



WEEK  
**THREE**  
DECEMBER 2024

SMALL GROUP  
**2-3**

## TODAY'S SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

### TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

**Born to Save**  
Jesus Is Born  
Luke 2:1-7

### TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

Celebrate because God  
sent a Savior.

### MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

"[Mary] is going to have a son.  
You must give him the name Jesus.  
That's because he will save his  
people from their sins."  
Matthew 1:21, NIV

### MONTHLY VIRTUE

Christmas—Celebrating Jesus,  
God's greatest gift

### BASIC TRUTH

I can trust God no matter what.

### PRELUDE: Setting the Tone for the Experience

See the **Getting Ready** pages at the end of this document for a detailed description of what you'll need for today.

In the **Prelude** folder of your curriculum, you'll find a variety of other resources to help you prepare.

Check out our Pinterest page here <https://bit.ly/447HSzi> for a visual on some of the activities.

Check out our Small Group Leader Conversation Guides to guide you through salvation conversations: <https://bit.ly/4daxSUg>

### SMALL GROUP

**15**  
MIN

#### **SOCIAL: Providing Time for Fun Interaction**

Early Arriver  
Opening Activity

### LARGE GROUP

**35**  
MIN

#### **STORY: Communicating God's Truth in Engaging Ways**

#### **WORSHIP: Inviting People to Respond to God**

Opener  
Worship  
Bible Story  
Bottom Line  
What's Our Part in the Story?  
Prayer

### SMALL GROUP

**25**  
MIN

#### **GROUPS: Creating a Safe Place to Connect**

Bible Story Review: Match Review  
Application Activity: For You  
Memory Verse Activity: Christmas Verse Celebration  
Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss

### HOME: Prompting Action Beyond the Experience

Parent Cue Card (Print or Email)  
Devotionals for Kids  
Parent Cue App



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**2-3**

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

PROVIDING TIME FOR FUN INTERACTION  
15 MINUTES

## MADE TO CONNECT

an activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding



*Before kids arrive, take a few moments to pray for them. Pray for those who might visit your group for the first time. Thank God for sending Jesus! Ask God to help the kids in your group trust and follow Jesus no matter what.*

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## MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

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## MONTHLY VIRTUE

**Christmas—Celebrating Jesus, God's greatest gift**

## BASIC TRUTH

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## 1. EARLY ARRIVER

**WHAT YOU NEED:** Offering container

**WHAT YOU DO:**

- Give each kid a high five or fist bump, and welcome them by name!
- Encourage any kids who brought an offering to place it in the offering container.
- Invite the group to play a game of Christmas "This or That?"
- Instruct the kids to run to one area of the group space if they prefer "this" and another area if they prefer "that."
- One at a time, share a Christmas "This or That" question (some suggestions are below), and invite the kids to move toward a specific area based on their answers.
- Some "This or That?" suggestions include:
  - Red or green?
  - Peppermint candy cane or other flavored candy canes?
  - Colored lights or white lights?
  - "Jingle Bells" or "Silent Night"?
  - Travel for Christmas or stay home?
  - Snow on Christmas or no snow?
  - One big gift or lots of small gifts?
  - Christmas tree up in November or Christmas tree up in December?
  - Wrapped gifts or gifts in bags?
  - Turkey or ham?
  - Sweet potatoes or regular potatoes?
- After a few rounds, encourage the kids to think of their own Christmas "This or That" questions.
- Continue playing by asking the kids to take turns asking their Christmas "This or That" questions.
- Play as long as interest and time allow.



PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

PROVIDING TIME FOR FUN INTERACTION  
15 MINUTES

### MADE TO PLAY

an activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group



## 2. OPENING ACTIVITY

**WHAT YOU NEED:** Candy canes and timer

**WHAT YOU DO:**

- Invite your group to form a standing circle.
- Give each kid one candy cane, but hold on to the extra one.
- Instruct the kids to hold the straight part of the candy cane with only one hand, with the hook side facing down.
- Direct the kids to place their free hand behind their back.
- Explain to the kids the goal is to see how fast they can pass the dangling candy cane around the circle, using only the hook part of their candy canes.
- Choose a kid to start.
- Place the extra candy cane you're holding onto the curved part of the candy cane of the kid who is starting the game.
- Start the round and start the timer—prompting kids to pass the dangling candy cane from one kid to the next using only their candy cane as a hook.
- Play several rounds, timing each round to see if the kids can beat their previous time.
- Set the candy canes aside for the Pray and Dismiss Activity.

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**WHAT YOU SAY:**

"When you hold your candy cane like this, what letter does it look like? (*Invite responses.*) Yeah! Our candy canes do look like the letter 'J'! **[Transition] The best Christmas gift we could ever receive starts with a 'J' too. Let's discover more!**"

Lead your group to the Large Group area.



PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

CREATING A SAFE PLACE TO CONNECT  
25 MINUTES

### MADE TO PLAY

an activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group



## 1. MATCH REVIEW

[TALK ABOUT GOD | BIBLE STORY REVIEW]

WHAT YOU NEED: "Memory Game Cards" Activity Page

### WHAT YOU DO:

- Invite the kids to sit in a circle.
- Shuffle the two sets of cards from the "Memory Game Cards" Activity Page.
- Set the cards face down in a grid pattern in the center of the circle.
- Instruct the kids to take turns flipping two cards over to find matching pairs.
- If a kid flips over a match, instruct them to share what their cards have to do with today's Bible Story.
- Play until all cards are matched.

### WHAT YOU SAY:

"What are some of the crazy and unplanned things that happened to Mary and Joseph? (*Invite responses. Kids might say: Mary's pregnancy, the angel's visit to Mary, Joseph's dream, the long trip to Bethlehem, no guest room to stay in, having baby Jesus in a room where animals were kept, etc.*)

"Mary and Joseph found a way to have joy even though things did not go their way. They chose joy in a very difficult situation because they trusted that God was at work. By choosing joy, they were able to see what really mattered: God sent a Savior as a tiny baby to be born in an unexpected place . . . and to bring joy to everyone.

"Because of Jesus, our relationship with God can be restored, and one day, God will make everything in this world right again. Just like Mary and Joseph, we can choose to have joy when things don't go our way because Jesus came to rescue us and bring joy to everyone. So, this Christmas let's **celebrate because God sent a Savior!**"

**[Make It Personal]** (*Share an age-appropriate story about when something didn't go your way, and you asked God to help you get through it. How did it turn out? How did remembering that God sent Jesus change your attitude?*)

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CREATING A SAFE PLACE TO CONNECT  
25 MINUTES

### MADE TO MOVE

an activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and taps into the energy in the body



### 3. CHRISTMAS VERSE CELEBRATION [HEAR FROM GOD | MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY]

**WHAT YOU NEED:** Bibles, and "Celebration Actions" Activity Page

**WHAT YOU DO:**

- Make sure each kid has a Bible.
- Guide the kids to look up the Memory Verse, Matthew 1:21, using the Bible Navigation Tips below:

***Finding verses with 2nd and 3rd graders:** Guide them to open their Bibles to the front and find the table of contents. (Hold up a Bible opened to the table of contents to show the kids what the page looks like.) When the kids find the table of contents, lead them to find Matthew in the list under "New Testament." When the kids find Matthew, lead them to look at the page number beside the word. Explain that the number tells them on what page they can find Matthew. Help the kids find the page. When they find Matthew, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. Help them find chapter 1. Explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Help them find verse 21 in chapter 1.*

- Read the verse together a few times.
- Instruct the kids to set their open Bibles aside.
- Divide the group into teams of three.
- Give each team a card from the "Celebration Actions" Activity Page.
- Instruct the kids to practice saying the verse using the celebration actions on their cards.
  - Let them know they can use their Bibles if needed.
- One at a time, invite each team to take turns reciting the verse in front of the entire group with their celebration action.
- Encourage the rest of the group to imitate reciting the verse after each team demonstrates their celebration action.
- Give out any remaining cards, or invite groups of kids to trade and practice saying the verse in a new way if time and interest allow.

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**WHAT YOU SAY:**

"Great job, everyone! Our Memory Verse comes from the book of Matthew, written by Matthew himself, who was one of Jesus' disciples. Joseph, who was engaged to Mary, found out that Mary was going to have a baby, and he was confused and worried.

"But then, an angel came to Joseph in a dream, and told him not to be afraid because this baby was from God. The angel told Joseph that this baby would be named Jesus, and He would rescue people and help them be friends with God. Our Memory Verse is part of what the angel told Joseph. Can you imagine how Joseph felt when he heard and understood what the angel told him? (Invite responses.)



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### (3. CHRISTMAS VERSE CELEBRATION, CONTINUED)

"Let's remember this amazing news and celebrate it! Just like Joseph found joy in knowing that Jesus was coming, we too can find joy and **celebrate because God sent a Savior!**"



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25 MINUTES

### MADE TO REFLECT

an activity that creates space for personal understanding and application



### 4. PRAY AND DISMISS [PRAY TO GOD | PRAYER ACTIVITY]

WHAT YOU NEED: Candy canes

WHAT YOU DO:

- Invite the kids to sit in a circle.
- Give each kid a candy cane.
- Instruct the kids to lay the candy canes down in front of them so it resembles a "J."
- Give the group a few minutes to reflect on how they can choose to have joy when unexpected things happen because Jesus came to rescue us.
- Close the group time in prayer.

WHAT YOU SAY:

"Dear God, thank You for sending Jesus to be our Savior and bring us joy, peace, and hope. Just like Mary and Joseph, help us to trust in You, to celebrate the gift of Jesus, and to have joy when unexpected things happen in our lives. Help us to remember that You are always with us. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

As adults arrive to pick up, consider sending kids home with a candy cane and encourage them to share the Memory Verse using one of their favorite celebration actions from the Christmas Verse Celebration Activity.

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