

Teaching Children Spiritual Truth Utilizing

Mouse's Christmas Gift



By Mindy Baker

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AUTHOR NOTE

Thank you for your interest in teaching spiritual truth to children utilizing Mouse's Christmas Gift as a tool. My prayer is that God will use these simple lessons and activities to reach many children with the message of the greatest gift, the gift of Jesus Christ.

Because of the *HOPE* we have in Christ,
MINDY BAKER





HOW TO USE THIS PACKET

- * This packet is intended for ministry to children ages Pre-K to 3rd grade. It is adaptable for Sunday School lessons, Children's Church lessons, Christian School lessons, Home School lessons, family devotions, or one-on-one time with a child.
- * It includes both a lesson to tell the Christmas story from the Bible and a lesson to utilize the book *Mouse's Christmas Gift*. The lessons can be combined into one longer session or may be used in two separate sessions.
- * The lesson utilizing *Mouse's Christmas Gift* has three distinct pathways of application. Select the one that best fits your needs.
- * For older children, there are application worksheets.
- * The packet also includes four craft ideas.
- * If you utilize centers, each application could become its own center for three rotations of approximately 10-15 minutes each. Add one of the crafts, and you have material for four separate centers.





COMPONENTS

Part One: The Christmas Story Bible Lesson

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Part Two: Mouse's Christmas Gift Lesson

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Application #1 Body of Christ

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Application Worksheet #1 Body of Christ

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Application #2 Be a Light

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Application Worksheet #2 Be a Light

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Application #3 The Greatest Gift

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Application Worksheet #3 The Greatest Gift

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Craft #1 Baby Jesus in a Manger

*

Craft # 2 Mouse in a Matchbox

*

Craft #3 I Can Be a Light Frame

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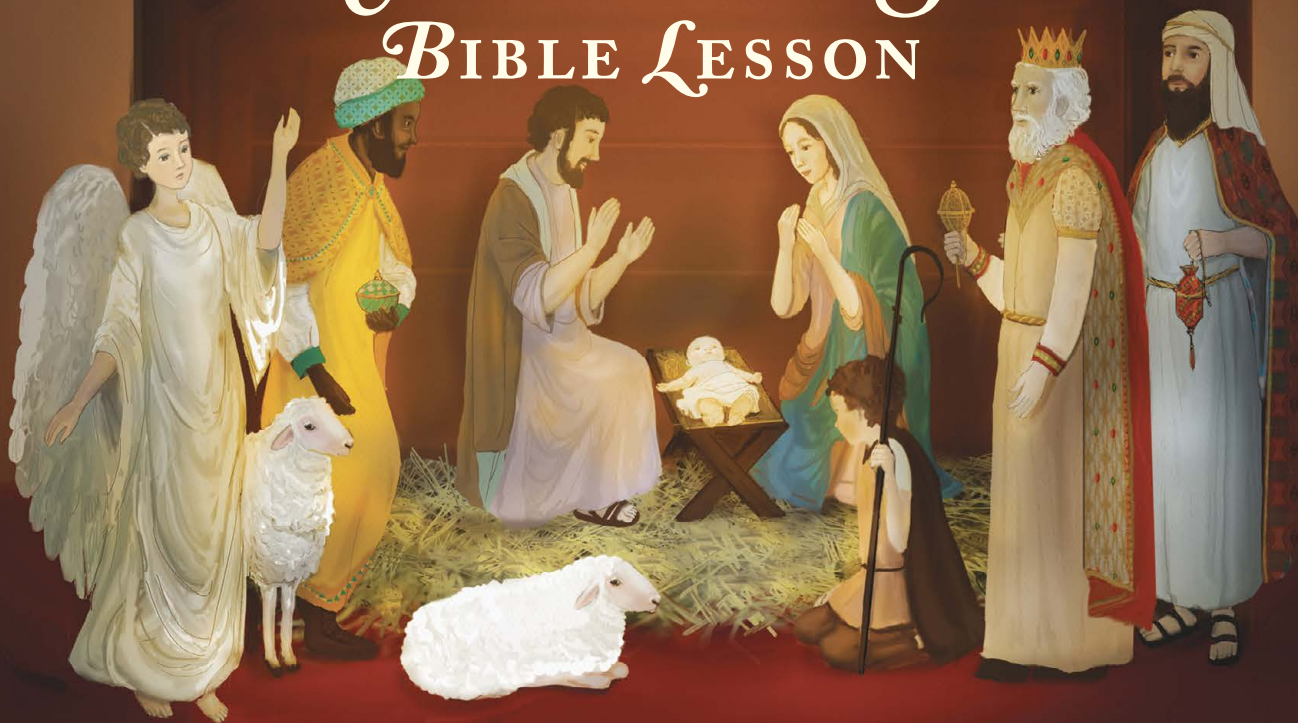
Craft #4 Ornament



PART ONE

THE CHRISTMAS STORY

BIBLE LESSON



Big Idea (Objective): Children will understand the Biblical narrative of the birth of Christ.

Materials Needed: A child friendly Nativity Set or a digital image of a Nativity Set to reference as you speak.

Welcome everyone! I'm so glad you're here! Does anyone know what special holiday will be here very soon? (*Christmas*)

What are some of the first things you think of when you think of Christmas? (*various responses*)

Did anyone think of a *baby*? How does a baby have anything to do with Christmas?
We are going to find that out today!

Our Bible lesson comes from the book of Luke, chapters 1-2 and the book of Matthew, chapters 1-2.

Today I want to share with you about the very first Christmas, and the reason that we celebrate Christmas. It all started a long time ago with the birth of a very special *baby* named Jesus.



PART ONE

THE CHRISTMAS STORY

BIBLE LESSON

(Have a nativity set to use as you speak. Depending on the size of your group you could also give each child a figurine to hold, then have them bring it to you at the appropriate time. If you don't think everyone can see, you could use a digital image of a nativity set and reference it as you speak.)

Has anyone ever seen something like this? Maybe you have something like this in your homes that you use as a Christmas decoration. Or, maybe you have seen something like this at church during Christmas.

This is called a Nativity. When we set up the Nativity in our homes, we are remembering something very important that happened a long, long time ago. Do you know what it is? *(the birth of Jesus)* Do you remember where I said that it is recorded in the Bible? *(Luke 1-2, and Matthew 1-2)*

Does anyone know who this is? *(hold up the figurine of Mary)*

And this? *(hold up the figurine of the angel)*

The Bible tells us that one day an angel appeared to Mary and told her that she would have a baby, that the baby would be God's Son, and that she should name him Jesus.

Does anyone know who this is? *(hold up the figurine of Joseph)*

This is Joseph. He and Mary had pledged (or promised) to get married. When Mary told Joseph that the angel said, "You will have a baby that will be God's Son, the Savior of the world!" Joseph didn't understand. He didn't want to get married anymore.

Then God sent an angel to Joseph in a dream. The angel said, "Joseph, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sin." After that, Joseph agreed to make Mary his wife.



PART ONE

THE CHRISTMAS STORY

BIBLE LESSON

In the meantime, Caesar (Caesar was a government leader, kind of like the President or a King) ordered a census. He wanted to know how many people were under his control. He wanted to count them. Counting the people is called a census. In order to be counted, the people had to travel to the city in which they were born.

That's why Joseph and Mary traveled to Bethlehem. It was a very busy place, with no room to stay in any of the inns (*like hotels*). Do you know where they ended up staying? (*a stable/ cave*) That's right! A place for animals! Look at this figurine. What animal is this? (*cow*) And this? (*sheep*). I'm sure a place for animals was not where Mary and Joseph wanted to spend the night! But it was time for the baby to be born, and there wasn't anywhere else.

That very night, Jesus, the Son of God, was born.

Look at this figurine? What is it? (*a manger*) What is a manger? (*a place where animals' food is placed*) The Bible tells us that Mary wrapped the baby Jesus in cloth and placed him in a manger.

While Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus were in the stable, something amazing was going on out in the surrounding hillside.

