

# 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

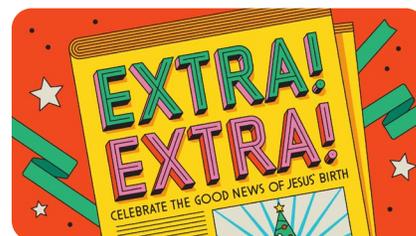
1. Bible Story Review: Breaking News: Jesus Is Born!
2. Application Activity: The Greatest Gift Box
3. Memory Verse Activity: Echo the Good News
4. Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss

#### 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

## Jesus Is Born Luke 2:1-20

### Bottom Line

**Jesus is the greatest gift.**

### 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**



### 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](https://joinamazing.com/everychild)

## SOCIAL

# Opening Activity

## What You Need

- Offering container
- Tape



## ① What You Do

**Pray for your group before they arrive** → Pray for kids who will visit your group for the first time. Recall the first time you heard about Jesus' birth. Thank God for giving Jesus, the greatest gift you could ever receive! Ask God to help each kid know how much He loves them, and that His love is a free gift they don't have to earn! Pray that the Holy Spirit would help you point to Jesus in every moment, and that new kids would leave small group celebrating that God loves them so much, He sent Jesus so they could be close to Him!

1. Greet each child by name with a high five, smile, or fist bump as they arrive.
2. Invite kids who brought an offering to place it in the offering container.
3. Before group time, use the tape to create a start line and a finish line in your space.
4. Say: "Today we're going to pretend we're shepherds. An angel just came and told us the good news: Jesus has been born in Bethlehem! We need to hurry and see Him in the manger where He was placed!"
5. Instruct the kids to line up behind the "start" tape line.
6. On "Go!" encourage the kids to run, hop, or skip across the space to the "manger" (finish line).
7. Play several rounds with different motions: walk like sheep, crawl, tiptoe, hop with joy, etc.
8. Celebrate when everyone reaches the "manger" together.

## ② What You Say

"Great job, shepherds! You hurried to see the good news, just like the shepherds in our Bible Story. Today we're going to hear how Jesus was born in Bethlehem. God didn't announce the news to kings or rich people first; He told shepherds out in the fields. And the shepherds were so excited that they ran to see Jesus.

"Just like the shepherds, we get to celebrate and share the good news too, because **[Bottom Line]** Jesus is the greatest gift! God sent us Jesus because He loves us so much! **[Transition]** Let's head to Large Group to hear the whole story."

**Transition** → Lead your group to the Large Group area.

K-1st

Small Group

December — Week 3

GROUPS 1/4

# Breaking News: Jesus Is Born!\*



Bible Story Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- No supplies needed
- Optional: simple props like a baby doll for baby Jesus, a staff for the shepherds, and white robes for the angels

## ① What You Do

1. Gather the kids and explain that they are going to act out the Bible Story together.
2. Assign roles: Mary, Joseph, angels, and shepherds
3. Narrate the story in simple chunks from Luke 2:1–20, prompting kids to act it out:
  - Mary and Joseph traveling to Bethlehem
  - Jesus being born and placed in the manger
  - An angel appearing to the shepherds and announcing that Jesus had been born
  - Other angels appearing to the shepherds and praising God
  - Shepherds running to see Jesus
  - Shepherds seeing Jesus
  - Shepherds telling everyone the good news as they returned
4. Switch roles if time allows, so more kids get to play different roles.

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## GROUPS 1/4

# Breaking News: Jesus Is Born!\*

## Bible Story Review

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- Optional: simple props like a baby doll for baby Jesus, a staff for the shepherds, and white robes for the angels



## ② What You Say

“Wow, you all did such a great job acting out this amazing story! Let’s think about what we just saw.”

“Mary and Joseph had to travel all the way to Bethlehem, even though Mary was going to have a baby. There wasn’t even a guest room for them, so Jesus was born in a place where animals stayed. That doesn’t sound like the way a king should arrive, does it? But God’s plan was perfect. Jesus was born in a way that showed He came for everyone, not just important or rich people, but for all of us.

“And who were the first people to hear the news? Shepherds! Not kings, not queens, not powerful rulers. Just regular, ordinary shepherds out in the fields. But God wanted them to know that Jesus was for them too. The angels filled the sky with singing, and the shepherds were so excited that they ran to Bethlehem to see Jesus. And when they saw Him, they couldn’t keep it to themselves. They told everyone they met the good news: The Savior has been born!

“God loves us so much that He worked for years and years throughout history to bring a Rescuer for all people! God wants us to be His close friends, but we couldn’t be close to Him because we were under the curse of sin. But God loves us too much to leave things that way! So He sent us a Rescuer, who would pay for sin and break that curse—Jesus. The angels knew that the news was so good that they couldn’t help praising God! The shepherds knew the news was so good, they told everyone they could! God loves us so much, He sent a Savior!

