

Gospel Light's

# Discovering God's Love



Includes  
CD-ROM



## Leader's Guide

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# How to Use *Little KidsTime*

## A few children, two leaders or teachers

If you teach with only one other person, follow these simple steps:

1. Read “*Discovering God’s Love Overview*” on page 7 to get a clear view of what this course is about.
2. Look at “*Advice & Answers for Schedule Planning*” on pages 9-11. Choose the schedule that best fits your situation and decide which centers to include.
3. Read the tip articles (pp. 21-31) for each center you will lead, taking note of the ways you can make each center an effective learning experience for the children in your class.
4. Decide which person will lead each activity as children move between the centers.
5. Print out lesson resources as needed from CD-ROM. Refer to “*What to Print List*” on CD-ROM.

## Lots of children, several teachers, a director or coordinator

If you are the children’s director or coordinator of *Little KidsTime*, follow the above steps and add two more!

6. Pay special attention to “*Getting & Keeping the Very Best Staff*” on pages 12-13. Remember to start recruiting early—several months before *Little KidsTime* begins.
7. Read “*Questions & Answers for a Terrific Program*” on pages 14-15 for tips on how to distribute and store curriculum, special ways to involve parents and more!



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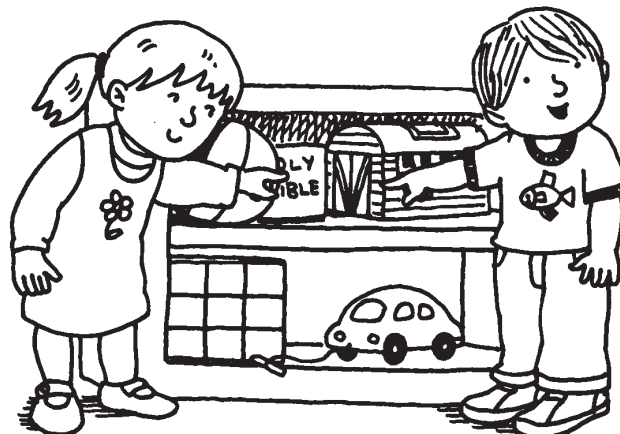
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Lessons ready to e-mail, lesson resources (patterns, game cards and more) and modifiable forms (recruiting flyers, planning page and more)





# Discovering God's Love Overview

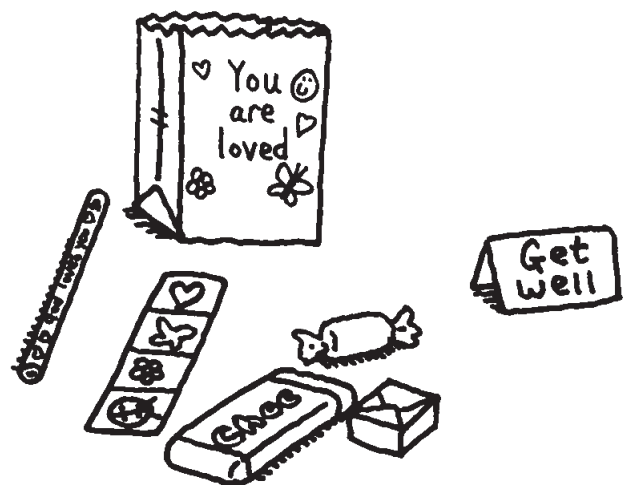
Welcome to a year's worth of great learning!

*Discovering God's Love* is designed to help you give preschoolers an increasing awareness and understanding of the reality of God's love and help in their daily lives. Preschoolers' most effective way to learn is through playing! For this reason, we've divided *Discovering God's Love* into Play, Listen and Talk. This format gives each child a chance to actively explore Bible truth in ways appealing to every learning style. As they become fully involved in learning, preschoolers discover ways they can *do* the things they have learned in class. God's Word comes to have real meaning for them!



## Special Features

- ➔ Additional lesson resources are available on the CD-ROM. These resources include patterns, pictures, game cards and more. Print out these resources as suggested in lessons. Refer to the "What to Print List" on the CD-ROM.
- ➔ Every lesson features three colorful Bible Story pictures as part of the story presentation. The back of one picture contains that lesson's Bible story in both English and Spanish. These pictures give children a visual focus while listening to the story!
- ➔ During each class session, preschoolers will participate in several different Play to Learn centers. These active learning experiences help focus children's attention as you relate the day's lesson to their lives. Each activity relates to the session's lesson focus (called "God's Word and Me") and many activities relate to the Bible story as well. Noncompetitive, active games give children a change of pace and a chance to move large muscles. Art activities give children an opportunity to creatively use a variety of art materials. Building, lifting and carrying blocks give children opportunities to develop motor skills and talk about everyday life. Science activities help them explore the wonderful things God has created.
- ➔ Each Play to Learn activity is designed to meet the needs and abilities of most preschool children. But to help you address the developmental differences between younger and older preschoolers, each activity center gives both an option For Younger Children and For Older Children. The younger option provides simplification or alternate ideas for younger children in your group. The older option provides challenge and enrichment ideas for kindergarten and other older children.
- ➔ The Listen to Learn center helps children connect Bible stories and truths to their lives as children listen to a Bible story, speak God's Word, sing and pray together.
- ➔ The Talk to Learn activities suggested on the final page of each lesson give you another way to customize each session to the needs and interests of your preschoolers. For both younger and



older children, the Bible Story Activity Pages Center uses fun pages from *The Big Book of Bible Story Activity Pages #1*. Kids will color, fold, tape or more to review the Bible story they just heard and then apply its truth to their lives. Conversation suggestions are included on every page so that you know exactly what to say to help them apply those truths! In the Preschool Puzzle Center, preschoolers will enjoy the challenge of puzzles from *The Big Book of Kindergarten Puzzles*. These puzzles (two for each lesson) give young children the opportunity to build a strong foundation of Bible truths and, at the same time, the chance to practice a number of important skills they will need in daily life. The Read-Aloud Story Center features a page for every lesson. The contemporary story and activity page from *The Big Book of Read Aloud Stories #1* relate to that session's lesson focus. These extra resources can be used at any time in the session to provide a change of pace, to extend the session or to allow for transitions at the beginning or end of the session.