Who knows what this figurine is? (*shepherd*) Shepherds were taking care of their sheep when suddenly something spectacular appeared in the sky! Does anyone know what it was? (*angel*)

Yes, the Bible (*Luke 2:9-12*) tells us that "an angel of the Lord appeared to them...and said, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.'" Then suddenly many more angels joined the one angel. The Bible says (verse 13), "A great company (that means a huge amount) of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.'"



PART ONE

THE CHRISTMAS STORY

BIBLE LESSON

Do you know what happened next? (*shepherds went to find Jesus*)

The shepherds left the hillside and went to find the baby Jesus. They wanted to see for themselves if what the angel said was true. And it was! They found Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus just as the angel had said. Then they knelt and worshipped the baby. He was no ordinary baby, he was the promised Messiah, the Savior, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

(If short on time, the portion about the wise men could be omitted.)

There are three more figures left, and one animal. Who knows what they are? (*Magi/wise men and the camel*)

How do they fit into the Christmas story? (*they followed a special star from the east and came to worship the newborn king*)

These Magi, or wise men, saw an unusual star and followed it many, many miles. In their culture, it was common to travel on camels. First they went to King Herod to find out where the new king was to be born. King Herod didn't know, so he asked the priests and teachers of the law. They told Herod that according to the prophecies of Scripture, the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem. King Herod sent the Magi on to Bethlehem and asked them to report back to him when and where they found the baby.

The Magi found Jesus, worshipped him, and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. But instead of reporting back to Herod, the Magi returned to their homes by another route.

So now you know about the birth of Jesus, the real reason we celebrate Christmas.

PART TWO

MOUSE'S CHRISTMAS GIFT LESSON



- Big Idea (Objective):** Children will understand the biblical meaning of Christmas and
- A. understand that God wants to use them in a special way, no matter their size.
 - B. understand that God wants them to shine a light for him in a dark world.
 - C. understand that material gifts don't satisfy us the way Jesus does.

Optional Materials Needed: wreath, small tree, ribbons or strips of material, small star to top the tree, play food (loaf of bread or jar of jam), music "O Holy Night," battery operated candles, child-friendly Nativity set.

Note: If you are only using the picture book for your lesson, create your own introduction that makes sense to your setting. If you do part one and two together, continue reading. Depending on the size of your group, you may want to purchase the eBook and project the images onto a larger screen.

I have a (*another*) story for you today. It is the story of a different animal. Can anyone guess, from the cover of the book, what animal it is? (*mouse*) That's right. Mouse lived in a church! He was a church mouse. This story is not from the Bible, it's just for fun, but it does have truths



PART TWO

MOUSE'S CHRISTMAS GIFT LESSON

we can apply to our lives. The Mouse in the story is a very clever mouse, because he knows about the true meaning of Christmas that we just learned about from the Bible. Let's see what happens... *Begin to read the story.*

Page 6: *After you read the line: "and he realized something was missing."*

ASK: What do you think was missing? (*the Nativity set*)

SAY: A mouse is tiny. Do you think a small mouse could really do anything to help this problem? Can small creatures do anything important? ...Let's find out....

Page 7: *Use a kid-friendly nativity set to illustrate as you read. When you read about Mouse placing each figure into the Nativity set, call on different children to put one of the figures into place. (As time permits, refer back to the Bible lesson you just taught with review questions like who was Mary? What did the angel tell the shepherds? etc.)*

ASK: What was it like for Mouse to lift those figurines into place? Did he give up? Should we give up when a job is hard? (*no*)

Page 8-9

ASK: Who is sick? (*Parson*) What does a parson do in the church? (*preach, lead*)

Page 10-11

ASK: Why is Mouse so sad? (*the Christmas Eve service is cancelled*) How could he help? (*have children give ideas*)

SAY: Let's find out. He is so tiny! Can such a tiny mouse make a difference? (*yes*)

Page 12-13

ASK: What did Mouse do? (*lit a candle in the window*)

SAY: I wonder how Mouse's light is going to make a difference.



