

UNCOVERING
Mercies
AT THE
Manger

CHRISTMAS BIBLE STUDY

by Kim Sorgius

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How to Use This Bible Study

Studying the Bible as a family is an incredible journey full of blessing, growth, and, yes, a little adventure along the way. But sometimes as parents we get frustrated because the process doesn't look quite like we envisioned. To keep this from happening, let's manage our expectations from the start and set up our family Bible study time for success!

THE PURPOSE OF BIBLE STUDY

It's important to know and keep our purpose in focus. Are we doing this to impress others? Look holy? Fulfill an obligation? Of course not. But sometimes we can slip into that gray area when we don't stay focused on why we are really doing this.

When we get down to it, the purpose of Bible study is:

To know God better by knowing His Word
To learn, discern, and share truth
To enjoy a deeper relationship with God

Will your kids remember the purpose? Probably not. So when your kids give lousy answers, pick their noses, fight, or even complain during your family time, keep your purpose in perspective. As parents, you're planting seeds, trusting that God will one day bring the growth. Don't imagine that other families are doing a better job. Trust God to take your offering of family Bible study—even if it's a little messy—and work in the hearts of your kids in His time and ways. He's faithful!

HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY STUDY TOGETHER

Often, families think the best way to study the Bible together is to sit in a circle and have each person read/answer questions. In truth, this is a good way to feel frustrated. Little kids can get lost and older kids can feel bored.

In order to meet each person where they are, the actual "study" part should be done on an age-appropriate level. To put it simply, any child over the age of 8 who can read on their own should be spending some time studying the Bible on their own. Once everyone has had the opportunity to study and process, come together to discuss what you've learned. Your conversations will be much richer!

Here's a breakdown of what that might look like for each age level.

PARENT GUIDE:

The parent guide has two aspects. First, there is a personal study for you. You'll be studying the same thing as the kids, but it's tailored to help you

think through it as a parent. At the conclusion of each lesson, you'll also find the central Scripture, key truth, and discussion questions. This section is designed to help you lead the discussion with your kids.

I recommend that you study on your own before beginning your day. Once everyone has completed the day's study, it's time to come together and discuss! Below, you'll find a strategy for working with each age level.

FOR KIDS AGES 4-7:

We recommend that each family member has a book. This helps kids feel like they aren't too young to be a part. Our Primary level books are written for this purpose. Mom/Dad reads the lesson out loud to the child and the child responds by answering questions verbally, as well as drawing in the space provided.

In our home, I gather all the kids in this age level and work together with them while the older kids are studying independently.

FOR KIDS AGES 8-12:

This is the premium age for spiritual growth! These kids are sponges, soaking up everything possible about God. Be sure they have their own book so they can move at their own pace and take ownership of what they are learning. Encourage them not to get hung up on things they don't know. They can ask questions during your family time.

The goal of their independent study is to get them in the Bible for themselves and to think deeply about what they are learning BEFORE anyone else puts ideas into their head. This is truly the key to helping kids have authentic life-changing faith.

FOR TEENS AGES 12 AND UP:

If you try to think for your teens, you'll quickly find yourself frustrated. God has uniquely designed this age group to challenge ideas, discern truth, and fight for what they believe. Now is the time to make sure they have many great tools at their fingertips.

Studying independently will provide the opportunity for them to read God's Word themselves and think through what they believe before discussing it. If you've ever felt like your teens weren't engaged, this is why. They need to study and grasp on their own before they can contribute to a discussion, much like you and I!

As you take steps towards family Bible study, remember, ultimately spiritual growth isn't up to you. Your job as the parent is to create an environment and provide the tools and instruction necessary for spending time with God. God's job is to transform hearts. Keep at it! I'm cheering you on!

Parent Guide

Imagine what it would be like if I told you the story of Little Red Riding Hood, but I started right at the part where the wolf is dressed up like Granny and hiding in her bed. Would you be confused? Would you wonder why “Granny” was trying to eat her?

Of course you would! When we don’t start at the beginning of a story, we leave out important details that help us understand what is happening.

What does this have to do with Christmas? Well, you’ve probably heard the Christmas story before, but do you know where the story begins? Do you know why it happened? Write your best answers below. Don’t worry if you don’t know for sure. You can look back at this at the end of our study and see how much you’ve learned.

Like most people, you probably started the story with the night Jesus was born or maybe even when the angel appeared to Mary. But you might not realize that starting the story there is like starting the story with the wolf dressed up and in Granny’s bed.

Before we can talk about that precious night of Jesus’ birth, you need to know the whole story so you don’t make wrong assumptions. And to know the whole story, you have to start at the beginning.

Read *Genesis 1:1*. Who created the world?



Humor me—I promise this isn’t a preschool lesson, but we need to start here. You know God created the world, but did you know He wasn’t alone?

Read *John 1:1-3*. Who was with God when He created the world?

Read *John 1:14*. What did the Word become?

Ok, so that's our big clue as to who the Word is. It's JESUS! If we want to really understand why Christmas is so important, it's not enough to just know that Jesus became flesh (meaning He was born on this earth).



We need to understand that He was here from the beginning—He created this earth for us with God! The Bible teaches that He is God. This is what makes the story so much better. Jesus gave up His position, His power, and His place in heaven to come to earth. Why? Let's look.

Read *John 1:16-18*. List three reasons Jesus came to earth.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Jesus came to earth to give us grace and truth. The law that Moses was given was impossible for us to follow, so Jesus came to pardon us or release us from the penalty of breaking this law—this is called mercy. He came to make God known to us.

So let's make that our goal for this study. Let's challenge ourselves to know God better through the story of Jesus and to experience the mercy Jesus came to give us.

Mercy is when someone else takes away the punishment you deserve. If you have young kids, be sure to point out mercy in real life examples as you go through this study. Each day we will be looking at God's mercy.

Pray and tell God that you're ready for this challenge! Ask Him to prepare the hearts of your children and open their eyes to His truth.

SCRIPTURE: John 1:14-18

KEY TRUTH: The Christmas story starts at the beginning of time when Jesus was in heaven with God.

DISCUSSION: Where does the Christmas story really start? Why did Jesus come to earth?

Primary

Imagine what it would be like if I told you the story of Little Red Riding Hood, but I started right at the part where the wolf is dressed up like Granny and hiding in her bed. Would you be confused? Would you wonder why “Granny” was trying to eat her?

Of course you would! When we don’t start at the beginning of a story, we leave out important details that help us understand what is happening.

What does this have to do with Christmas? Well, you’ve probably heard the Christmas story before, but do you know where the story begins? Do you know why it happened? Draw the story in the box on the next page and tell someone about it.



Like most people, you probably started your story the night when Jesus was born. But you might not realize that starting with the manger is like starting the story with the wolf dressed up and in Granny’s bed. We need to go back to the beginning so we will understand what is happening and why.

Read *John 1:1-3*. We know that God created the world. Who was with God when He did it?

