

WEEK

ONE

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. Floating Heart
2. Extra Coloring Sheet

Large Group (20 minutes)

Worship: Inviting people to respond to God

Story: Communicating God's truth in engaging ways

- Worship
- Bible Story
- Prayer

Small Group (25 minutes)

Groups: Creating a safe place to connect

1. Extra: Memory Verse with Motions
2. Carry The Message
3. Heart Angel

Home: Prompting action beyond the experience

- Going Home
- Memory Verse Card
- Parent Cue Card (print or email)
- [Parent Cue App](#) and ParentCue.org

THIS MONTH



Today's Bible Story

The Angel and Mary Luke 1:26-33,38

An angel tells Mary about Jesus.

Key Question

How do we know God loves us?

Bottom Line

God gave us Jesus.

Memory Verse

"God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son."

John 3:16 GNT



Inclusive Pro Tips

This leader guide is designed to be inclusive of children with a special need, learning difference, or disability who attend a group with their peers. See highlighted sections below for additional inclusive pro-tips. Check out the additional Special Needs resources included.

SOCIAL 1/3

Floating Heart



What You Need

- ☐ Mylar heart balloon, one per Small Group
- ☐ Plastic straw



Inclusive Pro Tips

Select moves that are suitable for everyone in the group. Movements can be done sitting if that is best for the group.

① What You Do

Before the Activity

1. Use the straw to inflate the balloon with air.
2. The mylar will self-seal once blown up and the straw is removed.

During the Activity

1. Hit or toss the balloon in the air and encourage children to do a movement before the balloon hits the ground.

After the Activity

Introduce the Bible Story.

② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Friends, I have a fun game to play with you today! Come over here and spread out."

During the Activity

"What shape is my balloon? **(Pause for responses.)** Yes! It's a heart! Hearts remind us of love. We've got a heart because we're going to be learning about how much God loves us! I'm going to toss the balloon in the air, and before it hits the ground, I want you to do any movement you want. You can jump, run in place, clap, dance, but whatever you do, you have to freeze when the balloon hits the ground. Are you ready to play? **(Toss the balloon. If children are struggling to know what to do, call out a movement for them to do.)** Oh no, hurry, it's almost to the ground, everybody freeze! **(Pause.)** You did it! **(Pick up the balloon and toss it again.)** Do a different movement this time. **(Repeat as desired.)** Friends, that was so fun!"

After the Activity

"Today we're going to hear how much God loves **(hold up the heart balloon)** us in our true story from the Bible. I can't wait to hear all about God's love! Let's go!"

Transition → Move to Worship and Story by following the balloon. Have the leader hold it up high so all children can see it, and the leader could even bob it in the air as they walk.

GROUPS 1/4

Memory Verse with Motions

Memory Verse Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

☐ No Supplies Needed

Note

You can find examples of hand motions in the "Memory Verse Hand Motions" PDF and video, included in the Prelude folder and on Pinterest.

Inclusive Pro Tips



Invite children to say it with you or repeat words after you.

Set out the picture cutouts made from the "Memory Verse Hand Motions" PDF for children to hold up or point to as an alternative to saying or repeating the verse out loud.



① What You Do

Before the Activity

1. Say the Memory Verse and demonstrate the motions for the children.

During the Activity

1. Teach the Memory Verse motions and invite the children to do them with you several times.

After the Activity

Connect the Memory Verse to the Bottom Line.

② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Friends, come stand with me, and let me tell you our brand-new Memory Verse! Ready to hear it? It goes like this. 'God **(flat hand with thumb to forehead, pull down)** loved the world so much **(cross arms over chest)** that he gave his only Son,' **(rock arms like a baby)** John 3:16." **(Open hands like a book.)**

During the Activity

"Now, let's learn the motions. The first part of our verse says: 'God **(flat hand with thumb to forehead, pull down)** Put one hand up straight in front of you with your thumb almost touching your forehead like this. **(Straight, flat hand with thumb at your forehead.)** Then move your hand straight down in front of you like this, **(pull down)** and say, 'God.' **(Repeat with children.)** Great job!

"The next part of our verse says: 'Loved the world so much.' **(Cross arms over chest.)** Give yourself a hug, **(hug yourself)** and say, 'loved the world so much.' **(Pause.)** Now let's put that together. 'God **(flat hand with thumb to forehead, pull down)** loved the world so much. **(cross arms over chest)** Great job!

Continue on the next page →

GROUPS 1/4

Memory Verse with Motions

Memory Verse Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

☐ No Supplies Needed

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"The next part of our verse says: 'That he gave his only Son.' **(Rock arms like a baby.)** Let's pretend we are holding a baby in our arms like this **(rock arms like a baby)** and say 'that he gave his only Son.' **(Repeat with children.)** Nice job! Now let's put that together. God **(flat hand with thumb to forehead, pull down)** loved the world so much **(cross arms over chest)** that he gave his only Son,' **(rock arms like a baby)** Super! "Now the last part is: John 3:16. **(Open hands like a book.)** Put your hands together in front of you and open them like you are opening a book **(open hands like a book)** and say: John 3:16. **(Repeat with children.)** Great job! I think we are ready to do it all together! Ready friends? 'God **(flat hand with thumb to forehead, pull down)** loved the world so much **(cross arms over chest)** that he gave his only Son,' **(rock arms like a baby)** John 3:16. **(Open hands like a book.)** Nice job. Let's do it again!" **(Repeat several times.)**

After the Activity

"The Bible teaches us that God loves us because **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus. How do we know God loves us? **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus."

GROUPS 3/4

Carry the Message

Application Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ "Carry the Message" Activity Page
- ☐ Cardstock
- ☐ Heart-shaped sticky notes, one per child
- ☐ Painter's tape



Inclusive Pro Tips

Place sticky note on hand or forehead if better for your group of children.

① What You Do

Before the Activity

1. Copy "Carry the Message" on cardstock, one per Small Group.
2. Tape the "Carry the Message" to one side of the room at child's height.
3. Add a sticky note to the top of each child's shoe.

During the Activity

1. Encourage children to move with sticky notes on their shoes across the room to the picture of Mary.
2. When they get to Mary, ask children to put their sticky notes on the picture and tell Mary, "Do not be afraid; I have good news."
3. Repeat as desired and change the message to, 'You are going to have a baby, and you will call Him Jesus.'

After the Activity

Connect the Bottom Line to the Bible Story.

② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Look what I have for each of you! (**Hold up a heart sticky note.**) A heart sticky note. Hearts make us think of love! This is a message, we're going to give it to Mary. (**Point to the picture of Mary.**) I think we should take our messages to Mary in a super fun way! I'm going to put the heart sticky on your shoe, and you have to walk carefully to take that heart to Mary."

Continue on the next page →

GROUPS 3/4

Carry the Message

Application Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ "Carry the Message" Activity Page
- ☐ Cardstock
- ☐ Heart-shaped sticky notes, one per child
- ☐ Painter's tape



During the Activity

Are you ready to deliver the message? Let's go! **(Pause.)** Walk slowly. Carry the message all the way to Mary. **(Pause.)** If the heart falls off, stop and put it back on. Yay! You made it! Now put your heart on Mary and tell her the message, Mary, you're going to have a baby, His name will be Jesus. **(With children.)** Mary, you're going to have a baby, His name will be Jesus. Great job carrying the message to Mary!"

After the Activity

"You all told such a great message to Mary! God sent an angel to give Mary a special message. Mary was afraid, but the angel said, 'Do not be afraid, Mary. I have good news! God wants you to know that you're going to have a baby. The baby is God's Son, and you will call him Jesus.' God showed us how much He loves us all by sending His Son, Jesus. And that is what we celebrate at Christmas! How do we know God loves us? **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus!"

Inclusive Pro Tips



Place sticky note on hand or forehead if better for your group of children.

GROUPS 4/4

Heart Angel

Application Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ "Heart Angel" Activity Page
- ☐ "Heart Angel Label" Activity Page
- ☐ Cardstock
- ☐ Avery® Labels #5160 or equivalent
- ☐ 5" heart cutouts
- ☐ Crayons
- ☐ Glue sticks
- ☐ 1/8-inch satin ribbon
- ☐ Clear tape
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Permanent marker

Inclusive Optional Supplies

- ☐ Adaptive crayons



Inclusive Pro Tips

Provide adaptive crayons.

① What You Do

Before the Activity

1. Copy "Heart Angel" on cardstock, one per child.
2. And then copy "Heart Angel Label" on label paper, one label per child.
3. Cut ribbon in 6-inch lengths, one per child.
4. Write each child's name on their paper.

During the Activity

1. Encourage children to glue the angel to the center of the heart.
2. Ask children to turn their angel over and place their label on the heart.
3. Create a loop with a piece of ribbon and tape to the back of the angel's head.

After the Activity

Connect the Bottom Line to the Bible Story.

② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Hello friends! Come join me at the table and let's create something super special to remember today's true story from the Bible."

Continue on the next page →



GROUPS 4/4

Heart Angel

Application Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

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- ☐ Clear tape
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Permanent marker

Inclusive Optional Supplies

- ☐ Adaptive crayons



Inclusive Pro Tips

Provide adaptive crayons.

During the Activity

"Today in our Bible Story, we learned that God sent an angel to give Mary a special message. Let's make an angel with this cutout (**hold up the angel cutout**) and this heart. (**Hold up the heart cutout.**) Hearts make us think of love, and we learned that God loves you and God loves me SO much. God gave us Jesus to be our friend forever! Glue your cutout to the heart. (**Pause.**) Great! Now you can color your angels and decorate them however you want! (**Pause.**) Wow! Super job! Now turn them over and add this label to the heart. (**Pause.**) Now I'll tape a loop of ribbon to the back so you can hang your special angels like a Christmas ornament."

After the Activity

"The true story of Christmas begins with God's love for us. God loved you even before you were born! God loves us SO much; God gave us Jesus to be our friend forever!

"It all started a long time ago when God sent an angel to give Mary a special message. Mary was afraid, but the angel said, 'Do not be afraid, Mary. I have good news! God wants you to know that you're going to have a baby. The baby is God's Son, and you will call him Jesus.'"

"When God sent the angel to Mary, God showed us how much He loves all of us by sending His Son Jesus. And that is what we celebrate at Christmas! **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus. How do we know God loves us? **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus."

Getting Ready

Social

Encourage preschoolers to enter the classroom and engage with peers and Small Group Leaders by providing fun, age-appropriate, hands-on activities that introduce new concepts they will hear in the Bible Story.

Offer one or more of the following activities as preschoolers arrive. Let one or two Small Group Leaders lead activities in different areas of the room while another leader greets parents and children at the door.

Groups

Create a safe place to connect through activities written to reach every learning style while reinforcing the Bottom Line introduced during the Bible Story and applying it to real-life experiences. In addition, these activities provide preschoolers with an opportunity to build relationships with their Small Group Leader.

Offer as many of the following activities as your time, facilities, resources, and leadership allow. You may want to lead one activity at a time. Or offer two activities at once and allow half the children to participate in each. Then switch groups and repeat the activities.

Pinterest

Visit our Pinterest page to see craft samples and suggested supplies.

bit.ly/FL_ChristmasShapes

Social

Floating Heart

- ☐ Mylar heart balloon, one per Small Group
- ☐ Plastic straw

1. Use the straw to inflate the balloon with air.

Piece by Piece

- ☐ Large heart cutouts in a variety of colors
- ☐ Envelopes
- ☐ Scissors

Inclusive Optional Supplies:

- ☐ A visual sample of a completed heart
1. Cut each heart into 4 pieces, one set for every two children.
 2. Place each set of pieces in an envelope.

Sort It with Love

- ☐ Shape sorter toys
 - ☐ Foam hearts
 - ☐ Butcher paper
 - ☐ Washable markers
 - ☐ Masking tape
1. Cover the table with butcher paper and draw a circle, rectangle, square, and heart. Adjust shapes based on your shape sorter toys.
 2. Place the shape sorter toys on the table, ensuring there's at least one foam heart for each child.

Continue on the next page →

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Social

Floating Heart

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 - ☐ Plastic straw
1. Use the straw to inflate the balloon with air.

Piece by Piece

Groups

Memory Verse with Motions

→ No supplies needed

Carry the Message

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 - ☐ Cardstock
 - ☐ Heart-shaped sticky notes, one per child
 - ☐ Painter's tape
1. Copy "Carry the Message" on cardstock, one per Small Group.
 2. Tape the "Carry the Message" to one side of the room at child's height.
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Heart Angel

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 - ☐ "Heart Angel Label" Activity Page
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 - ☐ 5" heart cutouts
 - ☐ Crayons
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 - ☐ 1/8-inch satin ribbon
 - ☐ Clear tape
 - ☐ Scissors
 - ☐ Permanent marker
1. Copy "Heart Angel" on cardstock, one per child.
 2. Copy "Heart Angel Label" on label paper, one label per child.
 3. Cut ribbon in 6-inch lengths, one per child.
 4. Write each child's name on their paper.

WEEK

TWO

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. Rock-A-Bye Baby
2. Extra Coloring Sheet

Large Group (20 minutes)

Worship: Inviting people to respond to God

Story: Communicating God's truth in engaging ways

- Worship
- Bible Story
- Prayer

Small Group (25 minutes)

Groups: Creating a safe place to connect

1. Special Gift
2. Birthday Jump

Home: Prompting action beyond the experience

- Going Home
- Memory Verse Card
- Parent Cue Card (print or email)
- [Parent Cue App](#) and [ParentCue.org](#)

THIS MONTH



Today's Bible Story

Jesus is Born Luke 2:1-7

Jesus is the best gift.

Key Question

How do we know God loves us?

Bottom Line

God gave us Jesus.

Memory Verse

"God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son."

John 3:16 GNT



Inclusive Pro Tips

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SOCIAL 3/3

Rock-A-Bye Baby

What You Need

- ☐ Baby dolls
- ☐ Soft blankets
- ☐ Optional: Toy bottles, small cradles, baskets



Inclusive Pro Tips



Pair Thoughtfully: Let children choose a doll or take turns. Some may want to be helpers instead of caregivers.

① What You Do

Before the Activity

1. Gather and set up baby dolls and blankets in a circle on the floor.
2. Optional: Place extra toys nearby.

During the Activity

1. Gather children near the baby dolls.
2. Show them how to gently swaddle the baby dolls.
3. Model rocking and caring for the dolls, encouraging gentle touches.
4. Celebrate their efforts to care for the babies.

After the Activity

Introduce the Bible Story.

② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Hey friends! Please sit down by a baby. We're going to pretend to take care of all these babies today."

During the Activity

"Let me show you how to swaddle our baby dolls. We wrap them gently in a blanket just like this. **(Pause for children to practice.)** Now let's rock our babies. Can you hold your baby gently and rock them back and forth. **(Pause for children to practice.)** Wow! You guys are so great at taking care of the babies! You can even pretend to feed your baby or sing them a song. **(Pause for children to practice.)**"

After the Activity

"Great job taking care of your baby dolls! That reminds me of our Bible Story today! Let's go listen to learn how Mary took care of a very special baby."

Transition → Move to Worship and Story by pretending to rock or hold a baby.

GROUPS 1/4

Special Gift

Memory Verse Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ "Special Gift" Activity Page
- ☐ Cardstock
- ☐ Crayons, washable markers, or dot markers
- ☐ Stickers
- ☐ Washable self-inking stamps
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Baby wipes
- ☐ Permanent marker

Note

You can find examples of hand motions in the "Memory Verse Hand Motions" PDF and video, included in the Prelude folder and on Pinterest.

Inclusive Pro Tips

Offer adaptive crayons.



① What You Do

Before the Activity

1. Copy "Special Gift" on cardstock and cut one per child.
2. Fold each child's paper and write their name.
3. Say the Memory Verse and do the motions with the children.

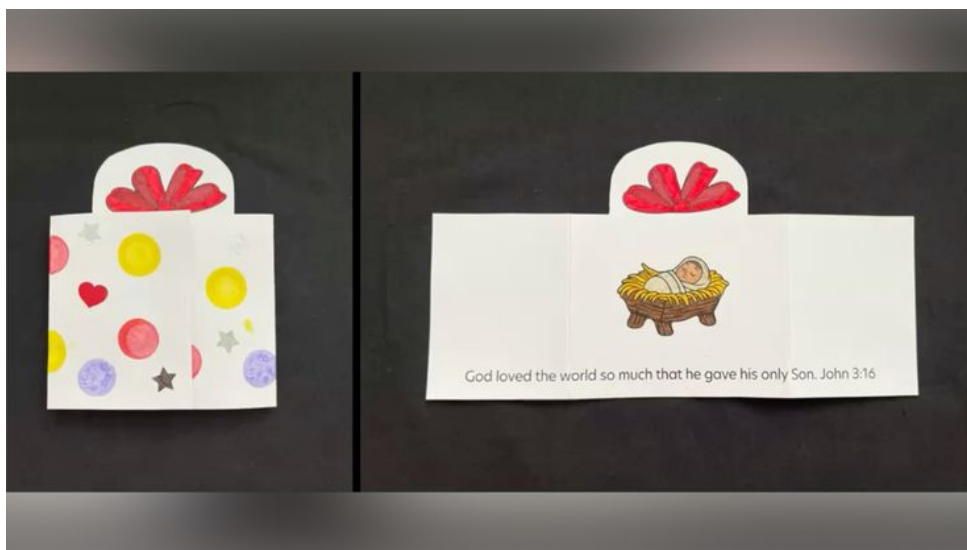
During the Activity

1. Encourage children to decorate the outside of their gift and say the verse together.
2. Then ask children to open the gift and color the baby Jesus.
3. When complete, say the verse as you do the motions together.

After the Activity

Connect the Memory Verse to the Bottom Line.

Continue on the next page →



GROUPS 1/4

Special Gift

Memory Verse Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ "Special Gift" Activity Page
- ☐ Cardstock
- ☐ Crayons, washable markers, or dot markers
- ☐ Stickers
- ☐ Washable self-inking stamps
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Baby wipes
- ☐ Permanent marker

Note

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Inclusive Pro Tips

Offer adaptive crayons



② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Friends, come stand with me, and let's say our verse as we do the motions. Ready? 'God (**flat hand with thumb to forehead, pull down**) loved the world so much (**cross arms over chest**) that he gave his only Son,' (**rock arms like a baby**) John 3:16. (**Open hands like a book.**) That was great! Now let's sit down at the table to make something special!"

During the Activity

"Look! It's a gift! Decorate the outside of your gift with the markers, stickers, and stamps. While you are decorating, let's say the words to our verse. (**With children.**) 'God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son,' John 3:16. Great job saying the verse with me. Wow! These gifts look so wonderfully special! But wait, open your gift and see what's inside. (**Pause.**) It's Jesus! Hooray! Jesus is the most wonderfully special gift because God gave us Jesus! Decorate the inside of your gift too. (**Pause.**) Now close your present and let's say our verse one more time with the motions. 'God (**flat hand with thumb to forehead, pull down**) loved the world so much (**cross arms over chest**) that he gave his only Son,' (**rock arms like a baby**) John 3:16. (**Open hands like a book.**) Nice job."

After the Activity

"The Bible teaches us that a very special baby was born, and He was God's Son, Jesus! Happy Birthday, Jesus! Jesus is the best gift ever! God loves us so much that [**Bottom Line**] God gave us Jesus. How do we know God loves us? [**Bottom Line**] God gave us Jesus."

GROUPS 3/4

Birthday Jump

Application Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

☐ Painter's tape

 USES MINIMAL
SUPPLIES

 MADE TO
↓
Move

① What You Do

Before the Activity

1. Create a large square on the floor with tape.

During the Activity

1. Encourage children to walk the square along the tape line and when prompted, jump into the square.

After the Activity

Connect the Bottom Line to the Bible Story.

② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Friends do you see this really big square on the floor? I think we should pretend that it is a really big gift box. Maybe it's a birthday present. Everyone, come stand on the lines. We are going to walk around the square and when I say 'Happy Birthday Jesus,' you jump into the box."

During the Activity

"Let's walk! (*Pause.*) Happy Birthday, Jesus! Jump in the box! (*Pause.*) Great job. Hey, I have a question. How do we know God loves us? Because **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus. Jesus is the best gift! Go back the tape line and let's do it again. (*Repeat as desired.*) That was so fun."

After the Activity

"Today in our Bible Story, we learned that Jesus was born and is the best gift ever! God loves us so much that God gave us Jesus! How do we know God loves us? **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus!"

Inclusive Pro Tips



In place of "walk" and "jump," say, "Move."

Getting Ready

Social

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Social

Rock-A-Bye Baby

- ☐ Baby dolls
 - ☐ Soft blankets
 - ☐ Optional: Toy bottles, small cradles, baskets
1. Gather and set up baby dolls and blankets in a circle on the floor.
 2. Optional: Place extra toys nearby.

Groups

Special Gift

- ☐ "Special Gift" Activity Page
- ☐ Cardstock
- ☐ Crayons, washable markers, or dot markers
- ☐ Stickers
- ☐ Washable self-inking stamps
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Baby wipes
- ☐ Permanent marker

Happy Birthday Jump

- ☐ Painter's tape
1. Create a large square on the floor with tape.

WEEK

THREE

Small Group Leader Guide

Today's Suggested Schedule

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1. Sticky Sheep
2. Extra Coloring Sheets

Large Group (20 minutes)

Worship: Inviting people to respond to God

Story: Communicating God's truth in engaging ways

- Worship
- Bible Story
- Prayer

Small Group (25 minutes)

Groups: Creating a safe place to connect

1. Shepherd Freeze Run Dance
2. Sheep Prints

Home: Prompting action beyond the experience

- Going Home
- Memory Verse Card
- Parent Cue Card (print or email)
- [Parent Cue App](#) and ParentCue.org

THIS MONTH



Today's Bible Story

The Shepherds Luke 2:8-20

The shepherds run to see Jesus.

Key Question

How do we know God loves us?

Bottom Line

God gave us Jesus.

Memory Verse

"God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son." John 3:16 GNT



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SOCIAL 1/3

Sticky Sheep

What You Need

- ☐ Ball pit balls
- ☐ Plastic container
- ☐ Wide painter's tape
- ☐ Permanent marker
- ☐ Optional: Sheep stickers in place of the permanent marker.

**Inclusive Pro Tips**

Encourage children to move in a way that best suits the group.

① What You Do

Before the Activity

1. Tear off two three-foot lengths of tape.
2. Attach one strip of tape vertically to the wall from the floor up and sticky side out, with a smaller piece of tape at the top and bottom.
3. Attach the second strip of tape the same way but two-feet apart from the first.
4. Create a straight line of tape on the floor about five-feet from the wall.
5. Draw a simple sheep face and ears on each ball pit ball and place them in the container.

During the Activity

1. Divide children into two groups and line each group up behind the tape line.
2. Encourage children to take turns picking a "sheep" from the container then running it to the tape.
3. Encourage children to stick the sheep to the tape line then run back for the next set of children to run. Continue until each child has had a turn.
4. If desired, the next round, ask children to take turns running to the wall to collect a "sheep" and run it back to the container. Repeat as desired.

After the Activity

Introduce the Bible Story.

Continue on the next page →

SOCIAL 1/3

Sticky Sheep

What You Need

- ☐ Ball pit balls
- ☐ Plastic container
- ☐ Wide painter's tape
- ☐ Permanent marker
- ☐ Optional: Sheep stickers in place of the permanent marker.



② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Friends, come over here and stand with me. I have a super fun activity for us to do today!"

During the Activity

"Let's get into two groups. *(Help distribute children into two groups.)* This group stand in a line right here *(point to one side of the container)* behind the tape and the other group stand in a line on this side. *(Pause.)* This container has a bunch of sheep in it. *(Pick up a ball and show the face.)* When I say GO, our first two friends will pick up a sheep from the container and run it all the way to the wall and stick it to the tape then run back like this. *(Demonstrate.)* Okay are we ready? GO! Pick up a sheep and run! *(Pause.)* Stick it on the tape and run back! *(Pause.)* Great job! Next friends pick a sheep and run! *(Continue with each child. Repeat as desired.)* That was so fun getting the sheep from here to there!"

After the Activity

"Today we are going to hear a true story from the Bible about some shepherds. Shepherds are people who take care of sheep, just like you did today!"

Transition → Move to Worship and Story by pretending to herd and guide pretend sheep as you walk.

Inclusive Pro Tips



Encourage children to move in a way that best suits the group.

GROUPS 1/4

Special Gift

Memory Verse Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

→ No Supplies Needed

Note

You can find examples of hand motions in the "Memory Verse Hand Motions" PDF and video, included in the Prelude folder and on Pinterest.

Inclusive Pro Tips



Select a movement that is best for the group in place of running.



① What You Do

Before the Activity

1. Gather children in an open area of the room.

During the Activity

1. Encourage children to run in place for a bit, then stop to say the verse as you do the motions together.

After the Activity

Connect the Bottom Line to the Bible Story.

② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Friends come over here, we're going to do something fun to review our Memory Verse."

During the Activity

"Everyone let's run in place. **(Pause.)** Wow, great job! Stop running and let's say our verse and do the motions together. 'God **(flat hand with thumb to forehead, pull down)** loved the world so much **(cross arms over chest)** that he gave his only Son,' **(rock arms like a baby)** John 3:16. **(Open hands like a book.)** Super-duper! Now let's run in slow motion. **(Pause.)** Stop running and let's say our verse. 'God **(flat hand with thumb to forehead, pull down)** loved the world so much **(cross arms over chest)** that he gave his only Son,' **(rock arms like a baby)** John 3:16. **(Open hands like a book.)** This time, let's run super, super fast. **(Pause.)** Wow, that was so fast. Stop and let's say our verse with the motions one more time. 'God **(flat hand with thumb to forehead, pull down)** loved the world so much **(cross arms over chest)** that he gave his only Son,' **(rock arms like a baby)** John 3:16. **(Open hands like a book.)** Great job running and fantastic job saying the Memory Verse with the motions!"

After the Activity

"Today in our Bible Story, the shepherds ran **(run in place)** to find Baby Jesus. They knew Baby Jesus was the best gift ever. How do we know that God loves us? **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus!"

GROUPS 3/4

Shepherd Freeze Run Dance

Application Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ APlay on TVs
- ☐ Upbeat worship music

Inclusive Pro Tips



Instead of "run" encourage children to "move" to Jesus.

Repeat the cue words clearly and consistently, FREEZE, RUN, DANCE, paired with exaggerated body language.



① What You Do

Before the Activity

1. Gather children in an open area of your room.

During the Activity

1. Explain to the children they'll pretend to be shepherds with the following three motions.
2. Explain the motions with visual cues or gestures: FREEZE = Stop and listen (hands to ears like listening to the angel) RUN = Run in place or run across the space to "Jesus" DANCE =
3. Celebrate by jumping or swaying with joy.
4. Start the music and play.
5. Mix the commands and repeat several times with enthusiasm.

After the Activity

Connect the Bottom Line to the Bible Story.

② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Hello friends! Come join me over here and spread out. We are going to play a game where we pretend to be shepherds!"

During the Activity

"I want you to listen for three words as we play our game. Freeze, run, and dance. When I say FREEZE, (*hands to ears like listening to the angel*) we're going to stop and listen to the angel. When I say RUN, we're going to run to Jesus. And when I say DANCE, we're going to celebrate by jumping or swaying because God gave us Jesus! Ready? Let's play!

(Call out commands with energy and mix them up!) "FREEZE! The angel says, 'Don't be afraid!' (*Pause for responses.*) RUN to the manger! (*Pause for responses.*) DANCE and celebrate! Wow! You guys are amazing being shepherds!" (*Repeat as desired.*)

After the Activity

"Great job, shepherds! You listened, you ran, and you celebrated! The shepherds in our Bible Story did the same thing. They were SO happy because **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus. How do we know God loves us? **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus."

GROUPS 4/4

Sheep Prints

Application Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ "Sheep Prints" Activity Page
- ☐ Cardstock
- ☐ Mini muffin pans
- ☐ White washable paint
- ☐ Black washable paint
- ☐ Paintbrushes
- ☐ Paper plates
- ☐ Plastic tablecloth
- ☐ Crayons
- ☐ Baby wipes
- ☐ Permanent marker

Inclusive Optional Supplies

- ☐ Dot markers



Inclusive Pro Tips

Offer dot markers in place of putting finger in paint.

MADE TO
↓
Create

① What You Do

Before the Activity

1. Copy "Sheep Prints" on cardstock, one per child.
2. Write each child's name on their paper.
3. Cover table with tablecloth.
4. Pour white paint on several plates and place on the table.
5. Pour a small amount of black paint on a plate, one for every four children, and place on the table.

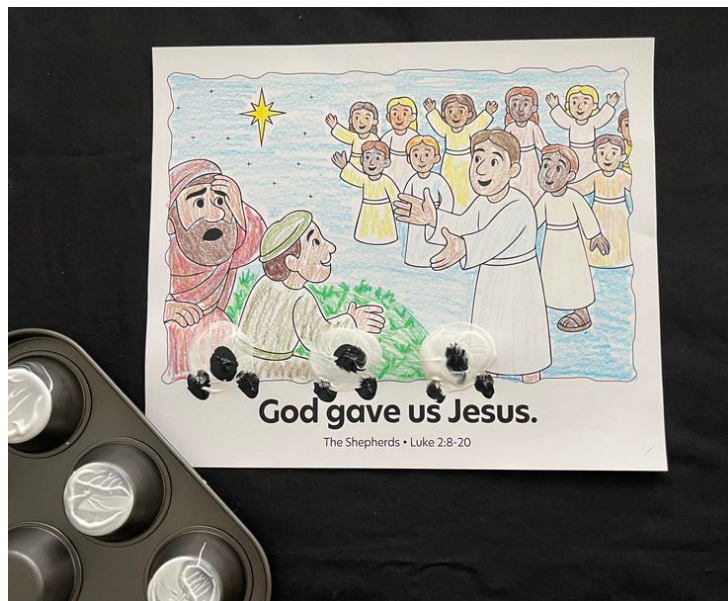
During the Activity

1. Encourage children to color their story picture.
2. Ask children to paint the backside of three top muffin cups on a pan.
3. Help children flip the muffin pan over and press it down on the bottom of their paper.
4. Encourage children to press their pointer finger into the black paint then press it in the center of each white painted circle.
5. Ask children to press their finger into the black paint again and press it down at the bottom of each circle for the sheep's legs.
6. Help children clean their hands as needed.

After the Activity

Connect the Bottom Line to the Bible Story.

Continue on the next page →



GROUPS 4/4

Sheep Prints

Application Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ "Sheep Prints" Activity Page
- ☐ Cardstock
- ☐ Mini muffin pans
- ☐ White washable paint
- ☐ Black washable paint
- ☐ Paintbrushes
- ☐ Paper plates
- ☐ Plastic tablecloth
- ☐ Crayons
- ☐ Baby wipes
- ☐ Permanent marker



Inclusive Pro Tips

Offer dot markers in place of putting finger in paint.

② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Everyone come over and let's create some story art to help us remember today's true story from the Bible."

During the Activity

"Today in our Bible Story, we learned that one night, some shepherds were in the fields taking care of their sheep. God sent a special messenger to tell them the good news. Color your paper. **(Pause.)** Great. Now let's make our sheep. Spread some paint on these three muffin cups. **(Point.)** Now press the muffin pan near the bottom of your paper. **(Pause.)** Lift it up and look! There are three circles! Let's make these circles into sheep. Put your finger up in the air and press it in the middle of your sheep. **(Pause.)** You made the sheep's head with your finger. Add two black fingerprints at the bottom of the sheep circles for legs. **(Clean hands as needed.)** These look great!"

After the Activity

"An angel came and told the shepherds, "Don't be afraid! I bring you good news of great joy! God's Son, Jesus, has been born! Then more angels came! There were angels everywhere! The angels praised God and said: "Glory to God in the highest!" **(Luke 2:14 NIV)**

"The shepherds were excited because **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus. So they ran to find baby Jesus. The shepherds found baby Jesus in the manger, just like the angel said. They were so happy the shepherds told EVERYONE that Jesus, God's Son, was born! How do we know God loves us? **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus."

Getting Ready

Social

Encourage preschoolers to enter the classroom and engage with peers and Small Group Leaders by providing fun, age-appropriate, hands-on activities that introduce new concepts they will hear in the Bible Story.

Offer one or more of the following activities as preschoolers arrive. Let one or two Small Group Leaders lead activities in different areas of the room while another leader greets parents and children at the door.

Groups

Create a safe place to connect through activities written to reach every learning style while reinforcing the Bottom Line introduced during the Bible Story and applying it to real-life experiences. In addition, these activities provide preschoolers with an opportunity to build relationships with their Small Group Leader.

Offer as many of the following activities as your time, facilities, resources, and leadership allow. You may want to lead one activity at a time. Or offer two activities at once and allow half the children to participate in each. Then switch groups and repeat the activities.

Pinterest

Visit our Pinterest page to see craft samples and suggested supplies.
bit.ly/FL_ChristmasShapes

Social

Sticky Sheep

- ☐ Ball pit balls
 - ☐ Plastic container
 - ☐ Wide painter's tape
 - ☐ Permanent marker
 - ☐ Optional: Sheep stickers in place of the permanent marker.
1. Tear off two three-foot lengths of tape.
 2. Attach one strip of tape vertically to the wall from the floor up and sticky side out, with a smaller piece of tape at the top and bottom.
 3. Attach the second strip of tape the same way but two-feet apart from the first.
 4. Create a straight line of tape on the floor about five-feet from the wall.
 5. Draw a simple sheep face and ears on each ball pit ball and place them in the container.
 6. Place the container on the floor at the tape line.

Groups

Shepherd Freeze Run Dance

- ☐ APlay on TVs

Sheep Prints

- ☐ "Sheep Prints" Activity Page
 - ☐ Cardstock
 - ☐ Mini muffin tins
 - ☐ White washable paint
 - ☐ Black washable paint
 - ☐ Paintbrushes
 - ☐ Paper plates
 - ☐ Plastic tablecloth
 - ☐ Crayons
 - ☐ Baby wipes
 - ☐ Permanent marker
1. Copy "Sheep Prints" on cardstock, one per child.
 2. Write each child's name on their paper.
 3. Cover table with tablecloth.
 4. Pour white paint on several plates and place on the table.
 5. Pour a small amount of black paint on a plate, one for every four children, and place on the table.

WEEK

FOUR

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. Star Parade
2. Extra Coloring Sheet

Large Group (20 minutes)

Worship: Inviting people to respond to God Story: Communicating God's truth in engaging ways

- Worship
- Bible Story
- Prayer

Small Group (25 minutes)

Groups: Creating a safe place to connect

1. Find the Special Gift
2. Special Star

Home: Prompting action beyond the experience

- Going Home
- Memory Verse Card
- Parent Cue Card (print or email)
- [Parent Cue App](#) and ParentCue.org



Today's Bible Story

The Wise Men Matthew 2:1-2, 9-11

The wise men follow a star to Jesus.

Key Question

How do we know God loves us?

Bottom Line

God gave us Jesus.

Memory Verse

"God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son." John 3:16 GNT



Inclusive Pro Tips

This leader guide is designed to be inclusive of children with a special need, learning difference, or disability who attend a group with their peers. See highlighted sections below for additional inclusive pro-tips. Check out the additional Special Needs resources included.

SOCIAL 1/3

Star Parade

What You Need

- ☐ Yellow star cutout
- ☐ Ruler or paint stir stick
- ☐ Masking tape

Inclusive Optional Supplies

- ☐ Stroller or wagon



Inclusive Pro Tips

Allow children who are not ready to walk independently to be pushed in a stroller or wagon while holding the star.

① What You Do

Before the Activity

1. Tape the star cutout to the end of the ruler/paint stir stick.

During the Activity

1. Hold up the star wand and ask the children to follow the star as you walk around the room.
2. Encourage children to take turns leading the Star Parade.
3. Continue until all children have had a turn.

After the Activity

Connect the Bottom Line to the Bible Story.

② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Today we're going to have a Star Parade! (**Hold up the star wand.**) Line up behind me."

During the Activity

"Follow me and let's march! (**Hold the star up high and start marching around the room.**) Look at you following the star! Great job! It's fun to be the leader of the star parade too! [**Child's name**] it's your turn to hold the star and lead us. (**Continue until all kids have had a turn.**) You all did a great job marching in our Star Parade and following the star!"

After the Activity

"You all did a great job marching in our Star Parade and following the star! Today in our Bible Story, we'll hear about some wise men who followed a star to find a special gift. Let's go!"

Transition → Move to Worship and Story by carrying the star wand and encouraging the children to continue following the star.

GROUPS 3/4

Find the Special Gift

Application Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ "Find the Special Gift" Activity Page
- ☐ Cardstock
- ☐ 4-inch star cutouts, nine per Small Group
- ☐ Red poster board
- ☐ Green poster board
- ☐ Christmas bows
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Painter's tape

USES MINIMAL
SUPPLIES

MADE TO
Move

Inclusive Pro Tips



Bring the "presents" to each child or let them point instead of lifting.

① What You Do

Before the Activity

1. Copy "Find the Special Gift" on cardstock, one per Small Group.
2. Cut posterboard in half, ten halves per Small Group.
3. Attach one large bow to each piece of poster board to create a present. Secure each piece of posterboard to the wall with tape along the top edge.
4. Tape one yellow star behind each present, except for one.
5. Tape Jesus behind one the present without the star.

During the Activity

1. Let each child take a turn lifting one present to reveal what's behind it.
2. If they find a star, celebrate and ask them who followed the star?
3. Remind them the wisemen followed the star.
4. When Baby Jesus is finally found, celebrate and remind them they found the best gift ever!

After the Activity

Connect the Bottom Line to the Bible Story.

Continue on the next page →

GROUPS 3/4

Find the Special Gift

Application Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ "Find the Special Gift" Activity Page
- ☐ Cardstock
- ☐ 4-inch star cutouts, nine per Small Group
- ☐ Red poster board
- ☐ Green poster board
- ☐ Christmas bows
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Painter's tape

Inclusive Pro Tips



Bring the "presents" to each child or let them point instead of lifting.

② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Hello friends! Look at all these big gifts on the wall. We're going to look behind these gifts today to find the most special gift! Just like the wise men were looking for someone very special, we'll see if we can find Jesus."

During the Activity

"[Child's name] you go first. Open the first present. **(Pause for responses.)** Oooh, you found a star! Just like the wise men did. [Child's name], your turn! **(Pause.)** Who will find the special gift? **(Repeat until they find Jesus.)** Hooray! You found Jesus! He's the best gift of all! **(Hide stars and Baby Jesus again and repeat as desired.)**"

After the Activity

"What a fun game! In our true story from the Bible, some wisemen were looking for Jesus, just like we did today! They followed a star to find Jesus! What special gift did they find when they followed the star? **(Pause for responses.)** Yes! Its Jesus! God gave us Jesus, the special gift, because He loves us so much! How do we know God loves us? **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus!"

GROUPS 4/4

Special Star

Application Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ "Special Star" Activity Page
- ☐ Cardstock
- ☐ Yellow washable ink pads
- ☐ Washable markers
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Baby wipes
- ☐ Permanent marker

Inclusive Optional Supplies

- ☐ Gloves



Inclusive Pro Tips

Provide gloves for child to wear if they are sensitive to the texture of the ink on their hand.



USES MINIMAL SUPPLIES

MADE TO
↓
Create

① What You Do

Before the Activity

1. Copy "Special Star" on cardstock and cut, one per child.
2. Write each child's name on their paper.

During the Activity

1. Encourage children to color their story picture.
2. Then ask children to fill the star by dipping their fingerprints on the ink pads and pressing it on the star outline on their paper.
3. Repeat until the star is filled.
4. Clean hands as needed.

After the Activity

Connect the Bottom Line to the Bible Story.

② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Everyone come over and let's create some story art to help us remember today's true story from the Bible."

During the Activity

"Look at your paper. The wise men are on their way to see someone very special, they're going to see Jesus! Color your paper but not the big star. **(Pause.)** Okay, now for that big, special star! Dip your finger onto the ink pad then press it on your paper inside the star. Keep going until the star is full! **(Help as needed.)** That is a very special star! **(Clean hands as needed.)** God put a special star in the sky to show them the way. The wise men followed the star until it stopped over a house, Jesus' house! When the wise men saw Jesus, they bowed down. They worshipped Jesus and gave Him very special gifts."

After the Activity

"The wise men followed a special star to Jesus and when they saw Him, they worshiped Him. We can worship Jesus too! God loves us so much because **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus. How do we know God loves us? **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus."

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Social

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Social

Star Parade

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 - ☐ Ruler or paint stir stick
 - ☐ Masking tape
1. Tape the star cutout to the top of the ruler/paint stir stick, one per Small Group.

Groups

Find the Special Gift

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 - ☐ Cardstock
 - ☐ 4-inch star cutouts, nine per Small Group
 - ☐ Red poster board
 - ☐ Green poster board
 - ☐ Christmas bows
 - ☐ Scissors
 - ☐ Painter's tape
1. Copy "Find the Special Gift" on cardstock, one per Small Group.
 2. Cut posterboard in half, ten halves per Small Group.
 3. Attach one large bow to each piece of poster board to create a present.
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Special Star

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 - ☐ Washable markers
 - ☐ Scissors
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