



Sharing the Christmas Story

Sample Sunday School Lesson Plans
For the four Sundays before Advent



 Presbyterian Church
of Aotearoa New Zealand

INTRODUCTION:

Children love stories and never tire of hearing them over and over again. The story of Jesus' birth must surely be one of the greatest stories ever told and even adults delight in hearing it again every Christmas. These sample Kids Friendly Sunday School lessons give some ideas and structure for bringing the story alive for children. We know that children (and adults for that matter) learn best when they move, play, sing, act and use as many of their senses in the process. These lessons have been written with that in mind. They are also tried and tested and have received the thumbs up by children.

This resource is supported by other Kids Friendly resources namely:

Christmas Crafts
Christmas Games and Quizzes
A Kids Friendly Advent

You are invited to supplement or change it by dipping into these many ideas and activities.

Whatever you do have fun!

For more information on ministering to children or to offer feedback or suggestions:

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Advent/Christmas–Term 4

Sample Sunday School lesson plan

(for the four Sundays before Advent)

Week 1: Introducing the Pageant and Auditions

Leaders: _____

Leading children's time in church: _____

Theme for children's time: _____

Lesson Objective: Excite and interest children in the coming pageant, inspire them to want to be part of it and help them understand what it is. Sometimes the name pageant can be confusing so you might like to call it a Christmas play or concert.

Set up

- ☺ Arrive early or do the day before.
- ☺ Turn on lights to create warm atmosphere and lay out room as you need it. If you are doing crafts set up the tables at the back of the room and cordon them off until craft time to create anticipation.
- ☺ Prepare children's altar table (at front) with world globe, cloth, candle, prayer wheel etc according to what you need.
- ☺ Check room is tidy and notice boards looking good.
- ☺ Set up welcome table in front foyer (with rolls, stickers, prize box, registration forms, welcome packs).

9.30 am – child worship assistant leads kids out of church to Sunday School rooms.

Invite all children and leaders to sit on carpet in a circle. (If you prefer chairs that's fine, but sit in a circle with them. It's much easier to manage behaviour this way and get away from the teacher/student culture.)

Kids Friendly Ritual

- ☺ Ask Worship Assistant to bring bible up and place on special table. Invite a child to light Christ candle. Try to include someone who doesn't do it in church because they are too shy or new etc. Always ask and if necessary explain why we light the Christ candle ie because Jesus shows us the way to live. He is like a light guiding us. Sometimes I give out a spot prize when a child responds to this question – prizes in box in cupboard.

Welcome

- ☺ Ask if any child is new and if so buddy them with a regular attendee and welcome them.
- ☺ Check if they received welcome pack and if not give one to them.
- ☺ Introduce leaders.
- ☺ Ask if anyone has had birthday the week before, sing happy birthday and present bookmark or they can choose something from the prize box.
- ☺ Notices – announce forthcoming children's events

Getting to Know you game: I like to do this if I don't know all the kids but it's up to you. It can be necessary if you don't have leader continuity. For ideas see "**Getting to know you games**" below.

What's a pageant?

Children probably relate better to the tern Christmas play. Invite kids to share their memories, talk about why we re-enact the story each year, what they like about the story, which bits they remember from last year. Get them excited about being part of presenting this special story.

Quiz:

Christmas Stars Quiz: Use PowerPoint to create this quiz or you can print out the questions and stick them up on a board or put them on the floor in the circle. Depending on numbers of children you could divide them into teams either by gender or by Christmas names eg shepherds and angels. You could make score boards and add points for games, quizzes each week over the four week period. Kids have to identify children in pictures from past pageants and identify their role to earn points. It's good if you can get some photos from a range of years. Children love to see themselves or their friends in the photos.

Christmas Quiz: Follow this with a general knowledge quiz on the Christmas story so you can gauge how much they already know to influence your next lessons. **(For sample PowerPoints contact Kids Friendly.)**

Introducing the reason for the season:

Involve children in making a big banner to hang in your Sunday School rooms saying: "Jesus is the reason for the season". Print out one letter per A4 sheet – a good font is Army hollow that children can cut out and colour in to stick on the banner or draw the statement onto the banner for them to colour in. Give them lots of other decorations and materials to decorate the banner. We made a really long banner that went down the side of our hall for all to see during the many weeks before Christmas.

Pageant Auditions: While children are busy making the banner you may like to hear the children who want speaking parts in the play to "audition".

Music: You may like to start teaching children some of the songs that will be sung in the pageant. Play them on a CD while the children are working too so they become familiar. Teach them a rap (see attached samples) as they love those.

Resources needed for this week:

CD and CD player, chalk, whiteboard and pen for scoreboard, letters for craft, pens and crayons for colouring in the letters, long piece of paper or material for banner, data projector.

Prayer Time: Pray with the children on this theme and thank Jesus for coming to our world to show us how to live and love.

Closing

- ☺ Invite children to lead us in the grace or teach us a new grace or teach children how to bless each other. For "**Graces and Blessings**" see below
- ☺ Release for morning tea.

