional)

- Artistic Reflection
- Child's Page Activity
- Additional Activity Options
- Liturgical Readings



### Day 3—Discover!

- Opening Prayer
- Engage
- Learning Activity
- Closing Prayer

## Day 1—Get Ready!

This day's lesson begins with an optional Bible procession. Then the children are asked a question that lays the foundation for the chapter. This engages the children and prompts simple discussion around concepts the children will be familiar with and connects those concepts with content the children will be learning in the chapter. The children will then look at some of the imagery surrounding the Bible story for the chapter.

## **Day 2— Dive In!**

This day's lesson immerses the children in the chapter's Bible story, using the child's page from the Bible story booklet. It encourages the children to review the images related to the Bible story. Then it involves reading the Bible story to the children. All Bible stories have been paraphrased using language that is friendly to kindergarten-age children. The core teaching part of the lesson presents essential content to be shared with the children and questions to ask to assess comprehension.

## **Day 3—Discover!**

This day's lesson invites the children to participate in a learning activity. This activity provides a creative and active way to reinforce important concepts learned in the Bible story and through the core teaching points. Frequently, this is an out-of-the-seat activity that creates energy and excitement while helping the children further explore concepts related to the chapter.

## **Day 4—Go!**

This day's lesson wraps up the chapter through a rereading of the Bible story, the child's page activity, and a final check and recall of the core chapter goals. Preparations are made for sending the family page home, which supports adults in understanding and reinforcing concepts learned in the classroom. The child's page also goes home so that the family can reread the Bible story, and the child can complete any unfinished activity.

## **Day 5—Discover More! (optional)**

If your school offers religion class five days a week, ideas are presented in this section for a fifth lesson. If your school has religion class four days a week, the ideas offered on day 5 can be used as supplementary activities on any of the other days.

## **Bible Story Booklets**

The Bible story booklets contain the child's pages for each of the 28 lessons in Discover! Finding Faith in Life. One side of the page presents the Bible story for the chapter with inviting illustrations. The Bible story text is included on the page so it can be read by teachers, caregivers, and children who can read. The other side of the page includes an activity related to the Bible story and chapter content. This can be completed together during class or at home, depending on time availability. Each page is perforated for easy removal and use in the chapter or at home.

## **Handouts**

Some chapters include additional handouts for the lesson. These handouts can be accessed in two different ways:

1. They can be found at the end of the chapter in the teacher guide.
2. They can be accessed as part of the online teaching resources for this grade at [www.smp.org/discover\\_kinderschool](http://www.smp.org/discover_kinderschool).

# Kindergarten

## Scope and Sequence

<b>Unit 1: We Meet Jesus</b>					
<b>Chapter Number and Title</b>	<b>1. Mary Says Yes to God</b>	<b>2. Jesus Is Born</b>	<b>3. The Wise Men Visit Jesus</b>	<b>4. Joseph Protects Jesus and Mary</b>	<b>5. Jesus Is Lost and Found</b>
<b>Catechism Pillar</b>	Believe	Celebrate	Live	Live: Catholic Social Teaching	Pray
<b>Catechism References</b>	279–301	456–460 477–478 527–530	528	1905–1912	2738–2745
<b>Chapter Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to recognize that God chose Mary to be the mother of Jesus</li> <li>to recognize that Jesus is the Son of God</li> <li>to understand that God chose all of us to be his children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to understand that angels told the shepherds about Jesus</li> <li>to recognize that Jesus, Mary, and Joseph were poor</li> <li>to know that Jesus loves us and shows us God's love</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to recognize that Wise Men visited Jesus after his birth</li> <li>to understand that the Wise Men brought gifts to Jesus</li> <li>to realize that we can give gifts to Jesus through sharing kindness and love</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to understand that Joseph took care of Jesus and Mary</li> <li>to know that Joseph is holy because he listened to God</li> <li>to recognize that we can pray for those who must leave their homes in times of emergency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to understand that Jesus was lost but was found with the teachers</li> <li>to realize that Jesus obeyed Joseph and Mary after he was found</li> <li>to recognize that we can pray anywhere</li> </ul>
<b>Scripture</b>	Luke 1:30–33, 38	Luke 2:1–7, 8–11, 13, 15–16	Matthew 2:9–12	Matthew 2:13–14, 19–23	Luke 2:41–52



<b>Unit 2: Jesus Grows Up</b>					
<b>Chapter Number and Title</b>	<b>6. John the Baptist Prepares for Jesus</b>	<b>7. Jesus Is Baptized</b>	<b>8. Jesus Is a Great Leader</b>	<b>9. Jesus Tells Stories to Help Us</b>	<b>10. Jesus Welcomes Children</b>
<b>Catechism Pillar</b>	Believe	Celebrate	Live	Live: Catholic Social Teaching	Pray
<b>Catechism References</b>	522–524	535–537 694 1131 1210–1216 1224	858–860 2600	546 1163–1171	544 561 699
<b>Chapter Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to learn that John the Baptist prepared people for Jesus</li> <li>to understand that John the Baptist baptized in a river, but we are baptized in a church</li> <li>to describe ways we can get our hearts and minds ready for Jesus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to understand that Jesus was baptized to obey God and to show his love for God</li> <li>to know that when we are baptized, we are welcomed into God’s family, the Church</li> <li>to recognize that Baptism is a reason for celebration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to discover that John the Baptist’s followers were looking for a great leader</li> <li>to understand that we are followers of Jesus</li> <li>to learn that curiosity is a gift that helps us as followers of Jesus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to recognize that Jesus told stories to teach us</li> <li>to understand that stories can help us learn important things</li> <li>to recall that the story of the helpful stranger teaches us to love and care for one another</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to identify that Jesus welcomed little children and made them feel important</li> <li>to learn that Jesus blessed, or prayed for, the children</li> <li>to understand that we can pray to Jesus because he loves us</li> </ul>
<b>Scripture</b>	Mark 1:4–8	Matthew 3:13–17	John 1:35–41	Luke 10:29–30, 33–35	Matthew 19:13–15

<b>Unit 3: Jesus Teaches Us</b>					
<b>Chapter Number and Title</b>	<b>11. Jesus Teaches Us about Our Hearts</b>	<b>12. Jesus Teaches Us That God Forgives</b>	<b>13. Jesus Teaches Us How to Be Happy</b>	<b>14. Jesus Teaches Us to Love God and Others</b>	<b>15. Jesus Teaches Us to Pray</b>
<b>Catechism Pillar</b>	Believe	Celebrate	Live	Live: Catholic Social Teaching	Pray
<b>Catechism References</b>	74–141 1100–1101	976–987	1026–1029 2012–2016	2055 2083 2196	2564–2565 2664 2792–2793
<b>Chapter Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to understand that people’s hearts can be like different kinds of soil</li> <li>to recognize that the “seed” is God’s Word or God’s message</li> <li>to realize that our hearts can be “good soil” for God’s seed, the Word of God</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to recall key elements of the story of the son and the father</li> <li>to realize that the boy’s father forgave him</li> <li>to understand that God is our Father and forgives us</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to realize that Jesus wants us to be happy</li> <li>to understand that we can be happy by showing kindness, being full of love, and making peace</li> <li>to recognize that we will be fully happy in Heaven with God one day</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to know that the first important commandment is to love God</li> <li>to know that the second important commandment is to love others as yourself</li> <li>to give examples of keeping each of these commandments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to understand that prayer is talking and listening to God</li> <li>to recognize that Jesus talked to and listened to God, his Father and ours</li> <li>to pray with Jesus, that we may all be one in God</li> </ul>
<b>Scripture</b>	Mark 4:16–20	Luke 15:11, 20–24	Matthew 5:6–9	Mark 12:28–31	John 17:11, 20–21, 23

<b>Unit 4: Jesus Dies and Rises for Us</b>					
<b>Chapter Number and Title</b>	<b>16. Jesus Dies for Us</b>	<b>17. Jesus Rises for Us</b>	<b>18. Jesus Is Our Shepherd</b>	<b>19. We Care for Jesus through People in Need</b>	<b>20. We Become Close to Jesus at Mass</b>
<b>Catechism Pillar</b>	Believe	Celebrate	Live	Live: Catholic Social Teaching	Pray
<b>Catechism References</b>	595–623	638–658 1136–1199 1322–1419	754	786 2447	1322–1419
<b>Chapter Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to identify the cross as an important symbol for Christians</li> <li>• to recognize that Jesus died on the cross out of love for us</li> <li>• to express different feelings about Jesus’ death</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to recognize that Jesus rose from the dead</li> <li>• to state that Jesus’ rising to new life is a reason to celebrate</li> <li>• to name some symbols of Jesus’ rising to new life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to learn that Jesus is the Good Shepherd</li> <li>• to understand that Jesus loves and protects us</li> <li>• to recognize that we follow Jesus because he is the Good Shepherd</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to recognize that we should care for people in need</li> <li>• to understand that when we care for those in need, we are caring for Jesus</li> <li>• to state different ways we can show kindness to others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to recognize that Jesus gave us himself at the Last Supper</li> <li>• to know that when we receive Holy Communion, we receive Jesus into our hearts</li> <li>• to understand that we can become close to Jesus at Mass through Holy Communion and prayer</li> </ul>
<b>Scripture</b>	Matthew 27:1–2, 29, 31, 50–54	Mark 16:1–6	John 10:11–15	Matthew 25:34, 37–40	Mark 14:22–24

