

# 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. Star Parade
2. Star Pick-Up
3. Big Star

## Large Group (20 minutes)

### Worship: Inviting people to respond to God

### Story: Communicating God's truth in engaging ways

- Worship
- Bible Story
- Prayer

## Small Group (25 minutes)

### Groups: Creating a safe place to connect

1. Follow The Star
2. Story Shapes
3. Find the Special Gift
4. Special Star

### Home: Prompting action beyond the experience

- Going Home
- Memory Verse Card
- Parent Cue Card (print or email)
- [Parent Cue App](#) and [ParentCue.org](#)

THIS MONTH



### Today's Bible Story

## The Wise Men Matthew 2:1-2, 9-11

The wise men follow a star to Jesus.

### Key Question

## How do we know God loves us?

### Bottom Line

## God gave us Jesus.

### Memory Verse

## "God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son." John 3:16 GNT



### Inclusive Pro Tips

This leader guide is designed to be inclusive of children with a special need, learning difference, or disability who attend a group with their peers. See highlighted sections below for additional inclusive pro-tips. Check out the additional Special Needs resources included.

## SOCIAL 1/3

# Star Parade

## What You Need

- ☐ Yellow star cutout
- ☐ Ruler or paint stir stick
- ☐ Masking tape

## Inclusive Optional Supplies

- ☐ Stroller or wagon



## Inclusive Pro Tips

Allow children who are not ready to walk independently to be pushed in a stroller or wagon while holding the star.

## ① What You Do

### Before the Activity

1. Tape the star cutout to the end of the ruler/paint stir stick.

### During the Activity

1. Hold up the star wand and ask the children to follow the star as you walk around the room.
2. Encourage children to take turns leading the Star Parade.
3. Continue until all children have had a turn.

### After the Activity

Connect the Bottom Line to the Bible Story.

## ② What You Say

### Before the Activity

"Today we're going to have a Star Parade! (**Hold up the star wand.**) Line up behind me."

### During the Activity

"Follow me and let's march! (**Hold the star up high and start marching around the room.**) Look at you following the star! Great job! It's fun to be the leader of the star parade too! [**Child's name**] it's your turn to hold the star and lead us. (**Continue until all kids have had a turn.**) You all did a great job marching in our Star Parade and following the star!"

### After the Activity

"You all did a great job marching in our Star Parade and following the star! Today in our Bible Story, we'll hear about some wise men who followed a star to find a special gift. Let's go!"

**Transition →** Move to Worship and Story by carrying the star wand and encouraging the children to continue following the star.

## SOCIAL 2/3

# Star Pick-Up

## What You Need

- ☐ Lint rollers
- ☐ Foam stars or metallic star confetti
- ☐ Plastic container
- ☐ Optional: Yellow construction paper, permanent marker, and scissors in place of foam stars or metallic star confetti



## ① What You Do

### Before the Activity

1. Scatter the stars along the table and place the container in the center.
2. Unwrap or remove the outer layer of each lint roller.
3. Option: Cut the paper into 1-inch pieces and draw a simple star shape on each and scatter on the table.

### During the Activity

1. Encourage children to roll the lint roller over the stars to see how many they can pick up.
2. Have them remove the stars from the lint roller and place them in the container. Repeat as desired.

### After the Activity

Introduce the Bible Story.

## ② What You Say

### Before the Activity

"Hello, friends! I'm so glad to see you today. Join me over here at the table."

### During the Activity

"There are stars scattered all over the table, and I need your help picking them up. I have these rollers for us to use to make it more fun! To use them, you just roll them over the table like this. **(Demonstrate.)** Okay! Let's get rolling! **(Pause.)** After you've collected the stars on your roller, pick them off and put them in the container then do it again. **(Have children share the lint rollers if needed. Reset and repeat as desired.)** That was fun using these rollers to pick up all the stars."

### After the Activity

"Look at all the stars you collected. God put so many stars in the sky but today in our Bible Story, we're going to hear about one very special star that helped show them the way to Jesus!"

**Transition →** Move to Worship and Story by encouraging children to follow you as you walk a few steps then do a star jump. Repeat as desired as you travel to your designated area.