Advent banners

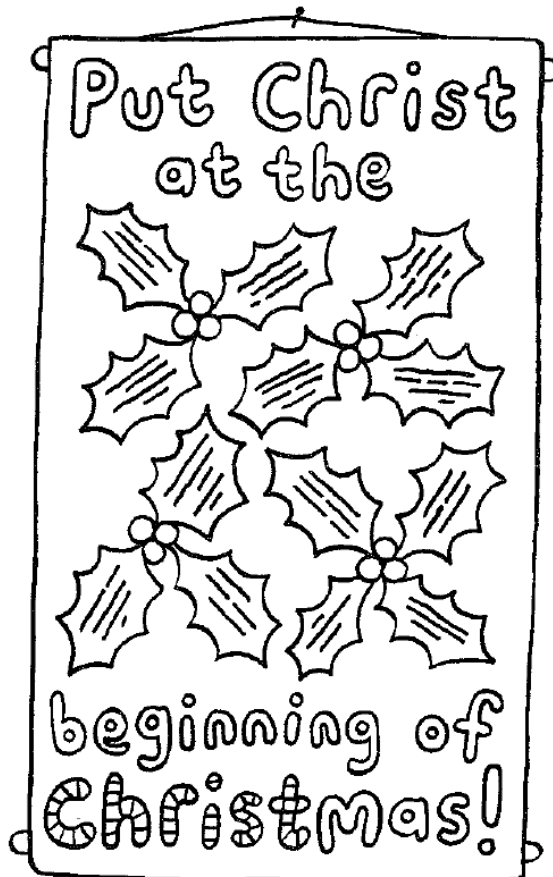
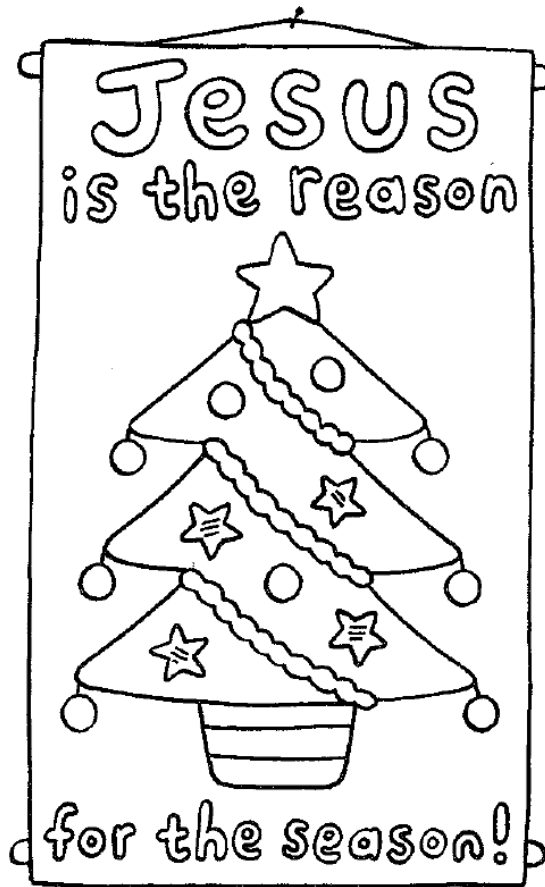
How to make your banner

You will need: a large piece of paper per banner (a length of wallpaper is ideal); felt-tip pens and other colouring equipment; collage materials; glue; length of garden cane or dowelling; string; sticky tape; clean-up and cover-up facilities

Choose a simple design – one of the ones on this page or one of your own – and draw the outline on the paper (you may want the children to help you with this). Leave enough space at the top of the paper so you can hang the banner up when it is finished. Draw the words in outline, so the children can colour them in.

Draw the words in outline letters so the children can colour them in. Use simple Christmas shapes like stars and holly leaves to make striking designs and patterns. Give each child a shape to decorate or encourage them to use their shape to write a one-line prayer.

When the children have finished and the banner is dry, turn the paper over. Place the cane or dowelling near the top of the back of the banner and pull the top of the paper over it. Secure with sticky tape. Tie an end of a piece of string to each end of the cane or dowelling and hang your banner where it can be seen by everyone!



Advent banners

Craft



Advent/Christmas–Term 4 Sample Sunday School lesson plan.

Week 2: The Christmas Story: Angel Gabriel visits Mary

Leaders: _____

Scripture: Luke 1: 26-38, Luke 2: 1-7

In church: Children's Time Leader: _____

Children's Time Theme: _____

Lesson Objective: Share the story and reinforce it with games, quizzes and craft.

Set up:

- ☺ Arrive early or do day before.
- ☺ Turn on lights to create warm atmosphere and lay out room as you need it. If you are doing crafts set up the tables at the back of the room and cordon them off until craft time to create anticipation.
- ☺ Prepare children's altar table (at front) with world globe, cloth, candle, prayer wheel etc according to what you need.
- ☺ Check room is tidy and boards looking good.
- ☺ Set up welcome table (with rolls, stickers, prize box, registrations forms, welcome packs).

9.30 am – child worship assistant leads kids out of church to Sunday School rooms.

Invite all children and leaders to sit on carpet in a circle. (If you prefer chairs that's fine but sit in a circle with them. It's much easier to manage behaviour this way and get away from the teacher/student culture.)

Kids Friendly Ritual

- ☺ Ask Worship Assistant to bring bible up and place on special table. Invite a child to light Christ candle. Try to include someone who doesn't do it in church because they are too shy or new etc. Always ask and if necessary explain why we light the Christ candle ie because Jesus shows us the way to live. He is like a light guiding us. Sometimes I give out a spot prize when a child responds to this question – prizes in box in cupboard.

Welcome

- ☺ Ask if any child is new and if so buddy them with a regular attendee and welcome them.
- ☺ Check if they received welcome pack and if not give one to them.
- ☺ Introduce leaders.
- ☺ Ask if anyone has had birthday the week before, sing happy birthday and present bookmark or they can choose something from the prize box.
- ☺ Notices – announce forthcoming children's events

Getting to Know you game: I like to do this if I don't know all the kids but it's up to you. Good to do if you don't have leader continuity. For ideas see "**Getting to know you games**" below.

Prayers: Use prayer ball and Christmas music. Kids stand in circle throw ball to each other. When music stops child with ball reads prayer under left thumb – all say

prayer associated with that in head for 5 secs until music starts up again.

Introducing Scripture of the day:

Divide kids into 2 teams and get them to name themselves according to one of the characters in the Christmas story eg angels, shepherds etc You could make score boards and add points for games, quizzes each week over the four week period.

Bible Race: Give each child a bible. Team 1 needs to look up scripture 1. **Luke 1: 26 – 38** and team 2 scripture 2. **Luke 2: 1 – 7**. Write the scriptures on the whiteboard to make it easier for them. First person to find reading, stands up and shouts Hallelujah. First team gets 10 points, second team gets 5 points. Keep scores on whiteboard or scoreboard. (Or you can get teams to nominate someone to represent them in the bible race).

Have a play reading with some kids reading out parts as per scriptures attached. Ask which two kids would like to take part of Gabriel and Mary. Adult leader narrates.

Luke 1: 26 – 38 An Angel Tells about the Birth of Jesus

Luke 2: 1 - 7 The Birth of Jesus

Explain the process:

☺ We will be reading small segments of the Christmas story. Children are to listen carefully because there will be quiz questions after each reading.

Reinforcing the theme/scripture:

Quiz: *If you think you know the answer, stand up, raise your hands and clap three times. If you call out the answer before being asked, your team will lose their chance and the points will go to the other team.*

- *First one to do so may give the answer on behalf of their team.*
- *If the answer is correct, your team gets 10 points, if the answer is wrong, the other team may answer (and receive 10 points if their answer is correct). If it goes back to the first team cos second guess is wrong the team then gets 5 points.*

Quiz questions

- ☺ What was the name of the Angel who told Mary she was going to have a baby?
- ☺ Who went travelling in this story?
- ☺ Why did they have to travel?
- ☺ What was the name of the Emperor who said everyone had to travel to the town they were born in?
- ☺ Where did they travel to?
- ☺ What happened to Mary when they were in Bethlehem?
- ☺ What happened when they tried to get a place to rest in the inn?

