

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 Born Luke 2:1-20

Bottom Line

Jesus is the greatest gift.

Conversation Starter

What's the best gift you've been given?

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
- ☐ Prepared gift bags
- ☐ Floor tape

Inclusive Supplies

- ☐ Pool noodles or grabbers



Inclusive Pro Tips

To adjust to the mobility needs of your group, put the gift bags in the center of the room and let kids use grabbers or pool noodles to pull a gift bag toward their team's space.

① What You Do

Pray for your group before they arrive → Thank God for each preteen who will join the group today, including those visiting for the first time. Ask the Holy Spirit to help your group feel that God loves them so much, He sent them Jesus! Pray that God would show you creative ways to challenge preteens to keep following and celebrating Jesus, in big and small ways, way beyond December.

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. Split the kids into two teams.
4. Mark a start and finish line for both teams with floor tape.
5. Place six gift bags at each team's finish line.
6. Explain how to play:
 - On "Go!" one kid from each team will run to the other team's finish line, grab one gift bag, and bring it to their own finish line.
 - Then, they will tag the next teammate to do the same.
 - Kids can only carry one gift bag at a time.
 - When you call time, the team with the most gift bags at their finish line wins.

② What You Say

"Whew! That game was FAST! You all were racing to get the most gifts, and you did a great job! **[Transition]** In our true story from the Bible today, we're going to hear about a gift that's completely different ... one you can't win, steal, or earn. God gave us the greatest gift of all time when He sent His Son, Jesus. God gave us Jesus because He loves us! And there's something else that's awesome about this great gift! This gift isn't just for a winning team—it's for everyone! Let's go find out more!"

Transition → Lead your group to the Large Group area.

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 cut-out shapes from the Shrinky Dink paper
- ☐ Permanent markers in various colors
- ☐ Hole punch
- ☐ String or ribbon
- ☐ Oven or toaster oven

Inclusive Pro Tips



Provide adaptive grips to use with markers.

① What You Do

1. Give every kid a Shrinky Dink cut-out shape.
2. Say: In today's story, people were waiting for a Messiah ... a rescuer. When Jesus came, it showed that God had worked for years and years throughout history to bring Jesus because He loves us and He is good.
3. Ask:
 - "How would you describe to other people why Jesus was the greatest gift they could ever receive?"
 - "If Jesus is the greatest gift, what makes Him different from every other gift you've ever gotten?"
4. Set out the permanent markers.
5. Say: "Today we're going to make an ornament!"
6. Ask the kids to think of some of the greatest gifts or blessings in their lives. (Jesus, family, friends, etc.)
7. Invite the kids to write those gifts on their ornaments as you discuss.
8. Give the kids time to decorate their ornaments with the markers. Encourage them to add symbols from today's Bible Story (e.g., manger, crown, light, cross).
9. Make sure the kids write their names on the front or back of their Shrinky Dink.
10. While you collect the sheets to shrink after service, guide the group through a discussion.
11. NOTE: Bake Shrinky Dinks at 325 degrees for 1-3 minutes. Watch as they curl and flatten. Once flat, bake for an additional 30 seconds. Remove them from the oven and flatten further with a flat object if needed while still warm.

Talk Together

1. Why do you think Jesus is a gift that shows you that God loves you?
2. Explain to the kids that these ornaments are a reminder that God gave the world His VERY best: Jesus! Why was Jesus such a good gift?

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

☐ "Gift Giver" Activity Page


Inclusive Pro Tips

If the kids don't feel comfortable calling out their answers, let them hold up their chosen answer card instead!

① What You Do

1. Divide the kids into three groups.
2. Give each group a set of "Gift Giver" Activity Page cards.
3. Explain how to play:
 - You will be the 'Gift Giver' and read to the kids one clue at a time that describes a gift we get from God without saying its name.
 - The groups must discuss and choose a card from their pile that matches their guess. After a few tries, you'll reveal the answer!
4. One by one, read the clues below in an order different than the order listed below.
5. Continue until all the gifts have been guessed.

Make It Personal → Share why the gift of Jesus doesn't compare to any other gift you've ever received. Discuss another gift that you've gotten that you REALLY love. Then, explain how it still can't match what Jesus has given you.

Clues and Answers

1. Clue: This gift can't be bought, but it's the reason you can live forever with God. (answer: eternal life)
2. Clue: This gift wipes away your sins and makes you clean before God. (answer: forgiveness)
3. Clue: This gift never runs out, even when you feel far away from God. (answer: God's love)
4. Clue: This gift gives you the true feeling that you're never alone, even when life feels hard. (answer: peace through Jesus)
5. Clue: When you choose to follow Jesus, this gift lives inside of you—it's God living inside of you! (answer: the Holy Spirit)
6. Clue: This gift is what happens when you choose to follow Jesus. (answer: adoption into God's family)

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



① What You Do

1. What's the best gift you've been given?
2. If Jesus is the greatest gift, what makes Him different from every other gift you've ever gotten?
3. How does God giving you Jesus show His love for you?
4. How could you "pass on" this gift to someone else this Christmas?

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?"

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

- ☐ Bible marked at Luke 2:11
- ☐ Prepared "Verse Delivery" Activity Pages
- ☐ Floor tape

Inclusive Supplies

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



Inclusive Pro Tips

For visual support, keep the verse written on a dry-erase board so kids who process language better visually can glance at it as they arrange their pages.

Give the teams the option to assemble the verse without racing if speed causes stress.

① What You Do

1. Before you begin, tape two start and finish lines in your group area.
2. Divide the kids into two teams and direct them to stand behind a start line.
3. Place a set of "Verse Delivery" Activity Pages at each team's finish line.
4. Select a kid to read Luke 2:11 from the marked Bible.
5. Repeat the verse together several times.
6. See if any kids remember the verse motions from Week 1.
7. (If you need a review, the motions are:
 - "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.
8. Review the verse with the motions.
9. Explain how to play.
 - One at a time, a kid from each team will travel quickly to grab a 'newspaper' and deliver the good news back to their team.
 - Once a team has collected all of the 'newspapers,' they must work together to put the verse words in order.
10. Celebrate both teams and gather the kids to discuss!

GROUPS 5/5

Make It Personal with Prayer

Prayer Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ "Extra! Extra!" Activity Page
- ☐ Pencils
- ☐ Coloring supplies

Inclusive Pro Tips



Encourage kids who have a harder time expressing themselves in writing to draw symbols or pictures instead. *(i.e., a heart for love, a cross for Jesus, or a gift box for thankfulness).*

① What You Do

1. Gather the kids in a circle.
2. Give each kid an "Extra! Extra!" Activity Page card and a pencil.
3. Place the pencils and coloring supplies in the center.
4. Explain that prayer is a conversation they can have with God anytime, anywhere about anything! It's how we show God that we love Him, trust Him, and are thankful for Him.
5. Encourage the kids to decorate the card and write their prayer to God in the blank space.
6. Use the following questions to guide their reflection before or while they write:
 - What is something you want to thank God for this Christmas season?
 - What do you want to tell Jesus today?
7. Close in prayer.



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
- ☐ Christmas-themed gift bags, 12 for each Small Group
- ☐ Tissue paper, enough for the gift bags
- ☐ Floor tape, one roll for each Small Group

Before group time:

- ☐ Fill the gift bags with tissue paper.

Groups

1. Take a Snapshot

- ☐ Shrinky Dink sheets (like this: <http://bit.ly/4nc4z8Y>)
- ☐ Permanent markers (in various colors), enough for each Small Group to share
- ☐ Hole punch, one for each Small Group
- ☐ String or ribbon, one roll for each Small Group
- ☐ Oven or toaster oven, one for each Small Group

Before group time:

- ☐ Pre-cut circles or ornament-like shapes out of the Shrinky Dink paper.
- ☐ Punch a hole at the top of each circle.
- ☐ Cut ribbon into 6-8-inch pieces.

2. Bible Story Extension

- ☐ Print "Gift Giver" Activity Page on paper and cut apart, three sets for each Small Group

3. Discussion Questions

No supplies needed

4. Verses to Take with You

- ☐ Bible marked at Luke 2:11, one for each Small Group
- ☐ Print "Verse Delivery" Activity Page on paper, two sets for each Small Group
- ☐ 8-inch pieces of string or rubber bands, 12 for each Small Group

Before group time:

- ☐ Roll each "Verse Delivery" page (art side facing out) and secure it with a piece of string or a rubber band.
- ☐ NOTE: Make sure to keep the two sets separate.

Inclusive Supplies:

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

5. Make It Personal with Prayer

- ☐ Print "Extra! Extra!" Activity Page on cardstock and cut apart, one for every kid
- ☐ Pencils, one for every kid
- ☐ Coloring supplies, enough for the Small Group to share