

Large Group (Stage) Leader Guide

Today's Suggested Schedule

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 (15 minutes)

Social: Providing time for fun interaction

1. Fun Run
2. Herding Sheep
3. Build What You Feel

Large Group (20 minutes)

Worship: Inviting people to respond to God

Story: Communicating God's truth in engaging ways

- Worship
("Happy Birthday Jesus" and "It's a Holy Night")
- Bible Story
- Prayer

Small Group (25 minutes)

Groups: Creating a safe place to connect

1. Verse RevEWE
2. Story Puzzles
3. In The Story
4. Shepherds in Action
5. Circle Ornament
6. Journal and Prayer

Home: Prompting action beyond the experience

- Memory Verse Card
- Parent Cue Card (print or email)
- [Parent Cue App](#) and [ParentCue.org](#)

THIS MONTH



Today's Bible Story

The Shepherds Luke 2:8-20

The shepherds run to Jesus.

Key Question

How do we know God loves us?

Bottom Line

God gave us Jesus.

Memory Verse

God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son.

John 3:16 GNT



Inclusive Pro Tips

Loud sounds, bright lights, and large groups can be overwhelming or overstimulating for some children. To create a more inclusive large group experience, consider offering adaptive tools like noise-canceling headphones, sunglasses, sensory-friendly items, or access to modified spaces.

10 MINUTES

Worship

10 MINUTES

Bible Study Prayer

① Worship

→ **Worship Leader enters.**

WORSHIP LEADER: "Merry Christmas, friends! My name is [*your name*], and I am so happy you are here today!

"Today, we are celebrating Jesus. God loves us SO much that [**Bottom Line**] God gave us Jesus! God loves you ... and [**Basic Truth**] God loves me.

"Wait ... who else does God love? Does God love the firefighters who keep us safe? (*Listen.*) Yes! God loves everyone.

"Let's run in place and pretend to tell our firefighters that God loves them. Ready? (*Hold up your fingers as you count.*) One ... two ... three ... Run with me!

→ **Lead children to run in place for a few seconds and then stop.**

"Okay, we made it to the fire station. Let's tell them God loves you. Ready? (*Hold up your fingers as you count.*) One ... two ... three!"

CHILDREN and WORSHIP LEADER: "God loves you!"

WORSHIP LEADER: "Great job! What about the doctors and nurses who make us feel all better? Does God love doctors and nurses? (*Listen*) Yes! God loves everyone.

"Let's run in place and pretend to tell our doctors and nurses that God loves them. Ready? (*Hold up your fingers as you count.*) One ... two ... three ... Run with me!

→ **Lead children to run in place for a few seconds and then stop.**

"Okay, we made it to the hospital. Let's tell them God loves you. Ready? (*Hold up your fingers as you count.*) One ... two ... three!

CHILDREN and WORSHIP LEADER: "God loves you!"

WORSHIP LEADER: "Yes, God loves you, and [**Basic Truth**] God loves me—God loves everyone! And God gave us Jesus to show us how much He loves us. So, let's sing and celebrate together!

10 MINUTES

Worship

10 MINUTES

Bible Study Prayer

→ **Lead children in singing "Happy Birthday Jesus."**

"Great singing, friends! Now let's learn some of God's words from the Bible. (*Open hands like a book.*) Are you ready? Watch me say the words from the Bible and do the motions, and then you can do them with me!

→ **Note: A video of the Memory Verse Motions is available in the Prelude folder and on Pinterest.**

"God (*flat hand with thumb to forehead, pull down*) loved the world so much (*cross arms over chest*) that he gave his only Son," (*rock arms like a baby*) John 3:16. (*Open hands like a book.*)

"Can you do that with me?"

→ **Lead children to say the Memory Verse with Hand Motions once or twice.**

"Great job, friends! Let's sing one more song together.

→ **Lead children in singing "It's a Holy Night."**

"Thanks for celebrating God with me! Merry Christmas!

[Transition] "And now it's time to turn around (*spin around*) . . . sit down (*sit down*) . . . shake the wiggles out (*wiggle hands*) . . . so we can hear (*cup hands behind ears*) what the story's all about!"

② Intro Sketch

→ **The prepared sheep pen is on one side of the storytelling area. The white beach balls are spread out on the opposite side of the storytelling area.**

→ **Host enters as Worship Leader exits. Host carries the shepherd's crook or inflatable candy cane.**

HOST: "Merry Christmas, friends! My name is [*your name*]. Welcome to [*your environment's name or story time*]!"