Games: halo toss and angel strike. Each team plays one game and then swops over.

Angel strike: place angel skittles in row. Have team line up, first member rolls ball and gets as many points as angels knocked over until all team members have had a turn. When you've had your turn go to back of line and sit down. Draw line on floor where kids stand to roll ball.

Halo toss – place angel on a line at the end of the room, draw a line from where team member throws the hoop and tries to get it over the angel. Everyone who gets over the angel gets 5 points for their team.

(see **Kids Friendly Christmas Games** resource for ideas on making skittles, halo's etc)

Craft: Choose an appropriate craft from the Kids Friendly Christmas Crafts resource – there are so many on offer. Or photocopy the attached angel and star patterns onto metallic card and take photos of kids' faces to stick on these to make decorations for your church Christmas tree.

Resources needed for this week:

CD and CD player, chalk, whiteboard and pen for scoreboard, reading printed out for play reading, angel skittles and ball, angel and hoop, bibles.

Prayer Time: Pray with the children on this theme and thank Jesus for coming to our world to show us how to live and love.

Closing

- ☺ Invite children to lead us in the grace or teach us a new grace or teach children how to bless each other. For "**Graces and Blessings**" see below
- ☺ Release for morning tea.

Luke 1: 26 – 38 An Angel Tells about the Birth of Jesus

26One month later God sent the angel Gabriel to the town of Nazareth in Galilee **27**with a message for a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to Joseph from the family of King David. **28**The angel greeted Mary and said,

ANGEL GABRIEL: "You are truly blessed! The Lord is with you."

29Mary was confused by the angel's words and wondered what they meant. **30**Then the angel told Mary,

ANGEL GABRIEL: "Don't be afraid! God is pleased with you, 31and you will have a son. His name will be Jesus. 32He will be great and will be called the Son of God Most High. The Lord God will make him king, as his ancestor

**David was. 33He will rule the people of Israel forever,
and his kingdom will never end."**

34Mary asked the angel:

MARY: "**How can this happen? I am not married!**"

35The angel answered,

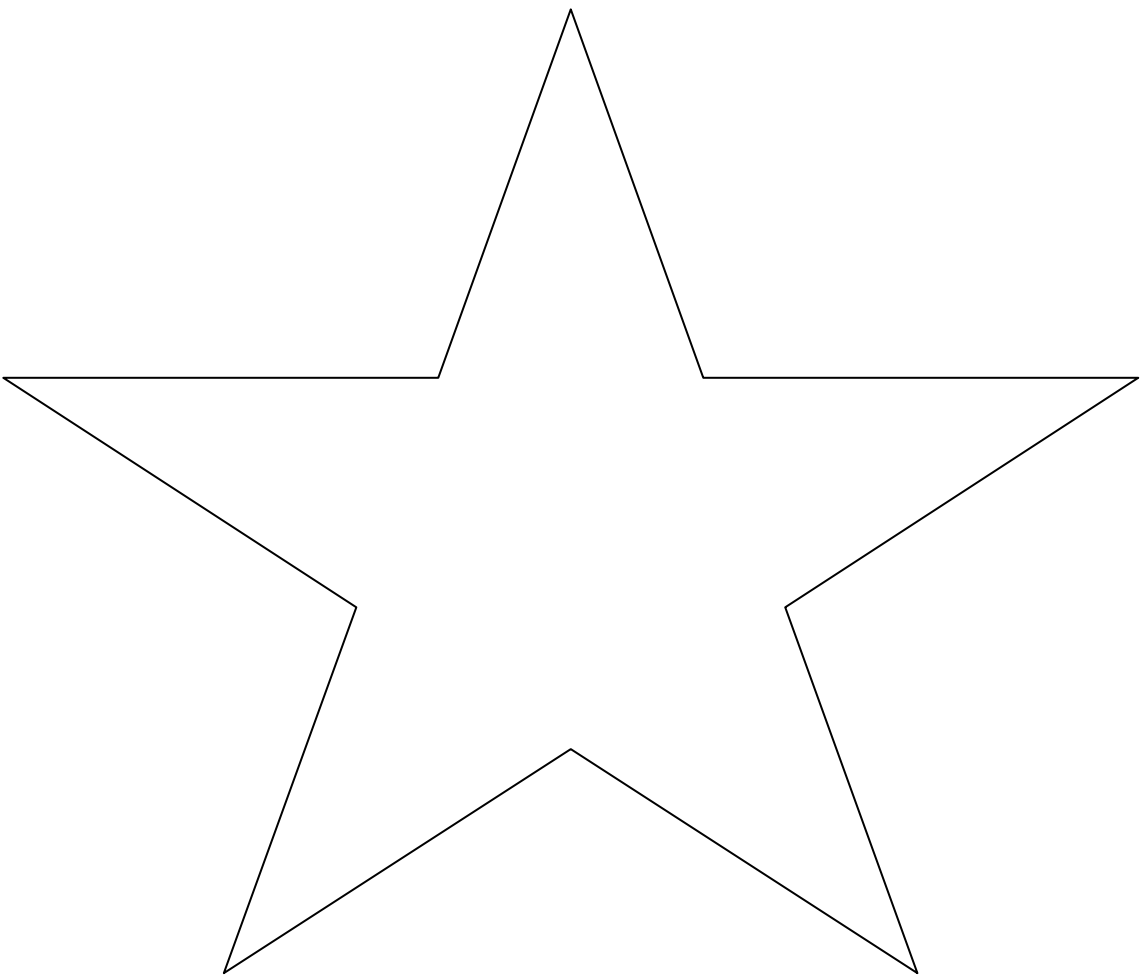
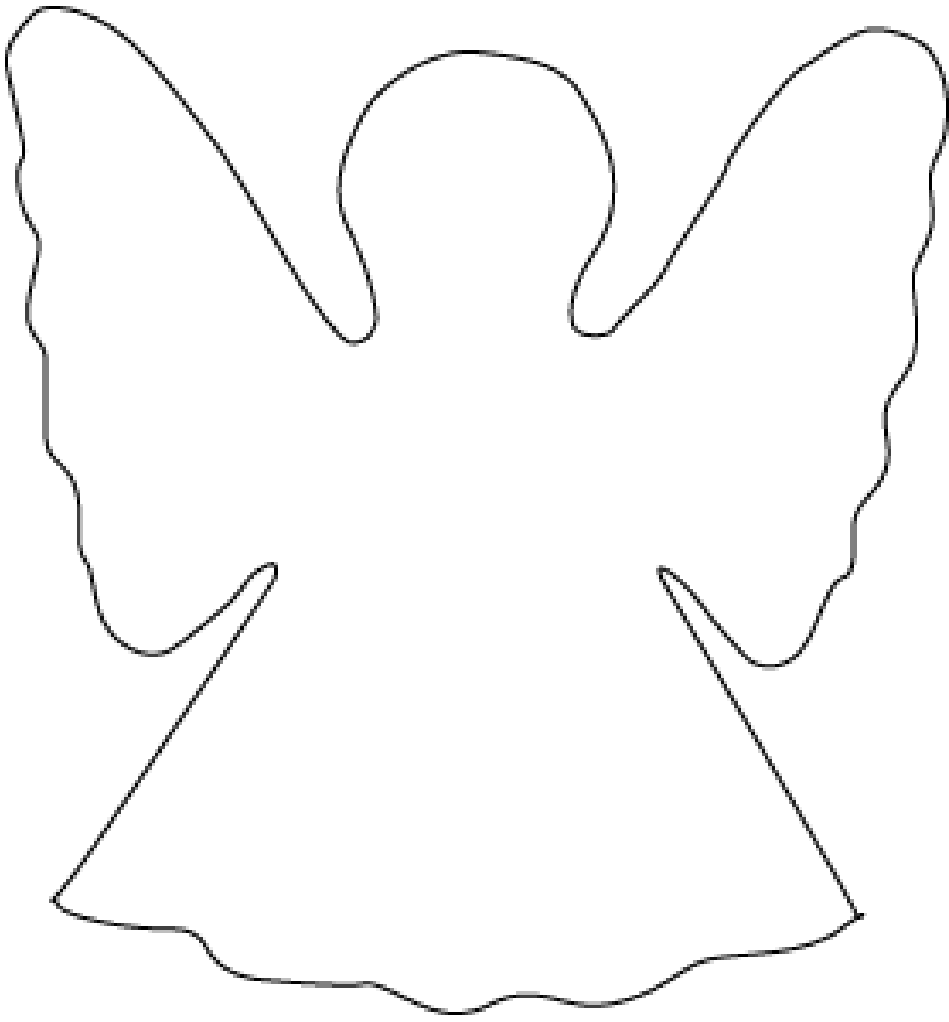
ANGEL GABRIEL: "**The Holy Spirit will come down to you, and God's power will come over you. So your child will be called the holy Son of God. 37Nothing is impossible for God!**"

