



SESSION ONE

God Gives Us Jesus

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 1:18-25; 3; 4:23-25; Luke 1:11-60; 2:1-20

BIBLE MEMORY VERSE

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 1 John 4:9

LESSON FOCUS

God's love is shown in Jesus.

BIBLE AIMS

During this session, each student may

1. DISCOVER that God sent His Son, Jesus, to show His love for us;
2. DESCRIBE situations in which to show God's love to others;
3. ASK God for help to show His love to others;
4. PRAY to become a member of God's family, as the Holy Spirit leads.

BIBLE STORY RECAP

One day an angel told Zechariah and his wife, Elizabeth, that they would have a son named John. John would help people prepare for the promised Savior. Angels then visited Elizabeth's cousin Mary and Joseph, the man Mary was engaged to marry. The angels said that Mary would have God's Son—the Savior! Mary's baby was born in Bethlehem and named Jesus.

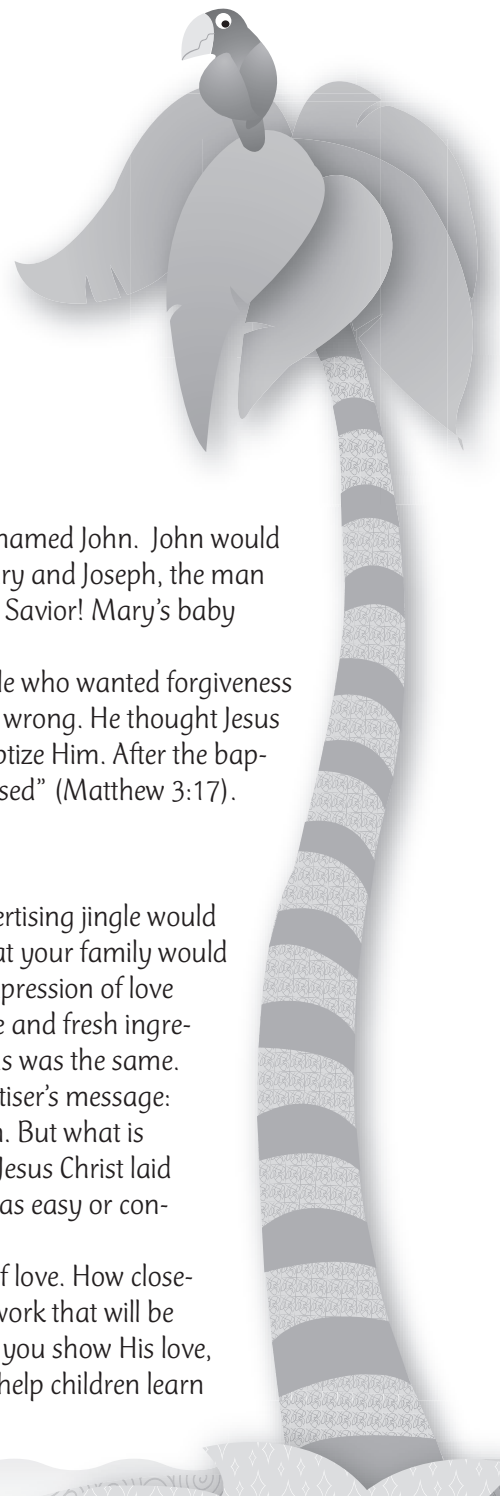
After the babies grew up, Jesus went to the Jordan River. John was baptizing people who wanted forgiveness for their sins. Jesus asked John to baptize Him. John knew Jesus hadn't done anything wrong. He thought Jesus should baptize him instead! But Jesus obeyed God in everything and insisted John baptize Him. After the baptism, a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). God sent His Son, Jesus, to show His love for us.

TEACHER'S DEVOTIONAL

"Nothin' says lovin' like somethin' from the oven!" Or at least that's what an old advertising jingle would have you believe. But the advertiser was selling a prepared product and implying that your family would never notice the difference between it and something made from scratch. A baked expression of love could be easy and convenient or it could be difficult and inconvenient, involving time and fresh ingredients! The advertiser would have us believe that the effort required by both methods was the same.

