



CHRISTMAS BONUS SESSION

YOUNGER KIDS LEADER GUIDE

CHRISTMAS BONUS SESSION

JESUS IS OUR RESCUER

LUKE 2



KEY PASSAGE: 1 Corinthians 10:31

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How can we glorify God? We can glorify God by loving Him and obeying Him.

CHRIST CONNECTION: The angels told the shepherds the birth of Jesus was good news for all the people. Anyone who believes the good news that Jesus lived, died, and rose again for their sin will be saved.

STORY POINT: Jesus is the promised Messiah who came from heaven to rescue us from sin.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

The announcement of the birth of Jesus came in a completely unexpected way. Instead of announcing the birth of the Savior in the halls of power or the seats of religion, God chose for a group of shepherds on the outskirts of Bethlehem to be the first to hear of Christ's birth. The announcement from angels to the shepherds watching over their flocks was significant not only because of the message they gave, but also for the people to whom it was given.

Shepherds spent their days on the fringes of society taking care of animals. Living on the outskirts made it difficult for these men to make it to synagogue and participate in the daily spiritual life of their community. Because these men constantly worked with livestock and were regularly exposed to manure and dead animals, they would have been considered unclean according to Jewish law.

It was no accident that God chose often overlooked and outcast shepherds as the ones to whom the angels would give the announcement of Jesus' birth. This announcement was a powerful statement about the nature of the kingdom of God. God's kingdom is for all people, and no one is outside of God's plan to know of His love.

The long expected announcement was remarkable. Jesus had been born for all people in the city of David. Three significant titles are used here to describe why that is good news for all people. First, Jesus is the Savior—the one who rescues people from sin. Next, He is the Messiah, the anointed one of God who came to lead God's people into God's kingdom. Finally, He is the Lord, the ruler of all the universe.

The shepherds' response to this glorious news included curiosity, awe, and obedience. This Christmas, may we do everything we can to see Jesus, adore Him for who He is, and boldly proclaim the truth that Jesus is Savior, Messiah, and the Lord.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10-15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25-30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING 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.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- ☐ "Match It" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- ☐ wrapping bows, 20–30
- ☐ spatulas, 2
- ☐ blindfolds, 2
- ☐ bowls, 2
- ☐ timer



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set (optional)



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ boxes, 2
- ☐ wrapping paper
- ☐ index cards, 28

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ cardstock, 1 sheet per kid
- ☐ dry erase board and marker (optional)

Reflection and Prayer

- ☐ Bible story coloring page



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- ☐ countdown video
- ☐ Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- ☐ Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- ☐ "Jesus Is Our Rescuer" video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster
- ☐ Christmas hymn (optional)

Key Passage Activity

- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ "For the Glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31)" song
- ☐ worship song of your choice (optional)
- ☐ note cards
- ☐ bowls, 2
- ☐ wrapping bows



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

SAY “What does it mean to rescue someone? Have you ever heard of someone being rescued? When?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Match It” activity page.

SAY “Today, we will learn that Jesus was born to rescue us from sin.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: RESCUE THE BOWS

Form kids into two teams. Invite each team to sit at a separate table. Distribute 20–30 wrapping bows on the table and place a bowl on the table. Place a blindfold on a kid on each team. Provide the blindfolded kids with a spatula. Then challenge the kids to use the spatula to place as many bows in the bowl as they can in 20 seconds. Count to see which team “rescued” the most bows and award that team a point. Pour the bows back on the table. Repeat, until every kid has a turn. The team with the most points wins.

SAY “Great job trying to rescue as many bows as you could! Today, we will learn about a rescue plan that is so much greater. We’ll see how **JESUS IS THE PROMISED MESSIAH WHO CAME FROM HEAVEN TO RESCUE US FROM SIN.**”

☐ OPTION 2: GLORY! HALLELUJAH!



Form kids into two teams. Designate one team as the angels and the other team as the shepherds. Lead each team to line up on opposite sides of the room. Number each kid on each team, trying to give each team the same number of kids. If teams do not have the same number of kids, assign a kid two numbers. Call out a number such as “three.” Kids on each team who were assigned the number three will run to the middle of the room. The angel will shout “Glory to God” and the shepherd will shout “Hallelujah.” The first kid to make it back to their team earns a point. Continue playing, calling out different numbers each time. The team with the most points wins.

SAY “The word hallelujah means ‘praise the Lord.’ Today, we will hear how angels praised God and said, ‘Glory to God,’ while announcing the good news of Jesus’ birth to shepherds watching their sheep. We’ll see how the shepherds were amazed at what they had seen and heard and also praised God.”





LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “ My name is [your name], and I’m so glad you’re here as we learn about the exciting news of Jesus’ birth. Today, we’ll be in the book of Luke 2. Did you bring your Bible? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.] Is Luke in the Old Testament or New Testament? [Allow responses.] Luke is in the New Testament and is one of the four Gospel books.

Today, we’ll learn that **JESUS IS THE PROMISED MESSIAH WHO CAME FROM HEAVEN TO RESCUE US FROM SIN.** [Display the Story Point Poster.] We need a Savior because we are sinners. God kept His promise to send Jesus, the Savior, into the world to rescue us from sin. Let’s prepare our hearts to hear God’s Word. ‘Dear God, thank You for keeping Your promise to send Jesus into the world. Help us hear Your truth with hearts that long to know You and worship You. Amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “ Our big picture question is, **How can we glorify God?** What is the answer? [Allow responses.] **We can glorify God by loving Him and obeying Him.**

God deserves all the glory and praise. He loved us so much that He made the way for our sin to be forgiven so we can be made right with Him. Today, we’ll see how God sent Jesus into the world to save us from sin. Jesus is the only way to be saved. Those who trust in Jesus desire to love God, obey Him, and glorify Him. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “ Throughout the Old Testament, God repeated His promise to send the Messiah into the world. From Genesis to Malachi, God’s prophets wrote down God’s promise and told the people to hope in the coming Messiah. Hundreds of years passed, and God’s people were waiting on the promise to come true. But God is never late. He knew the exact right time for the Messiah to be born. Today, we will see how God sent Jesus to be born in Bethlehem so people can be rescued from their sin. ”



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Luke 2. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Jesus Is Our Rescuer.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

JESUS IS OUR RESCUER

“An order went out that each person in the Roman Empire should go to his own town to be counted. So, Joseph went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was from the family line of David. Mary, who was engaged to Joseph and was pregnant, traveled with him.

While they were in Bethlehem, she gave birth to her firstborn son. There was no guest room available for them, so she wrapped him tightly in cloth and laid him in a manger.

Some shepherds were out watching their sheep in the fields nearby. An angel of the Lord stood before them, and glory shone all around them. They were terrified! But the angel said, “Don’t be afraid! I’m here to tell you good news of great joy for all the people. Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you. He is the Messiah, the Lord. You will know you have found him when you see a baby wrapped tightly in cloth and lying in a manger.”

Then many angels appeared, and they all began praising God. They said, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to people he favors!”

When the angels had left, the shepherds said, “Let’s go to Bethlehem right away to see what the Lord has told us through the angels!”

The shepherds hurried and found Mary, Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. They shared what they had heard from the angels, and everyone was amazed. Then the shepherds returned to their fields, glorifying and praising God for all they had seen and heard that day.

Christ Connection: The angels told the shepherds the birth of Jesus was good news for all the people. Anyone who believes the good news that Jesus lived, died, and rose again for their sin will be saved.”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Play Christmas music: As you tell the story, quietly play a Christmas hymn or gospel-centered carol.

Shout it: Invite kids to shout “Glory to God” when you share how the angels said these words.



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem because of a census (a counting of the people) ordered by Caesar Augustus. When they arrived, there was no guest room available for them. Where was Jesus laid after He was born? **[Allow responses.]** Jesus was placed in a manger. The manger was a feeding trough for animals. Though He is the Son of God, Jesus was born in a lowly place, showing that He would be a King who is humble. He is a King who came to give His life to save people from sin.

Shepherds were in the fields, watching over their sheep, when an angel appeared to them. What did the angel tell the shepherds? **[Allow responses.]** The angel told them that a Savior had been born—Christ the Lord! **JESUS IS THE PROMISED MESSIAH WHO CAME FROM HEAVEN TO RESCUE US FROM SIN!** Then many angels appeared, praising God and declaring peace to those who trust in Jesus. Anyone can trust in Jesus to be saved from sin and made right with God.

The shepherds hurried to find Jesus. What did the shepherds do after they saw Jesus? **[Allow responses.]** They worshiped him and told others the good news. The shepherds praised God for all they had seen and heard. Jesus’ birth was not just an ordinary event—it was God’s plan to save us. Because of sin, we are separated from God, but Jesus came to take away our sins and bring us back to God. Just as the shepherds shared the good news, we are also called to tell others that Jesus is the Savior! ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ The angels told the shepherds the birth of Jesus was good news for all the people. Anyone who believes the good news that Jesus lived, died, and rose again for their sin will be saved. Have you trusted in Jesus as your Savior? ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)

4 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Before the session, write the words of the key passage on individual note cards. Stick a card to a wrapping paper bow. Create two sets and place each set in a bowl. Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud 1 Corinthians 10:31 together.

SAY “ The angels gave glory to God because Jesus, the Savior, had come. In everything we do, we can glorify God, knowing He has made the way to save us from sin. ”

On your start, direct a kid from each team to race to their team’s bowl, retrieve a bow, and return to his team. The the next kid on the team will do the same. Continue until all bows have been retrieved. Then guide teams to turn the bows over to identify the key passage words and quickly place the key passage in order. The first team to place it in order wins.

Lead kids to sing “For the Glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

5 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “Dear God, thank You for sending Jesus into the world to rescue us from sin. We praise You and glorify You for how You love us. Jesus is the greatest gift we could ever receive. Amen.”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the New Testament Israel Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Luke 2. Explain that Luke is one of the four Gospel books that tells the stories of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Tell kids that the author of Luke is the physician Luke, who was a friend of the apostle Paul.

Consider pointing out the town of Bethlehem (15) on the New Testament Israel Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Luke 2:17 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verse aloud.

SAY “ The shepherds were so amazed by what they had seen and heard that they couldn’t keep the good news to themselves. They told others about Jesus and how the angels said He is the Savior. Like the shepherds, we can tell others about Jesus, sharing how He came to earth to save us from sin. The good news of Jesus is too important to keep to ourselves—all people need a Savior! ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ The shepherds were excited to tell others about Jesus after they saw Him. Who can you tell about Jesus? ”

Answers will vary. Remind kids that all people sin and need a Savior. Everyone needs to hear the good news of how Jesus can save people from their sins. We don’t need to be fearful or ashamed of sharing the gospel because God does the work of saving people. We are just called to be obedient and faithful to tell others the truth of salvation.

SAY “ Jesus was laid in a manger, even though He is the Son of God. What does this teach us about being humble and serving others? ”

Tell kids that Jesus is the King of kings, yet He came to earth in a lowly way. Discuss how people in God’s kingdom want to live like King Jesus. We can be humble and think of others as more important than ourselves. Jesus came to serve us by giving His life on the cross. We can serve others by putting their needs before our own.

SAY “ The angels praised God and said, ‘Glory to God in the highest!’ What are some ways you can praise and thank God? ”

Answers will vary. Challenge kids to live out 1 Corinthians 10:31, seeking to glorify God in all they do. Remind kids that God is worthy of all praise because He is the Creator and King. Discuss how we can praise God for salvation through Jesus, His provision and care, and all the many ways God displays His love to us.

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: UNWRAP IT

Before the session, write the words of the story point on individual index cards. Create two sets. Place each set of index cards in a box covered in wrapping paper. Consider wrapping the box in several layers of wrapping paper.

Form kids into two teams and direct each team to sit in a circle. On your start, hand each box to a kid on each team. Direct them to tear a piece of wrapping paper off the box and pass it to the kid on their right, who will do the same. Continue passing the box around the circle, tearing off a piece of paper until the entire box is unwrapped. Then challenge each team to work together to place the story point cards in the correct order. The first team to do so wins.

SAY “ God gave us the greatest gift when He sent Jesus to earth. **JESUS IS THE PROMISED MESSIAH WHO CAME FROM HEAVEN TO RESCUE US FROM SIN!** Salvation is a gift because no one can earn it. Nothing we do can make us right with God. But when we repent of our sins and trust in Jesus, we will be saved. Let’s praise God for this incredible gift! ”

☐ OPTION 2: CHRISTMAS CARD



Provide each kid with a piece of cardstock and markers. Invite kids to create a Christmas card for someone they know who needs to hear the good news of Jesus’ birth. Lead kids to fold the cardstock in half. On the cover, invite kids to draw a picture, such as the nativity or the angels sharing the good news with the shepherds. On the inside, invite kids to write a Bible verse such as Luke 2:11; John 3:16; or Matthew 1:21. Consider writing the verse on a dry erase board for kids to copy. Or guide kids to find the verse in a Bible and copy it. Invite kids to decorate their card with other drawings.

SAY “ Christmas cards are a great way to share the good news about Jesus with others. The Word of God is powerful, and when others read God’s words, the Holy Spirit can use them to help others see their need for Jesus. Pray over your card, asking God to help others trust in Jesus to be saved from their sin. ”

2 REFLECTION AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper and pencil to each kid. Ask kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Who can I tell about this story?

Be sure to send the sheets home with the kids along with the activity pages so parents can continue to discuss the Bible story with their kids. If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page. Pray for your group.

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.