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. You've Got Mail
- 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. Memory Verse with Motions
- 2. God Gave Us Jesus
- 3. Angel Ornament

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 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 protips. Check out the additional Special Needs resources included.

Small Group

December — Week 1

SOCIAL 3/3

You've Got Mail

What You Need

- □ Paper
- □ Envelopes
- ☐ Square-shaped stamps
- ☐ Washable ink pads
- ☐ Toy mailbox -> IN CLASSROOM
- ☐ Washable markers
- □ Baby wipes



Before the Activity

- 1. Set out all Items on the table.
- 2. Put the mailbox in a separate area of the room.

During the Activity

 Encourage children to make mail and deliver it to the mailbox.

After the Activity

Introduce the Bible Story.



Before the Activity

"Friends, I love getting mail. Sometimes special messages are sent in the mail!

Have you ever gotten anything in the mail? (*Pause for responses.*) It's fun to get mail! I have all the items to make a special letter for you to mail in that mailbox over there."

During the Activity

"We have paper to write on, envelopes to put the letter in, and stamps to put on the envelope. Let's make mail! (*Pause.*) Wow I really love the picture you drew on your letter. Fold it up and put it in the envelope. (*Pause.*) Great! Now your envelope needs a stamp. You can use any of these stamps. (*Pause.*) Go put your letter in the mailbox. (*Pause.*) You sent your special message!"

After the Activity

"In our true story from the Bible we're going to hear how God sent a very special message to a very young woman named Mary. Are you ready to go hear our Bible Story? (Pause for responses.) Me too! Let's go!"

Transition → Move to Worship and Story by whispering a special message in their ear "God loves you."



Small Group

December — Week 1

GROUPS 1/6



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

Inclusive Optional Supplies

- ☐ "Memory Verse Hand Motions" PDF
- □ Cardstock
- □ Scissors

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. Invite the children to do them with you several times.

After the Activity

Connect the Memory Verse to the Bottom Line.

Small Group

December — Week 1

GROUPS 1/6

SES WINING

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

Inclusive Optional Supplies

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 PDF
- ☐ Cardstock
- □ Scissors

Note

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Inclusive Pro Tips



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

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② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Friends, come stand with me, and let me tell you our brandnew 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!

"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."

4-5 Year-Olds Small Group

December — Week 1

GROUPS 4/6

God Gave Us Jesus



Application Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God Pray to God

Talk about God Live for God

What You Need

→ No supplies needed.

Inclusive Pro Tips



In place of "run" suggest another movement to include all children such as: cheer, clap, dance, move.

1) What You Do

Before the Activity

1. Gather children on one side of the room with you.

During the Activity

2. Encourage children to run to the other side of the room when they hear you say "God gave us Jesus".

After the Activity

Connect the Bottom Line to the Bible Story.

② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Let's play a game! Everyone come stand over here with me. This is going to be fun, but you have to listen for the special message I say."

During the Activity

"I am going to say a lot of words. Some might be silly and you can laugh, but when I say "God gave us Jesus" I want you to run to the other side of the room. Are you ready? Do you have your listening ears on? Great! Here we go! Sheep, mail, pickles, cupcakes... [Bottom Line] God gave us Jesus! (Pause as children run.) Great job! Stay where you are and this time when you hear those special words, run back over here. Baby, cheese, cow, diaper... [Bottom Line] God gave us Jesus! (Pause as children run.) Great job!"

After the Activity

"In today's Bible Story, Mary listened when the angel told her she was going to have a baby. Mary was 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 [Bottom Line] God gave us Jesus! How do we know God loves us? [Bottom Line] God gave us Jesus!"

Small Group

December — Week 1

GROUPS 5/6

Angel Ornament



Application Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God Pray to God

Talk about God Live for God

What You Need

□ Baby wipes

□ Permanent marker

□ "Angel Ornament" Activity Page
□ Cardstock
□ Round, wooden clothespins
□ Metallic pipe cleaners
□ 1/8-inch wide ribbon
□ Craft glue
□ Scissors
□ Hole punch

Inclusive Pro Tips



Display a completed Angel to follow as an example.

Go through step by step demonstrating and showing an example for each part of the activity.

(1) What You Do

Before the Activity

- Copy "Angel Ornament" on cardstock and cut, one cutout per child.
- 2. Punch a hole as indicated and write each child's name on their heart.
- 3. Cut ribbon into 6 to 8-inch lengths, one per child.
- 4. Thread the ribbon through the hole in each heart and knot the ends.
- 5. Cut pipe cleaners in half, one half per child.
- 6. Create a halo on each pipe cleaner by wrapping one end into a circle and twisting the end to secure.

During the Activity

- Encourage children to take the straight end of their pipe cleaner and wrap it around the notch of their clothespin a few times.
- Once wrapped, help align the halo over the rounded top of the clothespin.
- 3. Ask children to glue their clothespin to their heart with the writing on the back.
- 4. Clean hands as needed.

After the Activity

Connect the Bottom Line to the Bible Story.





4-5 Year-Olds Small Group

December — Week 1

GROUPS 5/6

Angel Ornament



Application Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God Pray to God

Talk about God Live for God

What You Need

☐ "Angel Ornament" Activity Page
☐ Cardstock
☐ Round, wooden clothespins
☐ Metallic pipe cleaners
☐ 1/8-inch wide ribbon
□ Craft glue
☐ Scissors
☐ Hole punch
☐ Baby wipes
☐ Permanent marker

Inclusive Pro Tips



Display a completed Angel to follow as an example.

Go through step by step demonstrating and showing an example for each part of the activity.

② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Come to the table and let's create a super special Christmas ornament."

During the Activity

"We're going to make an angel ornament to help us remember the special message that God sent to Mary. Wrap the straight end of your pipe cleaner around the notch on your clothespin like this. (Demonstrate.) Adjust the halo over the top of your clothespin. (Pause.) Now run some glue down the middle of the heart and press your clothespin on top of the glue. We'll let these dry and you can take them home."

After the Activity

"We used the heart for the angel's wings because hearts remind us of love. The true story of Christmas begins with God's love for us. God loves us so much, God gave us Jesus to be our friend forever!

"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 us all 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!"

Small Group

December — Week 1

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. https://bit.ly/FL_ChristmasShapes

Social

You've Got Mail Paper Envelopes Square-shaped stamps Washable ink pads Toy mailbox Washable markers

- 1. Set out all Items on the table.
- 2. Put the mailbox in a separate area of the room.

Groups

□ Baby wipes

Memory Verse with Motions

→ No supplies needed

God Gave Us Jesus

→ No supplies needed

Angel Ornament

"Angel Ornament" Activity Page		
Cardstock		
Round, wooden clothespins		
Metallic pipe cleaners		
1/8-inch wide ribbon		
Craft glue		
Scissors		
Hole punch		
Baby wipes		
Permanent marker		

- Copy "Angel Ornament" on cardstock and cut, one cutout per child.
- 2. Punch a hole as indicated and write each child's name on their heart.
- 3. Cut ribbon into 6 to 8-inch lengths, one per child.
- 4. Thread the ribbon through the hole in each heart and knot the ends.
- 5. Cut pipe cleaners in half, one half per child.
- Create a halo on each pipe cleaner by wrapping one end into a circle and twisting the end to secure.

WEEK



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. Hunt for the Gift
- 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. Pass the Gift
- 2. Best Gift Ornament

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

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

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 protips. Check out the additional Special Needs resources included.

Small Group

December — Week 2

SOCIAL 1/3

Hunt for the Gift

What You Need

- ☐ "Hunt for the Gift" Activity Page
- □ Cardstock
- ☐ Gift bows
- □ Painter's tape



1 What You Do

Before the Activity

- Copy "Hunt for the Gift" on cardstock, one set per Small Group.
- 2. Place the pictures around the room face down and secure with a piece of tape along the top edge.
- 3. Stick a gift bow on each paper.

During the Activity

- 1. Encourage children to look around the room to find the gift.
- When they find one, invite everyone over to discover what's inside.
- 3. Celebrate each discovery! Reset and repeat as desired.

After the Activity

Introduce the Bible Story.

② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Hello friends! I have something exciting to tell you! We're going on a gift hunt today! All around the room are gifts with pretty gift bows on top! (Show children an example of the presents.) When you find one, shout hooray and we'll all come see what's inside your gift."

During the Activity

"Ready, set, go! (Pause.) Oh look! Our friend [child's name] found a gift! Let's go find out what's inside! (Pause.) Okay [child's name] lift up the gift and show us what's inside. (Pause.) It's [picture]! Super cool! Let's go find some more gifts! (Repeat as desired.) Great job finding all the gifts! Each one of the gifts were super fun, but what do you think is the best gift ever? (Pause for responses.) Wow! Those are some amazing gifts!"

After the Activity

"You were such wonderful gift finders today! In our true story from the Bible, we'll hear how God gave us the best gift ever! Let's go hear it together!"

Transition → Move to Worship and Story by walking like you are carrying a giant present!

Inclusive Pro Tips



Place presents within each reach for all children.

Small Group

December — Week 2

GROUPS 4/6

Pass the Gift

Application Activity



Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Music player and upbeat preschool music on TVs
- ☐ Gift box with lid
- □ Individual heart stickers



1 What You Do

Before the Activity

1. Put the heart stickers, one per child, inside the gift box.

During the Activity

- 1. Ask children to sit in a circle.
- 2. Pass the gift box around as you play the music.
- 3. Pause the music and ask children to stop passing the gift.
- 4. Instruct whoever is holding the gift to open the box and take out one sticker then replace the lid.
- 5. Encourage everyone to say the Memory Verse with the motions together.
- 6. Start the music and continue until each child has a turn.

After the Activity

Connect the Bottom Line to the Bible Story.

Continue on the next page →





Place chairs in a circle to play.



GROUPS 4/6

Pass the Gift

Application Activity



Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- Music player and upbeat preschool music on TVs
- ☐ Gift box with lid
- ☐ Individual heart stickers



② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Friends, come over and sit in a circle on the floor with me. I have a fun game for us to play."

During the Activity

"We are going to pass this gift box from friend to friend as the music plays. When the music stops, whoever is holding the box gets to do something special. Everyone will get a turn. Are we ready? Great! (Start music.) I'll pass the gift next to me, and you pass it next to you. Keep going around the circle. (Pause the music.) [Child's name] you're holding the gift. Open it up and see what's inside. (Pause.) Heart stickers! Hearts make us think of love! Take one sticker then close the box. Let's all say our verse together 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.) Great job friends. (Start music) Pass the gift. (Continue until each child has a turn.) That was so much fun and look you all have hearts to remind you that God loves you!"

After the Activity

"The Bible teaches us wonderful things like how much God loves us! God loves us so much that [Bottom Line] God gave us Jesus! Jesus is the best gift ever! How do we know God loves us? [Bottom Line] God gave us Jesus!"





Place chairs in a circle to play.

Small Group

December — Week 2

GROUPS 5/6

Best Gift Ornament



Application Activity

Faith Skills Create

Pray to God

Talk about God

Hear from God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ "Best Gift Ornament" Activity Page
- □ Cardstock
- □ Crayons
- □ Craft sticks
- ☐ Yarn
- ☐ Glue sticks
- □ Scissors
- ☐ Hole punch
- ☐ Hot glue gun
- ☐ Hot glue sticks
- □ Permanent marker

Note

Use the hot glue gun before children arrive and store it out of reach in another room.





Provide adaptive crayons.

1 What You Do

Before the Activity

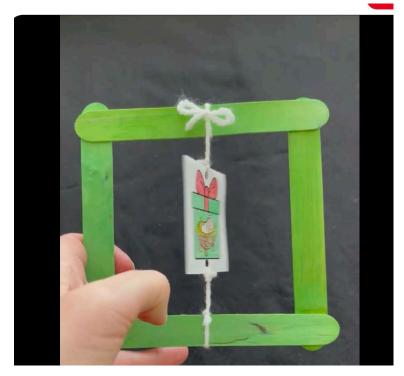
- Copy "Best Gift Ornament" on cardstock and cut, one cutout per child.
- 2. Fold each cutout in half as indicated and glue to sides together.
- 3. Hot glue four craft sticks together at the ends to create a square frame.
- 4. Punch a small hole at the top and bottom of each cutout.
- 5. Cut yarn in 8-inch lengths, two per child.
- 6. For each child, thread one length of yarn half-way through each hole and tie each side to the top and bottom craft sticks.
- 7. The yarn should be taut but have enough give not to cause the paper to rip.
- 8. Tie a bow from the excess at the top and trim the excess from the bottom.

During the Activity

- 1. Encourage children to color both sides of their picture.
- 2. Demonstrate how to hold the frame and gently twist the picture to make it spin.

After the Activity

Connect the Bottom Line to the Bible Story.



Small Group

December — Week 2

GROUPS 5/6

Best Gift Ornament



Application Activity



Faith Skills

Hear from God Pray to God

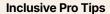
Talk about God Live for God

What You Need

☐ "Best Gift Ornament" Activity Page
☐ Cardstock
☐ Crayons
☐ Craft sticks
☐ Yarn
☐ Glue sticks
☐ Scissors
☐ Hole punch
☐ Hot glue gun
☐ Hot glue sticks
☐ Permanent marker

Note

Use the hot glue gun before children arrive and store it out of reach in another room.





Provide adaptive crayons.

② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Come to the table and let's create a super special Christmas ornament."

During the Activity

"We're going to make an ornament today that looks just like a gift. This fun ornament will help us remember what the very best gift is. Do you remember what the very best gift is? (Pause for responses.) That's right! Jesus is the very best gift! Look! There's baby Jesus on your ornament. Color your picture and then I'll show you how to make it spin. (Pause.) Okay, Hold your frame with one hand and twist the picture like this (demonstrate) then let go and watch it spin! (Pause.) Wow! You really made the best gift ornament!"

After the Activity

"Today's true story from the Bible begins when Mary and Joseph traveled a long, long way to the town of Bethlehem. Mary and Joseph probably walked all the way to Bethlehem or Mary might have ridden on an animal like a donkey because she was about to have a baby!

Once Mary and Joseph got to Bethlehem, they stayed in a place that had a manger. A manger is something animals eat out of. There might have been some animals there too! This place isn't fancy, but this is where God gave us something very special. A very special baby was born, and He was God's Son, Jesus! What a special gift! Jesus is the best gift ever! God loves us so much that [Bottom Line] God gave us Jesus! Happy Birthday, Jesus! How do we know God loves us? [Bottom Line] God gave us Jesus!"

Small Group

December — Week 2

Getting Ready

Social

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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

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Social

Hu	nt for the Gift			
	"Hunt for the Gift" Activity Page			
	Cardstock			
	Gift bows			
	Painter's tape			
1.	Copy "Hunt for the Gift" on cardstock, one set per Small			
2.	Group. Place the pictures around the room face down and secure			
_,	with a piece of tape along the top edge.			
3.	Stick a gift bow on each paper.			
Gr	roups			
Pag	ss the Gift			
_				
	Music player & upbeat preschool music on TVs			
	Gift box with lid			
	Individual heart stickers			
Inc	lusive Optional Supplies:			
1.	Put the heart stickers, one per child, inside the gift box.			
Be	st Gift Ornament			
	"Best Gift Ornament" Activity Page			
	Cardstock			
	Crayons			
	Craft sticks			
	Yarn			
	Glue sticks			
	Scissors			
	Hole punch			
	Hot glue gun			
	Hot glue sticks			
	Permanent marker			

Small Group

December — Week 2

Getting Ready

Social

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- Fold each cutout in half as indicated and glue to sides together.
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- For each child, thread one length of yarn half-way through each hole and tie each side to the top and bottom craft sticks. The yarn should be taut but have enough give not to cause the paper to rip.
- 7. Tie a bow from the excess at the top and trim the excess from the bottom.

Home

- → Make copies on cardstock or email this week's Parent Cue Card.
- → Copy the Memory Verse Card to hand out or make available to parents.
- → Copy "Going Home" and hang it on the door where Small Group Leaders can reference and remind parents of the Bottom Line and Memory Verse as parents pick up their children.
- → Tell parents about our additional family resource, the Parent Cue App and ParentCue.org.

WEEK

THREE

Small Group Leader Guide

Today's Suggested Schedule

Prelude: Setting the tone for the experience

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Small Group (15 minutes)

Social: Providing time for fun interaction

- 1. Fun Run
- 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

- Verse RevEWE
- 2. Shepherds in Action
- 3. Circle Ornament

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 Shepherds Luke 2:8-20

The shepherds run 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

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Small Group

December — Week 3

SOCIAL 1/3

Fun Run



What You Need

□ Timer



1 What You Do

Before the Activity

1. Gather children on one side of an open area in the room

During the Activity

- 2. Encourage children to run from one side of the room and time their runs.
- 3. Repeat as desired.

After the Activity

Introduce the Bible Story.

② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Everyone, come over here and let's get ready for a fun run!"

During the Activity

"I love to run fast, do you? Let's see how fast you can run from where you are right here (walk to the opposite side of the room) to where I am now and I'll time you. Ready, set, go! Run to me! (Start the timer.) Whoa! You are super-fast. The time says you ran [time] seconds! Stay here and I'll go stand on the other side and you can run again! (Repeat as desired.)
Great job running."

After the Activity

"That was so fun. In our Bible Story today, we're going to learn about a group of people who ran to see Jesus. I'm ready for the Bible Story, are you? Let's Go!"

Transition → Move to Worship and Story by slow running to your designated area.

Inclusive Pro Tips



If children cannot run, suggest all children run with their fingers or move in different ways, still explaining that people in our story "ran" to see Jesus.

Small Group

December — Week 3

GROUPS 1/6

Verse RevEWE



Memory Verse Review



Hear from God

Talk about God

Live for God

Pray to God

What You Need

→ No supplies needed

Inclusive Pro Tips

Offer noise-canceling headphones for children that may be sensitive to loud noises.

1 What You Do

Before the Activity

1. Gather with the children in an open area and say the Memory Verse with the motions.

During the Activity

Say the verse together with the children in different ways.

After the Activity

Connect the Memory Verse to the Bottom Line.

② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Friends, come over here. Let's say our verse as we do the motions together. 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.) Fantastic!"

During the Activity

"I love our Memory Verse; it tells us that God loves us. Let's say it super-duper loud this time. 'God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son,' John 3:16. That was so loud! This time let's say it super soft. 'God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son,' John 3:16. Let's try to say it like a baby. (Pause.) Oh, that was funny. Now let's say our verse like a sheep. (Pause.) Yes, baaa, baaa that was so good baaa, baaa. I loved saying our verse in all the different ways and remembering that God loves us."

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!"

Small Group

December — Week 3

GROUPS 4/6

Shepherds in Action

Application Activity



Faith Skills

Hear from God Pray to God

Talk about God Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ White mylar balloons
- □ Plastic straw
- □ Black permanent marker

Inclusive Pro Tips

Use plush sheep or a soft fabric ball instead of balloons for children who are sensitive to sounds or textures.

Children using mobility aids can roll or gently toss the balloon/ball with a partner.

If locking forearms is too difficult, children can hold a small hula hoop between them as the "pasture."

1 What You Do

Before the Activity

- 1. Insert the straw in the opening of the balloons and inflate with air.
- 2. Draw simple sheep faces on each mylar balloons.
- 3. Pair children in groups of two.
- 4. Assign each pair a "sheep" balloon.

During the Activity

- Model and encourage each pair face each other, stretch their arms straight out in front of them and lock their forearms with their partner.
- 2. This will create a safe "pasture" for catching sheep.
- 3. Once all pairs are ready, a leader will toss a "sheep" balloon into the air above the pairs.
- 4. Their job is to catch the sheep using only their locked arms, not their hands.
- 5. Once caught, the sheep can be gently tossed back to the leader for another round.
- 6. Repeat as desired.

After the Activity

Connect the Bottom Line to the Bible Story.

4-5 Year-Olds Small Group

December — Week 3

GROUPS 4/6

Shepherds in Action

Application Activity



Faith Skills

Hear from God Pray to God

Talk about God Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ White mylar balloons
- ☐ Plastic straw
- □ Black permanent marker

Inclusive Pro Tips

Use plush sheep or a soft fabric ball instead of balloons for children who are sensitive to sounds or textures.

Children using mobility aids can roll or gently toss the balloon/ball with a partner.

If locking forearms is too difficult, children can hold a small hula hoop between them as the "pasture."

② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Hello friends! Does anyone remember what a shepherd is? (Pause for responses.) That's right! A shepherd watches over sheep. There were shepherds watching over their sheep in our story today."

During the Activity

"Let's play a fun game where we pretend to be shepherds watching our sheep! You'll work with a friend to gently guide the balloon, our sheep, so it doesn't get away. Are you ready, shepherds? Lock your arms you're your partner and get ready to catch the sheep. (Toss the sheep in the air over each of the groups.) You're doing a great job keeping your sheep safe! Keep working together just like the shepherds worked to take care of their sheep. Great teamwork!" (Repeat as desired.)

After the Activity

"In our story today, the shepherds were watching over their sheep when they heard the good news that Jesus was born. They were so excited that they ran to find Jesus and told everyone that Jesus was born! 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."

Small Group

December — Week 3

GROUPS 5/6

Circle Ornament

Application Activity



Faith Skills

Hear from God Pray to God

Talk about God Live for God

What You Need

- □ "Circle Ornament" Activity Page
 □ Cardstock
 □ Crayons
 □ Small white pom-poms
 □ 3.94-inch clear refillable ornaments, one half per child
 □ Yarn
 □ Croft alvo
- ☐ Craft glue
- □ Scissors
- ☐ Hole punch
- □ Permanent marker

1 What You Do

Before the Activity

- Copy "Circle Ornament" on cardstock and cut, one cutout per child.
- 2. Punch a hole at the top of each child's paper.
- 3. Cut yarn in 8-inch lengths, one per child.
- 4. For each child, thread their yarn through the hole and knot the ends.
- 5. Write each child's name on their paper.

During the Activity

- 1. Encourage children to color their picture.
- 2. Ask children to put a few pom-poms on their picture then trace the outline of the circle on their paper with glue.
- 3. Help children align one ornament half on the glue.
- 4. Set aside to dry.

After the Activity

Connect the Bottom Line to the Bible Story.



4-5 Year-Olds Small Group

December — Week 3

GROUPS 5/6

Circle Ornament

Application Activity



Faith Skills

Hear from God Pray to God

Talk about God Live for God

What You Need

WI	nat You Need			
	"Circle Ornament" Activity Page			
	Cardstock			
	Crayons			
	Small white pom-poms			
	☐ 3.94-inch clear refillable			
	ornaments, one half per child			
	Yarn			
	Craft glue			
	Scissors			
	Hole punch			
\Box	Permanent marker			

② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Come to the table and let's create a super special Christmas ornament."

During the Activity

"We're going to make an ornament today that has a circle shape. This fun ornament will help us remember the part of the true Christmas story when the shepherds ran to see Jesus. Color your picture. (Pause.) I see Mary, Joseph, baby Jesus, and the shepherds. What animal do shepherds take care of? (Pause.) Sheep! That's right! These little pom-poms look like sheep. Let's count out three sheep. One, two, three! Great job! Put those to the side and we'll add them later. Trace the circle (point) with the glue. (Pause.) Put those sheep inside the circle, and now I'll help you add this circle on top of the glue. (Position a half of the ornament on top of the glue.) We'll let these super cute circle ornaments dry and then you can take it home."

After the Activity

"Today's true story from the Bible begins with some shepherds who were out in a field taking care of their sheep. One night, God sent an angel to give the shepherds a message. The angel said, "Don't be afraid! I bring you good news of great joy! God's Son, Jesus, has been born! Then more angels came and praised God and said: "Glory to God in the highest!" (Luke 2:14 NIV)

The shepherds were excited they ran and found baby Jesus in a manger just like the angel had said. They were so happy the shepherds told EVERYONE that Jesus, God's Son, was born!

Everyone who heard the good news about Jesus was amazed. The shepherds praised God because [Bottom Line] God gave us Jesus! How do we know God loves us? [Bottom Line] God gave us Jesus!"

Small Group

December — Week 3

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. https://bit.ly/FL_ChristmasShapes

Social

Fun Run

□ Timer

Groups

Verse RevEWE

→ No supplies needed

Shepherds in Action

- ☐ White mylar balloons
- □ Plastic straw
- □ Black permanent marker
- 1. Insert the straw in the opening of the balloons and inflate with air.
- 2. Draw simple sheep faces on each mylar balloons.
- 3. Pair children in groups of two.
- 4. Assign each pair a "sheep" balloon.

Circle Ornament

- □ "Circle Ornament" Activity Page
- □ Cardstock
- □ Crayons
- ☐ Small white pom-poms
- ☐ 3.94-inch clear refillable ornaments, one half per child
- ☐ Yarn
- □ Craft glue
- □ Scissors
- ☐ Hole punch
- □ Permanent marker
- Copy "Circle Ornament" on cardstock and cut, one cutout per child.
- 2. Punch a hole at the top of each child's paper.
- 3. Cut yarn in 8-inch lengths, one per child.
- 4. For each child, thread their yarn through the hole and knot the ends.
- 5. Write each child's name on their paper.

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 Path
- 2. Extra Coloring: Story Star Ornament

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. Sparkly Star
- 2. Shine the Story

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 protips. Check out the additional Special Needs resources included.

Small Group

December — Week 4

SOCIAL 3/3

Star Path

Explore

What You Need

- □ Butcher paper
- ☐ 1-inch to 2" wooden or plastic stars
- ☐ Washable markers
- Masking tape
- □ Baby wipes

Inclusive Optional Supplies

- □ Dot marker, toy car, or small sponge ball
- □ Dry erase board
- □ Dry erase marker

Inclusive Pro Tips

Allow children to push the star using different tools like a large dot marker, toy car, or a small sponge ball if markers are difficult to grasp or control.

Using a small dry erase board, provide a simple visual card showing a star path (dotted line) and an image of a child pushing the star forward to model the expected motion.

(1) What You Do

Before the Activity

- 1. Tape the butcher paper to the table.
- 2. Draw a large heart in the middle of the paper.
- Create a few start lines on either end of the paper and outline simple winding "paths" with dashed black or gray lines to the heart.
- 4. Give each child a star and a colorful marker.

During the Activity

- 1. Encourage children to place their star at the start line.
- 2. Help uncap their marker and ask children to place the tip of their marker on the paper against the star at the back of it.
- 3. Encourage children to push the star along the dotted path until they reach the heart in the middle.
- 4. Reset and repeat as desired.

After the Activity

Introduce the Bible Story.

② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Hello friends! Today we're going to go on a star adventure by following these dotted line paths. Let's see where they lead!"

During the Activity

"Place your star on the table at one of the start lines.

(Demonstrate.) Uncap your markers and place the tip on the paper right behind the star. Push the star with your marker along the dotted path. (Pause.) Look how carefully you're following the path! You are doing a great job staying on the path. Keep going until you get your star to then end of your path. (Pause.) You did it! Great job following the star path today friends! You got your stars the heart! Hearts make us think of love."

After the Activity

"Today we're going to hear a Bible Story about some very wise men who followed a star path too! I wonder what they found at the end of their path? Let's go find out!"

Transition → Move to Worship and Story by pretending to push a star with your feet of your finger in the air.

Small Group

December — Week 4

GROUPS 5/6

Story Star Ornament



Application Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God Pray to God

Talk about God Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ "Story Star Ornament" Activity Page
- □ Cardstock
- □ Crayons
- ☐ Yarn
- ☐ Glue sticks
- ☐ Hole punch
- □ Scissors
- □ Permanent marker

Inclusive Pro Tips



Provide adaptive crayons

(1) What You Do

Before the Activity

- 1. Copy "Story Star Ornament" on cardstock and cut, one set per child.
- 2. Fold each child's paper in half along the line.
- 3. Punch a hole at the top and bottom of each child's star.
- 4. Cut yarn in 8-inch lengths, two per child.
- 5. For each child, thread one piece of yarn through the hole at the top of their star and knot the ends.
- 6. Thread the other piece of yarn through the hole at the bottom and tie a knot.
- 7. Write each child's name on their star.

During the Activity

- 1. Encourage children to color both sides of their picture.
- 2. Ask children to flip their picture over and rub glue all over the back of their paper.
- 3. Help children fold their paper and sandwich the end of the yarn inside.

After the Activity

Connect the Bottom Line to the Bible Story.





4-5 Year-Olds Small Group

December — Week 4

GROUPS 5/6

Story Star Ornament



Application Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God Pray to God

Talk about God Live for God

What You Need

	"Story Star Ornament" Activity
	Page
	Cardstock
	Crayons
	Yarn
	Glue sticks
	Hole punch
	Scissors
\Box	Permanent marker

Inclusive Pro Tips



Provide adaptive crayons

② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Friends, come to the table and let's create a super special star ornament."

During the Activity

"We're going to make a special ornament today. This fun ornament will help us remember when the wise men followed a special star God put in the sky to find Jesus.

Color the pictures on your paper. (Pause.) Flip your paper over and rub glue all over the back. (Pause.) Great job! Now let's fold your pictures up with the end of the yarn inside. (Help fold each child's picture with the yarn inside.) Hold your ornament up by the loop. (Pause.) See how the wise men are following the star on one side and on the other they're at Jesus' house! What a neat ornament!

After the Activity

"Today's true story from the Bible begins with some wise men who believed God's words and knew that God was giving us someone very special. God put a special star in the sky to show the wise men the way. They followed the star until it stopped over Jesus' house! Jesus is the special person God gave us! When the wise men saw Jesus, they bowed down, worshiped Jesus, and gave Him very special gifts. We can worship Jesus too because God loves us so much [Bottom Line] God gave us Jesus! How do we know God loves us? [Bottom Line] God gave us Jesus!"

Small Group

December — Week 4

GROUPS 2/6

Sparkly Star

Bible Story Review



Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ "Sparkly Star" Activity Page
- □ Cardstock
- ☐ Wooden star cutouts
- □ Sparkly pipe cleaners
- □ Scissors
- ☐ Hole punch

Note

When purchasing wood star cutouts, look for stars that already have an ornament hole in them.

Inclusive Pro Tips



Allow children to fill star with yellow dot markers or dot stickers instead of wrapping with pipe cleaner.

1 What You Do

Before the Activity

- Copy "Sparkly Star" on cardstock and cut, one cutout per child.
- 2. Punch a hole punch on each card in the designated spot.

During the Activity

- 1. Give each child a wooden star.
- 2. Put an assortment of sparkly pipe cleaners in the center of the table.
- 3. Encourage children to wrap pipe cleaners around their star. Assist when needed.
- As the children finish wrapping their stars with pipe cleaners, thread one pipe cleaner through the hole in the star and the hole in the cutout.
- 5. Twist the ends of the pipe cleaner together to make a loop.

After the Activity

Connect the Bottom Line to the Bible Story.



Small Group

December — Week 4

GROUPS 2/6

Sparkly Star

Bible Story Review



Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ "Sparkly Star" Activity Page
- □ Cardstock
- ☐ Wooden star cutouts
- □ Sparkly pipe cleaners
- □ Scissors
- ☐ Hole punch

Inclusive Optional Supplies

☐ Yellow dot markers or dot stickers

Note

When purchasing wood star cutouts, look for stars that already have an ornament hole in them.

Inclusive Pro Tips



Allow children to fill star with yellow dot markers or dot stickers instead of wrapping with pipe cleaner.

② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Hey everyone! Come sit with me! We are going to make sparkly star ornaments today!"

During the Activity

"First, everyone needs a star. (Give each child a wooden star.) Who remembers what the wise men followed in our Bible Story today? (Pause.) Yes! A star! God put a special star in the sky to show the wise men how to get to Jesus. Let's make our stars special with these sparkly pipe cleaners. Just wrap the pipe cleaners around your star, like this. (Demonstrate and assist while the children work.) What did the wise men do when the star stopped over Jesus' house? (Pause.) You're right! The wise men worshiped Jesus and gave him gifts. When you're done wrapping your star, I have a label and a loop that will make your star into an ornament. Then you can take it home and when you look at it remember that [Bottom Line] God gave us Jesus."

After the Activity

"I want everyone to hold up their star ornament really, really high, like a star in the sky. Ooo...they look so sparkly! I hope every time you see your special star; you remember that God loved the world so much that [Bottom Line] God gave us Jesus! How do we know God loves us? [Bottom Line] God gave us Jesus!"

4-5 Year-Olds Small Group

December — Week 4

GROUPS 3/6

Shine the Story



Application Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God Pray to God

Talk about God Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Flashlights
- ☐ Foam star, heart, crown, and gift shaped stickers

Inclusive Optional Supplies

□ Second set of foam stickers

Inclusive Pro Tips



Present a second set of each shape to give a visual reference that children can point to.

1 What You Do

Before the Activity

- 1. Attach a foam sticker to the lens of each flashlight.
- 2. Dim the lights in the room slightly.

During the Activity

- 1. Shine the light on the wall one at a time.
- 2. Ask the children to name the shape they see and talk about what it reminds them of from the story.

After the Activity

Connect the Bottom Line to the Bible Story.

② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Let's use our flashlights to look for special shapes. Each one reminds us of something from today's Bible story!"

During the Activity

"I'm going to shine the flashlights at the wall. (Shine the heart shape.) Look! What shape is it? (Pause for responses.) That's right! It's a heart. Hearts remind us of love. God loves us so much that [Bottom Line] God gave us Jesus! (Shine the star shape.) Look! What shape is it? (Pause for responses.) That's right! It's a star! The star reminds us that the wise men followed a star to find Jesus! (Shine the crown shape.) Look! What shape is it? (Pause for responses.) That's right! It's a crown! The crown reminds us of the wise men. We have one last shape. (Shine the gift shape.) Look! What shape is it? (Pause for responses.) That's right! It's a gift! What gift did God give us? Yes! [Bottom Line] God gave us Jesus! That was so much fun!"

After the Activity

"Wow! You did a great job identifying all the shapes from today's Bible Story! My favorite shape is the heart and the gift because they remind us that God loves us so much that [Bottom Line] God gave us Jesus! How do we know that God loves us? [Bottom Line] God gave us Jesus!"

Small Group

December - Week 4

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 reallife 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. https://bit.ly/FL_ChristmasShapes

Social

Sta	ar Path					
_	1-inch to 2" wooden or plastic stars Washable markers Masking tape					
 1. 2. 3. 4. 	 Draw a large heart in the middle of the paper. Create a few start lines on either end of the paper and outline simple winding "paths" with dashed black or gray lines to the heart. 					
Sto	ory Star Ornament					
	"Story Star Ornament" Cardstock Crayons Yarn Glue sticks Hole punch Scissors Permanent marker	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.				
Groups Sparkly Star						
	"Sparkly Star" Activity Pag Cardstock Wooden star cutouts Sparkly pipe cleaners Scissors Hole punch	e				
	Copy "Sparkly Star" on cardstock and cut, one cutout per child.					
2.	Punch a hole punch on	ea	nch card in the designated spot.			
Sh	ine the Story					
	Flashlights Foam star, heart, crow	'n,	and gift shaped stickers			

1. Attach a foam sticker to the lens of each flashlight.

2. Dim the lights in the room slightly.