

Elementary LG | W3

Social: Providing Time for Fun Interaction

Opening Activity

Large Group (35 minutes)

Story: Communicating God's Truth in Engaging Ways

Worship: Inviting People to Respond to God

Opener

Worship

Bible Story (sections about God's Big Story are listed as optional)

Prayer

Small Group (25 minutes)

Groups: Creating a Safe Place to Connect

Bible Story Review: Breaking News: Jesus Is Born!

Application Activity: The Greatest Gift Box

Memory Verse Activity: Echo the Good News

Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss

Home: Prompting Action Beyond the Experience

Parent Cue Card (Print or Email)

Devotionals for Kids

Parent Cue App and ParentCue.org



Bible Story

Jesus Is Born | Luke 2:1-20

Bottom Line

Jesus is the greatest gift.

Monthly Memory Verse

"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord." • Luke 2:11 NIV

LG Opener

Opener Game

What You Need

 Gift boxes, five per small group	5
 Christmas-themed wrapping paper, several rolls (The more colorful, the better to make the challenge festive and fun!)	Several
 Tape	Several

HOST: "Hello, friends! It's almost Christmas! Yay!

"Extra! Extra! Read all about it! God loves you so much, He sent you Jesus!

"I'm so glad you're here today as we discover even more about why Christmas is about celebrating Jesus, God's greatest gift to us.

"And speaking of Christmas, have you ever listened closely to the sounds of Christmas? The jingle of bells, the hustle and bustle, and, of course, the music! Well, today, we're going to make music together with our very own rhythm and music game!"

Ask four kids to come up on stage to be a quartet—one for bells, one for wooden sticks, one for drums, and one for shakers. Give each kid one instrument.

"Okay, everyone, let's start with our hand bells. When I point to you, give them a good shake. Ready? Here we go. Listen to the jingle—it sounds just like sleigh bells on Christmas Eve, doesn't it?

"Now, let's try the wooden sticks. When it's your turn, tap them together like you're a drummer in a Christmas parade.

"And what about our drums? Give them a soft pat, pat, pat. Imagine you're playing along with the angel announcing the greatest gift ever—Jesus!

"Last one, our shakers! Shake them up and down gently. It's like the sound of falling snowflakes on a night at Christmastime.

"Now let's put it all together. We're going to play our instruments to 'Joy to the World' to celebrate Jesus, the greatest gift. Each of you has a part in this song, just like each of you has a part in celebrating Jesus this Christmas."

Host acts as conductor, and directs each group to play as the song plays over audio.

AUDIO: "Joy to the World"

"Isn't it great that we can come together and make music? This season is full of so much joy! Whether or not they believe it, the whole world is having a party because at Christmas God gave us the greatest gift—Jesus!

"Now, let's sing to the God who gave us such a great gift!"

15 min

Worship

2 min

Worship Opener

What You Need

No supplies needed

3 min

Silent Night - Orange Kids

What You Need

No supplies needed

5 min

Memory Verse

What You Need

No supplies needed

WORSHIP LEADER: "Hi, friends! Christmas Day is almost here — hooray! I love this time of year because it reminds us how much God loves us. At Christmas, we celebrate the greatest gift ever... Jesus!"

And our first song today is a fun and upbeat version of *Silent Night*. You might think 'Silent Night' sounds slow and quiet, but not this one! This version is full of joy — because the night Jesus was born was a night worth celebrating!

So let's stand up, stretch a little, bring that Christmas energy, and sing *Silent Night* together!"

WORSHIP LEADER: "Great singing, everyone! I love hearing you celebrate Jesus — that was awesome.

Before our next song, let's look at our Memory Verse for this month. This is the message the angel shared with the shepherds the night Jesus was born. It's such good news! It's found in Luke 2:11."

"It goes like this:

"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord" (Luke 2:11 NIV).

"Let me teach you some motions that might help you remember the verse. You guys repeat the motions after me:

"Today in the town of David" – *Point straight down with both hands like you're marking right now.*

"a Savior" – *Spread your arms wide like you're about to hug.*

"has been born" – *Rock your arms like you're holding a baby.*

3 min

Away in a Manger - Amazing Kids

What You Need

No supplies needed

2 min

Worship Closer

What You Need

No supplies needed

38 min

Bible Story (Live)

3 min

Introduction

What You Need

No supplies needed

"to you." – Point to a friend or the group.