<b>Liturgical Season Lessons</b>				
<b>Liturgical Season</b>	<b>All Saints' Day</b>	<b>Advent</b>	<b>Christmas</b>	<b>Lent</b>
<b>Chapter Title</b>	<b>Living a Life of Love</b>	<b>Preparing for Christmas</b>	<b>Celebrating the Birth of Jesus</b>	<b>Growing Closer to Jesus</b>
<b>Catechism References</b>	946–962	522–524	456–460 477–478 527–530	976–987 1846–1851
<b>Lesson Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to understand that the saints followed Jesus</li> <li>to realize that the saints lived lives of love</li> <li>to know that we can imitate Jesus and the saints in living lives of love</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to recognize the meaning of the word <i>advent</i></li> <li>to understand Advent as a season of preparation for Christmas</li> <li>to describe what we can do to get ready for the coming of Jesus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to recognize the story of Christmas</li> <li>to understand that Christmas is the birthday of Jesus</li> <li>to identify Jesus as the Son of God</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to understand that Lent is a season of preparation for Easter</li> <li>to recognize that Lent is a time of turning back to God</li> <li>to name “little things for Jesus” we can do during Lent</li> </ul>
<b>Scripture</b>	1 John 3:11, 16–18	Mark 1:4–8	Luke 2:1–7, 8–11, 13, 15–16	Luke 15:11, 20–24

<b>Liturgical Season Lessons</b>				
<b>Liturgical Season</b>	<b>Easter</b>	<b>Pentecost</b>	<b>Ordinary Time</b>	<b>Mary</b>
<b>Chapter Title</b>	<b>Jesus Is Risen</b>	<b>Filled with the Holy Spirit</b>	<b>We Are Loved</b>	<b>Mother of Jesus</b>
<b>Catechism References</b>	638–658	683–747	218–220	279–301
<b>Lesson Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to recall that Jesus rose from the dead to new life</li> <li>to recognize that we celebrate Jesus' rising to new life during Easter</li> <li>to understand that Easter is a special season in the Church</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to explain that the Holy Spirit is a special helper that Jesus sent at Pentecost</li> <li>to teach the children that the Holy Spirit can bring us comfort and peace</li> <li>to recognize wind and fire as symbols of the Holy Spirit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to understand that nothing can separate us from God's love</li> <li>to explain that Ordinary Time is a season for learning about Jesus' life and teachings</li> <li>to recognize that the liturgical color green is associated with Ordinary Time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to understand that God chose Mary to be the mother of Jesus</li> <li>to learn that we celebrate Mary all year long through special feast days</li> <li>to recognize and identify symbols associated with Mary</li> </ul>
<b>Scripture</b>	John 20:11–14, 16	John 14:16–17, 26–27	Romans 8:35, 37–39	Luke 1:30–33, 38



# Support Articles

## Characteristics of Kindergartners

Kindergartners are energetic, curious, and eager to learn about the world around them. With typical ages ranging from 5 to 6 years old, kindergartners exhibit a wide range of developmental levels. Some may still display preschool-like behaviors, while others seem ready for first grade. Children who have attended a preschool program may be more accustomed to group interactions and routines than children without that experience. However, every kindergartner will look to their teachers for guidance and approval, often needing positive reinforcement, especially when asked to work independently. All kindergartners thrive with hands-on experiences, nurturing guidance, and opportunities to explore their interests and creativity.

### Physical Characteristics

Kindergartners grow at different rates and can exhibit a wide range of heights, weights, and body proportions. They are constantly in motion and have difficulty remaining sedentary for long periods. Their gross motor skills are quite developed, but fine motor abilities like cutting, writing, and coloring are still emerging. Kindergartners may appear physically clumsy, bumping into objects or people as they move about. They require frequent breaks and chances to expend energy through movement and physical play. Kindergartners are also highly sensory, using all five senses to explore their environment. In general, they are active and physically engaged while exploring and interacting with their environment.

### Intellectual Characteristics

Kindergartners are in a period of rapid cognitive development, which is demonstrated by curiosity, creativity, and imagination. They frequently ask “why” about everything they encounter. They are concrete thinkers who learn best through direct sensory experiences and hands-on manipulation. While their attention spans are gradually increasing, kindergartners still need varied, interactive learning approaches to remain engaged. They enjoy repetition and familiarity but also thrive when offered new, imaginative experiences. A balance of experiences will provide the kindergarten child with the security of knowing something that has become familiar, as well as the excitement of learning something new. A need for security sometimes means that kindergartners are reticent to change activities when required. An advance alert often helps them prepare for putting things away and getting ready for the next activity. Kindergartners’ language skills are developing, so short and clear directions and explanations are best.

## Social-Emotional Characteristics

Kindergartners have a strong desire to please their teachers and follow rules and routines. However, they are still learning to manage big emotions, which can sometimes lead to impulsive outbursts. Kindergartners are developing independence but still seek frequent reassurance, approval, and guidance from adults. While learning to cooperate with peers, kindergartners may struggle with sharing, taking turns, and resolving conflicts. Relationships with peers may depend upon their age. Younger kindergartners will be more comfortable playing alongside one another, while older kindergartners enjoy talking and playing with others. They benefit from clear expectations, positive reinforcement, and nurturing classroom environments.

## Summary

The above are general characteristics of kindergartners. Although these characteristics might not describe every child, an awareness of these qualities will help you plan developmentally appropriate learning activities for your group. The more you learn about the spectrum of child development, the more you will understand where the children you teach have “come from” and where they are headed in their next phase of development. Each child develops at their own pace, and it is likely an uneven pace at that! One child may be far ahead intellectually but a little behind in social development. Another child’s social development may be right on target, but they may face challenges in thinking skills. The activities in this guide are so varied that you will find some to meet almost every child’s need to grow intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually.

One way to give every child a chance to grow and develop in your classroom, even if a group meets only once a week, is to give each child a job. Line leader, paper passer, prayer leader, movement leader—whatever small job is available should be assigned for one session (or one week) and then reassigned for the next one. Keep a running list of assignments so that each child gets a turn doing each job. Write the assignments for each session on the board. All children love to help and appreciate feeling appreciated, and you will be rewarded with a smooth-running group of proud and happy children.

# Using Bible Stories with Young Children

According to the Gospels, Jesus clearly wants children to come to him. We can fulfill his desire by leading them to Scripture. Jesus, the Word, is present in the words of Sacred Scripture. Through them, he speaks to children's hearts just as he speaks to ours. You can facilitate this encounter for his young disciples.

## Creating a Christian Environment

As you begin working with Bible stories, impress on the children the holiness of what you are doing. Explain that you and they are the Church in miniature. You are gathered to hear the Good News about Jesus that Scripture contains, to think about what he is saying to you, and to grow in your friendship with him. Remind the children of these facts periodically.

The room where you meet is holy space. As such, it should be neat, attractive, quiet, and free from distractions. Religious pictures and statues help set the tone, and a Christian song playing softly before the session helps the children focus on God. Praying before and after the sessions sends the message that this is special time.

## Creating a Loving Atmosphere

Christians are one with Jesus and with one another. Our classrooms should be characterized by love, the hallmark of Christians. As teachers, our bearing, our tone of voice, the way we move, and even how we dress convey our love for Jesus and the children as much as the words we speak. As soon as possible, learn the children's names and something about each child. Play icebreaker games to help the children get to know one another. Be quick to praise the children as a group and individually. Point out the gifts of each child and show appreciation for them.

## Create a Loving and Respectful Community

To build a loving and respectful community, plan opportunities for each child to contribute. Arrange for the children to work together on some projects. Make kindness a classroom rule, and encourage the children to help one another. Above all, treat the children equally, fairly, and with respect. When the children know you care about them, and when they care about one another, they are less likely to misbehave. They will not want to disappoint you! To forestall discipline problems, prepare lessons that keep the children active and engaged. (If you sense restlessness in the group, interrupt your lesson by having the children listen to or sing a song. You may want to add movements, and ask the group to follow you in prayerful song and dance.) If a child does disrupt the class, speak to them privately. If necessary, enlist the aid of parents.

## Shaping Attitudes toward the Bible

Teach the children that the Bible is the Word of God. Because God is its author, the Bible is holy. It should not be placed on the floor. To instill awe for the Bible, create a Bible corner by keeping a large, beautiful Bible on a table or shelf covered with a lovely cloth. Set a candle near it (if fire laws allow or use a battery-operated one) and sometimes light it when the Bible story is being read. Add, or let the children add, flowers, a plant, or colored leaves to the display.