“And guess what? We get to be like the shepherds. We get to celebrate Jesus and share the good news with others. **[Bottom Line]** Jesus is the greatest gift. God loves us so much, He sent us a Savior!

“Remember the real reason we celebrate at Christmas: God gave us the greatest gift—His Son, Jesus!”

GROUPS 3/4

# Echo the Good News



## Memory Verse Activity

### Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

### What You Need

- Bibles marked at Luke 2:11

### Inclusive Supplies

- Index cards  
 Marker



### Inclusive Pro Tips

Use the marker to write each word of “A Savior has been born to you” on an index card. If a child has speech or language challenges, show these cards, and encourage kids to echo with a motion or point to the card with the words of the key portion of the Memory Verse on them.

When doing “jump with each word,” give alternatives like clap, tap your knees, or wiggle your fingers.

## ① What You Do

1. Help kids open their Bibles to Luke 2:11 and point to the verse so they can follow along.

### \*Finding verses with Kindergarteners

- ① Guide children to open their Bibles to the marked page.
- ② Point to the book name at the top of the page as you say it aloud.
- ③ Guide them to find the big number on the page—this is the chapter number.
- ④ Guide them to look under the big number for the little number; this is the verse number. Tell them to leave their finger on the verse as you read it aloud.
- ⑤ Lead everyone to say the verse together.

### \*Finding verses with 1st graders

- ① Guide them to open their Bibles to the front and find the table of contents. *Hold up a Bible opened to the table of contents to show the kids what the page looks like.*
- ② When the kids find the table of contents, lead them to find the name of the book in the list. You can help by pointing out the first few letters of the book’s name.
- ③ When the kids find the book, lead them to look at the page number beside it. Explain that the number tells them on what page they can find that book. Help the kids find the page.
- ④ When they find the book, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. Help them find the right chapter.
- ⑤ When they find the chapter, explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Help them find the correct verse in that chapter.

2. Pair the kids up and have them stand facing each other.
3. Say: “You’re going to take turns being the angel and a shepherd. First, we’ll have the angel say the good news, and then the shepherd will echo it back!”
4. Call out each phrase of the verse for the angels to say first, then the shepherds echo: (The NIV and NIV of Luke 2:11 are identical, except for punctuation, so this verse breakdown will work for either translation.)
  - “Today in the town of David”
  - “A Savior has been born to you”
  - “He is the Messiah”
  - “The Lord.”
  - “Luke 2:11”

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GROUPS 3/4

# Echo the Good News



## Memory Verse Activity

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### Inclusive Pro Tips

Use the marker to write each word of “A Savior has been born to you” on an index card. If a child has speech or language challenges, show these cards, and encourage kids to echo with a motion or point to the card with the words of the key portion of the Memory Verse on them.

When doing “jump with each word,” give alternatives like clap, tap your knees, or wiggle your fingers.

5. After one full run-through, instruct the kids to switch roles so both kids get to be the angel and a shepherd.
6. Repeat several times, each round using a different style, such as:
  - Whisper voice
  - Cheerful voice
  - Jump with each word
  - Super-serious voice
7. End by gathering back together in a circle.

## ② What You Say

“Awesome job echoing the good news! The shepherds were the very first ones to hear these words from the angel, and they didn’t keep it to themselves. They passed it along to others, kind of like you just did with your partner.

“This verse tells us exactly why Christmas is such a big deal. God kept His promise because He loves us, and Jesus was born! And just like the shepherds, we can share this good news with everyone. Jesus is good news for all people—for your friends, your family, and even for you. That’s why we practice this verse: so we can remember it and tell others that the Savior has been born!”

## 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
- Crayons or markers



## ① What You Do

1. Gather the kids together in a circle.
2. Say: "We learned today that [Bottom Line] Jesus is the greatest gift. At Christmas, some people might think about toys, games, or presents, but none of those things last forever. Jesus is the gift that lasts forever, and He came for everyone!"
3. Invite kids to close their eyes and think of one thing they want to thank God for this Christmas. Maybe it's family, friends, or something they're excited about. Then ask them to also thank God for the greatest gift, Jesus.
4. Give 30 seconds of quiet reflection.
5. Close in prayer.

## ② What You Say

"Dear God, thank You for Christmas and for all the good things You give us. But most of all, thank You for the greatest gift of all, Jesus. Thank You that You sent us a Rescuer, just like You promised. Thank You that He came to show us Your love and to make a way for anyone who wants to be close to You. Please help us celebrate Jesus this Christmas more than anything else. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

**Transition** → As adults arrive to pick up, encourage the kids to share with them that Jesus is the greatest gift. Remind the kids to say: "We learned that [**Bottom Line**] Jesus is the greatest gift, and He came for everyone!" Encourage kids to tell their grown-ups that, just like the shepherds shared the good news, they can celebrate Jesus and share His love too.

### Inclusive Pro Tips



Instead of praying silently, give options for the kids to write or doodle to God quietly.