SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT BEFORE TEACHING:

When our sins made it impossible to come to God, He made the step of coming to us, through Jesus in the flesh. By doing so, He would experience the same things we experience: sorrow, temptation, and joy just to name a few. He not only knows our thoughts and how we feel, He has experienced first hand what it is to be man having those thoughts and feelings. He is able to understand us like no other because He has literally walked in our shoes. God did not come to earth as a form of man but literally as man. His desire for a relationship with us resulted in this extraordinary plan to come to earth to rescue, redeem and restore us to relationship with Him.

Kids will learn that God knows exactly how they feel and can be comforted in that knowledge. They also learn about the depths of the love of Jesus who would willingly come to earth to demonstrate that love to them.

MAIN POINT: Jesus, as Immanuel, was God coming down to earth to be with us.

BIBLE VERSE: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel (which means God with us.) Matthew 1:23

BIBLE STORY: Jesus is born
Luke 2:1-7,
John 1:14,
Matthew 1:22-25

THE GALLERY: CHRISTMAS TREE LANE
LESSON THREE: IMMANUEL

THIS LESSON CONTAINS:

Preparation:
O Christmas Tree Trivia
Francois and Frank
What’s Under the Tree
Unwrapping the Verse

The Work:
Christmas Bible Story
Funky Christmas Tree
Christmas Tree Art

Display:
The Christmas Tree Studio
Ornament Craft
Game
Bible Memory
Express Yourself
Snack
The Gallery Cards
Family Guide
Each slide will present a statement. Kids guess if the statement is true or false. This can be done by show of hands, shouting an answer, clapping or any other fun sound or movement.

**Trivia Question #1**
Helicopters help to lift harvested Christmas trees from farms.

Answer: True

**Trivia Question #2**
During the 1600s, Christmas trees were popular in Germany and were often decorated with bananas.

Answer: False. They were decorated with apples.

**Trivia Question #3**
While stealing a Christmas tree, the Grinch was caught in the act by a small Who named Mindy-Lou Who.

Answer: False. Her name was Cindy-Lou.

**Trivia Question #4**
The first Christmas tree appeared in the 15th century in Latvia where the men and women danced around the tree then lit it on fire.

Answer: True.

**Trivia Question #5**
The most popular item to put on top of a Christmas tree is a star.

Answer: False. The angel is the most popular.
Supplies: Christmas tree with lights on it, clipboard, photographs, yarn, hole punch, envelope

Note on photos: These can be pictures from a magazine, print outs of photos from the internet, actual photos of people the kids are familiar or photos of the kids.

Preparation: Put together the Christmas tree on the set. Punch holes in the photos, string yarn through and make a loop for hanging the photo on the tree. Clip the envelope to the clipboard. This will be the “bill” in the skit.

Francois is hanging the photos one by one. He steps back every so often and then rehangs a photo before hanging the next one.

Frank: Francois? Francois, where are you?

Francois: Ah Frank. My willing assistant. I am over here creating a masterpiece with this tree and these beautiful photos. See- (talks about some of the photos and characteristics of the people in the photos.)

Frank: Uh, Francois, aren’t you suppose to put ornaments on a tree? You know, round red balls and little stockings and candy canes. That kind of stuff. Not... photos.

Francois: Ah. But my tree is not any ordinary tree. No, the trees at Christmas Tree Lane are works of art. They tell a story.

Frank: I see. (He clearly does not see.) I have come to give you the bill for the order you made from Frank’s Christmas Tree Farm and to thank you for the business that you gave me with your order. I also wanted to make sure that the trees were what you wanted and that you are satisfied with the service that we gave you.

Francois: That is quite a mouthful. Yes, everything was splendid. But you could have sent me an email with the bill attached. No need to come all the way over here.

Frank: Yes, that is true. However, I have found that sending word and being there in person are two different things. There is nothing quite like being with someone in person. I make an effort to go to each of our customer’s business in order to meet with them personally and shake their hand. Holds out hand.)
Francois: (Shakes his hand.) I see. You are quite right! A message in the mail, an email sent on a computer, a photo on a tree is never the same as the actual person standing with you and talking. Which gives me a momentous idea!

