

WEEK

ONE

Large 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. Opening Activity

Large Group (35 minutes)

Worship: Inviting people to respond to God

Story: Communicating God's truth in engaging ways

- Opener
- Worship ("Joy to the World" from *Joy to the World Single* and "Extra, Extra [It's Christmas Time]" from *Extra, Extra (It's Christmas Time) Single*)
- Bible Story (sections about God's Big Story are listed as optional)
- Prayer

Small Group (25 minutes)

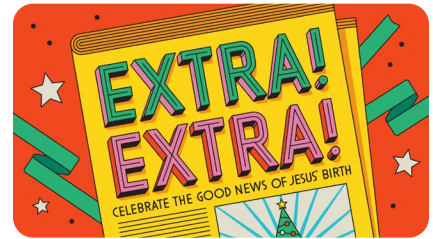
Groups: Creating a safe place to connect

1. Bible Story Review: Stand or Sit (K–1st grade), Chain Reaction (2nd–3rd grade)
2. Application Activity: Drawing a Plan (K–1st grade), Share the Good News! (2nd–3rd grade)
3. Memory Verse Activity: Verse in Motion (K–1st grade), Verse in Motion (2nd–3rd grade)
4. Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss

Home: Prompting action beyond the experience

- Parent Cue Card (Print or Email)
- Devotionals for Kids
- [Parent Cue App](#) and [ParentCue.org](#)

THIS MONTH



Today's Bible Story

Jesus Is Promised Isaiah 9:6–7, Micah 5:2

Bottom Line

Jesus is good news for everyone.

Memory Verse

**"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord."
Luke 2:11 NIV**



Inclusive Pro Tips

Loud sounds, bright lights, and large groups can be overwhelming or overstimulating for some children. To create a more inclusive large group experience, consider offering adaptive tools like noise-canceling headphones, sunglasses, sensory-friendly items, or access to modified spaces.

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

AUDIO: Play high-energy music as kids enter.

SLIDE: Theme

Optional Video: Theme Loop

→ **Host enters.**

Optional Video: Countdown

Optional Video: Theme Intro

Optional Video: Theme Loop

① Opener

HOST: "Hey friends, welcome to *[Name of environment]*!

We're so glad you're here today. This month we're discovering something super-special—it's all about Christmas, the time when we celebrate Jesus, God's greatest gift to all of us!

"Extra! Extra! Read all about it! God sent His Son because He loves us!

"But before we dive into learning more about God's great gift, we're going to start off with something super-fun! Let's get started with our game called 'Gift Shuffle.' This game is all about celebrating the gift of Jesus by moving with joy!

"Here's what you need for our game today: Just your smile and some space to move around. That's it!

"Here's how you play: I'm going to call out a Christmas/ wintertime activity, and when I say 'freeze,' you will freeze into a frozen version of that activity.

"Okay, are you ready? Let's all spread out so we've got room to move. *(Pause as the kids spread out.)*

"Great! Now that we've all got room to move, let's play our first round!"

→ **For round one, call out a wintertime activity. (Several are listed below.) Comment on the action, then say, "freeze," and comment on the kids' poses.**

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

Note: We've suggested worship songs below from Amazing Kids Worship and Orange Kids Music. We've created these songs to be developmentally appropriate for elementary and preteen kids, incorporating simple, direct language, fun dance movements, and upbeat, current arrangements.

We've chosen these specific songs that amplify our teaching content for this month. We recommend that you use these songs as scripted below, or combined with other popular worship songs that your kids know and love. Be sure to share the links to these songs with parents so they can stream them at home or in the car! Songs can be purchased at store. thinkorange.com or for free with APlay.

→ Play several rounds.

→ Christmas/wintertime activities: *(Feel free to add your own.)*

- Open a gift
- Make a snowman
- Decorate a Christmas tree
- Wrap a gift
- Drink hot chocolate
- Warm yourself by the fire
- Have a snowball fight
- Decorate Christmas cookies
- Go caroling

"Great job! That was so winter-y and Christmas-y!! I want to grab a candy cane just because I felt the season so much through you guys! Please take a seat. *(Pause as the kids sit down.)*

"There are so many things this season that we can celebrate! But one of the greatest things we can celebrate is God and how He sent His Son, Jesus, for us. God loves us so much! But before we learn about God's great gift in Jesus, let's lift our voices and worship God together!"

② Worship

→ Worship Leaders enter as Host exits.

WORSHIP LEADER: "Hi, wonderful friends! Christmas is such a special time, isn't it? It's when we celebrate Jesus, God's greatest gift to us. God gave us Jesus because He loves us so much! Our first song is 'Joy to the World.' Jesus is joy for the whole world—Jesus is good news for everyone!

"Let's stand up and get ready to sing 'Joy to the World!'"

AUDIO: "Joy to the World" / track 1 from Joy to the World single

WORSHIP LEADER: "Great singing and dancing, everyone!"

SLIDE: Memory Verse

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

WORSHIP LEADER: "Before we sing our last song, let's learn our Memory Verse together with some simple motions. This is part of the message the angel declared to the shepherds on the night Jesus was born! This message is recorded in the Bible in Luke chapter 2. It's Luke 2:11.

"It goes like this:

"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord" (**Luke 2:11 NIrV**).

"Let me teach you some motions that might help you remember the verse. You guys repeat the motions after me:

"Today in the town of David" – Point straight down with both hands like you're marking right now.

"a Savior" – Spread your arms wide like you're about to hug.

"has been born" – Rock your arms like you're holding a baby.

"to you." – Point to a friend or the group.

"He is the Messiah," – Pretend like you're putting on a crown with your hands.

"the Lord." – Point both hands up to the sky.

"Luke 2:11" – Open the palms of your hands together like you're opening a Bible.

"Let's all try that together!

→ (**Repeat the Memory Verse with the motions several times.**)

"Great job! This season, we can remember that God sent His Son, Jesus, to us. Isn't that amazing? It's great, great news! This next song is about how we can share that great news with everyone!

AUDIO: "Extra, Extra (*It's Christmas Time*)" / track from Extra, Extra (*It's Christmas Time*) Single

"Great job, everyone! Let's go ahead and sit down and hear our true story from the Bible today!"

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

Note: We're so excited to be going through key stories of the Bible this year and learning more about its Author—God! It's God's Big Story! But to provide you with flexibility as you experience God's Big Story in your own unique setting, there's more than one way to use the following script!

If you want to follow "God's Big Story," read the following script straight through. Each week will build on the previous ones. But, if your church wants to teach a Large Group session without connecting it to what has come before, two sections in the script below are optional—"God's Big Story Opener" and "God's Big Story Closer." (Or if you are joining us at some point throughout the year, you can opt out of the God's Big Story part and just join us as we journey through the rest of the story of Scripture!) We're going to go through the Bible as we teach throughout the year, but whether or not you share God's Big Story each week is up to you!

Whatever way you decide to use the following, know that we're praying diligently for you—we're asking God to help kids see and believe that He loves them, He invented them, and He wants to be their closest Friend. Forever. It's an honor to get to know God with you through the Bible this year!

③ Bible Story

SLIDE: Theme Background

→ **Storyteller enters as Worship Leaders exit.**

INTRODUCTION

→ **Set the table and two chairs in the middle of your Large Group stage. Set the Bible on the table.**

STORYTELLER: "Hi, much-loved people! Merry Christmas! This month, we're celebrating the good news of Jesus' birth!

"But before we get into the true story from the Bible this week, let me tell you about something amazing we're doing this year. We're going through key stories in the Bible from cover to cover!

"But are we going through the Bible just so we'll learn the awesome stories in the Bible? Not exactly! One of the reasons God gave us the Bible is so that we can get to know Him. He wants us to be His friends! So as we go through the Bible this year, our hope is that we learn about Him.

GOD'S BIG STORY OPENER (OPTIONAL)

STORYTELLER: "We're going to go through God's Big Story in the Bible together! *(Gesture to slide.)*

SLIDE: God's Big Story

"Let me catch you up on where we've been in God's Big Story so far.

"You might remember that, in the beginning, God created everything. He made the world, the animals, people ... everything! God made the first people for the same reason He made all people—to be His close, close friends. But sadly, the first people God made chose to turn away from Him and sin. God wanted people to be close to Him, but they couldn't anymore. Pain, sickness, and death entered the world too.

"But God didn't want to leave things that way. So He put His rescue plan in motion right from the start!

"God was going to rescue everything through a family! God chose a man named Abraham and promised that his family

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

would bless the whole world. Abraham had a great-grandson named Joseph, who became a leader in Egypt and saved his family—God’s people. Over time, God’s people grew but were enslaved by a new Pharaoh. God’s people cried out to God—‘Help us!’ they said—and God heard them! God freed His people and brought them to the super-nice home He had designed for them, the Promised Land.

“Some time after God’s people were settled in the Promised Land, they asked for a king like the other nations around them. God gave them a king, and then many more kings (**and one queen**) followed. Sadly, after a long time of turning away from Him, God allowed His nation to be split in two—into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. Prophets spoke for God saying, ‘Come back to Me!’ But the northern kingdom of Israel was destroyed, and the southern kingdom of Judah was taken captive. After years in exile, some of God’s people returned to rebuild their homeland, while others stayed in foreign lands.

“During that sad time, God kept sending messages to His people about the Rescuer He had promised long ago. ‘God’s Rescuer is going to come like this!’ the prophets said. But for years and years, nothing happened.

“But that long, long time was about to come to an end. God was about to show the world what He was working on for centuries!

“And that’s where God’s Big Story continues!

SETTING UP THE STORY

STORYTELLER: “Let’s continue on through the Bible! We’ve reached the part of the Bible where God is about to give us the greatest gift—Jesus!

“Did you know that God ALWAYS had a plan to send Jesus to the world?

“He did! Way back in the Garden of Eden, when the whole world fell under that awful curse and couldn’t be close to Him anymore, God promised that He was going to fix things. He wants to be close friends with people!

“Throughout the years, God kept working on that plan, and working on that plan, and working on that plan. And today, we’re going to look at a few times when He gave messages to His prophets.

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

"Through several of His prophets, He kept saying, 'I am going to send a Rescuer! I am going to send a Rescuer!' One of these prophets was a man named Isaiah.

"In fact, you'll never believe this, but I think the prophet Isaiah is here to join us today. (*Calling backstage*) Isaiah! Isaiah, can you come out here?

→ **Host enters, as Isaiah—wearing a robe and gray beard, holding an oversized, rolled-up scroll and a feather pen.**

THE PROPHET ISAIAH

STORYTELLER: "So, [*Host's name*] . . . I mean, Isaiah . . . we're so glad to have you here with us today."

HOST (as ISAIAH): "Oh, well, hello there. I'm happy to be here with you."

STORYTELLER: "So, Isaiah, you lived more than 700 years before Jesus was born. Is that right?"

HOST (as ISAIAH): (*Long pause as if he's going to say a lot, but then doesn't.*) "Yes."

STORYTELLER: "But even though you lived so long before Jesus came, you knew that God WOULD send the Savior. You knew He is good and He would do what He promised. Is that right?"

HOST (as ISAIAH): (*Brightly*) "Yes!"

STORYTELLER: "Okay. Now, tell me if I have this right. God gave you a really incredible vision.

HOST (as ISAIAH): "He did! In this vision, I heard God's voice. He asked:

"Who will I send?' (*Isaiah 6:8, NIV*)

"And I was like, (*raise your hand*) 'Here I am. Send me!' (*Isaiah 6:8, NIV*)

STORYTELLER: "Isaiah, that's incredible! You were so willing to give your life to follow God and do what God wanted you to do. (*Pause.*) So you were ready to speak God's words to the people—and we can even read some of the words God told you

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

to tell the people today."

HOST (as ISAIAH): *(Holding up the scroll and feather pen)* "Yes. Today you can find them in the book of the Bible called Isaiah—it's right there in what you call the Old Testament!"

STORYTELLER: "Amazing! So, you were living during a time when the southern kingdom of Judah was being threatened by lots of different enemies. That must have been a very difficult time for you."

