

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.



Today's Bible Story

The Wise Men Visit Jesus Matthew 2:1-12

Bottom Line

Celebrate Jesus all year long.

Conversation Starter

How can you celebrate Jesus through the year?

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



Inclusive Pro Tips

Adjust to the mobility of your group by playing this game from a seated position. Have the kids raise their right hand or left hand to represent their answers.

① What You Do

Pray for your group before they arrive → Pray for kids who will visit your group for the first time. Ask the Holy Spirit to help your group see that knowing Jesus isn't just for Christmas—knowing Jesus is for every day, every season, all year long because what was started at Christmas was God making a way for people to choose to be His friend. Ask God to help you show that the blessing of being God's friend goes way beyond Christmas. Pray that God would show you creative ways to challenge preteens to keep knowing, 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. Gather the kids together in the center of your group area.
4. Play a game of "This or That" by directing the kids to go to either side of the room (or your group space) depending on your answer.
5. Point to either side of the room (or your group space) as you ask questions.
6. "This or That" questions:
 - Summer or Winter?
 - Fall or Spring?
 - Spring or Winter?
 - Fall or Summer?
 - Winter or Fall?
 - Summer or Spring?
7. Gather the group together to discuss.

② What You Say

"It was fun to see what seasons each of you chose! We all have our favorite seasons, but no matter what time of year it is (**Summer, Fall, Winter, or Spring**), we can celebrate Jesus! **[Transition]** Today in our true story from the Bible, we'll hear how worshiping Jesus isn't something we save just for Christmas, it's something we can do all year long! Let's go!"

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

- ☐ Chair ("Interview seat")
- ☐ Play microphone

① What You Do

1. Gather the kids together.
2. Pick one kid to be the "reporter" and another to be the "guest."
3. Invite the "guest" to sit in the chair.
4. Give the play microphone to the "reporter."
5. Invite the "reporter" to position the microphone in front of the "guest" and ask the "guest":
 - "How do you celebrate Jesus?"
 - "What's one way you could show Jesus' love to others this month?"
 - "What makes Jesus worth celebrating all year?"
6. Continue rotating roles so everyone gets to be a "reporter" and a "guest."

Talk Together

7. Ask:
 - What happens when you spread BAD news?
 - What happens when you spread GOOD news?
8. Share with the kids that when they tell others about Jesus and His great love, they're passing on the greatest story ever!

Inclusive Pro Tips



Some kids might not feel comfortable speaking in front of the group. Allow them "pass" if they prefer to observe before participating.

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

- ☐ Large poster board
- ☐ Markers



① What You Do

1. Lay the poster board in the center of the group or on the wall.
2. Explain that you will work together to create a “Year of Worship” board! It’s a giant board that reminds us to celebrate Jesus all year long.
3. Divide the board into four sections with a marker:
→ Winter, Summer, Spring, and Fall.
4. Set out the markers.
5. Invite the kids to grab a marker and write or draw one way they can celebrate Jesus in each season.
→ NOTE: Share ideas like reading the Bible, playing worship music, helping a neighbor, sharing the story of how they came to know Jesus at camp, etc.)
6. Once every section has several ideas, circle up to read them aloud as a group.

Make It Personal → Add your own ideas alongside the kids! Share an age-appropriate time when you celebrated Jesus in an everyday season, even when it wasn’t a holiday. If possible, tell a short story about how it impacted your faith or someone else’s life.

Inclusive Pro Tips



Let the kids dictate their ideas to you if writing is difficult.

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

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Connect

① What You Do

1. How can you celebrate Jesus through the year?
2. The shepherds immediately went to tell others about Jesus. How can we have that same excitement to share about Him in our own lives, especially when it's not Christmas?
3. Worship can look different in every season. What are some ways you can worship Jesus when life feels busy or hard?
4. Worship is more than singing songs. It's loving Jesus with our whole lives. What's one thing you could do this week that would show Jesus you love Him?

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

- ☐ "Verse Cards" Activity Page
- ☐ Party blowers
- ☐ Plastic cups
- ☐ Cotton balls
- ☐ Tape

Inclusive Pro Tips



Let kids move cups by hand if blowing through party blowers is not accessible.

Place cups on a table instead of the floor for wheelchair access.

① What You Do

1. Before you begin:
 - Place the "Verse Cards" in a line on one end of your group space.
 - Place a cup upside down on top of each verse card.
 - Then, place a cotton ball on the cup.
2. Use tape to mark a start line at the other end of your group area.
3. Give each kid a party blower.
4. Explain how to play.
 - One at a time, the kids will run to the cups and use their party blower to blow a cotton ball off of one cup.
 - Once they blow the cotton ball off, they can lift the cup up and retrieve the verse card.
 - The next kid will do the same and bring the card back to the group.
5. Once all the verse cards are collected, invite the kids to work together to put the verse in the correct order.
6. Repeat until the kids can recite the verse from memory.
7. If you have more than 10 kids, play again to allow other kids a chance to grab a card!

Talk Together

1. Why do you think we play games that allow us to put God's Word in order?
2. What does this verse remind you about who Jesus is?

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

- ☐ Index cards
- ☐ Pencils
- ☐ Optional: Finished poster board from Bible Story Extension Activity

① What You Do

1. Gather the kids together in a circle.
→ NOTE: If you completed the Bible Story Extension Activity, set the poster board in the center and invite the kids to reflect on what was written.
2. Give each kid an index card and a pencil.
3. Invite the kids to silently pray to God and tell Him about their plans to celebrate Jesus all year long!
4. Then, have them use the index card and pencils to write out their prayer to God.
5. Close in group prayer.

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).*

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

Groups

1. Take a Snapshot

- ☐ Chair ("Interview seat"); one for each Small Group
- ☐ Play microphone, one for each Small Group

2. Bible Story Extension

- ☐ Large poster board, one for each Small Group
- ☐ Markers, enough for each Small Group to share

3. Discussion Questions

No supplies needed

4. Verses to Take with You

- ☐ Print "Verse Cards" Activity Page on paper and cut apart, one set for each Small Group
- ☐ Party blowers, one for every kid
- ☐ Plastic cups, 10 for each Small Group
- ☐ Cotton balls, 10 for each Small Group
- ☐ Tape, one roll for each Small Group

5. Make It Personal with Prayer

- ☐ Index cards, one for every kid
- ☐ Pencils, one for every kid
- ☐ Optional: Finished poster board from Bible Story Extension Activity