Frank: (Turns to go.) I had better get out of here quick. His ideas are never good for me.

Francois: Just a moment Frank. It appears that I will need your assistance. (Takes a photo from the tree. Compares it to Frank.) Yes, I will definitely need your assistance.

Frank: Oh no, you don’t.

Francois: I am having difficulty deciding on the final placement of this photo. So if you could stand here by the tree and pretend to be this person. (He moves Frank into a pose similar to the picture. He also moves his head and mouth until the face looks familiar.) Hold that look just like that. (Moves back and looks over the tree and Frank.) Ah ha! That is what I am missing. (He hangs the photo in just the “right” spot.)

Frank: Are you kidding me?

Francois: Not at all. This worked beautifully. Now, we can do the rest of the photos. (He turns his back on Frank to pick a photo.)

Frank flees from the scene throwing the “bill” behind him as he leaves.


WHAT’S UNDER THE TREE

Supplies: For the display-baby in a manger, “Immanuel” sign

Preparation: Print Immanuel sign. Fold it into a tent sign. Practice toggling Powerpoint slides back and forth to reveal gifts.
Under the Christmas tree there are gifts. One of the gifts contains the symbol that we will use to help us remember the name of Jesus we are learning today. As each gift is opened, see if you can decide if this might be a symbol for the name of Jesus.

(Have all the kids work together, divide into teams or choose two people to compete.)

Which one do you think represents the name Immanuel? (Give the kids some opportunities to guess.)

First we might need to understand what Immanuel means. God with us. Which one of these gifts might represent God with us?

It is the manger. Jesus was born as a baby and placed in a manger. He became man and lived among us. He was God with us.

Jesus, as Immanuel, was God coming down to earth to be with us.

Options:
Display: Place manger and the Immanuel sign in the display.

No PowerPoint: If you do not have access to power point, place a manger or a picture of a manger in a gift wrapped box and have the kids guess what might be in the box giving clues.

UNWRAPPING THE VERSE

Read Matthew 1:23 together:

Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel (which means God with us.)

Let’s say the verse again with some motions to help us remember it.

Behold (Put hands out wide in front of you dramatically.)
The virgin will conceive and bear a son, (Rock a baby in arms.)
And they shall call (Place hands up to the mouth on either side as if calling someone.)
His name Immanuel (Point to sky.)
Which means God with us (Point to sky and then to self and others.)
THE WORK
CHRISTMAS BIBLE STORY

Jesus is born

Supplies: Large map of the world, permanent markers (or push pins), baby doll, strips of cloth

Preparation: Place the map on the wall or on a corkboard/bulletin board if using push pins. Kids will be marking a place on the map using either the markers or the push pins.

How many of you live in a different place from where your family is from? In other words, were you born in the same place as where you live now or do your grandparents live in a different place? I want you to think about the general place your family is from and then come up to the map and put a dot on that place. (Kids may need some help defining what that means especially if their parents are from different areas. Choose the area their father is from.)

When Jesus was born, his family had to travel to the place where they were from. A ruler named Caesar Augustus made a decree that everyone must be registered in the town where their family was from. Joseph had to go to Bethlehem. At that time the family was just Joseph and Mary. They traveled from Nazareth to Bethlehem.

It must have been a hard trip because Mary was pregnant. She was close to her time to give birth. How many of you remember when your mom or aunt or friend was close to having a baby? What do you remember about that time? (Give the kids an opportunity to share.)

When they arrived in Bethlehem, it was time for Mary to give birth. The Bible says, “She gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.” Swaddling cloths were strips of material that people would wrap around newborn babies to keep them warm and snug. (Show with the doll and strips of cloth.) They named the baby Jesus.

Long before Jesus was born, there was prophecy about Him. That means the future was told about Him from prophets who heard from God. One of the things that was said about his birth was our Bible verse today. Let’s say it together:
Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel (which means, God with us.) Matthew 1:23

God came down to us through Jesus. He came and lived among us. He became a man who would have feelings. He would be tempted. He would be thirsty and hungry. He would be sad and happy.