HOST (as ISAIAH): *(Long pause as if he's going to say a lot, but then doesn't.)* "Yes."

THE RESCUER

STORYTELLER: "Okay. So, Isaiah, in the midst of all of that, God gave you messages. A lot of the messages God gave you were about a time far in the future—a time when God would send someone to the rescue. This Rescuer was someone God had promised was coming a long, long time ago, who would break the curse the world was under so people could be close to God again!

"Isaiah, God gave you some clues about that Rescuer, that Savior, who was coming. Would you mind reading some of the words God gave you about the Savior? Here, you can read them right here from the Bible.

→ **Hand the Bible to Isaiah.**

HOST (as ISAIAH): "Why, yes, of course!

→ **Host (Isaiah) opens the Bible to Isaiah 9:6 (NirV) and reads—slowly and deliberately.**

A child will be born to us.
A son will be given to us.
He will rule over us. *(NirV)*

WONDERFUL ADVISER ...

STORYTELLER: "Isaiah, I have to say, it's just amazing to think that God told you all of this about Jesus, HUNDREDS of years before He was born! Could you read us the next part—the part that says what the Savior would be like?"

HOST (as ISAIAH): "I'd love to.

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

→ **Host (*Isaiah*) opens the Bible to Isaiah 9:6 (NirV) and reads—slowly and deliberately.**

He will be called

Wonderful Adviser and Mighty God.

He will also be called Father Who Lives Forever

and Prince Who Brings Peace. (*NirV*)

STORYTELLER: "Wow—that is so cool!"

"God told you that the Rescuer would be our Wonderful Adviser ... Jesus directed His disciples, and He can direct us when we're not sure what to do.

"God told you that the Rescuer is our Mighty God. Well, Jesus is the Son of God. He's stronger and more powerful than any other king!

"The Rescuer would be called 'Father Who Lives Forever.' In Isaiah's day, a lot of people thought of a king as the father of a nation. Jesus is the King above all other kings, and He will live forever. Jesus is the King who lives forever!

"And God told you that the Rescuer would be called 'Prince Who Brings Peace.' Jesus did that too! When Jesus laid down His life for us—and rose again!—He made peace. He made a way for anyone who wants to, to be close with God again.

(To audience) "You see, Jesus was the Rescuer who God had promised so long ago! He is the one who would break that curse! And when we believe in Jesus and follow Him, we can be close to God again. We start a friendship with God that lasts forever.

(To Host) "Isaiah, could you please read us the next part of what God shared with you before you go? I just love to hear the words God shared through you about Jesus!"

HOST (as ISAIAH): "Of course!"

→ **Host (*Isaiah*) opens the Bible to Isaiah 9:7 (NirV) and reads—slowly and deliberately.**

There will be no limit to how great his authority is.

The peace he brings will never end.

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

He will rule on David's throne
and over his kingdom.

He will make the kingdom strong and secure.

His rule will be based on what is fair and right.

It will last forever.

The LORD's great love will make sure that happens.

He rules over all.

STORYTELLER: "Wow. God's great love would make sure that all happened. His love really is great. And God really wanted the people to know that He was sending a Rescuer, so much so that He gave even more details about this Rescuer to another prophet.

"Isaiah, would you mind reading the words that God gave this other prophet about Jesus?"

HOST (as ISAIAH): "Definitely! Here is what God told another prophet, named Micah.

→ **Host (Isaiah) opens the Bible to Micah 5:2 (NIRV) and reads.**

"Bethlehem Ephrathah, you might not be
an important town in the nation of Judah.

But out of you will come for me
a ruler over Israel.

His family line goes back
to the early years of your nation.

It goes all the way back
to days of long ago."

STORYTELLER: "Wow. God was telling the people that His Rescuer was going to come from Bethlehem, this tiny town. That was even more details about the Rescuer! God really wanted the people to know that help was coming. God even told the people where the Rescuer would come from!

"Isaiah, thank you so much for joining us today. And thank you for writing down these amazing words that set the stage for our Rescuer, our Savior, Jesus. **(To audience)** Let's give Isaiah a hand as he heads out!"

WRAPPING UP THE STORY

STORYTELLER: "Wow, I'm so thankful for the words God spoke

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

to Isaiah and Micah.

"Well, as we just saw, the Christmas story isn't just about a baby in a manger, it's about a promise that God kept. Before the shepherds, the star, even Mary and Joseph, God had a plan to rescue us. And that plan is Jesus. He's the reason we celebrate Christmas. God loves you so much He sent you Jesus!

"So let's celebrate Jesus this Christmas. He is the best gift ever—the best gift from a God who loves you so, so much that He worked for years and years to bring you a rescue.

"And this gift is not just for you—it's for everyone! That's our Bottom Line for today:

SLIDE: Bottom Line

[Bottom Line] "Jesus is good news for everyone." Say that with me."

→ Host enters and joins in.

STORYTELLER, HOST, and KIDS: *[Bottom Line]* "Jesus is good news for everyone."

GOD'S BIG STORY CLOSER (OPTIONAL)

HOST: "Let's take a look at the progress we made in God's Big Story this week!

SLIDE: God's Big Story

"This week we're right up here on this picture of God's Big Story, 'The Birth of Jesus.' (*Gesture to slide.*) This is such an important part in God's Big Story!

"This week we talked about two of God's prophets, Isaiah and Micah. Even though they both lived hundreds of years before Jesus was born, God gave them both hints and clues about God's promised Rescuer who would come. If you'll remember, since way back in the Garden of Eden when the first people fell under that awful curse of sin and couldn't be close to God anymore, God said: 'I am coming to rescue you.' For years and years, God was working on keeping that promise. Then, as we'll see in the next few weeks, Jesus came, just like God said He would! God loves us so much that He sent the Rescuer, Jesus, who would save us all! Merry Christmas, God sent you Jesus!

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

"Let's put the next image on our timeline!"

SLIDE: Week 1 Timeline Image

→ **If you're making a timeline of printed images on your wall, take this moment to place today's timeline image on the clothesline.**

"This week we talked about two of God's prophets—Isaiah and Micah! This is an image of the prophet Isaiah!"

WHAT'S OUR PART IN THE STORY?

HOST: "So, friends, we've heard all about the incredible promises God made long before Jesus was born. God promised a special baby would come—a baby who would grow up to be our Savior, the one who could break that awful curse. That was the promise that God had made long, long ago, He was going to send our Savior! And when Jesus came, He was that promise come true!"

STORYTELLER: "That's what Isaiah and Micah was talking about a long time ago. And guess what? It's not just a story from the past. Jesus is still good news today, for me and you!"

"And this great Rescue, it isn't just for some people; it's for everyone. That's why we say Jesus is good news for everyone. And that's what Christmas is all about—celebrating Jesus, God's greatest gift.

"We can celebrate by remembering and sharing this good news. Tell your friends and family that Jesus came for all of us. Let's make Him the center of our story, not just at Christmas, but every day.

"Now let's talk to the God who loves us so, so much He sent us the best gift of Jesus!"

④ Prayer

STORYTELLER or HOST: "Dear God, thank You for sending Jesus, the promise that You kept. Help us to always remember that You love us so much that You sent us Jesus. Help us remember Your great love this Christmas and beyond! We love

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

→ **Dismiss kids to their small groups.**

AUDIO: Play high-energy music as the kids exit.

SLIDE: Theme

Optional Video: Theme Loop

PLANNING

Getting Ready: Opener

What You Need

- ☐ Host

Music and Sound Effects

- ☐ Upbeat music to use as kids enter the room

Large Group Visuals

- ☐ Theme Slide
- ☐ Memory Verse Slide

Optional Videos

- ☐ Theme Loop
- ☐ Countdown
- ☐ Theme Intro

What You Do:

1. Download the slides or optional videos and have them ready to use. If you do not have screen capabilities, you have Orange's permission to enlarge and print the slides on paper.
2. Download music and/or sound effects on an authorized basis from a resource such as Apple Music®, Amazon Music®, and/or a sound effect library and have it ready to play. Or, if you choose to stream music, refer to the terms and conditions of your streaming service. Note that you will likely need a commercial license in order to stream music publicly. Also confirm that your church has appropriate licensing to perform music and sound effects in your kids' environments, such as a blanket PERFORMmusic™ license from CCS.
→ Note: Legally a song and/or sound effect belongs to the songwriter/composer who created it and the publisher who markets it. Performance rights organizations (PROs) license public performances (live or recorded) of their members' music. PROs in the U.S. are ASCAP, BMI, and SESAC. It is up to you to make sure your church has permission to perform or play a recording of a song and/or sound effect.

APlay

Get the most out of your curriculum with APlay! JoinAPlay.com is an all-in-one media organization and presentation tool. Experience all of your Orange Curriculum media assets, now pre-built and fully customizable. No more sorting through multiple download folders.

APlay is free with your curriculum subscription and packed with features to help your weekly experience run smoother. APlay gives you more time to focus on what truly matters — more ministry, less media management with Apple TV-based media solutions.

PLANNING

Getting Ready: Worship

What You Need

- ☐ Worship Leader(s)

Music and Sound Effects

- ☐ "Joy to the World" from *"Joy to the World" single*
- ☐ "Extra, Extra (It's Christmas Time)" from *Extra, Extra (It's Christmas Time) single*

Optional Videos

Available for Purchase

- ☐ "Joy to the World" Dance Moves Video or Live Lyrics Video
- ☐ "Extra, Extra (It's Christmas Time)" Dance Moves Video or Live Lyrics Video

[Store.ThinkOrange.com](https://www.thinkorange.com)

What You Do:

1. Download all songs and have them ready to use. Note: Make sure your church has obtained licensing rights to play or perform music. You can obtain a license to perform worship music from Christian Copyright Licensing International (www.ccli.com). It covers over 200,000 worship songs for congregational singing. You are responsible for including the copyright information on all songs reproduced under the Church Copyright License (including song lyrics projected onscreen). This includes the song title, writer credit(s), copyright notice, and your church's CCLI license number. You can include this information on one of the lyric slides, or you can create a separate slide detailing this information, but the copyright information must appear at least once for each song you play or perform.

For example:

"Hallelujah" words and music by John Doe
 ©2000 Good Music Co.
 CCLI License # 0000

2. Dance Moves Videos and Live Lyrics Videos are available for many Orange Kids Music songs. For more information, visit [Store.ThinkOrange.com](https://www.thinkorange.com).

PLANNING

Getting Ready: Bible Story

What You Need

- ☐ Storyteller
- ☐ Host
- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Table
- ☐ Biblical-style robe
- ☐ Fake gray beard
- ☐ Oversized, rolled-up scroll
- ☐ Feather pen
- ☐ Printed script for the Host
- ☐ Two chairs

Music and Sound Effects

- ☐ Upbeat music to use as kids exit the room

Large Group Visuals

- ☐ Theme Background Slide
- ☐ Bottom Line Slide
- ☐ Theme Slide

Optional Video

- ☐ Theme Loop

What You Do:

1. Download the slides and have them ready to use. If you do not have screen capabilities, you have Orange's permission to enlarge and print the slides on paper.
2. Confirm that your church has appropriate licensing to perform or play music and sound effects in your kids' environments (see above under Opener).
3. Before group time, the Host should be familiar with the script, so give them the script ahead of Large Group time. It might be a good idea to have the Host and Storyteller run through the script a few times together prior to Large Group.

Optional for God's Big Story

- ☐ Clothesline and clothespins for the timeline in your room
- ☐ God's Big Story Slide
- ☐ Week 1 Timeline Image Slide
- ☐ We recommend that you create a timeline in your Large Group room that you can add to throughout this curriculum year as we travel through the Bible. This can be a simple clothesline or a section of the wall where you can hang the printed Timeline Images in order, week by week. We'll provide a Timeline Image for each week of the curriculum. There are two versions of each Timeline Image—a slide and a print version. A digital [God's Big Story poster](#) is available as well in the Orange Store.

PLANNING

Getting Ready

Video Enhancements for Your Environment

Available in your media files and APlay.

Our Large Group scripts are interchangeable with these videos so you can plug and play the way you need to each week.