38MARY said, "**I am the Lord's servant! Let it happen as you have said.**" And the angel left her.

Luke 2: 1 - 7 The Birth of Jesus

1About that time Emperor Augustus gave orders for the names of all the people to be listed in record books. (this is called a census) **3**Everyone had to go to their own hometown (where they were born) to be listed. **4**So Joseph had to leave Nazareth in Galilee and go to Bethlehem in Judea.

5Mary was engaged to Joseph and travelled with him to Bethlehem. She was soon going to have a baby, **6**and while they were there, **7**she gave birth to her first-born ^[c] son. She dressed him in baby clothes ^[d] and laid him on a bed of hay, because there was no room for them in the inn.





Advent/Christmas–Term 4 Sample Sunday School lesson plan.

Week 3: The Christmas Story: The Shepherds

Leaders: _____

Scripture: **Luke 2: 8-14**

In church: Children's Time Leader: _____

Children's Time Theme: _____

Lesson Objective: Share the story and reinforce it with games, quizzes and craft.

Set up:

- ☺ Arrive early or do day before.
- ☺ Turn on lights to create warm atmosphere and lay out room as you need it. If you are doing crafts set up the tables at the back of the room and cordon them off until craft time to create anticipation.
- ☺ Prepare children's altar table (at front) with world globe, cloth, candle, prayer wheel etc according to what you need.
- ☺ Check room is tidy and boards looking good.
- ☺ Set up welcome table (with rolls, stickers, prize box, registrations forms, welcome packs).

9.30 am – child worship assistant leads kids out of church to Sunday School rooms.

Invite all children and leaders to sit on carpet in a circle. (If you prefer chairs that's fine, but sit in a circle with them. It's much easier to manage behaviour this way and get away from the teacher/student culture.)

Kids Friendly Ritual

- ☺ Ask Worship Assistant to bring bible up and place on special table. Invite a child to light Christ candle. Try to include someone who doesn't do it in church because they are too shy or new etc. Always ask and if necessary explain why we light the Christ candle ie because Jesus shows us the way to live. He is like a light guiding us. Sometimes I give out a spot prize when a child responds to this question.

Welcome

- ☺ Ask if any child is new and if so buddy them with a regular attendee and welcome them.
- ☺ Check if they received welcome pack and if not give one to them.
- ☺ Introduce leaders.
- ☺ Ask if anyone has had birthday the week before, sing happy birthday and present bookmark or they can choose something from the prize box.
- ☺ Notices – announce forthcoming children's events

Getting to Know you game: I like to do this if I don't know all the kids but it's up to you. Good to do if you don't have leader continuity. For ideas see "**Getting to know you games**" below.

Prayers: Use prayer ball or prayer wheel etc.

Introducing Scripture of the day: Tell kids to get into their teams from last week. Choose a team leader for the day. For kids who weren't there last week allocate them to a team.

Bible Race: Get kids to choose a member from each of their teams to come up front to search for the bible reading – "on your marks get set go."

First person to find it gets ten points, second person 5 points. Keep scores on scoreboard.

Write the scripture they are looking for on the whiteboard to make it easier for them. **Luke 2: 8-14.** When person finds reading, he/she stands up and shouts Hallelujah.

Have a play reading with some kids reading out parts (angel, group of angels, shepherd) as per scripture attached. Ask which two kids would like to take parts and you be the narrator or give it to a really good reader.

TELL THE KIDS THERE WILL BE A TEAM QUIZ AFTER THE READING SO THEY NEED TO LISTEN REALLY WELL

Reinforcing the theme/scripture with a quiz:

Explain: If you think you know the answer, stand up, raise your hands and clap three times. If you call out the answer before being asked your team will lose their chance and the points will go to the other team.

