



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.

SMALL GROUP

10
MIN

SOCIAL: Providing Time for Fun Interaction
Early Arriver
Opening Activity

LARGE GROUP

30
MIN

STORY: Communicating God's Truth in Engaging Ways
WORSHIP: Inviting People to Respond to God
Opener
Worship ("Joy" from Life.Church and "Silent Night" from Orange Music)
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: Nativity Puppets(*k-1st grade*), Match Review (*2nd-3rd grade*)
Application Activity: Celebration Band(*k-1st grade*), For You (*2nd-3rd grade*)
Memory Verse Activity: God Sent a Savior (*k-1st grade*), Christmas Verse Celebration(*2nd-3rd grade*)
Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss



WEEK
THREE
DECEMBER 2024

LARGE GROUP
K-3

PRELUDE **SOCIAL** **STORY** **WORSHIP** **GROUPS** **HOME**

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

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

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

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sent a Savior.

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LARGE GROUP

ENGAGE KIDS' HEARTS THROUGH A DYNAMIC AND INTERACTIVE BIBLE STORY, WORSHIP, AND PRAYER EXPERIENCE IN A LARGE GROUP SETTING.

AUDIO: PLAY HIGH-ENERGY CHRISTMAS MUSIC AS KIDS ENTER.

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP

Host enters.

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): COUNTDOWN

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME INTRO

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP

OPENER

HOST: "Hi, everyone! I just LOVE this time of year! There are so many fun Christmas songs. Do you have a favorite Christmas song? When I count to three, everybody say your favorite! One, two, three! *(Pause for response.)* Those are some great choices. I'd love to make a playlist with all of them.

"There's so much to celebrate at Christmastime, and it's all about the birth of Jesus, God's Son. Jesus was born to be our Savior!

"I've got another fun Christmasy game for us to play today. This one is a Christmas Fill-in. I'll ask you for some different kinds of words, and then I'll use your words to fill in the blanks here on my sheet. Then I'll read the very special Christmas poem that we've all made together.

Ready? Let's get started!

Use the printed Christmas Fill-In Sheet to prompt you as you ask for different types of words. As you ask for the different words, explain that a noun is a person, place, or thing . . . a verb is an action word . . . and an adjective is a word that describes something. Be ready to share some examples.

Use the suggested words the kids give you and write them on the sheet. Move quickly so you have lots of time to read the poem dramatically at the end. Be sure to walk around the room so you hear suggestions from the whole room, and not just kids up front.

"All right! Nice job, everyone. Now that we've put all of this together, I'd like to perform a dramatic reading for you. This is 'The Night Before Christmas' . . .
RIDGE KIDZ-style.



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PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

AUDIO: CALM, INSTRUMENTAL CHRISTMAS MUSIC (SUGGESTION: "WE WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS" BY OUR DISTANT WORLDS)

Read the finished fill-in from the sheet. Read dramatically, like the poem is especially profound and emotional.

"Wow. Just wow. I think that's a new Christmas classic! Let's all jump up on our feet now so we can sing some songs that actually make sense. Let's worship!"



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PRELUDE

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10 MINUTES

WORSHIP

Worship Leaders enter as Host exits.

WORSHIP LEADER: "This is such a special time of year, and we get to worship God through all of it. Okay, does anyone have their joy with them this morning? I said does anyone have their joy? Okay, let's sing together!"

VIDEO: "Joy" from Life.Church" LIVE LYRICS VIDEO

Endless Joy - Jesus Christ is with us, he has come to save us. That's the source of our joy! Amen!

Okay, let's sing one more song, our version of Silent Night. Are you ready?

VIDEO: "SILENT NIGHT" FROM ORANGE MUSIC" LIVE LYRICS

Amazing job friends! Let's pray.

Pray and close (pray in your own words)



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25 MINUTES

BIBLE STORY

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

Storyteller enters as Worship Leaders exit.

SETTING UP THE STORY

STORYTELLER: "Hello, friends! It's so great to be here with you as we look at the Christmas story here in the Bible. (Hold up Bible.)

"We're celebrating how Jesus was born in Bethlehem. But as you might remember, God's plan to send Jesus started long before that. God created the world and everything in it. And when people turned away from God, the world was broken. But God had a plan to make it all right again. Through the words of prophets like Isaiah, God promised to one day send a Savior.

"Over a period of hundreds of years, God's people waited for the Savior to come. One day, an angel appeared to a young woman named Mary. The angel told Mary that she would have a baby . . . and that the baby would be God's Son.

"As we get into our story today, there are some ways you can help me tell it. First, we've got some sound effects, but they won't just play themselves. I need a button pusher!

Choose a kid to come up on stage and stand next to the button on the table.

(To the kid) "[Kid's name], you'll be our sound effects director. Every time I point to you, like this (*demonstrate*), then you can push the button to play a sound. Go ahead and push the button to test it out.

AUDIO: STORY SOUND 1 (BOING!)

"Okay. Try it again.

AUDIO: STORY SOUND 2 (COW MOO)

"One more time.

AUDIO: STORY SOUND 3 (ANGELIC "AHHHH")

"Great! I think we're ready. [Kid's name], you'll just stay right there by the button and I'll point to you when it's time to push it. (To audience) Now, we'll also need a few actors. Who would like to play Mary and Joseph?"

Choose two kids to play Mary and Joseph. Give them biblical-looking costumes to wear.

"Okay. Everybody say, 'Hi, Mary and Joseph.'" AUDIENCE: "Hi, Mary and Joseph."