For 252 Kids (kindergarten through 3rd grade):

→ StoryLab: Invite elementary kids to engage with inquisitive young hosts as they explore core biblical truths and stories in a STEAM-inspired setting.

For 252 Preteen (4th and 5th grade):

→ The So & So Show: Guide preteens to explore questions of faith through a YouTube-style show full of humor and lots of zany fun.

Additional environment enhancements including:

- Motion graphics, including loops
- Themed transitions
- Countdown videos (30 seconds, 60 seconds, and 5 minutes)

WEEK

TWO

Large 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. Opening Activity

Large Group (35 minutes)

Worship: Inviting people to respond to God

Story: Communicating God's truth in engaging ways

- Opener
- Worship ("Silent Night" from Silent Night (The King Is Born) and "Extra, Extra [It's Christmas Time]" from Extra, Extra It's Christmas Time single)
- Bible Story (sections from God's Big Story are listed as optional)
- Prayer

Small Group (25 minutes)

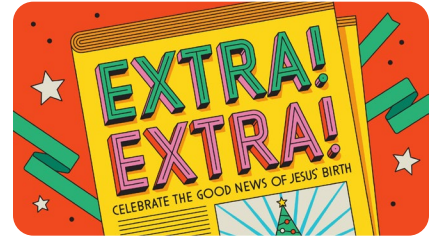
Groups: Creating a safe place to connect

1. Bible Story Review: Promise Relay (K–1st grade), Unbox the Greatest Gift (2nd–3rd grade)
2. Application Activity: Trust Moves (K–1st grade), God's Plan (2nd–3rd grade)
3. Memory Verse Activity: Verse Ornaments (K–1st grade), Verse Postcard (2nd–3rd grade)
4. Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss

Home: Prompting action beyond the experience

- Parent Cue Card (Print or Email)
- Devotionals for Kids
- [Parent Cue App](#) and [ParentCue.org](#)

THIS MONTH



Today's Bible Story

Gabriel Visits Mary Luke 1:5–66

Bottom Line

God always had a plan to send Jesus.

Memory Verse

**"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord."
Luke 2:11 NIV**



Inclusive Pro Tips

Loud sounds, bright lights, and large groups can be overwhelming or overstimulating for some children. To create a more inclusive large group experience, consider offering adaptive tools like noise-canceling headphones, sunglasses, sensory-friendly items, or access to modified spaces.

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

AUDIO: Play high-energy music as kids enter.

SLIDE: Theme

Optional Video: Theme Loop

→ **Host enters.**

Optional Video: Countdown

Optional Video: Theme Intro

Optional Video: Theme Loop

① Opener

HOST: “Hi, friends! Welcome to *[Name of environment]*! This month, we’re celebrating something really special. It’s Christmas time—a time we remember God’s greatest gift to us: Jesus.

“Extra! Extra! Read all about it! God sent Jesus to rescue you because He loves you so much!

“And you know what? Just like we enjoy the rhythm of our favorite Christmas songs, God had a rhythm in His plan for sending Jesus to us. Today, we’re going to have fun with rhythm and music while we get ready for an amazing true story from the Bible about God’s plan to send Jesus!

→ **Instruct the kids to sit in one big circle. If you have a lot of kids, you may want to create more than one circle. You will also need more than one box if you create multiple circles.**

“Let’s all sit in a circle and get started with our game called ‘Rhythm Gift Pass!’ We’re going to pass something to each other, just like God passed on His promise through Jesus.

“In ‘Rhythm Gift Pass,’ we’re going to pass these little gift boxes around the circle to the beat of the music. But here’s the catch—you have to keep the rhythm! If the music speeds up, pass the gift quickly. If the music slows down, pass the gift slowly. If the music stops, you’re out. Let’s keep the rhythm going, just like the Christmas story keeps going every year!

“Are you ready? Let’s start the music and get those gifts moving!

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

Note: We've suggested worship songs below from Amazing Kids Worship and Orange Kids Music. We've created these songs to be developmentally appropriate for elementary and preteen kids, incorporating simple, direct language, fun dance movements, and upbeat, current arrangements.

We've chosen these specific songs that amplify our teaching content for this month. We recommend that you use these songs as scripted below, or combined with other popular worship songs that your kids know and love. Be sure to share the links to these songs with parents so they can stream them at home or in the car! Songs can be purchased at store. thinkorange.com or for free with APlay.

AUDIO: Festive Christmas Music with a Beat

Play festive Christmas music at regular speed, fast speed, and slow speed, and stop the music. Encourage the kids to pass the gift according to the speed of the music. Occasionally, stop the music so kids are "out."

HOST: "Great job, everyone! You kept the rhythm going just like God keeps His promises going. In our Bible Story today, we'll learn how Zechariah, Elizabeth, and Mary were part of God's plan—a plan He had from the very beginning. And that's what our Bottom Line is all about: **[Bottom Line]** God always had a plan to send Jesus.

"Now, as we get ready to hear more about this incredible plan, let's prepare our hearts to celebrate the best gift ever through worship. We'll sing songs that remind us of the joy and love that Jesus brings. Let's thank God for sending us Jesus! So everybody, stand up and let's lift our voices together!"

② Worship

→ **Worship Leaders enter as Host exits.**

WORSHIP LEADER: "Hi, everyone! It's a special time of year, and we're going to celebrate with some songs that remind us of the first Christmas when God gave us the greatest gift ever—Jesus! God loves us so much that He gave us Jesus! Are you ready to sing and celebrate together?"

"Let's start with a song called 'Silent Night.'

AUDIO: "Silent Night (*The King Is Born*)" / track 1 from Silent Night (*The King Is Born*)

WORSHIP LEADER: "Great singing and dancing, everyone!"

SLIDE: Memory Verse

WORSHIP LEADER: "Before we sing our last song, let's read our Memory Verse together and learn some simple motions. This is part of what the angel declared to the shepherds on the night Jesus was born! It's great, great news! This message is recorded in the Bible in Luke chapter 2, verse 11.

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

"This is part of what the angel said:

"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord" (Luke 2:11 NIV).

"What great news! Jesus had been born! Let me teach you some motions that might help you remember the verse. You guys repeat the motions after me:

"Today in the town of David" – Point straight down with both hands like you're marking right now.

"a Savior" – Spread your arms wide like you're about to hug.

"has been born" – Rock your arms like you're holding a baby.

"to you." – Point to a friend or the group.

"He is the Messiah," – Pretend like you're putting on a crown with your hands.

"the Lord." – Point both hands up to the sky.

"Luke 2:11" – Open the palms of your hands together like you're opening a Bible.

"Let's all try that together!

→ **Repeat the Memory Verse with the motions several times.**

"Great job! This season, we can remember that God sent His Son, Jesus, to us. Isn't that amazing? It's great, great news! This next song is about sharing the great news with everyone!

AUDIO: "Extra, Extra (*It's Christmas Time*)" / track from Extra, Extra (*It's Christmas Time*) Single

"Great job, everyone! It's so fun to celebrate what God did for us at Christmas! Let's go ahead and sit down and hear our true story from the Bible today!"

③ Bible Story

SLIDE: Theme Background

→ **Storyteller enters as Worship Leaders exit.**

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

Note: We're so excited to be going through key stories of the Bible this year and learning more about its Author—God! It's God's Big Story! But to provide you with flexibility as you experience God's Big Story in your own unique setting, there's more than one way to use the following script!

If you want to follow "God's Big Story," read the following script straight through. Each week will build on the previous ones. But, if your church wants to teach a Large Group session without connecting it to what has come before, two sections in the script below are optional—"God's Big Story Opener" and "God's Big Story Closer." (Or if you are joining us at some point throughout the year, you can opt out of the God's Big Story part and just join us as we journey through the rest of the story of Scripture!) We're going to go through the Bible as we teach throughout the year, but whether or not you share God's Big Story each week is up to you!

Whatever way you decide to use the following, know that we're praying diligently for you—we're asking God to help kids see and believe that He loves them, He invented them, and He wants to be their closest Friend. Forever. It's an honor to get to know God with you through the Bible this year!

INTRODUCTION

- Make sure a small table is set up to the side of the stage so the Storyteller can place their Bible on it, read their Bible from it, and narrate the story. Set the baby doll prop near the table so the Elizabeth actress can access it.

"Hey, friends! It's almost Christmas! Yay!

"Can you feel the joy in the air? It's because, whether or not everyone believes it, at Christmas, we celebrate that God sent us the greatest gift of Jesus!

"We're going to talk more about God's great gift of Jesus today, but before we do that, let me tell you about something amazing we're doing this year! We're going through key stories in the entire Bible from cover to cover!

"Part of the reason God gave us the Bible is so we can learn about Him! So as we go through all of these true stories in the Bible this year, we'll learn about Him!"

GOD'S BIG STORY OPENER (OPTIONAL)

STORYTELLER: "We're going to go through God's Big Story in the Bible together so we can get to know Him! (***Gesture to slide.***)

SLIDE: God's Big Story

"Let me catch you up on where we've been in God's Big Story so far!

"You might remember that, in the beginning, God created everything. He made the world, the animals, people ... everything! God made the first people for the same reason He made all people—to be His close, close friends. But sadly, the first people God made chose to turn away from Him and sin. God wanted people to be close to Him, but they couldn't anymore. Pain, sickness, and death entered the world too.

"But God didn't want to leave things that way. So He put His rescue plan in motion right from the start!

"God was going to rescue everything through a family! God chose a man named Abraham and promised that his family would bless the whole world. Abraham had a great-grandson named Joseph, who became a leader in Egypt and saved his

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

family—God’s people. Over time, God’s people grew but were enslaved by a new Pharaoh. God’s people cried out to God—‘Help us!’ they said—and God heard them! God freed His people and brought them to the super-nice home He had designed for them, the Promised Land.

“Some time after God’s people were settled in the Promised Land, they asked for a king like the other nations around them. God gave them a king, and then many more kings (**and one queen**) followed. Sadly, after a long time of turning away from Him, God allowed His nation to be split in two—into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. Prophets spoke for God saying, ‘Come back to Me!’ But the northern kingdom of Israel was destroyed, and the southern kingdom of Judah was taken captive. After years in exile, some of God’s people returned to rebuild their homeland, while others stayed in foreign lands.

“During that sad time, God kept sending messages to His people about the Rescuer He had promised long ago. ‘God’s Rescuer is going to come like this!’ God told His prophets to share. But for years and years, nothing happened.

“But that long, long time was about to come to an end. God was about to show the world what He was working on for centuries—His plan to rescue all of us.

“And that’s where we are in God’s Big Story!

SETTING UP THE STORY

STORYTELLER: “Today, we’re continuing our journey through the Bible. And today is our first time in the New Testament—this week’s true story is in the book of Luke.

→ **Hold up the Bible and turn to the New Testament, making sure the kids can see what you’re doing.**

“God had been planning His great rescue for a long, long time.

→ **Point out the big chunk of the Bible that is the Old Testament as you say the next words.**

“Ever since the Garden of Eden, when Adam and Eve fell under that curse of sin, and the whole world couldn’t be close to God anymore, God promised that He was going to rescue us so we could be close to Him.

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

"And at just the right time, after years and years and years, something amazing happened! That's what our true story from the Bible is all about! Let's get started!"

BIG NEWS FOR ZECHARIAH

STORYTELLER: "Now, at the time our story takes place, there was a priest named Zechariah. Zechariah, can you come to the middle of the stage?"

→ **Nod to Zechariah actor to cue him to come to center stage and act.**

"Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth faithfully served God, but they had no children. They believed they were way past the age that they ever COULD have children.

→ **Zechariah is standing with his hands, palms up, in front of him, like he's offering something.**

"One day, Zechariah was chosen to enter the temple and burn incense before God, while his group of priests was serving. As Zechariah stood before the altar, the angel Gabriel appeared before him!"

→ **Zechariah puts his hands up in front of his face, like he's blocking the light.**

"The angel said:

→ **Open the Bible to Luke 1:13-17 (NirV) and read.**

"Do not be afraid, Zechariah. Your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will have a child. It will be a boy, and you must call him John. He will be a joy and delight to you. His birth will make many people very glad. He will be important in the sight of the Lord ... He will prepare the way for the Lord."

"WHOA. Zechariah's mind must have been reeling.

→ **Zechariah holds his head (*hands on either side*).**

"God was promising a child—and not just any child, but one who would be a powerful leader for God.

"Zechariah asked the angel how this could happen.

→ **Zechariah holds his hands up, palms up, in a questioning pose.**

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

"After all, he was quite an old man, and his wife Elizabeth was old too. Listen to what the angel said.

→ **Open the Bible to Luke 1:19-20 (NIV) and read.**

"I am Gabriel. I serve God. I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. And now you will have to be silent. You will not be able to speak until after John is born. That's because you did not believe my words. They will come true at the time God has chosen."

"Ouch! Zechariah didn't have anything to say to this ... because he couldn't speak. When he left the temple, the other priests tried to find out why Zechariah had been in there so long, but he could only tell them in gestures—like charades!

→ **Zechariah acts like he's doing charades.**

"Elizabeth, can you move to center stage, too?

→ **The Elizabeth actress should stand next to the Zechariah actor, with her back to the audience to conceal the pregnancy pillow.**

"It must have been a double shock for Elizabeth when Zechariah got home. Not only was he unable to speak ... but he had a pretty unbelievable story to share.

→ **Zechariah is doing the charades again.**

"Elizabeth must have been overjoyed, though, when God's words came true, and she became pregnant!

→ **Elizabeth turns around, revealing her "pregnancy" (pillow).**

BIG NEWS FOR MARY

STORYTELLER: "Now, Elizabeth and Zechariah's story wasn't over, but we need to take a quick detour. Elizabeth and Zechariah, can you move to the side of the stage?

"Mary, it's your turn!

→ **Nod as the Mary actress moves to the middle of the stage.**

"Several days' journey away, in the town of Nazareth, Elizabeth's relative Mary was about to receive amazing news too.

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

→ **Mary is on her knees in a praying pose.**

"The angel Gabriel appeared to Mary, just like he had appeared to Zechariah before!

→ **Mary holds up her hands in front of her face to block the light.**

"The angel said to Mary:

→ **Open the Bible to Luke 1:28 (NirV) and read.**

"The Lord has blessed you in a special way. He is with you."

"Mary was completely shocked! She didn't understand what the angel was saying. But Gabriel went on, saying:

→ **Open the Bible to Luke 1:30-32 (NirV) and read.**

"Do not be afraid, Mary. God is very pleased with you. You will become pregnant and give birth to a son. You must call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God."

"Mary asked how this could happen.

→ **Mary holds up her hands in a questioning manner.**

"Gabriel responded:

→ **Open the Bible to Luke 1:35-37 (NirV) and read.**

"The Holy Spirit will come to you. The power of the Most High God will cover you. So the holy one that is born will be called the Son of God. Your relative Elizabeth will have a child even though she is old. People thought she could not have children. But she has been pregnant for six months now. That's because what God says will always come true."

"Mary chose to trust God.

→ **Mary bows her head reverently.**

"She said:

→ **Open the Bible to Luke 1:38 (NirV) and read.**

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

"I serve the Lord . . . May it happen to me just as you said it would."

"Then the angel left Mary.

VISITING ELIZABETH

STORYTELLER: "Mary then took a trip to see her cousin Elizabeth. It would have taken days of hard travel, but at last she arrived in the hill country of Judea where Zechariah and Elizabeth lived.

"Elizabeth, can you join Mary in the middle of the stage?

"When Mary entered the home of Elizabeth and Zechariah, she called out a greeting to Elizabeth, and the baby inside Elizabeth jumped!

→ **Elizabeth holds her stomach.**

"Elizabeth said to Mary:

→ **Open the Bible to Luke 1:42-45 (NirV) and read.**

"God has blessed you more than other women. And blessed is the child you will have! But why is God so kind to me? Why has the mother of my Lord come to me? As soon as I heard the sound of your voice, the baby inside me jumped for joy. You are a woman God has blessed. You have believed that the Lord would keep his promises to you!"

→ **Mary and Elizabeth hug.**

"Mary knew that God had blessed her in a special way. She stayed with Elizabeth for three months, and then she went home.

"Mary, you can move off to the side. Zechariah, can you join Elizabeth in the middle of the stage?

"Soon after that, it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby.

→ **Elizabeth gets the baby doll.**

"Friends and relatives crowded around Elizabeth and Zechariah and their newborn baby.

→ **Zechariah pretends to hold back the crowds.**

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

"The relatives planned to name the baby Zechariah, after his father. But Elizabeth spoke up and said that the child should be called John.

→ **Elizabeth holds up one hand and shakes her head.**

"Everyone turned to Zechariah to get his say. But of course, Zechariah still couldn't talk, so he gestured for something to write with.

→ **Zechariah gestures for something and pretends to write on something.**

"Zechariah wrote, 'His name is John.' Right away, Zechariah could speak!

ZECHARIAH: "John! His name is John! Praise God!"

WRAPPING UP THE STORY

STORYTELLER: "Wow! What an amazing true story!"

"Let's give a big hand to our actors, everyone.

→ **Lead the applause as the actors wave and exit.**

"As we wrap this up, remember that God's plan to send Jesus wasn't random—it was perfect and powerful, and straight from Him. God had planned to send Jesus for a long, long time.

"Through Zechariah, Elizabeth, and Mary, we see that God keeps His promises! He will work through situations that seem impossible, but they aren't impossible for Him. He had promised that He would rescue His people, and He made a way where it seemed like there was no way!

"And, this is absolutely amazing. Our rescue was so important to God that He sent us His very own Son as our Rescuer. What a great, great gift!

STORYTELLER: "Jesus, God's Son Himself, came to rescue us so we could be close to God again. That's what makes Christmas such good news."

"The story of Jesus' birth is one that we can carry in our hearts all year long. God loves us so much that He sent us Jesus!

"God always had a plan to send Jesus ... and He did!

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

"That's our Bottom Line for today.

SLIDE: Bottom Line

[Bottom Line] "God always had a plan to send Jesus. Say that with me."

STORYTELLER and KIDS: **[Bottom Line]** "God always had a plan to send Jesus."

GOD'S BIG STORY CLOSER (OPTIONAL)

STORYTELLER: "Let's take a look at the progress we made in God's Big Story this week!

SLIDE: God's Big Story

"This week we're right up here on this picture of God's Big Story, 'The Birth of Jesus.' (***Gesture to slide.***) This is such an important part in God's Big Story!

"This week, we talked about some important figures in God's great rescue plan—Zechariah, Elizabeth, and Mary! And God wanted to make it clear that He, and only He, was behind this great rescue. A couple who were too old had a baby? A young girl was going to have a baby who would be God's Son? Only God can do that! That seems impossible for us, but it's not impossible for God! For years and years and years, God had worked on this great rescue plan. But God wasn't just going to rescue us, He was going to send a Rescuer—His very own Son. God loves you so much that He gave you the greatest gift, your Rescuer, Jesus. Merry Christmas, God sent you Jesus!

"Let's put the next image on our timeline!

SLIDE: Week 2 Timeline Image

→ **If you're making a timeline of printed images on your wall, take this moment to place today's timeline image on the clothesline.**

"This week we talked about some of the people God did amazing things through in His great rescue plan—Zechariah, Elizabeth, and Mary. This picture is of the angel Gabriel coming to visit Mary to deliver the news that she was going to have Jesus, God's very own Son! Amazing!"

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

WHAT'S OUR PART IN THE STORY?

STORYTELLER: "Wow. God loves you so very much that He worked for years and years and years to bring about His great rescue.

"This Christmas, remember God's love. Remember that He didn't let anything get in His way to send you the gift of Jesus. Even though Zechariah and Elizabeth were old, God brought them the baby they wanted! And Mary was going to be the mom of God's Son? That's impossible for us, but not for God! God was making it very clear that He was the One behind the first Christmas. And nothing was going to stand in His way to send you your Rescuer. "When we celebrate Christmas, we're not just celebrating a holiday. We're celebrating God's love! God loves you so much He sent you Jesus!

"God loves you so very much. That's why **[Bottom Line]** God always had a plan to send Jesus.

"This Christmas, every time you see a decoration or anything Christmas, remember God's great love for you. The whole world is having a party because God gave us the greatest gift! Every time you see a twinkle light, or a Christmas cookie, or a candy cane, you can think, 'It's a big celebration because God sent Jesus. He loves me!'

"Let's talk to God who loves us so much He worked for years and years to send Jesus."

④ Prayer

STORYTELLER or HOST: "God, thank You that You always had a plan to send Jesus. You never intended for our relationship with You to stay broken, and You put a plan together that unfolded over hundreds of years so we could be close to You again. Thank You for sending Jesus to show us how much You love us. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

→ **Dismiss kids to their small groups.**

AUDIO: Play high-energy music as the kids exit.

SLIDE: Theme

Optional Video: Theme Loop

PLANNING

Getting Ready: Opener

What You Need

- ☐ Small boxes (5-10, depending on group size)
- ☐ Christmas-themed wrapping paper
- ☐ Christmas music playlist
- ☐ Music player with the ability to speed up or slow down a song

Music and Sound Effects

- ☐ Upbeat music to use as kids enter the room
- ☐ Christmas music that has a beat.

Large Group Visuals

- ☐ Theme Slide
- ☐ Memory Verse Slide

Optional Videos

- ☐ Theme Loop
- ☐ Countdown
- ☐ Theme Intro

What You Do:

1. Download the slides or optional videos and have them ready to use. If you do not have screen capabilities, you have Orange's permission to enlarge and print the slides on paper.
2. Refer to week 1 to confirm that your church has appropriate licensing to perform or play music and sound effects in your kids' environments.
3. Wrap the small boxes. Make one box for each circle you'll create for the game.

APlay

Get the most out of your curriculum with APlay! JoinAPlay.com is an all-in-one media organization and presentation tool. Experience all of your Orange Curriculum media assets, now pre-built and fully customizable. No more sorting through multiple download folders.

APlay is free with your curriculum subscription and packed with features to help your weekly experience run smoother. APlay gives you more time to focus on what truly matters — more ministry, less media management with Apple TV-based media solutions.

PLANNING

Getting Ready: Worship

What You Need

- ☐ Worship Leader(s)

Music and Sound Effects

- ☐ "Silent Night" from Silent Night (The King Is Born)
- ☐ "Extra, Extra (It's Christmas Time)" from Extra, Extra (It's Christmas Time) single

Optional Videos

Available for Purchase

- ☐ "Silent Night" Dance Moves or Live Lyrics Video (available through Store.ThinkOrange.com)
- ☐ "Extra, Extra (It's Christmas Time)" Dance Moves Video or Live Lyrics Video (available through Store.ThinkOrange.com)

Store.ThinkOrange.com

What You Do:

1. Download all songs and have them ready to use. Note: Make sure your church has obtained licensing rights to play or perform music. You can obtain a license to perform worship music from Christian Copyright Licensing International (www.ccli.com). It covers over 200,000 worship songs for congregational singing. You are responsible for including the copyright information on all songs reproduced under the Church Copyright License (including song lyrics projected onscreen). This includes the song title, writer credit(s), copyright notice, and your church's CCLI license number. You can include this information on one of the lyric slides, or you can create a separate slide detailing this information, but the copyright information must appear at least once for each song you play or perform.

For example:

"Hallelujah" words and music by John Doe
©2000 Good Music Co.
CCLI License # 0000

2. Dance Moves Videos and Live Lyrics Videos are available for many Orange Kids Music songs. For more information, visit Store.ThinkOrange.com.

PLANNING

Getting Ready: Bible Story

What You Need

- ☐ Storyteller
- ☐ Host
- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Table
- ☐ Three adult or student volunteers to play Zechariah, Elizabeth, and Mary (see “What You Do”)
- ☐ Pillow for Elizabeth’s “pregnancy”
- ☐ Baby doll
- ☐ 3 biblical-style robes for Zechariah, Elizabeth, and Mary

Music and Sound Effects

- ☐ Upbeat music to use as kids exit the room

Large Group Visuals

- ☐ Theme Background Slide
- ☐ Bottom Line Slide
- ☐ Theme Slide

Optional Video

- ☐ Theme Loop

What You Do:

1. Download the slides and have them ready to use. If you do not have screen capabilities, you have Orange’s permission to enlarge and print the slides on paper.
2. Confirm that your church has appropriate licensing to perform or play music and sound effects in your kids’ environments (see above under Opener).
3. Recruit three people who can play Zechariah, Elizabeth, and Mary (one male and two females). They won’t have any spoken lines, except for Zechariah at the very end. Make sure they have a copy of the script ahead of time so they know which motions to do during the story.
4. Take time to rehearse the story in advance with the three actors. Make sure that Elizabeth knows where the baby doll will be.

Optional for God’s Big Story

- ☐ Clothesline and clothespins for the timeline in your room
- ☐ God’s Big Story Slide
- ☐ Week 2 Timeline Image Slide
- ☐ We recommend that you create a timeline in your Large Group room that you can add to throughout this curriculum year as we travel through the Bible. This can be a simple clothesline or a section of the wall where you can hang the printed Timeline Images in order, week by week. We’ll provide a Timeline Image for each week of the curriculum. There are two versions of each Timeline Image—a slide and a print version. A digital [God’s Big Story poster](#) is available as well in the Orange Store.

PLANNING

Getting Ready

Video Enhancements for Your Environment

Available in your media files and APlay.

Our Large Group scripts are interchangeable with these videos so you can plug and play the way you need to each week.

For 252 Kids (kindergarten through 3rd grade):

→ StoryLab: Invite elementary kids to engage with inquisitive young hosts as they explore core biblical truths and stories in a STEAM-inspired setting.

For 252 Preteen (4th and 5th grade):

→ The So & So Show: Guide preteens to explore questions of faith through a YouTube-style show full of humor and lots of zany fun.

Additional environment enhancements including:

- Motion graphics, including loops
- Themed transitions
- Countdown videos (30 seconds, 60 seconds, and 5 minutes)

WEEK

THREE

Large 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. Opening Activity

Large Group (35 minutes)

Worship: Inviting people to respond to God

Story: Communicating God's truth in engaging ways

- Opener
- Worship ("Joy to the World" from Joy to the World single and "Extra, Extra [It's Christmas Time]" from Extra, Extra It's Christmas Time single)
- Bible Story (sections from God's Big Story are listed as optional)
- Prayer

Small Group (25 minutes)

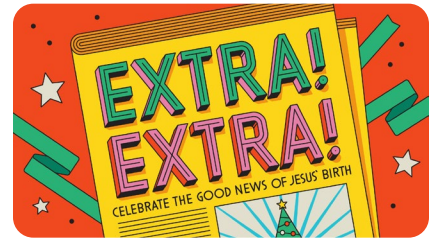
Groups: Creating a safe place to connect

1. Bible Story Review: Breaking News: Jesus is Born! (K-1st grade), Shepherds' Surprise (2nd-3rd grade)
2. Application Activity: The Greatest Gift Box (K-1st grade), Pass the Gift (2nd-3rd grade)
3. Memory Verse Activity: Echo the Good News (K-1st grade), Good News Gazette (2nd-3rd grade)
4. Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss

Home: Prompting action beyond the experience

- Parent Cue Card (Print or Email)
- Devotionals for Kids
- [Parent Cue App](#) and [ParentCue.org](#)

THIS MONTH



Today's Bible Story

Jesus Is Born Luke 2:1-20

Bottom Line

Jesus is the greatest gift.

Memory Verse

**"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord."
Luke 2:11 NIV**



Inclusive Pro Tips

Loud sounds, bright lights, and large groups can be overwhelming or overstimulating for some children. To create a more inclusive large group experience, consider offering adaptive tools like noise-canceling headphones, sunglasses, sensory-friendly items, or access to modified spaces.

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

AUDIO: Play high-energy music as kids enter.

SLIDE: Theme

Optional Video: Theme Loop

→ **Host enters.**

Optional Video: Countdown

Optional Video: Theme Intro

Optional Video: Theme Loop

① Opener

HOST: "Hello, friends! It's almost Christmas! Yay!

"Extra! Extra! Read all about it! God loves you so much, He sent you Jesus!

"I'm so glad you're here today as we discover even more about why Christmas is about celebrating Jesus, God's greatest gift to us.

"And speaking of Christmas, have you ever listened closely to the sounds of Christmas? The jingle of bells, the hustle and bustle, and, of course, the music! Well, today, we're going to make music together with our very own rhythm and music game!"

→ **Divide kids into four groups—one for bells, one for wooden sticks, one for drums, and one for shakers. Give each kid one instrument. (If you don't have enough instruments to give each kid an instrument, then form a quartet and ask four kids to be your onstage band.)**

"Okay, everyone, let's start with our hand bells. When I point to you, give them a good shake. Ready? Here we go. Listen to the jingle—it sounds just like sleigh bells on Christmas Eve, doesn't it?

"Now, let's try the wooden sticks. When it's your turn, tap them together like you're a drummer in a Christmas parade.

"And what about our drums? Give them a soft pat, pat, pat. Imagine you're playing along with the angel announcing the greatest gift ever—Jesus!

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

Note: We've suggested worship songs below from Amazing Kids Worship and Orange Kids Music. We've created these songs to be developmentally appropriate for elementary and preteen kids, incorporating simple, direct language, fun dance movements, and upbeat, current arrangements.

We've chosen these specific songs that amplify our teaching content for this month. We recommend that you use these songs as scripted below, or combined with other popular worship songs that your kids know and love. Be sure to share the links to these songs with parents so they can stream them at home or in the car! Songs can be purchased at store. thinkorange.com or for free with APlay.

"Last one, our shakers! Shake them up and down gently. It's like the sound of falling snowflakes on a night at Christmastime.

"Now let's put it all together. We're going to play our instruments to 'Joy to the World' to celebrate Jesus, the greatest gift. Each of you has a part in this song, just like each of you has a part in celebrating Jesus this Christmas."

→ **Host acts as conductor, and directs each group to play as the song plays over audio.**

AUDIO: "Joy to the World"

"Isn't it great that we can come together and make music? This season is full of so much joy! Whether or not they believe it, the whole world is having a party because at Christmas God gave us the greatest gift—Jesus!

"Now, let's sing to the God who gave us such a great gift!"

② Worship

→ **Worship Leaders enter as Host exits.**

WORSHIP LEADER: "Hi, friends! Christmas Day is almost here! Hooray! Christmas is such a special time because it's when we celebrate Jesus, God's greatest gift to us. God gave us Jesus because He loves us so much! Our first song is 'Joy to the World.' It's a little bit different than the one we played music to. But Jesus is joy for the whole world—Jesus is good news for everyone!

"Let's stand up and get ready to sing 'Joy to the World!'"

AUDIO: "Joy to the World" / from Joy to the World single

WORSHIP LEADER: "Great singing and dancing, everyone!"

SLIDE: Memory Verse

WORSHIP LEADER: "Before we sing our last song, let's learn our Memory Verse together with some simple motions. This is part of the message the angel declared to the shepherds on the night

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

Jesus was born! The angel's visit to the shepherds is recorded in the Bible in Luke chapter 2. It's Luke 2:11!

"It goes like this:

"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord" (Luke 2:11 NIV).

"Let me teach you some motions that might help you remember the verse. You guys repeat the motions after me:

"Today in the town of David" – Point straight down with both hands like you're marking right now.

"a Savior" – Spread your arms wide like you're about to hug.

"has been born" – Rock your arms like you're holding a baby.

"to you." – Point to a friend or the group.

"He is the Messiah," – Pretend like you're putting on a crown with your hands.

"the Lord." – Point both hands up to the sky.

"Luke 2:11" – Open the palms of your hands together like you're opening a Bible.

"Let's all try that together!

→ **Repeat the Memory Verse with the motions several times.**

"Great job! This Christmas season, we can remember that God sent His Son, Jesus, to us. Isn't that amazing? It is great, great news! This next song is talking about how we can share that great news with everyone!

AUDIO: "Extra, Extra (*It's Christmas Time*)" / track from Extra, Extra (*It's Christmas Time*) Single

"Great job, everyone! Let's go ahead and sit down and hear our true story from the Bible today!"

③ Bible Story

SLIDE: Theme Background

→ **Storyteller enters as Worship Leaders exit.**

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

Note: We're so excited to be going through key stories of the Bible this year and learning more about its Author—God! It's God's Big Story! But to provide you with flexibility as you experience God's Big Story in your own unique setting, there's more than one way to use the following script!

If you want to follow "God's Big Story," read the following script straight through. Each week will build on the previous ones. But, if your church wants to teach a Large Group session without connecting it to what has come before, two sections in the script below are optional—"God's Big Story Opener" and "God's Big Story Closer." (Or if you are joining us at some point throughout the year, you can opt out of the God's Big Story part and just join us as we journey through the rest of the story of Scripture!) We're going to go through the Bible as we teach throughout the year, but whether or not you share God's Big Story each week is up to you!

Whatever way you decide to use the following, know that we're praying diligently for you—we're asking God to help kids see and believe that He loves them, He invented them, and He wants to be their closest Friend. Forever. It's an honor to get to know God with you through the Bible this year!

INTRODUCTION

STORYTELLER: "Hi, friends! It's almost Christmas! That's so exciting! There are Christmas trees and presents and candy canes—all to celebrate what happened on that very first Christmas, when God gave us Jesus—**[Bottom Line]** Jesus is the greatest gift!

"And that's what we're going to learn about today! But before we get to the Christmas story, let me tell you about something amazing we're doing this year! We're learning about the key stories in the Bible from cover to cover!

"Why? Well, one of the reasons God gave us the Bible is so we can know Him! So as we read key stories from the Bible this year, hopefully we'll learn about Him!

GOD'S BIG STORY OPENER (OPTIONAL)

STORYTELLER: "We're going to go through God's Big Story in the Bible together so we can get to know Him! **(Gesture to slide.)**

SLIDE: God's Big Story

"Let me catch you up on where we've been in God's Big Story so far!

"You might remember that, in the beginning, God created everything. He made the world, the animals, people ... everything! God made the first people for the same reason He made all people—to be His close, close friends. But sadly, the first people God made chose to turn away from Him and sin. God wanted people to be close to Him, but they couldn't be close to Him anymore. Pain, sickness, and death entered the world too.

"But God didn't want to leave things that way. So He put His rescue plan in motion right from the start!

"God was going to rescue everything through a family! God chose a man named Abraham and promised that his family would bless the whole world. Abraham had a great-grandson named Joseph, who became a leader in Egypt and saved his family—God's people. Over time, God's people grew but were enslaved by a new Pharaoh. God's people cried out to God—'Help us!' they said—and God heard them! God freed His people and brought them to the super-nice home He had designed for them, the Promised Land.

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

"Some time after God's people were settled in the Promised Land, they asked for a king like the other nations around them. God gave them a king, and then many more kings (**and one queen**) followed. Sadly, after a long time of turning away from Him, God allowed His nation to be split in two—into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. Prophets spoke for God saying, 'Come back to Me!' But the northern kingdom of Israel was destroyed, and the southern kingdom of Judah was taken captive. After years in exile, some of God's people returned to rebuild their homeland, while others stayed in foreign lands.

"During that sad time, God kept sending messages to His people about the Rescuer He had promised long ago. 'God's Rescuer is going to come like this!' God told His prophets to share. But for years and years, nothing happened.

"But that long, long time was about to come to an end. God was about to show the world what He was working on for centuries—His plan to rescue all of us.

"And that's where we are in God's Big Story!

SETTING UP THE STORY

- **Set a large table in the middle of the stage. On this large table should be the Storyteller's Bible, the tub of vanilla frosting, the canister of different-colored sprinkles, the butter knife (or other tool) for spreading the frosting, and the cookie sheet with the ten sugar cookies on them that will be used to tell the Bible Story. To one side, it should also contain the backdrop where the decorated cookies will be placed.**
- **Storyteller should be wearing the apron and the chef's hat (if wearing).**
- **Storyteller can place the printed script on the table for reference if needed. An adult volunteer (a sous chef) is recommended to help Storyteller decorate and position the cookies as they tell the story!**

STORYTELLER: "Merry Christmas, everyone! And welcome to the [*your environment's name*] baking show! I've always wanted to have my own baking show, so I figured, what better time to do it than today? I thought I could tell the story of Jesus'

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

birth by decorating some Christmas cookies. And my sous chef here (***nod to volunteer***) is going to help me tell the story and decorate some cookies!

→ **Hold up the undecorated Mary cookie.**

"Let's get started here with Mary while we remember where we've been so far.

→ **Put frosting and one color of sprinkles on the Mary cookie. throughout this next section. (*Make sure to make eye contact with the kids from time to time, and feel free to have ongoing discussion with the sous chef—that will make things more entertaining.*)**

"God always had a plan to send Jesus. Ever since the Garden of Eden, when Adam and Eve ushered in the curse of sin that kept everyone from being close to God, God started His plan to rescue us. He wants us to be His close friends!

"So God got to work on His great rescue plan. And He worked for years and years and years—all of the Old Testament in the Bible is filled with stories of God working on His great rescue plan. Then, when the time was right, God sent an angel to a young woman named Mary to tell her some incredible news—she was going to have a baby!

→ **Hold up the finished Mary cookie to show the kids, then put it against the backdrop. Be sure to put it on one side of the backdrop to leave room on the other side for the shepherds.**

"And this baby was going to be a very special baby! God wasn't just going to rescue us, He was sending a Rescuer—His very own Son!

THE CENSUS

→ **During this section, put frosting and a different color of sprinkles on the Joseph cookie.**

STORYTELLER: "At this time, God's people were living under Roman rule. The Roman leader, Caesar Augustus, commanded that everyone should be counted so they could pay taxes. That meant everyone had to go to their hometown to be listed.

"In Nazareth, there was a man who was engaged to marry Mary. He was a carpenter named Joseph.

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

- **Hold up the finished Joseph cookie, then place it against the backdrop.**
- **During this section, put frosting and a different color of sprinkles on the baby Jesus cookie. Only put frosting on the manger cookie (*no sprinkles*).**

“Both Joseph and Mary had been born into the family line of King David. So they would have to make the almost week-long journey to Bethlehem, the town of David, in order to be counted. This was more than a little inconvenient, as Mary was going to have a baby!

THE JOURNEY

STORYTELLER: “Depending on the route they took, the trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem could have been up to 90 miles—which would have taken nearly a whole WEEK for Joseph and Mary to travel on foot, or by donkey.

“When they finally arrived in Bethlehem, they found that lots of other people had come back to Bethlehem to be counted too. There was no guest room where Joseph and Mary could stay. They finally found a place where animals came in on cold nights.

THE BIRTH

STORYTELLER: “While Mary and Joseph were there in Bethlehem, the Bible tells us this:

- **Open the Bible to Luke 2:6-7 (NirV) and read.**

While Joseph and Mary were there, the time came for the child to be born. She gave birth to her first baby. It was a boy.

- **Hold up the finished baby Jesus cookie, then place it against the backdrop (*between Joseph and Mary*).**

“Mary wrapped Jesus in strips of cloth to keep Him warm and cozy. There was no crib or cradle, so she placed Him in a manger—a feeding trough for animals. God’s Son, the best gift ever, came into the world in the most unexpected way!

- **Put the frosted manger cookie between Joseph and Mary and stick the baby Jesus cookie inside the manger.**

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

- During the next section, decorate the two shepherd cookies. (They can be the same color of sprinkles.) You will also be using the three angel cookies, but you can leave them undecorated.

SHEPHERDS SEE

STORYTELLER: "A little ways away, there were some shepherds out in the fields watching over some sheep.

- Hold up the two finished shepherd cookies, then place them against the other side of the backdrop.

"The shepherds were just taking care of their sheep when, suddenly, an angel appeared!"

- Hold up one of the undecorated angel cookies. Hold it above the shepherds as you speak the next words.

"The angel had big news! A Savior was born—Jesus!"

"This is what the angel announced:

- Open the Bible to Luke 2:10-12 (NirV) and read.

"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news. It will bring great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord. Here is how you will know I am telling you the truth. You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger."

"And all of a sudden, more angels joined the first one!

- Have the sous chef hold up the other two undecorated angel cookies above the shepherds as Storyteller says these next lines.

"The angels praised God. They said:

- Open the Bible to Luke 2:14 (NirV) and read.

"May glory be given to God in the highest heaven! And may peace be given to those he is pleased with on earth!"

"The angels left and went back to heaven.

- Put all three of the undecorated angel cookies back on the cookie sheet.

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

STORYTELLER: “The shepherds were so excited that they ran to see baby Jesus.

- **Move the two decorated shepherd cookies over on the backdrop to the first family cookies like they are running.**

“The shepherds found Jesus just like the angel had told them—He was lying in a manger.

- **Move the two shepherd cookies up and down as if they’re excited to see baby Jesus.**

“As the shepherds went back to the fields, they told everyone about the amazing thing that had happened!”

- **Move the shepherd cookies back to the other side of the backdrop. Try to move them as if they are excited, and say the following.**

SHEPHERDS: “Hooray! The Savior has been born! An angel told us, and we saw Him for ourselves! He is here!”

“The shepherds were the first to spread the good news. God’s promise had come true with Jesus.”

- **Decorate the cross cookie with frosting and a different color sprinkles.**

WRAPPING UP THE STORY

STORYTELLER: “No one understood it then, but this tiny baby would grow up to teach, heal, and show people what God is like. And then Jesus would choose to lay down His life and die on a cross—for you and me, and for the whole world. He would break that curse of sin so we could be close to God again!

- **Hold up the finished cross cookie and then place it against the backdrop.**

“Because of Jesus, we can have a relationship with God that will last forever! Jesus is our Rescuer!

“And that’s why we celebrate Christmas! Jesus is the reason for the season. At Christmas, we celebrate that God gave us the greatest gift.

“That reminds me of our Bottom Line for this week!

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

SLIDE: Bottom Line

[Bottom Line] "Jesus is the greatest gift. Say that with me."

→ **Host enters and joins in.**

STORYTELLER and HOST and KIDS: **[Bottom Line]** "Jesus is the greatest gift."

"God loves you so much that He sent you Jesus! Merry Christmas, everyone!"

GOD'S BIG STORY CLOSER (OPTIONAL)

HOST: "Let's take a look at the progress we made in God's Big Story this week!"

SLIDE: God's Big Story

"This week, we're up here in the part of this picture of God's Big Story, 'The Birth of Jesus.' (***Gesture to slide.***) Today we talked about when Jesus was born!"

"This week, we talked about such an important part of God's great rescue! Ever since the Garden of Eden, when the whole world needed rescue from the curse of sin, God promised He was going to rescue us so we could be close to Him again. In all of the stories in the Bible we read up to this point (***gesture to your timeline***), God was working, working, working on this great rescue plan. And He loves us so much, He never gave up, even when people in His story turned away from Him. He kept on working toward our rescue, no matter what. And to the shock of both heaven and earth—Jesus, God's very own Son, was going to be our Rescuer! God is coming to rescue us! No one expected God's Big Story to take this turn, but God knew it all along. And then one night, that gift of Jesus arrived. And that little baby would grow up to be the One who would rescue us all. That little Baby in the manger is our Savior. Merry Christmas! God gave you Jesus!"

"Let's put the next image on our timeline!"

SLIDE: Week 3 Timeline Image

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

→ If you're making a timeline of printed images on your wall, take this moment to place today's timeline image on the clothesline.

"This week, we talked about when God gave us Jesus, our Rescuer!"

WHAT'S OUR PART IN THE STORY?

HOST: "One of the traditions of Christmas (*besides baking awesome Christmas cookies!*) is that we give gifts to each other.

"Well, at Christmas, God gave you the greatest, greatest gift that there ever could be. He gave you Jesus.

"Jesus would grow up, give His life, break that horrible curse of sin we were all under, and make a way for you to be God's friend forever.

"Jesus would make a way so you could be close friends with the God who is kind, loving, compassionate, and fun. God made a world where amazing things like warm cookies, yummy frosting, and colorful sprinkles are possible! Not to mention big hugs and puppy bounces! This world was God's idea! He is the best.

"God was giving you a way to be His friend forever. He was giving you a way to be friends forever with the most incredible Being.

"And don't forget about the forever part! As God's friend, you will live with Him in a perfect world forever!

"The best gift you will ever, ever get is the one we celebrate at Christmastime! So as you do all of the fun Christmas things this next week, remember the reason why you're doing it is because you're celebrating that God loves you so much, He gave you Jesus. **[Bottom Line]** Jesus is the greatest gift!

"Let's talk to the God who gave us such an amazing gift!"

Continue to next page →

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

④ Prayer

STORYTELLER or HOST: "Dear God, thank You for sending us the greatest gift of all, Your Son, Jesus. Help us to remember this Christmas, and every Christmas, You gave us the greatest gift because You love us so much. Merry Christmas, Jesus. We love You so much too."

→ **Dismiss kids to their small groups.**

AUDIO: Play high-energy music as the kids exit.

SLIDE: Theme

Optional Video: Theme Loop

PLANNING

Getting Ready: Opener

What You Need

- ☐ Host
- ☐ Hand bells (or jingle bells tied to ribbons), several or one, depending on your group size
- ☐ Wooden sticks (or spoons), several or one, depending on your group size
- ☐ Drums (or upside-down buckets), several or one, depending on your group size
- ☐ Homemade shakers (or plastic bottles filled with beans), several or one, depending on your group size

Music and Sound Effects

- ☐ Upbeat music to use as kids enter the room
- ☐ An audio recording of "Joy to the World"

Large Group Visuals

- ☐ Theme Slide
- ☐ Memory Verse Slide

Optional Videos

- ☐ Theme Loop
- ☐ Countdown
- ☐ Theme Intro

What You Do:

1. Download the slides or optional videos and have them ready to use. If you do not have screen capabilities, you have Orange's permission to enlarge and print the slides on paper.
2. Refer to week 1 to confirm that your church has appropriate licensing to perform or play music and sound effects in your kids' environments.
3. Decide how many kids you'd like to play. Ideally, you'd have an instrument for each kid. But if you have a Large Group and you don't have enough instruments to give each kid an instrument, then have four instruments (one of each type) for an onstage quartet.

APlay

Get the most out of your curriculum with APlay! JoinAPlay.com is an all-in-one media organization and presentation tool. Experience all of your Orange Curriculum media assets, now pre-built and fully customizable. No more sorting through multiple download folders.

APlay is free with your curriculum subscription and packed with features to help your weekly experience run smoother. APlay gives you more time to focus on what truly matters — more ministry, less media management with Apple TV-based media solutions.

PLANNING

Getting Ready: Worship

What You Need

- ☐ Worship Leader(s)

Music and Sound Effects

- ☐ "Joy to the World" from Joy to the World single
- ☐ "Extra, Extra (It's Christmas Time)" from Extra, Extra (It's Christmas Time) single

Optional Videos

Available for Purchase

- ☐ "Joy to the World" Dance Moves or Live Lyrics Video (available through Store.ThinkOrange.com)
- ☐ "Extra, Extra (It's Christmas Time)" Dance Moves Video or Live Lyrics Video (available through Store.ThinkOrange.com)

Store.ThinkOrange.com

What You Do:

1. Download all songs and have them ready to use. Note: Make sure your church has obtained licensing rights to play or perform music. You can obtain a license to perform worship music from Christian Copyright Licensing International (www.ccli.com). It covers over 200,000 worship songs for congregational singing. You are responsible for including the copyright information on all songs reproduced under the Church Copyright License (including song lyrics projected onscreen). This includes the song title, writer credit(s), copyright notice, and your church's CCLI license number. You can include this information on one of the lyric slides, or you can create a separate slide detailing this information, but the copyright information must appear at least once for each song you play or perform.

For example:

"Hallelujah" words and music by John Doe
©2000 Good Music Co.
CCLI License # 0000

2. Dance Moves Videos and Live Lyrics Videos are available for many Orange Kids Music songs. For more information, visit Store.ThinkOrange.com.

PLANNING

Getting Ready: Bible Story

What You Need

- ☐ Storyteller
- ☐ Host
- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Large table
- ☐ Adult or student helper
- ☐ Aprons (Christmas aprons if possible!)
- ☐ Chef's hats (optional)
- ☐ Printed script, for reference
- ☐ Pre-made, undecorated sugar cookies on a cookie sheet, using cookie cutters like these: (<https://a.co/d/0kdj7d9>) and these (<https://amzn.to/4nnR1XT>) (see "What You Do")
- ☐ Tub of vanilla frosting
- ☐ Butter knife or tool to spread the frosting
- ☐ Container with many options for colors of sprinkles
- ☐ Napkins
- ☐ Cookie sheet to make backdrop for the cookie display (see "What You Do")

Music and Sound Effects

- ☐ Upbeat music to use as kids exit the room

Large Group Visuals

- ☐ Theme Background Slide
- ☐ Bottom Line Slide
- ☐ Theme Slide

Optional Video

- ☐ Theme Loop

What You Do:

1. Download the slides and have them ready to use. If you do not have screen capabilities, you have Orange's permission to enlarge and print the slides on paper.
2. Confirm that your church has appropriate licensing to perform or play music and sound effects in your kids' environments (see above under Opener).
3. Buy or make these sugar cookies:
 - Mary
 - Joseph
 - Baby Jesus
 - Manger
 - 2 Shepherds
 - 3 Angels
 - Cross
4. If possible, chill the cookie dough before cutting the shapes, and then bake them immediately in a pre-heated oven. This will help the cookies to retain their shape.
5. Because you'll need to decorate the cookies quickly as you tell the story (and also concentrate on what you're saying), plan to use vanilla frosting and different colored sprinkles on each cookie.
6. You may want to print a copy of the script so you can read much of it instead of trying to do two tasks at once. A helper (a sous chef) is recommended to help with the decorating.
7. Create some sort of backdrop to display the cookies as you finish them. It can be as simple as a cookie sheet lined up against something heavy, like books, and draped in a white or black cloth. Ideally, have this backdrop set up already on the table before Large Group starts.

Optional for God's Big Story

- ☐ Clothesline and clothespins for the timeline in your room
- ☐ God's Big Story Slide
- ☐ Week 3 Timeline Image Slide
- ☐ We recommend that you create a timeline in your Large Group room that you can add to throughout this curriculum year as we travel through the Bible. This can be a simple clothesline or a section of the wall where you can hang the printed Timeline Images in order, week by week. We'll provide a Timeline Image for each week of the curriculum. There are two versions of each Timeline Image—a slide and a print version. A digital [God's Big Story poster](#) is available as well in the Orange Store.

PLANNING

Getting Ready

Video Enhancements for Your Environment

Available in your media files and APlay.

Our Large Group scripts are interchangeable with these videos so you can plug and play the way you need to each week.

For 252 Kids (kindergarten through 3rd grade):

→ StoryLab: Invite elementary kids to engage with inquisitive young hosts as they explore core biblical truths and stories in a STEAM-inspired setting.

For 252 Preteen (4th and 5th grade):

→ The So & So Show: Guide preteens to explore questions of faith through a YouTube-style show full of humor and lots of zany fun.

Additional environment enhancements including:

- Motion graphics, including loops
- Themed transitions
- Countdown videos (30 seconds, 60 seconds, and 5 minutes)

WEEK

FOUR

Large 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. Opening Activity

Large Group (35 minutes)

Worship: Inviting people to respond to God

Story: Communicating God's truth in engaging ways

- Opener
- Worship ("Silent Night" from Silent Night (The King Is Born) and "Extra, Extra [It's Christmas Time]" from Extra, Extra It's Christmas Time single)
- Bible Story (sections from God's Big Story are listed as optional)
- Prayer

Small Group (25 minutes)

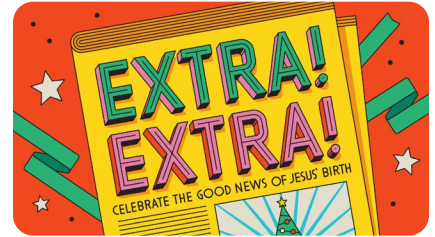
Groups: Creating a safe place to connect

1. Bible Story Review: Follow the Clues (K–1st grade), Journey to Jesus (2nd–3rd grade)
2. Application Activity: Celebrate All Year Long (K–1st grade), Celebrate Jesus All Year Long (2nd–3rd grade)
3. Memory Verse Activity: Move Around Verse (K–1st grade), Catch the Verse (2nd–3rd grade)
4. Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss

Home: Prompting action beyond the experience

- Parent Cue Card (Print or Email)
- Devotionals for Kids
- [Parent Cue App](#) and [ParentCue.org](#)

THIS MONTH



Today's Bible Story

The Wise Men Visit Jesus Matthew 2:1-12

Bottom Line

Celebrate Jesus all year long.

Memory Verse

**"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord."
Luke 2:11 NIV**



Inclusive Pro Tips

Loud sounds, bright lights, and large groups can be overwhelming or overstimulating for some children. To create a more inclusive large group experience, consider offering adaptive tools like noise-canceling headphones, sunglasses, sensory-friendly items, or access to modified spaces.

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

AUDIO: Play high-energy music as kids enter.

SLIDE: Theme

Optional Video: Theme Loop

→ **Host enters.**

Optional Video: Countdown

Optional Video: Theme Intro

Optional Video: Theme Loop

① Opener

HOST: “Hey everyone, and welcome! This month, we’re discovering something really special. We’re learning all about the Christmas story and how it shows us that Jesus is God’s greatest gift to us. Even though it’s after Christmas, as we will see this week, we can celebrate Jesus all year long!”

“This is our final week, and it’s a part of the Christmas story that happened about two years after Jesus was born. When Jesus was born, God put a star in the sky, and some Wise Men from the east followed it!”

“So we’re going to play a game called ‘Star Search.’ In this room are hidden glow-in-the-dark stars. I need two volunteers to come up front. If you want to be a volunteer, raise your hand!”

→ **Choose two volunteers from the kids who have their hands raised.**

“Great! When we turn off the lights, you will have 1 minute to find as many glow-in-the-dark stars as you can. The one who finds the most stars wins.”

“For those of you not playing, we’re going to divide the room into two teams. This side is Team 1 [**Volunteer 1 name**], and this side is Team 2 [**Volunteer 2 name**]. When we start, your team can shout out where you see a star to guide your ‘star searcher.’”

“Okay, when we turn off the lights, our timer will start. Are you ready? Let’s start our Star Search.”

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

Note: We've suggested worship songs below from Amazing Kids Worship and Orange Kids Music. We've created these songs to be developmentally appropriate for elementary and preteen kids, incorporating simple, direct language, fun dance movements, and upbeat, current arrangements.

We've chosen these specific songs that amplify our teaching content for this month. We recommend that you use these songs as scripted below, or combined with other popular worship songs that your kids know and love. Be sure to share the links to these songs with parents so they can stream them at home or in the car! Songs can be purchased at store. thinkorange.com or for free with APlay.

- **Start your timer (or use a countdown video) and turn the lights off. When one minute is up, turn the lights back on and count the number of stars each contestant has found. Announce the winner.**
- **If you have time to play again and have stars that were not found, consider selecting two more star searchers and play another round.**

"Today, we'll hear more about the Wise Men and how they celebrated Jesus. But first, let's worship the God who loves us so much He sent us Jesus."

② Worship

- **Worship Leaders enter as Host exits.**

WORSHIP LEADER: "Hey, everyone! Are you ready to sing and celebrate? Even though Christmas is over, Jesus is still the best gift ever, and we can celebrate Him all year! We have some special songs today that help us remember the best gift ever! Let's start with a song called 'Silent Night.'"

AUDIO: "Silent Night (*The King is Born*)" / track 1 from Silent Night (*The King is Born*)

SLIDE: Memory Verse

"Before we sing our last song, let's recite our Memory Verse together. Our Memory Verse is part of the message that the angel said to the shepherds on the night Jesus was born, but it is good news for all year! It's Luke 2:11 NIV:

"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord."

"Now I'll say a part, and you repeat it after me!"

"Today in the town of David,"

KIDS: "Today in the town of David,"

WORSHIP LEADER: "a Savior has been born to you."

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

KIDS: "a Savior has been born to you."

WORSHIP LEADER: "He is the Messiah, the Lord."

KIDS: "He is the Messiah, the Lord."

WORSHIP LEADER: "Great job! Every time we remember these words, we celebrate the amazing gift of Jesus. Now, let's pray together and thank God for sending us His Son."

WORSHIP LEADER: "Dear God, thank You for loving us so much that You sent Jesus to be our Savior. Help us to celebrate Jesus not just today, but every day. We love You, and we're so grateful for Your gift. In Jesus' name, Amen."

WORSHIP LEADER: "Alright, let's sing one more time and celebrate Jesus, the best gift we've ever been given!"

AUDIO: "Extra, Extra (*It's Christmas Time*)" / track 1 from Extra, Extra (*It's Christmas Time*) single

"Great job, everyone! Let's go ahead and sit down and hear our true story from the Bible today."

③ Bible Story

SLIDE: Theme Background

→ **Storyteller enters as Worship Leaders exit.**

INTRODUCTION

STORYTELLER: "Wow! That was awesome worship! And you guys are great star searchers too! Today, in our true story from the Bible, we're going to talk about some people who were also great star searchers!"

"But before we get into that true story, let me tell you about something amazing we're doing this year! We're going to go through the entire story of the Bible this year from cover to cover!"

"God gave us the Bible so we can know what He is like! So as we read the Bible this year, hopefully we will learn about Him!"

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

Note: We're so excited to be going through key stories of the Bible this year and learning more about its Author—God! It's God's Big Story! But to provide you with flexibility as you experience God's Big Story in your own unique setting, there's more than one way to use the following script!

If you want to follow "God's Big Story," read the following script straight through. Each week will build on the previous ones. But, if your church wants to teach a Large Group session without connecting it to what has come before, two sections in the script below are optional—"God's Big Story Opener" and "God's Big Story Closer." (Or if you are joining us at some point throughout the year, you can opt out of the God's Big Story part and just join us as we journey through the rest of the story of Scripture!) We're going to go through the Bible as we teach throughout the year, but whether or not you share God's Big Story each week is up to you!

Whatever way you decide to use the following, know that we're praying diligently for you—we're asking God to help kids see and believe that He loves them, He invented them, and He wants to be their closest Friend. Forever. It's an honor to get to know God with you through the Bible this year!

GOD'S BIG STORY OPENER (OPTIONAL)

STORYTELLER: "We're going to go through God's Big Story in the Bible together so we can learn about God! (*Gesture to slide.*)

SLIDE: God's Big Story

"Let me catch you up on where we've been in God's Big Story so far!

"You might remember that, in the beginning, God created everything. He made the world, the animals, people ... everything! God made the first people for the same reason He made all people—to be His close, close friends. But sadly, the first people God made chose to turn away from Him and sin. God wanted people to be close to Him, but they couldn't anymore. Pain, sickness, and death entered the world too.

"But God didn't want to leave things that way. So He put His rescue plan in motion right from the start!

"God was going to rescue everything through a family! God chose a man named Abraham and promised that his family would bless the whole world. Abraham had a great-grandson named Joseph, who became a leader in Egypt and saved his family—God's people. Over time, God's people grew but were enslaved by a new Pharaoh. God's people cried out to God—'Help us!' they said—and God heard them! God freed His people and brought them to the super-nice home He had designed for them, the Promised Land.

"Some time after God's people were settled in the Promised Land, they asked for a king like the other nations around them. God gave them a king, and then many more kings (**and one queen**) followed. Sadly, after a long time of turning away from Him, God allowed His nation to be split in two—into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. Prophets spoke for God saying, 'Come back to Me!' But the northern kingdom of Israel was destroyed, and the southern kingdom of Judah was taken captive. After years in exile, some of God's people returned to rebuild their homeland, while others stayed in foreign lands.

