

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. Hunt for the Gift
2. Mary and Joseph Travel
3. Where Do You Sleep?

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. The Gift of Verse
2. What's Missing?
3. Manger Builders ⚠️ **ALLERGY**
4. Pass the Gift
5. Best Gift Ornament
6. Journal and Prayer

Home: Prompting action beyond the experience

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



Today's Bible Story

Jesus is Born

Jesus is the best gift.
Luke 2:1-7

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

Hunt for the Gift

What You Need

- ☐ "Hunt for the Gift" Activity Page
- ☐ Cardstock
- ☐ Gift bows
- ☐ Painter's tape



Inclusive Pro Tips



Place presents within easy reach for all children.

① What You Do

Before the Activity

1. Copy "Hunt for the Gift" on cardstock, one set per Small Group.
2. Place the pictures around the room face down and secure with a piece of tape along the top edge.
3. Stick a gift bow on each paper.

During the Activity

1. Encourage children to look around the room to find the gift.
2. When they find one, invite everyone over to discover what's inside.
3. Celebrate each discovery! Reset and repeat as desired.

After the Activity

Introduce the Bible Story.

② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Hello friends! I have something exciting to tell you! We're going on a gift hunt today! All around the room are gifts with pretty gift bows on top! **(Show children an example of the presents.)** When you find one, shout hooray and we'll all come see what's inside your gift."

During the Activity

"Ready, set, go! **(Pause.)** Oh look! Our friend **[child's name]** found a gift! Let's go find out what's inside! **(Pause.)** Okay **[child's name]** lift up the gift and show us what's inside. **(Pause.)** It's **[picture]**! Super cool! Let's go find some more gifts! **(Repeat as desired.)** Great job finding all the gifts! Each one of the gifts were super fun, but what do you think is the best gift ever? **(Pause for responses.)** Wow! Those are some amazing gifts!"

After the Activity

"You were such wonderful gift finders today! In our true story from the Bible, we'll hear how God gave us the best gift ever! Let's go hear it together!"

Transition → Move to Worship and Story by walking like you are carrying a giant present!

SOCIAL 2/3

Mary and Joseph Travel



What You Need

- ☐ "Mary and Joseph Travel" Activity Page
- ☐ Cardstock
- ☐ Chubby paint brushes
- ☐ Disposable casserole pans
- ☐ Sand
- ☐ Clear tape
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Plastic tablecloth
- ☐ Option: Oval/platter-size paper plates in place of disposable casserole pans

① What You Do

Before the Activity

1. Copy "Mary and Joseph Travel" on cardstock and cut, one cutout per child.
2. Tape one cutout to the upper portion of each paint brush. Cover tables with the tablecloth.
3. Pour a thin layer of sand into each disposable casserole pan, one for every three to four children.
4. Place on the table, spacing them so three to four children can easily work at each one.

During the Activity

1. Encourage children to move their Mary and Joseph paintbrush through the sand creating a path from one side to the other.
2. Smooth out the sand and repeat as desired.

After the Activity

Introduce the Bible Story.

② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Hello, hello friends! Come join me at the table. I have a fun activity for us today."

During the Activity

"Look at all this sand, we're going to walk Mary and Joseph (**hold up a paintbrush**) through the sand, to get from the side to the other. (**Pause.**) You did it! You helped get Mary and Joseph from one side to the other. Look at the path you made, that is a really long way to travel! Let's smooth out the sand and do it again." (**Repeat as desired.**)

After the Activity

"Today, in our Bible Story, we're going to hear how Mary and Joseph had to travel a long way to the town of Bethlehem. And we'll hear what special thing happened when they got there! Let's go hear our story!"

Transition → Move to Worship and Story in different ways like walking, marching, skating, etc.

SOCIAL 3/3

Where Do You Sleep?

What You Need

- ☐ Butcher paper
- ☐ Washable markers
- ☐ Toy birds
- ☐ Toy fish
- ☐ Toy horses
- ☐ Little People®
- ☐ Masking tape



① What You Do

Before the Activity

1. Cover the table with butcher paper and tape to secure.
2. Draw a simple oval nest, wavy blue lines or a fishbowl, a simple stable outline, and a simple bed.
3. Place the toys in the center of the table.

During the Activity

1. Encourage children to match the animals to the place where they sleep.

After the Activity

Introduce the Bible Story.

② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Friends, come sit with me at the table. We are going to play a matching game."