- *First one to do so may give the answer on behalf of their team.*
- *If the answer is correct, your team gets 10 points, if the answer is wrong, the other team may answer (and receive 10 points if their answer is correct). If it goes back to the first team cos second guess is wrong the team then gets 5 points.*

Quiz questions

- ☺ Where were the shepherds when the angels appeared?
- ☺ What did the angels tell the shepherds?
- ☺ Where did they have to go to find the baby?
- ☺ What was the baby's name?
- ☺ What was the baby's mother's name?
- ☺ What was the baby lying in when they found him?

Games: Shepherds' Race (optional depending how much time you have)

Provide each child with materials to make a sheep (*one large marshmallow, and 5 little ones, and tooth picks; or pompons, sheep face and feet and a glue stick*) and ask them to make a sheep. Provide each team with a staff (candy cane) and explain they will have to guide their sheep into a sheepfold before they could leave for Bethlehem. Place sheep on the floor covered with clean sheet if they want to eat their sheep at the end of the game. Move sheep forward with candy cane staff and into a sheepfold placed at the end of the room. As soon as the first shepherd is back, pass the staff to the next shepherd etc. First team who has all their sheep safely in the fold wins.

Craft: Choose an appropriate craft from the **Kids Friendly Christmas Crafts** resource – there are so many on offer.

Resources needed for this week:

Whiteboard board and whiteboard pen, score chart, craft materials, marshmallows, toothpicks, sheet, boxes for sheep pen, printouts of scripture reading, bibles, prayer ball/prayer wheel etc

Closing

- ☺ Invite children to lead us in the grace or teach us a new grace or teach children how to bless each other.
- ☺ Release for morning tea.

The Shepherds Luke 2: 8-14

That night in the fields near Bethlehem some shepherds were guarding their sheep. All at once an angel came down to them from the Lord, and the brightness of the Lord's glory flashed around them. The shepherds were frightened. But the angel said,

ANGEL: "Don't be afraid! I have good news for you, which will make everyone happy. This very day in King David's hometown a Savior was born for you. He is Christ the Lord. You will know who he is, because you will find him dressed in baby clothes and lying on a bed of hay."

Suddenly many other angels came down from heaven and joined in praising God. They said:

GROUP OF ANGELS: "Praise God in heaven! Peace on earth to everyone who pleases God."

After the angels had left and gone back to heaven, the shepherds said to each other,

SHEPHERD: "Let's go to Bethlehem and see what the Lord has told us about."

They hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and they saw the baby lying on a bed of hay.

When the shepherds saw Jesus, they told his parents what the angel had said about him. Everyone listened and was surprised. But Mary kept thinking about all this and wondering what it meant.

As the shepherds returned to their sheep, they were praising God and saying wonderful things about him. Everything they had seen and heard was just as the angel had said.

Eight days later Jesus' parents did for him what the Law of Moses commands. And they named him Jesus, just as the angel had told Mary when he promised she would have a baby.



Advent/Christmas–Term 4

Sample Sunday School lesson plan.

Week 4: The Christmas Story: The Wisemen

Leaders: _____ Scripture: **Matthew 2: 1 - 11**

In church: Children's Time Leader: _____

Children's Time Theme: _____

Lesson Objective: Share the story and reinforce it with games, quizzes and craft.

Set up:

- ☺ Arrive early or do day before.
- ☺ Turn on lights to create warm atmosphere and lay out room as you need it. If you are doing crafts set up the tables at the back of the room and cordon them off until craft time to create anticipation.
- ☺ Prepare children's altar table (at front) with world globe, cloth, candle, prayer wheel etc according to what you need.
- ☺ Check room is tidy and boards looking good.
- ☺ Set up welcome table (with rolls, stickers, prize box, registrations forms, welcome packs).

9.30 am – child worship assistant leads kids out of church to Sunday School rooms.

Invite all children and leaders to sit on carpet in a circle. (If you prefer chairs that's fine, but sit in a circle with them. It's much easier to manage behaviour this way and get away from the teacher/student culture.)

Kids Friendly Ritual

- ☺ Ask Worship Assistant to bring bible up and place on special table. Invite a child to light Christ candle. Try to include someone who doesn't do it in church because they are too shy or new etc. Always ask and if necessary explain why we light the Christ candle ie because Jesus shows us the way to live. He is like a light guiding us. Sometimes I give out a spot prize when a child responds to this question.

Welcome

- ☺ Ask if any child is new and if so buddy them with a regular attendee and welcome them.
- ☺ Check if they received welcome pack and if not give one to them.
- ☺ Introduce leaders.
- ☺ Ask if anyone has had birthday the week before, sing happy birthday and present bookmark or they can choose something from the prize box.
- ☺ Notices – announce forthcoming children's events

Getting to Know you game: I like to do this if I don't know all the kids but it's up to you. Good to do if you don't have leader continuity. For ideas see "**Getting to know you games**" below.

Prayers: Have a time of creative prayer and sharing

Music: You may like to sing some Christmas songs or practise some for the Christmas play.

Introducing Scripture of the day: Tell kids to get into their teams from last week. Choose a leader for the day. For kids who weren't there last week allocate them to a team.

Bible Race: Get kids to choose a member from each of their teams to come up front to search for the bible reading – "on your marks get set go."

Matthew 2: 1-11

Write the scripture on the white board to make it easier for them to remember. First person to find it stands up and shouts Hallelujah and gets ten points, second person 5 points. Keep scores.

Have a play reading with some kids reading out parts as per scripture attached. Ask which two kids would like to take parts and you be the narrator or give it to a really good reader.

TELL THE KIDS THERE WILL BE A TEAM QUIZ AFTER THE READING SO THEY NEED TO LISTEN REALLY WELL

Reinforcing the theme/scripture with a quiz:

Explain: If you think you know the answer, stand up, raise your hands and clap three times. If you call out the answer before being asked your team will lose their chance and the points will go to the other team.

- *First one to do so may give the answer on behalf of their team.*
- *If the answer is correct, your team gets 10 points, if the answer is wrong, the other team may answer (and receive 10 points if their answer is correct). If it goes back to the first team cos second guess is wrong the team then gets 5 points.*

Quiz questions

- What was the name of the king when Jesus was born?
- After Jesus was born some important visitors travelled to Jerusalem to visit the new king that was born. Who were they?
- How did they know that Jesus was born?
- How did they find Jesus?
- In what direction was the star – north, south, east or west?
- Where did they find Jesus?
- What was one of the presents the wisemen gave Jesus (and the others?)
- Why did the king want them to find Jesus?
- Who told Joseph (Jesus' father) that the king Herod wanted to kill him?
- Where did Joseph, Mary and Jesus go and live to escape the king?