## SOCIAL 3/3

# Big Star

## What You Need

- ☐ Painter's tape
- ☐ Yellow pom-poms

## Inclusive Optional Supplies

- ☐ Broom



## ① What You Do

### Before the Activity

1. Create a large star on the floor with tape.
2. Scatter pom-poms all over the floor around the star.

### During the Activity

1. Encourage children to move all the yellow pom-poms inside the star.

### After the Activity

Connect the Bottom Line to the Bible Story.

## ② What You Say

### Before the Activity

"Come look at this big star. And all these yellow pom-poms, they look like little stars. Let's play a game to get all the little stars into the great big one."

### During the Activity

"Ready, set, go! **(Pause.)** Wow, great job. We are filling up the star and look how big and bright it looks now. Look around, did we get all the little stars in the big one? **(Pause.)** Get those last pom-poms and then we'll spread them all around and play again!"

### After the Activity

"Look at our star, it's big and bright. In our Bible Story today, we're going to hear about a really bright, really special star. Let's go hear all about it!"

**Transition →** Move to Worship and Story by giving each child a high five and saying "[*Child's name*] you did great!"

## Inclusive Pro Tips



Provide a broom for children to use if they are unable to bend down and pick up the pom-poms.

GROUPS 1/4

# Follow the Star

## Memory Verse Review

### Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

### What You Need

- ☐ "Memory Verse Sticker" Activity Page
- ☐ Avery® Labels #22830 or equivalent
- ☐ 3-inch to 4-inch foam star
- ☐ Painter's tape

### Note

You can find examples of hand motions in the "Memory Verse Hand Motions" PDF and video, included in the Prelude folder and on Pinterest.

USES MINIMAL  
SUPPLIES

MADE TO  
Move

## ① What You Do

### Before the Activity

1. Copy "Memory Verse Sticker" on label paper, one sticker per child.
2. Tape the star shape to the wall.
3. Make a tape line from one side of the room to the star on the wall.
4. Say the Memory Verse and do the motions together with the children.

### During the Activity

1. Encourage children to follow the tape line to the star and then say their Memory Verse.
2. Give each child a Memory Verse sticker.

### After the Activity

Connect the Memory Verse to the Bottom Line.

## ② What You Say

### Before the Activity

"Friends, let's say our Memory Verse together as we do the motions. 'God (*flat hand with thumb to forehead, pull down*) loved the world so much (*cross arms over chest*) that he gave his only Son,' (*rock arms like a baby*) John 3:16. (*Open hands like a book.*) Great job! Now come line up with me at the tape line."

### During the Activity

"Do you see that star? Let's see if we can follow the line to the star. Friends, walk very slowly and follow the line. Where is it taking us? (*Pause for responses.*) That's right! To the star. We made it to the star; now let's say our verse together. 'God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son,' John 3:16. We did it! Here is a special sticker for you. (*Give each child a sticker.*) Yay!"

### After the Activity

"In today's Bible Story we heard how the wise men followed a special star to see Jesus. They knew Jesus was special. How do we know God loves us? [*Bottom Line*] God gave us Jesus!"

## GROUPS 2/4

# Story Shapes

## Bible Story Review

## Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

## What You Need

- ☐ "Story Shapes" Activity Page
- ☐ Cardstock
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Painter's tape
- ☐ Option: Clear Con-Tact® paper



## ① What You Do

## Before the Activity

1. Copy "Story Shapes" on cardstock and cut, one set of shapes per child.
2. Tape the shapes in vertical lines on the floor in this order: heart, square, circle, star.
3. Make one line of shapes for each child.
4. Option: Tape the shapes to the floor by covering them with clear contact paper.

## During the Activity

1. Invite the children to stand at the beginning of a line of shapes.
2. As you review the Bible story, the children will hop from shape to shape and end on the star.
3. Repeat as time and interest allow.

## After the Activity

Connect the Bottom Line to the Bible Story.

## ② What You Say

## Before the Activity

"Hey, **[say children's names]**! Come stand with me. We're going to hop through the Bible story on these story shapes!"

Continue on the next page →

## Inclusive Pro Tips



In place of hopping, move or point to each story shape.

## GROUPS 2/4

# Story Shapes

## Bible Story Review

## Faith Skills

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Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

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## Inclusive Pro Tips

In place of hopping, move or point to each story shape.

## During the Activity

Everyone stand in front of a heart. **(Assist when needed.)** Now listen closely so you will know when it's time to hop on the heart. **(pause)** Ready? Hop on the heart! Yay! **(clap)**

"Look at the heart you are standing on. Hearts make us think of LOVE. The true story of Christmas is about how 'God LOVED the world so much that he gave his only Son.' **(John 3:16)** One day, God sent an angel to tell Mary that she was going to have a baby. The baby would be God's Son, Jesus.

"Ok, get ready to hop again. **(pause)** Hop on the square! Yay! **(clap)**

"Look at the square you are standing on. GIFTS or presents are sometimes shaped like a square. Joseph and Mary traveled to Bethlehem. When they got there, baby Jesus was born! God gave us the best GIFT when **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus!

"It's time to hop again. **(pause)** Hop on the circle! Yay! **(clap)**

"Look at the circle you're standing on. A circle is the shape of SHEEP. God sent an angel to tell shepherds watching SHEEP that Jesus had been born. The shepherds were so excited that they ran to see baby Jesus! The shepherds found baby Jesus lying in a manger, just like the angel said.

"We're going to hop one more time. **(pause)** Hop on the star! Yay! **(clap)**

"Look at the star you are standing on. Wise men followed a special STAR all the way to Jesus for a long time. When the wise men saw Jesus, He wasn't a baby anymore, but maybe even close to your age. He was at His home, not the manger. They worshipped Jesus and gave Him gifts.

"And that is the true story of Christmas! Let's hop through the story again! Go back to the heart!" **(Repeat as time and interest allow.)**

## After the Activity

That was fun hopping through the true story of Christmas! Now we know that Christmas is when we celebrate that God loved us so much **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus! How do we know God loves us? **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus!"

GROUPS 3/4

# Find the Special Gift

## Application Activity

### Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

### What You Need

- ☐ "Find the Special Gift" Activity Page
- ☐ Cardstock
- ☐ 4-inch star cutouts, nine per Small Group
- ☐ Red poster board
- ☐ Green poster board
- ☐ Christmas bows
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Painter's tape



### Inclusive Pro Tips

Bring the "presents" to each child or let them point instead of lifting.

## ① What You Do

### Before the Activity

1. Copy "Find the Special Gift" on cardstock, one per Small Group.
2. Cut posterboard in half, ten halves per Small Group.
3. Attach one large bow to each piece of poster board to create a present. Secure each piece of posterboard to the wall with tape along the top edge.
4. Tape one yellow star behind each present, except for one.
5. Tape Jesus behind the present without the star.

### During the Activity

1. Let each child take a turn lifting one present to reveal what's behind it.
2. If they find a star, celebrate and ask them who followed the star?
3. Remind them the wisemen followed the star.
4. When Baby Jesus is finally found, celebrate and remind them they found the best gift ever!

### After the Activity

Connect the Bottom Line to the Bible Story.

Continue on the next page →



## GROUPS 3/4

# Find the Special Gift

## Application Activity

### Faith Skills

Hear from God

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- ☐ Green poster board
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- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Painter's tape



### Inclusive Pro Tips



Bring the "presents" to each child or let them point instead of lifting.

## ② What You Say

### Before the Activity

"Hello friends! Look at all these big gifts on the wall. We're going to look behind these gifts today to find the most special gift! Just like the wise men were looking for someone very special, we'll see if we can find Jesus."

### During the Activity

"[Child's name] you go first. Open the first present. **(Pause for responses.)** Oooh, you found a star! Just like the wise men did. [Child's name], your turn! **(Pause.)** Who will find the special gift? **(Repeat until they find Jesus.)** Hooray! You found Jesus! He's the best gift of all! **(Hide stars and Baby Jesus again and repeat as desired.)**"

### After the Activity

"What a fun game! In our true story from the Bible, some wisemen were looking for Jesus, just like we did today! They followed a star to find Jesus! What special gift did they find when they followed the star? **(Pause for responses.)** Yes! It's Jesus! God gave us Jesus, the special gift, because He loves us so much! How do we know God loves us? **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus!"