PART TWO

MOUSE'S CHRISTMAS GIFT LESSON

Page 14-15

ASK: When you look at the picture, how do you think Alexander is feeling? (*sad*) Why? (*no money, grouchy adults*) How would you feel if someone said there was no money to buy Christmas presents? (*take a few responses*)

ASK: What did Alexander see off in the distance? (*light*)

Page 16-25

At this point, ask for the kids to become the “chain reaction.” You could do this with paper props or actual props. As you read, pause and have a child hang up a wreath, have several children tie ribbons or material strips on a small tree, have one child place a star on top of the tree, have one child bake the bread, have one child pretend to start a fire in the stove.

SAY: Each villager did a different job, and that is why the church service was so wonderful. Did you know that God has unique jobs for each one of us to do? He uses our interests, talents, and abilities to make a difference. What did Alexander make? (*wreath*) What did the girls and villagers do? (*decorate the tree*) What did the blacksmith make? (*star*) What did the widow contribute? (*bread*) The Bible says in Ephesians 2:10 “We are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” Have you ever thought that God has a job for you to do?

Page 26

Sing/Or play the music of “O Holy Night.” If the room you are using is conducive, dim the lights and use some battery-operated candles to set a mood.

Page 28-31

ASK: In the story, what book of the Bible do the church members read from? (*Luke 2*) Hey—wait a minute, it’s the same book we learned about in our Bible lesson! And the same verse the angel told the shepherds! Whoa!



PART TWO

MOUSE'S CHRISTMAS GIFT LESSON

Page 32:

SAY: Mouse says, “All was well.” He didn’t get a big, fancy gift, so why is he so happy? Why are the villagers so happy? (*Mouse knew he had made a difference, the people had each other, they had Jesus*)

ASK: So, I have to ask you, did Mouse do anything important? (*set up the Nativity, lit the candle, unlocked the door*)

What if he hadn’t done those things, how would that have changed the story? (*various answers*)

Choose one of the three wrap up options to end your time. Or, depending on the way that you organize your class, each wrap-up option could become a center/station. Kids can rotate through all three centers/stations, or you can add a craft station for 4 distinct centers/stations. But please first contact Zondervan for permission to display the images at www.zondervan.com/about-us/permissions.

APPLICATION #1

BODY OF CHRIST

Just like Mouse did something special (*even though he was tiny*) I know God has something special that he wants you to do, too.

In another place in the Bible (*1 Corinthians 12*), Christians are compared to parts of a body. One person is the ear, one person is the foot, one person is the eye, one person is the hand. Think of a body with only eyes and no nose. Or think of a body with only feet. (*if you are artistic, show a funny drawing of a creature with all noses, or all feet etc.*) That would be pretty silly. God is showing us that just like all of the parts of a body work together, he wants each of us to play a role, or do a job for him. Can you think of any other situation where it is important that each person does his or her own special job? (*sports team, orchestra or band, race car driver with pit crew, city etc.*) It is like that at church, too. God gives each of his followers special gifts that they can use to make a difference for him.

Have you ever thought that God has a job he wants you to do? What do you think that could be?

Let's pray and ask God to show us something this week that we could do to make a difference in our church, our school, our home, or in the life of someone else.

Close in prayer. Transition to next activity.



APPLICATION WORKSHEET #1
BODY OF CHRIST



Look at the list of book characters and the different jobs. Draw a line from each character to his/her special job.

1. Mouse

2. Alexander

3. Lizzie Jenkins

4. Blacksmith

5. Widow Bartholomew

6. villagers

a. baked bread

b. made a wreath

c. lit a candle and set up the Nativity

d. made a star, lit a fire in the stove

e. sang, decorated the tree

f. used her hair ribbons to decorate

APPLICATION WORKSHEET #1

BODY OF CHRIST

God says that his church is like a body. Draw a picture of a creature that has only one type of body part (For example: all eyes)
Share your drawing with your group:



- * Think about the human body. Is there any part that is not needed? _____
Thank God for the amazing body he created for you!
- * What special job do you have or would you like to have in your church or Sunday School class?

- * What special job do you have or would you like to have in your family?

- * What could you do this week to make a difference in someone else's life?

