

UPDATED IN 2018!



The Christmas Lesson

CHRISTMAS IS ABOUT JESUS!

Romans 6:23

POWER PHRASE

Christmas is about Jesus!

MEMORY VERSE

Romans 6:23, “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

SUPPORTING DOCTRINES

For supporting doctrines, see our Statement of Faith at www.novoministries.org/statement-of-faith.

GOALS

The child will...

- Understand the true meaning of Christmas!
- Learn that the ultimate gift is eternal life through a relationship with Jesus!
- Choose to ask Jesus to forgive his sins and be the Lord of his life!

REMINDERS

Christmas can be the most magical, meaningful time of year; but it also can be a very difficult time for many. Due to hard life circumstances, absence or loss of a family member, or reminders of difficult past Christmases, some children may not look forward to Christmas. This is an opportunity to remind the children of the true meaning of Christmas and how much God loves them and is there for them.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We want to express our gratitude to the volunteers who contributed ideas toward the development of this lesson. All of our contributors are knowledgeable and have worked extensively with at-risk children. Thank you for the time you have invested in these children.

The stories and photos shared in the Gospel Presentation activities are used by permission of the individuals.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

All Large Group or Small Group activity visuals or supply items followed by an asterisk (*) may be downloaded for printing at www.novoministries.org/resource.

THE CHRISTMAS STORY (BIBLE STORY: MATTHEW 1-2, LUKE 1-2)

Visuals

- Bible Story Visuals*, Lip Sync Signs*

Supplies

- Bible, Bible Insert for Large Group*, posterboard, markers

Captivate #1 – Lip Sync!

- Print the signs for the Bible Story and cut out the mouth section of each. Choose children to be each of the main characters. Have them dramatically repeat parts of the story as you tell it.

Captivate #2 – Picture It!

- Choose a child or leader to draw elements of the Bible Story as you tell it. The volunteer does not necessarily have to draw well. Even stick figures can be fun. Focus on adding facial expressions or specific actions for parts of the story.

Introduction

- God created the whole universe and everything in it. He created Adam and Eve so He could have a relationship with them. But because of Adam and Eve's sin, they and everyone after them would be separated from God. However, God's love for us was so great that He was willing to make the ultimate sacrifice so we could receive forgiveness for our sin. God put His plan into motion.
- God the Father would send Jesus, His only Son, to come to earth. He would come as a baby but grow into a man who would die to take the punishment for all sins.

Story

- Retell the story from Matthew 1-2 and Luke 1-2.
- See Bible Story Script.

Conclusion

- God knew that only someone who was perfect could pay the punishment for sin. But no one on earth was perfect. So God sent His Son Jesus, Who had never sinned, to pay the price for our sin. Jesus came to earth as a baby, to live a perfect life, die on the cross for our sin, and rise from the dead to offer us the greatest gift we could ever receive – salvation! This is why we celebrate Christmas – to remember all that Jesus came to do for us!

TESTIMONY

- Share how you realized the real meaning of Christmas.
- Share a time you allowed other things to distract you from the real meaning of Christmas.

CHALLENGE

Visuals

- Key Point Visuals*, Power Phrase Visual*, Memory Verse Visual*

Supplies

- Bible, Bible Insert for Large Group*

Introduction

- In our Bible Story, we learned that God’s love for us was so great that He chose to send His one and only Son to pay the price for our sins so we could receive forgiveness. Jesus came to earth as a baby and grew into a man. He experienced all the temptations, feelings, and heartaches we experience; yet He never sinned. Christmas is about Jesus because He gave His life so we could receive forgiveness for our sin and no longer be separated from God.

Key Points

Sin separates us from God!

- Sin is anything we think, say, or do that breaks God’s Law. Whether you tell a lie, steal a toy, or think about how to steal a toy, they are all sin.
- The Bible tells us that what we deserve for sin is death. Romans 6:23a, “For the wages of sin is death.”
- We don’t immediately die when we sin. When it says the wages or punishment for sin is death, it means that after our bodies die, we will be separated from God forever and will not spend eternity with Him in Heaven. It also means that here on earth we can’t have a relationship with God because our sin separates us from Him.

God has a gift to give us!

- The greatest gift we could ever receive is forgiveness for our sin and eternal life. This gift is freely given to everyone who accepts it.
- We don’t deserve this gift! We are all sinners and deserve to be separated from God (Romans 3:23).
- There is nothing we can do to earn this gift of forgiveness for our sins.
- Ephesians 2:8-9, “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

Jesus is our solution!

- We can receive forgiveness for our sins only through Jesus Christ, because He paid the price for our sins when He died on the cross.
- To receive this gift, we must admit our sins and ask Jesus to be the Lord of our lives. When we do that, all our sins — past, present, and future — are forgiven (1 John 1:9).
- Romans 6:23b, “But the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Conclusion

- We celebrate Christmas because of Jesus. We are so thankful that He came and was born in a manger, that He paid the ultimate price by dying on the cross so we could be forgiven of our sins. There is no greater gift that we can receive. There is no one who loves us more! This Christmas, let’s remember that it is all about Jesus!

CHALLENGE (CONTINUED)

Invitation

For the unsaved child:

- Do you know the real reason we celebrate Christmas? God sent His Son to die on the cross so that you could receive forgiveness for your sins.
- We have all sinned, and sin separates us from God (Romans 6:23a). Sin is anything we think, say, or do that breaks God's Law. Jesus paid the price for our sin; He became our Substitute (2 Corinthians 5:21).
- Invite the children to stay behind and talk to a leader if they have any questions or would like to ask Jesus to forgive their sins and be the Lord of their lives.

For the saved child:

- Are you allowing other things to be more important this Christmas? Are you putting Jesus first this Christmas?
- Encourage children to stay behind and talk to a leader if they have any questions.

GREATEST GIFT (ARRIVING ACTIVITY)

Supplies

- A wrapped present with removable lid, small mirror or foil

Instruction and Application

- In advance, wrap a box so the lid can be removed without unwrapping. Glue a small mirror or foil in the bottom of the box.
- As the children arrive, tell them we are going to talk about the greatest gift ever given and who it was for. Ask the children their favorite gift they either gave or received. Do they still have that gift? Often the gifts we want the most last only a short while. For instance, an amazing video game may end up breaking or a beautiful outfit gets outgrown.
- But the greatest gift will last forever! I wonder who that gift is for. Have one of the children open the box and look inside. When they look in the box, they will see their reflection. Have the child pass the box around the group so each child can look in the box and see his or her reflection. Explain that God's gift of salvation is for each of them! God wants to forgive their sins and spend eternity with them in Heaven! Today we will learn who made it possible for us to receive such an amazing gift!
- Review the Memory Verse with the children. Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."



DONOR (MEMORY VERSE)

Visuals

- Memory Verse Visual*, Illustrated Memory Verse Visual*, Picture of a child in a hospital bed*

Supplies

- Bible, Memory Verse Game cards* (two sets), scissors

A.G.A.I.N. Acrostic

A — Attention Grabber (Grab their attention with an interesting introduction, and don't let go!)

Show the children the picture of the child in a hospital bed. Explain that this child has a problem with her heart so her name is on an organ donor list. Ask the children if they know what an organ donor is. Say that an organ donor is someone who has agreed that when they die, someone else can have the organs in their body. That means that when they die, their heart, for example, could be given to someone else so that person could live. This girl will die without an organ donor. There is nothing she has done to earn the right to receive a heart from a donor. Yet it is freely given to her. We are like this girl. We need God's forgiveness and a new heart (spiritually), but there is nothing we can do to earn it. Jesus came to earth with a purpose. He was born in a manger and grew to be a man who freely gave His life and paid the price for us.

G — God's Word (Show them that the concept you are teaching comes from the Bible.)

Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

A — Awareness (Make them "aware" of the words and concepts.)

Wages of sin — the cost, the punishment, what is deserved for breaking God's Law

Death — eternal separation from God

Free gift — nothing we deserve, nothing we can earn

Eternal life — forever with God in Heaven

I — In Their Lives (Teach them to apply the lesson "in their lives.")

Unsaved child (questions to ask an unsaved child)

Have you asked Jesus to forgive your sins? Have you received the greatest gift? If not, what is keeping you from accepting this gift?

Saved child (questions to ask a saved child)

How can you share the greatest gift with others? Who can you tell about Jesus?

N — Number of Times (Repeat the content again and again until the children memorize it.)

Read from Scripture. Repeat after me. Play the Memory Game three or four times.

Memory Game

Give the game cards to the children and have them repeat the words while putting them in the correct order. You also can divide into two teams and race to put the words in order.

SAVED (GOSPEL PRESENTATION)

Visuals

- “Who Is God?” and “What to Do Now?” Foundational Gospel Truths Visuals*, Picture of John Smith*

Supplies

- Bible, paper, writing tools, playdough

Instruction and Application

- John Smith grew up in a family that knew and loved God. He made the decision to ask Jesus to forgive his sins and be the Lord of his life when he was young. But the reality of how mighty and loving God was became more real when a tragedy struck his family.
- When John was 14, he and some friends went out on the ice of a Missouri lake. They didn't realize the temperature had warmed and the ice was not safe to walk on. The ice cracked under their feet, and John and one of his friends fell into the freezing cold water. It took 15 minutes before his friends were able to pull John out of the water.
- At the hospital, John's body lay lifeless for more than 60 minutes. There was no heartbeat! His mom Joyce entered his hospital room right before they were going to announce his time of death. She began to pray that God would heal her son. Immediately the nurse found a heartbeat!
- John's story did not stop there. John's family, church, and people all over the world began to pray for complete healing for John. He had to overcome all of his organs shutting down and multiple other health issues. Everything was against him, and he had only a 1 percent chance of survival. But 16 days after the accident, John walked out of the hospital completely healed!
- God not only saved John when he forgave his sins and gave him eternal life, but He also healed him and gave him a second chance at life on earth. John and his mom now share their story to inspire others. It has been featured in many articles and on TV, as well as in a book called *The Impossible*, which is soon to be made into a movie. John gives all the glory to God for sparing his life, and he plans one day to become a pastor.
- Just like John, we can know who God is and experience His love and presence in our lives. Use the “Who Is God?” visuals to review.
- Each of us has opportunity to share what God has done in our lives so others can receive forgiveness. Use the “What to Do Now?” Visual to review.

Discussion

- Older Team: Have the children share things in their lives that seem impossible – situations in which they want God to perform a miracle.
- Younger Team: Say “God is ...” and point to a child to fill in the blank. Continue until each child has had a turn.
- Quiet Team: Have the children write the word God in the center of their papers. Have them write around it who God is and all God has done for them.
- Active Team: Have the children spell God with playdough. Encourage them to talk about who God is to them.

FLASHBACK (REVIEW QUESTIONS)

Supplies

- Review Questions*

Large Group Review Questions

- Why did Jesus come to earth? (To pay the price for our sins)
- Who did God send to tell Mary about baby Jesus? (An angel)
- After Joseph found out about the baby, what did the angel say to him? (The angel told Joseph not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife because the baby was God's Son Who would save His people from their sins.)
- In what kind of place was Jesus born? (A manger)
- What does "Messiah" mean? (Savior)
- Who appeared to the shepherds? (An angel)
- Who brought gifts to Jesus? (Wise men)
- What gifts did they bring? (Gold, frankincense, and myrrh)
- Who wanted to kill Jesus when He was a child? (King Herod)

Discussion Questions

- Why do you think Jesus came to earth to be born as a human baby?
- How can we celebrate Jesus during Christmas?

STICK PUPPETS (CRAFT)

Visuals

- Craft sample*

Supplies

- Stick Puppets and Manger Template* (one of each per child, printed on card stock), large plastic resealable bags (one per child), craft sticks or people craft sticks (eight per child), glue, coloring tools

Instruction and Application

- Give each of the children a Stick Puppets and Manger Template. Have the children color both papers and then cut out each of the people as well as the manger. Remind them to cut off the small piece on both sides of the bottom of the page. (If they don't, the paper won't stand properly.) The children will need to fold back the two sides along the line to create a 90-degree angle with the front of the manger. Next, have them glue each of the people onto a craft stick. Then they can act out the Christmas story with their stick puppets! When they are finished, have them put all the pieces into a resealable bag so they can take them home.
- Remind the children that today we learned that Christmas is about Jesus. God gave us the greatest gift when He sent His Son to earth so He could be the Substitute for our sin. Through Him we can receive the ultimate gift, which is eternal life through a relationship with Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9).
- Review the Memory Verse together. Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."



WHAT'S THE POINT? (APPLICATION ACTIVITY)

Supplies

- “What’s the Point?” card*, paper, writing tools

Activity #1

- Give each child a “What’s the Point?” card. Point out to the children the gift on the card. Remind them that we learned that Jesus died on the cross so we could receive forgiveness for our sins. But we also have a choice. Will we accept His gift of forgiveness? Will we allow Him to be the Lord of our lives? Have the children fill out the card with the choices they want to make.

Activity #2

- Have the children discuss who they know who has not heard about the greatest gift ever given. Encourage the children to make a card for that person, telling how Jesus loves him and died on the cross so he could be forgiven for his sins and spend eternity with God in Heaven.

NOW WHAT? (ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES)

Supplies

- Additional Activity #1: Coloring Pages*
- Additional Activity #2: Maze Activity Page*
- Additional Activity #3: Word Search Activity Page*
- Additional Activity #4: Christmas Bingo*

Instruction and Application

- These activities are to be used with your team, as time allows, to reinforce the lesson concepts. The children may take these home each week or do them while they are listening to you teach during Small Group. These activities require little to no explanation and can be great for moments when you are transitioning or don’t have time to start another activity.

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