

The Little Drummer Boy: Ezra's Journey

Teacher Notes

Suggested age range: 4–8 years | **Suggested school levels: Early Years / Lower Primary**

Overview

The Little Drummer Boy: Ezra's Journey is a gentle and heartfelt picture book set around the time of Christ's birth. Through Ezra's journey, children are invited into a story of wonder, fear, courage, giving, humility, and love. As Ezra encounters the baby Jesus, the story highlights an important message: even a small gift, offered with sincerity and love, can be deeply meaningful.

These teacher notes are designed to support discussion, reflection, and simple classroom activities around the Nativity, kindness, generosity, courage, and the true meaning of giving.

Key Themes

- Giving from the heart
- Kindness
- Humility
- Love
- Faith
- Fear and courage
- The Nativity
- Wonder
- Gratitude

Learning Opportunities

- speaking and listening
- personal and social development
- religious education / Christian studies
- reflection and discussion
- creative response activities

Before Reading

- What is a gift?
- Does a gift have to be big to be special?
- Why do people give gifts?
- What do you know about the birth of Jesus?
- What does it mean to give with love?

During Reading

As you read, encourage children to notice:

- Ezra's feelings and journey

- the setting around the birth of Jesus
- the importance of simple, heartfelt giving
- the way the characters respond to the baby Jesus
- the sense of wonder in the story

You may like to pause and ask:

- How do you think Ezra is feeling here?
- Is Ezra feeling brave, afraid, or both?
- What might make this part of the journey feel scary?
- What helps Ezra keep going?
- Why is Ezra's gift important?
- What makes a gift meaningful?
- What do you notice about this part of the Nativity story?
- How does this moment show love or kindness?

After Reading Discussion Questions

- What happened in the story?
- Who is Ezra?
- Where does Ezra go, and why is the journey important?
- What gift does Ezra bring?
- Why is Ezra's gift special?
- Was Ezra ever afraid?
- What helped him continue his journey?
- Can someone feel afraid and still be brave?
- What does this story teach us about giving?
- Why do you think simple gifts can sometimes mean the most?
- How does this story help us think about the birth of Jesus?
- What feelings do you notice in the story?
- What can we learn from Ezra?

Key Message

A loving gift, offered sincerely, can be deeply meaningful. What matters most is not how great or expensive a gift may be, but the love with which it is given. Even when we feel afraid or uncertain, courage, love, and faith can help us keep going.

Classroom Activities

1. **My Gift from the Heart.** Ask children to draw or write about a gift they could give that comes from kindness rather than money. This might be help, friendship, encouragement, music, or a thoughtful action.
2. **Nativity Retell.** Invite children to retell the Nativity story in simple sequence, including where Ezra's journey fits into the larger story of Jesus' birth.
3. **Drumbeat of Joy.** Talk about music as a way of expressing feeling. Children can clap or tap simple rhythms and discuss how music can be a gift that brings joy to others.

4. **A Special Gift.** Ask children to complete the sentence: “A special gift is special because...” This can lead to discussion about love, thoughtfulness, courage, and generosity.

Cross-Curricular Links

English

- retelling the story
- discussing characters and events
- identifying message and theme

Religious Education / Christian Studies

- the Nativity
- the birth of Jesus
- giving and humility
- Christian values

Personal and Social Learning

- kindness
- generosity
- gratitude
- empathy
- courage

Art / Music

- Nativity drawings
- creative gift pictures
- rhythm and simple musical response

Extension Ideas

- Create a class Nativity display.
- Make a ‘gifts from the heart’ wall of drawings or written ideas.
- Compare different gifts in stories and discuss what makes them meaningful.
- Write a short class prayer or reflection about love, kindness, courage, and giving.

Home Connection

Encourage children to talk at home about the difference between expensive gifts and thoughtful gifts, and to think of one way they can give joy to someone else.