APPLICATION #2

BE A LIGHT

Mouse's light made a big difference in this story. Has anyone ever been outside in the nighttime? How would you describe it? (*dark*) What is dark? (*no light*) How can we see in the dark? (*we need light*) Have you ever noticed that even a little light can be seen from very far away. Even a small light makes a difference in a big, dark room. (*insert personal story about tripping in the dark, needing a flashlight when the electricity goes out, light of the stars, street with no street light, needing a night light because you were afraid*)

Mouse's candle reminds me of several verses in the Bible about light. In the book of John, (*John 8:12*) Jesus said "I am the light of the world." What do you think he means by that? (*give kids a chance to respond*)

Sometimes the Bible uses comparisons, to help us understand things. In this case the dark is representing the sin, pain, and sorrow in the world. Jesus (*the light*) is the solution to that darkness. He is the light. In another verse (*Acts 13:47*) Jesus said, "I have made you a light." He also said (*Ephesians 5:8*), "Live as children of the light." And check out these verses in Matthew 5, "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

When you become a follower of Jesus, you have his light inside of you. Just like Mouse's candle was a light to Alexander, God wants your life to be a light to others by the way you live. That means that you live and act in such a way that it brings hope and healing to others. What are some ways that we can be a light to our friends? (*have at least 2 examples of situations kids could relate to like kindness on the playground, sharing toys, helping parent set the table*)

APPLICATION #2

BE A LIGHT

Think about how the light of Mouse's candle caused a chain reaction. First Alexander saw the light and made a wreath. Then Lizzie and her sister saw the wreath and decorated the tree, then the villagers joined in the decorating. What did the Blacksmith do next? (*made the star*)

Then the widow saw him add the star and baked her bread. One little light set all of that in motion. (*Option, bring kids up front to form a human chain to illustrate.*)

Boys and girls, when we do actions that are light, (even when it feels like a small thing) it affects other people, and it can set into motion a huge chain reaction.

Do you have God's light inside of you?

I wonder what action of light God wants you to do this week? Let's pray and ask him!

Close in prayer. Transition to the next activity.



APPLICATION WORKSHEET #2

BE A LIGHT

Look up each verse to discover the word that goes in the blanks. Then use the numbers to solve the Hidden Message below.

1. What did God say in Genesis 1:3 “Let there be _____.”
5 30 28 12 10

2. What did Jesus call himself in John 8:12? “I am the light
of the _____.”
21 45 16 5 11

3. What did Jesus call his followers in Matthew 5:14? “You are the
_____ of the world.”
5 30 28 12 10

4. How did believers become the light according to Acts 13:47?

“I have _____ you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring
salvation to the ends of the earth.”
1 9 17 22

5. What command did God give in Ephesians 5:8. “Live as

_____ of the light.”
2 12 30 5 11 16 22 19

6. In Matthew 5:16, Why did Jesus want his followers to shine their

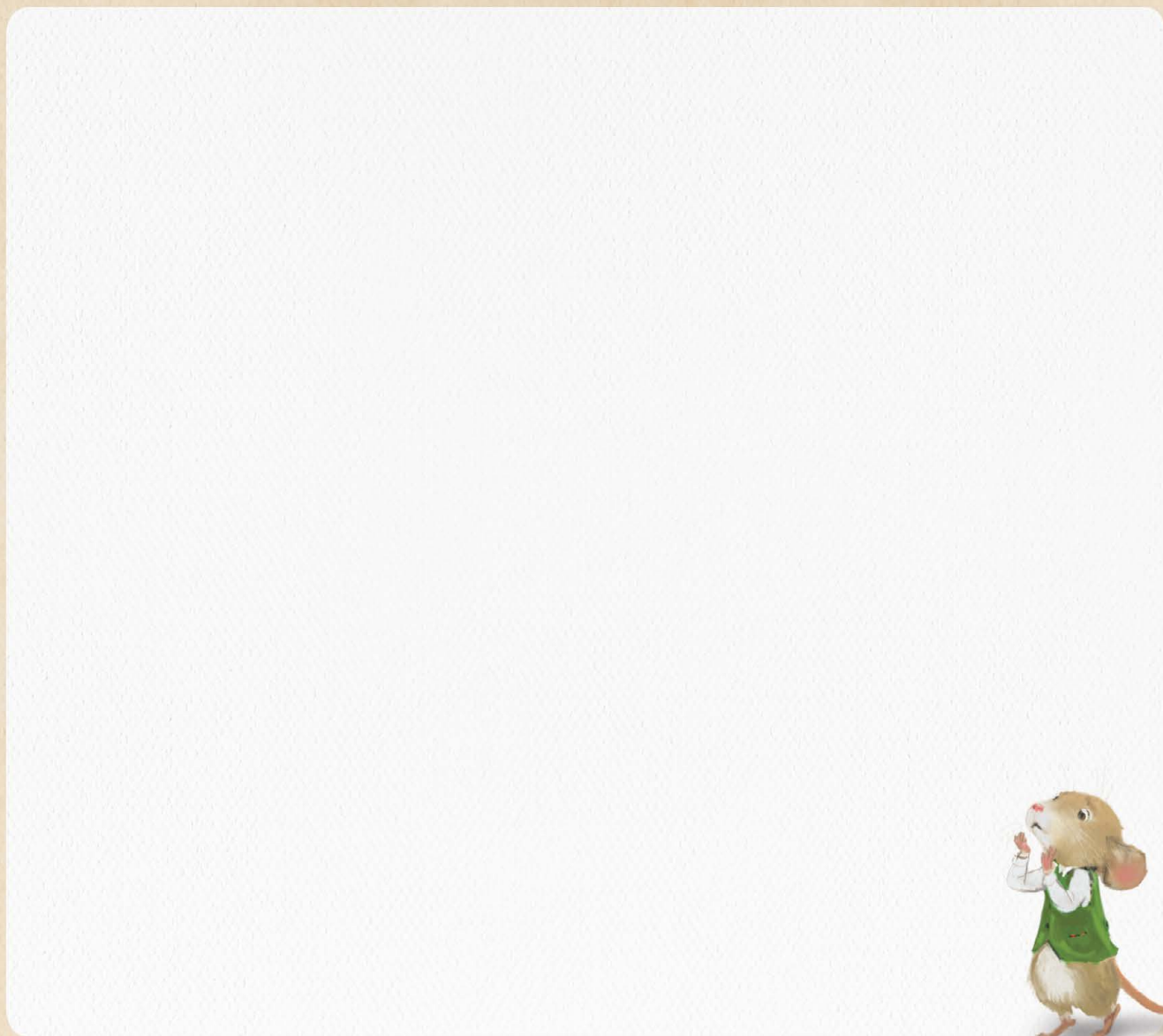
light before men? “...so they may _____ your good deeds and
_____ your Father in heaven.”
4 16 9 30 3 22



APPLICATION WORKSHEET #2

BE A LIGHT

What is one way you can be a light this week? Write it down or draw a picture. If time permits, take turns acting out your idea and see if your friends can guess what you will do.



Look at the numbers under the letters you filled in above. Some of the numbers are the same as the numbers in the **Hidden Message**. Can you solve the **Hidden Message**, using the numbers that all of the words have in common?

Hidden Message Question: What does Jesus want his followers to do?

Hidden Message:
 3 12 30 19 22

APPLICATION #3

THE GREATEST GIFT

At the end of the book Mouse says, “All was well.” He didn’t get a big, fancy gift, so why is he happy? Why are the villagers happy? (*Mouse knew he had made a difference, the people had each other and they had Jesus*) Let’s think for a minute about what things are worth.

ASK: What are some things that cost a lot of money—maybe some really cool presents that you want for Christmas? (*call on various children*) Have you ever received a toy that you thought you really wanted, but the next day it broke? Or after you played with it awhile, it wasn’t that fun anymore? Some of the most valuable things don’t cost any money. Who can think of something that is very special that doesn’t cost ANY money? (*hug, friendship, spending time together, conversation, smile, helping someone, love, relationship with Jesus, home in heaven*) You don’t have to answer this aloud, but think about it quietly: What would you rather have: a family or an X-box game? A friend or the latest toy? A day with a parent playing a game or a new pair of shoes? (*think of examples that fit your class*) What is really the most valuable? Why? (*pause to let kids think*)

I know one valuable thing that I want –and it is not available in a store or online. Can anyone guess what it is? (*allow a few kids to guess*) It is love.

