

A colorful illustration of a nativity scene. In the foreground, Mary is shown in profile, looking down at the baby Jesus who is lying in a wooden manger filled with yellow straw. Joseph is standing to the right, looking on. A white lamb is in the bottom left corner. In the background, a donkey and a camel are visible. A lantern hangs from the ceiling, and a city is visible in the distance under a starry night sky.

OR

CHRISTMAS BONUS SESSION

KIDS  
**WORSHIP GUIDE**



the **GOSPEL**PROJECT.

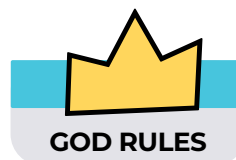




# THE GOSPEL

## GOD'S PLAN FOR US

The gospel is the good news, the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use these prompts to share the gospel with your kids.



Ask: "Who is in charge at home?" Explain that because God created everything, He is in charge of everything. Read Revelation 4:11.



Ask: "Have you ever done something wrong?" Tell kids that everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin separates us from God. Read Romans 3:23.



Explain that God is holy and must punish sin. God sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment we deserve. Read John 3:16.



Ask: "What is the best gift you've ever received?" Say that Jesus took our punishment for sin by giving His life, and He gives us His righteousness. God sees us as if we lived the perfect life Jesus lived. This is the best gift ever! Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.



Explain that everyone has a choice to make. Ask: "Will you trust Jesus as your Savior and Lord? You can turn from self and sin and turn to Jesus." Read Romans 10:9-10.



CHRISTMAS BONUS SESSION

# JESUS IS OUR GREATEST GIFT

MATTHEW 1; LUKE 2



**CHRIST CONNECTION:** The birth of Jesus was good news! Jesus was not an ordinary baby. He is God's Son, sent to earth from heaven. Jesus, the promised Savior, came into the world to show us what God is like and to deliver us from sin and death.

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Why does sin separate us from God? Because God is holy, sin has broken our relationship with God.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Psalm 34:17

**EXPECTED RESPONSE:** Praise



## PREPARE

### PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

## PLAN the Session

1. Read the Leader Bible Study and review the session plan.
2. Check out the session-by-session training available on Ministry Grid.
3. Pray for yourself, your group, and the other leaders and kids in your ministry.

## LEADER Bible Study

Our familiarity with the story of God's entrance into humanity often causes us to lose sight of the glorious reality of the incarnation. Like the darkness of creation before God spoke the light into existence, our world is darkened by sin, and the birth of Christ ushers in a world of light. As you prepare for your time with kids this week, don't let the familiar threads of the story rob you of the wonder of what God has done.

**Jesus' entrance into the world shows the character of God.** The circumstances surrounding the birth of Christ often surprise us. Jesus was born to poor parents from a small town. He was born and swaddled in a stable surrounded by farm animals. This humble birth demonstrates the kind of King He came to be. Jesus is a humble, servant king who cares for all people no matter their social station in life.

**God fulfilled His promise to rescue us from sin.** Jesus came into the world to fulfill God's promise that went all the way back to the garden of Eden. After the deception of the serpent and the infection of sin, God promised that though sin had broken people's hearts and had hurt His creation, one day a Savior would come and destroy sin and death forever. He would undo the curse of sin and make all things new.

**We can praise God for the greatest gift of all.** A right response to God's work in the world is praise and thanksgiving. He has provided everything we need for salvation and citizenship in His kingdom. With the birth of the infant Savior, all of humanity now has the opportunity to be set free from bondage to sin. Through faith we are no longer under the power of sin but have the freedom to walk in abundant life.

As you teach kids this week, encourage them to try to hear the story of Jesus' birth as if for the first time. Find out what surprises them about this narrative. As they enjoy all that the Christmas season has to offer, invite them to step back and consider how they have already been offered the greatest gift of all: Jesus. The question we all must answer is this: will we receive from God what He has so graciously offered us?