- ➔ Because teachers are the heart of any teaching time, *Discovering God's Love* is especially easy for teachers to use. Every lesson opens with a Teacher Challenge to give teachers insight and background in understanding how the lesson's focus applies to their own lives. The Leader's Guide can be printed from the CD-ROM and then copied so that each member of the teaching team can be given a copy of the lesson to which he or she has been assigned. Or you may also e-mail the lessons to your teachers. Each center's page includes the Bible verse (God's Word) and the lesson focus (God's Word and Me) so every member of the team understands the goal of the lesson and how that center ties into achieving the goal.

## Prayerful Preparation

When you and your team members are prepared, you're eager and enthusiastic. This makes your children eager to learn, too! As you pray and organize this course to meet the needs of your group, ask God what He wants to do during this time. Invite Him to make you sensitive to ways you can be part of what He wants to accomplish. Although these children are young, you are laying foundations for understanding that will make an eternal difference as they discover God's love and grow into whole-hearted followers of Jesus Christ!





# Advice & Answers for Schedule Planning

## How much time is needed for each session?

To answer this question, ask another question: How much time do you need for each session to take? This course is designed to meet the needs of multiple time frames and a wide variety of needs. Selecting from the variety of activities provided in each session gives you freedom to make the session last for however long you will be meeting with your children. See the scheduling options on page 11. These suggestions meet the needs of a majority of programs.

## What are unique needs of preschoolers?

As you develop your schedule, consider a few of the unique needs of the children you serve:

- ➔ Preschoolers are not able to sit still for long periods of time. Some will not be able to sit still for any period of time! Be prepared to alternate seated activities with activities that allow children to exercise their large muscles (finger play, active games, block, playground play, etc.). Restless children are a signal that a change is needed! If children attend a portion of the adult worship service before the session begins, be sure to have large-motor play or an active game at the beginning of the session.
- ➔ Preschoolers have no sense of schedules and timetables. Be flexible in your expectations! The length of time for each center may vary widely as young children move freely between the centers as their interests direct. When these activity centers are open-ended, without a set beginning or end, you can provide as many centers as you have teachers or helpers. When each teacher or helper takes responsibility for a center, a child may play the game for a few minutes, move to the Block Center to build awhile and then work on an art activity. This flexibility allows preschoolers to engage in activities that have meaning to them that day!
- ➔ For children to be able to move freely between the centers, keep all *Little KidsTime* activity centers in the same room. Create a large graphic sign to identify each center; for instance, a crayon for the Art Center, jumping children for the Active Game Center, blocks for the Block Center, a magnifying glass for the Science Center, etc. Children can then easily identify each center. Printable graphics for these signs are also provided on the *Discovering God's Love* CD-ROM packaged in this book.

## What activities are found in the Play to Learn part of the session?

- ➔ The Active Game Center gives preschoolers a change of pace and a chance to move. All of these games challenge young children physically and mentally but are appropriate for young children, easygoing and noncompetitive.
- ➔ The Art Center activities provide a variety of sensory involvements as children enjoy meaningful art experiences. Dozens of fine motor, categorizing and other skills are practiced during this time.
- ➔ The Block Center encourages children to lift, carry and build with blocks, giving them opportunities to develop motor skills, use their imaginations, care for materials and make decisions.
- ➔ The Science Center provides the kinds of firsthand experiences that are essential for young children to learn. Exploring God's creation helps a child begin to sense the extent of God's love, His care and His wisdom.

## What makes up the Listen to Learn part of the session?

- The Listen to Learn portion of the session is the place where children interact with God’s Word and Bible truth. All the children come together for this flexible time that actively involves young children in the basic elements of worship: music, God’s Word and prayer. Children listen to and talk about the Bible story; they sing, interact and pray to make Bible truths real in their world of family and friends.
- If your group is mostly younger preschoolers, omit some of the activities to shorten the time. But do be ready and excited to tell the Bible story; you’ll find that even the youngest ones will be engaged!

## What makes up the Talk to Learn part of the session?

- Children have played while you have helped them think about Bible truth by your conversation. They have now listened to the Bible story, interacted and responded to Bible truth through review, praise and prayer. Now, it’s time to talk about what the Bible story and verse mean in their everyday lives. But a formal question-and-answer session likely won’t help young children understand what God’s Word means for them! However, when children’s hands are busy, their minds and hearts seem to be available so that they talk freely and understand easily. With your interested listening, loving guidance and your ability to tie their thoughts to God’s Word, they will talk to learn!
- The Bible Story Activity Pages Center gives children an engaging way to review the Bible story they just heard and then apply its truth to their lives. Conversation suggestions are included on every page so that you know exactly what to say to help them apply those truths! Pages are found in *The Big Book of Bible Story Activity Pages #1*.
- The Preschool Puzzle Center gives preschoolers time to enjoy the challenge of puzzles from the *The Big Book of Kindergarten Puzzles*. These puzzles give you another way to talk about the session’s Bible truth—and they give young children a fun and yet challenging way to practice a number of important skills they need as they grow.
- In the Read-Aloud Story Center, a story picture from *The Big Book of Read-Aloud Stories #1* helps each child understand and apply the session’s Bible truth to his or her own life as they hear a contemporary story and complete a color-and-do page.