But where I can get love? Not a store, not online. I can get love from God! Boys and girls, do you know how much God loves you? I want you to know about God’s love. Let me read you a few verses that tell you exactly how God feels about each of you. In Isaiah 43 – 44, God tells us that (*possibly insert a few of the kids’ names*) Andrew, I created you and formed you...You are precious and honored in my sight. You are my servant whom I have chosen.” (*repeat this sentence using different children’s names to personalize it*)

APPLICATION #3

THE GREATEST GIFT

WOW! I don't know about you, but that sounds to me like a pretty special kind of love! Two more things you can't buy in a store are forgiveness from sin, and a home in heaven. At Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus, God's Son. But did you know that the baby Jesus was born with a purpose? He was born so that he could grow up, and then die to pay the penalty for our sin.

All of us are sinners. (*Romans 3:23*) The Bible teaches that the penalty for sin is death. (*Romans 6:23*) Jesus died on the cross, so that we can have forgiveness from our sin and a home in heaven. He offers that to us as a free gift. In John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life."

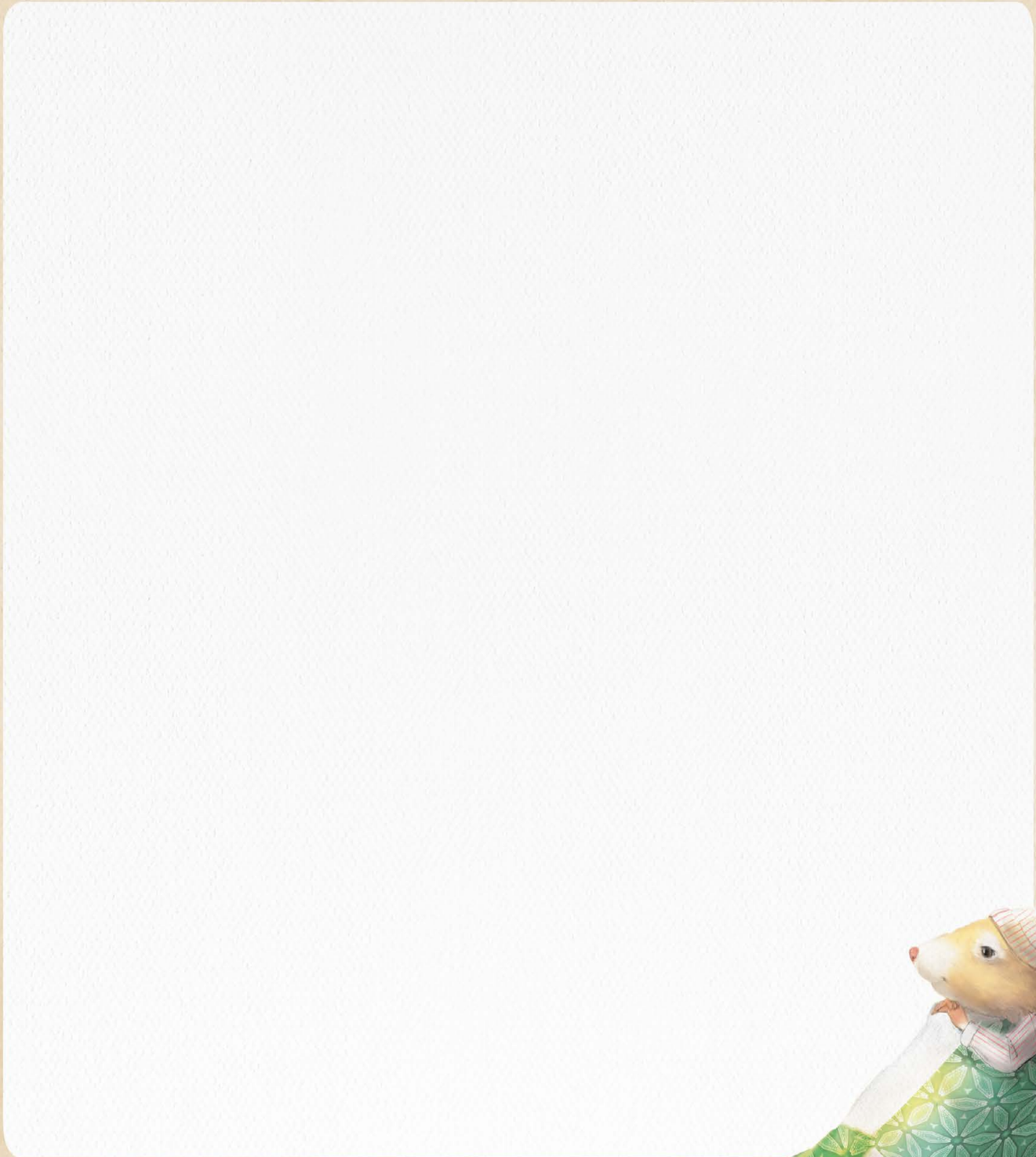
So, no matter what you "get" or "don't get" for Christmas, I want you to remember the greatest gifts of all. The gift of God's love. And the gift of Jesus, dying on the cross and paying the penalty for our sin so that we can have a home in heaven forever.