Game - Star treasure hunt and puzzle

Each team needs to search for 10 stars of one colour ie red for team 1 and green for team 2. Written on each of the 5 stars is a statement about different characters in the story. Written on the other 5 stars is a character's name. When the kids have found all the stars, they try to match the statements with the characters. When they have matched them, they all stand up and shout Hallelujah. First team gets 50 points, second team gets 25 points.

Game - Magi Gift Delivery Race

Each team will be given a wrapped present. Teams line up with all players behind each other. First person passes the present over his head, next person through his legs (as in the "over and under" pass the ball game). After the last person takes the present, he runs back to the front of the line and repeats the process - continue until the person who started is back in the front position.

First team with leader back in front sits down and shouts hallelujah and wins 50 points. Second team wins 25 points.

Craft: Choose an appropriate craft from the **Kids Friendly Christmas Crafts** resource – there are so many on offer.

Resources needed for this week:

Whiteboard board and whiteboard pen, score chart, craft materials, resources for games ie stars in different colours and two presents. Printouts of scripture reading, bibles, prayer ball/prayer wheel.

Closing

- ☺ Invite children to lead us in the grace or teach us a new grace or teach children how to bless each other.
- ☺ Release for morning tea.

Matthew 2: 1-11 The Wise Men

When Jesus was born in the village of Bethlehem in Judea, Herod was king. During this time some wise men from the east came to Jerusalem and said,

WISEMAN 1: "Where is the child born to be king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him."

When King Herod heard about this, he was worried, and so was everyone else in Jerusalem. Herod brought together the chief priests and the teachers of the Law of Moses and asked them,

HEROD: **"Where will the Messiah be born?"**

They told him,

CHIEF PRIEST: **"He will be born in Bethlehem, just as the prophet wrote, 'Bethlehem in the land of Judea, you are very important among the towns of Judea. From your town will come a leader, who will be like a shepherd for my people Israel.' "**

Herod secretly called in the wise men and said to them:

HEROD: **"Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, let me know. I want to go and worship him too."**

Matthew 2: 9-11

The wise men listened to what the king said and then left. And the star they had seen in the east went on ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. They were thrilled and excited to see the star.

When the men went into the house and saw the child with Mary, his mother, they knelt down and worshiped him. They took out their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh and gave them to him. Later they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, and they went back home by another road.

After the wise men had gone, an angel from the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said,

ANGEL: **"Get up! Hurry and take the child and his mother to Egypt! Stay there until I tell you to return, because Herod is looking for the child and wants to kill him."**

That night, Joseph got up and took his wife and the child to Egypt, where they stayed until Herod died.

WORDS FOR STARS

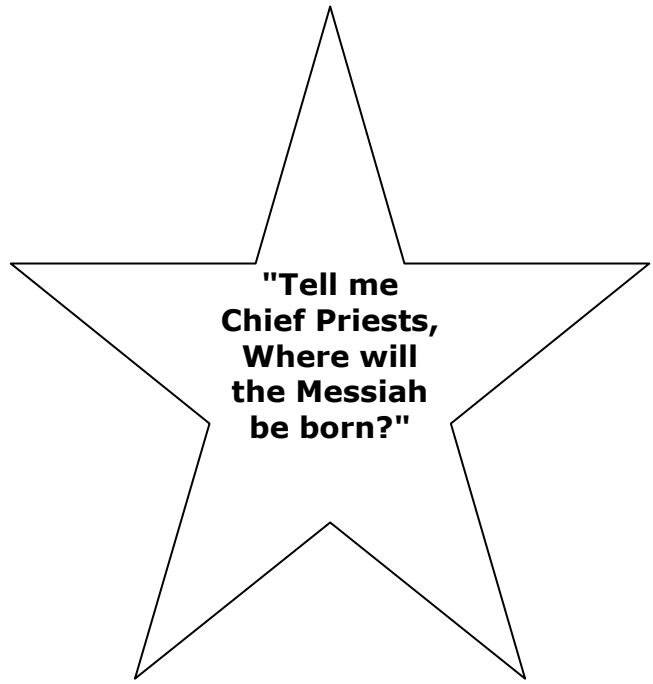
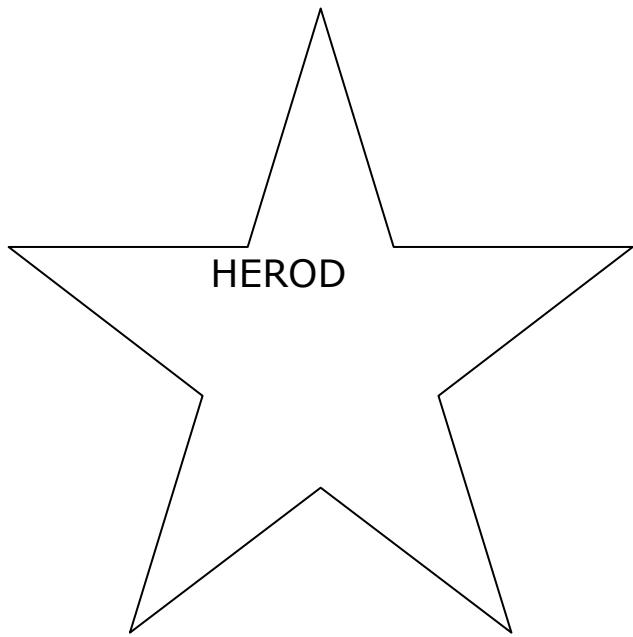
HEROD: "Tell me Chief Priests, Where will the Messiah be born?"

