

## Today Is Christmas | Lesson Plan

What is the history and significance of Christmas?

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Students will demonstrate an understanding of the historical and cultural significance of Christmas, including its origins, traditions, and reasons for its celebration in America.

### Learning Objectives:

- Understand the historical significance of the Christmas holiday.
- Analyze the influence of Christianity on Western Civilization through the Christmas Story.
- Explore the symbolism of Christmas decorations and traditions.
- Complete a calendar page related to the day, season, time, and weather.
- Identify key vocabulary related to *Otto's Tales: Today is Christmas*.

### Key Vocabulary:

- **Christmas:** The day Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus.
- **Holy Land:** The area in the Middle East where many important events in Jewish, Christian, and Muslim history occurred.
- **Three Wise Men:** Three individuals, sometimes called "the Magi," Christians believe traveled far to worship Jesus when he was born.
- **Gold, frankincense, and myrrh:** The gifts the three wise men gave to Jesus.
- **Jesus:** A religious leader from the Holy Land in the first century who Christians believe is the Son of God and the Savior of all who believe in Him.
- **Saint Nicholas:** A Christian bishop from Greece who lived in modern-day Turkey from 270 AD-343 AD. Legend has it that he would anonymously throw bags of gold coins into the windows of the poor.

**Educational Standards:** CCRA.SL.2, CCRA.SL.3, CCRA.SL.4, CCRA.L.6

**Academic Subject Areas:** America, Judeo-Christian Values, Bible

### What You'll Need

- Video: *Otto's Tales: Today Is Christmas* (Watch [Here](#))
- Book (Optional): *Otto's Tales: Today Is Christmas* (Purchase [Here](#))
- Worksheet: *Otto's Tales: Today is Christmas* (Click [Here](#))
- Drawing supplies: crayons, colored pencils, or markers

### Lesson Plan (45 mins.)

Warm-Up: (10 mins.)



1. Begin by asking students what they know about **Christmas** and how people celebrate it. Allow students to contribute how their families celebrate and what they know about the history of the holiday.
2. Explain that the word *Christmas* comes from two words: *Christ*, meaning 'the Savior,' and *mass*, which refers to a church service. Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ—the Savior in the Christian faith—and is a time of celebration, giving, and reflection that brings families and communities together.
3. Introduce key vocabulary and explain the significance of each in light of the Christmas holiday.
4. Introduce the topic of *Today is Christmas* for the Otto's Tales Video.

Watch and Complete: (15 mins.)

1. Show the video "*Otto's Tales: Today is Christmas*" to the students.
2. Encourage students to pay attention to the story, characters, and the values discussed.
3. Allow students to discuss the video in small groups, focusing on the main themes and ideas. Ask guiding questions for them to discuss:
  - Who are the main characters of the story?
  - Dennis and Otto travel to different places. Where are the different settings in the story?
  - What gifts did the Three Wise Men bring for the birth of Jesus? Why do you think they brought those gifts?
  - What did St. Nicholas throw through the open window that landed in the stocking by the fire? Why do you think that was the gift he chose to give?
  - Which president do Dennis and Otto visit at the White House?
  - Why does giving to others bring out the Christmas spirit?
4. Transition to the next part of the lesson; understanding the holiday on the calendar and connecting to what students learned in the story.

Wrap-Up: (20 mins.)

1. Distribute individual copies of the "**Today Is Christmas**" **Worksheet** and guide students through the following:
  - In the **Calendar Area**, ask students to draw a picture of their favorite part of the story or something that makes them think of the joy of the Christmas holiday.
  - Have students write the name of the month (**December**) and fill in the calendar grid by numbering the days, starting from the correct day of the week. Remind them that **December has 31 days**.
  - In the **Month Section**, direct students to read aloud or sing the months of the year song. Then, have them color in the correct month.
  - In the **Seasons Section**, ask students to read aloud the four seasons, then color the appropriate season.
  - In the **Weather Section**, instruct students to circle or color the character that correctly displays today's weather.

- In the **Telling Time Section**, guide students to write the current time in both analog and digital formats.
  - In the **Temperature Section**, have students color today's temperature.
2. Conclude the lesson by revisiting the key concepts discussed. Invite a few students to share what they drew or one thing they learned about the meaning of Christmas.

### **Extension Activity: Christmas Carol Sing-Along**

Organize a sing-along session where students can learn and sing popular Christmas carols, such as "Jingle Bells" or "Deck the Halls." Discuss the lyrics and their meaning to help students understand the joy and celebration associated with Christmas.

### **Don't have time for the complete lesson? Quick Activity (15-20 mins.)**

After watching the video, distribute the worksheet and coloring supplies, and allow students to draw and color a picture to represent what they learned in this lesson.