"He is the Messiah," – Pretend like you're putting on a crown with your hands.

"the Lord." – Point both hands up to the sky.

"Luke 2:11" – Open the palms of your hands together like you're opening a Bible.

"Let's all try that together!"

Repeat the Memory Verse with the motions several times.

"Now we're going to sing *Away in a Manger*. This song helps us picture that very first Christmas night — Jesus, born in a humble place, but still the greatest gift the world has ever received. As you sing, think about how amazing it is that God sent His Son for you.

Let's keep celebrating Jesus together!"

"Great job, everyone! You sang that beautifully. Christmas is such a special time to remember that God sent us Jesus — the greatest gift.

Let's go ahead and sit down and get ready to hear our true story from the Bible today!"

STORYTELLER: "Hi, friends! It's almost Christmas! That's so exciting! This season, there are Christmas trees and candy canes and there's so much joy—all to celebrate what happened on that very first Christmas, when God gave us Jesus—**[Bottom Line] Jesus is the greatest gift!**

"And that's what we're going to learn about today! But before we get to the Christmas story, let me tell you about something amazing we're doing this year! We're learning about the key stories in the Bible from cover to cover!

5 min

GOD'S BIG STORY OPENER (OPTIONAL)

What You Need

No supplies needed

"Why? Well, one of the reasons God gave us the Bible is so we can know Him! So as we read key stories from the Bible this year, hopefully we'll learn about Him!

STORYTELLER: "We're going to go through God's Big Story in the Bible together so we can get to know God! (*Gesture to slide.*)

SLIDE: God's Big Story

"Let me catch you up on where we've been in God's Big Story so far!

"You might remember that, in the beginning, God created everything. He made the world, the animals, people ... everything! God made the first people for the same reason He made all people—to be His close, close friends. But sadly, the first people God made chose to turn away from Him and sin. God wanted people to be close to Him, but they couldn't be close to Him anymore. Pain, sickness, and death entered the world too.

"But God didn't want to leave things that way. So He put His rescue plan in motion right from the start!

"God was going to rescue everything through a family! God chose a man named Abraham and promised that his family would bless the whole world. Abraham had a great-grandson named Joseph, who became a leader in Egypt and saved his family—God's people. Over time, God's people grew but were enslaved by a new Pharaoh. God's people cried out to God—'Help us!' they said—and God heard them! God freed His people and brought them to the super-nice home He had designed for them, the Promised Land.

"Some time after God's people were settled in the Promised Land, they asked for a king like the other nations around them. God gave them a king, and then many more kings (and one queen) followed. Sadly, after a long time of turning away from Him, God allowed His nation to be split in two—into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. Prophets spoke for God saying, 'Come back to Me!' But the northern kingdom of Israel was destroyed, and the southern kingdom of Judah was taken captive. After years in exile, some of God's people returned to rebuild their homeland, while others stayed in foreign lands.

"During that sad time, God kept sending messages to His people about the Rescuer He had promised long ago. 'God's Rescuer is going to come like this!' God told His prophets to share. But for years and years, nothing happened.

"But that long, long time was about to come to an end. God was about to show the world what He was working on for centuries—His plan to rescue all of us.

"And that's where we are in God's Big Story!

5 min

SETTING UP THE STORY

What You Need

 One full-size Hershey's Milk Chocolate candy bar for Mary (because the angel appeared to HER and SHE trusted God)	1
 One full-size Mr. Goodbar candy bar for Joseph (because Joseph was righteous)	1
 One mini, wrapped Reese's Peanut Butter Cup for baby Jesus (Jesus is the Reese's for the season.)	1
 Four full-size Almond Joy candy bars for angels (because they delivered good news of great JOY)	4
 Two full-size candy canes for the shepherds (because shepherd's crooks look like candy canes)	2
 One full size package of Skittles for the sheep	1
 Three blank cardboard boxes that will sit on the table and serve as the backgrounds for the three "scenes"—Nazareth, Bethlehem, and the Shepherd's	3
 Pieces of black construction paper	Several
 Pieces of green construction paper	Several
 Tape	1

Set a large table in the middle of the stage. On this large table should be the Storyteller's Bible, and the three cardboard boxes that will serve as the background for the story. From the audience's perspective, put the Nazareth box on the left, then the Bethlehem box in the middle, then the Shepherd's Field box to the right.

