

3-5 Year-Olds

Small Group

December — Week 3

# Small Group 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  ALLERGY
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
- 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

- Going Home
- 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

This leader guide is designed to be inclusive of children with a special need, learning difference, or disability who attend a group with their peers. See highlighted sections below for additional inclusive pro-tips. Check out the additional Special Needs resources included.

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SOCIAL 1/3

# Fun Run

## What You Need

- Timer



## ① What You Do

### Before the Activity

1. Gather children on one side of an open area in the room

### During the Activity

2. Encourage children to run from one side of the room and time their runs.
3. Repeat as desired.

### After the Activity

Introduce the Bible Story.

## ② What You Say

### Before the Activity

"Everyone, come over here and let's get ready for a fun run!"

### During the Activity

"I love to run fast, do you? Let's see how fast you can run from where you are right here (**walk to the opposite side of the room**) to where I am now and I'll time you. Ready, set, go! Run to me! (**Start the timer.**) Whoa! You are super-fast. The time says you ran [**time**] seconds! Stay here and I'll go stand on the other side and you can run again! (**Repeat as desired.**) Great job running."

### After the Activity

"That was so fun. In our Bible Story today, we're going to learn about a group of people who ran to see Jesus. I'm ready for the Bible Story, are you? Let's Go!"

**Transition** → Move to Worship and Story by slow running to your designated area.

## Inclusive Pro Tips



If children cannot run, suggest all children run with their fingers or move in different ways, still explaining that people in our story "ran" to see Jesus.

SOCIAL 2/3

# Herding Sheep\*



## What You Need

- Cotton balls or white pom-poms
- Plastic decorative candy canes
- Optional "Allergy Alert Poster," cardstock, and regular-size candy canes

## Note

Be sure to list the items you will be using today on the "Allergy Alert Poster" (in the Prelude folder) and post it at the door to your room.



## Inclusive Pro Tips

Provide candy canes that are large enough to touch the ground so children can participate while sitting in a chair.

## ① What You Do

### Before the Activity

1. Scatter the cotton balls/pom-poms around the table.
2. Option: Copy "Allergy Alert Poster" on cardstock, list candy canes, and post at the door.

### During the Activity

1. Give each child a candy cane or if you have more children than candy canes, encourage children to gather two sheep then pass the candy cane to another child and repeat until each child has a turn.
2. Encourage children to pretend to be a shepherd and use the candy cane as a "staff" to gather the "sheep."
3. Gather all the sheep into the center of the table.

### After the Activity

Introduce the Bible Story.

## ② What You Say

### Before the Activity

"Friends, join me over here at the table. Look at all these cotton balls. Let's pretend they're sheep and we are shepherds. Shepherds have staffs that help direct and gather their sheep. **(Hold up candy cane.)** This candy cane looks a lot like a shepherd staff. We'll use these as our staffs to gather sheep."

### During the Activity

"Okay, shepherds! Let's gather the sheep. Be gentle and kind and try to get your sheep in the middle of the table. **(Pause.)** Wow, you are good shepherds! Some of those sheep are tricky. Keep trying to gather them with your staff. **(Once the sheep are gathered, scatter again. Repeat as desired.)** That was so fun! You did a great job of being shepherds!"

### After the Activity

"Today, in our Bible Story, we're going to hear about real shepherds who got some amazing news while they were in the field taking care of their sheep. Let's go hear our story!"

**Transition** → Move to Worship and Story by pretending to gather sheep as you walk to your designated area.

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GROUPS 1/6

# Verse RevEWE

Memory Verse Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

→ No supplies needed

Inclusive Optional Supplies

Noise-canceling headphones



Inclusive Pro Tips

Offer noise-canceling headphones for children that may be sensitive to loud noises.

## ① What You Do

**Before the Activity**

1. Gather with the children in an open area and say the Memory Verse with the motions.

**During the Activity**

1. Say the verse together with the children in different ways.

**After the Activity**

Connect the Memory Verse to the Bottom Line.

## ② What You Say

**Before the Activity**

"Friends, come over here. Let's say our verse as we do the motions together. Ready? '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.**) Fantastic!"

**During the Activity**

"I love our Memory Verse; it tells us that God loves us. Let's say it super-duper loud this time. 'God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son,' John 3:16. That was so loud! This time let's say it super soft. 'God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son,' John 3:16. Let's try to say it like a baby. (**Pause.**) Oh, that was funny. Now let's say our verse like a sheep. (**Pause.**) Yes, baaa, baaa that was so good baaa, baaa. I loved saying our verse in all the different ways and remembering that God loves us."

**After the Activity**

"Today in our Bible Story, the shepherds ran (**run in place**) to find Baby Jesus. They knew Baby Jesus was the best gift ever. How do we know that God loves us? [**Bottom Line**] God gave us Jesus!"

