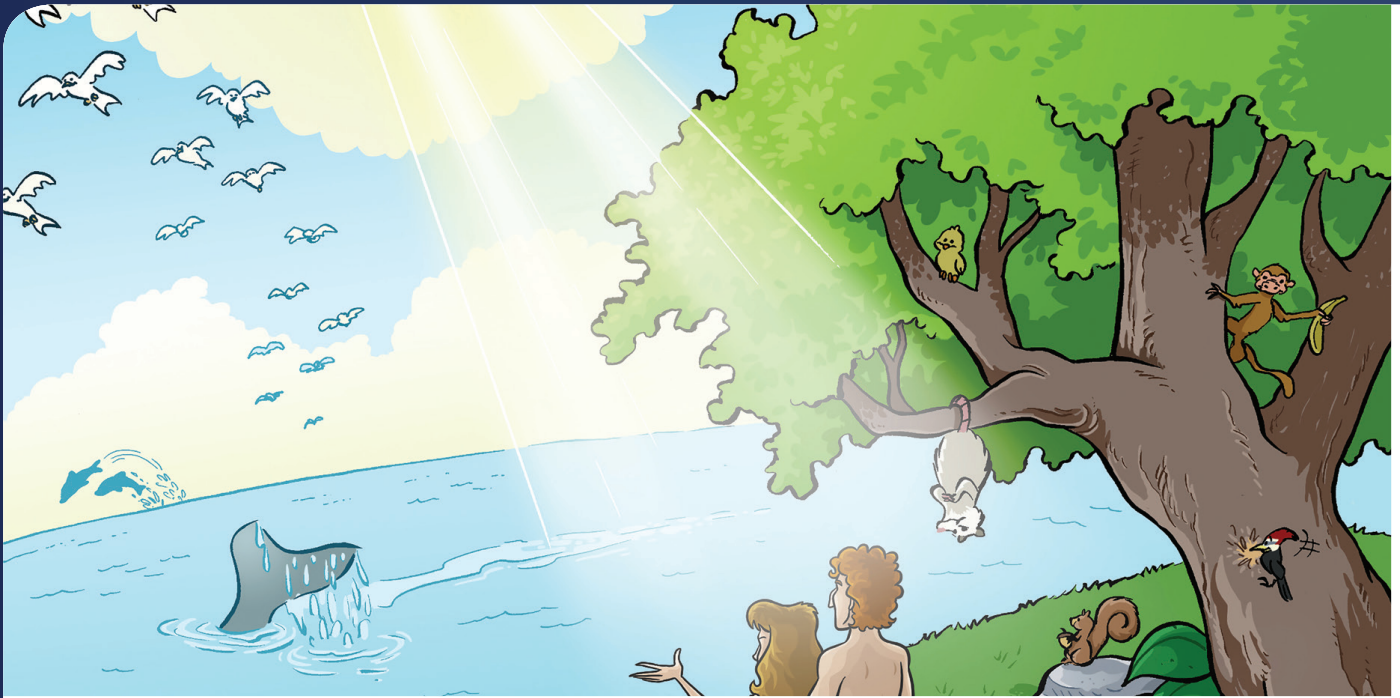




CHRISTMAS LESSON 1

The pre-existence of the Son of God

JOHN 1:1-5



Jesus is the always living God.



“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1).

Supporting Truths

1. Jesus is God.
2. Jesus was always alive.
3. Jesus is the Father’s eternal companion.
4. Jesus is the Word and light.
5. Jesus created and keeps giving life.

Objectives

1. Recite John 1:1.
2. Explain that Jesus was always alive even before He was born in Bethlehem.
3. Define the Trinity.
4. Explain that Jesus shows us the Father.
5. Compare John 1:1–5 to Genesis 1:1–3.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

The pre-existence of the Son of God • John 1:1–5



Lesson Summary

The story of Christmas begins long before Jesus was born in Bethlehem. It begins at the very beginning, because Jesus is actually the eternal Word of God. He was with God before anything was created, and He really is God and the One who created everything. So when He was born on this earth, He came to give life again: to bring light and new life into the world as He did in the beginning.

