

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: Take a Snapshot
2. Application Activity: Bible Story Extension and Discussion Questions
3. Memory Verse Activity: Verses to Take with You
4. Prayer Activity: Make It Personal with Prayer

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? Check out the 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.

Conversation Starter

What's the best news you've ever heard?

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
- ☐ Timer
- ☐ "Clues" Activity Page
- ☐ Masking tape



Inclusive Pro Tips

To adjust to the mobility needs of your group, place the cards on a table and let the kids collect them from a seated position as they try to guess the answer.

① What You Do

Pray for your group before they arrive → Pray for kids who will visit your group for the first time. Invite God to prepare every preteen's heart to hear the truth that Jesus is good news for everyone—including them! Pray for any new kids who might be curious or unsure that they would feel welcomed and included. Thank God for the promises He made long ago, and for keeping every single one through Jesus. Ask the Holy Spirit to help preteens see that following Jesus isn't about having it all together; it's about trusting the One who came to save us all.

1. Welcome kids by name as they arrive with a high-five, fist bump, or a wave.
2. Invite any kids who brought an offering to place it in the offering container.
3. Before you begin, tape the "Clues" Activity Page cards around your group area.
4. Divide the kids into small teams.
5. Invite the teams to spread out.
6. Explain how to play:
 - When you say "Go," one kid from each team runs to a clue, grabs a card, brings it back, and tags the next teammate.
 - The teams are to collect as many clues as they can before the time is up in one minute.
 - Once all the clues have been collected, the teams will sit together and try to find the answer the clues point to. (Jesus!)
7. Set a timer for 60 seconds.
8. Signal the first kids to begin.
9. Stop the timer after 60 seconds.
10. Encourage the teams to sit together, go through their clues, and see if they can name Who the clues are about. (Jesus!)
11. When the game is over, instruct the kids to gather together.

Continued on the next page. →

SOCIAL

Opening Activity

**What You Need**

- ☐ Offering container
- ☐ Timer
- ☐ "Clues" Activity Page
- ☐ Masking tape

② What You Say

"Awesome job collecting all of the clues, friends! These clues might not tell us the whole story, but they point to something really important that happened in our true story from the Bible today. **[Transition]** Just like these clues, God gave His people promises a long time ago about something amazing He was going to do ... and He had the whole plan in motion even before anyone could see it! Let's go discover more!"

Transition → Lead your group to the Large Group area.

Inclusive Pro Tips

To adjust to the mobility needs of your group, place the cards on a table and let the kids collect them from a seated position as they try to guess the answer.

GROUPS 1/5

Take a Snapshot



Application Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Prepared dominoes with cardstock cutouts taped to them
- ☐ Pencils



Inclusive Pro Tips

For kids with limited mobility, allow kids to build the domino pattern from a seated position or on a tabletop close to them.

① What You Do

1. Divide the kids into three groups.
2. Give each group a pencil and 8 dominoes. The dominoes should have the cardstock taped to them.
→ Make sure each group has one "Jesus will come" domino and one "Jesus is born" domino.
3. On the other dominoes, encourage the kids to write or draw ways Jesus is good news (for example, He forgives, His love is for everyone, He heals, He gives peace, He saves, and He is always with us).
4. Instruct the groups to set up their dominoes in a creative pattern, placing the "Jesus will come" domino at the front, and the "Jesus is born" domino right behind it. The rest of the dominoes can go in any order.
5. When ready, instruct the kids to knock over the first domino and watch the chain reaction, showing how God's plan to send Jesus spread the good news to everyone.
6. Optional: If time allows, let the kids build a domino line together with all of their dominoes.
7. Gather the kids to discuss.

Talk Together

1. Ask: How does it make you feel to know the good news of Jesus is for everyone?
2. Tell the kids: "When we tipped over that first domino, the good news spread through the whole line. That's what happened when Jesus came! The good news began to spread from Bethlehem and is still spreading TODAY. And here's another incredible part: YOU are part of that story! God can use you to help others know Jesus is good news for them too."
3. Ask: What are some of the Christmas decorations or evidence of Christmas that you see throughout your day?
4. Say: "This season, there's a built-in way you can start a conversation with Jesus with someone! The whole world is having a party—a Christmas party! Even if people don't believe it, Jesus is the reason for the season. Every light, every decoration, every Christmas cookie is celebrating Him. God loves us so much that He sent Jesus to rescue us so we could be His close friends! So if there's a Christmas decoration around, you can say, 'Hey, why do we celebrate Christmas? Did you know that God loves you so much?' That's a great way to start a conversation about Jesus!"
5. Ask: Who can you tell about the good news of Jesus this month?

