

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. Opening Activity

Large Group (35 minutes)

Worship: Inviting people to respond to God

Story: Communicating God's truth in engaging ways

- 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

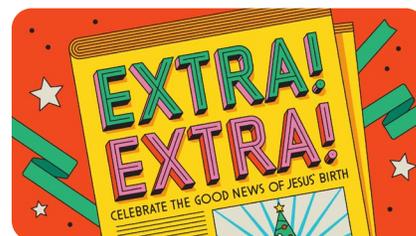
1. Bible Story Review: Promise Relay
2. Application Activity: Trust Moves
3. Memory Verse Activity: Verse Ornaments
4. Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss

Home: Prompting action beyond the experience

- Devotionals for Kids
- Parent Cue Card (print or email)
- [Parent Cue App](#) and [ParentCue.org](#)

🌟 Need activities for a K-5th group? Check out the 2nd-3rd grade guide.

THIS MONTH



Today's Bible Story

Gabriel Visits Mary Luke 1:5-66

Bottom Line

God always had a plan to send Jesus.

Memory Verse

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



Inclusive Pro Tips

This leader guide is created with inclusion in mind. It supports children with learning differences, disabilities, or special needs as they participate alongside their peers. Look for the highlighted sections for extra tips to help welcome and include every child. For more resources, check out our free *A Place at the Table* course with Kim Botto and EveryChild Curriculum. joinamazing.com/everychild

SOCIAL

Opening Activity



What You Need

- Offering container
- Three prepared Christmas-themed gift bags with paper slips in them
- Optional: Christmas stickers for participation

① What You Do

Pray for your group before they arrive → Pray for kids who will visit your group for the first time. Thank God for His perfect plan and for choosing Zechariah, Elizabeth, and Mary to be part of His big story. Ask God to help every kid learn to see that God is good and He loves us so much that He worked for years and years and years on His plan to send Jesus because He wants to be close to us. Ask God to help kids see His great love even more clearly this Christmas.

1. Greet each kid by name with a high five, fist bump, or smile!
2. Invite any kids who brought an offering to place it in the offering container.
3. Show the kids the gift bags filled with tissue paper.
4. Say: "There are 'plans' hidden inside!"
5. Choose a kid to pick a slip of paper from a bag, read it aloud, and follow the plan (for example: hop three times).
6. Continue until all of the kids have had a turn.
7. Encourage everyone to cheer when a plan is followed!
8. If time allows, mix up the slips in the gift bags and play again.
9. Optional: Hand out a Christmas sticker to each kid as a "You followed the plan!" reward.

② What You Say

"Amazing job, everyone! Those were some silly plans, but you all followed them so well! You didn't know what was inside the bag until you pulled it out, but you trusted the plan and followed it.

"In today's true story from the Bible, we'll hear about a young woman named Mary. God sent an angel to tell her about HIS big plan. It wasn't a silly plan—it was the most important plan ever! God's plan was to send Jesus to rescue the world. Mary trusted God's plan, even though it felt surprising. We can trust God's plan too, because God is good and **[Bottom Line]** God always had a plan to send Jesus. **[Transition]** Let's head to Large Group to hear more about it!"

Transition → Lead your group to the Large Group area.

GROUPS 1/4

Promise Relay



Bible Story Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- "Promise Relay Puzzles" in three zip-top baggies



Inclusive Pro Tips

Omit the "race" portion and encourage all children to work at their own pace and celebrate every accomplishment.

① What You Do

1. Divide the kids into three groups.
2. Give each group a zip-top baggie with puzzle pieces.
3. Invite the kids to race to put their puzzle together.
4. Once all puzzles are complete, talk about how each picture shows part of God's plan (Zechariah, John, Mary, Jesus).
5. Remind kids: Just like a puzzle, you may not understand how the pieces go together, but God is always working toward something beautiful!

② What You Say

"Wow, you did such a great job putting your puzzles together! At first, all the pieces were separate and didn't make much sense. But when you kept working, you could see the whole picture, and it was beautiful. That's kind of like God's plan.

"God is good and He is always, always working for something that's good. For hundreds and hundreds of years, even though people didn't understand their parts in God's great rescue plan, God was working on His plan to send Jesus.

"In our Bible Story today, we read about some of the people who were in God's great rescue plan! First, God sent the angel Gabriel to Zechariah to tell him about baby John, who would prepare the way. Then God sent Gabriel to Mary, a young woman from a small town, with the biggest news of all: She would have a baby, and that baby would be Jesus, God's Son! Mary didn't have all the answers, and she might have felt a little scared. But she trusted God. She knew that He was good, and so His plan would be good. She said yes, even when she didn't know how everything would work out because she trusted God.