## How do we plan each session?

Each teacher takes responsibility for one or more activities, interacting with each child as he or she visits the activity center—greeting the child at eye level, listening, conversing and using the day’s focus and Bible verse to help children gain more understanding. Helpers and teachers who aren’t leading an activity move freely to help children and teachers.

Once you have chosen the activities for each session, plan who will lead and who will help with each center. You may want to photocopy each of the chosen activities for the teacher or teachers who will lead or you may find it easier and faster to find the lesson on the CD-ROM enclosed in this book and e-mail it to each teacher. This helps to ensure that teachers have plenty of time to do their necessary preparation. The Teacher Challenge

**Little KidsTime Discovering God's Love** Multiple Forms

Date: Sept. 4 Lesson Number and Title: 1 Baby in a Basket  
Teaching Team: Judy, Jean, Latasha, Marcos

Time	Center	Teachers	Helpers
10:45-11:15	Art Center	Latasha	Judy
	Block Center	Marcos	
	Science Center	Jean	
11:15-11:30	Snack		
11:30-11:45	Listen to Learn	Marcos	Judy, Jean
11:45-12:00	Preschool Puzzle Center	Latasha	Jean

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on the first page of each lesson will help teachers to prepare their hearts and minds in the week before each session.

Also check the CD-ROM for additional resources (pictures, patterns, etc.) that may be needed. Refer to the “What to Print List” on the CD-ROM.

Doing this preparation early goes a long way to help you avoid last-minute panic! Planning a month or more in advance will ensure that your teachers are well prepared to serve the children in their care.

For help in staffing and recruiting, complete a planning page on a weekly, monthly or quarterly basis (see samples on previous page). These pages can also be taken from the CD-ROM, filled out and e-mailed to your teachers and helpers ahead of time!

## What are some schedule options?

Below are some sample schedule options. Adapt these sample schedules to the needs and interests of your church. Add or substitute other centers to meet the needs of your group. You may also wish to include snacks (see recipes on p. 17) and/or supervised outdoor playtime. Once you’ve adapted a schedule option for your group, fill out the form from the CD-ROM, print it and post it in classrooms where sessions will take place. Also, e-mail the schedule to every teacher and helper to quickly get the whole team on the same page!

**Schedule Options**

**Option 1 (60-75 minutes)**

- Play to Learn/Talk to Learn\***  
20-30 minutes  
Active Game Center  
Art Center  
Science Center
- Snack and/or supervised outdoor play**  
25 minutes
- Listen to Learn**  
10-15 minutes

\* Select from the Active Game Center, Art Center, Block Center, Science Center, Bible Story Activity Pages Center, Preschool Puzzle Center and Read-Aloud Story Center.

**Option 2 (60-90 minutes)**

- Adult Worship**  
15-20 minutes
- Play to Learn/Talk to Learn\***  
20-30 minutes  
Active Game Center  
Art Center  
Science Center
- Listen to Learn**  
10-15 minutes
- Snack and/or supervised outdoor play**  
25 minutes

\* Select from the Active Game Center, Art Center, Block Center, Science Center, Bible Story Activity Pages Center, Preschool Puzzle Center and Read-Aloud Story Center.

**Option 3 (75-90 minutes)**

- Play to Learn\***  
20-30 minutes  
Active Game Center  
Art Center  
Block Center
- Snack and/or supervised outdoor play**  
25 minutes
- Listen to Learn**  
10-15 minutes
- Talk to Learn\***  
20 minutes  
Bible Story Activity Pages Center  
Preschool Puzzle Center  
Read-Aloud Story and Activity Center

\* Select from the Active Game Center, Art Center, Block Center and Science Center.

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# Getting & Keeping the Very Best Staff

One of the most important elements in staffing a successful *Little KidsTime* program is planning how you will recruit and organize your staff. However you do it, keep in mind that the best learning and the most fun take place when there is one teacher or helper for approximately every six children.

The optimum plan for staffing is to have the same teachers in place for six months to one year. Both teachers and children benefit from regular interaction. Long-term consistency creates a wonderful opportunity for spiritual growth in children as they build relationships with caring adults who are faithful in demonstrating God's love.

While it may be easier to recruit teachers to teach one session at a time, such short-term staffing creates other problems. Many churches have found that rotating teachers frequently not only makes learning and growth difficult for children but also creates a heavy workload in administration (distributing curriculum, orienting a constant stream of new teachers, etc.).

Here are some options if long-term commitment is difficult in your situation.

- Ask teachers to teach for three or four months at a time instead of a year.
- Find two teams of teachers and helpers who will each teach for a month. Then plan to rotate the two teams so that they alternate monthly. Over the course of a year, teachers and children become familiar with each other and can benefit from regular interaction.
- If you must rotate teachers more frequently (weekly or biweekly), have regular greeters or leaders who are present every week.