## PREPARE

### THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



## LEARN

### 20-30 MINUTES

Teach kids how and why we worship



## LOVE

### 25-30 MINUTES

Lead kids to love God by worshiping Him



## LIVE

### 10 MINUTES

Lead kids to live worshipful lives for God



## PREPARE

FOR THE SESSION

## GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



### LEARN

#### Countdown

- ☐ countdown video

#### Worship through Music

- ☐ "Confidence of Our Hope," "God Redeems," or other high-energy worship songs of your choosing

#### Introduction and Big Picture Question

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

#### Tell the Bible Story

- ☐ "Jesus Is Our Greatest Gift" video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster

#### Group Demonstration

- ☐ rock
- ☐ small bag of dirt
- ☐ plastic gold coins
- ☐ photo of a mansion
- ☐ boxes, 2
- ☐ gift wrap
- ☐ gift wrap bows
- ☐ paper bags, 2



### LOVE

#### Group Activity

- ☐ balloons, 6-8

#### Respond in Worship

- ☐ "This is My God," "Jesus, You're All I Need," or other slower worship songs of your choosing
- ☐ offering basket or collection box (optional)



### LIVE

#### Key Passage

- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ "He Rescues Them (Psalm 34:17)" song

#### Additional Activity

- ☐ hula hoops, 10-15



LEARN

## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

# LEARN through Worship

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### 1 COUNTDOWN

Show the countdown video as your kids arrive, and set it to end as worship time begins.

### 2 WORSHIP THROUGH MUSIC (5–10 min.)

Choose a few high-energy worship songs—such as “Confidence of Our Hope” or “God Redeems”—to sing with your group of kids. Lead motions enthusiastically and encourage kids to join you. Between songs, help the kids think through what it means to worship God and why we often use music to help us do so. Take time to talk the kids through any lyrics that might be challenging to understand.

### 3 INTRODUCTION AND BIG PICTURE QUESTION (3 min.)

**SAY** “ I’m so glad to see you all today! I hope you brought your Bible because we’re diving in to the story of God fulfilling His promise to save us from our sin. But before we get started, I want to know the best gift you’ve ever been given. [Allow responses.] Those are all wonderful gifts! Did you know that we have already been given the greatest gift of all time? It’s true! Jesus is the greatest gift we could ever receive.

Our big picture question is, **why does sin separate us from God?** Let’s say the answer together. **Because God is holy, sin has broken our relationship with God.** But, even when our relationship with Him was broken, God had a plan to provide someone to rescue all of humanity from sin. All along, God planned to send the Rescuer into the world—His own Son. The time had finally come for God’s rescue plan to be put into action. But the Son of God wouldn’t come down from the clouds or simply appear out of thin air. Instead, God Himself would take on human flesh as a baby. **GOD’S SON, JESUS, WAS BORN IN BETHLEHEM,** and He deserves our praise!

If we want to read about Jesus being born, what part of the Bible should we turn to? [Allow responses.] That’s right, the four Gospels work together to tell the story of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. In fact, the whole Bible fits together to tell the larger story of how God is at work in the world He has made. We read the Bible because it tells us what is true about God and ourselves. We know that God loves us because He sent Jesus into the world to save us. ”





## LEARN

### THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

#### 4 TELL THE BIBLE STORY (10 min.)

Open your Bible to Matthew 1; Luke 2. Tell the Bible story using the script provided, or flesh out the “Kids Sermon Outline” in the margin to teach a more in depth message. You may choose to play the Bible story video “Jesus Is Our Greatest Gift.” Use bold text to retell or review the story.

#### JESUS IS OUR GREATEST GIFT

“ Mary was engaged to be married to Joseph. One day, an angel told Mary she was going to have a very special baby. The angel explained, “This baby will be God’s Son.” Then an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream. The angel said, “Don’t be afraid to take Mary as your wife. Her baby was put there by the Holy Spirit. Name Him Jesus because He will save His people from their sins!” This was amazing news! Jesus—God in the flesh—would come as a light into the dark world.