Consider holding a prayer service honoring the Bible. Process with the Bible held high. Sing a song about God's Word, and read Scripture verses about it (see Psalm 119, Matthew 7:24–29, Matthew 13:1–9, Hebrews 4:12). Conclude by setting the Bible in its special place and having everyone bow to it one by one.

## Telling a Bible Story

You may wish to tell a Bible story in a creative way for the children. Check the list below for a few storytelling techniques that will delight the group and make the story more memorable.

### What You Can Do to Tell the Story

1. Use gestures, movements, and expressions. Vary the speed and volume of your voice. You might even dress like a Bible character.
2. Ask questions as you tell the story to maintain interest and stimulate thinking. But keep the questions simple so they do not distract.
3. Add sensory words to bring the story to life. Let the children see, hear, smell, taste, and feel the story as if they were there.
4. Make comments that link the story to the children's world. Refer to current news, famous people, and what the children know and experience.
5. Use flannel board figures, dolls, stuffed animals, puppets, or pipe-cleaner figures.
6. Do a chalk talk, preferably with colored chalk—even if you aren't a good artist.
7. Tear or fold paper to form a shape as you talk—for example, a whale for Jonah, a star for the Nativity, and a lily for the Resurrection. Craft books can provide ideas for these shapes.
8. Tell the story by interviewing someone posing as a person in the story or as a witness to it.
9. Think of colors that match parts of the story. Show construction paper of those colors at the appropriate times.
10. Post or project a picture of the story. Or reveal several of them as you tell the story. These might be glued to the sides of a box.

## What the Children Can Do as the Story Is Told

1. Distribute pictures of people and objects from the story. When the person or object is mentioned, the child holding it stands and raises it high or posts it to a sheet of newsprint.
2. Have the children draw on paper or work with clay as the Spirit moves them.
3. Direct the children to respond with a sound or action when they hear a certain word. For example, in the story of the Fall, they could hiss at the word *snake*.
4. Do an action as you read each sentence, and have the children repeat the sentence and the action.

## Reinforcing the Bible Stories

Children are usually eager to tell and retell familiar stories. In their spontaneous play, they “act out” stories they see on television and roles they experience in their families. Acting out Bible stories, as well as learning related poems and songs, are ways children can use their natural gifts of role-play, music, and rhyme.

### Plays

Help the children act out the story using symbols, headbands or signs, costumes, props, scenery drawn on the board, and sound effects. The children can present the play to another class or their families.

### Songs and Movement

Teach Scripture-related songs. Some hymns sung in church are based on Scripture. Many collections of Bible songs geared to children can be found online. As appropriate, invite the children to follow your example as you move prayerfully to these songs, or lead the children around the room in a march, procession, or dance. If singing is “praying twice,” as Saint Augustine says, perhaps those who move and dance as they sing are praying three times!

### Poems

A favorite of teachers and children for decades is the Arch book series (Concordia Publishing House). Each book tells a Bible story in rhyme.

## A Legacy of Love for Scripture

The key factor in teaching children Scripture is your love for it. When you treasure God’s Word, it will show, and the children will catch your attitude. Then the time spent reading and studying the Bible will be a joy for you and the children. You will be handing on a legacy of love for Scripture that will stay with the children for the rest of their lives.



# Discover!

Finding Faith in Life

## Unit 1

### We Meet Jesus

#### Chapter 1

Mary Says Yes to God . . . . . 30

#### Chapter 2

Jesus Is Born . . . . . 44

#### Chapter 3

The Wise Men Visit Jesus . . . . . 65

#### Chapter 4

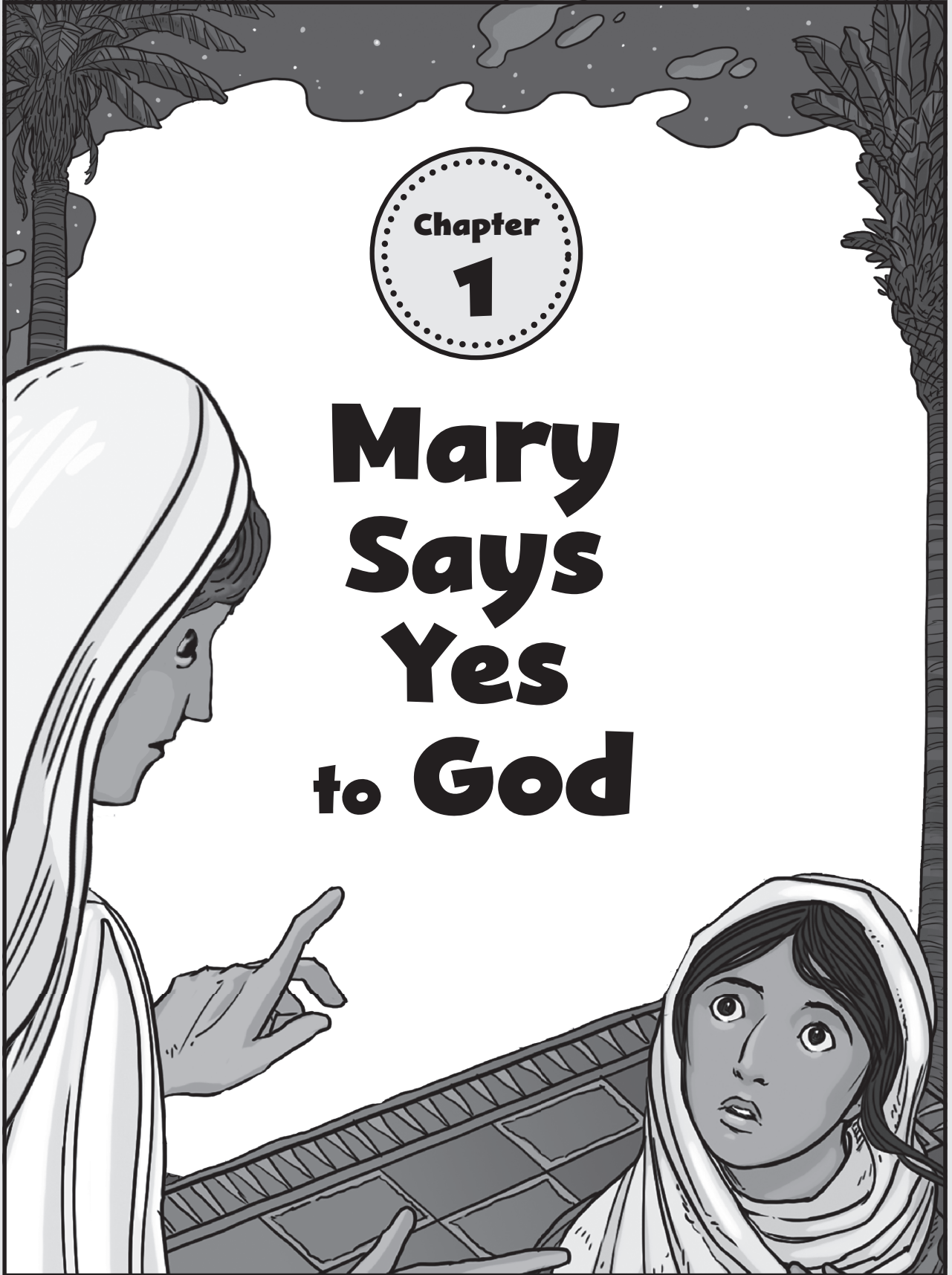
Joseph Protects Jesus and Mary . . . . 77

#### Chapter 5

Jesus Is Lost and Found . . . . . 89

Chapter  
**1**

**Mary  
Says  
Yes  
to God**



Chapter  
**1****Chapter at a Glance****Scripture Focus**

Luke 1:30–33, 38

**Chapter Goals**

- to recognize that God chose Mary to be the mother of Jesus
- to recognize that Jesus is the Son of God
- to understand that God chose all of us to be his children

**Catechism Pillar**

Believe

**Catechism References**

279–301

**Background Reflection**

In this chapter, the children hear the account of the beginning of our salvation, when Mary responded to the message of an angel with her assent to be the mother of the Son of God. The fact of being chosen for this momentous responsibility was not enough; God needed Mary's yes to put this plan of salvation into action. The same is true for us. Each one of us is chosen by God—chosen to be born, chosen to be a child of God, chosen to use our gifts and talents for good. We too are invited to say yes to God, just as Mary did.



## Day 1—Get Ready!

### Materials Needed

- a classroom Bible (*optional*)
- a large bookmark or ribbon (*optional*)
- a designated prayer table or Bible stand (*optional*)
- recorded music and appropriate equipment for playing it (*optional*)
- the chapter 1 child's page, removed from each Bible story booklet
- a statue or picture of Mary, Mother of God

### Opening Prayer

- Take time to review how to make the Sign of the Cross.
- Ask the children to repeat each phrase after you, and then demonstrate the hand gesture that goes with each phrase.
- Accept their efforts at this point. Refinements will come later, after you reinforce this during each session.