"During that sad time, God kept sending messages to His people about the Rescuer He had promised long ago. 'God's Rescuer is going to come like this!' the prophets said. But for years and years, nothing happened.

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

"And then it did! God sent Jesus, the Rescuer we needed, just like He promised!"

"And that's where we are in God's Big Story!"

SETTING UP THE STORY

- **Set a small table on stage so the Communicator can set their Bible on it and read from it.**

STORYTELLER: "We're continuing right along through the Bible to the book of Matthew.

"After God sent Jesus, He put a star in the sky to honor Him. Some Wise Men from the east saw that star! Let's read about their story!"

THE JOURNEY OF THE WISE MEN

SLIDE: 1 The Wise Men Study

STORYTELLER: "Far from Bethlehem, some Wise Men noticed a new star shining brightly in the sky. They believed it was a sign that a new king, someone very special, had been born. These were no ordinary travelers; they were Magi, Wise Men who studied the stars and understood that this star was an extraordinary heavenly announcement."

- **Open the Bible to Matthew 2:1 (NIRV) and read.**

Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea. This happened while Herod was king of Judea. After Jesus' birth, Wise Men from the east came to Jerusalem.

SLIDE: 2 The Wise Men Journey

"These Wise Men didn't have all the answers, but they knew that God had done something special. They followed the star, trusting it would lead them to the new king. They traveled for many days across deserts and mountains, facing the hot sun and cold nights. They persevered because they knew something wonderful was at the end of their journey.

"Sometimes, just like the Wise Men, following Jesus means trusting even when we don't understand everything. It means having faith that He is leading us to something good, even if the journey is long and hard."

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

KING HEROD'S PLAN

SLIDE: 3 The Wise Men Talk to King Herod

STORYTELLER: "When the Wise Men reached Jerusalem, they met King Herod. But he wasn't happy to hear about a new king. Herod was a king who liked to be in charge and didn't want anyone to take his place.

→ **Open the Bible to Matthew 2:3 (NirV) and read.**

"Where is the child who has been born to be king of the Jews? We saw his star and it rose. Now we have come to worship him." When King Herod heard about it, he was very upset. Everyone in Jerusalem was troubled too.

"Herod pretended to be interested, but he really wanted to stop Jesus from becoming king. He told the Wise Men to find the new king and report back to him, saying that he too wanted to worship Jesus. But Herod was lying; he felt threatened and wanted to hurt Jesus."

GIFTS FOR THE KING

STORYTELLER: "When the Wise Men finally found Jesus, they saw He wasn't just any child. He was a young child, but also the King sent by God! They were filled with joy and knew that their long journey was worth it."

→ **Open the Bible to Matthew 2:11 (NirV) and read.**

The Wise Men went to the house. There they saw the child with his mother Mary. They bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures.

SLIDE: 4 The Wise Men Worship Jesus

"The Wise Men brought special gifts for Jesus—gold, frankincense, and myrrh. They were all gifts for a king. The Wise Men's gifts were very meaningful, and their worship was sincere. They knew that Jesus was someone great. They showed us that Jesus is someone extraordinary, someone worth giving our best to. And just like them, we can celebrate Jesus every day, not just at Christmas time!"

"And God protected the Wise Men. God warned them in a dream not to return to Herod. This shows us that even when people

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

have plans against God, He is always in control. He warned the Wise Men in a dream, and they went home a different way, safe from Herod's bad plan."

→ **Open the Bible to Matthew 2:12 (NirV) and read.**

God wanted them in a dream not to go back to Herod. So they returned to their country on a different road.

WRAPPING UP THE STORY

STORYTELLER: "So, boys and girls, the Wise Men arrived to celebrate Jesus long after He was born. The first Christmas had come and gone, and they still came to worship Jesus and give them their very best!

"And that's our Bottom Line today: We can celebrate Jesus all year long, just like the Wise Men did. We don't need to wait for a special day to celebrate Jesus—He loves us every day, and He is amazing every day. We can show our love for Him by how we live, how we treat others, and how we thank Him for all the blessings He gives us."

"That reminds me of our Bottom Line for today.

SLIDE: Bottom Line

[Bottom Line] "Celebrate Jesus all year long. Say that with me."

→ **Host enters and joins in.**

STORYTELLER and HOST and KIDS: **[Bottom Line]** "Celebrate Jesus all year long."

GOD'S BIG STORY CLOSER (OPTIONAL)

STORYTELLER: "Let's take a look at the progress we made in God's Big Story this week!

SLIDE: God's Big Story

"This week we're right up here a little bit past this picture of God's Big Story, 'The Birth of Jesus.' (*Gesture to slide.*) Jesus was just a toddler in the story we read today, so we are on the path just after Jesus was born!

"This week we talked about the Wise Men who came to worship Jesus! After years and years, God had kept His promise, and He

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

put a star in the sky to celebrate it. We needed rescue, and God sent a Rescuer. The Wise Men lived far away from Bethlehem, but they saw the star in the sky and knew it was for a king. Jesus is a King, He is the King of kings. And the people would find out in the coming years that this King had left heaven to come to earth, and give up His life to break that curse we were under. This King would be our Rescuer! The Wise Men came to worship a king—and Jesus is the King of kings, the King who would save us all.

“Let’s put the next image on our timeline!”

SLIDE: Week 4 Timeline Image

→ **If you’re making a timeline of printed images on your wall, take this moment to place today’s timeline image on the clothesline.**

“This week we talked about the Wise Men who came to celebrate Jesus!”

WHAT’S OUR PART IN THE STORY?

HOST: “What an incredible journey the Wise Men had, following that star to find Jesus. Long after Jesus was born, they were still giving Him gifts and showing Him how wonderful He is!”

“And we can do the same thing! You can celebrate Jesus all year long, not just during the Christmas season.

“The Wise Men gave Jesus their very best. We don’t have those big fancy gifts like they did, but we can still give Jesus our very best. We do that by showing His love and kindness everywhere we go. If someone is lonely, we can smile at them or sit with them. If someone falls and gets a scrape, we can give them a bandage and a hug. We can show Jesus’ love every day—that’s giving Jesus our very best!”

“And the Wise Men worshipped Jesus and showed Him how amazing He is. We can do that too! All year long! When we see something that makes us happy—like a friend’s laugh, a yummy roll of bread, a puppy’s swishy tail—we can say, ‘Wow, Jesus. You are awesome to make something so good.’ You can tell Jesus how wonderful He is all year long!”

“You can celebrate Jesus all year long, not just at Christmastime!”

25 MINUTES

Story

10 MINUTES

Worship

"Let's pray and thank God for sending Jesus to us. Then, you'll go to your small groups and talk more about how we can celebrate Jesus every day."

④ Prayer

STORYTELLER or HOST: "Dear God, thank You for the gift of Your Son, Jesus. Help us to celebrate You every day. We love You so much, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

→ **Dismiss kids to their small groups.**

AUDIO: Play high-energy music as the kids exit.

SLIDE: Theme

Optional Video: Theme Loop

PLANNING

Getting Ready: Opener

What You Need

- ☐ Host
- ☐ 50 or more glow-in-the dark stars (like these: <http://bit.ly/4nQT72t>)
- ☐ Timer (smartphone or watch or countdown video)

Music and Sound Effects

- ☐ Upbeat music to use as kids enter the room

Large Group Visuals

- ☐ Theme Slide
- ☐ Memory Verse Slide

Optional Videos

- ☐ Theme Loop
- ☐ Countdown
- ☐ Theme Intro

What You Do:

1. Download the slides or optional videos and have them ready to use. If you do not have screen capabilities, you have Orange's permission to enlarge and print the slides on paper.
2. Refer to week 1 to confirm that your church has appropriate licensing to perform or play music and sound effects in your kids' environments.
3. *Optional:* Download a countdown video from a royalty-free site. Load it into your presentation software and have it ready to play during the Opener. You could also keep time on a smartphone or watch. Note: Some presentation software, such as ProPresenter, includes a built-in countdown clock that can be overlaid on a still image.
4. Hide the glow-in-the-dark stars in your room before kids arrive. Make sure the stars are within reach.

APlay

Get the most out of your curriculum with APlay! JoinAPlay.com is an all-in-one media organization and presentation tool. Experience all of your Orange Curriculum media assets, now pre-built and fully customizable. No more sorting through multiple download folders.

APlay is free with your curriculum subscription and packed with features to help your weekly experience run smoother. APlay gives you more time to focus on what truly matters — more ministry, less media management with Apple TV-based media solutions.

PLANNING

Getting Ready: Worship

What You Need

- ☐ Worship Leader(s)

Music and Sound Effects

- ☐ "Silent Night" from Silent Night (The King Is Born)
- ☐ "Extra, Extra (It's Christmas Time)" from Extra, Extra (It's Christmas Time) single

Optional Videos

Available for Purchase

- ☐ "Silent Night" Dance Moves or Live Lyrics Video (available through Store.ThinkOrange.com)
- ☐ "Extra, Extra (It's Christmas Time)" Dance Moves Video or Live Lyrics Video (available through Store.ThinkOrange.com)

Store.ThinkOrange.com

What You Do:

1. Download all songs and have them ready to use. Note: Make sure your church has obtained licensing rights to play or perform music. You can obtain a license to perform worship music from Christian Copyright Licensing International (www.ccli.com). It covers over 200,000 worship songs for congregational singing. You are responsible for including the copyright information on all songs reproduced under the Church Copyright License (including song lyrics projected onscreen). This includes the song title, writer credit(s), copyright notice, and your church's CCLI license number. You can include this information on one of the lyric slides, or you can create a separate slide detailing this information, but the copyright information must appear at least once for each song you play or perform.

For example:

"Hallelujah" words and music by John Doe
©2000 Good Music Co.
CCLI License # 0000

2. Dance Moves Videos and Live Lyrics Videos are available for many Orange Kids Music songs. For more information, visit Store.ThinkOrange.com.

PLANNING

Getting Ready: Bible Story

What You Need

- ☐ Storyteller
- ☐ Host
- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Small table

Music and Sound Effects

- ☐ Upbeat music to use as kids exit the room

Large Group Visuals

- ☐ Theme Background Slide
- ☐ Bottom Line Slide
- ☐ Theme Slide
- ☐ Bible Story Images, including:
 - "1 The Wise Men Study" Slide
 - "2 The Wise Men Journey" Slide
 - "3 The Wise Men Talk to Herod" Slide
 - "4 The Wise Men Worship Jesus" Slide

Optional Video

- ☐ Theme Loop

What You Do:

1. Download the slides and have them ready to use. If you do not have screen capabilities, you have Orange's permission to enlarge and print the slides on paper.
2. Confirm that your church has appropriate licensing to perform or play music and sound effects in your kids' environments (see above under Opener).

Optional for God's Big Story

- ☐ Clothesline and clothespins for the timeline in your room
- ☐ God's Big Story Slide
- ☐ Week 4 Timeline Image Slide
- ☐ We recommend that you create a timeline in your Large Group room that you can add to throughout this curriculum year as we travel through the Bible. This can be a simple clothesline or a section of the wall where you can hang the printed Timeline Images in order, week by week. We'll provide a Timeline Image for each week of the curriculum. There are two versions of each Timeline Image—a slide and a print version. A digital [God's Big Story poster](#) is available as well in the Orange Store.

PLANNING

Getting Ready

Video Enhancements for Your Environment

Available in your media files and APlay.

Our Large Group scripts are interchangeable with these videos so you can plug and play the way you need to each week.

For 252 Kids (kindergarten through 3rd grade):

→ StoryLab: Invite elementary kids to engage with inquisitive young hosts as they explore core biblical truths and stories in a STEAM-inspired setting.

For 252 Preteen (4th and 5th grade):

→ The So & So Show: Guide preteens to explore questions of faith through a YouTube-style show full of humor and lots of zany fun.

Additional environment enhancements including:

- Motion graphics, including loops
- Themed transitions
- Countdown videos (30 seconds, 60 seconds, and 5 minutes)