TIME TO BE COUNTED

STORYTELLER: "Mary and Joseph were engaged to be married, and they lived in the town of Nazareth. Their land was ruled by the Romans, and the leader of the Romans was a man named Caesar Augustus."



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25 MINUTES

Host enters, wearing a royal robe and crown and carrying the megaphone.

HOST: *(Pompous voice)* "It is I . . . Caesar Augustus."

Point to the sound effect kid to cue the kid to push the button.

AUDIO: STORY SOUND 4 (ROYAL FANFARE)

STORYTELLER: "Caesar Augustus announced that everyone had to go to their hometown to be counted. He wanted to see how many people were living there at the time."

HOST: *(Pompous voice, into the megaphone)* "Everyone must be counted."

Point to the sound effect kid to cue the kid to push the button.

AUDIO: STORY SOUND 4 (ROYAL FANFARE)

Host exits.

STORYTELLER: (Reference the kids playing Mary and Joseph) "Mary and Joseph had to travel to Bethlehem, because Joseph's family was from there."

JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM

STORYTELLER: "The journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem was about 80 miles . . . which would have taken several days. *(To the two kids)* Let's see you walk in place, Mary and Joseph."

Point to the sound effect kid to cue the kid to push the button.

AUDIO: STORY SOUND 5 (WALKING)

"Maybe they had a donkey with them."

Point to the sound effect kid to cue the kid to push the button.

AUDIO: STORY SOUND 6 (DONKEY)

"Either way, when they finally arrived in Bethlehem, there was no guest room where they could stay."

Point to the sound effect kid to cue the kid to push the button.

AUDIO: STORY SOUND 7 (SLOW-MOTION "NOOOOOO")

JESUS IS BORN

STORYTELLER: "Mary and Joseph ended up staying in a place where animals were kept. We're not sure if the animals were there, but they might have been!"



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Set the plush barnyard animals around the kids playing Mary and Joseph. Then point to the sound effect kid to cue the kid to push the button.

AUDIO: STORY SOUND 8 (ANIMALS)

“But there, in that place used for animals, is where Jesus, God’s Son, was born!”

Give the baby doll to the girl playing Mary. Then point to the sound effect kid to cue the kid to push the button.

AUDIO: STORY SOUND 9 (BABY SOUNDS)

“Here’s what we read in Luke, chapter 2.

Open the Bible to Luke 2:7 (NirV) and read.

[Mary] gave birth to her first baby. It was a boy. She wrapped him in large strips of cloth. Then she placed him in a manger. That’s because there was no guest room where they could stay. (NirV)

“Mary and Joseph laid baby Jesus in a feeding trough for the animals.

Set out the manger (or something to represent a manger, like a suitcase rack with a pillow on top). Cue the girl playing Mary to place the doll on it.

“Jesus wasn’t born in a palace . . . but there in the place where the animals were kept, in the small town of Bethlehem. “Let’s give a big hand to our helpers!”

Collect the props and dismiss the kid helpers to their seats.

WRAPPING UP THE STORY

STORYTELLER: “We celebrate Christmas because God sent Jesus to be our Savior. Jesus was born in a really unexpected place. And He brought hope, joy, and love to the whole world!”

“Here’s what we get to do at Christmastime:

SLIDE: BOTTOM LINE

“Celebrate because God sent a Savior. Say that with me.”

STORYTELLER AND KIDS: “Celebrate because God sent a Savior.”

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP

Host enters, back in regular clothes.



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PRELUDE **SOCIAL** **STORY** **WORSHIP** **GROUPS** **HOME**

25 MINUTES

WHAT'S OUR PART IN THE STORY?

HOST: “As we celebrate Christmas, it’s important for us to remember what it was like for Mary and Joseph when Jesus was born. They had traveled days and days in order to be counted. They were far away from home. And it was there in Bethlehem when they first got to meet Jesus!”

STORYTELLER: “The way Jesus came wasn’t really what people might have expected. It was a big surprise that the Savior of the world was born in a small town in a place where animals were sometimes kept. But Mary and Joseph found great joy and wonder because of the way they got to be part of God’s incredible story.

SLIDE: VIRTUE
OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME TRANSITION TO VIRTUE

HOST: “Remember, Christmas is about celebrating Jesus, God’s greatest gift.”

SLIDE: THEME
OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): VIRTUE TRANSITION TO THEME
OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP

STORYTELLER: “When we think about the way God sent Jesus, it can bring us great joy! We can celebrate how Jesus came to live with us as a baby, and how Jesus grew up to show us how to love God and love others. Jesus eventually gave up His life for us so we could live forever with God.”

HOST: “When we choose to love and follow Jesus, God sends the Holy Spirit to live with us. Joy comes when we allow the Spirit to work in and through us. A great way to find joy is to find ways to celebrate, even when things don’t go the way you expected. That’s something that stays with us, whether it’s Christmastime or ANYtime.”

STORYTELLER: “We can celebrate that God loves us so much more than we can ever imagine. God loved us enough to send Jesus for us! Let’s pray.”

PRAYER

STORYTELLER OR HOST: “Dear God, thank You for loving us so much that You sent Jesus to be our Savior. We can see how Jesus was born in an unexpected way . . . but it was all part of Your good plan. As we celebrate during this season, help us remember what Jesus came to do for us. We’re thankful for the way Jesus showed us what You are like and how to live. And we’re thankful for the way Jesus made a way for us to have a relationship with You that will last forever. Thank You for the truth that *[Basic Truth]* we can trust You no matter what. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.”

Dismiss kids to their small groups.

AUDIO: PLAY HIGH-ENERGY CHRISTMAS MUSIC AS THE KIDS EXIT.
SLIDE: THEME
OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP