

Small Group Leader Guide

Today's Suggested Schedule

Prelude: Setting the tone for the experience

See the Getting Ready pages at the end of this document for a detailed description of what you'll need for today. In the Prelude folder of your curriculum, you'll find a variety of other resources to help you prepare.

Small Group (15 minutes)

Social: Providing time for fun interaction

1. Opening Activity

Large Group (35 minutes)

Worship: Inviting people to respond to God

Story: Communicating God's truth in engaging ways

- Opener
- Worship
- Bible Story
(sections about God's Big Story are listed as optional)
- Prayer

Small Group (25 minutes)

Groups: Creating a safe place to connect

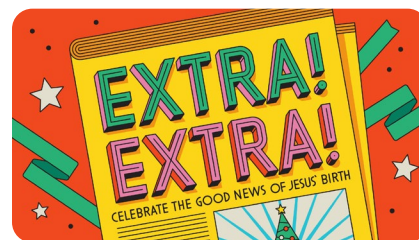
1. Bible Story Review: Chain Reaction
2. Application Activity: Share the Good News!
3. Memory Verse Activity: Verse in Motion
4. Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss

Home: Prompting action beyond the experience

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

✦ Need activities for a K-5th group? Use this 2nd-3rd grade guide!

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

This leader guide is created with inclusion in mind. It supports children with learning differences, disabilities, or special needs as they participate alongside their peers. Look for the highlighted sections for extra tips to help welcome and include every child. For more resources, check out our free *A Place at the Table* course with Kim Botto and EveryChild Curriculum. joinamazing.com/everychild

SOCIAL

Opening Activity



What You Need

- ☐ Offering container
- ☐ Tape
- ☐ Prepared "Newsfeed" posterboard
- ☐ "News Headline Cards" Activity Pages



Inclusive Pro Tips

To adjust to the mobility needs of your group, place the cards and posterboard on a table and let the kids look at them from a seated position.

① What You Do

Pray for your group before they arrive → Pray for kids who might visit your group for the first time. Thank God for keeping His promise to send Jesus, our Messiah! Ask God to fill the room with excitement as you get ready to share the good news about Jesus. Pray that every child would hear, believe, and celebrate that Jesus came for them, no matter who they are or where they're from. Invite the Holy Spirit to help kids understand that Jesus is the best news ever!

1. Before the kids arrive, hide the "News Headline Cards" around the room.
→ **NOTE:** Tape them on the walls or scatter them around the floor.
2. Greet each kid by name with a fist bump, high-five, smile, or wave as they arrive!
3. Invite any kids who brought an offering to place it in the offering container.
4. Explain the game:
→ "Today we're going on a News Hunt! Do you know what a headline is? It's like the title of a book or a story. It's meant to give you a clue to what the news or story is about. These news headlines are clues that will help us discover the BEST news ever. When you find one, bring it to me so we can add it to our 'newsfeed' board. These news headlines will help us figure out what today's Bible Story is all about!"
5. Explain that headlines are like little titles for a BIG story.
6. Let kids search the room to find headline cards.
7. When they find one, help them tape it to the "Newsfeed" posterboard.
8. Once all the headlines are found, read them aloud together and wonder together about what today's good news might be about.

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SOCIAL

Opening Activity

**What You Need**

- ☐ Offering container
- ☐ Tape
- ☐ Prepared "Newsfeed" posterboard
- ☐ "News Headline Cards" Activity Pages

Inclusive Pro Tips

To adjust to the mobility needs of your group, place the cards and posterboard on a table and let the kids look at them from a seated position.

② What You Say

"Whoa! You all found so many news headlines! These headlines all point to something BIG. It's actually the most exciting news, ever! A long time ago, God promised He would send someone very special ... the world needed rescue, and this person would bring hope, joy, and love to the whole world. These news headlines give us clues about who that someone is. **[Transition]** I can't wait for us to hear more in our true Bible Story today. Let's head to Large Group so we can hear the full story about the greatest news ever ... news that's for EVERYONE!"

Transition → Lead your group to the Large Group area.

GROUPS 1/4

Chain Reaction



Bible Story Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Dominoes
- ☐ Optional: Christmas-themed washi tape

① What You Do

1. Show kids the dominoes and invite them to help you build a big “chain reaction” design.
2. Let them work together to place the dominoes back-to-back in any creative pattern—straight line, zigzag, winding path, etc.
3. Ask kids to notice how each domino needs to be close enough for the next one to fall.
4. Highlight teamwork—every domino (and every helper) matters for the chain to work.
5. Pick a kid to start the chain reaction by knocking over the first domino.
6. Watch the dominoes tumble and celebrate when they reach the end!
7. Explain:
 - “God’s plan to send Jesus was just like this chain reaction—every person, every moment, every promise worked together perfectly so Jesus would come at just the right time!”
 - “The incredible thing is that this chain reaction keeps going as we share the good news about Jesus with everyone around us!”
8. Encourage the kids to reset the dominoes, to try building new patterns, and see if they work differently!
9. Let different kids start the chain reaction each time, so everyone gets a turn.