### Bible Procession (*optional*)

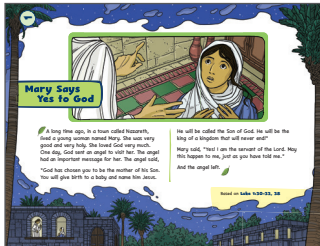
- Prepare by placing a bookmark or ribbon in the Bible at Luke 1:30–33, 38.
- Explain to the children that they will begin the new week and the new Bible story by having a Bible procession, which will involve processing, or walking, with the Bible to the prayer space. Remind them that we give special honor to the Bible because it is God's message of love to us.
- Invite the children to gather at the back of the room. Arrange them in one or two lines as appropriate. Begin playing music if desired.
- Lead the children to the prayer space, carrying the closed Bible with two hands at waist level with the front cover facing forward. (You may choose to designate one child to carry the Bible in this way.)
- Open the Bible on the table or Bible stand, using the bookmark or ribbon to find the Bible story for the week.
- Fold your hands, bow slightly from the waist, and step aside. Ask the children to come up to the Bible, one or two at a time, and guide them in making this reverent gesture before returning to their seats.

### Engage

- Ask if anyone in the group has ever been chosen to do something special or received a special invitation. Perhaps someone has been asked to join a team, attend a party, or be part of a wedding.
- Explain that this week the children will hear a Bible story about something special Mary was chosen to do.

- Remind the children that Mary is the mother of God and the mother of Jesus. Sometimes we call her Our Lady. Ask if anyone has seen pictures of statues of Mary in church or even in their home.
- Show the children a statue or picture of Mary as a reminder of who she is.

## Bible Story Preview



- Distribute the child's page, and ask the children to look at the main picture above the Bible story. Briefly discuss the picture by asking the following questions:
  - In the picture, we can see someone's hands and someone with a white robe. Who do you think this might be? *(Accept responses.)* Those are the hands of the angel and the angel's white robe.
  - We also see a young woman in the picture. That is Mary. How do you think she is feeling? Happy? *(No.)* Sad? *(No.)* Kind of wondering and questioning? *(Yes.)*
  - Can you look like you're wondering and questioning? Can you say, "Hmm?" and put your finger on your chin? *(Model this for the children.)*
  - Let's look at the bottom of the page. We can see the angel and Mary through the windows. What do you think they are doing? *(Accept responses.)*
  - Mary and the angel are having a conversation! In a conversation, it is important to talk. But what else is important in a conversation? *(listening)*
- Explain that in the next lesson, you will read the Bible story. Tell the children that they will find out what the angel said to Mary and what Mary said to the angel after she had listened carefully.
- Collect the child's page for use on days 2 and 4.

## Closing Prayer

- End the lesson by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and a brief, spontaneous prayer. Close with another Sign of the Cross.



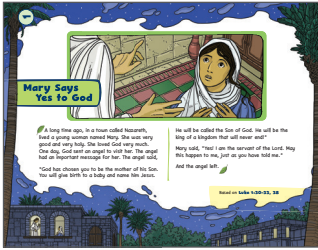
## Day 2—Dive In!

### Materials Needed

- the chapter 1 child's page, one for each child

### Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Continue with this prayer:
  - Mary, our Mother, help us to say yes to God as you did. Amen.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.



## Engage

- Distribute the child's page, and ask the children to turn to the side where the Bible story appears.
- Invite them to review the pictures to consider what the Bible story might be about.
- Ask them who the two figures are in the pictures. (*Mary and the angel*)
- Encourage the children to listen carefully to learn what the angel said to Mary and what Mary said to the angel.

## Bible Story

- Read the Bible story to the children slowly, stopping briefly after each sentence. If the children are readers, invite them to follow along. If not, invite them to look at the main picture as you read.
- Collect the child's page for use on day 4.

## This Chapter's Bible Story

### Mary Says Yes to God

A long time ago, in a town called Nazareth, lived a young woman named Mary. She was very good and very holy. She loved God very much. One day, God sent an angel to visit her. The angel had an important message for her. The angel said,

"God has chosen you to be the mother of his Son. You will give birth to a baby and name him Jesus. He will be called the Son of God. He will be the king of a kingdom that will never end!"

Mary said, "Yes! I am the servant of the Lord. May this happen to me, just as you have told me."

And the angel left.

(Based on Luke 1:30–33, 38)

## Core Teaching

- Begin the discussion by reminding the children that the angel and Mary were having a conversation. Ask the children to share what it means to have a conversation with someone. (*We talk and we listen to the other person.*)
- Invite the children to recall what the angel said to Mary in the conversation in today's Bible story. Emphasize that the angel told Mary that God had chosen her to be the mother of Jesus.



- Ask the children to recall what Mary said in the conversation with the angel. Point out that she said yes and said she was a servant of the Lord. Explain that this means she wanted to do what God wanted her to do.
- Expand the discussion with the following questions:
  - Who was talking in this conversation? (*the angel and Mary*)
  - Who was listening in this conversation? (*At first, Mary was listening. Then Mary started talking too.*)
  - How do we know that Mary was listening to the angel? (*She said yes to the message of the angel.*)
  - How do we know that the angel was listening to Mary? (*Mary gave her answer, and then the angel left.*)
  - Where do you think the angel went? (*back to God, to deliver the message*)
  - What do you think the angel said to God? (*The angel told God that Mary said yes!*)
- Explain to the children that each of us is chosen by God. Tell them that God chose us to be born, to be his children, and that God chose us to have certain good qualities like loving others, telling jokes, drawing pictures, and other good gifts.
- Invite the children to share some of the good gifts they have from God. Help them name some of the things they are good at.
- Point out to the children that when God asks us to do something, he usually doesn't send an angel. Tell them that their parents or teachers often ask them to do things. Invite them to share some examples.
- Explain that when we listen to our parents or teachers, we can say yes to God, just like Mary.
- Tell the children that you will all say yes to God right now. Explain that you will all make an exploding yes!
- Ask the children to follow your actions. Crouch down and put your hands on your knees. Slowly come up, moving your hands up your legs and making a "ya, ya, ya, ya" sound. Then "explode" by placing your feet and legs wide, raising your arms up wide, and exclaiming, "YES!"

## Closing Prayer

- End the lesson by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Offer a short prayer of petition, asking the children to share the names of people or situations they would like the group to pray for.
- Close with another Sign of the Cross.



## Day 3—Discover!

### Materials Needed

- copies of the handout “Mary Says Yes,” on page 42 of the teacher guide, one for each child
- scissors, one pair for each child

### Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Continue with this prayer:
  - Mary, our Mother, help us say yes to God, as you did. Amen.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

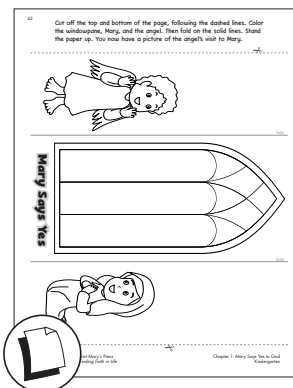
### Engage

- Begin with a brief review of the Bible story or a few key points from the core teaching on day 2.
- Invite the children to retell the Bible story to the best of their recollection, and then continue with the following points:
  - In the Bible story, we heard about the visit of an angel to a young woman named Mary. Who sent the angel to visit Mary? (*God*)
  - What was the angel’s message to Mary? (*God has chosen you to be the mother of his Son.*)
  - What was Mary’s answer to the angel? (*Yes!*)

### Learning Activity

#### Mary and the Angel

- Distribute the handout and scissors. Invite the children to cut along the dashed lines. Be ready to assist children who may need extra help cutting.
- Ask the children to color in the pictures of the windowpane, the angel, and Mary.
- Show the children the solid fold lines on the handout, and demonstrate how to fold the handout so that it will stand.
- Help the children fold their handout, even if they have not finished coloring.
- Assure the children that they can finish coloring their handout when they get home.
- Remind the children to stand the picture on their dresser or in another place in their home.
- Explain that the picture will remind them to ask Mary to bless them and their family.



Also available  
at [www.smp.org](http://www.smp.org)  
[/discover\\_kinderschool](http://discover_kinderschool)

### Additional Activity Options

If this learning activity would not work well with your group, you may choose to use any of the additional activities on pages 40–41 of the teacher guide in its place.

### Closing Prayer

- End the lesson by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Invite them to fold their hands, close their eyes, and open their ears and their hearts. Then pray this short prayer:
  - Dear God, we know you chose Mary to be the mother of your Son, Jesus. We know you chose us to be your children. Help us say yes to you, like Mary did. Amen.
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.