The box of candy props should be on the floor, but accessible to Storyteller.

Storyteller can place the printed script on the table for reference if needed.

STORYTELLER: "Merry Christmas, everyone! This week is so super-special because we are going to tell the story of God sending Jesus! **[Bottom Line] Jesus is the greatest gift!**

"And I thought what better way to tell this sweet story, this story about God blessing us with goodness, than with some candy!

Reach in the prop box for the Hershey's Milk Chocolate candy bar and hold it up.

"This Hershey's Milk Chocolate bar will represent Mary. You'll understand why in a minute. Let's get started here with Mary while we remember where we've been so far.

Prop "Mary" up against the cardboard box representing Nazareth. (Make sure to make eye contact with the kids from time to time, and feel free to have ongoing discussion about positioning the candy bars just right—"stay right up here, Mrs. Candy Bar"—your conversation will make things more entertaining!)

"God always had a plan to send Jesus. Ever since the Garden of Eden, when Adam and Eve ushered in the curse of sin that kept everyone from being close to God, God started His plan to rescue us. He wants us to be His close friends!

"So God got to work on His great rescue plan. And He worked for years and years and years—all of the Old Testament in the Bible is filled with stories of God working on His great rescue plan. Then, when the time was right, God sent an angel to a young woman named Mary to tell her some incredible news—she was going to have a baby!

Hold up the "Mary" candy bar while you say these next words.

"God sent an angel to HER and SHE trusted God and said she wanted God's plan for her life.

"God sent an angel to HER and SHE trusted God. Get it? HER-SHE? Okay, I'll move on. Back to the story.

"And this baby God was sending was going to be a very special baby! God wasn't just going to rescue us; He was sending a Rescuer—His very own Son!

STORYTELLER: "At this time, God's people were living under Roman rule. The Roman leader, Caesar Augustus, commanded that everyone should

5 min

THE CENSUS

What You Need

No supplies needed

5 min

THE JOURNEY

What You Need

No supplies needed

5 min

THE BIRTH

What You Need

No supplies needed

be counted so they could pay taxes. That meant everyone had to go to their hometown to be listed.

"In Nazareth, there was a man who was engaged to marry Mary. He was a carpenter named Joseph.

Reach in the prop box for the Mr. Goodbar candy bar and hold it up.

"Now the Bible says that Joseph was a righteous man. He was good. So he's Mr. Goodbar! Get it, Mr. GOOD-bar?"

Prop the "Joseph" candy bar up next to the "Mary" candy bar on the Nazareth backdrop.

"Both Joseph and Mary had been born into the family line of King David. So they would have to make the about week-long journey to Bethlehem, the town of David, in order to be counted. This was more than a little inconvenient, as Mary was going to have a baby!

Walk the "Joseph" and "Mary" candy bars from the Nazareth background to the Bethlehem background and prop them up against the Bethlehem background.

STORYTELLER: "Depending on the route they took, the trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem could have been up to 90 miles—which would have taken nearly a whole WEEK for Joseph and Mary to travel on foot, or by donkey.

"When they finally arrived in Bethlehem, they found that lots of other people had come to be counted as well. There was no guest room where Joseph and Mary could stay. They finally found a place where animals came in on cold nights.

STORYTELLER: "While Mary and Joseph were there in Bethlehem, the Bible tells us this:

Open the Bible to Luke 2:6-7 (NIRV) and read.

While Joseph and Mary were there, the time came for the child to be born. She gave birth to her first baby. It was a boy.

Reach in the prop box for the wrapped mini Reese's peanut butter cup and hold it up.

"Aww, look! Mary had a little boy—Jesus! He is the Reese's, I mean the REASON, for the season! This candy cup with the wrapper also looks like a crown. Even though Jesus was a baby, He is the King of kings!

