

- Israel's army was losing a battle with the Philistines and decided to bring the sacred Box onto the battlefield, hoping that God would fight for them.
- God had ordered that the sacred Box be kept in the most holy place in the tabernacle. Only the high priest could approach it once a year, with sacrificial blood.
- The Philistines were terrified believing that Israel's God had entered the battlefield. However, they fought even harder and captured the Box.
- Eli the high priest heard this and was so shocked that he fell over backwards and died.
- The Philistines put the sacred Box, in their temple beside their idol, the fish god, Dagon.
- On the third day, Dagon fell over and his fish head broke off, just as Jesus later crushed the head of the old serpent when He rose from the dead on the third day.
- Dagon reminds us of the huge fish that had to vomit Jonah back up alive on the third day.
- When the Philistines got painful, fatal tumours, they put the Box on a cart behind two cows with no driver, to see if God would lead the cows back to Israel.
- When some farm workers saw the sacred Box with its shiny gold wings returning to Israel, they rejoiced like the disciples did when they saw Jesus after He returned from death.

**Memorize** John 1:14.

**Form groups** of two or three persons, to pray and plan activities. Ask God's help, to see by faith the risen Christ who is Emmanuel, 'God with us,' and to grow in our relationship with Him. Pray for one another.

**To introduce the Lord's Supper**, read John chapter 1, verses 1-3 and 7.

- Explain that Jesus is the living Word of God, who became flesh, the visible image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15-17; John 1:14)
- The Lord's Supper reflects this wonderful incarnation. It reminds us that Jesus was born in a human body, when we eat the bread. Jesus shed human blood to cover the sins of all men. If you want to clarify this further, read 1 Timothy 2:6 & 7 and 1 John 2:2.

## JESUS WAS BORN AS A HUMAN

### 1. Discover the deepest meaning of Christmas and Jesus' incarnation.

**Prayer:** "Dear Jesus, help me to appreciate this marvellous truth, that you are both man and God. Help me to explain to others that in you God and man were blended, and that you are the Father's greatest gift to us."

**Background.** If you do not yet know the historical account of Jesus' birth, then, please, read Luke chapters 1 & 2 and Matthew chapters 1 & 2. The children's study for Christmas includes a drama from Luke chapters 1 & 2.



**Isaiah prophesied** hundreds of years before Christ. Find in Isaiah 7:14, what the saviour would be called. Answer: He would be called "Emmanuel," which means "God with us."

**Jesus has two natures**, the divine nature of God and the human nature of man. He is the bridge between mankind and the One Most Holy and Almighty God.

- Which of His two natures is seen in John 1:1-3?
- John 1:1 identifies Jesus as the eternal Word. What does John 1:14 say He became?
- Find if Jesus existed before he was born as a man, also in John 1:1-3.
- Which of His two natures is seen in Hebrews 2:14 & 15?

**Find** from whom Jesus saved us by sharing our human nature, also in Hebrews 2:14 & 15. Answer: By becoming human, Christ saved us from the devil.

- Find in Galatians 4:3-7 what Jesus enables us to become, by His becoming a man. Answer: Because God was born as a man, he could die in our place

and make us sons of God, and heirs together with Him of His Father's blessings.

## 2. Plan with your co-workers special Christmas activities.

- Some believers might sing about Jesus' birth in front of friends' houses at Christmas time.
- Others might take food or other gifts to very poor neighbours.
- Have meals or parties with other believers, friends and relatives, to celebrate Jesus' birth.

## 3. Plan a Christmas celebration.

Select activities that fit local customs.

**Ask the Children** to present whatever they may have prepared.

**Prophecies of Jesus' birth.** Prepare helpers to read each prophecy when you mention it. Explain that Old Testament prophets foretold Jesus' birth long before it happened. They predicted that the promised Saviour of mankind would be ...

- The offspring of woman and would crush the head of the serpent (Satan), Genesis 3:15.
- Abraham's descendant who would bless all nations, Genesis chapter 12, verses 1-3 and 7.
- From the tribe of Judah, Genesis 49:10.
- A prophet comparable to Moses, to whom the people would listen, Deuteronomy 18:15.
- A descendant of King David, whose reign would last forever, Isaiah 9:6 & 7.
- Born in Bethlehem, Micah 5:2.
- Born of a virgin and called 'Emmanuel,' Isaiah 7:14.

**Explain** why we call Jesus 'Emmanuel' and that He has two natures.

**Wise men** visited the baby Jesus, Matthew 2.

- You or a helper should read or tell by memory the story in Matthew 2.
- Explain that the wise men recognized that Jesus was a special king sent by God.

- Ask, "What very bad man did not want Jesus to live?"
- Ask, "In what ways do bad men today, like King Herod, reject God and seek to hurt His people?"
- Ask, "Shepherds found Jesus lying in a manger. Where did the wise men find him?" Answer: In a house.
- Explain that the Bible does not say how many wise men there were, but it does say how many gifts they brought. How many?

**Tell the story** of the capture of the Covenant Box (1 Samuel chapters 4-6). First, explain what the Covenant Box was:

- Before Jesus was born, God illustrated with earthly symbols important aspects of the work that Jesus' would do to save people. The Covenant Box was associated with the presence of God with men. When Jesus was born God came to be with us in the flesh, replacing the symbol.
- The Box was a large chest holding the tablets of stone upon which God wrote the Ten Commandments that were the foundation of His Old Testament covenant with Israel. Jesus, like the sacred Box, carries God's law in His heart. He always obeyed God the Father.
- The Box was made of wood overlaid with gold. Ezekiel saw God's glory, visible above it in Ezekiel 10:4, just as John and the apostles saw God's glory emanate from Jesus (John 1:14).



- Two cherubim (mighty angels) made of gold were on each end of the Box lid, with their wings spread forward overshadowing the lid. Scripture portrays such Cherubim several times when describing the glorious presence of the Almighty God.

**Relate** only the main points of the story in 1 Samuel 1-4.