As you might suspect, what people think about love can be a lot like that advertiser's message: Love should be easy and convenient. It should just happen, like a chemical reaction. But what is God's definition of love? First John 3:16 tells us, "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us." When Jesus surrendered His life for us, He did not do what was easy or convenient. Jesus showed us *agape* love—total and complete.

Before your week of VBS work begins, take time to consider your definition of love. How closely does it align with Jesus' definition? Then commit yourself to do cheerfully the work that will be needed—whether easy or difficult, convenient or inconvenient. Ask God to help you show His love, especially during trying moments. God has put you in this place, this week, to help children learn to know what His love really is!



BIBLE STORY REVIEW GAME

Materials Checklist

- ◆ SonTreasure Island CD and player
- ◆ Undersea Cards (pp. 31-33)
- ◆ card stock
- ◆ scissors or paper cutter
- ◆ large blue covering (parachute, tarp, tablecloth, bedsheet, length of fabric, etc.)

UNDER THE BIG BLUE SEA

PREPARATION: Photocopy the appropriate age-level Undersea Cards onto card stock, making two sets of cards. Cut cards apart and place cards facedown on the floor. Spread out large blue covering on floor, covering the cards.

PROCEDURE: Students form two teams and line up on opposite sides of the blue covering. Assign players on one team the name of a sea creature (shark, dolphin, whale, seahorse, starfish, crab, angel fish, etc.). Assign players on other team the same names, but start at the opposite end of the line (sketch a).

Begin playing "Island Sounds" from CD. Team members squat to hold the edges of the covering, but they don't lift it yet. Call out one of the assigned sea creature names. Students stand and lift covering. The two students who were assigned the name called duck under the covering, grab a card and bring it back to their respective teams (sketch b). As students bring cards to their teams, team members squat down and place covering back on floor. Repeat process.

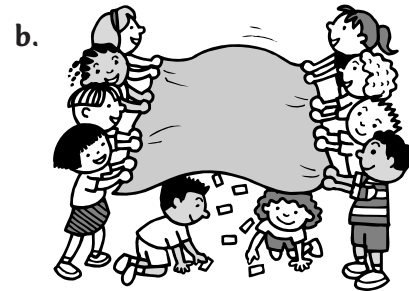
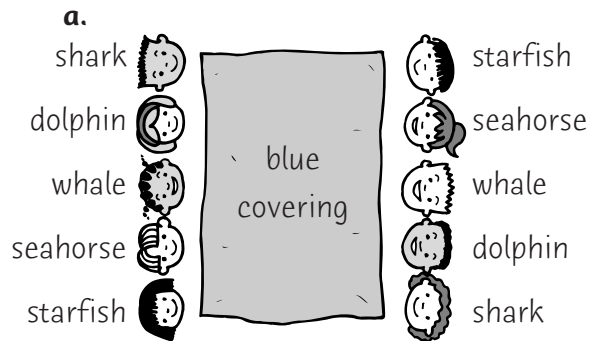
If a student brings a duplicate card, the next player who is called must return duplicate card before choosing a new card. Once all cards have been collected, teams race to place cards in the correct story sequence or word order. The first team to correctly order the cards reads them aloud in order. Repeat game as time allows.

KEY CONVERSATION: Every year we celebrate Jesus' birth at Christmas. But we don't have to wait until Christmas to thank God for giving us Jesus! God gave us Jesus because He loves us. And because He loves us, we can show God's love to others. When are some times you can show God's love to the people in your family? In your neighborhood?

Today we've been talking about a particular aspect of God's love. Who can tell me today's Daily Treasure? (God's Love Is Giving.) Sharing God's love with others is like sharing a treasure. This week we'll all discover great things about the treasure of God's love.

PRIMARY SIMPLIFICATION: Use the primary age-level Undersea Cards found on page 31. These cards are numbered in story order and are simpler to read.