GROUPS 2/5

Bible Story Extension

Bible Story Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ "Prophecies Fulfilled" Activity Page
- ☐ Floor tape

MADE TO
↓
Move

① What You Do

1. Before you begin, mark three taped lines on one side of your group area.
2. Divide the kids into three groups.
3. Instruct each group to stand behind a taped line.
4. Place the two "Fulfillment Cards" from the "Prophecies Fulfilled" Activity Page a few feet away from each group.
5. Give each group the two "Prophecy Cards" from the "Prophecy Fulfilled" Activity Page.
6. Explain the goal:
 - One at a time, a kid from each team will travel to retrieve a "Prophecy Fulfilled" card. Once both "Prophecy Fulfilled" cards are collected, the team is to work together to match each prophecy with its fulfillment.
7. Once the matches are made, quickly review each pair, pointing out how God's plan in the Old Testament came true in the New Testament.
8. Ask: "Which prophecy from today's activity amazed you the most? Why?"
9. Share with the group:
 - "The Old Testament is before Jesus was born, and the New Testament tells what happened when He came and after. Even though they were written at different times, both parts are telling one big story: God's plan to save us through Jesus."
 - "These prophecies from Isaiah and Micah were written hundreds of years before Jesus was born, and yet they happened exactly like God said. That's not just a good guess; that's God proving His Word is true and God always keeps His promises!"

Make It Personal → Share about what Jesus means to you! Who taught you about Jesus? How does knowing Jesus still change your life today? Share age-appropriately.

Inclusive Pro Tips



To adjust to the mobility of your group, let the kids match the cards from a seated position.

GROUPS 3/5

Discussion Questions



Bible Story Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

No supplies needed

Inclusive Supplies

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



Inclusive Pro Tips

Be sensitive to kids who may need extra time to process their thoughts and respond. Be patient and create a safe space where everyone has a chance to share when they're ready.

Frequently check for understanding during discussion by asking questions like, "Can someone share in their own words what we're talking about?"

① What You Do

1. What's the best news you've ever heard?
2. Why do you think God told His people about Jesus hundreds of years before He was born?
3. How do you think God feels about you since He worked hundreds and hundreds of years to bring His great rescue plan for you?
4. If someone asked you why we celebrate Christmas, how would you explain it using today's Bible Story?

GROUPS 4/5

Verses to Take with You

Memory Verse Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

☐ Bibles

Inclusive Supplies

☐ Dry-erase marker
☐ Dry-erase board


Inclusive Pro Tips

Consider performing the motions from a seated position to adjust to the mobility needs in your group.

Use the dry-erase marker and board to write the verse for visual learners to see.

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 below.

*Finding verses with 4th-5th graders

- ① Ask kids to tell you if the book of the Bible they're looking for is in the Old Testament or New Testament. If it's in the Old, instruct kids to flip slowly, starting at the front of the Bible and heading toward the back, until they find the book they're looking for. If it's in the New, instruct kids to start flipping from the back, going forward to find the book they're looking for.
- ② When they find the book, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers.
- ③ Once they find the chapter, explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Tell kids to find the verse within the chapter they've already found.

3. Repeat the verse together several times.
4. Review any words that might be unfamiliar to the kids, like 'Messiah':
 - "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. Set the Bibles aside and teach the kids this month's verse motions. (The NIV and NIV for Luke 2:11 are very similar, except for punctuation.)

Continued on the next page. →

GROUPS 4/5

Verses to Take with You

Memory Verse Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

☐ Bibles

Inclusive Supplies

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

Inclusive Pro Tips



Consider performing the motions from a seated position to adjust to the mobility needs in your group.

Use the dry-erase marker and board to write the verse for visual learners to see.



"Today" – Point straight down with both hands like you're marking right now.

"in the town of David" – Make a "roof" over your head with your hands.

"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.

6. Repeat the motions until the kids have learned them.
7. Call on several kids to try the motions on their own while they say the Memory Verse!
8. Ask:
 - If you were one of the shepherds hearing this news for the first time, what would you do next?
 - How can you remember that Jesus is the reason for the season this Christmas?

GROUPS 5/5

Verses to Take with You



Prayer Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

No supplies needed

Inclusive Supplies

- ☐ Index cards
- ☐ Pencils

① What You Do

1. Gather the kids together in a circle.
2. Explain that prayer is a conversation they can have with God anytime, anywhere, about anything!
3. Invite the kids to close their eyes, take a deep breath, and silently think about the truth that God worked for years and years to send Jesus to rescue them, so that they could be His close friend.
4. Encourage them to listen in their hearts for anything they might want to say to God.
5. Ask the kids if they'd like to share any prayer requests with the group.
6. Close in prayer.

Inclusive Pro Tips



Give each kid a pencil or an index card who would rather write or doodle to God. Suggest they draw symbols like a heart or a cross.

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.

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
- ☐ Timer, one for each Small Group
- ☐ Print "Clues" Activity Page on paper and cut apart, one set for each Small Group
- ☐ Masking tape, one roll for each Small Group

Groups

1. Take a Snapshot

- ☐ Dominoes, 24 for each Small Group
- ☐ Pencils, three for each Small Group
- ☐ White cardstock, two sheets for each Small Group
- ☐ Masking tape, one roll for each Small Group

Before group time:

- ☐ Cut 24 pieces of cardstock into rectangles the size of a domino.
- ☐ Tape each piece of cardstock to a domino.
- ☐ Label three dominoes in pencil: Jesus will come.
- ☐ Label three dominoes in pencil: Jesus is born.

2. Bible Story Extension

- ☐ Print "Prophecies Fulfilled" Activity Page on paper and cut apart, three sets for each Small Group
- ☐ Floor tape

3. Discussion Questions

No supplies needed

4. Verses to Take with You

- ☐ Bibles, one for every two kids

Inclusive Supplies:

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

5. Make It Personal with Prayer

No supplies needed

Inclusive Supplies:

- ☐ Index cards
- ☐ Pencils