GROUPS 4/4

# Special Star

## Application Activity

### Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

### What You Need

- ☐ "Special Star" Activity Page
- ☐ Cardstock
- ☐ Yellow washable ink pads
- ☐ Washable markers
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Baby wipes
- ☐ Permanent marker

### Inclusive Optional Supplies

- ☐ Gloves



### Inclusive Pro Tips

Provide gloves for child to wear if they are sensitive to the texture of the ink on their hand.

## ① What You Do

### Before the Activity

1. Copy "Special Star" on cardstock and cut, one per child.
2. Write each child's name on their paper.

### During the Activity

1. Encourage children to color their story picture.
2. Then ask children to fill the star by dipping their fingerprints on the ink pads and pressing it on the star outline on their paper.
3. Repeat until the star is filled.
4. Clean hands as needed.

### After the Activity

Connect the Bottom Line to the Bible Story.

## ② What You Say

### Before the Activity

"Everyone, come over and let's create some story art to help us remember today's true story from the Bible."

### During the Activity

"Look at your paper. The wise men are on their way to see someone very special, they're going to see Jesus! Color your paper but not the big star. **(Pause.)** Okay, now for that big, special star! Dip your finger onto the ink pad then press it on your paper inside the star. Keep going until the star is full! **(Help as needed.)** That is a very special star! **(Clean hands as needed.)** God put a special star in the sky to show them the way. The wise men followed the star until it stopped over a house, Jesus' house! When the wise men saw Jesus, they bowed down. They worshipped Jesus and gave Him very special gifts."

### After the Activity

"The wise men followed a special star to Jesus and when they saw Him, they worshiped Him. We can worship Jesus too! God loves us so much because **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus. How do we know God loves us? **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus."

# Getting Ready

## Social

Encourage preschoolers to enter the classroom and engage with peers and Small Group Leaders by providing fun, age-appropriate, hands-on activities that introduce new concepts they will hear in the Bible Story.

Offer one or more of the following activities as preschoolers arrive. Let one or two Small Group Leaders lead activities in different areas of the room while another leader greets parents and children at the door.

## Groups

Create a safe place to connect through activities written to reach every learning style while reinforcing the Bottom Line introduced during the Bible Story and applying it to real-life experiences. In addition, these activities provide preschoolers with an opportunity to build relationships with their Small Group Leader.

Offer as many of the following activities as your time, facilities, resources, and leadership allow. You may want to lead one activity at a time. Or offer two activities at once and allow half the children to participate in each. Then switch groups and repeat the activities.

## Pinterest

Visit our Pinterest page to see craft samples and suggested supplies.  
[bit.ly/FL\\_ChristmasShapes](https://bit.ly/FL_ChristmasShapes)

## Social

### Star Parade

- ☐ Yellow star cutout
- ☐ Ruler or paint stir stick
- ☐ Masking tape

#### *Inclusive Optional Supplies:*

- ☐ Stroller or wagon

1. Tape the star cutout to the top of the ruler/paint stir stick, one per Small Group.

### Star Pick-Up

- ☐ Lint rollers
- ☐ Foam stars or metallic star confetti
- ☐ Plastic container
- ☐ Optional: Yellow construction paper, permanent marker, and scissors in place of foam stars or metallic star confetti

1. Scatter the stars along the table and place the container in the center.
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3. Option: Cut the paper into 1-inch pieces and draw a simple star shape on each and scatter on the table.

### Big Star

- ☐ Painter's tape
- ☐ Yellow pom-poms

#### *Inclusive Optional Supplies:*

- ☐ Broom

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## Groups

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- ☐ 3-inch to 4-inch foam star shape
- ☐ Painter's tape

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2. Tape the star shape to the wall.
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### Story Shapes

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- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Painter's tape
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- ☐ Baby wipes
- ☐ Permanent marker

## Inclusive Optional Supplies:

- ☐ Gloves
1. Copy "Special Star" on cardstock and cut, one per child.
  2. Write each child's name on their paper.

**Continue on the next page →**

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## Home

- Make copies on cardstock or email this week's Parent Cue Card.
- Copy the Memory Verse Card to hand out or make available to parents.
- Copy "Going Home" and hang it on the door where Small Group Leaders can reference and remind parents of the Bottom Line and Memory Verse as parents pick up their children.
- Tell parents about our additional family resource, the [Parent Cue App](#) and [ParentCue.org](https://www.ParentCue.org).