During the Activity

"Look at all these pictures. What do you see? **(Pause.)** I see a nest. **(Point to nest.)** I see a stable. **(Point to the stable.)** I see a fishbowl. **(Point to fish bowl)** These are all places where animals sleep. I need your help putting the animals in the right place. Can you help me figure out where they sleep? What lives in this nest? **(Pause for responses.)** Yes, a bird. Put the bird there. **(Pause.)** Great job. Now what animal sleeps in the stable? **(Pause for responses.)** Yes, the horse! Put the horse in the stable. **(Pause.)** Who sleeps here in the water? **(Pause for responses.)** Yes, the fish does! Put the fish in the water. **(Pause.)** Great job! Now, YOU are a person, where do you sleep? **(Pause for responses.)** Yes, in a bed. Put the person in the bed. Way to go!"

After the Activity

"Today in our true story from the Bible, we're going to hear about a place where Jesus slept when He was born! Let's go hear all about it!"

Transition → Move to Worship and Story by asking silly scenarios of where things sleep. "Does a dog sleep in an airplane? Nooo. Does a camel sleep on a flower? Nooo. Does a person sleep on a cloud?"

GROUPS 1/6

The Gift of Verse

Memory Verse Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ "The Gift of Verse" Activity Page
- ☐ Colored cardstock in a variety of colors
- ☐ Glue sticks

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.

Inclusive Pro Tips



Work as a group and repeat words slowly and several times to allow time for all children to process.

① What You Do

Before the Activity

1. Copy "The Gift of Verse" on colored cardstock in a variety of colors, one set per Small Group.
2. Fold and glue the sides together for each paper.
3. Scatter out of order in your area.
4. This activity can be done sitting at a table or on the floor.
5. Say the Memory Verse and do the motions together with the children.

During the Activity

1. Encourage children to find the five gifts and put them in numerical order.
2. Flip one gift over at a time then the leader will read the words on the back.
3. Once all five gifts have been flipped over, leader will read the entire verse.
4. Say the verse and do the motions together.
5. Reset and repeat as desired.

After the Activity

Connect the Memory Verse to the Bottom Line.

② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Friends, come join me over here and let's say our Memory Verse and do the motions together. Everybody ready? Okay! Here we go! '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 everyone."

Continue on the next page →

GROUPS 1/6

The Gift of Verse

Memory Verse Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ "The Gift of Verse" Activity Page
- ☐ Colored cardstock in a variety of colors
- ☐ Glue sticks

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.



Inclusive Pro Tips

Work as a group and repeat words slowly and several times to allow time for all children to process.

During the Activity

"Friends, I need your help finding the five gifts I brought today. Let's go look around! **(Pause.)** Hooray! Hooray! You found all five gifts! Look how pretty and colorful they are! **(Pause.)** Each present has a number on it. **(Point.)** Let's put them in order, one to five. Do you see the gift with the number one on it? **(Pause.)** There it is! What about the gift with the number two? **(Continue with each gift and line up numerically.)** Great job! Thank you for helping me find all the gifts and put them in order. Let's turn them over and see what's inside. **(Flip gift number one over.)** Gift number one says 'God loved the world' hmm, let's see what gift number two has inside. **(Flip gift number two over.)** It says, 'so much.' Let's keep going! **(Continue flipping each gift and reading the words.)** Now that we've opened each of the gifts, let's put the words together. **(Point to each gift as you say the words.)** 'God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son,' John 3:16. **(Repeat as desired.)** That was so fun opening all the gifts to find our Memory Verse together."

After the Activity

"And do you know what the very best gift God gave us is? **(Pause for responses.)** Jesus! That's right! Jesus is the best gift ever! God loves us so much that **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus. And that is what we celebrate at Christmas! How do we know God loves us? **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus."

GROUPS 2/6

What's Missing?

Bible Story Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ "What's Missing?" Activity Page
- ☐ "What's Missing Stickers" Activity Page
- ☐ 11-inch x17-inch paper
- ☐ Avery® Labels #22807 or equivalent



① What You Do

Before the Activity

1. Copy "What's Missing?" on 11-inch x17-inch paper, one per child.
2. Copy "What's Missing Stickers" on label paper, one of each sticker per child.

During the Activity

1. Encourage children to look in the first section and find what's missing.
2. Give each child a Mary sticker to go in the space where she is missing in the picture.
3. Do this with the other three sections of pictures, giving each child a donkey, sheep, and baby Jesus sticker to go in the spaces where they're missing.

After the Activity

Connect the Bottom Line to the Bible Story.

② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Everyone come sit with me. I have a fun game for us to play as we review our Bible Story!"

Continue on the next page →

GROUPS 2/6

What's Missing?

Bible Story Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ "What's Missing?" Activity Page
- ☐ "What's Missing Stickers" Activity Page
- ☐ 11-inch x17-inch paper
- ☐ Avery® Labels #22807 or equivalent



During the Activity

"First you need this picture page. (*Hand each child a paper.*) This has pictures from the Bible Story we heard today about Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus.

"Put your finger on the first section of your page, like I am doing. (*Demonstrate and make sure the children are on the right section.*) It's a picture of the manger with baby Jesus, Joseph, and animals. Who's missing? (*Pause for answers.*) Yes, Mary's missing, but not for long! I have a Mary sticker you can put in the missing spot! (*Give each child a Mary sticker and show them where to put it.*)

"Let's do another one! This time, put your finger on the next section of your page, like I am doing. (*Demonstrate and make sure the children are on the right section.*) In this picture, there's an animal missing. Do you see what animal is missing? (*Assist when needed.*) Yes, the donkey is missing, but not for long! I have a donkey sticker you can put in the missing spot! (*Give each child a donkey sticker and show them where to put it.*) Move your finger down to the picture below. There is another animal missing in this picture. Do you see what animal is missing? (*Assist when needed.*) Yes, the sheep is missing, but not for long! I have a sheep sticker you can put in the missing spot! (*Give each child a sheep sticker and show them where to put it.*)

"We have one more missing picture. Put your finger on the last section of your page, like I am doing. (*Demonstrate and make sure the children are on the right section.*) This picture is missing the most special part of the story! Do you know what's missing? It's baby Jesus! But not for long! I have a baby Jesus sticker you can put in the missing spot! (*Give each child a baby Jesus sticker and show them where to put it.*) When baby Jesus was born, Mary wrapped Him in cloths and placed Him in a manger."

After the Activity

"Mary and Joseph probably walked all the way to Bethlehem or Mary might have ridden on an animal like a donkey because she was about to have a baby! In Bethlehem, they stayed in a place that had a manger and maybe some animals too! This is where a very special baby was born, and He was God's Son, Jesus! What a special gift! Now you have the true story of Christmas to take home. You can tell your family that we know God loves us because **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus! How do we know God loves us? **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus!"

GROUPS 3/6

Manger Builders*

! ALLERGY

Application Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ "Allergy Alert Poster"
- ☐ Cardstock
- ☐ Popsicle sticks
- ☐ Play-Doh®

Inclusive Optional Supplies

- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Washable markers in place of popsicle sticks and Play-Doh.
- ☐ Disposable glove

Inclusive Pro Tips



Let children use gloves or alternative materials if they are sensitive to the texture of Play-Doh.

Use a marker to draw simple step-by-step pictures on a piece of paper showing how to build a manger.



① What You Do

Before the Activity

1. Copy "Allergy Alert Poster" on cardstock, list Play-Doh®, and post at the door.
2. Set popsicle sticks and small portions of Play-Doh on the table.
3. Pre-build an example manger to show the children.

During the Activity

1. Encourage children to build a stable using the popsicle sticks and Play-Doh as "glue" to hold their sticks together.
2. Encourage children to think about what the manger may have looked like in the Bible Story.
3. As they work, remind them that a manger is something animals eat out of, it wasn't fancy, but a very special baby was born there, Jesus!
4. Gather the children around their creations.
5. Celebrate all the mangers each child built to remember where Jesus was born!
6. Remind children that Jesus is the best gift ever and he was born in a manger.

After the Activity

Connect the Bottom Line to the Bible Story.

② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Today we learned that when Jesus was born Mary wrapped Him in cloths and laid Him in a manger, a place where animals eat! Let's build our own mangers using popsicle sticks and Play-Doh!"

Continue on the next page →

3-5 year-Olds

Small Group

December — Week 2

GROUPS 3/6

Manger Builders*

! ALLERGY

Application Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ "Allergy Alert Poster"
- ☐ Cardstock
- ☐ Popsicle sticks
- ☐ Play-Doh®

Inclusive Optional Supplies

- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Washable markers in place of popsicle sticks and Play-Doh.
- ☐ Disposable glove

Inclusive Pro Tips



Let children use gloves or alternative materials if they are sensitive to the texture of Play-Doh.

Use a marker to draw simple step-by-step pictures on a piece of paper showing how to build a manger.