Spotlight on the Gospel

Christmas is a season full of good things, a time for fun, family, and rest from work and school. But with all the festivities, it is easy to get caught up in the moment and miss the lasting wonder of Christmas. So what is so lasting and so wonderful about Christmas? It is Jesus Himself. He wasn't just a baby who was born and died in ancient Israel. He is in fact the eternal God, always living and able to give new and lasting life to anyone who trusts in Him (John 20:31).

THIS WEEK



**The pre-existence of
the Son of God**
John 1:1–5

NEXT WEEK



**The incarnation of the
Son of God**
John 1:6–18

Lesson Commentary

Jesus is the always living God.

Christmas is a season full of good things, a time for fun, family, and rest from work and school. But with all the festivities, it is easy to get caught up in the moment and miss the lasting wonder of Christmas. So what is so lasting and so wonderful about Christmas? It is Jesus Himself. He wasn't just a baby who was born and died in ancient Israel. He is in fact the eternal God, always living and able to give new and lasting life to anyone who trusts in Him (John 20:31).

The Word was always God (1:1-2)

To keep us from getting lost in the moment, John begins at the very beginning (1:1a). No matter how far back you go, something—or Someone—was there. He didn't come into existence. He is pre-existent, always there, always living. There was never a time when He was not alive. Who is this? As soon as John says, "In the beginning," we think, "In the beginning, God" (Gen 1:1). But that's not what John says! He says, "In the beginning was the Word." That is shocking, since only God has always existed. John is talking about a Word who is pre-existent, eternal, and seems very much like God Himself.

So who is this Word? We know that we use words to communicate our thoughts and intentions. We use them to reveal ourselves to others and to get things done. Similarly, in the Old Testament, God used His

Word to reveal Himself (1 Sam 3:21; Jer 1:4) and do His work of creation (Ps 33:6) and salvation (107:20). So whoever this Word is, He must come from the Father to make the Father known and to do the Father's will.

The Word was also with God (John 1:1b). He existed in a personal relationship with God. So the Word is a person, but He is not the same person as the Father. Long ago God hinted at this when He said, "Let Us

make man in Our image" (Gen 1:26). From the beginning, God has had an eternal companion who is equally Creator and is equally represented by mankind.

But isn't God the only Creator and the only pattern for mankind? Yes, so John tells us plainly, "And the Word was God" (John 1:1c). This is not just saying that the Word was in some way divine, since there is another Greek word for that. Rather, God's eternal companion is also God's very self. The Word is God in His very nature and essence. He is God at the core of who He is. Once we include the Holy Spirit (Gen 1:2), we have the Trinity: the three-in-one God. So this is the Word John is talking about (John 1:2): someone who has always existed and is equal to God, yet is sent by God to reveal Him and do His work.

The Word is the creator God (1:3)

A major part of that work is creation. Since John wrote, "In the beginning was the Word," instead of "In the beginning, God," we already expect that John will go on to say "the Word created" instead of "God created" (Gen 1:1). And we already know God created by His word (1:3). So it makes sense that the Word is the Creator (John 1:3a). This confirms that the Word is God, since creation is something only God can do (Isa 45:18; Rev 4:11).

But could God have created the Word, and then the Word created everything else? No, first, because nothing was ever created

besides what the Word created (John 1:3b). Second, while the Word simply "was," everything else was "made" or, literally, "came into being." Since there was never a moment when the Word came into being, He is the uncreated Creator.

The Word was life and light (1:4-5)

But how is it possible for the Word just to exist without ever being created? Because He is self-existent, having life in Himself (1:4a). It is His nature to be alive, showing again that He is God (Exod 3:14; Acts 17:28). Also, because of the life that is in Him,



THINK ABOUT IT

"By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host" (Ps 33:6).

THINK ABOUT IT

"And God said, 'Let there be light...'" (Gen 1:3a).



STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

The pre-existence of the Son of God • John 1:1–5



THINK ABOUT IT

Jesus is the great “I am” (John 8:58).

He is able to create life (Gen 1:14–31). Not only that, but life continues to be in Him. He created in the beginning, He goes on keeping creation alive (Col 1:17), and He also creates new, spiritual life (John 4:14).

The life that is in the Word is also the light of men (John 1:4b). Light and life always go together, just as light allowed the rest of creation to come alive in the beginning (Gen 1:3). The Word’s light is for humans, because God’s life and light are for humans (Ps 36:9; 56:13). Just as this life and light came through God’s written Word in the Old Testament (Ps 119:105; Prov 6:23), so now they come through the living Word. This again shows that the Word is fully God, since God is light (Ps 27:1). God’s glory is bright, shining light, a bright cloud at the Red Sea (Exod 14:19–20) and flashing lightning on Mt Sinai (19:16–18). God looked like gleaming metal surrounded by brightness (Ezek 1:26–28) and like a man dressed in bright clothing, with bright hair, sitting on a blazing throne, with fire pouring out before Him (Dan 7:9–10). This light and glory of God is the same light and glory that belong to the Word.

The light of the Word shines in the darkness (John 1:5). By shining in the darkness, He allows people to see God and know what He is like. He shines with the light of truth (Ps 119:105) and holiness (1 John 1:6–7), and He shines into a world darkened by sin (Prov 4:19) and lack of truth (Rom 2:19). The darkness cannot “overcome” His

light because no matter how much Satan and sinful people fight against the Word, they cannot win. The light always conquers. This is the Word, always living, always shining, always winning.



THINK ABOUT IT

Sinners hate the light (John 3:20).

Conclusion: The Word is Jesus

You already know who the Word is (1:14), but imagine being there in Bethlehem as Jesus’ first tiny cries broke the crisp night air. Would you have realized who this newborn was? He is the Word who has always been alive (8:58; 17:5). He shows us exactly who the Father is because He has exactly the same nature as the Father (10:30; 14:9; Heb 1:1–3). He does the Father’s work (John 5:30; Heb 1:3) of creating (Col 1:16) and saving (1:20) because He is fully God (1:19). He has life in Himself and offers new, **eternal**, never-ending life to all who believe in Him (John 3:15–17; 5:26). His life is the light (8:12) that shines in the darkness (Isa 9:2), opens blind eyes (42:6–7), shows God’s glory to all nations (49:6; 60:1–5), and brings healing and peace (Mal 4:2; Luke 1:79). The darkness of Satan could not kill Him (Matt 2:16) or disqualify Him (4:1–11), for Jesus is the glorious, life-giving, unbeatable Word, our Mighty God and Savior (Isa 9:6; Tit 2:13; Heb 1:8).

So who do you celebrate at Christmas? Sin is so blinding and deadly that only the Word of life and light can rescue, yet most people love the darkness of their sin more (John 3:19–21). Many celebrate Christmas, and might even celebrate Christ, but still do not submit to the **deity** or God-ness of Jesus. If they continue this way, they will die in their sins (8:24). But for a few, the light of Jesus has opened their eyes to the overwhelming glory of God (2 Cor 4:4–6). The light of Jesus creates new life in them, so that they turn from sin and walk in the light of holiness (1 John 1:6–7). They enjoy the festivities of Christmas, but to them there is one thing that rises far above everything else: Jesus the Word, the eternal God of life and light.

Lesson Outline

Jesus is the always living God.

AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE



1. Jesus shows us God (1:1a, 4b–5).
2. Jesus has always been alive (1:1a).
3. Jesus is God but not the Father (1:1b–2).
4. Jesus created everything (1:3).
5. Jesus has life to give to us that lasts forever (1:4a).



AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE

1. **The Word was always God (1:1–2).**
 - The Word always existed (1:1a, 2).
 - The Word existed in relationship with God (1:1b, 2).
 - The Word had the same nature as God (1:1c).
2. **The Word is the uncreated Creator (1:3).**
 - The Word created everything (1:3).
 - The Word was not created (1:3).
3. **The Word is life and light (1:4–5).**
 - The Word had life in Himself (1:4a).
 - The Word's life is light shining in darkness (1:4b–5).
4. **Conclusion: The Word is Jesus.**
 - Jesus was always God (John 8:58; 10:30).
 - Jesus is the uncreated Creator (Col 1:16, 19).
 - Jesus is life and light (John 8:12; 14:6).



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

The pre-existence of the Son of God • John 1:1–5



Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

1. **What does John call Jesus?**
The Word.
2. **Did Jesus first start living when He was born?**
No. He has always been alive, no matter how far back you go.
3. **What did Jesus do that only God can do?**
He created everything.
4. **What does Jesus have in Himself?**
Life that lasts forever.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

1. **Why is Jesus called the Word?**
We use words to reveal ourselves to others and to get things done. So Jesus is God's Word because He reveals God to us and does the Father's work.
2. **What does pre-existent mean?**
It means that Jesus has always been alive.
3. **Is Jesus the same as God the Father?**
No, but they have always been in a close relationship together.
4. **Is Jesus like God, or is Jesus God?**
Jesus is God: He has the exact same nature as the Father. We know He is God because He is eternal, Creator, and self-existent (uncreated).
5. **What are some of the God's works that Jesus does?**
He created in the beginning, and He also saves (creates a new creation).
6. **Why is Jesus able to make us alive to God?**
Because Jesus has life in Himself.
7. **How is Jesus able to show us who God is?**
Because His life is light that can shine through the darkness of our sin.
8. **What is another word for the light of Jesus?**
Glory. Jesus' glory is the same as the Father's glory.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT CHRISTMAS?

What is your favorite thing about Christmas? Let me tell you about my favorite thing about Christmas—the best thing ever!

THAT'S ME!

Bring one of your baby pictures to class. Show it to the children and ask them if their parents have any pictures of them as babies. Talk about how every person begins life as a baby—even the tallest, oldest person they've ever seen started out life as a tiny, helpless child. Well, every person except one. Even though Jesus entered into this world as a baby boy, He was alive long before His birth. In fact, Jesus has no beginning. He is the eternal (always living) God.



LIGHT CONQUERS DARKNESS

Turn off the lights and use a small flashlight to show how even a small amount of light is able to drive darkness out of the room. Darkness cannot overcome it. Neither can Satan and the powers of darkness defeat the light of Jesus.

NO BEGINNING

Bring a large ball of yarn to class. Ask a child to begin pulling on the end of the yarn. As they pull, more and more yarn will come off the ball. While they're pulling, ask the class how long they think it will take to get to the beginning? If they keep pulling the yarn, they will eventually unravel the whole ball. But not with Jesus. If His life were represented by this yarn, then they would never get to the beginning, no matter how long they pulled. You would keep pulling forever and ever because Jesus has no beginning. He is eternal.



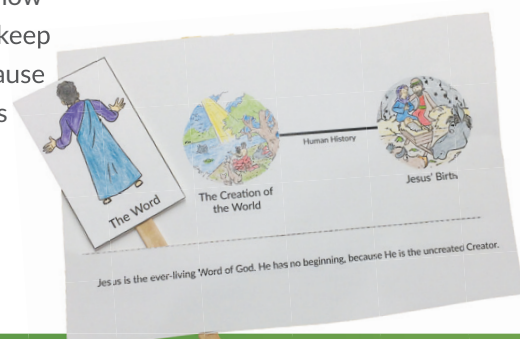
THE EVERLIVING ONE

See Year 3 Craft Book, Book 2.

Materials: Craft sheets, crayons, tape, scissor, craft stick.

Directions: Color the images. Cut “The Word” image and tape in its back the craft stick. Cut where the dotted line is. Have “The Word” image moving from before the creation of the world to the moment of the birth of Jesus.