## Recruiting Tips

Recruiting teachers and helpers is one of the key tasks to making *Little KidsTime* an effective and fun learning experience for the children of your church and community. Keep the following tips in mind as you seek the volunteers and then match their talents to the tasks to be done:

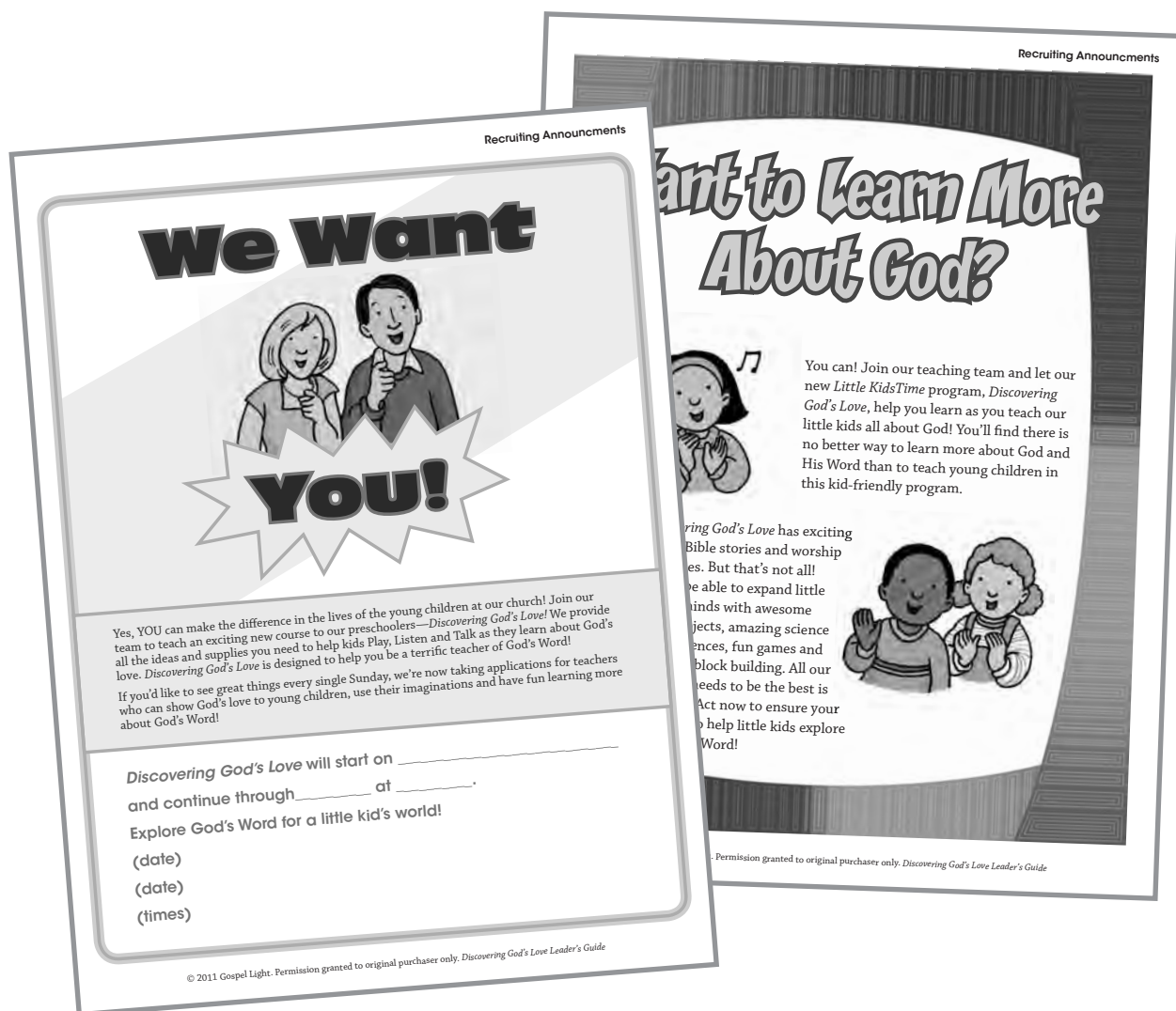
- Pray for guidance in finding the people God wants to serve in this ministry.
- Start early!
- Keep all the leaders of your Sunday School and other children's ministries aware of and praying about staffing needs.
- Write a job description for each *Little KidsTime* staff position. (Check *Preschool Smart Pages* for samples; modifiable sample job descriptions can be found on the *Preschool Smart Pages* CD-ROM.)
- Make a list of potential teachers and helpers. Consider a wide variety of sources for volunteers: church membership list, new members' classes, suggestions from adult teachers or leaders, lists of previous and current teachers and survey forms. Get recommendations from present teachers. Don't overlook singles, senior citizens, youth and collegians. Be sure to follow your church's established procedures for screening volunteers.
- Look for team members with interests and abilities in specific areas. For example, the teaching team for 24 children might consist of two to three adults: One prepares and leads the Listen to Learn time and two others each lead a different activity center during Play to Learn or Talk to Learn. When not actively involved with leading a center, team members act as helpers. The leader of the Listen to Learn time might also lead an activity center.
- Prayerfully prioritize your prospect list. Determine which job description best fits each person's strengths and gifts.
- Personally contact the prospects. Sending an e-mail, a personal letter or a flyer to each prospect is a good first step. Follow up with a phone call to personally answer any questions or to see if the prospect has made a decision.

- ➔ Provide new volunteers with all the needed materials, forms, helpful hints and training that will help them to succeed. For all teachers and helpers, you may want to schedule one or more training meetings at which you distribute curriculum, review schedules and procedures, learn the songs together, etc.
- ➔ During the volunteer's time of service, make sure the volunteer knows who will be available to answer questions or lend a helping hand. Look for specific actions and services contributed by the volunteer and offer your thanks.
- ➔ Plan a thank-you brunch or pizza dinner or lunch for teachers and their families. Even the ones who don't attend will be grateful for your appreciation!