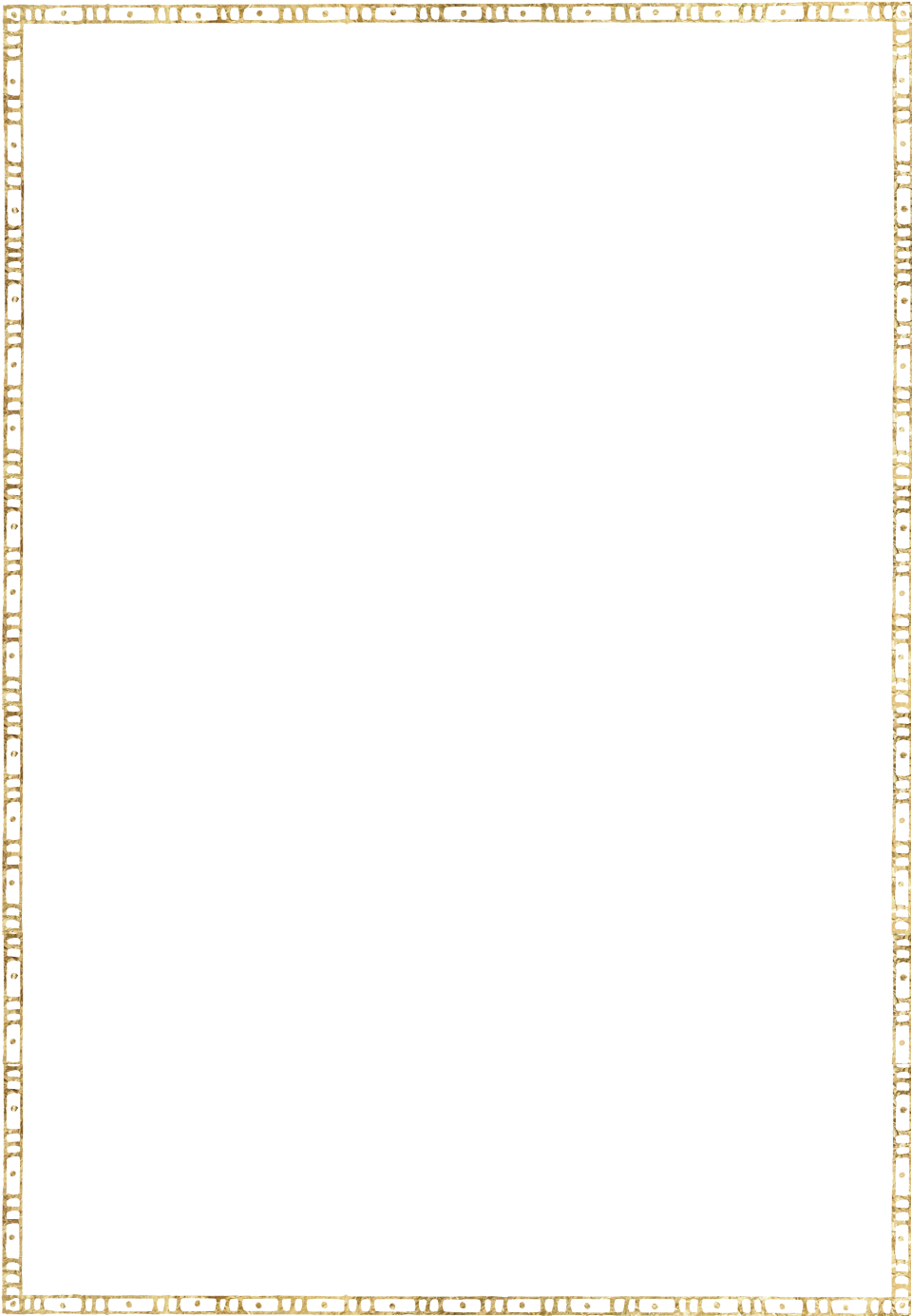
These verses might seem a little tricky. “The Word” is Jesus.

Read *John 1:14*. What did the Word become?

The Word (Jesus) became flesh (meaning He was born on this earth). If we want to understand why Christmas is so important, it’s not enough to just know that He was born. We need to understand that He was here from the beginning—He created this earth for us with God! Jesus gave up His place in heaven to come to earth to save us from our sins even though we don’t deserve it—this is called mercy.

So let’s make the goal of this study to experience the mercy Jesus came to give us.

Draw or write about the Christmas story. Tell as much as you know.



Pray and tell God that you're ready to know Him and learn the whole story of Jesus.

Junior

Imagine what it would be like if I told you the story of Little Red Riding Hood, but I started right at the part where the wolf is dressed up like Granny and hiding in her bed. Would you be confused? Would you wonder why “Granny” was trying to eat her?