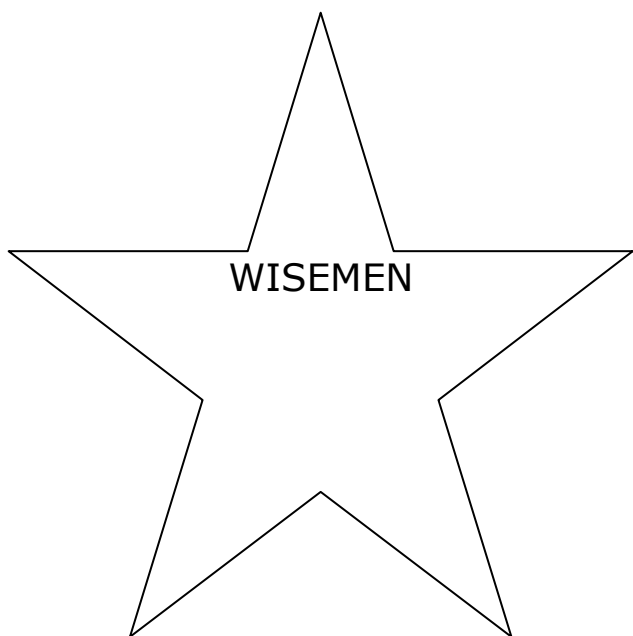
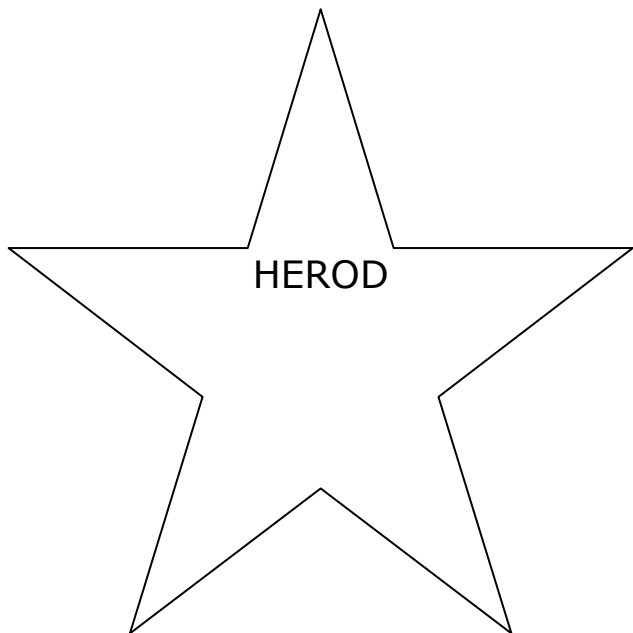
CHIEF PRIEST: "He will be born in Bethlehem, just as the prophet wrote."

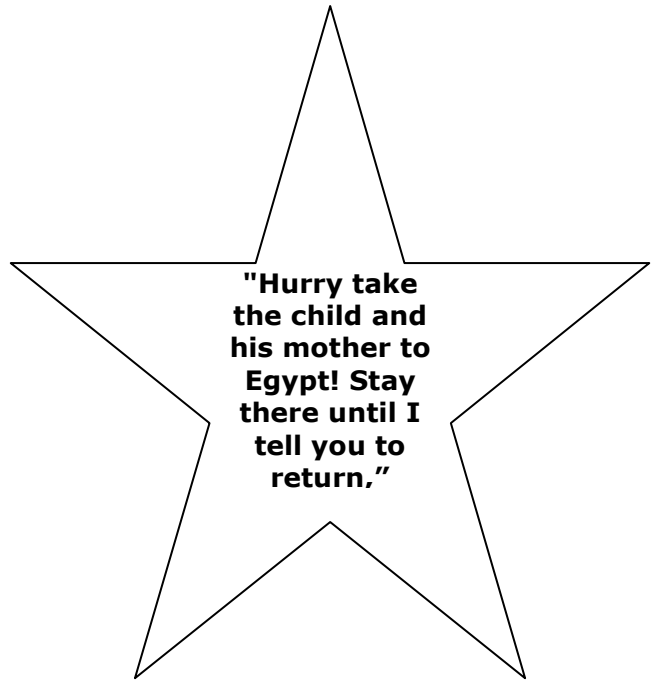
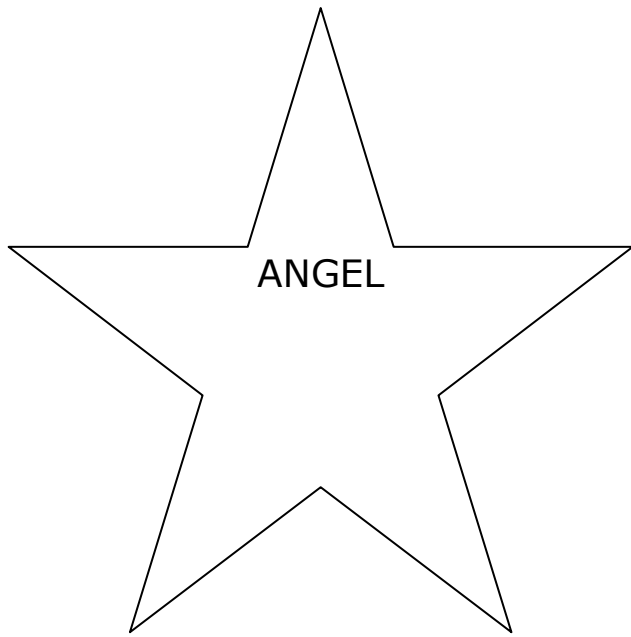
HEROD: "Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, let me know. I want to go and worship him too."

WISEMEN: "We have brought you gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh"

ANGEL: "Get up! Hurry and take the child and his mother to Egypt! Stay there until I tell you to return, because Herod is looking for the child and wants to kill him."







Extra Game - Capture the Star

Circle in middle of room (chalk on carpet or Hula Hoop) and one circle in each corner of the room (same)

Stars in middle hula hoop (at least 1 per child)

Divide group into two teams. Number each child in the team (eg 1 – 6). Call a number and all four of that number must run to the middle circle pick up a star and take it back to their team's circle – can't throw it in, have to place it (or it is confiscated). The child keeps running back to get more until next number is called and the star hunters change. When the new number is called, kids who are not that number can't pick up a star or it is confiscated. When all the stars have gone from the middle circle kids can run and steal stars from other teams' circles. When you say stop – count each team's stars and each team the number of points according to how many stars they got.

MORE RESOURCES TO HELP YOU:

GETTING TO KNOW YOU GAMES

1. Children stand in line across end of room. One is leader and calls out a letter. If the letter is in a child's name he takes a leap forward and so on until he/she reaches the other end and touches the leader and shouts his name. First one there gets to take over the letter calling and so on until last one has reached the end line.
2. Sit in circle and throw a ball, cushion or soft toy to person whose name you know. As you throw object say "hi Jill" and so on until everyone knows each others' name.
3. Kids sit in circle. Leader starts by crossing arms over chest and saying: "I'm Jill and God loves me, pass it on" and taps person on left or right of her to pass it on, until it has gone around the room. You can get them to repeat this faster and faster each time you go around the circle.
4. Create hangman on a white board. Give each child a turn to place dashes for as many letters of her name and get other kids to guess the letters for her name. First one to guess her name, gets to rub out hangman and start again with his name (best for small groups).