Mary and Joseph lived in the town of Nazareth. During the time Mary was pregnant, the Roman emperor, Caesar Augustus, announced that everyone needed to return to their own towns and be registered for a census. Since Joseph was a descendant of King David, he and Mary traveled to Bethlehem, the city of David. While they were there, the time came for Mary to have her baby. Mary and Joseph looked for a safe place to stay, but every place was full. So Mary and Joseph found a place where animals were kept, and that is where Mary had her baby. Joseph named Him Jesus. Mary wrapped the baby tightly in cloth and laid Him in a feeding trough.

That night, some shepherds were watching over their sheep in the fields near Bethlehem. Suddenly, an angel stood before them and the glory of the Lord shone around them. They were terrified! The angel said, “Don’t be afraid! I have very good news for you and for all the people: Today a Savior, who is the Messiah and the Lord, was born for you in the city of David.” Then the angel said, “You will find a baby wrapped tightly in cloth and lying in a manger.”

Suddenly, a whole army of angels appeared, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to people He favors!”

When the angels left and returned to heaven, the shepherds decided to go straight to Bethlehem to see what had happened. They hurried to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph and the baby, who was lying in the feeding trough. Then the shepherds went and told others about the baby Jesus. Everyone who heard about Jesus was amazed. Mary thought about everything that was happening and tried to understand it. The shepherds returned to their fields, praising God because everything had happened just as the angel said. ”

#### KIDS SERMON OUTLINE

**Jesus’ entrance into the world shows the character of God (Luke 2:1-7):** God’s Son came into the world as a humble, servant King.

**God fulfilled His promise to rescue us from sin (Luke 2:11-12):** God’s promised Messiah was born.

**We can praise God for the greatest gift of all (Luke 2:13-20):** Both the angels and the shepherds praised God.



## LEARN

### THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

#### 5 CHRIST CONNECTION

**SAY** “What did you hear? Did anything surprise you? God’s Son, Jesus, was born in Bethlehem. The birth of Jesus was good news! Jesus was not an ordinary baby. He is God’s Son, sent to earth from heaven. **[Read Luke 2:6-7.]** Does it surprise you that Jesus—the King of kings—was born in such a humble place? **[Allow responses.]** God shows us something about His character in the way He came into the world. He cares about all people, whether they’re rich or poor. Jesus came to be a humble king who serves. Jesus, the promised Savior, came into the world to show us what God is like and to deliver us from sin and death.

Sin is when we do, say, or think things that go against is God’s best for us. Sin disconnects us from God, and we can’t do anything to fix it. We can’t work hard enough or be good enough to earn our salvation. But here’s the good news: God loves us even when we don’t love Him. God made us; we are His children, and we belong to Him. You can’t do, say, or think enough bad things to make God stop loving you. Need more proof? Listen to this! **[Read John 3:16.]** ”

#### 6 GROUP DEMONSTRATION (5 min.)

Prior to the session, place a rock and a handful of dirt in two separate boxes and wrap them in beautiful wrapping paper and bows. Place gold coins and a photo of a mansion in two crumpled up paper bags. Display the four wrapped gifts. Ask four volunteers to come to the front. Invite one of them to choose a gift to open. Ask why they chose that one. Let them open it, then allow the other volunteers to choose a gift to open.

**SAY** “Were you surprised to find rocks and dirt wrapped so nicely? Was it unexpected that the gold coins came in a crumpled paper bag? **[Allow responses.]** Sometimes the outward appearance might be deceiving. What did we hear in our story today? **[Ask a kid to summarize the Bible story.]** God Himself came into the world by taking on a human body. Jesus is fully God and also fully human. You may have heard this story many times, but when you stop to think about it, it’s truly shocking that the God who created the heavens and the earth would be born in such a humble place. Where would you expect the King of kings to be born? **[Allow responses.]** God kept His promise to send the Rescuer into the world. Here was the King God’s people had been anticipating for generations, born to poor parents in a stable surrounded by farm animals and shaggy shepherds.

