



PRETEEN
DECEMBER 2024

FOR LEADERS ONLY

GOD VIEW: THE CONNECTION BETWEEN CHRISTMAS AND GOD'S CHARACTER, AS SHOWN THROUGH GOD'S BIG STORY

Have you ever stopped to listen to a group of carolers and then joined them to go spread some more Christmas cheer with others? Music is such a big part of Christmas, but it's not the main reason we celebrate. It's easy to get distracted with all the lights, presents, and traditions that sometimes we forget it's not about the things we do, but Who we do it for and why we do it.

That's why this December, we're singing loudly as we jam out to our Christmas Playlist to celebrate Jesus, God's greatest gift! The best gift God ever gave was Jesus. Because of Jesus, it's possible for us to have a relationship with God that will last forever. As we get in the mix this Christmas season, let's take time to remember the reason we celebrate in the first place: Jesus, the greatest gift the world has ever known.

CORE INSIGHT: The theological foundation for CHRISTMAS

Connection because of God's Love

I live in pursuit of an infinite God who desires an eternal relationship with me.

The best gift God ever gave was Jesus. Because of Jesus, it's possible for us to have a relationship with God that will last forever. As we remember the Christmas story, we take time to celebrate the greatest gift the world has ever known.

CHRISTMAS is about celebrating Jesus, God's greatest gift.

HEADS UP: IDEAS TO KEEP IN MIND AS YOU TALK ABOUT CHRISTMAS WITH KIDS

The Christmas season can be an interesting time for families as they navigate how they'll celebrate with their kids and extended family and friends. It's important to keep in mind that not everyone will experience this season the same way. Some go all out with presents, while others keep it low-key.

Christmas can be a time when people feel grief from losses over the past year or the pain of current health situations. Christmas can also expose some of the socioeconomic differences among the people who attend your church. It's important to keep all of these things in mind as you talk about Christmas plans, what kids want for Christmas, or what kids are hoping for this year. Have a plan in place to make sure ALL kids feel at home in your church.

Also, note that the Christmas season may invite conversations about following Jesus. Be sensitive to any kids who might have questions and follow your church's policy for having conversations about salvation. Be sure to invite families into the discussions or decisions as well. For extra support or guidance on how to have these conversations, check out Orange's [Start Here](#) resource.

Lastly, remind your Small Group Leaders and Storytellers that it's not our job to tell kids what to think and believe about Santa Claus, Elf on the Shelf, or any of the traditions that people have. Just meet kids where they are and direct them back to their parents for these sorts of questions.



FOR LEADERS ONLY (CONTINUED)

WEEK 1

Key Question: Why is Jesus important to you? As we start the month of December, Christmas is on everyone's mind. It's the perfect time to help preteens consider not just what they believe, but why. This week, we'll talk about how God always had a plan to send Jesus, the light of the world. We pray that this question will help preteens to be open to asking questions so they can grow in their faith and make it their own.

We kick off week 1 at the very beginning. In **John 1:1-5, 14**, we learn that before there was anything, even life itself, there was the Word. Jesus was this Word – a light that became a human to shine in the darkness and show us Who God is. We get to see the plan God had for us from the very beginning and celebrate because of the gift of Jesus.

Bottom Line: God always had a plan to send Jesus. Much of what we celebrate at Christmas is an incredible reminder that God can be trusted no matter what. Since the very beginning, God made a promise to save the world and then followed through with Jesus. Because of Jesus, we can celebrate the opportunity to have a relationship with God that lasts forever.

WEEK 2

Key Question: What helps you remember that God is with you? We start with this question to help preteens start thinking about all the times that God has been there for them in the past. When they focus on the things God has already done instead of their current circumstances, it makes it a little easier to face new troubles that may come up, and helps them to remember that they are not alone!

In week two, we turn to **Luke 1:26-38** and **Matthew 1:18-25**. On both occasions, an angel visited Mary and Joseph to inform them that they would be the parents of the coming Savior of the world. They would call Him Immanuel, which means "God with us". They could have said no and refused, but even though they were afraid, they trusted that God was with them through it all.

Bottom Line: Celebrate because God is with you. When God sent Jesus, it was the answer to many, many prayers and years of waiting. The people must have wondered what God was doing or if God was still working. We can feel the same way in our own lives. Yet, time and time again, we see that we can trust God no matter what, and celebrate because God sent Jesus for us.



FOR LEADERS ONLY (CONTINUED)

WEEK 3

Key Question: **What does Christmas mean to you?**

Sometimes it's easy to get caught up in the hustle and bustle of Christmas that it can start to feel a little overwhelming. However, when we turn our focus to the WHO of Christmas instead of all the things we get or do at Christmas, we start to see the joy that Jesus brings. We hope this question becomes a great conversation starter that leads preteens to a deeper understanding of Who Jesus is and why He is worth celebrating.

In week three, we head to **Luke 2:1-7** for the birth of Jesus! This Word that God had promised from the beginning had finally arrived as a humble baby. It may not have been as everyone thought, such as a warrior or someone with high status, but it was exactly what the world needed. God's rescue plan to save the world was in motion, and as we remember how Jesus was born, we can always find a reason to celebrate!

Bottom Line: **Celebrate because God sent a Savior.** We all know that Christmas is about Jesus, but sometimes it's easy to make it all about the lights, decorations, and presents. Those things aren't bad, but it's important that we stay focused on the truth of what and WHO we celebrate at Christmas. God loved us enough to send Jesus to rescue us. Knowing that can help us celebrate Jesus, the true reason for the season.

WEEK 4

Key Question: **How are you celebrating Christmas this year?** What's that one Christmas tradition you look forward to every year? What's your favorite may be different from someone else's favorite. Through all of our various backgrounds and experiences, we have a chance to celebrate Jesus in the unique ways God has created us. We hope this question invites preteens to share the joy Jesus brings with others this Christmas season.

For week 4 we continue the story in **Luke 2:8-20**. Jesus was born, and it was now time to announce it to the world. Instead of heading to the wealthiest people, some angels visited the shepherds and announced Jesus' birth to them first! The shepherds ran to see Jesus, and once they did, it was news they couldn't keep to themselves. Jesus is worth celebrating with everyone!

Bottom Line: **Celebrate Jesus with others.** This story reminds us that Jesus didn't just come for the powerful or most important people. Jesus came to show everyone that they can be part of what God is doing in the world. We pray that this Christmas kids will remember that Jesus came for them and for everyone around them, and that's a **good** reason to celebrate!



FOR LEADERS ONLY (CONTINUED)

WEEK 5

Key Question: **How can you celebrate Jesus all year long?** Once Christmas is over, it can seem like everyone is talking about New Year's resolutions and plans for the year ahead. We hope this sort of question will help preteens understand how they can make following Jesus a big part of their new year. Because of Jesus, we have something to look forward to, not just one day, but every day!

We finish up the month in **Matthew 2:1-12**. Wise Men from the east traveled long and far to meet Jesus. When they saw the star in the sky, they did everything they could to find the promised Savior. It didn't matter that it took them a while to get to Jesus, because they knew that Jesus was worth celebrating. No matter when or where.

Bottom Line: **Never stop celebrating Jesus.** After the Christmas decorations come down, it can be easy for kids to assume that the spirit of Christmas gets packed away too. We want kids to realize that they don't need a fancy holiday to celebrate Jesus. They can celebrate when they sing to Jesus, read the Bible, and show Jesus' love to others. Jesus can be celebrated anytime and anywhere!