During the Activity

"I love how you're building your mangers! Who ate in the manger? *(Pause for responses.)* Yes! That's right! A manger is a place where animals eat! Who slept in a manger? *(Pause for responses.)* Wow! That's right! Jesus was born and slept in a manger. The place Jesus was born wasn't fancy, but this is where God gave us something very special. A very special baby was born, and He was God's Son, Jesus! What a special gift! Jesus is the best gift ever! Wow! Your mangers look wonderful! Are our mangers fancy? *(Pause for responses.)* You're all right! They're not fancy!"

After the Activity

"Jesus could have been born in a palace or a castle, but God chose a place with a manger because Jesus came for everyone! Jesus is God's Son. **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus because God loves us so much! How do we know God loves us? **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus!"



GROUPS 4/6

Pass the Gift

Application Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Music player
- ☐ Upbeat preschool music
- ☐ Gift box with lid
- ☐ Individual heart stickers

Inclusive Optional Supplies

- ☐ Chairs



Inclusive Pro Tips

Place chairs in a circle to play.

① What You Do

Before the Activity

1. Put the heart stickers, one per child, inside the gift box.

During the Activity

1. Ask children to sit in a circle.
2. Pass the gift box around as you play the music.
3. Pause the music and ask children to stop passing the gift.
4. Instruct whoever is holding the gift to open the box and take out one sticker then replace the lid.
5. Encourage everyone to say the Memory Verse with the motions together.
6. Start the music and continue until each child has a turn.

After the Activity

Connect the Bottom Line to the Bible Story.

② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Friends, come over and sit in a circle on the floor with me. I have a fun game for us to play."

During the Activity

"We are going to pass this gift box from friend to friend as the music plays. When the music stops, whoever is holding the box gets to do something special. Everyone will get a turn. Are we ready? Great! **(Start music.)** I'll pass the gift next to me, and you pass it next to you. Keep going around the circle. **(Pause the music.)** [Child's name] you're holding the gift. Open it up and see what's inside. **(Pause.)** Heart stickers! Hearts make us think of love! Take one sticker then close the box. Let's all say our verse together as we do the motions. Ready? '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 friends. **(Start music)** Pass the gift. **(Continue until each child has a turn.)** That was so much fun, and look, you all have hearts to remind you that God loves you!"

Continue on the next page →

3-5 year-Olds

Small Group

December — Week 2

GROUPS 4/6

Pass the Gift

Application Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Music player
- ☐ Upbeat preschool music
- ☐ Gift box with lid
- ☐ Individual heart stickers

Inclusive Optional Supplies

- ☐ Chairs

MADE TO
↓
Move

USES MINIMAL
SUPPLIES

Inclusive Pro Tips



Place chairs in a circle to play.

After the Activity

"The Bible teaches us wonderful things like how much God loves us! God loves us so much that **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus! Jesus is the best gift ever! How do we know God loves us? **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus!"

GROUPS 5/6

Best Gift Ornament

Application Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ "Best Gift Ornament" Activity Page
- ☐ Cardstock
- ☐ Crayons
- ☐ Craft sticks
- ☐ Yarn
- ☐ Glue sticks
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Hole punch
- ☐ Hot glue gun
- ☐ Hot glue sticks
- ☐ Permanent marker

Inclusive Optional Supplies

- ☐ Adaptive crayons

Note

- ☐ Use the hot glue gun before children arrive and store it out of reach in another room.

Inclusive Pro Tips

Provide adaptive crayons.



① What You Do

Before the Activity

1. Copy "Best Gift Ornament" on cardstock and cut, one cutout per child.
2. Fold each cutout in half as indicated and glue two sides together.
3. Hot glue four craft sticks together at the ends to create a square frame.
4. Punch a small hole at the top and bottom of each cutout.
5. Cut yarn in 8-inch lengths, two per child.
6. For each child, thread one length of yarn half-way through each hole and tie each side to the top and bottom craft sticks.
7. The yarn should be taut but have enough give not to cause the paper to rip.
8. Tie a bow from the excess at the top and trim the excess from the bottom.

During the Activity

1. Encourage children to color both sides of their picture.
2. Demonstrate how to hold the frame and gently twist the picture to make it spin.

After the Activity

Connect the Bottom Line to the Bible Story.

② What You Say

Before the Activity

"Come to the table and let's create a super special Christmas ornament."