Because God is with us means that He understands us. He knows what it feels like to be a human being. When we are sad and feel like no one understands, He does. When we are tempted to do something wrong, He knows what that feels like and can give us the strength to not do the wrong thing.

The fact that God is with us does not mean that our lives will always be easy. But it does mean that He will always be with us. When things are tough, we do not have to go through those things alone. He will always give us the help we need.

Remember that Jesus, as Immanuel, was God coming down to earth to be with us.

**PRAYER**

Ask Jesus to help the children who might be going through something tough this Christmas. Encourage the children to tell Jesus how they are feeling- the struggles they are having- emphasizing that He knows all about them and wants them to share how they feel with Him.

**FUNKY CHRISTMAS TREE**

**Supplies:** Powerpoint or printed picture of Christmas tree hair

I have a picture of a funky Christmas tree. Are you ready to see it?

Who would like to have hair that looks like this? Can you imagine walking around with your Christmas tree on your head all the time? Your Christmas tree would never leave you. It would be with you when you sleep, when you eat, when you go to school, when you play sports, and when you take a shower. You would have the spirit of Christmas with you at all times.
Not only would you have the tree with you at all times, you would be able to bring the tree to others. Wherever you would go, people would see the tree. Do you think it would make people smile? Do you think you would be bringing a fun Christmas cheer to others?

This tree reminds me of the name Immanuel and how God came down to earth as Jesus. He came so He could be with us. Even though Jesus went back to heaven, His Spirit stayed with us. For those who are believers, He is with them always. No matter where we go, He is with us. We never have to face anything alone.

We also bring Him with us wherever we go. We reflect His love to others. They should be able to see Jesus in the way we act and the things we say. We should do things that Jesus would do to help others. Because He lives in us, He will give us the power and strength to do those things.

For instance, when we see a friend that is sad, we can reflect God’s love to that friend. We might just sit with the friend quietly so she/he does not have to be alone. Or we might talk about what is making the friend sad. We might play with the friend to help the friend get his/her mind off what is bothering them. Even if we are not sure what we should do, we can pray and ask Jesus to help us know the right thing to do and to say.

God could have stayed far away from us. But instead, He sent Jesus to earth so He could be with us. He came to us when we needed Him.

Let’s say our verse again to remind us of what the name Immanuel means. “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel (which means God with us.)” Matthew 1:23

**CHRISTMAS TREE ART: HANDPRINT TREE**

**Supplies:** Poster board, tape or evergreen tree (artificial or real), colored paper, markers

**Preparation:** Cut circles out of the paper large enough for the kids to place a handprint. Either draw a tree on poster board or use an evergreen stand alone tree. Make sure that the tree used is large enough to accommodate all the handprint ornaments.
Jesus’ name Immanuel means God with us. When Jesus was born, it was literally God coming down to earth to be with us.

God loves each one of us. He knows all about us. For instance He knows exactly how many hairs are on our head. (Matthew 10:30)
He is not a God that stays far away from us but instead chose to come down with us.

Each person is special to God. He cares about every single person. He wants each person to serve Him and love Him, too.

The last couple weeks we learned that as the Horn of Salvation, Jesus is strong and fights for every one of us. The evergreen Christmas tree reminds us that God promised that Jesus would come as the Horn of Salvation and He kept his promise. We learned that the name Jesus means that He will save us. The wood on the Christmas tree reminds us that Jesus died on a tree (the cross) in order to save us. Today we are going to place handprints on the tree as a reminder that every single person is important to God. He came to earth to be with us because we are just that important.

(Have the kids trace their handprints on a large circle. Hang the circles on the tree as ornaments.)
DISPLAY

CHRISTMAS TREE STUDIO

Divide the kids into small groups and let them work together to create a tree. Different options for trees emphasizing the importance of each individual are listed below. Consider allowing each group to make a different kind of tree. When completed, display the trees in the room or hallway. Each week more trees will be added to your “Christmas Tree Lane.”