The Everliving One
See Year 3 Craft Book, Book 2



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

The pre-existence of the Son of God • John 1:1–5



AGES 6–8



BORN BUT NOT CREATED

When were you born? When did you begin to exist? Whose birthday do we celebrate at Christmas? So when did Jesus begin to exist? Trick question! He never began to exist, because He always was alive!

PONY EXPRESS

Communication is critical. We use our words to reveal ourselves to others and to get things done. One example of the critical nature of communication is the rise of the Pony Express. This mail service began in April 1860 and claimed that it could carry a letter from St. Joseph, Missouri to Sacramento, California in just ten days. While many said this couldn't be done, the founders of the Pony Express believed they could do it by going in short stages and using mounted riders instead of coaches. Communication is important to God, too. But He didn't use ponies and riders. God has revealed Himself to us through His Son. Jesus is the Word of God. Today's lesson will be about this Word.



IT WON'T GO OUT!

Buy some trick birthday candles that are extremely difficult to blow out. Light one of the candles in class and have a few children try to blow it out (don't tell them it's a special candle). Use this to illustrate John 1:5: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

BACK TOGETHER AGAIN

What is your favorite toy? If that toy broke, shattering into many pieces, would you be able to fix it? But what if the person who designed it and made it came to your house? Do you think he could put it back together and make it work again? This is similar to what Jesus came to earth to do. Because He is the One who created us in the beginning, He is the only one who can put us all back together and make us right.



THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

See Year 3 Craft Book, Book 2.

Materials: Craft sheet, tape, black cardstock, yellow crayons.

Directions: Color the image of the world and the light bulb. Have the kids write on the black cardstock with the yellow crayon the word "Jesus is the" and "of the" as shown in the image. (Instead of a yellow crayon, you could use a silver sharpie or glow in the dark paint). Tape the light bulb and the world to complete the sentence.



*The Light of the World
See Year 3 Craft Book, Book 2*

AGES 9–11



INTRODUCE

EARLIEST MEMORY

What are some of the children's earliest memories? Can anyone remember anything when they were three years old? How about two years old? One year old? While some of us can remember further back than others, all of us have a starting point for our memories. But not Jesus. His memories have no beginning because He has no beginning.

JUST RIGHT

Our planet is called a "Goldilocks planet." Does anyone know why? It is just the right distance from the sun, meaning it is just the right temperature to sustain life: it is neither too hot or too cold. Talk about how important the light is that we get from the sun. In addition to warmth, plants and other organisms convert the sun's rays into energy. This process, called photosynthesis, is the basis for almost all life on earth since it starts the food chain. The sun also provides light so that we can see. But today we'll see that Jesus gives even better light.



ILLUSTRATE

SO MUCH MORE

Bring or show the class a reproduction of a famous painting. Explain that reproductions are great because they allow us to see famous works of art that we might not otherwise be able to see because we couldn't afford to purchase or travel to see the original. However, they are not the original, and a serious art collector would be able to spot differences between a reproduction and the original. But this is not the case with Jesus. He shows us God, but unlike a painting that has been reproduced, Jesus is not inferior to God in any way. He is God Himself (Heb 1:1–3).

GREATEST DETERRENT

Ask the children to identify some things people do to prevent crime (build a fence, buy a dog or gun, install locks or a home security system, put up signs, etc.). What about installing a light? Hold up a light bulb and talk about how something as simple as light can stop criminals because they don't want to be seen. The light that Jesus provides does more than just prevent evil: His light conquers evil (John 1:5)!



APPLY

CREATED FOR RELATIONSHIP

Who is your best friend? How long have you been friends? Does anyone know where the idea of relationship comes from? It comes from God. In John 1:2 we read that Jesus, the Word, "was in the beginning with God." The Father and Son (and the Holy Spirit) have enjoyed a perfect relationship for all eternity. And when God created us in His image (Gen 1:26), He created us to have a relationship with Him. But that relationship has been broken by sin (Gen 3:8). In response, God has sent His Son to pay the price of our sin so that we can once again enjoy friendship with God (John 15:13–15). Are you friends with God? Or are you His enemy?