Continue on the next page →

GROUPS 5/6

Best Gift Ornament

Application Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ "Best Gift Ornament" Activity Page
- ☐ Cardstock
- ☐ Crayons
- ☐ Craft sticks
- ☐ Yarn
- ☐ Glue sticks
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Hole punch
- ☐ Hot glue gun
- ☐ Hot glue sticks
- ☐ Permanent marker

Inclusive Optional Supplies

- ☐ Adaptive crayons

Note

- ☐ Use the hot glue gun before children arrive and store it out of reach in another room.

Inclusive Pro Tips

Provide adaptive crayons.



During the Activity

"We're going to make an ornament today that looks just like a gift. This fun ornament will help us remember what the very best gift is. Do you remember what the very best gift is? **(Pause for responses.)** That's right! Jesus is the very best gift! Look!

There's baby Jesus on your ornament. Color your picture and then I'll show you how to make it spin. **(Pause.)** Okay, Hold your frame with one hand and twist the picture like this **(demonstrate)** then let go and watch it spin! **(Pause.)** Wow! You really made the best gift ornament!"

After the Activity

"Today's true story from the Bible begins when Mary and Joseph traveled a long, long way to the town of Bethlehem. Mary and Joseph probably walked all the way to Bethlehem or Mary might have ridden on an animal like a donkey because she was about to have a baby!

Once Mary and Joseph got to Bethlehem, they stayed in a place that had a manger. A manger is something animals eat out of. There might have been some animals there too! This place isn't fancy, but this is where God gave us something very special. A very special baby was born, and He was God's Son, Jesus! What a special gift! Jesus is the best gift ever! God loves us so much that **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus! Happy Birthday, Jesus! How do we know God loves us? **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus!"

GROUPS 6/6

Journal and Prayer

Prayer Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Journal
- ☐ Fun-shaped pen

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.



① What You Do

Before the Activity

1. Encourage the children to pretend they are carrying a gift as you lead them to your Small Group spot.
2. Sit down and gather the children around you.

During the Activity

1. Review the Bible Story and Memory Verse Hand Motions, then ask the children to help you make a list in the journal of gifts they want to give other people for Christmas.

After the Activity

Pray with children using the list you made in the journal.

② What You Say

Before the Activity

"It's Small Group time! Today we are going to pretend we are carrying a gift while we walk to our Small Group spot. Are you going to carry a small gift (***act like you are holding a small gift in one hand***) or a BIG gift? (***Act like you are holding a huge gift with both hands.***) Pick up your gift and get ready to follow me! (***Pretend you are carrying a gift as you lead the children to your Small Group spot.***) Whew! We made it! Now we can sit down and talk about today's Bible Story. One, two, three, sit down with me!"

Continue on the next page →

GROUPS 6/6

Journal and Prayer

Prayer Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Journal
- ☐ Fun-shaped pen

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.



During the Activity

(Open the Bible and lay it in front of the children.) "In our Bible Story today, God gave everyone in the world the best gift ever! **(Pause.)** Do you remember the gift God gave us? Yes! **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus! And Jesus is the best gift!

"Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem. When they got there, baby Jesus was born! Mary wrapped baby Jesus and placed Him in a manger. A manger is where the animals ate their food. Wow! Just think about it! 'God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son.' John 3:16. That's A LOT of love! And that's how we know God loves us!

"The Bible verse we are learning talks about how we know God loves us. It says, '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.)** Did you hear that? God loves us so much **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus! Let's stand up and say that Bible verse together! Just say what I say and do what I do! '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.)**

"Yay! **(Clap.)** And that is what we celebrate at Christmas! God loved us so much **[Bottom Line]** God gave us Jesus! Now let's sit down so we can write in our prayer journal and talk to God. **(Open journal.)** In our Bible Story, God gave us the best gift – His Son, JESUS! That is why we give gifts to each other at Christmas. We give to others the way God gave to us. Let's make a list in our journal of gifts we want to give other people for Christmas. Then we can use the list when we pray. When I say your name, tell me one gift you would like to give someone at Christmas, and I will write it in our journal." **(Remember to print, as you write in the journal, so the children can recognize their names and the letters.)**

After the Activity

"These are some wonderful gifts! **(Hold up journal.)** Let's pray and talk to God. Would anyone like to pray before I pray? **(Give each child who wants to pray the opportunity to do so.)** Dear God, Thank You for giving us the best gift, JESUS! We know you love us because You gave us Your Son, Jesus. Please help us give to others the way You give to us, so people will know we love them too. **[Child's name]** wants to give a **(what they listed)**. **[Child's name]** wants to give a **(what they listed)**. **[Child's name]** wants... **(continue saying this for each child)** You are the best, God, and we love You very much. In Jesus' name. Amen."

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.
https://bit.ly/FL_ChristmasShapes

Social

Hunt for the Gift

- ☐ "Hunt for the Gift" Activity Page
- ☐ Cardstock
- ☐ Gift bows
- ☐ Painter's tape

1. Copy "Hunt for the Gift" on cardstock, one set per Small Group.
2. Place the pictures around the room face down and secure with a piece of tape along the top edge.
3. Stick a gift bow on each paper.

Mary and Joseph Travel

- ☐ "Mary and Joseph Travel" Activity Page
- ☐ Cardstock
- ☐ Chubby paint brushes
- ☐ Disposable casserole pans
- ☐ Sand
- ☐ Clear tape
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Plastic tablecloth
- ☐ Option: Oval/platter-size paper plates in place of disposable casserole pans

1. Copy "Mary and Joseph Travel" on cardstock and cut, one cutout per child.
2. Tape one cutout to the upper portion of each paint brush.
3. Cover tables with the tablecloth.
4. Pour a thin layer of sand into each disposable casserole pan, one for every three to four children.
5. Place on the table, spacing them so three to four children can easily work at each one.

Continue on the next page →

Getting Ready

Social

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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.

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Where Do You Sleep?

- ☐ Butcher paper
- ☐ Washable markers
- ☐ Toy birds
- ☐ Toy fish
- ☐ Toy horses
- ☐ Little People®
- ☐ Masking tape

1. Cover the table with butcher paper and tape to secure.
2. Draw a simple oval nest, wavy blue lines or a fishbowl, a simple stable outline, and a simple bed.
3. Place the toys in the center of the table.

Groups

The Gift of Verse

- ☐ The Gift of Verse" Activity Page
- ☐ Colored cardstock in a variety of colors
- ☐ Glue sticks

1. Copy "The Gift of Verse" on colored cardstock in a variety of colors, one set per Small Group.
2. Fold and glue the sides together for each paper.
3. Scatter, out of order in your area. This activity can be done sitting at a table or on the floor.

What's Missing?

- ☐ "What's Missing?" Activity Page
- ☐ "What's Missing Stickers" Activity Page
- ☐ 11-inch x17-inch paper
- ☐ Avery® Labels #22807 or equivalent

1. Copy "What's Missing?" on 11-inch x17-inch paper, one per child.
2. Copy "What's Missing Stickers" on label paper, one of each sticker per child.

Continue on the next page →

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Manger Builders*

- ☐ "Allergy Alert Poster"
- ☐ Cardstock
- ☐ Popsicle sticks
- ☐ Play-Doh®

Inclusive Optional Supplies:

- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Washable markers in place of popsicle sticks and Play-Doh.
- ☐ Disposable gloves

1. Copy "Allergy Alert Poster" on cardstock, list Play-Doh®, and post at the door.
2. Set popsicle sticks and small portions of Play-Doh on the table.
3. Pre-build an example manger to show the children.

Pass the Gift

- ☐ Music player
- ☐ Upbeat preschool music
- ☐ Gift box with lid
- ☐ Individual heart stickers

Inclusive Optional Supplies:

- ☐ Chairs

1. Put the heart stickers, one per child, inside the gift box.

Best Gift Ornament

- ☐ "Best Gift Ornament" Activity Page
- ☐ Cardstock
- ☐ Crayons
- ☐ Craft sticks
- ☐ Yarn
- ☐ Glue sticks
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Hole punch
- ☐ Hot glue gun
- ☐ Hot glue sticks
- ☐ Permanent marker

Continue on the next page →

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Inclusive Optional Supplies:

☐ Adaptive crayons

1. Copy "Best Gift Ornament" on cardstock and cut, one cutout per child.
2. Fold each cutout in half as indicated and glue two sides together.
3. Hot glue four craft sticks together at the ends to create a square frame.
4. Punch a small hole at the top and bottom of each cutout.
5. Cut yarn in 8-inch lengths, two per child.
6. For each child, thread one length of yarn half-way through each hole and tie each side to the top and bottom craft sticks. The yarn should be taut but have enough give not to cause the paper to rip.
7. Tie a bow from the excess at the top and trim the excess from the bottom.

Journal and Prayer

- ☐ Bible
☐ Journal
☐ Fun-shaped pen

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.