



2023 | CHILDREN'S LESSON DECEMBER 3-24

“What Child is This?” (The Perfect Gift) — Luke 1:50-55

Preparation

- 1 Make copies of Resource Page 1 (at least one per child with a few extras) for the opening activity.
- 2 If you choose “Wrapping Gifts,” gather a few gifts for an organization that your church supports at this time of the year. Also, gather the appropriate materials listed below for wrapping those gifts or creating wrapping paper.
- 3 If you choose “Pass the Parcel,” collect several small gifts appropriate for the children in your group. Wrap each small gift in a “layer” of wrapping paper so that the final product is one large “gift” with many layers. Make sure you have enough gifts for everyone.

Gathering (10–15 minutes)

As children enter, give them a copy of Resource Page 1. Above each box, they should write the name of someone in their family (this can be a person or an animal, someone who lives with them or someone who does not — consider “family” in the broadest terms possible). In the box, they should draw a picture of that person (to the best of their ability). Finally, on the line beneath each box, have children write down the perfect Christmas gift for that family member. If time permits or if a child has additional family members, they can continue to draw and brainstorm “perfect gifts” on additional copies of the resource page. If a child cannot write or spell the perfect gifts or family names, leaders should be prepared to assist.

After all children have had time to draw and write, allow each child to share about one person’s perfect gift. Ask the question, “What makes that gift perfect for that family member?”

Encountering the Word (10 minutes)

Tell children that as we are getting ready for Christmas, we are going to read a song that Mary sang about Jesus before Jesus was born. (If your church has a favorite hymn with these words in it or a favorite choral anthem, consider sharing a recording of that — it will help to emphasize to the children that even though we are reading it, it is supposed to be a song!)

Have children open their Bibles to Luke 1:50–55. This passage starts in the middle of Mary’s song. During the first part, Mary has sung about how glad she is that God has chosen her to give birth to Jesus. The second half of the song (which we are about to read) is about all of the things that Jesus will do for the world after he is born.

For Older Children:

Have a volunteer read verses 50–55. Ask the children what they heard that Jesus will do in these verses. If children need help, look at the verses one by one. Ask children to share the things that Jesus will do, write them down on a board or draw pictures to help children remember.

- In verse 50, God promises that Jesus will show mercy. What is mercy? (Mercy is taking care of someone when they need something.)
- In verse 51, Jesus will show strength! What are some ways that Jesus might show strength?
- In verse 52, Jesus lifts up the lowly. Being lowly means you might feel sad. How does Jesus help people who sometimes feel sad? Who in our world might feel sad?
- In verse 53, Jesus will feed everyone who is hungry! Do you know anyone who is hungry?
- In verse 54, Jesus promises to help all of God’s people. Can you imagine any way that God’s people need help?
- In verse 55, God remembers making promises to God’s people in the past and promises to keep these promises.

Ask the question: If Jesus does all these things, how is Jesus the perfect gift for our world?

For Younger Children:

Read this simplified version of Luke 1:50–55. Ask the same questions (stopping verse by verse if that feels right for your group).

- 50 In Jesus, God will show love to everyone, no matter their age.
- 51 Jesus will be strong and will help those who are not strong.
- 52 Jesus will make sure the powerful use their power wisely. Jesus will help those who are sad or tired.
- 53 Jesus will make sure everyone has food. Jesus will teach people with lots of food how to share.
- 54 Jesus will help all of God’s children and remember to show them love.
- 55 God will keep these promises in Jesus forever and ever.

Responding to the Word (20–25 minutes)

Choose some or all of the options below:

1 Wrapping Gifts

Before the lesson, gather gifts to support one of the ministries of your church, like diapers for a women’s shelter or toys for a children’s home. Show the children these gifts and tell them who will be receiving these gifts. Ask the children to think together how these gifts are helpful for those who are receiving them.

Then, for **Older Children**, allow children to wrap the gifts and sign Christmas cards to attach to the gifts. If possible have bows, tape and ribbons in addition to the wrapping paper.

For **Younger Children**, pass out large sheets of white paper and invite children to draw Christmas pictures on the paper that you will eventually use as wrapping paper. If you have access to Christmas stamps and ink or Christmas stickers, children can also create wrapping paper out of those items.

2 Writing a Thank You Note

Gather children around a piece of posterboard. Tell children that you are going to write a thank you note to God for all the gifts that God has given you. You may use the following format:

Dear God:

We know that you always give us what we need. Thank you for giving us ...
(allow each child to add one thing to the list that they have received).

We also know that you give us people like Jesus to teach us how to be faithful.
Thank you for sending us (again, let every child name at least one person).

This Christmas, teach us to say thank you for all the gifts we will receive.

Love, (have children sign their names or draw pictures).

Consider sharing this letter in a church newsletter or in another form of communication to the whole church.

3 Pass the Parcel

Note: If you would prefer to have children learn the game by watching a video, have children watch Season 3, Episode 14 of “Bluey” on Disney Plus (approximately eight minutes).

Before beginning, gather several small gifts that children in your group may enjoy. These can be candy that meets your dietary/allergy needs, pencils, slap bracelets, tops, yo-yos or anything else they might like. Gather lots of wrapping paper or newsprint and wrap each small gift in a different “layer” of wrapping. As you play music, children should pass the parcel (of gifts wrapped in different layers). When the music stops, whoever is holding the parcel gets to unwrap the outermost layer and keep whatever gift was wrapped there. Continue playing music and unwrapping layers until you are out of gifts. Ensure when stopping the music that each person receives at least one gift.