## Recruiting Announcements

The teachers and helpers who will be your *Little KidsTime* teachers and helpers will appreciate clear, concise information about the program—and a little added inspiration couldn't hurt! Here are some attention-grabbing recruiting announcements.

Take these announcements from the CD-ROM, available in a modifiable format.





# Questions & Answers for a Terrific Program

## What's the best way to distribute and store *Little KidsTime* curriculum?

When you first receive your curriculum, print out the pages from the CD-ROM. Also print the additional lesson resources from the CD-ROM. Place pages in a binder, using dividers to separate the main sections of the book: planning pages, lesson pages, etc.

Then photocopy all the lesson pages, making a copy for each person who will be teaching. Also make multiple copies of the tips page for each activity center (one of the appropriate center for each teacher or helper). Distribute the appropriate pages to teachers and helpers at a *Little KidsTime* orientation meeting or mail them to teachers a week or so before their teaching assignments begin.

### OR

E-mail pages from the CD-ROM to the appropriate teachers and helpers.

## How can we build enthusiasm for *Little KidsTime*?

Children of all ages will respond positively to your efforts to create interest in *Little KidsTime*.

- ➔ Plan theme days such as Fruit Day (everyone is served a specific fruit for a snack), Crazy Hat Day (everyone wears a funny- or silly-looking hat), Color Day (everyone wears clothes of a certain color) or, for Sunday evening or weekday programs, Parent Day (parents and/or grandparents attend *Little KidsTime* with their children or grandchildren).
- ➔ Design a special name tag just for the children who attend *Little KidsTime*. See the CD-ROM for modifiable name tag files in either black and white or color.



- ➔ Make or decorate T-shirts for *Little KidsTime* participants or teachers to wear.
- ➔ Create a special name or logo for your *Little KidsTime* program. Use it on all publicity, recruiting letters, T-shirts, name tags and classroom signs.

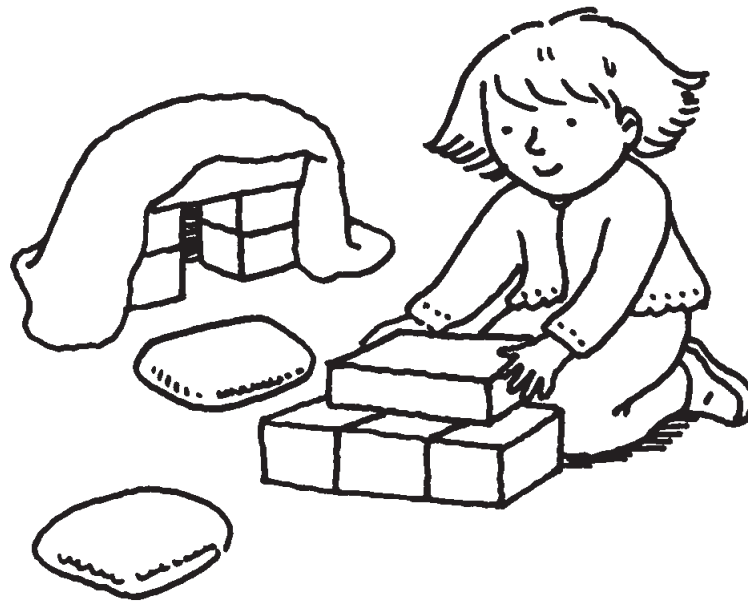
These special attention-getting ideas can be used to kick off the beginning of *Little KidsTime*, as a way to reach out to the community or as “fun-builder” ideas at any time during the year when you feel enthusiasm or attendance are lagging.



## How can we make *Little KidsTime* challenging enough for kindergartners?

Throughout *Little KidsTime*, options are suggested in each center for ways to increase the challenge in that activity for older children. If your group is large enough to divide into classes, group older children in a separate class.

- ➔ *The Big Book of Kindergarten Puzzles* provides challenging puzzles for kindergartners.
- ➔ At the Active Game Center, older children can help to demonstrate games.
- ➔ At the Art Center, older children can help younger ones with gluing, cutting, etc.
- ➔ During Listen to Learn, invite one or more of the older children to demonstrate motions for younger children to imitate during the Bible story or while singing.



# Leading the Young Child Toward Jesus

When we have presented Jesus by both our actions and our words, a foundation is laid for a child to receive Christ as Savior. Every lesson may create an opportunity to talk with a young child who wants to know more about Jesus.

- The young child is easily attracted to Jesus. Jesus is a warm, sympathetic person who obviously likes children, and children readily like Him. These early perceptions prepare the foundation for the child to receive Christ as Savior and to desire to follow His example in godly living.
- While some children at this age level (especially from Christian homes) may indeed pray to become a member of God's family, accepting Jesus as their Savior, expect wide variation in children's readiness for this important step. Allow the Holy Spirit room to work within His own timetable.
- Talk individually with children. Something as important as a child's personal relationship with Jesus Christ can be handled more effectively alone than in a group.
- Ask questions that will help you determine what the child understands. Open-ended what-do-you-think questions give you a chance to hear what's really going on in the child's mind and heart. "What do you like best about Jesus?" will help a child give words to his or her thoughts and feelings about Him.
- Talk simply. Phrases such as "born again" or "Jesus in my heart" are symbolic and far beyond a young child's understanding. Focus on how God makes people a part of His family: **God loves us, but we have done wrong things (sinned). God says sin must be punished. God sent Jesus to take the punishment for the wrong things we have done. We can tell God that we have done wrong and tell Him we are sorry for our sin. We can ask Jesus to be our Savior. Then we become a part of God's family.** Share this information whenever a child seems interested but only for as long as the interest lasts. Lay a good foundation for a lifetime of solid spiritual growth!