INTERACTIVE PRAYERS:

Prayers for the world

Use a globe. Invite a child to spin the globe and then point to a country. Talk about what it could be like for children in this country and then pray for them.

The five-finger prayer

Do you ever have trouble thinking of something to say when you are talking to a friend? I do. I have a friend that I walk with every day and sometimes we go for a long time without either of us saying anything. We just can't think of anything to say.

Sometimes that same thing happens when I am praying. I start to pray and then I just can't think of anything to say. Does that ever happen to you? Well, today, I want to show you something that will help you when that happens. It is called the "Five Finger Prayer."

First, I want you to put your hands together in front of you as if you are praying. Keep your eyes open so that you can see your hands. You will notice that the closest finger to you is the thumb. Since it is the closest to you, the thumb reminds you to pray for those that are closest to you. Pray for your parents and your brothers or sisters.

The next finger is called your index finger. It is used for pointing. Let this finger remind you to pray for those that point you in the right direction. Pray for your teachers at school, your Sunday School teacher, and your pastor.

The next finger is the tallest finger. This finger reminds us to pray for our leaders. Pray for the president and other leaders in our government and those who are leaders in our town.

The fourth finger is the called the ring finger. Did you know that this is the weakest of all the fingers? Just ask any one who plays the piano and they will tell you that is true. Let this finger remind you to pray for those who are sick.

The next finger is the smallest finger. The Bible says, "Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought." Let the little finger remind you to pray for yourself.

So the next time you are talking to God, and you can't think of anything to say, let the "Five Finger Prayer" help you.

Dear Lord, we thank you for prayer. It is good to have a friend to talk to, but even friends sometimes have trouble thinking of something to say. Help us to remember this "Five Finger Prayer" to remember those who need our prayers. Amen.

Prayer Huddle

Form a circle and have kids "huddle" by putting their arms over the shoulders of the people next to them. Lead this cheer: Two, four, six, eight. God, we do appreciate_____. Then have each person in the circle shout out one thing he or she is thankful for. End with the group cheering: Yea, God!

Spin the bottle

Place an empty bottle in the middle of a circle. One person spins it and shouts a prayer eg "thank you God for_____" or "We pray for peace " etc (you can suggest or get them to suggest what kind of prayers we are going to do and then change them after a few people have had a turn.) The person the bottle points to gets to pray next and then spins the bottle again.

Prayer wheel

Cut out a big round of card and an arrow that you attach with a split pin or a nail that goes through the card into a cork at the back. Divide the card into segments and ask kids to suggest what kind of prayers we could put in each segment ie prayers for our country, people, thank you, please, sorry etc Write the kind of prayer in each segment and then get kids to spin the arrow and according to where it lands offer a prayer accordingly.

Musical prayers

Have cards/coloured paper with types of prayers on them (as above) and place them all over the floor. Play music and get kids to march around the room singing with the CD. When the music stops, kids jump onto nearest card, close eyes for 5 seconds and say a silent prayer as per the card.

Candlelight Prayer

You'll need matches, a big candle, and small individual candles (can use tee lights @ 8 for \$2). Place the big candle on a table in the centre of a preferably darkened room. As you light the candle, invite kids to gather in a circle around the table. Invite a child to light the candle saying: "We light the Christ candle" Get all other kids to respond:

"Christ is the light of the world"

Stand by the candle and say: Today we're going to offer prayers of praise (or thanks). Pick up a small candle, light it from the big candle, and complete this sentence prayer: God, I praise (thank) you for _____.

Invite kids to take candles and follow your example. Have everyone carefully extinguish the candles, close their eyes and sit in silence for half a minute. You may want to allow kids to take their candles home to use during personal quiet times with God. If you do, encourage children to get their parents' permission to light it.

A variation: Light a small candle from the big candle and then give it to a child saying: "May God's light shine through you _____" Invite that child to light a small tee light from the main "Christ" candle and present to another child saying the same words and so on.

Introducing Prayer – The Praying Mantis

This little bug looks a little like a grasshopper, but do you know what it is? That's right a praying mantis. The name comes from their front legs. Their front legs are folded like praying hands. But the bug isn't praying. God made this bug with the front legs folded to look the way it does. Sometimes boys and girls fold their hands in church. They look like the praying mantis, but like the praying mantis, they aren't really praying. They just look like they are. Prayer is more



than folding your hands or positioning yourself on your knees. Prayer is talking to God. You can talk to God when you're riding your bike. You can talk to him as you walk to the store. Prayer isn't about a location. You don't have to be in church or on your knees. It isn't about folded hands, its about conversation. God wants you to talk to Him, just like you would your best friend. You are so precious to Him and He wants you to know Him. He wants you to talk to Him every single day.

GRACES

Teach children graces to share before morning tea and to take home to share with their families

Superman Grace

Thank you Lord for giving us food (one arm up)
Thank you Lord for giving us food (other arm up)
Thank you Lord, Thank you Lord (wave arms)
For giving us food (circle arms around and take off)

The Adams Family

Diddle dee dum (click, click), Diddle dee dum (click, click)
Diddle dee dum, Diddle dee dum, Diddle dee dum (click, click)

We're hungry and we're thirsty,
We're rumbly in our tummy
We know the food is yummy
And so we thank you Lord (Repeat chorus)

Thank you for the world so sweet (hum hum)

Thank you for the food we eat (yum yum)
Thank you for the birds that singalingaling
Thank you God for everything.

Row Row Row the Boat

We thank you Lord for happy hearts
For rain and sunny weather
We thank you Lord for this our food
And that we are together.

Oh the Lord's been good to me

And so I thank you Lord
For giving me the things I need
The sun and the rain and the apple seed
Thank you thank you Lord.

We will we will thank you (tune: We will rock you – Queen)

God you are a good God
Please accept this grace
As we sit and feed our face
We've got food on our plates
We think that's great
And pretty soon we'll be putting on weight
Singing we will we will thank you (clap clap)
We will we will thank you (clap clap)

Blessing each other:

Get kids to choose a partner

† Face your partner: make a cross on her forehead saying:

"God bless you and keep you"

† Make a semi-circle with your arms from the top of her head to her waist saying:

"God make His light to shine around you..."

† lift her arms high saying:

"and through you"

† Place hands on her shoulders saying:

"And grant you His peace".