Jesus came into the world to fulfill God’s promise that went all the way back to the garden of Eden. Do you remember the story of Adam and Eve’s first sin? Listen to what God said to the snake after he tempted Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit. **[Read Genesis 3:15.]**

In that moment God promised that, even though sin had broken people’s hearts and had hurt His creation, one day a Savior would come and destroy sin and death forever. He would undo the curse of sin and make everything new. God renewed this promise when He spoke to Abraham many years later. **[Read Genesis 12:2-3.]** God keeps His promises. Abraham’s family would be the ones through whom the Messiah, or Rescuer, would come. Many generations later, Jesus was born into the family of Abraham. Jesus was born as a baby—fully human, and at the same time fully God. ”





LOVE

THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

## LOVE with Worship

### 1 DISCUSSION (10 min.)

Consider forming smaller groups to discuss the following deep questions. Encourage kids to be honest about their feelings and help them learn to process them in healthy ways.

1. What did we discover about God in this passage? God loves us so much that He sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to be the ultimate and final sacrifice for our sin. Jesus was born to humble people in a humble place, demonstrating that He cares about all people no matter their social status, wealth, power, or fame. Jesus came for everyone.
2. We can praise God for giving us the greatest gift: Jesus. What are some other responses you had when you heard this story? Maybe you felt amazed or confused that Jesus would be born in a stable. Provide a safe place for kids to discuss their emotions. Explain that God already knows how we feel and wants us to be honest with Him about what is on our minds as we look to follow His direction for our lives.
3. What are some ways a person might praise God? There are many ways to praise God. People can praise Him through singing, dancing, serving, silent prayer, or praying with others. Praising God is one way to thank Him for His blessings to us.
4. Can you think of other times you have felt those feelings? Would anyone like to share their stories? Help kids talk through other situations where they praised God, felt confused, amazed, or another emotion mentioned in the first question. Be prepared with examples from your own life.
5. How can we receive the gift God offers us in Jesus? Paul tells us in his letter to the Romans how to accept this invitation. "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved...Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (Romans 10:9-13)." We don't have to jump through hoops or say a complicated prayer. We just need to tell God that we need His help, and we want to follow Him. He forgives us and heals our hearts.

After the kids have had time to discuss, direct their attention back to the main worship leader for the group activity. If you formed smaller groups, you may choose to re-gather as a larger group depending on your ministry context.

### 2 RESPOND THROUGH PRAYER (3 min.)

**SAY** "God showed us how much He loves us by sending Jesus into the world. God knows that sin has broken our hearts, and He hasn't left us this way. He has offered us a way to be in relationship with Him through His Son, Jesus. He loves us so much that He wants to set us free and give us the life He created us to live. We can trust God and give Him our hearts to heal and restore. Let's pray and praise God for the gift of Jesus. [Offer the kids some time of quiet reflection and prayer.]"

### 3 GROUP ACTIVITY: BALLOON SCRAMBLE (5-10 min.)

**SAY** "We've learned so much in our Bible story today. Let's play a game to help us remember an important truth from God's Word."

Instruct the kids to scatter over the playing area and toss a balloon or beach ball into the air. The objective is to keep the balloon in the air using any part of the body. Once one balloon is up, add two or three more balloons to the game. Encourage the kids to keep count of the number of times the balloons are kept up in the air before hitting the ground. Challenge the kids to keep the balloons up longer with each round.



## THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

**SAY** “ You had to work hard to make sure the balloons didn’t touch the ground. Trying to keep all those balloons up is a bit like trying to be perfect by obeying all the rules all the time. It’s exhausting! None of us can be perfect. At some point, we will all fail. Our situation seems hopeless. How can we be right with God if it’s impossible for us to be perfect? That’s the good news of the gospel. Jesus Christ came to be for us what we cannot be for ourselves. He lived a life of perfect obedience to God. He never sinned, not even once. And when we come to Him with faith, He gives us His perfection. He shares His righteousness with us so we can be close to God, no longer tied down by our sin.