Talk Together

1. Recap the Bible Story:
 - God promised a special child would be born: Isaiah said this child would be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.
 - Why did we need a Savior? In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve broke their closeness with God. No one could be close to God anymore. But God didn’t want to keep things that way! He loves us and wants to be close friends with each of us. So over years and years and years, God was faithful, through every moment and every person, to send Jesus and start the plan to rescue us because God loves you so much and He is so good!
 - As Micah said, the Savior would be born in the small town of Bethlehem.
 - These promises were given hundreds of years before Jesus was born, and God kept every one of them!

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GROUPS 1/4

Chain Reaction

Bible Story Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Dominoes
- ☐ Optional: Christmas-themed washi tape

② What You Say

"How cool was that?! Every single block had to be in the right place for the chain reaction to work. If we left out even one block, the chain would have stopped. Every part of God's plan to send Jesus was important! He used people, places, and promises from a long time ago to get everything ready for the Savior to come.

"This season, there are Christmas decorations all around you. The whole world is having a party! That's because whether or not people believe it, Jesus is the true reason for the season. God sent His Son to save the world! So **[Bottom Line]** Jesus is good news for everyone!"



GROUPS 2/4

Share the Good News!*



Application Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ "Newspaper" Activity Page
- ☐ Coloring supplies



Inclusive Pro Tips

If a child doesn't feel ready to name a specific person, they can draw a group of people and continue to think about it.

Consider pairing kids together if writing or drawing is a challenge. One can share the idea while the other does the drawing/writing.

① What You Do

1. Give every kid a "Newspaper" Activity Page card.
2. Read the headline on each card together. ([Bottom Line] Jesus is Good News for everyone!)
3. Set out the coloring supplies.
4. Ask kids to think of someone they could tell about Jesus this week.
5. Let them draw or write that person's name or a picture in the blank space.
6. Encourage them to take the card home as a reminder!

Make It Personal → Share an age-appropriate example of a time you shared the good news of Jesus with someone!

② What You Say

"Wow, this headline says: Jesus is good news for everyone! That means He came for all people, no matter where they live, what they've done, what they look like, or how old they are. Jesus came for you, your family, your friends ... EVERYONE! God loves us so much that He sent Jesus to rescue us from the curse of sin and make a way for everyone to be close friends with God again.

"This week, pray for the one person you wrote or drew about today. Think about how you can share the Good News that Jesus loves them with them this week. **[Bottom Line]** Jesus is good news for everyone. This season, there are Christmas decorations everywhere, and a lot of ways you can start a conversation about the Good News of Jesus. He is the real reason for the season. Every light, every tree, every Christmas party is celebrating Him! You can use the Christmas things that are all around you this season to help you start a conversation about Jesus!"

GROUPS 3/4

Verse in Motion

Memory Verse Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ "Verse Motions" Activity Page
- ☐ Optional: Jingle bells

Inclusive Supplies

- ☐ Dry-erase marker
- ☐ Dry-erase board

Inclusive Pro Tips



To adjust to the mobility needs of your group, perform the motions from a seated position.

Use the dry-erase marker and dry-erase board to make the verse visible for the kids.



① What You Do

1. Give every two kids a Bible.
2. Invite them to look up Luke 2:11 using the Bible Navigation Tips.

*Finding verses with 2nd-3rd graders

- ① Guide them to open their Bibles to the front and find the table of contents. *Hold up a Bible opened to the table of contents to show the kids what the page looks like.*
- ② When the kids find the table of contents, lead them to find the name of the book in the list.
- ③ When they find the book, lead them to look at the page number beside it. Explain that the number tells them on what page they can find that book. Help the kids find the page.
- ④ When they find the book, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. Help them find the correct chapter.
- ⑤ Then explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Help them find the correct verse in that chapter.

3. Repeat the verse together several times.
4. Review any words that might be unfamiliar to the kids, like "Messiah," and explain what they mean:
 - "Messiah" is a special title that means: "Anointed One" or "Chosen One."
 - A long time before Jesus was born, God promised His people that He would send someone to rescue them, to make things right, so they could be close to God again. That person would be the Messiah!
 - This verse that we shared today is part of the message the angel delivered to the shepherds that Jesus is the Messiah! The angel was saying: "This is the One God promised! He's the Rescuer, the forever King, the one we've all been waiting for to make us right with God again!"
5. Use the "Verse Motions" Activity Page to teach the motions to the kids. (The NIV and NIV are very similar.)
 - "Today in the town of David" (point to the ground)
 - "a Savior has been born to you." (pretend to rock a baby)
 - "He is the Messiah" (point one hand up)
 - "the Lord." (point both hands up)
 - "Luke 2:11" (open hands like holding an open Bible)
6. Practice the Memory Verse with the motions slowly, then faster.

Continued on the next page. →



GROUPS 3/4

Verse in Motion

Memory Verse Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ "Verse Motions" Activity Page
- ☐ Optional: Jingle bells

Inclusive Supplies

- ☐ Dry-erase marker
- ☐ Dry-erase board

7. Challenge the kids to pretend they're the angel and deliver the Memory Verse in a whisper, then a cheer while doing the motions.
8. Optional: Feel free to give each kid a bell to jingle and ring as they do the motions.
9. Repeat the Memory Verse several times with the motions so it sticks!

Talk Together

1. "Who is the Savior this verse is talking about?"
2. "What does it mean that Jesus is good news for everyone?"

② What You Say

"Great job, everyone! This verse is like a special delivery straight from God's heart to us. It tells us that Jesus, God's Son, was born for YOU! Not just for the people in the Bible, not just for grown-ups, but for everyone! That means the Savior, the Rescuer God promised, came because He loves you and wants you to know Him. How incredible is that? Let's keep practicing our verse with these motions so we can remember in our heads AND in our hearts that **[Bottom Line]** Jesus is good news for everyone!"

Inclusive Pro Tips



To adjust to the mobility needs of your group, perform the motions from a seated position.

Use the dry-erase marker and dry-erase board to make the verse visible for the kids.

GROUPS 4/4

Pray and Dismiss

Prayer Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Sticky notes
- ☐ Pencils
- ☐ Optional: "Newsfeed" Posterboard from Opening Activity

Inclusive Supplies

- ☐ Index cards
- ☐ Pencils



① What You Do

1. Gather the kids together in a circle.
2. Give each kid a sticky note and a pencil.
3. Explain that prayer is a conversation they can have with God anytime, anywhere, about anything!
4. Invite them to draw or write a prayer to God.
5. Ask: What is something you want to thank God for or ask for help with?
6. Once the kids have written or drawn their prayer, encourage them to place it in the center of the circle.
7. Optional: If you completed the Opening Activity, have the kids place the sticky notes on the "Newsfeed" posterboard.
8. Pray together, thanking God for sending Jesus and asking Him to help us share the good news with everyone.
9. Close in prayer.

② What You Say

"Dear God, thank You for each of my friends here today! We are SO thankful that Jesus was part of Your rescue plan all along. Thank You for loving us so much that You sent Your one and only Son to save us from sin so we could be close to You. Following Jesus is the BEST decision we'll ever make. Help us to remember what celebrating Christmas is all about. And help us to share the good news of Jesus with those around us! We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen!"

Transition → As adults arrive to pick up, remind them to pray for the person they drew on their newspaper card! Encourage the kids to tell their grown-ups how they plan to share the good news of Jesus with that person.

Inclusive Pro Tips



Allow kids to show their prayers by drawing symbols or pictures instead of writing words.

Getting Ready

Social

Welcome the kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up. Use this time to create space for them to connect with you and with each other by playing age-appropriate games, asking fun questions, and encouraging friendly interactions. This is a great moment to help kids feel seen, known, and ready to experience today's story.

Groups

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible story applies to real life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

- Choose as many of these activities as you like.
- * If you don't have time to do all these activities, be sure to do activity #2.

Home

- Print on cardstock or email this week's devotionals and Parent Cue cards.
- Tell parents about our additional family resources: **Parent Cue App**

Social

Opening Activity

- ☐ Offering container
- ☐ Tape, one roll for each Small Group
- ☐ "Newsfeed" Posterboard, one for each Small Group (see below)
- ☐ Print "News Headline Cards" Activity Page on cardstock and cut apart, one set for each Small Group

Before group time:

- ☐ Draw a news channel stand on the posterboard with a marker.

Groups

1. Chain Reaction

- ☐ Dominoes, at least 15 for each Small Group
- ☐ Optional: Christmas-themed washi tape (Feel free to tape the dominoes with Christmas-themed washi tape for more Christmas fun!)

2. Share the Good News!*

- ☐ Print "Newspaper" Activity Page on cardstock and cut apart, one card for every kid
- ☐ Coloring supplies, enough for each Small Group to share

3. Verse in Motion

- ☐ Bibles, one for every two kids
- ☐ Print "Verse Motions" Activity Page on paper, two copies for each Small Group
- ☐ Optional: Jingle bells, one for every kid

Inclusive Supplies:

- ☐ Dry-erase marker
- ☐ Dry-erase board

4. Pray and Dismiss

- ☐ Sticky notes, one for every kid
- ☐ Pencils, one for every kid
- ☐ Optional: "Newsfeed" Posterboard from Opening Activity