## Day 4—Go!

### Materials Needed

- the chapter 1 child's page, one for each child
- copies of the chapter 1 family page, on page 43 of the teacher guide, one for each child

### Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Continue with this prayer:
  - Mary, our Mother, help us say yes to God as you did. Amen.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

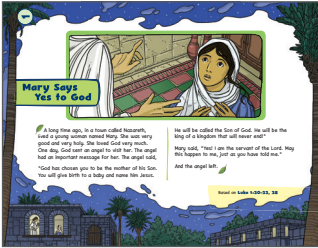
### Engage

- Begin with a brief review of the learning activity from day 3.
- Invite the children to share what they remember from the activity and what they might have learned. Then continue with the following points:
  - In the last lesson, we made a picture of Mary and the angel talking together. We talked about the conversation Mary had with the angel.
  - What did the angel tell Mary? (*that God had chosen her to be the mother of his Son*)
  - What did Mary say to the angel? (*Mary said yes!*)

- Are we chosen by God to be his children? *(Yes.)* Did God choose us to have good qualities? *(Yes.)*
- How can we say yes to God? *(By listening to our parents and teachers and doing what they ask.)*

## Bible Story

- Distribute the child's page, and ask the children to turn to the side where the Bible story appears. Remind them that it has been a few days since they last heard the story, so you will read it again to refresh their memory.
- Read the Bible story to the children slowly, inviting them to follow along or look at the pictures as you read.



## This Chapter's Bible Story

### Mary Says Yes to God

A long time ago, in a town called Nazareth, lived a young woman named Mary. She was very good and very holy. She loved God very much. One day, God sent an angel to visit her. The angel had an important message for her. The angel said,

"God has chosen you to be the mother of his Son. You will give birth to a baby and name him Jesus. He will be called the Son of God. He will be the king of a kingdom that will never end!"

Mary said, "Yes! I am the servant of the Lord. May this happen to me, just as you have told me."

And the angel left.

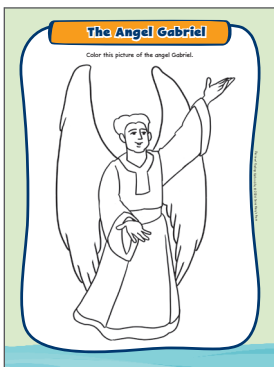
(Based on Luke 1:30–33, 38)

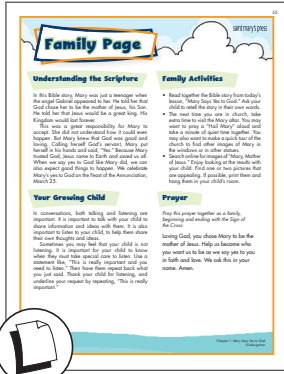
## Child's Page Activity

- Tell the children to turn over the child's page. Introduce the activity, reading any directions that are offered.
- Assure the children that if they do not finish the child's page activity by the end of the session, they can complete it at home.

## Chapter Wrap-Up

- Recall the chapter goals by asking the following questions:
  - Who did God choose to be the mother of Jesus? *(Mary)*
  - Who is the Son of God? *(Jesus)*
  - Who chose us to be God's children? *(God chose us to be his children.)*
- Remind the children to take the child's page home.





Also available in full color in both English and Spanish at [www.smp.org/discover\\_kinderschool](http://www.smp.org/discover_kinderschool)

- Distribute the family page, and encourage the children to share it at home. You may want to staple the child's page and the family page together as the children are getting ready to leave.

## Closing Prayer

- End the lesson by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Invite them to fold their hands, close their eyes, and open their ears and their hearts. Then pray this short prayer:
  - Dear God, we know you chose Mary to be the mother of your Son, Jesus. We know you chose us to be your children. Help us say yes to you, like Mary did. Amen.
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.



## Day 5—Discover More! (optional)

The following suggestions can be used alone or in combination to create an additional lesson for day 5. Choose the suggestions that best fit with your particular schedule or any specific objectives you might have.

### Artistic Reflection

Encourage the children to share significant learnings or key points through art, skills, or other forms of creative expression.

### Child's Page Activity

If the children did not complete their child's page activity on day 4, instead of sending it home that day, use day 5 to have them complete it.

### Additional Activity Options

Use any of the additional activity ideas on pages 40–41 of the teacher guide to reinforce the core learning goals of the chapter.

### Liturgical Readings

Read through the Gospel for the upcoming Sunday liturgy—a list of readings can be found by using the calendar on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' website ([usccb.org](http://usccb.org)). Invite the children to share what they hear as a message. You do not need to provide lengthy background or explanation; rather, encourage the children to open their ears and hearts to what the reading might be saying to them. Use this as a time of preparation for the Sunday liturgy.

## Activity Ideas

### Materials Needed

- none

### Conversation: Talking and Listening

- Introduce this activity as a game of talking and listening.
- Explain that you will call on several children and ask them a question.
- Encourage the group to listen carefully to the answers.
- Announce a simple question to the group, like, “What will you do after our session today?”
- Call on someone to answer the question. Remind the group to listen carefully to their answer.
- Try this format:
  - Johnny, what will you do after our session today? (*My mom is taking me to the park.*)
  - Johnny is going to the park after our session today!
  - Sally, what will you do after our session today? (*I will go home and eat lunch.*)
  - Did everyone listen to Johnny and Sally? What will Johnny do after our session today? (*He will go to the park.*) What will Sally do after our session today? (*She will go home and eat lunch.*)
- Continue in this way until several children have answered a question.
- Repeat as time permits, announcing another simple question. Here are a few sample questions:
  - What do you do after you get up in the morning?
  - What is your favorite thing to do on Saturdays?
  - What is your favorite food?
- Review each question and answer briefly to help the children remember the answers.
- Congratulate the children on being good talkers and good listeners!



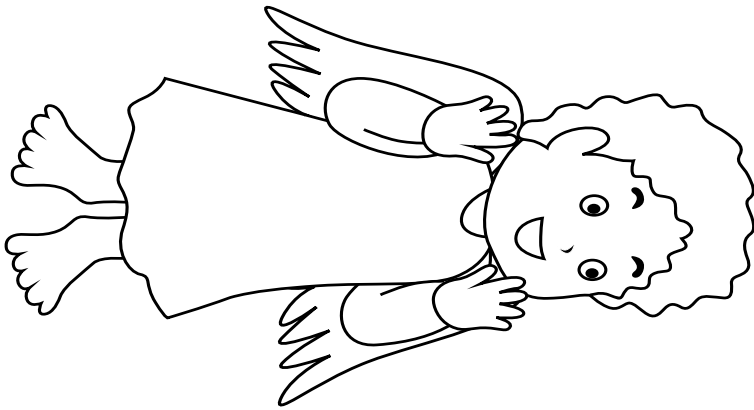
## Materials Needed

- items needed for costumes (optional)
- coaching ahead of time for two volunteers

## Mary Says Yes: A Short Play

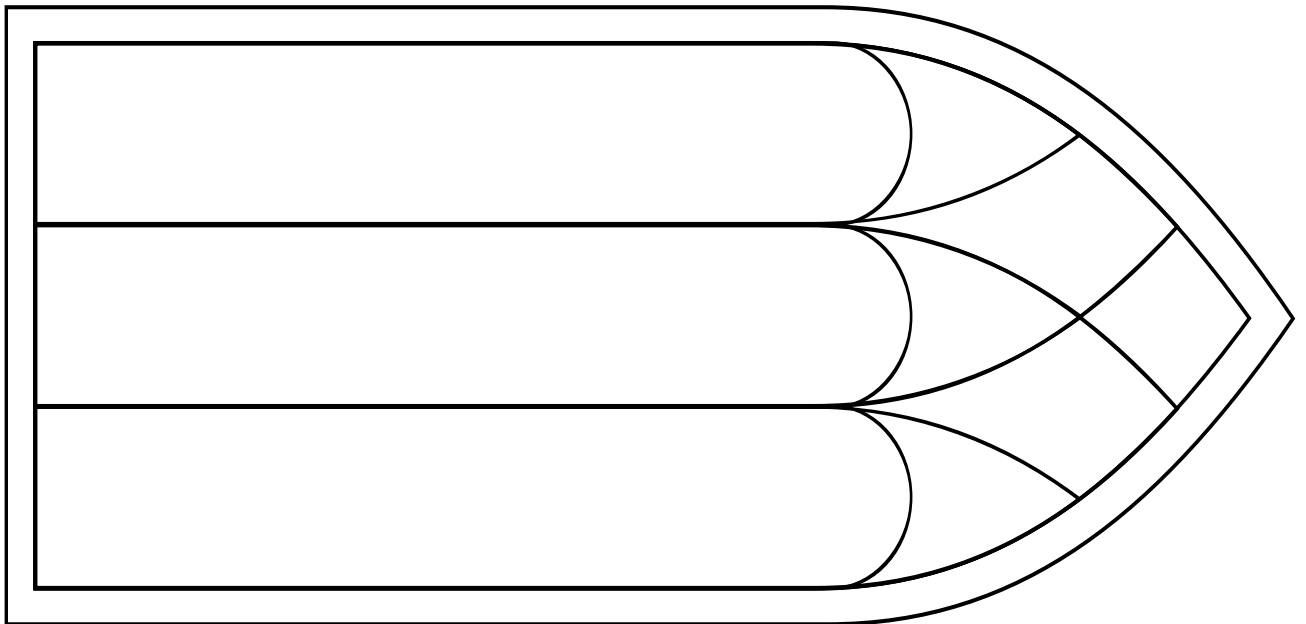
- Introduce this activity by explaining that two children will act out the story of the angel's visit to Mary.
- Choose volunteers to be the angel and Mary. (*Choose children who have loud voices and who do not mind being the center of attention.*)
- Take the volunteers aside to give them their lines. Ask them to repeat their lines a few times. Use the following, or similar, script:
  - Angel:** God has chosen you to be the mother of his Son! Do you agree?
  - Mary:** I agree. I say yes to God.
- Arrange an area as a stage, and have the rest of the children gather as the audience.
- Introduce the play as follows:
  - Ladies and gentlemen, we are about to watch an important story. It is the story of Mary saying yes to God. Please enjoy the show!
- Bring the child playing Mary to the center of the stage, directing them to kneel with their side facing the audience.
- Signal to the child playing the angel to "fly in" with open arms and land in front of Mary, standing sideways to the audience.
- Help the the child playing the angel say their lines, repeating after you if necessary. Direct the child playing Mary to look up at the angel and say their lines, again assisting as needed.
- Invite the actors to stand up, turn to the other children, and say, "The End." Conclude the play with the following words:
  - Thank you, angel and Mary (*or name the children*), for a wonderful performance. Take a bow!
- Ask for two more volunteers to act out the play again, as time permits.