After the activity, ask children these (or similar) questions:

- Were there enough gifts for everyone?
- Was anyone left out of this activity?
- How is Jesus the perfect gift for everyone?
- How can we “pass around” what Jesus has given us?

Closing Activity (five minutes):

Gather children in a circle. Ask each child to think through what they have learned and talked about today. Ask them to select one gift that they have received from God or from Jesus. Go around the circle, inviting them to share their perfect gift. They do not need to explain a lot about it unless they would like. After everyone has shared, say this prayer.

Dear God,

Thank you for all of our perfect gifts.

Thank you for giving Jesus to this whole world.

Amen.

Extension Options:

Send home a list of local organizations that need collections at Christmas time, including links to their websites. Invite families to explore their websites, noting what kinds of donations they request and who receives these donations. If resources permit, suggest that families deliver some of these donations to the organization. Encourage families to think together about how they might volunteer with that particular organization. Continue to frame conversations around Jesus being God's gift to our world.



QUESTIONS?

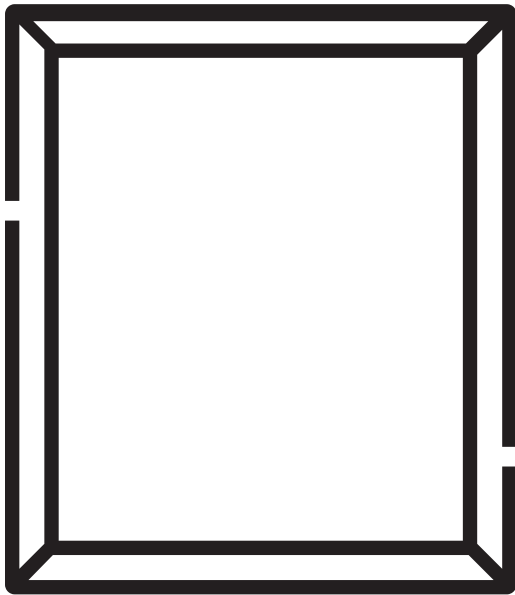
Feel free to contact us at

800-728-7228, ext. 5047

or email special.offerings@pcusa.org

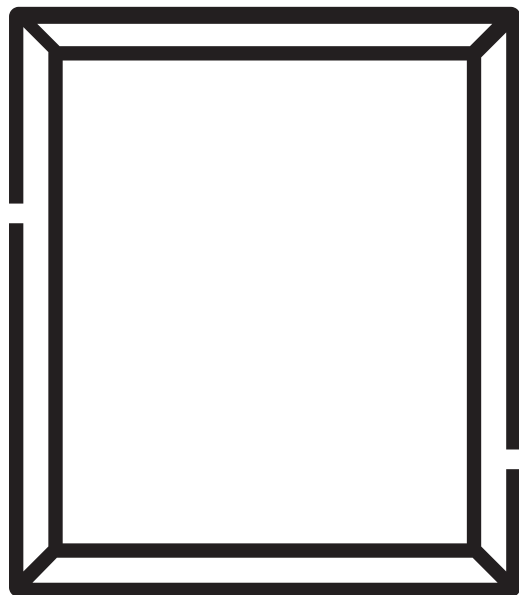
pcusa.org/christmasjoy

FAMILY MEMBER:



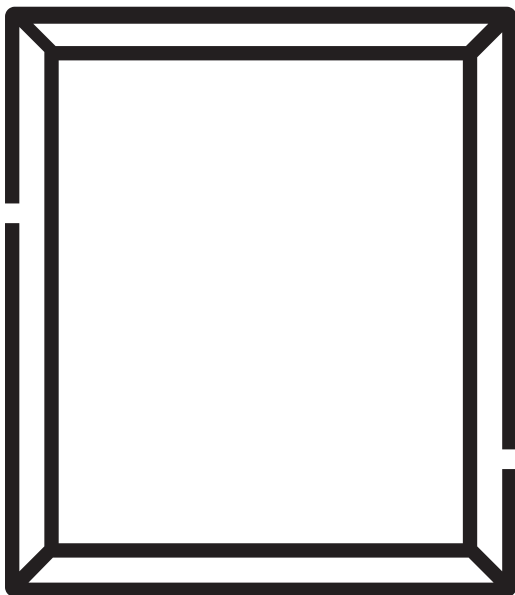
THE PERFECT GIFT:

FAMILY MEMBER:



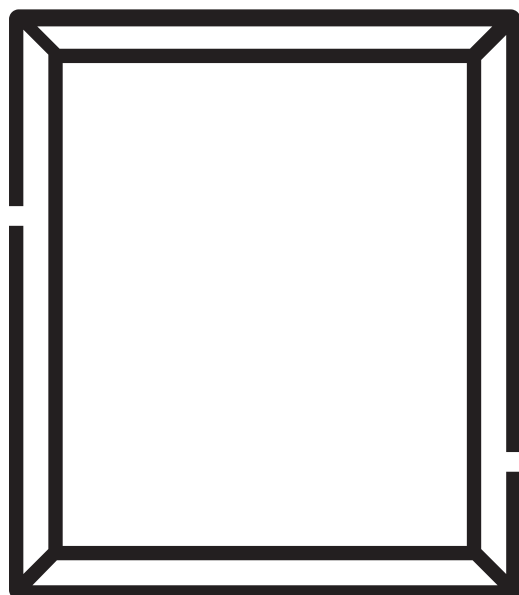
THE PERFECT GIFT:

FAMILY MEMBER:



THE PERFECT GIFT:

FAMILY MEMBER:



THE PERFECT GIFT: