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EARLY CHILDHOOD
LEADER GUIDE—UNIT 7

Flexible curriculum that nurtures
lifelong disciples of Jesus

Enduring Faith Bible Curriculum
can be used during Sunday School,
Midweek programs, small groups,
and homeschool—*any time, any day*
your congregation meets weekly. With
several age levels, the curriculum
supports your church’s members at
whatever stage of life they are to
sustain faith that endures for a lifetime.

LESSON	LESSON TITLE / TEXT
1	An Angel Announces—Jesus’ Birth Foretold <i>Luke 1:26–56</i>
2	Silence before a Son—John Is Born <i>Luke 1:5–25, 57–66</i>
3	The Temple Testimonies—Jesus’ Birth and Presentation <i>Luke 2:1–7, 22–40</i>
4	His Father’s House—Boy Jesus in the Temple <i>Luke 2:41–52</i>
5	The Pointing Prophet—John Points to Jesus <i>Matthew 3; John 1:29–34</i>
6	A Temple Cleansing—Jesus Clears the Temple <i>John 2:13–22</i>
7	The Born-Again Truth—Jesus Teaches Nicodemus <i>John 3:1–21</i>
8	Living Water—Jesus Teaches the Samaritan Woman <i>John 4:1–42</i>
9	The Poolside Sign—Jesus Heals at Bethesda <i>John 5:1–17</i>
10	The Matthew Matter—Jesus Calls Matthew <i>Matthew 9:9–13</i>
11	A Water Wonder—Jesus Walks on Water <i>Matthew 14:22–33</i>
12	A Confident Confession—Peter Confesses Christ SEASONAL (Reformation) <i>Matthew 16:13–23</i>
13	A Mountaintop Wonder—Jesus’ Transfiguration <i>Luke 9:28–36</i>
14	Mission Wonders—Jesus Sends the Seventy-Two <i>Luke 10:1–12, 17–20</i>

EARLY CHILDHOOD
LEADER GUIDE

Unit 7: Jesus Comes for Us



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Lesson 5 finger play: *Wiggle & Wonder*, © 2012 CPH.

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RELIGION / Christian Education /
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First Greek city-states established
900 BC

Iron Age societies develop
in Germany and Austria

800 BC
First recorded Olympic games
in Greece
776 BC

Celts begin to settle in Ireland
500 BC

Work begins on
Great Wall of China
220 BC

Han Dynasty restored in China
AD 23

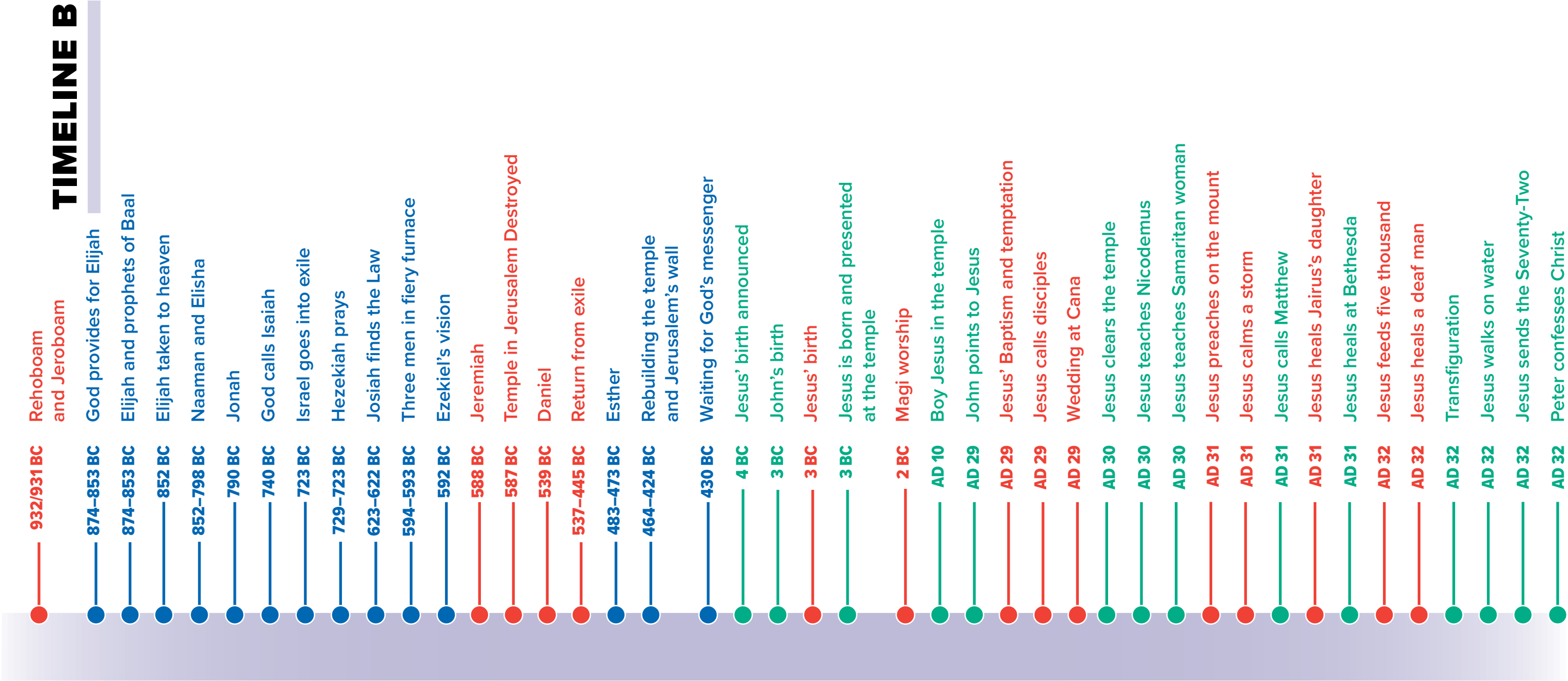
KEY

Bible Survey

Old Testament
Exploration

New Testament
Exploration

World History



ADDITIONAL LEADER HELPS

MAKE YOUR OWN LIBRARY OF CPH RESOURCES

Throughout the teacher preparation sections, we have pointed to some key resources that would be helpful to you as you prepare your lessons. You will also benefit from having some early childhood songbooks and books of finger plays.

The Lutheran Study Bible (CPH, 2009), also referred to as *TLSB*

Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation (CPH, 2017)

Concordia’s Complete Bible Handbook, second edition (CPH, 2013)

Know the Bible Now (CPH, 2016)

Lutheran Service Book (CPH, 2006)

Little Ones Sing Praise (CPH, 1989)

Sing & Wonder (CPH, 2015)

Wiggle & Wonder (CPH, 2012)

ONLINE RESOURCES

Additional resources are available in the online digital resource center at **cph.org/digitalcontent**, including the Planning Guide, Pastor Guide, Unit Planner, Leader Devotions, Lesson Openings, Social Media Helps, and music resources. Ask your coordinator for access to the online digital resource center to get these materials.

MUSIC

Ask your coordinator for access to music from the online digital resource center. Songs are frequently repeated so children can learn them better. Young children love repetition anyway! If you aren’t comfortable teaching children to sing a song, play the music in the background as children enter your classroom or work on projects during the lesson or at the end of class. Together with children, sing along and enjoy God’s Word in song. Consider giving children rhythm instruments or chiffon scarves to use as they sing.

ENDURING FAITH PAGES

Enduring Faith Pages are reproducible take-home resources that summarize each Bible lesson and provide suggestions for “taking home” Bible truths from the lesson. Each page also has an illustrated version of the day’s Bible Verse, perfect for coloring. Ask your coordinator for access to the Enduring Faith Pages from the online digital resource center for copying.

PUPPETS

Preschoolers love little puppet friends and relate well to them. We encourage you to use one! The puppet talks in the Leader Guide are called Buddy Talks, and we call the puppet Buddy, which means “friend,” but you can use whatever name you like. You can find an assortment of puppets for purchase on cph.org.

MAKE THIS YOUR OWN

We recognize that no two classrooms are the same. We hope, however, that we have provided you with a framework of options to share the unchanging Word of God in creative and flexible ways. Choose from the options in the road map of this Leader Guide to make the lessons work best for the children in your setting. Know that we at Concordia Publishing House are praying for you as you do the important work of sharing the precious love of Jesus with His children.

ENDURING FAITH BIBLE CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

The Enduring Faith Bible Curriculum features a Christ-centered, three-year chronological survey of Bible history with uniform outlines across all levels. The materials have been designed to help you teach the Christian faith in age-appropriate ways, with the goal of helping your students grow deeper in their understanding of God’s Word.

- Year 1 is an overview of the Bible and its major themes, tracing God’s plan of salvation from Genesis to Revelation.
- Year 2 looks at the Old Testament in depth.
- Year 3 looks at the New Testament in depth.
- There are three units per year, with fourteen lessons per unit; this allows for a seasonal lesson in each unit. Teachers can choose to teach the seasonal lesson when Thanksgiving, Christmas, or Easter occurs, or disregard it if they wish to stick with the chronology.
- There are four overlapping levels as well as materials for a one-room classroom. Here is a handy chart that shows the focus of the levels and how all the levels connect:

Level	Age Range	Objective	Summary Word
Early Childhood	Preschool through grade 1, nonreaders	Discover the account	Know
Elementary	Grades 1 through 6	Explore the context	Grow
Youth	Grades 6 through 12	Defend the faith	Go
Adult	Grade 11 through adult	Equipped to teach	Show
One-Room Classroom	Preschool through grade 6		

FEATURES OF THE STUDENT MATERIALS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

Discover Leaflet—*You will need one set of leaflets per learner and teacher. Send home the first leaflet in the set, which is addressed to parents, the first week.*

Page 1

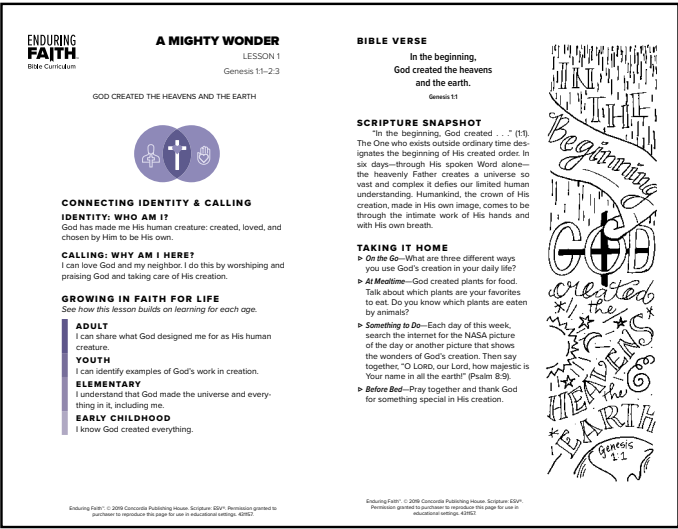
- Bible stories are told in age-appropriate ways, with storytelling suggestions and an open-ended “I wonder” question to engage children in the story.
- Colorful, child-friendly Bible art illustrates the lesson narrative.
- A note to parents also provides a prayer and Bible Verse that parents can say with their child.
- Each leaflet is perforated so page 1 can be separated from page 2 and made into a Bible story book at home.

Page 2

- Two activities are provided on each leaflet: one to review the Bible story to help young children “know” it, and one to apply the story to children’s lives today.

Sticker Pages—*You will need one set of stickers per learner.*

- Colorful stickers can be used for leaflet and craft activities.
- Stickers are perforated into grids by lesson for easy separation.



HOW TO USE THE LEADER GUIDE

OVERVIEW

This section lets you see the biblical foundation of each lesson at a glance. All levels share the same Bible Truth, Bible Verse, Law & Gospel, and Scripture Snapshot, allowing families to learn together. The Learner Goal is unique to each level.

ACTIVE LEARNING

Move gets children moving through games and action rhymes. Children need to use their large muscles to process information. These activities allow for that.

Snack provides themed ideas for snacks. Provide options for those with allergies.

Create gives arts and crafts suggestions that use locally provided materials and stickers from the Sticker Pages. As children make their crafts, reinforce the Learner Goal.

Do not feel like you have to do all these activities. Pick those that work best for your time and class.

BONUS ACTIVITIES

Look here to find a variety of creative ways to complement, add to, or extend the lesson.

PAGE 1 LEADER GUIDE

ENDURING FAITH Sunday School - Midwest Bible Curriculum

EARLY CHILDHOOD Unit 1 LEADER GUIDE Lesson 1

A MIGHTY WONDER

Creation Genesis 1:1-2:3 Beginning of time

OVERVIEW

BIBLE TRUTH God created the heavens and the earth.

BIBLE VERSE In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:1

LEARNER GOAL I know God created everything.

LAW & GOSPEL We forget, or even refuse to believe that God is our Creator and the giver of all good things. God gives us faith to believe that He created the heavens and the earth and that He continues to provide us with all good things, especially life and salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ.

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT "In the beginning, God created..." (1:1). The One who exists outside ordinary time designates the beginning of His created order. In six days—through His spoken Word alone—the heavenly Father creates a universe so vast and complex it defies our limited human understanding. Humankind, the crown of His creation, made in His own image, comes to be through the intimate work of His hands and with His own breath.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read Genesis 1:1–23 and notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

MORE TIME Read "The Beginning," "Genesis," and "God Creates the World" on pages 8–13 of *Know the Bible Now*.

IN DEPTH Review the section "The First Article (Part 1)" in *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* (2017).

SUPPLY LIST

FOR THIS LESSON

- ☐ Nature items & bag
- ☐ Plastic animals, tub & rice
- ☐ Blocks, chocolate chips, art supplies & story bag
- ☐ Ball
- ☐ Animal pictures
- ☐ Fruit & skewers
- ☐ Lunch bags, yarn or pipe cleaners & hole punch
- ☐ Praise wavers

FOR EVERY LESSON

- ☐ Bible, songbook & classroom supplies
- ☐ Copies of *Discover Leaflet*, stickers & music downloads
- ☐ Supplies for bonus activities

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PAGE 4 LEADER GUIDE

ACTIVE LEARNING

☐ MOVE Show pictures of animals (e.g., a fish, bird, dog, elephant). Have the children act out animal sounds or behaviors—moo like a lion, move hands like a fish, hop or chirp like a bird, swing arm in front of face for an elephant, and the like.

After each pantomime, say, **God made the [lion], and God made it good. God made everything! We praise You, God!** Talk about how God wants us to care for the animals and the world He made and ways we can do this. Also talk about times we might not be kind or caring (e.g., we don't care for our pet). Assure children of Jesus' forgiveness and help to do better.

☐ SNACK Make fruit kebabs. Thread six to seven pieces of fruit on each skewer. Use three colors (e.g., banana slices, grape halves, and strawberries). Have children identify the colors and count the pieces of fruit. Talk about how God cares for us by giving us good things to eat. Ask, **What are other ways God cares for us?** (He gives us clothing, a home, etc.)

☐ CREATE Give each child a paper lunch bag and a face sticker to put on the front of the bag to make a happy-face litter bag. Children can add flower and heart stickers and color designs on their bags. Punch a hole on each side of the bag, near the top. Thread a piece of yarn or a pipe cleaner through one hole. Thread the opposite end through the other hole. Knot or twist ends in place. Talk about how God wants us to care for His creation.

Encourage children to put pieces of trash in their bags to keep God's world clean. Talk about other things the children can do to care for God's world: this week, such as watering plants or feeding pets.

✱BONUS ACTIVITIES

-sort and count 15 minutes Bring leaves, or go outside to gather leaves. Set out construction paper in "leaf" colors (green, yellow, red, orange, brown), and have the children sort leaves. If they are all green, sort them by size or texture. Ask, **Who made the leaves? What else did God make?** Say, **God made everything! God made it good.**

Counting game 10 minutes Roll a die, and have children choose an action (e.g., if a child rolls a 5, children hop five times; if a child rolls a 3, children take three giant steps). Relate the six numbers on the die to God's creation of the world in six days. Also point out how God made us special so we can hop, jump, crawl, sing, touch, and so forth.

BIRD FEEDER 10 minutes Thread O-shaped cereal and blueberries (or two types of cereal) onto a pipe cleaner. Twist ends together, and thread with yarn for hanging. As the children work, talk about how God wants us to care for His creation. This activity also gives young children practice in fine motor skills.

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LESSON PREP

Use these suggestions for your own Bible study as you prepare to teach this lesson.

BASIC Begin here—read the full Bible text.

MORE TIME Read a devotion or additional article.

IN DEPTH Gain a deeper understanding of the Bible story and its context.

SUPPLY LIST

FOR THIS LESSON

Choose the lesson activities you wish to do, and put a check in the box so you know the supplies you'll need to gather.

FOR EVERY LESSON

Use this checklist as a reminder of items that you need on hand for every lesson.

CONNECTING IDENTITY & CALLING

This section speaks to the universal questions of "Who am I?" and "What is my purpose in life?" from a biblical, Christ-centered viewpoint.

GROWING IN FAITH FOR LIFE

See how the level-specific Learner Goals articulate each lesson's Bible Truth in a developmentally appropriate way.

PAGE 2 LEADER GUIDE

LAUNCH

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS Greet children at eye level, and tell them where to put their offerings. Help children get to know one another as they work on an activity that connects what they know to what they will learn in the lesson. If class time is short, omit these and start with Jesus Time.

SENSORY Place items in a bag that children can touch (e.g., a pine cone, feather, leaf, flower, carrot, orange, banana, acorn, faux fur). Tell children to reach into the bag and try to guess what one thing is by feeling it. Take the item out of the bag. Ask, **What is it?** God made the [banana]. Repeat with the other items. Today you'll hear how God made everything!

RICE Hide plastic animals in a tub of rice. Set out matching animals or pictures of them on the table. Have children look for the animals in the rice and match them to the ones on the table. Ask, **What animals did you find? How many are still hiding in the rice?** God made all the animals. Today you'll hear how God made everything!

JESUS TIME SING "We Are in God's House Today" (digital resource center) or "Happy Now We Gather" (*Little Ones Sing Praise*, p. 9).

SAY Who has gone to a zoo or farm? What animals did you see? What is your favorite animal? Today you'll learn God made the animals. God made everything!

PRAY Dear God,* help us use our ears* to listen* and to learn* that You made everything.* We pray in Jesus' name.* Amen.*

*At the asterisks, have children echo the phrase to God.

LEARN

INTRODUCE THE BIBLE STORY Put items you use to make things (e.g., blocks, chocolate chips, and art supplies) in a story bag. Say, Hi, friends! I'm glad to see you here today. I wonder...do you like to make things? What do you like to make? Tell children you have things in your story bag that we use to make something. Take items out, one at a time, and talk about what you could make (a building, cookies, a picture or craft). It's fun to make things, isn't it? Today you will hear how God made the whole world! When we make things, we start with something, like blocks or baking supplies or paper and markers. But when God made the world, He started with nothing! Let's listen and find out how God made everything!

TELL THE BIBLE STORY Tell the Bible story in your own words, using the *Discover Leaflet* as a guide. Use the questions on the leaflet to review.

SAY THE BIBLE VERSE Read the Bible Verse from Genesis 1:1. Have the children echo the words after you at each asterisk: **In the beginning,* God created* the heavens and the earth.*** Have children sit in a circle. Say the Bible Verse together as you roll a ball to a child. Say, **In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Ask a child to suggest something God made as you say, God made [a lion], and God made it good. We praise You, God!** Roll ball to next child. Repeat phrase with new animal.

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PAGE 3 LEADER GUIDE

LIVE

DISCOVER LESSON TRUTHS Separate each *Discover Leaflet* into two pages. Use a three-hole punch to make holes along the left side of the first page. Send the page home with each child, or put it into a binder you have purchased for each child. Send this note home with it.

Dear Grown-Ups: Each week, your child will bring home a page with the Bible story on it. Put these Bible story pages in a binder to make a Bible story book for your child.

Hand out the second page, stickers, and crayons.

SIDE 1 Connect the dots and color the tree. Count the apples with the children. Review how God made the world.

SIDE 2 Talk about how God gives all of us the job of taking care of His world. Give children stickers to show ways they can do this too. Reassure children that even when we fail to take care of His creation, God forgives our sins for Jesus' sake.

ENGAGE IN ACTIVE LEARNING Take time to reinforce lesson truths with one or more of these active learning options. Don't feel like you have to do them all, but choose the ones that work best for you and the children you teach. Turn to "Active Learning" on the back page for instructions to do the activities below.

☐ MOVE Using animal pictures as prompts, have children act out animal movements or sounds.

☐ SNACK Make fruit kebabs to talk about God's care. Sing "Thank You for the World So Sweet" (*Little Ones Sing Praise*, p. 17) for your snack-time prayer.

☐ CREATE Help children make a happy-face litter bag to use in caring for God's creation.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING Review the Learner Goal, and check for understanding by asking children to tell how God cares for them and ways they can care for His world. Assure them of Jesus' love and forgiveness for the times they fail to do this.

LEAVE

SING "God Made Them All" (digital resource center) "God's a Father Kind and True" (*Little Ones Sing Praise*, p. 30) Give the children colorful praise wavers to wave as they sing.

SAY Today we learned God made everything. God made us, too, and cares for us. He gives us the job of taking care of His world.

PRAY Dear Father in heaven, thank You for the beautiful world You made. Help us to take care of it. Thank You for sending Jesus to be our Savior and for forgiving us when we don't take care of Your world as You want. Amen.

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LAUNCH

Building Relationships helps children transition into the classroom, create friendships with classmates, and build readiness for what they will learn in the lesson. Do one or both learning activities, or feel free to allow children free time and then start with Jesus Time when everyone has arrived.

Jesus Time provides a short order of worship with song suggestions and a prayer.

LEARN

Introduce the Bible Story uses props or gives suggestions for Buddy puppet talks to engage children's interest as you introduce the story theme.

Tell the Bible Story uses the first page of the *Discover Leaflet* as a guide for storytelling and often includes suggestions for involving the children in a creative way. Check for understanding by using the questions on the leaflet or other suggestions in the lesson.

Say the Bible Verse provides activities and suggestions for helping young children learn the words and meanings. Remember to show your Bible and read the words from it so children associate that the words are from God's true Word, the Bible.

SIDEBARS

Notes in the sidebars provide options to help you individualize the lesson to fit your group.

Leader Notes give options and helps.

Christ Connection shows how Jesus is central to every lesson.

Bonus Activity suggestions give you options for adding to or extending the lesson.

LIVE

Discover Lesson Truths uses the second page of the *Discover Leaflet*, which provides two activities. The Bible story activity provides an opportunity to review the story so children will learn and "know" it. The other activity applies what was taught in God's Word to children's lives today.

Engage in Active Learning provides hands-on, active ways for children to apply the lesson truths through games, action rhymes, snacks*, and crafts. Ideas are listed here and fleshed out on the back page of the Leader Guide. (*Check for food allergies always.)

Check for Understanding helps you gauge what children are learning.

LEAVE

Wrap up the lesson with a closing song and prayer. Review the Learner Goal to remind children of what they learned in the lesson.

ACTIVE LEARNING

MOVE

Have children stand still as you slowly say, “Wait, wait, wait.” When you say, “Go,” the children may hop, jump, wiggle, and move around until you say, “Freeze.” Then they are to stand still again. Repeat. At the end, talk about how it is hard to wait, especially if you are waiting for something fun like a birthday or event. Connect to how God’s people waited for Jesus to come.

SNACK

Let the children make angels by matching round and triangle-shaped crackers or cheese slices cut in triangles to angel shapes you have drawn on paper plates. *Option:* Tear angel food cake into pieces. In a bowl, combine vanilla instant pudding, a 20-ounce can of crushed pineapple with juice, and an 8-ounce tub of whipped topping. Layer a serving bowl with one-third cake pieces, then a third of the pudding mixture. Repeat two more times so there are three layers of the cake and pudding mixture.

CREATE

Use 3-ounce white paper cups or clear plastic cups. Place the cups upside down so the bottoms become the tops of the bells. Use a wide marker to write one letter of JOY on each cup. Cut a 15-inch piece of yarn, craft cord, or ribbon. Thread the end through a tapestry needle, and pull it through the J bell from top to bottom. Leave a loop at the top for hanging the bell. Knot the yarn inside the cup to hold it in place. Then poke the needle with thread through the O bell and tie a knot to hold it in place; attach the Y bell, and knot. Tie a jingle bell at the bottom of the string of bells. Add stickers (Sticker Page) to the opposite side of the bells.

BONUS ACTIVITIES

SURPRISE BUBBLES

10 minutes

Set a blanket on the floor and let the children blow bubbles onto it. They will be surprised to see that bubbles blown onto a softer surface don’t pop right away. Ask, **Were you surprised your bubbles didn’t pop at first? Blowing bubbles is fun, isn’t it? It makes us happy. In our Bible story, two women are surprised and happy. One is Mary, and the other is Elizabeth. We can be happy too, because Jesus is our Friend.** Sing a few stanzas of “Love in a Box” (*Little Ones Sing Praise*, p. 35) as you blow more bubbles.

J-E-S-U-S SONG

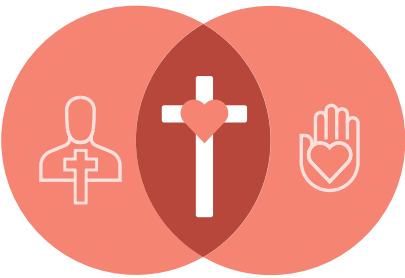
10 minutes

Say, **God sent an angel to tell Mary that He was keeping His promise to send a Savior, and she would be His mother. The angel said to call the baby Jesus, which means “God saves,” and that’s what Jesus does for us.** Sing to the tune of “Bingo.”
St 1: Mary soon will have a Son,
and you will name Him Jesus.
J-e-s-u-s. J-e-s-u-s. J-e-s-u-s.
And you will name Him Jesus.
St. 2: He’ll save people from their sins,
so you will name Him Jesus.
J-e-s-u-s. J-e-s-u-s. J-e-s-u-s.
So you will name Him Jesus.

ANGEL ORNAMENTS

15 minutes

Make angel ornaments. Cut out small round circles for heads and large triangles for bodies. Give children a doily to fold in half and attach to the triangle for wings. Say, **Gabriel was God’s messenger. Usually we can’t see angels. But the Bible says they sometimes take the form of powerful men wearing brightly shining clothes. They might have wings, but not always. They are so awesome looking that people are often afraid. So one of the first things an angel says is “Don’t be afraid.”**



CONNECTING IDENTITY & CALLING

IDENTITY: WHO AM I?

Our God announces the coming fulfillment of His promise, given to Adam and Eve at the fall.

CALLING: WHY AM I HERE?

I can trust God to keep His promises. He calls me to share this Good News with others.

GROWING IN FAITH FOR LIFE

See how this lesson builds on previous learning for each age.

ADULT

I can examine the text of the angel announcement for insights into how Jesus’ birth fulfilled God’s promise in Scripture.

YOUTH

I can describe the importance of the angel’s message that Mary would bear the Son of God.

ELEMENTARY

I understand that God promised to send His Son, Jesus.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

I know God kept His promise to send Jesus to be my Savior.

ENDURING FAITH

Sunday School • Midweek Bible Curriculum

EARLY CHILDHOOD
Unit 7
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 1

Jesus’ Birth
Foretold
Luke 1:26–56
4 BC

AN ANGEL ANNOUNCES

OVERVIEW

BIBLE TRUTH

God promised to send His Son.

BIBLE VERSE

My spirit rejoices in God my Savior. Luke 1:47

LEARNER GOAL

I know God kept His promise to send Jesus to be my Savior.

LAW & GOSPEL

Like Mary, I deserve nothing from God because of my sinfulness.

God gives me unmerited grace and favor because of His Son.

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

Mary receives an angelic announcement telling her that, despite her virginity, she will give birth to the long-awaited Savior. The child in Elizabeth’s womb leaps within her when the mother of the promised Messiah approaches. Elizabeth rejoices in the reaction and welcomes Mary to stay with her for a time. Mary’s song of praise, the Magnificat, resounds in the Church to this day.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read the Bible text and notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

MORE TIME Read “Jesus’ Childhood,” pages 210–11, and “The Birth of Jesus Foretold,” pages 216–17, in *Know the Bible Now* (CPH, 2016).

IN DEPTH Read Questions 127–28 in *Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation* (CPH, 2017) to review what angels do.

SUPPLY LIST

FOR THIS LESSON

- Play dough, rolling pins, triangle & circle cookie cutters
- Items that absorb sound, tray & rice
- Balloon, confetti & pin
- Cheese slices or crackers & paper plates or angel food cake, instant pudding, 20-ounce crushed pineapple & 8-ounce whipped topping
- Small paper cups or clear plastic cups, jingle bells, yarn or ribbon or cording, tapestry needle (adult use only)

FOR EVERY LESSON

- Bible, songbook & classroom supplies
- Copies of *Discover Leaflet*, stickers & music downloads (digital resource center)
- Supplies for bonus activities

LAUNCH

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

PLAY DOUGH Set out play dough, rolling pins, and circle and triangle cookie cutters. Show how to cut out a triangle body and wings and a circle head to make an angel. Say, **God made angels to serve Him. They bring messages from God and protect us. In today’s story, an angel delivers a special message.**

JESUS TIME

SING “Happy Now We Gather” (digital resource center) or “Jesus, Our Good Friend” (*Little Ones Sing Praise*, p. 77)

SAY **Hi, boys and girls! I’m glad you are here.** Build relationships with the children by asking about their week and by celebrating birthdays or Baptisms.

PRAY Dear God,* thank You for Your love.* Thank You for sending Jesus* to be our Savior.* Help us listen* and learn* more today.* Amen. *Children echo.

LEARN

INTRODUCE THE BIBLE STORY

Put confetti inside a balloon and blow it up. Have a pin to pop it. If children might be frightened by popping a balloon, use a smartphone that sets off a cascade of virtual confetti and streamers when you type “Congratulations” in a text message. Alternately, put a surprise item like a sticker or streamer for each child inside a bag. Adjust talk as needed. Ask, **Have you ever been surprised by something you didn’t expect? What was the surprise? How did it make you feel?** Listen to answers. **Who likes balloons?** Show your balloon. **This balloon has a special surprise!** On the word *surprise*, pop the balloon, so the confetti falls to the floor. **How did that make you feel? Happy? Surprised? Today we’ll hear a story about a woman named Mary who had three surprises—a surprise visitor, a surprise message, and a surprise gift.**

TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Remind children that all the stories in God’s Word are true. Tell the story in your own word, using the *Discover Leaflet* as a guide. Afterward, ask, **What were Mary’s surprises? Who was the visitor? What was his message? What was the gift he told her about?**

SAY THE BIBLE VERSE

Say, **When Mary went to see Elizabeth, she sang a song to praise God. Sometimes we sing her song in church. It is called the Magnificat. Our Bible words for today come from Mary’s song.** Read the Bible Verse from Luke 1:47 in your Bible. **Mary sang, “My spirit rejoices in God my Savior.” Mary rejoiced that God was keeping His promise to send Jesus to be the Savior. She was happy she was going to be His mother.**

Knowing Jesus is our Savior makes us happy too. Let’s say Mary’s words: **“My spirit rejoices in God my Savior.** Say the words together. **Elizabeth’s baby leaped for joy inside Elizabeth when Mary came to visit. The baby was happy that Jesus was coming to save us. We can jump for joy too. Let’s do that as we say our Bible Verse.**

Say: **My spirit (*jump*) rejoices (*jump*) in God (*jump*) my Savior (*jump*).**

EXPLORATION Set out items that absorb sound in different ways (e.g., plastic, aluminum, paper, wood, carpet, glass, pillow). Set items on a tray and let children pour rice over the items and listen to the different sounds. Say, **Today, we’ll hear how Mary listened to a special visitor from God. Listen for the special news he had.**

LIVE

DISCOVER LESSON TRUTHS

Separate each Discover Leaflet into two pages. Send the first page home with each child, or put it into a binder you have purchased for each child. Hand out the second page, stickers, and crayons. Send this note home with the first page:

Dear Grown-Ups: This week’s lesson begins the New Testament stories in your story book binder. Each week, continue to insert the pages in your story book so they are in chronological order.

SIDE 1 Say, **After Adam and Eve fell into sin, God promised to send a Savior. But God’s people had to wait a long time. Then at the right time, God kept His promise. How? Have children color Mary and add an angel sticker as they tell what happened. How did Mary feel when she heard this Good News? Who did she go tell?**

SIDE 2 Say, **God kept His promise to send Jesus to be our Savior. God keeps all His promises. He promises to care for us. Put a happy face sticker by the promises God keeps for you. God’s love makes us happy. Who can you tell about Jesus?**

ENGAGE IN ACTIVE LEARNING

Take time to reinforce lesson truths with one or more of these active-learning options. Turn to “Active Learning” on the back page for instructions to do the activities below.

□ MOVE

Play Wait, Wait, Wait. God’s people had to wait a long time for the Savior. But God kept His promise. At the right time, He sent an angel to say baby Jesus would soon be born.

□ SNACK

Make angels or angel trifle to celebrate the sweet news the angel Gabriel gave Mary. (Provide dairy- and gluten-free options for those with sensitivities.)

□ CREATE

Make Joy Bells to celebrate the happy news that God kept His promise to send Jesus to be our Savior.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

Ask, **What did the angel tell Mary? How did this make her feel? Who did Mary go tell?** Listen for answers to ascertain children’s understanding of the story. Say, **Jesus came to be our Savior too. How does this make you feel? Who can you tell?**

LEAVE

SING “The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came” (digital resource center) or the two stanzas below to the tune of “Jesus, Our Good Friend” (*Little Ones Sing Praise*, p. 77). Wave streamers or ring your Joy Bells in joyful celebration.

**Once, an angel came to Mary, told her happy news;
She would soon be Jesus’ mother; Mary sang for joy.**

**Jesus is our Friend and Savior; He loves you and me.
I am joyful, oh, so joyful; He loves you and me.**

SAY God’s people waited a long time for the Savior. But at the right time, God kept His promise. He sent an angel to give Mary the Good News message that soon Jesus, the Savior, would be born, and she would be His mother. That Good News message is for us too: God sent Jesus to be our Savior.

PRAY We thank You, God, for Your love. We thank You for keeping Your promise to send baby Jesus to be our Savior. Amen.



LEADER NOTE

Help children get to know one another as they work on an activity that connects what they know to what they will learn in the lesson. If class time is short, omit these and start with Jesus Time.



BONUS ACTIVITY

Use the “Surprise Bubbles” activity.



LEADER NOTE

Sing one or more of the suggested songs each week, as well as other favorites. Ask your coordinator for access to download music from the online digital resource center.



LEADER NOTE

Mary sings a song of God’s faithfulness. This song, known now as the Magnificat (meaning “it magnifies”), reminds us of Hannah’s song from 1 Samuel 2. Mary rejoices that God has remembered His promises to His people to send the Messiah, and she is honored to be included in that plan of salvation.



CHRIST CONNECTION

God visited Mary and made her a great promise. That promise has been fulfilled for us in Jesus, who offers us forgiveness, life, and salvation.



LEADER NOTE

Check with parents ahead of time and provide options for children with allergies. Most cookies, pretzels, and the like, can also be purchased in allergy-free forms. You can also provide fruit or another alternative.



BONUS ACTIVITY

Help children remember what the name *Jesus* means, by singing the “J-E-S-U-S Song.”



BONUS ACTIVITY

For another craft, make “Angel Ornaments.”

ACTIVE LEARNING

☐ **MOVE**
God sent an angel (*Spread arms for wings*).
He had good news to tell (*Cup mouth*).
He said to Zechariah (*Spread arms for wings*),
“You’ll have a baby boy” (“Rock” a baby).
Zechariah heard it (*Cup hands behind ears*),
But he did not believe (*Shake head no*).
God kept His promise (*Point up*),
And baby John was born (“Rock” a baby).
God sends His Good News (*Spread arms wide*)
To you and me (*Point to others and self*).
His best news is Jesus (*Make a finger cross*);
He came for you and me (*Point to others and self*).

☐ **SNACK**
Pour alphabet cereal into clear plastic cups. Write children’s names on paper plates, and encourage them to find some of the letters in their names. Ask, **Do you remember what Zechariah wrote on his tablet?** (“His name is John.”) **What can you do with your letters?** **Can you find any of the letters in your name?** Watch what children are doing and encourage their discoveries. **I see you found a [C] just like the [C] in your name.**

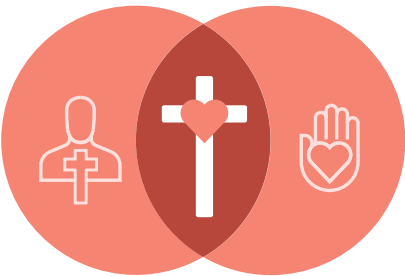
☐ **CREATE**
Make storytelling figures. Attach stickers of Zechariah, the angel, and Elizabeth holding baby John to upside-down cups. Children can add a folded doily to the back of the angel cup for wings. Give each child a 4×4×4-inch white craft box to color yellow or to wrap in yellow construction paper or gold wrapping paper, and then add the altar sticker to make an altar of incense.

★ BONUS ACTIVITIES

LEARNING NAMES
10 minutes
Use markers to write each child’s name in bubble letters on a sheet of paper. Say, **In our Bible story, God gave some parents a special baby and told them what to name him. You are a blessing from God to your family. Your parents probably chose your name carefully. So I thought it would be fun for all of us to see what our names look like. Can you find your name?** Help child locate name, e.g., [Zoe] **you have a [Z] in your name.** Set out supplies to decorate names (e.g., glitter pens, stickers, tissue paper).

BABY TALK
15 minutes
Invite someone in your church who is expecting a baby to come and talk with the children. Ask her to bring along items she has gathered for the new baby and tell the children what she is doing to get ready. Ask about the process of choosing the baby’s name. Bring a baby name book and tell children the meanings of their names. Assure them that they are special to you and God. He calls them by name in Baptism and makes them His children. He has jobs for them too. Consider a project to collect baby items for a shelter.

MESSENGER BAG
15 minutes
Cut around the back pocket of old jeans or corduroy pants, leaving the pocket intact. Hand-sew the ends of a long piece of braided cord to the top for a handle. Have children decorate it (e.g., with buttons, sequins, duct tape, fabric paint). *Option:* Set out art supplies and paper craft bags for children to decorate. Glue on a longer braided cord. Talk about how God sent John to be His messenger and tell people about Jesus. Children can use their messenger bags to carry a Bible storybook or Sunday School projects.



CONNECTING IDENTITY & CALLING

IDENTITY: WHO AM I?
God sends His messengers to His people, and they bring His Word to all humankind.

CALLING: WHY AM I HERE?
I can trust the promises given by God’s messengers.

GROWING IN FAITH FOR LIFE
See how this lesson builds on previous learning for each age.

- ADULT**
I can describe how the events surrounding John the Baptist’s birth relate to key Old Testament themes and promises of God.
- YOUTH**
I can show how John was God’s promised messenger who pointed to Jesus.
- ELEMENTARY**
I understand that God sent John as His messenger.
- EARLY CHILDHOOD**
I know God sent John to get people ready for Jesus.

ENDURING
FAITH™
Sunday School • Midweek
Bible Curriculum

SILENCE
BEFORE A SON

John Is Born
Luke 1:5–25,
57–66
3 BC

OVERVIEW

- BIBLE TRUTH**
God sent John as His messenger.
- BIBLE VERSE**
Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people. Luke 1:68
- LEARNER GOAL**
I know God sent John to get people ready for Jesus.
- LAW & GOSPEL**
As a child of the first parents, Adam and Eve, I am sinful and in need of salvation.
John, and others who proclaim the Good News, point me to Jesus, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.
- SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT**
Doubting the angel’s announcement of his coming son, Zechariah finds himself silenced until the boy’s birth. Upon writing, “His name is John,” Zechariah regains his voice and prophecies concerning his son’s work.

LESSON PREP

- BASIC** Read the Bible text and notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible*.
- MORE TIME** Read pages 214–15 and 218–19 in *Know the Bible Now* for an overview and insights about John’s birth.
- IN DEPTH** Read the article “The Temple in Luke,” in *The Lutheran Study Bible*, page 1705.

SUPPLY LIST

- FOR THIS LESSON**
 - ☐ Sheets of paper, rolling pin, play dough & craft sticks
 - ☐ Baby dolls & baby items
 - ☐ Baby items in a story bag
 - ☐ Alphabet cereal, clear plastic cups & paper plates
 - ☐ Paper cups, 4×4×4-inch white craft boxes, doilies & yellow or gold paper
- FOR EVERY LESSON**
 - ☐ Bible, songbook & classroom supplies
 - ☐ Copies of *Discover Leaflet*, stickers & music downloads (digital resource center)
 - ☐ Supplies for bonus activities

LAUNCH

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

BLOCKS Use a rolling pin to cover pieces of printer paper with a flat layer of play dough. Set out wooden craft sticks for children to use to carve a picture on their play dough “tablets.” Or help them carve the letters of their name. Say, **Today, we will hear about a man who used a board covered with wax for writing.**

JESUS TIME

- SING** “The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came” (digital resource center) or stanza 1 of “I Am Jesus’ Little Lamb” (*Lutheran Service Book* 740)
- SAY** **Hi, boys and girls! Have you ever gotten a letter or package in the mail? Who did it come from? Today, you’ll hear about a time God sent a message to someone in a special way.**
- PRAY** **Dear Jesus,* You know our names.* Thank You for loving us* and making us Your children.* Help us listen* and learn* about the special helper* You sent* to get people ready* for You long ago.* Amen.*** *Children echo.

DRAMATIC PLAY Set out baby dolls and a variety of baby items (e.g., baby bottles, pacifiers, washcloths, clothing, diapers, rattles). Let the children play with the dolls and pretend to care for them. Say, **You are taking good care of your babies. In today’s Bible story, you will hear more about a special baby.**

LEARN

INTRODUCE THE BIBLE STORY

Put baby items in a story bag (e.g., a rattle, bottle, diaper, onesie, pacifier). Say, **Let’s play a guessing game about getting ready to do something.** Tell children you will give them some clues and they can guess what you are getting ready to do. **Here is the first set of clues: I get out a bowl. I find a cookbook. I take some eggs out of the fridge. I find the flour and sugar. What am I getting ready for?** (Baking cookies)

Let’s try another one. I put on my pajamas. I brush my teeth. I say my prayers. What am I getting ready for? (Going to bed) Show story bag. **I have some items in my bag that tell what the people in our Bible story were getting ready for.** Take out the items one at a time. **What are these things used for? What were the people getting ready for?** (A baby) **God was sending a special little baby to help people get ready for Jesus. God told the baby’s parents what to name him. I wonder what it was.** Let children guess. **Those are good guesses! Listen for his name and see if you are right.**

TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Tell the Bible story in your own words, using the *Discover Leaflet* as a guide. Use the questions for review.

SAY THE BIBLE VERSE

When John was born, his father, Zechariah, sang a song to praise God. In the song, he said baby John would grow up to do important things. He would help people get ready for Jesus. The beginning of Zechariah’s song starts with these words (read Luke 1:68): **“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people.” In church, we sing these words in a song called the Benedictus.** Say verse.

- Group 1: **Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,**
Group 1: **for He has visited and redeemed His people.**

LIVE

DISCOVER LESSON TRUTHS

Separate each *Discover Leaflet* into two pages. Send the first page home with each child, or put the page into a purchased binder. Hand out the second page, stickers, and crayons.

SIDE 1 Have children color the baby. Ask, **What was the baby’s name? Add a tablet sticker. God sent John to be His messenger. When John grew up, he would tell people about Jesus.** After the children find the hidden crosses, as a class, have the children name something they can tell about Jesus.

SIDE 2 Say, **Gabriel brought good news to Zechariah and Elizabeth. He told them they would have a baby, and they did. When baby John grew up, he would tell people God’s Good News message about Jesus.**

Point to the page. **Each of these little cards has a good-news message you might tell.** Ask children what they think each one says, and then read the captions. **Now look at the people in the picture. Who could you tell each of these messages to?** Let children take turns as you name the message and then they choose whom they would tell it to. They can draw lines on their page from the message to a person. There are no right or wrong answers. The first four messages are things children enjoy sharing. Help them see that they can also share about their Friend and Savior, Jesus.

ENGAGE IN ACTIVE LEARNING

Take time to reinforce lesson truths with one or more of these active-learning options. Turn to “Active Learning” on the back page for instructions to do the activities below.

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| □ MOVE
Have children stand. Lead them in doing the actions as you say the rhyme that reviews the story. | □ SNACK
Serve alphabet cereal in clear plastic cups. Write children’s names on paper plates. | □ CREATE
Make story figures to act out the story. |
|---|--|---|

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

Help children understand that God was getting the world ready for Jesus’ coming. He sent His angel messenger to tell Zechariah he and Elizabeth would have a baby. This baby would be God’s special helper. He would grow up and tell people that Jesus is the Savior. Ask, **How can you share God’s message about Jesus?** (They can sing and tell; they can show Jesus’ love.)

LEAVE

- SING** “Ponder and Praise” (digital resource center) or “Jesus Loves Me, This I Know” (*Little Ones Sing Praise*, p. 42)
- SAY** **God sent John to be His special helper. John would tell others about Jesus. God loves you. He knew you before you were born, and He called you by name in Baptism or through His Word to be His children. With God’s help, you can tell the Good News of Jesus too.**
- PRAY** **Dear God, thank You for sending Jesus to be our Savior. Thank You for helpers like John, who tell about Him. Help us share Your love and tell others the Good News about Jesus too. Amen.**



LEADER NOTE
Help children get to know one another as they work on an activity that connects what they know to what they will learn in the lesson. If class time is short, omit these and start with Jesus Time.



BONUS ACTIVITY
For another prelearning activity, use “Learning Names.”



LEADER NOTE
Sing one or more of the suggested songs each week, as well as other favorites. Ask your coordinator how to access the digital resource center.



LEADER NOTE
Show your Bible. Tell children that all the stories in God’s Word are true.

When you teach the Bible Verse, show children where it is in the Bible. Even though children can’t read the words yet, they are learning that the words are from the Bible.



CHRIST CONNECTION
John was God’s special messenger who came to prepare the world for the Messiah, Jesus Christ.



LEADER NOTE
Provide a gluten-free snack for those with a gluten allergy. Give them magnet or paper letters to make their names.



BONUS ACTIVITY
Use “Baby Talk.”



BONUS ACTIVITY
For another craft option, make a “Messenger Bag.”