"Today, I am playing a super-fun Christmas game. First, I need this.

10 MINUTES

Worship

10 MINUTES

Bible Study Prayer

→ **Pick up a white beach ball.**

"Do you know what shape this is? (*Listen.*) That's right! It's a circle.

"I'm pretending these white beach balls are fluffy sheep. Can you all 'Baa' like a sheep with me?"

CHILDREN and HOST: "Baa! Baa!"

HOST: "You are great sheep! Now, I'm the shepherd, so I have to take care of my sheep. I have to get all the sheep inside the (*gesture to the sheep pen*) sheep pen with this!

→ **Hold up the shepherd's crook/candy cane.**

"Do you think I can do it? (*Listen.*) Here I go!

→ **Gently pull or push the beach balls with the shepherd's crook/candy cane until you get them into the 'sheep pen.'**

→ **Note: If it is taking you too long to get them into the pen, simply adjust the following line to say that you are taking a break for the Bible Story.**

"Whew! That was fun! All my sheep are safe now!

"And that means it's time for today's true story from the Bible! I'll see you in a bit!"

③ Bible Story

→ **Storyteller enters as Host exits. Storyteller carries a Bible and a white robe.**

STORYTELLER: "Merry Christmas, friends! I'm [*your name*], and I am so excited about today's Bible story. It begins with some sheep. Sheep are so fluffy, and sheep say, "Moo! Moo!"

→ **Listen to the children's protests and play along.**

"Oh, sheep don't say 'moo?' What animal says 'Moo?' (*Listen.*) Oh, yes, of course! COWS say 'moo.' Sheep say, "Ribbit, ribbit!"

10 MINUTES

Worship

10 MINUTES

Bible Study Prayer

→ **Listen to the children's protests and play along.**

"Wait, sheep don't say that? What animal says 'Ribbit?' (**Listen.**) Oh, you're right! FROGS say 'Ribbit.'

"So, tell me, what do sheep say? (**Listen.**) Yes, sheep say 'Baa!' You're so smart!

"Well, friends, I can't wait to tell you a true story from the Bible. It's in the book of Luke.

→ **Open the Bible for children to see, then set it down.**

"And our story begins with some sheep that say ...

→ **Put your hand behind your ear to prompt the children.**

CHILDREN and STORYTELLER: "Baa! Baa!"

STORYTELLER: "You've got it!"

SLIDE → Story Image W3 01

"One night, there were some shepherds watching their sheep.

"Alright, I need a few shepherds. Who wants to be my shepherds?

→ **Pick a few preschoolers to be shepherds. Bring them into the storytelling area, and give them white beach ball 'sheep' to hold.**

"So, the shepherds were in the fields outside the town of Bethlehem. (**With quiet excitement, like you are telling a secret.**) The shepherds didn't know it yet, but God's Son, Jesus, was born!

→ **Make a really excited face, but act like you are trying to contain your excitement.**

"That's so exciting! Let's all do an excited quiet dance. (**Hold up your fingers as you count.**) One ... two ... three ... stand up and dance!

10 MINUTES

Worship

10 MINUTES

Bible Study Prayer

→ **Lead children to do a little dance.**

"Oh, I love your dance moves! Now, let's sit back down. (**Hold up your fingers as you count.**) One ... two ... three ... sit down!

→ **Motion for the children to sit down.**

"Oh, Jesus' birthday is so exciting! It's a really big deal, and God didn't keep the news to Himself. God wanted EVERYONE to know about it, starting with the shepherds out in the field.

→ **Gesture to the shepherds.**

"So, God sent a very special messenger to the shepherds. God sent an angel!

"Okay, friends, now I need someone to be an angel!

→ **Pick a preschooler to be the angel, and bring them into the storytelling area. Give them a white robe to wear.**

SLIDE → Story Image W3 02

"Angels are God's special messengers, and when the angel appeared to the shepherds, the shepherds were so surprised ... and afraid!

(To the shepherd volunteers.) Can you make an afraid face and say, 'Oh, no!?'

→ **Make an afraid face.**

SHEPHERD VOLUNTEERS and STORYTELLER: "Oh, no!"

STORYTELLER: "Yes, the shepherds were afraid!"

