

## A Shower for Baby Jesus

This might be planned for an individual class or the whole Sunday School. Send invitations to each child's family, and have fun decorating the room ahead of time. Plan to have refreshments, and have a short programme of Christmas carols and a reading of the Christmas story. Then unwrap the gifts. Afterwards, they can be boxed up and donated to the local Birthright, which assists mothers in difficult circumstances to keep their babies, or to the Salvation Army Christmas gift programme or any other local organization which has a need for baby items.

## Christmas Cards

Easy and effective Christmas cards for children to make use small candy canes and construction paper. Fold the paper in 4 to make the card. Glue the wrapped candy cane upside down to the left hand side of the front to make a

J Then add these letters "esus is the reason . . .," and inside the card, "we celebrate this season."

## An Epiphany Party

In 2003, January 6 falls on the first Monday of the new school term. The day before, though, might be an ideal way of winding up the season and celebrating this wonderful, yet rather over-looked festival.

Ask each child to come dressed up as one of the magi (wise men, kings)

Organise activities based on the themes of journeying, gifts, or stars which will last about 2 hours (see below) and plan to finish with snacks which approximate Middle Eastern food - such as pita bread, grapes, if they are not too expensive, dates (or date squares or cookies), tangerines, figs, and halva, if you can find it. Almond cookies could also be served. You may also wish to bake small cup cakes, putting a small dry bean inside one of them. At the end of the party the child who gets the cake with the bean is crowned Twelfth Night King or Queen. This is traditional in some parts of the world.

### Possible activities

- ★ Find the frankincense. Have about 6 numbered small baby food jars, or similar size containers. In each one put a cotton ball which has been permeated with a different scent e.g. incense, furniture polish, garlic, coffee, lemon, cloves. See how many can guess which is the incense.
- ★ Kim's game. Put about 15 items which are related to a modern journey across the desert on a

tray. E.g. a compass, a map, a flashlight, a water bottle, matches, a picture of a tent, sunscreen, sunglasses, a high energy bar etc. Allow the children to look at the objects for 30 seconds. The leader then secretly removes one object and asks them to tell which one. Do this several times, and then vary it by putting an object back.

- ★ Read the story of the journey of the Magi. 'The Wise Men's Visit' found in The Lion Storyteller's Bible or 'The Wise Men Visit Jesus' from the Read With Me Bible are good versions. Ask questions, depending on the ages of your children, such as: Who has helped you on your Christian journey? Are they people living today or has anyone been helped by a Saint or hero from long ago? What are these people like? If wise people brought God gifts today, what do you think they would bring? What is the best Christmas present you have ever had? Why?
- ★ Make cinnamon stick stars. Use 6 cinnamon sticks, glueing them first into two triangles, and then sticking the triangles together to make a six pointed star. Tie each point with a small piece of Christmas ribbon. The children may take these home to hang in a closet as an air freshener.
- ★ Make 'Kings.' Use plain coloured paper party hats for the kings costumes. If you can't find plain ones paint the ones you get in rich reds, purples, greens and blues. You will also need styrofoam balls 2 1/2 inches in diameter for heads. Ahead of time, paint these in skin colours. (Remember that tradition has it that one of the kings was black) Make a small starter hole in a styrofoam ball and press it down onto the point of the paper hat. Take it off again and put glue in the hole before re-attaching. Decorate the hats (costumes) with ribbon, rickrack, sequins, gold or silver doilies
- ★ Gift wrapping race. Make teams of 4. Provide each team with an empty shoebox, a piece of gift wrap big enough to cover it, tape and scissors. Each person on the team may use only one hand! On 'go,' begin to wrap - the winners are the team with the neatest package and the best teamwork.

Try this **tongue twister** with your class for fun:  
Santa's shop stocks short spotted socks.