Cut off the top and bottom of the page, following the dashed lines. Color the windowpane, Mary, and the angel. Then fold on the solid lines. Stand the paper up. You now have a picture of the angel's visit to Mary.

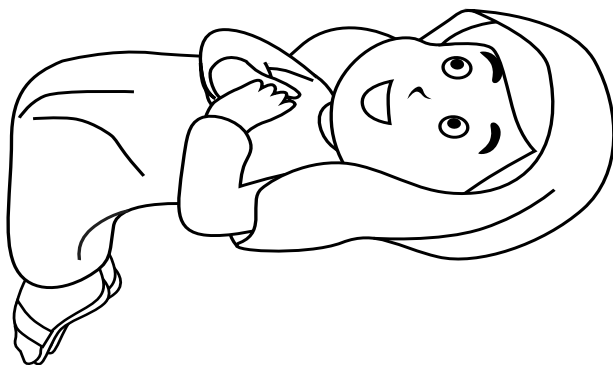


fold

**Mary Says Yes**



fold



# Family Page

## Understanding the Scripture

In this Bible story, Mary was just a teenager when the angel Gabriel appeared to her. He told her that God chose her to be the mother of Jesus, his Son. He told her that Jesus would be a great king. His Kingdom would last forever.

This was a great responsibility for Mary to accept. She did not understand how it could even happen. But Mary knew that God was good and loving. Calling herself God's servant, Mary put herself in his hands and said, "Yes." Because Mary trusted God, Jesus came to Earth and saved us all. When we say yes to God like Mary did, we can also expect good things to happen. We celebrate Mary's yes to God on the Feast of the Annunciation, March 25.

## Your Growing Child

In conversations, both talking and listening are important. It is important to talk with your child to share information and ideas with them. It is also important to listen to your child, to help them share their own thoughts and ideas.

Sometimes you may feel that your child is not listening. It is important for your child to know when they must take special care to listen. Use a statement like, "This is really important and you need to listen." Then have them repeat back what you just said. Thank your child for listening, and underline your request by repeating, "This is really important."

## Family Activities

- Read together the Bible story from today's lesson, "Mary Says Yes to God." Ask your child to retell the story in their own words.
- The next time you are in church, take extra time to visit the Mary altar. You may want to pray a "Hail Mary" aloud and take a minute of quiet time together. You may also want to make a quick tour of the church to find other images of Mary in the windows or in other statues.
- Search online for images of "Mary, Mother of Jesus." Enjoy looking at the results with your child. Find one or two pictures that are appealing. If possible, print them and hang them in your child's room.

## Prayer

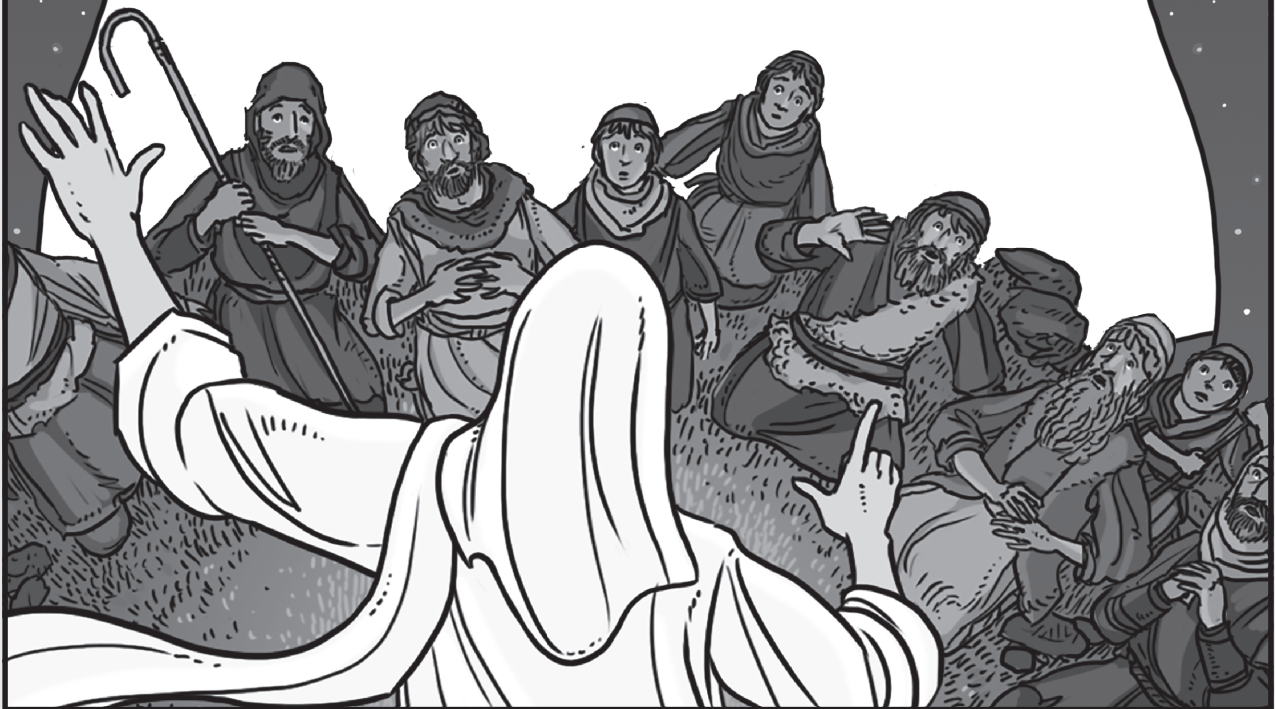
*Pray this prayer together as a family, beginning and ending with the Sign of the Cross:*

Loving God, you chose Mary to be the mother of Jesus. Help us become who you want us to be as we say yes to you in faith and love. We ask this in your name. Amen.

Chapter

2

# Jesus Is Born




 Chapter  
**2**

## Chapter at a Glance

### Scripture Focus

Luke 2:1–7, 8–11, 13, 15–16

### Chapter Goals

- to understand that angels told the shepherds about Jesus
- to recognize that Jesus, Mary, and Joseph were poor
- to know that Jesus loves us and shows us God's love

### Catechism Pillar

Celebrate

### Catechism References

456–460, 477–478, 527–530

### Background Reflection

This chapter is a balancing act! In teaching about the birth of Jesus, we retell the beautiful story of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem, the story of the journey of Mary and Joseph, the stable, the innkeeper, the shepherds, and the angels. But we also must emphasize that this Jesus, who was born as an infant in Bethlehem, is alive and with us today. He came to us out of love and loves us still. Subsequent chapters follow Jesus as he grows up, accepts his mission, and begins to teach. The story of the Word of God becoming a human being begins at the Annunciation, continues at Bethlehem, and becomes part of our story today as we proclaim, "Jesus loves us!"



## Day 1—Get Ready!

### Materials Needed

- a classroom Bible *(optional)*
- a large bookmark or ribbon *(optional)*
- a designated prayer table or Bible stand *(optional)*
- recorded music and appropriate equipment for playing it *(optional)*
- the chapter 2 child's page, removed from each Bible story booklet

### Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Pray this short prayer:
  - Dear God, thank you for bringing us together to learn more about the birth of Jesus. Amen.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

### Bible Procession *(optional)*

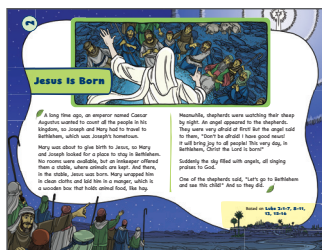
- Prepare by placing a bookmark or ribbon in the Bible at Luke 2:1–7, 8–11, 13, 15–16.
- Explain to the children that the group will begin the new week and the new Bible story by having a Bible procession, which will involve processing, or walking, with the Bible to the prayer space. Remind them that we give special honor to the Bible because it is God's message of love to us.
- Invite the children to gather at the back of the room. Arrange them in one or two lines as appropriate. Begin playing music if desired.
- Lead the children to the prayer space, carrying the closed Bible with two hands at waist level with the front cover facing forward. (You may choose to designate one child to carry the Bible in this way.)
- Open the Bible on the table or Bible stand, using the bookmark or ribbon to find the Bible story for the week.
- Fold your hands, bow slightly from the waist, and step aside. Ask the children to come up to the Bible, one or two at a time, and guide them in making this reverent gesture before returning to their seats.