Put the "Jesus" mini Reese's peanut butter cup between the "Joseph" and "Mary" candy bars.

"Mary wrapped Jesus in strips of cloth to keep Him warm and cozy. There was no crib or cradle, so she placed Him in a manger—a feeding

SHEPHERDS SEE

What You Need

No supplies needed

trough for animals. God's Son, the best gift ever, came into the world in the most unexpected way!

Reach in the prop box for the two full-size candy canes and hold them up.

STORYTELLER: "A little way away, there were some shepherds out in the fields watching over some sheep, I mean Skittles!

"And shepherds often used shepherd's crooks to guide the sheep. These candy canes look like shepherd's crooks!

Prop the two "shepherd" candy canes against the Shepherd's Field background as best you can. Sprinkle the Skittles randomly around the Shepherd's Field.

"The shepherds were just taking care of their sheep when, suddenly, an angel appeared!"

Reach in the prop box for one of the full-size Almond Joy candy bars and hold it up. Have it "hover" over the candy cane shepherds, the Skittles sheep, and the Shepherd's Field as you speak the next lines.

"The angel had good news of great joy! Get it, an Almond Joy? Ha ha!

"Anyway, the angel's big news was so important. The Savior, our Rescuer, was born—Jesus!

"This is what the angel announced to the shepherds:

Open the Bible to Luke 2:10-12 (NirV) and read.

"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news. It will bring great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord. Here is how you will know I am telling you the truth. You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger."

"This is the part of the story where I'm going to need a helper! If you would like to help me, raise your hand.

Choose a volunteer from the kids with their hands raised and instruct the volunteer to join you on stage.

"And all of a sudden, more angels joined the first one! Okay [kid's name], we've got to get some more joyful angels! You get more Almond Joy

candy bars, I mean angels, from that box. I think there are three more! I'll take one, and you take the other two.

"Let's hover them over the candy cane shepherds, and I'll tell you what happened next.

"The angels praised God. They said:

Open the Bible to Luke 2:14 (NIRV) and read.

"May glory be given to God in the highest heaven!

And may peace be given to those he is pleased with on earth!"

Move the Almond Joy candy bars over the candy cane shepherds like they're having a praise party for a few seconds.

"Then the angels left and went back to heaven. [Kid's name], let's put our Almond Joys, I mean angels, back in the box.

Put all four of the Almond Joy candy bars back in the prop box.

"Thank you for your help, [kid's name]! You can return to your seat. Everyone give [kid's name] a round of applause. (*Join in the applause.*)

STORYTELLER: "I'll continue my sweet story.

"The shepherds were so excited that they ran to see baby Jesus.

Move the two candy cane shepherds over from the Shepherd's Field background to the Bethlehem background like they are running.

"The shepherds found Jesus just like the angel had told them—He was lying in a manger. They were so excited to see Jesus!

Act like the two candy cane shepherds are jumping with excitement.

"As the shepherds went back to the fields, they told everyone about the amazing thing that had happened!"

5 min

WRAPPING UP THE STORY

What You Need

No supplies needed

5 min

GOD'S BIG STORY CLOSER (OPTIONAL)

What You Need

No supplies needed

Move the two shepherd candy canes back to the Shepherd's field background. Try to move them as if they are excited, and say the following. Then once they arrive at Shepherd's Field, try to prop them up, but feel free to lay them down if that won't work.

SHEPHERDS: "Hooray! The Savior has been born! An angel told us, and we saw Him for ourselves! He is here!"

"The shepherds were the first to spread the good news. God's promise had come true with Jesus. It was the absolute sweetest news!"

STORYTELLER: "No one understood it then, but this tiny baby would grow up to teach, heal, and show people what God is like. And then Jesus would choose to lay down His life and die on a cross—for you and me, and for the whole world. He would break that curse of sin so we could be close to God again.

"Because of Jesus, we can have a relationship with God that will last forever! Jesus is our Rescuer!

"And that's why we celebrate Christmas! Jesus is the reason for the season. At Christmas, we celebrate that God gave us the greatest gift.

"That reminds me of our Bottom Line for this week!

SLIDE: Bottom Line

[Bottom Line] "Jesus is the greatest gift. Say that with me."