Most trees will need a canvas board, foam core board or poster board.

-FINGERPRINT TREE

**Supplies:** Green inkpad, variety of different colored ink pads, wet wipes

Lightly draw an outline of a tree on the board with pencil. Roll the thumb in the green inkpad and press onto the board inside the lines. Continue until the tree is filled in. Do not overlap the thumbprints.

When dried, use the pinkie fingertips to make ornaments using the other colored inks.

-BULB TREE

**Supplies:** Small colored Christmas balls, tacky glue, markers

Draw a large triangle on the board lightly with a pencil. Carefully write name on the bulb. Glue the bulb onto the board inside the lines. Under the tree, write “IMMANUEL: God With Us”

-CUPCAKE HOLDER TREE

**Supplies:** Paper cupcake holders, glue, black permanent marker

Have the kids glue cupcake holders in a triangular pattern to represent a tree. Leave an inch of space between each row. Write the first initial for each child inside the cupcake holder. Make a tree trunk with a few of the cupcake holders on the bottom.
-**CHALKBOARD TREE**

**Supplies:** Chalkboard paint, paintbrush, white chalk

**Preparation:** Draw a Christmas tree on the board. Paint it with chalkboard paint.

Using white chalk, draw garland on the tree writing the words “Immanuel: God With Us” inside it. Sign names on the tree.

-**PHOTO COLLAGE TREE**

**Supplies:** Photos of each child, glue

Draw an outline of a Christmas tree on the board. Fill in the tree with photos of the kids. Glue in place. At the bottom of the tree write: Jesus is Immanuel, God with Us.

-**ORNAMENT CRAFT: MANGER BULB**

**Supplies:** Clear Christmas bulb (craft ones made to open), raffia, solid color fabric, wooden bead, scissors, glue

**Preparation:** Cut the fabric into 3 inch squares.

Glue the bead in the corner of the fabric. This is the head of the baby. Fold the fabric over to make a blanket covering the baby’s body. Glue in place.

Open the ornament and fill the bottom with raffia. Place the baby on top of the raffia. Close the ornament.

-**GAME: TELEPHONE CHARADES**

Divide the kids into teams. Line up each team single file. The first person in the line thinks of an action that someone might do at Christmas. They turn and act it out to the person behind them. That person then turns and acts it out to the person behind them. This continues until the end.

The person at the end announces the action. How far off are they? If the first person would have gone to the back and done the action for the last person, would it have turned out differently?
Review what it means that Jesus is Immanuel. How is being with someone different than being far off? Remind the kids that God is not far from us but with us.

BIBLE MEMORY ACTIVITY

Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel (which means God with us.) Matthew 1:23

Supplies: Five different colors of paper, tape, verse resource page

Preparation: Print the verse on five different colors of paper. Cut the words apart and tape the pieces around the room. Tape some words under tables, chairs and other moveable objects.

Divide the kids into five teams. Assign each team a color to match one of the colors of paper. Have them race to find all the words and put them in order.

EXPRESS YOURSELF

Supplies: Copy of questions for each small group

1. What does Immanuel mean? Why does Jesus have that name?
2. Why do you think it makes a difference that God is with us instead of somewhere far away?
3. Can you think of a time when you knew that God was with you and it helped you? (Maybe a time you were sad or scared.)
4. What do you think it might have been like the night Jesus was born, the night when God came to earth as man?
5. What amazes you about God living as a man on earth?
6. How would knowing that God is with you help you when you are going through a difficult time?
**SNACK: MANGER**

**Supplies:** Rice Krispie™ square, fruit roll up, chow mein noodles, plate

Place the Rice Krispie TM square on the plate. This is the manger. Arrange chow mein noodles on top for straw. Unroll the fruit roll up. Fold it over a few times until it resembles a baby in a blanket. Place this on the straw.

Review why the manger is a symbol for the name Immanuel.

**GALLERY CARDS**

**Supplies:** printed card for each child, markers or crayons (optional)

**Name:** Immanuel  
**Symbol:** Manger  
**Verse:** Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel (which means God with us.) Matthew 1:23

Give each child the card. If using the coloring cards, use markers or crayons to decorate them. Go over the verse together and review the symbol.
SUPPLY LIST

FRANCOIS AND FRANK: ☐Christmas tree with lights on it ☐Clipboard ☐Photographs ☐Yarn ☐Hole punch ☐Envelope

WHAT’S UNDER THE TREE: ☐For the display-baby in a manger (picture is also available) ☐“Immanuel” sign

CHRISTMAS BIBLE STORY: ☐Large map of the world ☐Permanent markers (or push pins) ☐Baby doll ☐Strips of cloth

FUNKY CHRISTMAS TREE: ☐Powerpoint or printed picture of Christmas tree hair

CHRISTMAS TREE ART: ☐Poster board ☐Tape or evergreen tree (artificial or real) ☐Colored paper ☐Markers

FINGERPRINT TREE: ☐Green inkpad ☐Variety of different colored inkpads ☐Wet wipes

BULB TREE: ☐Small colored Christmas balls ☐Tacky glue ☐Markers

CUPCAKE HOLDER TREE: ☐Paper cupcake holders ☐Glue ☐Black permanent marker

CHALKBOARD TREE: ☐Chalkboard paint ☐Paintbrush ☐White chalk

PHOTO COLLAGE TREE: ☐Photos of each child ☐Glue

ORNAMENT CRAFT: ☐Clear Christmas bulb (craft ones made to open) ☐Raffia ☐Solid color fabric ☐Wooden bead ☐Scissors ☐Glue

GAME: ☐None

BIBLE MEMORY ACTIVITY: ☐Five different colors of paper ☐Tape ☐Verse resource page

EXPRESS YOURSELF: ☐Copy of questions for each small group

SNACK: ☐Rice Krispie™ square ☐Fruit roll up ☐Chow mein noodles ☐Plate

GALLERY CARDS: ☐Printed card for each child ☐Markers or crayons
Family Imaginative Thinking:
Recreate a manger (feeding trough) complete with straw (cut up yellow paper) and a baby (doll or stuffed animal). Wrap the baby in swaddling cloths. These were strips of fabric wrapped around a baby. (Use toilet paper if fabric is not available.) Sit together as a family in the dark with Christmas lights on thinking about what that night must have been like.

Family Christmas Cooking: Gingerbread Manger Scene
Supplies: graham crackers, animal crackers, shredded wheat, small gingerbread men cookies, white frosting

Construct walls using the graham crackers. Use frosting to hold them in place. Make a manger from the shredded wheat. Use gingerbread men for Mary and Joseph and animal crackers for the animals.

Family Discussion:
1. Read the scripture as a family from the Bible story. What do you know about Jesus' birth?
2. Why is Jesus called Immanuel?
3. What does it mean that God is with us? What difference does it make to us?
4. Can you think of a time when your family was going through a hard time and you knew that God was with you?

MAIN POINT: Jesus, as Immanuel, was God coming down to earth to be with us.

BIBLE VERSE: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel (which means God with us.) Matthew 1:23

BIBLE STORY: Jesus is born
Luke 2:1-7,
John 1:14,
Matthew 1:22-25
EXPRESS YOURSELF

1. What does Immanuel mean? Why does Jesus have that name?

2. Why do you think it makes a difference that God is with us instead of somewhere far away?

3. Can you think of a time when you knew that God was with you and it helped you? (Maybe a time you were sad or scared.)

4. What do you think it might have been like the night Jesus was born, the night when God came to earth as man?

5. What amazes you about God living as a man on earth?

6. How would knowing that God is with you help you when you are going through a difficult time?
IMMANUEL

IMMANUEL
BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL CONCEIVE AND BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL (WHICH MEANS GOD WITH US.)
MATTHEW 1:23

BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL CONCEIVE AND BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL (WHICH MEANS GOD WITH US.)
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