"There will be times in your life when you go through something hard or scary too. But you can do what Mary did—you can trust God because He is good. Over years and years and years, God was working on His good plan to rescue you. He was working on a beautiful picture! He was working to send Jesus! **[Bottom Line]** God always had a plan to send Jesus. What He was working on was good, good, good, and He is always working toward goodness, toward something beautiful, in your life too!"

K-1st

Small Group

December — Week 2

GROUPS 2/4

Trust Moves



Application Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

No supplies needed

① What You Do

1. Invite kids to spread out in the room where they have space to move.
2. Explain: "I'm going to say a statement. If you think it's true, show me a trust move! That means take one big step forward, and then step back to your spot."
3. Practice together once with a fun statement like: "Christmas cookies are so yummy!"
4. Read through statements one by one, giving kids time to respond with their "trust move."
5. Mix Christmas fun questions with Bible truth to keep it light and engaging.
6. After the final statement, invite kids to sit down in a circle to talk.

Trust Move Statements

1. Hot chocolate tastes better with marshmallows.
2. God sent Gabriel to Mary with good news.
3. Decorating a Christmas tree is fun.
4. Mary trusted God's plan, even when she didn't understand it all, because she trusted God.
5. Singing Christmas songs makes you happy.
6. [Bottom Line] God always had a plan to send Jesus.
7. You'd rather get toys than socks for Christmas.
8. For years and years, God worked on His good plan of sending Jesus, and God is working on something beautiful in your life too!

Continued on the next page. →

Inclusive Pro Tips



For an option with less movement, encourage kids to make a "T" with their hands for "trust."

K-1st

Small Group

December — Week 2

GROUPS 2/4

Trust Moves



Application Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

No supplies needed

② What You Say

"You all did such a great job with your trust moves, and I love your answers about Christmas too! It's fun to think about things like hot chocolate, songs, and even Christmas trees! But even more than all those fun things, Christmas is about Jesus! Every decoration, every celebration is really about Him!

"In our Bible Story, we learned that Mary chose to trust God. She didn't know how everything would work out, and she might have been nervous, but she said yes to God's plan because she trusted God. That's what trust looks like: choosing to follow God because you know He is good even when you don't see the whole picture.

"God's people had been waiting hundreds of years for a Rescuer, and then suddenly, God put another part of His plan into action through Zechariah, Elizabeth, John, and Mary. The whole time, God was working on His good plan to send Jesus. Every step shows us that **[Bottom Line]** God always had a plan to send Jesus.

"And here's the good news: God is working for good in your life too. Just like Mary trusted God, you can trust Him when things feel confusing, or when you're nervous, or when life feels uncertain. God is good, good, good, and He is always working toward something good.

"So this Christmas, when you see the lights, have winter break, or sing carols, remember: it's all about Jesus. And you can always trust God, because He loves you so much that He sent Jesus for you."

Inclusive Pro Tips



For an option with less movement, encourage kids to make a "T" with their hands for "trust."

GROUPS 4/4

Pray and Dismiss



Prayer Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

No supplies needed

Inclusive Supplies

- Index cards
- Coloring supplies



Inclusive Pro Tips

Offer index cards and coloring supplies for kids who may prefer to draw or write their prayers to God instead of praying silently! This gives visual and kinesthetic learners a hands-on way to reflect and connect with God.

① What You Do

1. Gather the kids together in a circle.
2. Say: "Today we learned that God had a plan to send Jesus, and He told Mary through the angel Gabriel. Mary didn't have all the answers, and it might have felt a little scary, but she trusted God. He is good, so she knew He was working for good, so she trusted Him. We can do the same!"
3. Invite kids to close their eyes and think about something in their life that feels hard to understand, something they need to trust God with.
4. Share examples like: "Maybe you feel nervous about a test, or you're waiting for something, or you're having trouble with a friend."
5. Say: "Now let's take a quiet moment to talk to God about it. You can tell Him what's on your mind and ask Him to help you trust Him."
6. Give kids 30 seconds of silent prayer time.
7. Close in prayer.

② What You Say

"Dear God, thank You for always keeping Your promises. Thank You for having a plan to send Jesus at just the right time. Sometimes we don't understand what You're doing, but we know that You are always working towards something good. Help us to trust You. When life feels confusing or scary, remind us that You love us and we can trust You. We love You, God, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

Transition → As adults arrive to pick up, encourage the kids to share with their parents that God always had a plan to send Jesus. Encourage kids to give one example of something they can trust God with this week.