Do you remember how Paul said we can be saved? **[Read Romans 10:9.]** We don’t have to do a lot of good things to earn God’s love. We simply confess with our mouths that Jesus is truly in control, and His death was enough to pay for our sin. His life is sufficient to give us eternal life with God. This is the amazing truth that we celebrate at Christmas. Jesus came into the world to be our greatest gift, God’s fulfillment of His promise to bring us out of the darkness of sin and into the light of His wonderful love. ”

### 4 RESPOND IN WORSHIP (3 min.)

Choose slower worship songs—such as “This is My God” or “Jesus, You’re All I Need”—that will help your kids reflect on the concepts they have learned about during this session. Encourage kids to respond however they feel God leading them, whether in prayer, quiet thought, or song.

**SAY** “ Jesus came into the world to be living proof of God’s immense love for us. Jesus came to live the perfect life we can’t live. **Why does sin separate us from God? Because God is holy, sin has broken our relationship with God.** Jesus died on the cross for us. And He defeated death when He rose from the dead. Jesus has won the battle against sin and evil. He has done all the work and offers us an invitation to experience life with God as His brothers and sisters. God is worthy of our worship and gratitude for everything He has done for us. Let’s worship God together now. ”

As you continue playing music, allow the kids a few minutes to pass an offering basket, bring offerings to a collections box, or collect offerings in another way.



## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

### LIVE in Worship

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#### 1 KEY PASSAGE (5 min.)

**SAY** “David wrote this Psalm years before Jesus was born. David understood that only God can rescue us from our troubles. We know that Jesus was born to live the perfect life and die on the cross. God used Jesus’ death and resurrection to bring about life for everyone who decides to follow Him. That’s the ultimate example of God’s rescue!”

Read Psalm 34:17 and encourage the kids to read along. Display the Key Passage Poster for kids to read. You may also sing the key passage song, “He Rescues Them (Psalm 34:17).”

#### 2 APPLICATION (2 min.)

Spend some time following up with the kids to see if they were able to complete the application challenges from the previous session. Encourage each kid for his or her efforts, and remind kids to keep seeking ways to worship God each day.

**SAY** “Today we heard that God’s Son, Jesus, was born in Bethlehem, and He deserves our praise. Let’s try this new challenge until we are together again. This is a busy season with Christmas right around the corner. In the midst of the busyness, find some quiet time this week to spend with God. Think about the ways He has provided for you physically and spiritually. Remember that through Jesus you have the opportunity to be part of God’s kingdom. Spend time this week praising Him for this incredible gift!”

#### 3 PRAYER AND ANNOUNCEMENTS (2 min.)

**SAY** “Father, we are incredibly thankful for this Christmas season. Help us remember that Your greatest gift to us is Jesus. Lead us to respond to You with praise and thanksgiving for everything You have given us. Thank You for everything You have done for us. Amen.”

Make any announcements from your kids’ ministry before dismissing. If there’s significant time between dismissal and pick-up, consider using the additional activity to keep the kids engaged. You may also substitute the additional activity for the group activity.





## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

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### ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

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#### HULA HOOP FREEZE TAG

Set up hula hoops throughout the play area. Choose one kid to be It. Play a game of tag in which the kids are safe from being tagged when they stand in the hula hoops. Kids may only stand in a hoop for 10 seconds before continuing to run. When a kid is tagged, they are frozen until they are un-tagged by another player.

**SAY** “ What a fun game! You were only safe in the hoops for 10 seconds before you had to keep running. Let’s think about the way Jesus saves us. No tagging is necessary, and thankfully, when Jesus saves us, we’re safe for all eternity, not just a few seconds. How can we respond to this gift? **[Allow responses.]** Do you remember how the shepherds responded after they saw Jesus in the manger? Let’s read and find out. **[Read Luke 2:16-18; 20.]** The shepherds went to see Jesus and they went away praising God. He had kept His promise to send the Rescuer into the world. Here was the king God’s people had been anticipating for generations, and some of the first people to see Him were tired shepherds who had been living out in the fields. They were pretty low on the social ladder in those days, but God wanted to share His gift with everyone, not just powerful or wealthy people. And the shepherds give us an example of an appropriate response: praise for what God has done! ”