## Engage

- Ask if anyone in the group has ever seen a baby. As volunteers respond, ask if the baby was born into their family or was a relative's or neighbor's baby, etc.
- Explain that we celebrate the birth of Jesus as a baby at Christmas, but any time of year is a good time to celebrate that Jesus was born like us, as a baby. Continue by sharing that he was born like us to show us God's love.
- Tell the children that all of us were born as babies, and our parents and teachers help us grow up.
- Explain that they will learn more about Jesus' birth as a baby in the Bible story this week.

## Bible Story Preview



- Distribute the child's page, and ask the children to look at the main picture above the Bible story.
- Briefly discuss the picture by asking the following questions:
  - In the picture, we can see someone in white. Who is this, and what are they doing? (*This is an angel. The angel is announcing something to the shepherds.*)
  - Let's look at the shepherds. Look at their mouths. Are their mouths open or closed? (*open*)
  - Their mouths are open because they are surprised. Can you open your mouth and look surprised? (*Model this for the children.*)
  - Can you look surprised and say, "Oh!" or "Ah!" or "Wow!"? (*Model this for the children.*)
  - Now look at the bottom of the page. What are the shepherds doing there? (*pointing*)
  - Maybe they are saying, "Look, look!" Let's point at the sky like the shepherds! Let's say, "Look, look!" (*Model this for the children.*)
  - The story we will hear in the next session will tell us why the shepherds were so surprised. We will find out why the shepherds were pointing to the sky!
- Collect the child's page for use on days 2 and 4.

## Closing Prayer

- End the lesson by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and a brief, spontaneous prayer. Close with another Sign of the Cross.



## Day 2 - Dive In!

### Materials Needed

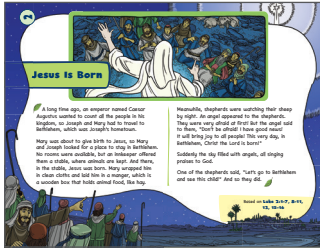
- the chapter 2 child's page, one for each child
- a manger scene, preferably in the prayer corner, with a figure of the infant Jesus in the manger

### Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Pray this short prayer:
  - Dear God, thank you for bringing us together to learn more about the birth of Jesus. Amen.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

### Engage

- Distribute the child's page, and ask the children to turn to the side where the Bible story appears.
- Invite them to review the pictures to consider what the Bible story might be about.
- Ask them to put their finger on the angel in the picture, and then to put their finger on the shepherds.



### Bible Story

- Read the Bible story to the children slowly, stopping briefly after each sentence. If the children are readers, invite them to follow along. If not, invite them to look at the main picture as you read.
- Collect the child's page for use on day 4.

### This Chapter's Bible Story

#### Jesus Is Born

A long time ago, an emperor named Caesar Augustus wanted to count all the people in his kingdom, so Joseph and Mary had to travel to Bethlehem, which was Joseph's hometown.

Mary was about to give birth to Jesus, so Mary and Joseph looked for a place to stay in Bethlehem. No rooms were available, but an innkeeper offered them a stable, where animals are kept. And there, in the stable, Jesus

*(continued on next page)*

*(continued from previous page)*

was born. Mary wrapped him in clean cloths and laid him in a manger, which is a wooden box that holds animal food, like hay.

Meanwhile, shepherds were watching their sheep by night. An angel appeared to the shepherds. They were very afraid at first! But the angel said to them: "Don't be afraid! I have good news! It will bring joy to all people! This very day, in Bethlehem, Christ the Lord is born!"

Suddenly the sky filled with angels, all singing praises to God.

One of the shepherds said, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this child!" And so they did.

(Based on Luke 2:1–7, 8–11, 13, 15–16)

## Core Teaching

- Begin the discussion by sharing these or similar words:
  - We just heard about the birth of Jesus. Can anyone tell me where people usually put babies so they can sleep? *(in a crib or in a big baby basket or a cradle)*
  - Where did Mary lay Jesus to sleep? *(in a manger, a food box for animals)* Yes, and it was probably full of clean, soft hay, so it was a good bed for Jesus.
  - Who told the shepherds about Jesus? *(the angels)*
  - Where did the shepherds go to see Jesus? *(to the stable in Bethlehem)*
  - Where was Jesus? *(in the manger inside the stable)*
  - Why were Joseph and Mary and Jesus in the stable? *(No rooms were available in the inn. Joseph and Mary were poor. They did not have another other place to stay.)*
- Expand the discussion with the following remarks:
  - There are people today who also have no place to stay. What do we call those people? *(poor people or homeless people)*
  - Yes, we call them poor people or homeless people because they do not have much money and have no place to stay. Mary and Joseph had a home, but they were traveling and had no place to stay.
  - They were also poor. They did not have much money. Even if a nice room had been available, they might not have been able to afford it. Jesus did not come to us as a rich king, but as a poor child.
  - Jesus became poor to show us that God loves us and all people, even the very poorest, and that we should all love one another.

- Explain that we celebrate the birth of Jesus because Jesus shows us that God loves us! Tell the children that Jesus shows us that God loves everybody, even the very poorest people. Continue by sharing that Jesus shows us God's love by being born and becoming like us.
- Continue with the following:
  - Let's celebrate that Jesus loves us. *(Gather the children in a big circle, holding hands. Lead the following hand gestures while asking the group to repeat your words after you.)*
  - Jesus loves us! *(Hold hands up high.)*
  - Jesus wants us to love one another! *(Bring hands down and crouch down near the floor.)*
  - God loves us! *(Bring hands up.)*
  - We love God! *(Bring hands down.)*
  - Thank you, God, for sending Jesus! *(Bring hands waist high and sway back and forth. Repeat several times.)*
  - Amen! *(Bring hands up.)* Amen! *(Bring hands down.)* Amen! Amen! Amen! *(Hold hands up and end.)*

## Closing Prayer

- End the lesson by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Offer a short prayer of petition, asking the children to share the names of people or situations they would like the group to pray for.
- Close with another Sign of the Cross.



## Day 3 - Discover!

### Materials Needed

- copies of the handout "Jesus Is Born," on page 56 of the teacher guide, one for each child
- crayons or markers
- scissors, one pair for each child
- envelopes, one for each child

## Opening Prayer

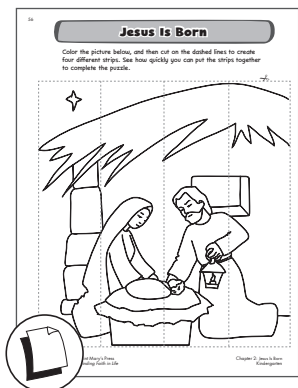
- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Pray this short prayer:
  - Dear God, thank you for bringing us together to learn more about the birth of Jesus. Amen.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

## Engage

- Begin with a brief review of the Bible story or a few key points from the core teaching on day 2.
- Invite the children to retell the Bible story to the best of their recollection, and then continue with the following points:
  - The Bible story was about the birth of Jesus. Can anyone remember where Jesus was born? (*in a stable in Bethlehem*)
  - Who were the first people to find out about the birth of Jesus? (*the shepherds*)
  - Who told the shepherds about the birth of Jesus? (*the angels*)
  - Why was Jesus born in a stable? (*because Mary and Joseph were poor and had nowhere else to go*) This shows that God loves everyone and that Jesus was sent to love everyone, especially those who are poor.

## Learning Activity

### Jesus Is Born Puzzle



Also available  
at [www.smp.org](http://www.smp.org/discover_kinderschool)  
[/discover\\_kinderschool](http://www.smp.org/discover_kinderschool)

- Distribute the handout along with crayons or markers and scissors.
- Point out the image, and ask the children what it shows.
- Tell them that they are going to create their own puzzle, but that the first step is to color the picture on the handout.
- Allow time for the children to color the image, and then explain that they can cut the handout on the dashed lines, creating four different strips of paper.
- Encourage them to mix up the strips of paper, and tell them that you want to see how quickly they can put the pieces together in the right order to complete the puzzle. You can count aloud to create more excitement.
- Congratulate the children when they have completed the puzzle. If there is more time, you might consider having them swap their strips of paper to complete another child's puzzle.
- Distribute the envelopes, and invite the children to place their strips of paper in an envelope for safekeeping. Mention that they may need to fold the strips.
- Tell the children to take their puzzle home and see how quickly their family members can complete it. Also, you might suggest that their family can help them tape the pieces together or glue them onto cardboard to display their artwork at home.