Host enters and joins in.

STORYTELLER and HOST and KIDS: **[Bottom Line]** "Jesus is the greatest gift."

"God loves you so much that He sent you Jesus! Merry Christmas, everyone!"

HOST: "Let's take a look at the progress we made in God's Big Story this week!

SLIDE: God's Big Story

"This week, we're up here in the part of this picture of God's Big Story, 'The Birth of Jesus.' (*Gesture to slide.*) Today we talked about when Jesus was born!

"This week, we talked about such an important part of God's great rescue! Ever since the Garden of Eden, when the whole world needed rescue from the curse of sin, God promised He was going to rescue us so we could be close to Him again. In all of the stories in the Bible we read up to this point (*gesture to your timeline*), God was working, working, working on this great rescue plan. And He loves us so much, He never gave up, even when people in His story turned away from Him. He kept on working toward our rescue, no matter what. And to the shock of both heaven and earth—Jesus, God's very own Son, was going to be our Rescuer! God is coming to rescue us! No one expected God's Big Story to take this turn, but God knew it all along. And then one night, that gift of Jesus arrived. And that little baby would grow up to be the One who would rescue us all. That little Baby in the manger is our Savior. Merry Christmas! God gave you Jesus!

"Let's put the next image on our timeline!"

SLIDE: Week 3 Timeline Image

If you're making a timeline of printed images on your wall, take this moment to place today's timeline image on the clothesline.

"This week, we talked about when God gave us Jesus, our Rescuer!"

8 min

Closing

5 min

WHAT'S OUR PART IN THE STORY?

What You Need

No supplies needed

HOST: "One of the traditions of Christmas (besides baking awesome Christmas cookies!) is that we give gifts to each other.

"Well, at Christmas, God gave you the greatest, greatest gift that there ever could be. He gave you Jesus.

"Jesus would grow up, give His life, break that horrible curse of sin we were all under, and make a way for you to be God's friend forever.

"Jesus would make a way so you could be close friends with the God who is kind, loving, compassionate, and fun. God made a world

where amazing things like warm cookies, yummy frosting, and colorful sprinkles are possible! Not to mention big hugs and puppy bounces! This world was God's idea! He is the best.

"God was giving you a way to be His friend forever. He was giving you a way to be friends forever with the most incredible Being.

"And don't forget about the forever part! As God's friend, you will live with Him in a perfect world forever!

"The best gift you will ever, ever get is the one we celebrate at Christmastime! So as you do all of the fun Christmas things this next week, remember the reason why you're doing it is because you're celebrating that God loves you so much, He gave you Jesus. **[Bottom Line] Jesus is the greatest gift!**

"Let's talk to the God who gave us such an amazing gift!

STORYTELLER or HOST: "Dear God, thank You for sending us the greatest gift of all, Your Son, Jesus. Help us to remember this Christmas, and every Christmas, that You gave us the greatest gift because You love us so much. Merry Christmas, Jesus. We love You so much too."

Dismiss kids to their small groups.

3 min

PRAYER

What You Need

No supplies needed

Supplies

Opener Game	Quantity
1. Gift boxes, five per small group	5
2. Christmas-themed wrapping paper, several rolls (The more colorful, the better to make the challenge festive and fun!)	Several
3. Tape	Several

SETTING UP THE STORY	Quantity
1. One full-size Hershey's Milk Chocolate candy bar for Mary (because the angel appeared to HER and SHE trusted God)	1
2. One full-size Mr. Goodbar candy bar for Joseph (because Joseph was righteous)	1
3. One mini, wrapped Reese's Peanut Butter Cup for baby Jesus (Jesus is the Reese's for the season.)	1
4. Four full-size Almond Joy candy bars for angels (because they delivered good news of great JOY)	4
5. Two full-size candy canes for the shepherds (because shepherd's crooks look like candy canes)	2
6. One full size package of Skittles for the sheep	1
7. Three blank cardboard boxes that will sit on the table and serve as the backgrounds for the three "scenes"—Nazareth, Bethlehem, and the Shepherd's	3
8. Pieces of black construction paper	Several
9. Pieces of green construction paper	Several
10. Tape	1