Let's thank him for those amazing gifts. *Close in prayer. Transition to next activity.*



APPLICATION WORKSHEET #3
THE GREATEST GIFT

Draw several things that cost a lot of money, or gifts that you want to get for Christmas. Share your drawings with the person sitting next to you.



APPLICATION WORKSHEET #3

THE GREATEST GIFT

Unscramble the key words. Look up the Bible verses for clues.

- a. Isaiah 43:1 I _____ (E D E R A C T) you.
- b. Isaiah 43:1 I _____ (D F R O E M) you.
- c. Isaiah 43:4 You are _____ (O S I R P E C U)
and _____ (D H N O R E O) in my sight.
- d. Isaiah 43:4 Because I _____ (V E L O) you,
- e. Isaiah 44:2 You are my servant whom I have _____ (N C O S H E).

Based on those verses, how would you describe the way God feels about you?
Can you draw a picture that expresses that?



APPLICATION WORKSHEET #3
THE GREATEST GIFT

What is the greatest gift of all? Why? (Draw it below.)



CRAFT #1

BABY JESUS IN A MANGER

Materials: Small clothespins, pale blue felt, twine, empty toilet tissue tubes, glue or glue sticks, marker. (optional: yellow felt)

1. Draw a face on a mini-clothespin with a marker.
2. Wrap it with a piece of pale blue felt, and tie it with twine.
3. Save an empty toilet paper tube, and cut it in half.
4. Glue the two halves together, back to back, to form a manger for the baby Jesus mini-clothespin.
5. Optional: Glue on a piece of yellow felt for the hay.



CRAFT #2

MOUSE IN A MATCHBOX

Materials: Tiny matchboxes with matches removed, rectangular cotton pads, felt, scissors, Mouse paper dolls printed on cardstock.

1. Buy a matchbox and remove the matches.
2. Place cotton pads (used for make-up remover) in the matchbox to make a soft bed for Mouse.
3. Cut a piece of felt for a blanket.
4. Assemble the bed and place the mouse paper doll in it. (Select the Mouse paper doll that best “fits” your matchbox.)
5. *Option:* Have children “tell” Mouse the story of Jesus’ birth.



CRAFT #3

I CAN BE A LIGHT FRAME

Materials: Cardstock frames (one per child), or tongue depressor sticks, glue gun, foamies, markers, battery operated candle, camera, ability to print photos.

1. Use a hot glue gun to make a frame with 4 large popsicle sticks/tongue depressor sticks. *Option:* Use cardstock to make a rectangular frame large enough to fit around a photo.
 2. Use Christmas foamies or markers to decorate.
 3. Take a picture of child holding a battery-operated candle.
 4. Print pictures, place in frames and give to the children the following week.
- Optional caption for frame:* I can be a light!



CRAFT #4

ORNAMENT

Materials: Ornaments on cardstock, ribbon, hole punch

1. Cut out the ornament shape.
2. Punch a hole for a ribbon.
4. Tie it with ribbon to hang on your tree.