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GROUPS 2/6

# Story Puzzles

Bible Story Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- "Story Puzzles" Activity Pages
- 11-inch x17-inch paper
- Scissors
- Gallon-sized resealable bags



## ① What You Do

### Before the Activity

1. Copy "Story Puzzles" on 11-inch x17-inch paper and cut, one set per Small Group.
2. Place each puzzles' pieces in a separate baggie.
3. Label the baggies 'Puzzle 1,' 'Puzzle 2,' and 'Puzzle 3.'

### During the Activity

1. Gather the children around a table or on the floor.
2. Divide the children into three groups.
3. Give each group a puzzle to do together.
4. When the puzzles are complete, look at the pictures together as you review the Bible story.
5. Option: Do all three puzzles together as one group.

### After the Activity

Connect the Bottom Line to the Bible Story.

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GROUPS 2/6

# Story Puzzles

Bible Story Review

## Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

## What You Need

- "Story Puzzles" Activity Pages
- 11-inch x17-inch paper
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## ② What You Say

### Before the Activity

"Who wants to play a puzzle game? I have three puzzles for us to put together. I can't wait to see what pictures they make!"

### During the Activity

"Let's look at puzzle number one. **(Put the puzzle together.)** What do you see? **(Pause for responses.)** You're right! There's an angel **(point)** and some shepherds **(point)** and some sheep! **(Point.)** God sent an angel to tell shepherds the good news that Jesus had been born!"

"Now let's look at puzzle number two. **(Put the puzzle together.)** What do you see? **(Pause for responses.)** Yes! I see shepherds running! After the angel told the shepherds Jesus had been born, they were so excited that they ran to see baby Jesus!"

"We have one more puzzle to look at, puzzle number three. **(Put the puzzle together.)** What do you see? **(Pause for responses.)** Aww...it's baby Jesus. The shepherds found baby Jesus lying in a manger, just like the angel said they would."

### After the Activity

"I love puzzles. But do you know who I love more than puzzles? **(Pause.)** I love Jesus! And I'm so glad God loved us so much that **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus. How do we know God loves us? **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus! Yay! **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus!"

GROUPS 6/6

# Journal and Prayer

## Prayer Activity

### Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

### What You Need

- Bible
- Journal
- Fun-shaped pen

### Note

You can find examples of hand motions in the "Memory Verse Hand Motions" PDF and video, included in the Prelude folder and on Pinterest.



## ① What You Do

### Before the Activity

1. Encourage the children to jog as you lead them to your Small Group spot.
2. Sit down and gather the children around you.

### During the Activity

1. Review the Bible Story and Memory Verse Hand Motions, then encourage the children to make a list in the journal of what they would tell baby Jesus if they saw Him lying in a manger.

### After the Activity

Pray with children using the list you made in the journal.

## ② What You Say

### Before the Activity

"It's Small Group time! Today we're going to jog to our Small Group spot. Jogging is like slow running. Are you ready to jog with me? Let's go! (***Jog as you lead the children to your Small Group spot.***) Jogging got us here faster than walking! Now we can sit down and talk about today's Bible Story. One, two, three, sit down with me!"

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GROUPS 6/6

# Journal and Prayer

## Prayer Activity

### Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

### What You Need

- Bible
- Journal
- Fun-shaped pen

### Note

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### During the Activity

**(Open the Bible and lay it in front of the children.)** "In our Bible Story today, the shepherds were so excited about Jesus being born that they didn't walk...they didn't jog...they RAN to see baby Jesus!

"When the shepherds got to Mary and Joseph, they saw Jesus lying in a manger, just like the angel said. It was true! 'God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son!' John 3:16

"Hey! That's the Bible verse we are learning! '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.)** Let's say that together! Just stand up and say what I say and do what I do! '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.)**

"Wow! That was fantastic! **(Two thumbs up.)** Now let's sit down so we can write in our prayer journal and talk to God. **(Open journal.)** In our Bible Story, the shepherds ran to see baby Jesus, and they found Jesus lying in a manger, right where the angel said Jesus would be. I wonder what the shepherds said to baby Jesus.

"Hey! That gives me an idea! Let's write in our prayer journal what we would tell baby Jesus if we saw Him lying in a manger, like the shepherds did. Then we can use the list when we pray. When I say your name, tell me what you would tell baby Jesus if you saw Him lying in a manger, and I will write it in our journal. **(Assist when needed. Remember to print, as you write in the journal, so the children can recognize their names and the letters.)**

### After the Activity

"This is so special! **(Hold up journal.)** Let's pray and talk to God. Would anyone like to pray before I pray? **(Give each child who wants to pray the opportunity to do so.)** Dear God, Thank You that we got to hear more about the true story of Christmas and how You gave us Your Son, Jesus. If we were like the shepherds and saw baby Jesus, **[child's name]** would tell Him **(read what they wrote)**, and **[child's name]** would tell Him... **(say this with each child)**. You're the best, God. In Jesus name. Amen."