# Jesus Is Born

Lesson 15

## Bible Story

Luke 2:1-7

## Teacher Challenge

It's strange that God would come to Earth in the fragile, vulnerable form of a human baby, isn't it? Yet because of this decision, Jesus—fully God—experienced firsthand every high and low of human life. His understanding of our needs and longings has no bounds, just as His love for us has no bounds. And it is because of His great love for us that He became the means of our redemption.

- ➔ What are the signs of the season that show that Jesus has been forgotten in the midst of celebrations?
- ➔ What can you do to make Jesus central in your celebrations?

Make an effort to let Jesus shine through you and your activities so that others will remember that Christmas is a time to recognize the greatest gift of love ever given. Just as God had not forgotten His people or His promise of a Messiah, He does not forget you or your needs or longings. He continues to be the hope for those who believe in Him. And the joy you show will be an inspiration for the children in your class.

**God's Word**  
"Good news! Today Jesus has been born." (See Luke 2:10-11.)

**God's Word and Me**  
I'm glad Jesus was born!

## Teacher's Planning

1. Choose which centers you will provide and the order in which children will participate in them. For tips on schedule planning, see page 9.
2. Plan who will lead each center, making sure to have one adult for approximately every six children. For staffing tips and ideas, see page 12.



# Play to Learn

Lesson 15

## Active Game Center: Color Praise

### Collect

Bible, construction paper in a variety of colors, scissors, paper bag.

### Prepare

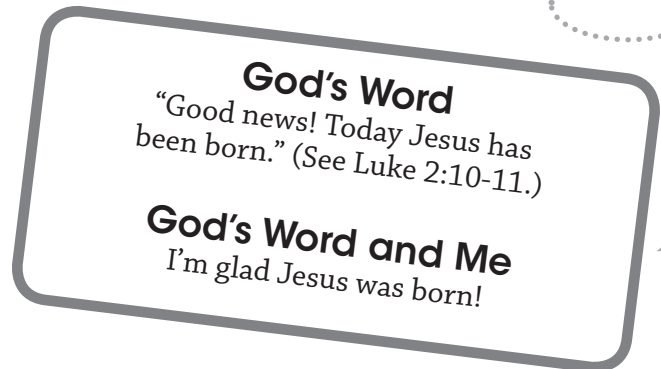
Cut construction paper into strips and place in bag.

### Do

1. Children sit in an open area of your classroom. Pull a paper strip out the bag. Children wearing a clothing item of the same color as the paper strip jump up and say, "Jesus is born!"
2. Repeat with other colors until all children have had a turn.

### Talk About

- ➔ **In our Bible story today, angels told shepherds the good news that Jesus was born. We celebrate Christmas to remember Jesus' birth. Let's play a game to show we are glad Jesus was born.**
- ➔ **What do you do at home to celebrate Christmas? Christmas trees and presents are fun, but we celebrate Christmas because Jesus was born.**
- ➔ **The Bible says, "Good news! Today Jesus has been born." What reminds you of Jesus at Christmastime?**
- ➔ **I'm glad Jesus was born! Pray briefly, Thank You, God, that Jesus was born.**



### For Younger Children

Limit the number of colors to two, and give each child a paper strip to hold. Children jump up when the strip pulled from the bag matches the strip they are holding.

### For Older Children

In additional rounds, vary the action children perform (clap, run to door, turn around, etc.). Children may repeat the Bible verse while they perform the action.

# Play to Learn

Lesson 15

## Art Center: Christmas Circle Ornaments

### Collect

Bible, red and green construction paper, pencil, ruler, scissors, ribbon or yarn, Christmas stickers, tape, hole punch; optional—Lesson 15 Circle Ornament Pattern from *Discovering God's Love* CD-ROM.

### Prepare

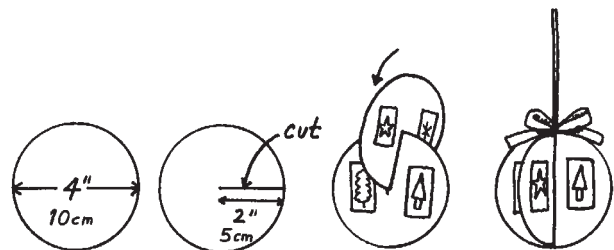
Cut 4-inch (10-cm) circles from construction paper—one red and one green for each child. In each circle, cut a 2-inch (5-cm) slit as shown in sketch a. (Optional: Make copies of Circle Ornament Pattern onto red and green paper and cut as indicated.) Cut ribbon or yarn into 8-inch (20-cm) lengths—one for each child.

### Do

1. Give each child one red and one green circle. Child adds stickers for decoration. Child slides the red circle into the green one.
2. Adjust circles so they are at right angles to each other and secure with tape. Punch hole through top. Thread ribbon through hole and tie ends for hanger.

### Talk About

- ➔ **The Bible says, "Good news! Jesus has been born." We are happy that Jesus was born! Let's make Christmas ornaments.**
- ➔ **We make ornaments for our Christmas trees as a way to celebrate Jesus' birthday. What kind of Christmas decorations do you have inside your home? Outside?**
- ➔ **Your family will be glad to have your Christmas decoration. We made them because we are glad Jesus was born! Pray briefly, Dear God, thank You that Jesus was born.**



**God's Word**  
"Good news! Today Jesus has been born." (See Luke 2:10-11.)

**God's Word and Me**  
I'm glad Jesus was born!

### For Younger Children

Children may require assistance to slide the red circle into the green circle.

