

BIBLE TIMELINE ASSEMBLIES

34. GOD'S CHRISTMAS GIFT LABEL

Bible Base: John 3: 16; John 1: 12

Key Christian Belief: The gift of God's love is for everyone.

Aim: To help children understand that Jesus is God's gift to everyone who believes.

You Will Need

- three gifts as described in the introduction.
- a large gift label with the words of the two headings below written on it.

Introduction

Display three presents you have brought each wrapped up with a label. The labels should say 'mum', 'brother' and 'baby'. Produce a tie, for example, from the gift labelled baby, perfume from the gift labelled brother and a baby toy from the gift labelled mum.

Get the children to work out that the labels have been mixed up. Point out that labels on gifts are important because they tell us who the gifts are from and who they are for.

Explain that at Christmas we remember how God gave us the gift of His Son, Jesus. When He was born as a baby He did not come with a gift label but today we will imagine what it might have looked like and what it might have said on it if He had.

With Love From God

Read or have a child prepared in advance to read John 3: 16 in a child-friendly version. Display the first part of your large gift label.

The Bible tells us that Jesus was God's Son and that God sent Him into the world to show us how much He loves us. When He grew up Jesus taught people about God's love. He also showed God's love to everyone - including those whom no one else cared about and those who knew they did not deserve it. He wanted them all to know that God loved them. And finally He showed God's love for us all by dying on the cross, which is what the Bible says He had been sent to do, to take the blame for the wrong things in our lives so that we can be God's friends and one day live with Him in heaven.

Christians believe that Jesus came to bring us the Good News that God loves us and wants us to be His friends. He was sent into this world with love from God.

To All Who Believe

Read or have a child prepared to read in advance John 1: 12 in a child-friendly version. Display the second part of your large gift label.

The gift of God's love is not just for those who are clever, talented, rich or good enough to deserve it. What Jesus came to do, He came to do for everyone. Both poor shepherds and rich Wise Men came to visit the baby Jesus. And because of what Jesus has done for us, the Bible says that everyone can know God's love and friendship in their lives. This is God's gift to us - we don't need to earn it or pay for it but we do need to accept it and the Bible tells us that it is by believing in Jesus, and welcoming Him into our lives, that we receive the gift of God's love and are welcomed into His family as His children!

And so the gift of God's love, that Jesus came to bring, is for all who believe.

Conclusion

There were lots of people in Bethlehem in those days who knew nothing about the wonderful gift that had been given. But people like Mary and Joseph, the shepherds and the wise men - who had heard and believed the Good News had something wonderful to celebrate that the others did not have.

There are lots of people around us who will not give a second thought to Jesus this Christmas while those who have heard and believed the Good News of what He came to do for us have something to celebrate that will last far beyond Christmas. Because of Jesus Christians believe we can be God's friends forever!

Action Rhyme

For young children, conclude by teaching them the following rhyme, with actions, to remind them of the Christmas story.

This is the stable warm and dry,	<i>(Make a roof shape with your fingertips.)</i>
This is the star that shone in the sky,	<i>(Open and close fingers repeatedly.)</i>
This is the baby who came from above	<i>(Fold arms as if holding a baby.)</i>
To bring us the wonderful gift of God's love.	<i>(Give yourself a hug.)</i>

Song

The carol 'O Little Town Of Bethlehem' which includes the line 'How silently the wondrous gift is given' might be appropriate for older children to sing.