PRETEEN CHALLENGE: Use the preteen age-level Undersea Cards found on page 33. Before placing cards in order, students fill in the missing words.



MEMORY VERSE GAME

LOVE LETTERS IN THE SAND

PREPARATION: Display poster. Post large sheet of paper next to poster. Put sand in trays. Spread newspaper on floor and place trays on newspaper. Dampen sand using spray bottles. Use masking tape to make a starting line about 6 feet (1.8 m) from trays.

PROCEDURE: Point to poster and read verse aloud, asking students to read along with you. Ask students to suggest simple pictures that could be used in place of verse words. (A heart for the word “love.” A large numeral 1 for the word “one.”) On large sheet of paper, write verse again, using suggested drawings in place of words.

Students divide into two teams, and then each team divides into pairs. Give each pair a bandana, scarf or cloth strip. Pairs tie their dominant hands together and then form a line with their team behind the starting line.

At your signal, the first pair from each team hurries to the sand tray and uses their tied hands to write the first word of the memory verse or draw the suggested picture. First pair returns to their team and tags the next pair. That pair hurries to sand tray, smooths the sand and draws or writes the next picture or word. Continue until each team completes the verse. As time permits, play game again.



Materials Checklist

- ◆ Session 1 Memory Verse Poster from *Elementary Teaching Resources*
- ◆ large sheet of paper
- ◆ several shallow trays
- ◆ sand
- ◆ newspaper
- ◆ spray bottles filled with water
- ◆ masking tape
- ◆ marker

For each pair of players—

- ◆ bandana, scarf or cloth strip

KEY CONVERSATION: For whom did God send His Son into the world?

(All the people in the world. Everyone.) **Our verse says “that we might live through him.” This means that Jesus made it possible for us to have our sins forgiven and live with Him forever.**

In order to play this game, you had to work together as pairs. That isn’t always easy to do! But working together kindly is a way to show God’s love. Because God loves us, we can show His love to others. Who can you show God’s love to?

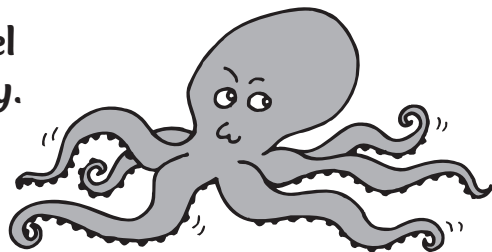
Who can tell me what today’s Daily Treasure tells us about God’s love? (God’s Love Is Giving.) God gives good things to us and we can give to others. One of the best things we can give is God’s love. God’s love is a treasure that becomes richer as we share it with others.

PRIMARY SIMPLIFICATION: Instead of tying hands together, pairs each hold onto the same pencil or craft stick and use it to draw. Instead of writing words, pairs draw only the suggested drawings.

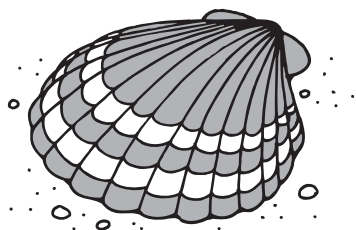
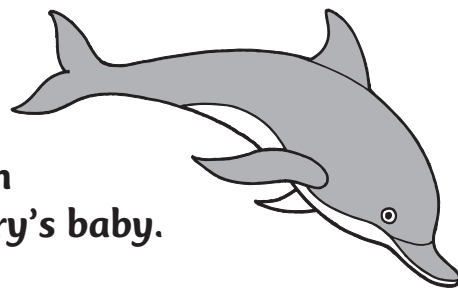
PRETEEN CHALLENGE: Use Sandy Verse Cards on page 34. Photocopy a set of cards for each team and cut out. Place each set of cards in a bag and place next to sand tray. Instead of tying partners’ hands together, one partner in each pair will be the Drawer and the other will be the Reader. As each pair reaches the sand tray, Reader selects a card from the bag. Reader doesn’t show the card to Drawer but describes what Drawer should draw. For example, if the card shows the Earth, Reader might say, **Draw a large circle. Inside the circle, draw some squiggly shapes.** Drawer then guesses which verse word the drawing stands for. For cards with words, Reader tells Drawer how many words are on the card and then spells words one letter at a time as Drawer writes them until he or she guesses what the words are.

When Drawer has successfully guessed the word or words, the pair takes the card and returns to the team. The next pair takes a turn. After all cards are retrieved, teams race to put them in verse order.

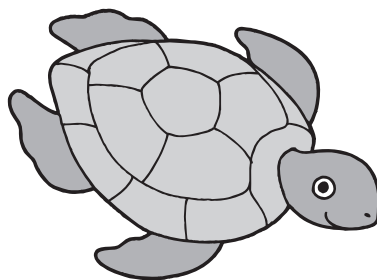
1. An angel visits Mary.



2. An angel tells Joseph about Mary's baby.



3. Mary and Joseph go to Bethlehem.

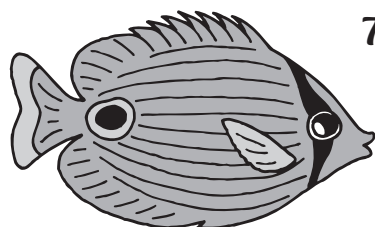
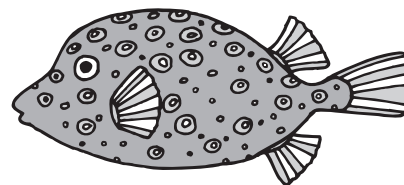


4. Jesus is born in a stable.

5. Mary puts Jesus in a manger.

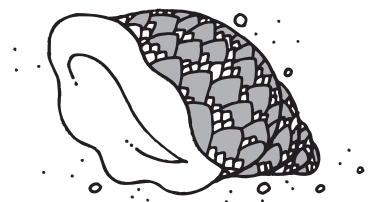


6. An angel tells shepherds that the Savior has been born.

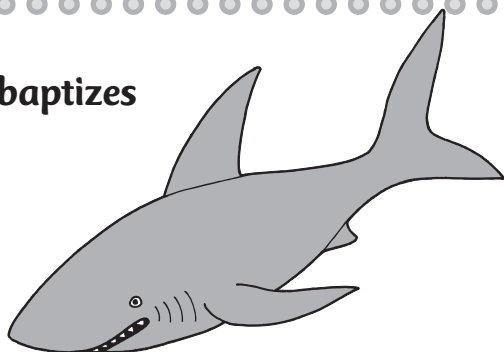


7. Shepherds find and worship the baby Jesus.

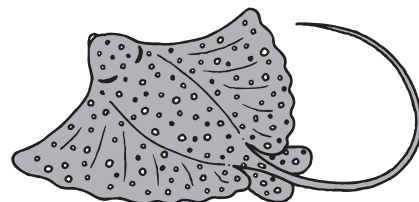
8. John tells people to stop doing wrong.



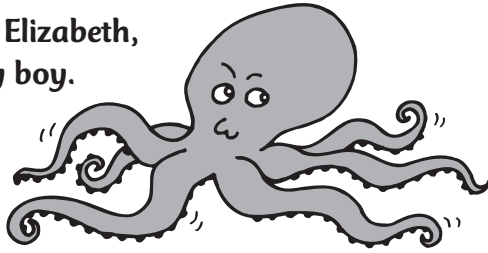
9. John baptizes Jesus.



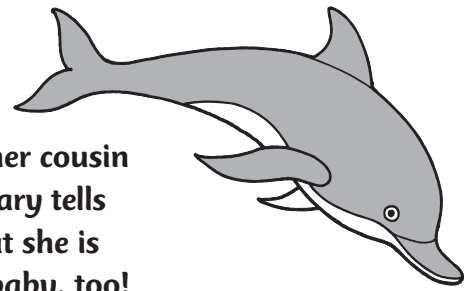
10. A voice from heaven says that Jesus is God's Son.



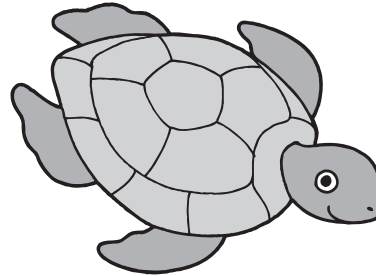
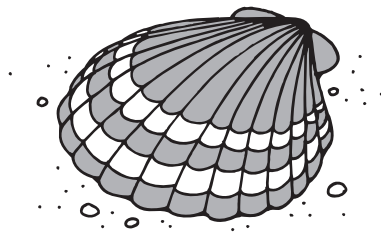
An angel tells Zechariah that he and his wife, Elizabeth, will have a baby boy.



Mary visits her cousin Elizabeth. Mary tells Elizabeth that she is expecting a baby, too!



An angel tells Joseph that Mary's baby is the Savior God promised to send.

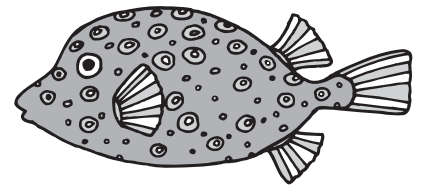


Mary and Joseph take a long trip to Bethlehem.

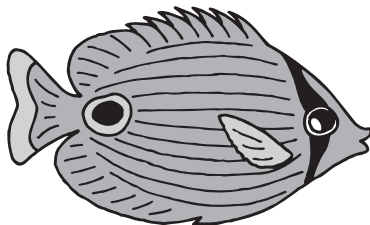
Jesus is born in a stable. Mary places Him in a manger filled with hay.



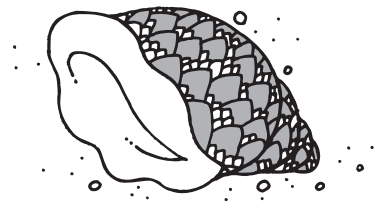
Angels visit shepherds to tell them that the Savior has been born.



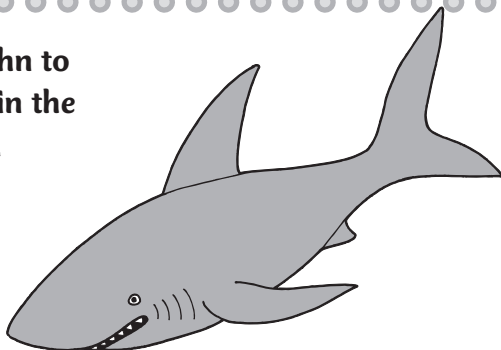
Shepherds visit the baby Jesus and worship Him. The shepherds tell everyone they see about the baby.



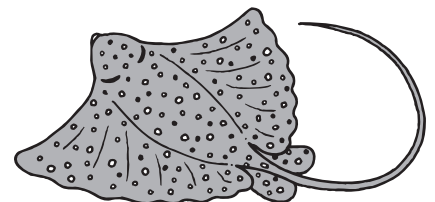
John tells people that they need to stop doing wrong and start preparing for the coming Savior.



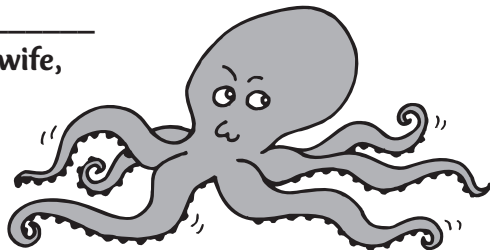
Jesus asks John to baptize Him in the Jordan River.



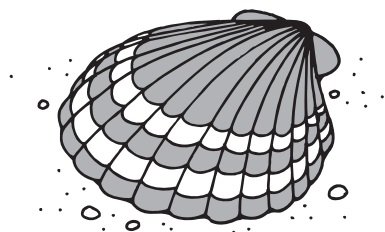
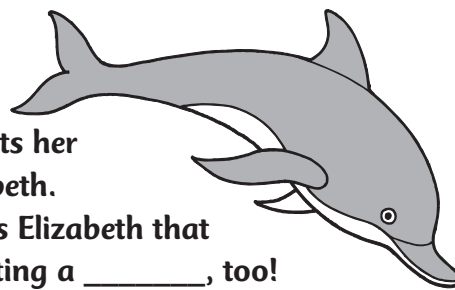
People hear a voice from heaven say, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."



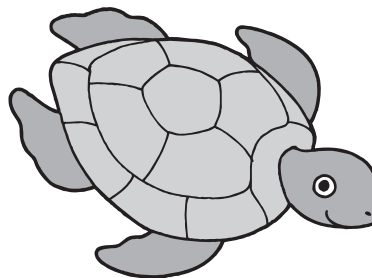
An angel tells _____
that he and his wife,
Elizabeth, will
have a
_____.



_____ visits her
cousin Elizabeth.
_____ tells Elizabeth that
she is expecting a _____, too!

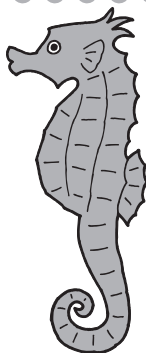


_____ tells Joseph
that Mary's baby
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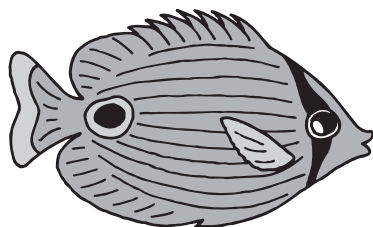
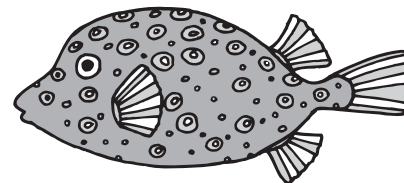


Mary and Joseph take
a long trip to _____.

Jesus is born in a _____.
Mary places Him in a
_____ filled with _____.

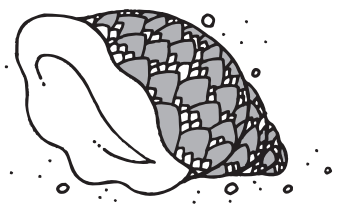


_____ visit _____
in their fields to
tell them that
the Savior has
been born.

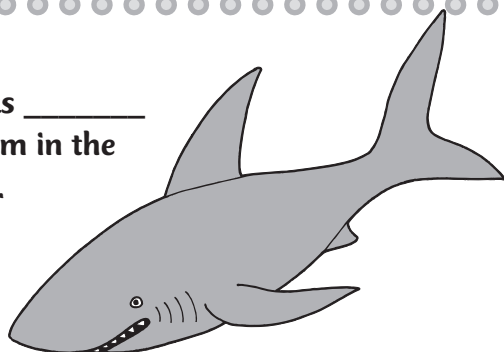


Shepherds visit
the _____ and
worship Him.
The shepherds
tell _____ they
see about _____.

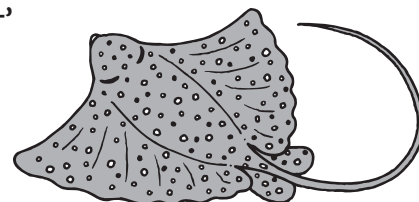
John tells people that
they need to stop
_____ and start
preparing for
the _____.



_____ asks _____
to baptize Him in the
Jordan River.



People hear a voice
from _____ say,
"This is _____,
whom I love;
with him I am
well pleased."



**This is
how**

**God
showed
his**

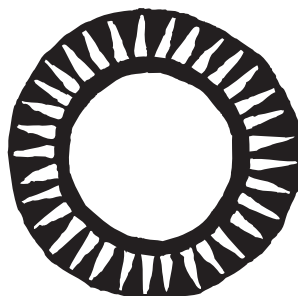


**among
us:**

**He sent
His**

1

**and
only**



**into
the**



that we

**might
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him.

**1 John
4:9**