### For Older Children

Provide glitter pens or markers for children to use.

# Play to Learn

Lesson 15

## Block Center: Stable Blocks

### Collect

Bible; blocks; straw, hay or raffia; toy animals or animals from a nativity set.

### Do

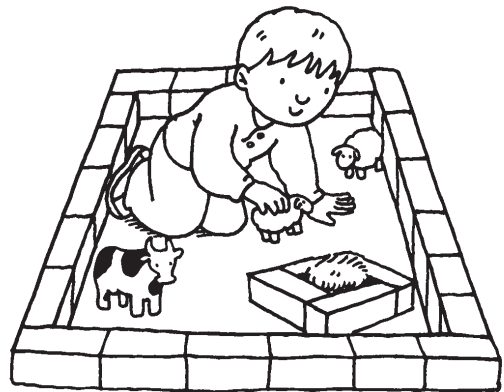
Children use blocks and straw, hay or raffia to build a stable and manger for animals.

**God's Word**  
"Good news! Today Jesus has been born." (See Luke 2:10-11.)

**God's Word and Me**  
I'm glad Jesus was born!

### Talk About

- ➔ **Our Bible tells about a time when Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem. Lots of other people also went to Bethlehem. Mary and Joseph looked and looked to find a place to sleep. Where did they finally stay? (A stable.) A stable is a building where animals live. Let's use our blocks to build a stable!**
- ➔ **When nighttime comes, where do animals sleep? Many animals sleep in a barn or a stable. Mary and Joseph stayed in a stable with the animals. What kinds of animals sleep in a stable?**
- ➔ **The Bible tells us, "Good news! Today Jesus has been born." Jesus was born while Mary and Joseph were in the stable. Where do babies usually sleep? Where do you think Mary laid baby Jesus down to sleep? (A manger.) A manger is a box that animals eat from. Let's put lots of hay in the manger, so it will be nice and soft for baby Jesus.**
- ➔ **I'm glad Jesus was born! Pray briefly, Thank You, God, for sending Your Son, Jesus.**



### For Younger Children

Make a large masking-tape square on floor for the stable. Children use blocks to outline masking-tape stable and build a manger. Children act like and make sounds of animals that might live in the stable. (Note: Remove masking tape immediately after activity.)

### For Older Children

Children build a road leading to the stable and use toy people or nativity figures to act out the Bible story as you briefly tell the story. Expect to repeat the Bible story many times as children come and go from the Block Center.



# Play to Learn

Lesson 15

## Science Center: Texture Touch

### Collect

Bible; straw, hay or raffia; piece of wood; faux or real fur; sheepskin; swatch of soft fabric (flannel, fleece, brushed cotton, etc.).

### Do

1. Children touch and explore the textures of the various items.
2. Use suggestions below to talk about objects in the stable that had the same texture as each item.

### Talk About

- ➔ **I'm glad baby Jesus was born! In today's Bible story, baby Jesus was born in a stable! A stable is a place where animals sleep. Let's feel some things that may have been in that stable.**
- ➔ **Emma, why do you think there was hay in the stable? Mary laid hay in the manger for Jesus to sleep on. The manger is a box animals eat from.**
- ➔ **Many buildings are made of wood. Daniel, what is something in our room that is made of wood?**
- ➔ **What kinds of animals have fur? What animals live in a stable or a barn?**
- ➔ **Leah, what do babies wear? Mary probably used soft fabric like this to keep baby Jesus nice and warm.**
- ➔ **The Bible says, "Good news! Today Jesus has been born." I'm glad Jesus was born! Are you glad, too? Pray briefly, Dear God, we are glad You sent Jesus to be born. We love You.**



**God's Word**  
"Good news! Today Jesus has been born." (See Luke 2:10-11.)

**God's Word and Me**  
I'm glad Jesus was born!

### For Younger Children

Bring an unbreakable nativity set. Help children identify nativity objects made of the same materials as those you brought.

### For Older Children

Give each child a small piece of each differently textured item. Children glue items to paper plates.

# Listen to Learn

Luke 2:1-7

Lesson 15

## Collect

Bible, Bible Story 28 pictures from *God's Story for Me Poster Pack #1*, *Preschool Music #1 CD* and player, blanket, jingle bells of various sizes and kinds, small shakers.

## Greet Each Other

Invite children to be in a musical Christmas parade or orchestra. Lead children in pretending to play a variety of instruments (trumpet, drum, guitar, flute, etc.). Then repeat the rhyme below or sing it to the tune of "O Christmas Tree."

**Oh, come and join our Christmas band! Look at what is in my hand.**

**I have a (trumpet) I can (blow). Let's all thank God with (trumpets)!**

**God's Word**  
"Good news! Today Jesus has been born." (See Luke 2:10-11.)

**God's Word and Me**  
I'm glad Jesus was born!

## Tell the Story

Open your Bible to Luke 2. Tell the story using the pictured motions (keywords in bold) or show Bible Story 28 pictures.

**Do you or anyone you know have a baby brother or sister at home? Listen to find out what happened when God sent a very special baby to be born.**



One day Joseph said to Mary, "We must go to Bethlehem. We must write our names in the king's book." So Joseph and Mary began to **pack** for their trip. When all their things were packed, they started to go to Bethlehem.



