

# 'God's Gift To The World'



This material is suitable for ages 8+.

### **Aim:**

Jesus is God's gift to us.

### **Bible focus:**

John 3:16

### **You will need:**

Gift wrapped presents (at least 2 but you may need more depending on the number of children in your group and how many teams you form), tape, treats to go inside the box or present you have wrapped (enough for each child).

### **Background:**

Have a Christmas present relay. Place the tape and the (two) gift-wrapped and ribbon-tied boxes on a table at one end of the room. Form (at least two) teams, and have the children line up at the opposite end of the room.

When you say 'go', a child from each team will hurry to the table, carefully untie and unwrap the gift box, then run back and tag the next person who will hurry to the table and rewrap and retie the box. Continue in this way until the team is finished. Try and work it so that the relay finishes with the gift being rewrapped.

Ask the children to tell you about occasions when they receive gifts (e.g. Christmas, birthdays, family celebrations, etc.)

Why do people give gifts? (To show they love you, to mark an occasion, etc.)

What do we do when someone gives us a present? (We receive the present, we open it and say 'thank you'.)

Have the teams unwrap the presents from the race and give them each a treat. (Be aware of dietary requirements when you buy these.)

## Bible time:

In a few weeks time it will be Christmas and we'll all be giving our families and friends gifts or presents but that's not only what Christmas is about. Who can tell me what special event Christians celebrate at Christmas? (Allow time for a response.) We celebrate the birth of Jesus. You can think about Jesus birth this way – Jesus was sent to earth by God as a present to the world. Have you ever thought about Jesus this way? God sent His Son Jesus to earth and when He grew up He told the world about God's love for them.

In the Bible in John 3:16 we are told that Jesus has done everything for us so that we won't be separated from God forever. That was why God sent Jesus as His gift to the world. God loves us so much that He wants everyone to be His friend. He sent Jesus to tell everyone about God's love. We also know that when He grew up Jesus died on a cross for us and then He rose again. God gave us the ultimate present.

What did we say we had to do to receive gifts? (Simply receive it, say 'thank you' and open it). The same is true of God's gift to us. We don't have to do anything to receive God's gift except receive it and say 'thank you'.

## Response time:

Some of you have already said thank you to God and received Jesus as God's gift. That's great and you know how great it is to have Jesus as your friend. Today you will have the chance to say 'thank you' to God again for His gift if you would like to.

Some of you might like to say thank you and receive God's gift for the first time and you will have the chance to do that when we pray in a moment.

Others might like to ask more questions about receiving God's gift. You can talk with me (or another leader) in a moment.

## Prayer:

Dear God, thank you for loving me so much (pause) that you sent Jesus as your gift (pause). I want Him to be my friend (pause) and I want to live my life showing that I am your friend (pause). Amen.



## Follow up:

Encourage the children that if they have further questions they would like to ask, to come and speak to you or one of the other leaders about this. Also encourage any children who have prayed this prayer for the first time to come and tell you so you can pray for them this week and help them to keep on trusting Jesus.

It will be helpful to have copies of Starting Out: how to be a follower of Jesus for 8 - 11's to help you follow up the children. Part 2 of the Starting Out booklet introduces the children to the Bible and helps them understand what it's like to live as friends of Jesus. Some age-appropriate Bible Reading notes may also be an appropriate method of following up the children who made decisions. These resources are available from your local Scripture Union Resources For Ministry bookshop. Make time to go through the Bible Reading notes to ensure the children have a good understanding of how to use these notes.

A further counselling resource that may be helpful if a child has more questions is Team Talk, again produced by Scripture Union. It is available through their Resources For Ministry department ph. 02 4337 0200 [www.scriptureunion.org.au/resources\\_ministry.htm](http://www.scriptureunion.org.au/resources_ministry.htm). or Koorong Books [www.koorong.com.au](http://www.koorong.com.au). This resource includes pages for children who are recommitting their lives or for children who have asked questions about a particular issue. E.g. Why did dad leave home?

Linking children in to other sections in the corps e.g. Sunday School, SAGALA, Kids Club or Junior Soldiers will also help with their ongoing spiritual development.