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid." (**Luke 2:10 NIV**)

(To the angel volunteer.) "Can you say, 'Do not be afraid!'"

SHEPHERD VOLUNTEERS and STORYTELLER: "Do not be afraid!"

STORYTELLER: "That's right! The angel told them:

10 MINUTES

Worship

10 MINUTES

Bible Study Prayer

"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news. It will bring great joy for all the people." *(Luke 2:10 NIRV)*

"The angel told them that Jesus had been born and that the shepherds would find Him in a manger.

SLIDE → Story Image W3 03

"Then, even more angels appeared! Can everyone in the room stand up and be an angel? *(Pause.)* The Bible teaches us that a large group of angels appeared. They praised God and said:

"Glory to God in the highest!" *(Luke 2:14 NIV)*

"Let's all say that together. Ready?"

CHILDREN and STORYTELLER: "Glory to God in the highest!"

STORYTELLER: "Louder!"

CHILDREN and STORYTELLER: "Glory to God in the highest!
Glory to God in the highest!"

STORYTELLER: "Great job! The angels praised God because Jesus was born. *[Bottom Line]* God gave us Jesus!

"Okay, I need all of my angel to sit down.

→ **Lead your angel volunteer to their seat.**

"After the angels left, the shepherds were so excited that they ran to find baby Jesus.

"Okay, shepherds, it's time to run and find baby Jesus. Remember, the angel said that they would find baby Jesus in a manger.

→ **Encourage the shepherd volunteers to look around the storytelling area for baby Jesus in the manger.**

"Keep looking until you find Him in the manger!

→ **When the shepherd volunteers are not looking, reveal the baby doll in the manger by lifting the large box.**

10 MINUTES

Worship

10 MINUTES

Bible Study Prayer

"Hey, let's help our friends out. (*Pointing to the baby doll.*) Do you see baby Jesus anywhere? (*Listen.*) Oh, shepherds! Come here and see baby Jesus!

→ **Guide the shepherds to sit around the manger.**

SLIDE → Story Image W3 04

"The shepherds found baby Jesus, and just like the angel said, the baby Jesus was in a manger. The shepherds were SO happy, they told EVERYONE that Jesus, God's Son, was born!

"Okay, shepherds, let's go tell everyone that Jesus was born. Come with me!

→ **Lead the shepherd volunteers to a small group.**

"Okay, let's tell them 'Jesus is born!'"

SHEPHERD VOLUNTEERS and STORYTELLER: "Jesus is born!"

STORYTELLER: "Great job! Let's go tell more people.

→ **Lead the shepherd volunteers to another small group.**

"Okay, let's them 'Jesus is born!'"

SHEPHERD VOLUNTEERS and STORYTELLER: "Jesus is born!"

STORYTELLER: "Let's do that one more time.

→ **Lead the shepherd volunteers to a small group.**

"Say 'Jesus is born!'"

SHEPHERD VOLUNTEERS and STORYTELLER: "Jesus is born!"

STORYTELLER: "Great job, shepherds! You can have a seat now.

→ **Help the shepherd volunteers back to their small group.**

"Friends, everyone who heard the good news about Jesus was amazed, and the shepherds praised God.

10 MINUTES

Worship

10 MINUTES

Bible Study Prayer

"Everybody, let's praise God like the shepherds. Say: 'Yay, God!'"

CHILDREN and STORYTELLER: "Yay, God!"

STORYTELLER: "Yes! Yay, God! [**Bottom Line**] God gave us Jesus!"

"Friends, God loves you and [**Basic Truth**] God loves me so much that [**Bottom Line**] God gave us Jesus. How do we know God loves us?"

CHILDREN and STORYTELLER: [**Bottom Line**] "God gave us Jesus!"

STORYTELLER: "Yes, [**Bottom Line**] God gave us Jesus."

→ **Pick up and close Bible.**

Transition → "Our story time is over, but we're not through. Let's talk to God because God loves you!"

④ Prayer

LEADER: "Dear God, you are so awesome! Thank You for giving us Jesus. We know You love us because You gave us Your Son. Help us tell everyone about Jesus, just like the shepherds, so they will know that You love them too. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen."

"I'll see you next time. Bye!"

Transition → Host enters as Storyteller exits, carrying Bible.