Of course you would! When we don't start at the beginning of a story, we leave out important details that help us understand what is happening.

What does this have to do with Christmas? Well, you've probably heard the Christmas story before, but do you know where the story begins? Do you know why it happened? Write your best answers below. Don't worry if you don't know for sure. You can look back at this at the end of our study and see how much you've learned.

Like most people, you probably started your story the night when Jesus was born. But you might not realize that starting with the manger is like starting the story with the wolf dressed up and in Granny's bed. We need to go back to the beginning so we will understand what is happening and why.

Read *Genesis 1:1*. Who created the world?

Ok, so you probably know God created the world, but did you know He wasn't alone?

Read *John 1:1-3*. Who was with God when He created the world?

Sometimes these verses seem tricky. “The Word” is Jesus. We get a clue about that if we keep reading in John.



Read *John 1:14*. What did the Word become?

If we want to really understand why Christmas is so important, it's not enough to just know that Jesus became flesh (meaning He was born on this earth). We need to understand that He was here from the beginning—He created this earth for us with God! The Bible teaches that He is God. This is what makes the story so much better. Jesus gave up His position, His power, and His place in heaven to come to earth. Why? Let's look.

Read *John 1:16-17*. What came through Jesus Christ?

_____ and _____

Read *John 1:18*. What else did Jesus come to do?

Jesus came to earth to give us grace and truth. The law that Moses was given was impossible for us to follow, so Jesus came to pardon us or release us from the penalty of breaking this law—this is called mercy. Secondly, He came to make God known to us.

So let's make that our goal for this study. Let's challenge ourselves to know God better through the story of Jesus and to experience the mercy Jesus came to give us.

Pray and tell God that you're ready for this challenge!



Youth

Imagine what it would be like if I told you the story of Little Red Riding Hood, but I started right at the part where the wolf is dressed up like Granny and hiding in her bed. Would you be confused? Would you wonder why “Granny” was trying to eat her?

Of course you would! When we don’t start at the beginning of a story, we leave out important details that help us understand what is happening.

What does this have to do with Christmas? Well, you’ve probably heard the Christmas story before, but do you know where the story begins? Do you know why it happened? Write your best answers below. Don’t worry if you don’t know for sure. You can look back at this at the end of our study and see how much you’ve learned.

Like most people, you probably started the story with the night Jesus was born or maybe even when the angel appeared to Mary. But you might not realize that starting the story there is like starting the story with the wolf dressed up and in Granny’s bed.

Before we can talk about that precious night of Jesus’ birth, you need to know the whole story so you don’t make wrong assumptions. And to know the whole story, you have to start at the beginning.

Read *Genesis 1:1*. Who created the world?

Humor me—I promise this isn’t a preschool lesson, but we need to start here. You know God created the world, but did you know He wasn’t alone?



Read *John 1:1-3*. Who was with God when He created the world?

Sometimes these verses seem tricky. You might find yourself asking, “Who or what is the Word?” or “How can the Word both be God and be with Him?” I hear ya.



Read *John 1:14*. What did the Word become?

Ok, so that’s our big clue as to who the Word is. It’s JESUS! If we want to really understand why Christmas is so important, it’s not enough to just know that Jesus became flesh (meaning He was born on this earth).

We need to understand that He was here from the beginning—He created this earth for us with God! The Bible teaches that He is God. This is what makes the story so much better. Jesus gave up His position, His power, and His place in heaven to come to earth. Why? Let’s look.

Read *John 1:16-17*. Why did Jesus come to earth?

Read *John 1:18*. What other reason is given?

Jesus came to earth to give us grace and truth. The law that Moses was given was impossible for us to follow, so Jesus came to pardon us or release us from the penalty of breaking this law—this is called mercy. Secondly, He came to make God known to us.

So let’s make that our goal for this study. Let’s challenge ourselves to know God better through the story of Jesus and to experience the mercy Jesus came to give us.

Pray and tell God that you’re ready for this challenge!

Jesus' Family Tree