Mary probably rode on a donkey. **Clippety-clop**, clippety-clop—the donkey's feet went clippety-clop against the rocks on the road. Joseph walked beside her. It was a long, hard, bumpy ride for Mary. It was almost time for Mary to have a baby. Mary and Joseph knew that this baby would be very, very special. This baby would be God's Son, Jesus.



Soon it was almost nighttime. Mary was tired! How much farther would they have to go? Finally they saw the town of Bethlehem ahead.



But when Mary and Joseph got to Bethlehem, the town was FULL of people! There was no place for them to **sleep**. Every room was full. So Mary and Joseph went to a stable where animals were kept. They slept on the hay.

There in the stable, in the quiet nighttime, **baby** Jesus was born. Mary wrapped baby Jesus in warm clothes. Then she laid Him on soft hay in the manger. (The manger is a box animals eat from. It made a comfortable bed for baby Jesus.)

Mary and Joseph took good care of baby Jesus. Jesus is God's special Son!

## Talk About the Story

**Mary and Joseph were so happy baby Jesus was born. I'm glad Jesus, God's Son, was born! Aren't you glad, too? At Christmastime, what are some ways to show we are glad Jesus was born?** (Sing songs about Jesus' birth. Decorate Christmas trees. Give gifts to people.)

## Sing to God

**Let's sing a song about some very good news!** Lead children in singing "God Loved Us" (track 5 on CD). **This song tells us the very best news ever: Jesus was born! Why did God send His Son, Jesus?** (God loved us.)

**Option:** Provide rhythm instruments for children to use while singing "God Loved Us."

## Hear and Say God's Word

Holding your Bible open to Luke 2:10-11, say verse aloud. **What good news does this Bible verse tell us?** (Today Jesus has been born.) Lead children in saying the Bible verse together a few times. Ask all children with a certain characteristic to say the verse together (everyone wearing red, everyone with brown hair, everyone wearing tennis shoes, etc.). Choose several categories and repeat the Bible verse several times.

## Pray to God

Lead children in repeating the following prayer, phrase by phrase: **Dear God, we are glad that You love us. We are glad You sent Your Son, Jesus, to be born. We love You. In Jesus' name, amen.**

## Praise to God

Children hold a blanket taut while an adult places several bells on the blanket. Play "Sing Praises" (track 16 on CD). Children bounce bells to music and describe the sounds. **We are glad that Jesus was born! We show we are glad when we sing and make music.** Add more bells or small shakers!

# Talk to Learn

Lesson 15

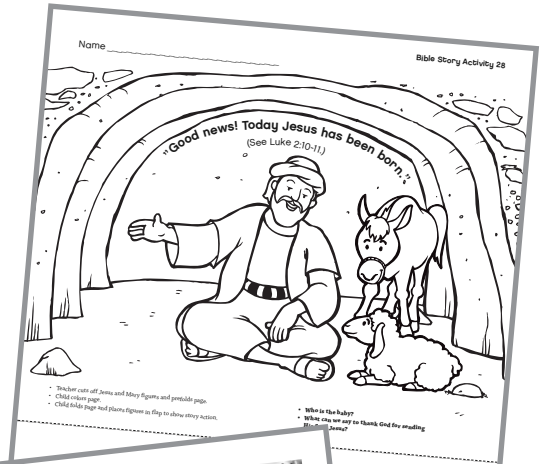
## Bible Story Activity Pages Center

### Collect

A copy of Activity 28 from *The Big Book of Bible Story Activity Pages #1* for yourself and each child, scissors, crayons or markers; optional—glue, bits of raffia.

### Do

Lead children to complete pages following the instructions. (Optional: Children glue bits of raffia to manger for hay.) Use the conversation suggestions as children complete their pages and retell the story.



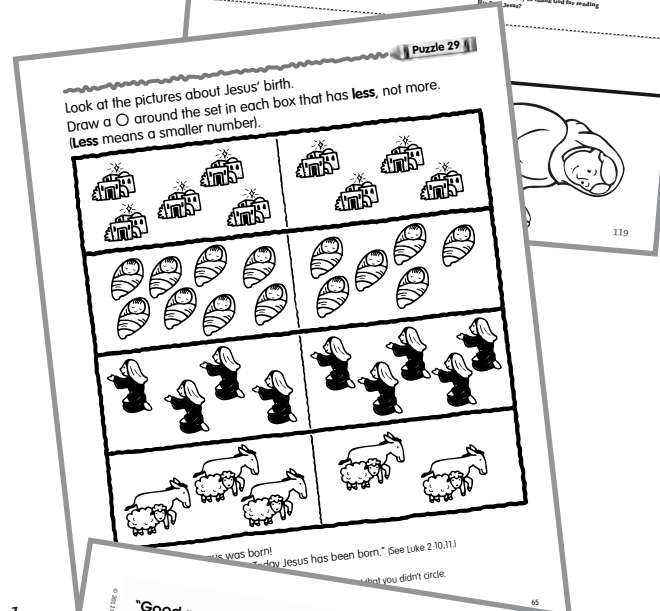
## Preschool Puzzle Center

### Collect

Copies of Puzzles 29 and 30 (p. 65 and p. 67 from *The Big Book of Kindergarten Puzzles*) for each child; pencils, crayons or markers.

### Do

Children complete the puzzles and color pages. Use the conversation suggestions on the pages.



## Read-Aloud Story Center

### Collect

A copy of Story Picture 15 from *The Big Book of Read-Aloud Stories #1* for yourself and each child, crayons or markers.

### Do

Read the story and distribute pictures. Use the conversation suggestions as children complete their pages.

