

Lesson Plan: The Nativity Storytellers

Materials Needed

- A children's Bible or a book about the Nativity story (e.g., "The Christmas Story" by Jane Werner Watson) OR a link to an age-appropriate animated video of the Nativity.
- Whiteboard or large sheet of paper and markers.
- Paper, pencils, and colored pencils or markers.
- **For Project Options (choose one):**
 - **Option A (Diorama):** Shoebox, construction paper, scissors, glue, craft sticks, cotton balls, fabric scraps, modeling clay, small twigs, etc.
 - **Option B (Mini-Play):** Paper for scripts, simple props (blankets for robes, a doll for baby Jesus), a camera or phone to record (optional).
 - **Option C (Comic Strip):** Paper (or a pre-printed comic template), pencils, ruler, fine-tip markers.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Identify the key people and places in the Christmas Nativity story.
- Retell the main events of the Nativity story in the correct order.
- Create a project (diorama, play, or comic) that accurately tells the Nativity story.
- Explain the importance of one character or symbol from the story.

Lesson Procedure

Part 1: Introduction (10 minutes)

Hook: The Christmas Detectives

Let's start by being detectives! When you see Christmas decorations, what are some of the first things you see? (*Allow for answers like Santa, reindeer, snowmen, and also angels, stars, a baby in a manger*). Excellent! Today, we are going to investigate the story behind some of those special symbols: the star, the angels, and the baby in the manger. It's a very old and important story called the Nativity.

Setting Our Goals

Today, we're going to become Nativity experts! Daniella and Alisia, our goal is to know this story so well that you could tell it to someone else using your own amazing creations. We'll learn who was there, what happened, and then you'll get to be the storytellers!

Part 2: Body of the Lesson (30-40 minutes)

I Do: Telling the Story (10-15 minutes)

1. The teacher/parent will read the Nativity story aloud from a book or play a short animated video

about it.

2. As the story unfolds, pause to point out the key figures and places. On a whiteboard or large paper, write down the names as they appear:
 - **Characters:** Mary, Joseph, Angel Gabriel, Baby Jesus, Shepherds, Angels, King Herod, the Three Wise Men (Magi).
 - **Places:** Nazareth, Bethlehem, the Stable/Manger.
 - **Key Symbols:** The Star of Bethlehem.
3. **Talking Points:** "So first, an angel visited a young woman named Mary. That's a pretty surprising start to a story! Then, Mary and her fiancé Joseph had to take a long, long trip to a town called Bethlehem. Imagine walking or riding a donkey for days! When they got there, there were no hotel rooms left, so they had to stay in a simple stable where animals lived. That very night, a special baby was born—Jesus. Far away, shepherds were watching their sheep when angels appeared, filling the sky with light and music to announce the good news. At the same time, wise men in the east saw a brand new, bright star and knew it was a sign that a new king was born, so they followed it to find him."

We Do: Putting the Puzzle Together (10 minutes)

1. **Story Sequencing:** On the whiteboard, write the following key events out of order:
 - Baby Jesus is born in a stable.
 - An angel tells Mary she will have a special baby.
 - Wise Men follow a star and bring gifts.
 - Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem.
 - Shepherds visit the new baby after angels appear to them.
2. **Guided Practice:** "Okay, story detectives, let's put these events in the right order. What happened FIRST in our story?" Work together with Daniella and Alisia to number the events from 1 to 5. This is a great time to ask questions like, "Why did Mary and Joseph have to travel?" or "Who were the very first visitors to see the baby?"

You Do: Become the Storyteller! (15-20 minutes for planning, more time for creating)

Now it's your turn to tell the story in your own creative way! You can work together or each choose your own project. Pick one of these three options:

- **Option A: The Shoebox Manger Scene.** Create a 3D diorama of the Nativity scene inside a shoebox. Your goal is to show who was there on that first Christmas night.
- **Option B: The Nativity Mini-Play.** Write a short script with 2-3 short scenes that tell the story. You can be the actors and use simple props to perform your play.
- **Option C: The Christmas Comic Strip.** Draw a 6-panel comic strip that shows the main events of the story from beginning to end. Use speech bubbles and captions to tell the story.

Success Criteria (What a great project looks like):

- Your project includes at least 4 key characters (e.g., Mary, Joseph, Jesus, and shepherds or wise men).
- The story is told in the correct order.
- Your creation clearly shows the main setting: the stable in Bethlehem.
- It is neat, colorful, and shows your best creative effort!

Part 3: Conclusion (10 minutes)

Show and Share (Summative Assessment)

It's time for the premiere! Daniella and Alisia, present your finished projects.

- If you made a diorama, explain who each character is and why you designed it the way you did.
- If you wrote a play, perform it!
- If you drew a comic, read it aloud to us.

As you share, tell us about one character or symbol in your project and why you think it's important to the story.

Recap and Reflection

Let's review what we learned.

- Who can name three people who visited the baby Jesus? (*Shepherds, Wise Men*)
- Where was Jesus born? (*In a stable in Bethlehem*)
- What guided the Wise Men to him? (*A bright star*)

The Nativity story is a cornerstone of Christmas. Now, when you see a Nativity scene this holiday season, you'll be the experts who know the whole amazing story behind it. Great work today, storytellers!

Differentiation

• For Learners Needing Support:

- Provide pre-printed character templates to cut out and color for the diorama.
- Offer a "fill-in-the-blank" script for the play where they just need to add a few key words.
- Provide a comic strip template with captions already written, so they only need to draw the pictures.

• For Advanced Learners:

- Challenge them to include an extra scene in their project, like the angel visiting Joseph in a dream or the Wise Men visiting King Herod.
- Encourage them to research and explain the meaning of the gifts the Wise Men brought: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.
- For the play, have them create their own simple costumes or background scenery.