⑤ Outro Sketch

→ **Host enters as Storyteller exits.**

10 MINUTES

Worship

10 MINUTES

Bible Study Prayer

HOST: "Wow! An angel told the shepherds that Jesus was born. The shepherds were so excited that they ran to find Jesus. And then they ran to tell everyone that **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus!

"I think I (**point to self**) got the story. Did you (**point to children**) get it? If you did, say, 'Got it!' Get it?" (**Cup one hand behind ear.**)

CHILDREN and HOST: "Got it!"

HOST: (**Give two thumbs-up.**) "Good!"

[Transition] "And now it's time for more Bible fun. There's more to learn. Come on, everyone!"

→ **Host dismisses small groups and exits.**

PLANNING

Getting Ready: Worship

Gather children for a Large Group time that includes interactive Worship, the Intro Sketch, and the Bible Story. The Stage Script is written for those who gather their preschoolers together from multiple rooms and have a larger space on which to present the Bible Story. If you are pulling your children to a rug on one side of your preschool space, you may benefit from using the Rug Script.

What You Need

- Worship Leader(s)

Music and Sound Effects

Available through

[Store.ThinkOrange.com](https://store.thinkorange.com)

- "Happy Birthday Jesus"
- "It's a Holy Night"

Optional Videos

Available through

[Store.ThinkOrange.com](https://store.thinkorange.com)

- "Happy Birthday Jesus"
Dance Moves Music Video
- "It's a Holy Night"
Dance Moves Music Video

What You Do:

1. Prepare all songs and have them ready to use.
2. Visit [Store.ThinkOrange.com](https://store.thinkorange.com) for Music Scope and Cycle purchases.
→ store.thinkorange.com/collections/music-first-look-scope-cycle-2025-2026
3. Check out the Ministry Leader Guide for more information.

Suggestions

1. A Worship Leader and live instruments are recommended to sing along with the music tracks.
2. Encourage children to be active during worship by incorporating the appropriate hand motions.

APlay

Get the most out of your curriculum with **APlay!** [JoinAPlay.com](https://joinaplay.com) is an all-in-one media organization and presentation tool. Experience all of your Orange Curriculum media assets, now pre-built and fully customizable. No more sorting through multiple download folders.

APlay is free with your curriculum subscription and packed with features to help your weekly experience run smoother. APlay gives you more time to focus on what truly matters—more ministry, less media management with Apple TV-based media solutions.

PLANNING

Getting Ready: Intro/Outro Sketch

Gather children for a Large Group time that includes interactive Worship, the Intro Sketch, and the Bible Story. The Stage Script is written for those who gather their preschoolers together from multiple rooms and have a larger space on which to present the Bible Story. If you are pulling your children to a rug on one side of your preschool space, you may benefit from using the Rug Script.

What You Need

- Shepherd's crook or inflatable candy cane
- 3-5 white beachballs
- 2 trifold presentation boards
- Utility knife

What You Do:

1. Cut the trifold presentation boards in half horizontally.
2. Set up the shorter presentation boards in the storytelling area to create a 'sheep pen.'
3. Inflate the beachballs.

PLANNING

Getting Ready: Bible Story

Gather children for a Large Group time that includes interactive Worship and the Bible Story. The Rug Script is written for those who pull their children to a rug (*or area*) to one side of their preschool space to tell the Bible Story. If you gather your preschoolers together from multiple rooms and have a larger space on which to present the Bible Story, you may benefit from using the Stage Script.

What You Need

- Bible
- White robe for a preschooler to wear
- Option: Cardstock

Large Group Visuals

- Story Image W3 01
- Story Image W3 02
- Story Image W3 03
- Story Image W3 04

What You Do:

1. Download the Large Group Visuals to display on a device or screen or copy on cardstock.

Suggestions

1. Choose an engaging adult to tell the Bible Story. This person should be able to command the attention of preschoolers and control the group through animated storytelling. These scripts are written to be “told” and not “read.” Advance preparation is necessary.

Supplemental Resources

WONDER! LOOK AT GOD'S STORY

First Look offers weekly videos to engage preschoolers with the Bible Story. Join our Bible storytellers, Treehouse friends, and, of course, Ollie the Owl to discover the wonder in God's story. Available in your media files and APlay.

[Store.ThinkOrange.com](https://www.thinkorange.com)

First Look Pinterest Page

Visit our Pinterest page to see craft samples and suggested supplies.

bit.ly/FL_ChristmasShapes