### Additional Activity Options

If this learning activity would not work well with your group, you may choose to use any of the additional activities on page 55 of the teacher guide in its place.

## Closing Prayer

- End the lesson by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Explain to the children that today's prayer recalls the Bible story of Jesus being born. Invite them to repeat the words and actions after you:
  - Baby Jesus, very small (*make yourself small*)
  - Sleeping in the manger stall (*head to the side on hands as if sleeping*)
  - Many angels in the sky (*look up*)
  - Singing praise to God on high. (*raise hands in air*)
  - Thank you, God, for Jesus! (*wave hands and cheer*)
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.



## Day 4 - Go!

### Materials Needed

- chapter 2 child's page, one for each child
- copies of the chapter 2 family page, on page 57 of the teacher guide, one for each child

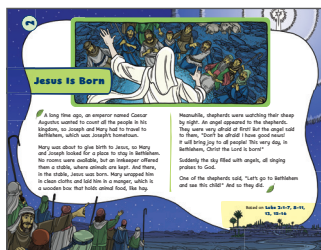
## Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Pray this short prayer:
  - Dear God, thank you for bringing us together to learn more about the birth of Jesus. Amen.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

## Engage

- Begin with a brief review of the learning activity from day 3.
- Invite the children to share what they remember from the activity and what they might have learned. Then continue with the following points:
  - In the last lesson we talked about the birth of Jesus in the stable at Bethlehem. Today, let's think about why Jesus was born in a stable. Why do you think that was? (*Mary and Joseph were poor, and they had no place to stay.*)
  - Why did Jesus come as a poor little baby instead of as a rich king? (*to show that God loves everyone, not just those who are rich but also those who are poor*)





## Bible Story

- Distribute the child’s page, and ask the children to turn to the side where the Bible story appears. Remind them that it has been a few days since they last heard the story, so you will read it again to refresh their memory.
- Read the Bible story to the children slowly, inviting them to follow along or look at the pictures as you read.

## This Chapter’s Bible Story

### Jesus Is Born

A long time ago, an emperor named Caesar Augustus wanted to count all the people in his kingdom, so Joseph and Mary had to travel to Bethlehem, which was Joseph’s hometown.

Mary was about to give birth to Jesus, so Mary and Joseph looked for a place to stay in Bethlehem. No rooms were available, but an innkeeper offered them a stable, where animals are kept. And there, in the stable, Jesus was born. Mary wrapped him in clean cloths and laid him in a manger, which is a wooden box that holds animal food, like hay.

Meanwhile, shepherds were watching their sheep by night. An angel appeared to the shepherds. They were very afraid at first! But the angel said to them: “Don’t be afraid! I have good news! It will bring joy to all people! This very day, in Bethlehem, Christ the Lord is born!”

Suddenly the sky filled with angels, all singing praises to God.

One of the shepherds said, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this child!” And so they did.

(Based on Luke 2:1–7, 8–11, 13, 15–16)

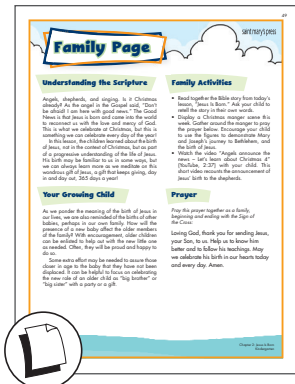
## Child’s Page Activity



- Tell the children to turn over the child’s page. Introduce the activity, reading any directions that are offered.
- Assure the children that if they do not finish the child’s page activity by the end of the session, they can complete it at home.

## Chapter Wrap-Up

- Recall the chapter goals by asking the following questions:
  - Who told the shepherds about Jesus? (*the angels*)
  - Were Jesus, Mary, and Joseph rich, with lots of money? (*No, they were poor.*)
  - Who loves us and shows us God’s love? (*Jesus*)
- Remind the children to take the child’s page home.



Also available in full color in both English and Spanish at [www.smp.org/discover\\_kinderschool](http://www.smp.org/discover_kinderschool)

- Distribute the family page, and encourage the children to share it at home. You may want to staple the child's page and the family page together as the children are getting ready to leave.

## Closing Prayer

- End the lesson by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Explain to the children that today's prayer recalls the Bible story of Jesus being born. Invite them to repeat the words and actions after you.
  - Baby Jesus, very small (*make yourself small*)
  - Sleeping in the manger stall (*head to the side on hands as if sleeping*)
  - Many angels in the sky (*look up*)
  - Singing praise to God on high. (*raise hands in air*)
  - Thank you, God, for Jesus! (*wave hands and cheer*)
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.



## Day 5 - Discover More! (optional)

The following suggestions can be used alone or in combination to create an additional lesson for day 5. Choose the suggestions that best fit with your particular schedule or any specific objectives you might have.

### Artistic Reflection

Encourage the children to share significant learnings or key points through art, skills, or other forms of creative expression.

### Child's Page Activity

If the children did not complete their child's page activity on day 4, instead of sending it home that day, use day 5 to have them complete it.

### Additional Activity Options

Use any of the additional activity ideas on page 55 of the teacher guide to reinforce the core learning goals of the chapter.

### Liturgical Readings

Read the Gospel for the upcoming Sunday liturgy—a list of readings can be found by using the calendar on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' website ([usccb.org](http://usccb.org)). Invite the children to share what they hear as a message. You do not need to provide lengthy background or explanation. Rather, encourage the children to open their ears and hearts to what the reading might be saying to them. Use this as a time of preparation for the Sunday liturgy.

## Activity Ideas

### Materials Needed

- a figure of the baby Jesus from a manger scene

### Seeking the Baby Jesus

- Introduce this activity by explaining that this is a game of hide and seek with the baby Jesus.
- Explain that you will choose a volunteer to stand by the door with their eyes closed. Tell the children that you will then hide the baby Jesus somewhere in the room.
- Share that the volunteer will try to find the baby Jesus, and the rest of the children will help by saying “hot” or “cold” as the volunteer comes closer or moves farther away from the baby Jesus.
- Play the game again, as time allows, by selecting a new volunteer and hiding the baby Jesus in another location.

### Materials Needed

- a song sheet for a Christmas carol
- a recording of the Christmas carol and appropriate equipment for playing it *(optional)*
- a computer with internet access *(optional)*
- a computer projector *(optional)*

### Let's Sing Christmas Carols!

- Explain that we usually celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas, and we celebrate by singing Christmas carols. Tell the children that today is a good day to sing Christmas carols too, because today they learned more about the birth of Jesus.
- Using the song sheet, teach the carol you have chosen, line by line, asking the children to repeat each line after you. Then help the children sing two lines at a time, and then the entire verse. If you have a recording of the Christmas carol, you may wish to play it and have the children sing along for practice. (Suggested carols: “Silent Night,” “Away in a Manger,” “O Come Little Children.”)
- *Optional:* Show the video “The Rainbow Collections - Little Donkey (Official Lyric Video)” (YouTube, 2:20), which is a song about a donkey carrying Mary to Bethlehem. Then invite the children to get down on all fours and be “little donkeys” like the one in the video. Play the “Little Donkey” song again as you lead the children around the room while they pretend to be little donkeys carrying Mary to Bethlehem.

# Jesus Is Born

Color the picture below, and then cut on the dashed lines to create four different strips. See how quickly you can put the strips together to complete the puzzle.



# Family Page

## Understanding the Scripture

Angels, shepherds, and singing. Is it Christmas already? As the angel in the Gospel said, "Don't be afraid! I am here with good news." The Good News is that Jesus is born and came into the world to reconnect us with the love and mercy of God. This is what we celebrate at Christmas, but this is something we can celebrate every day of the year!

In this lesson, the children learned about the birth of Jesus, not in the context of Christmas, but as part of a progressive understanding of the life of Jesus. His birth may be familiar to us in some ways, but we can always learn more as we meditate on this wondrous gift of Jesus, a gift that keeps giving, day in and day out, 365 days a year!

## Your Growing Child

As we ponder the meaning of the birth of Jesus in our lives, we are also reminded of the births of other babies, perhaps in our own family. How will the presence of a new baby affect the older members of the family? With encouragement, older children can be enlisted to help out with the new little one as needed. Often, they will be proud and happy to do so.

Some extra effort may be needed to assure those closer in age to the baby that they have not been displaced. It can be helpful to focus on celebrating the new role of an older child as "big brother" or "big sister" with a party or a gift.

## Family Activities

- Read together the Bible story from today's lesson, "Jesus Is Born." Ask your child to retell the story in their own words.
- Display a Christmas manger scene this week. Gather around the manger to pray the prayer below. Encourage your child to use the figures to demonstrate Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem, and the birth of Jesus.
- Watch the video "Angels announce the news – Let's learn about Christmas 4" (YouTube, 2:37) with your child. This short video recounts the announcement of Jesus' birth to the shepherds.

## Prayer

*Pray this prayer together as a family, beginning and ending with the Sign of the Cross:*

Loving God, thank you for sending Jesus, your Son, to us. Help us to know him better and to follow his teachings. May we celebrate his birth in our hearts today and every day. Amen.