



GETTING READY

1. Welcome/Opener

What You Need:

- Host
- Wrapping supplies (paper, tape, bows, etc.)

Music and Sound Effects (SFX):

- Upbeat music to use as kids enter the room
- Up tempo Christmas music as kids play the game

Large Group Visuals:

- Undercover Christmas Theme Slide

What You Do:

- Collect enough Christmas wrapping supplies for every Small Group to wrap their leader. These can be pre-set on stage for the Host to use during the Opener. When the music starts, kids will run up and grab supplies then bring them back to their group and wrap their leader. Best wrapping job wins.

2. Communicator Script

What You Need:

- Communicator

- Bible
- Nativity set (the larger the better)
- A table

Music and Sound Effects (SFX):

- Upbeat music to use as kids exit the room

Large Group Visuals:

- Key Question Slide
- Awkward Family Christmas Photos (see “What You Do”)
- Nativity Scene in Modern Locations

What You Do:

- The Nativity Set will be used as an interactive prop throughout the story. The set will start out empty, and various pieces will be added as the story is told. The larger the better, but regardless of the size, be sure you interact with the audience using the various pieces.
- The pieces of the nativity should be throughout the room to give the idea that the people in the story traveled a great distance to get to Bethlehem.
- Download several appropriate images from the Awkward Family Photos website or ask your team or volunteers if they have any they'd like to share.

3. Worship

What You Need:

- This Is Living
- Alive Again

Simply the Best

Bible Story: Simply the Best (Jesus is Born) • *Luke 2:1-7*

Bottom Line: God gave us the greatest gift.

Key Question: What are some ways you can give?

Memory Verse: “God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life.” *John 3:16 (NirV)*

Life App: Compassion—Caring enough to do something about someone else’s need

Basic Truth: I can trust God no matter what.

Story: Communicating God’s Truth in Engaging Ways (Large Group, 35 minutes)

Engage kids’ hearts through a dynamic and interactive Bible story, worship, and prayer experience in a Large Group setting.

SFX: *Play high-energy music as kids enter.*

CG: *Undercover Christmas Theme Slide*

Host enters.

Welcome

*Host has lots of energy as he or she welcomes everyone to [Name of Environment]. Host is relatable and inviting. Host can talk about something that happened culturally throughout the week like a big sports game, movie opening (*Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*), or a viral video on YouTube, etc. Christmas is coming up, so obviously there is much to talk about there. Host tells them how excited he or she is that they’re there and briefly runs through what they can expect. This is especially helpful for first-time guests to make them feel like they know what’s happening.*

Opener

HOST: “Hey everybody! Can you believe how close we are to Christmas?! So how many of you had to wrap a present or two already? Good—consider that practice because today kicks off with an all-play! I need everybody up!”

Host brings out the wrapping supplies.

HOST: “Here’s how it works. When I say go, you are going to come and grab some wrapping supplies, and we are going to have a contest to see who can do the best wrapping job. One problem: I don’t have any presents. (*Look around*) Hmm . . . you know what we do have, though? Small Group Leaders!”

“That’s right. When I say go, you are going to grab some wrapping supplies and wrap your small group leader. We will then have a panel of judges who will determine the best Gift-Wrapping Small Group. Ready, set, GO!”

SFX: *Up-tempo Christmas music as kids play the game*

After time is called, bring out a few adults to judge and declare a winning group. These can be people in your tech booth, Worship Leaders, or your Communicator.

HOST: “Wow! That was highly entertaining. And educational—now I know how to wrap some of those awkward-sized presents this year. Not that you guys are awkward-sized . . . ah . . . never mind.

Announcements

Use this as an example of what to say. Make it your own and help the kids feel welcomed. Then take a moment to share any/all announcements.

HOST: "I'm so excited to be here with all of you today and get a little crazy! If it's your first time here, I want to welcome you and I would love to have a chance to meet you, get a high five and show you around. Here at Mission, we believe that this is a place for you and you belong here no matter who you are or what you believe. Mission is for YOU!

I have just a few announcements for you all today...

Share any/all announcements.

Now let's all stand up, get close, give someone a high five and let's sing and worship together!

Host exits and Worship Leader enters.

Worship

WORSHIP LEADER: "Thank you, *[Name of Host]*. Let's get up and get loud as we sing and dance for who God is and what he's done for us!

This Is Living

WORSHIP LEADER: "That was amazing! (*Take a moment to say something about the next song*). So let's give everything we have and worship God together!

Alive Again

Communicator enters as Worship Leaders exit.

COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT

INTRODUCTION

COMMUNICATOR: “Hey, everyone! Christmas is almost here, and I will tell you . . . I am really in the spirit! I love everything about this time of year . . . decorating the house, brainstorming presents to buy for my family and friends, singing Christmas carols, and eating lots of good holiday food. Now by show of hands, how many of your families send out a Christmas card with your family photo on it?”

Pause for response.

“That’s great! So . . . did you ever have your photo session not go as planned? Maybe like some of these gems I found!”

CG: Awkward Family Christmas Photos

As you click through the pictures, make comments. Be sure that the comments are of a positive nature and in good fun. If time allows, considering having several Small Group Leaders come up on stage and reenact a picture(s).

“Those are awesome, right? You just gotta laugh when you see those pictures. Like I said, I love everything about this season!”

TENSION

COMMUNICATOR: “Now as much as we get into the decorations and presents and food and pictures . . . Have you ever wondered if Christmas is more than just the Christmas season? What I mean is . . . is the story Jesus being born stuck in December only to be talked about once a year? Or is it a story that matters in March or July? For some of you, that may be a weird question. For others it may sound like an easy question to answer. Either way, it’s a good question for us to ask this time of year.”

TRUTH

COMMUNICATOR: “Think about it like this. How many of you have one of these—or something like one of these—on display somewhere in your house?”

Reveal nativity set (no figures in it yet).

“Yeah, me too! Many of us have a nativity set on display during the whole season. We don’t know exactly where Mary and Joseph stayed, but they stayed someplace where people kept animals. Maybe even like this one I have here. Now, of course, I’m sure you’ve noticed by now that this one is empty. Yet over the course of the Christmas story, more and more people came and filled up this place. We can learn more about how those people got there as we check out the Christmas story found the Gospel of Luke in the New Testament.”

(Read from Luke 2:1, 3-4) “In those days, Caesar Augustus made a law. It required that a list be made of everyone in the whole Roman world. . . . Everyone went to their own town to be listed. So Joseph went also. He went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea. That is where Bethlehem, the town of David, was.”

Pick up Nativity scene Joseph, who is across the room.

“Here’s Joseph. Our story starts out with a bit of a challenge for him. The Caesar—the king of the entire Roman Empire—decided that he wanted to take a census. In other words, he wanted to count all the people in his empire so that he knew (and the world would know!) just how big and powerful of a kingdom he had. But to do so, he commanded every person to return to his or her hometown to be counted there. That may not seem like a big deal, but Joseph and (*pick up nativity scene Mary*) Mary lived in Nazareth.

“Joseph’s family was from Bethlehem (*Point across to the table with the nativity scene on it*) . . . and now they had to travel there from Nazareth. That was almost 70 miles!”

“After a long and difficult journey, Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem. (*Walk them over to the table*) Let’s read . . . (*Reading from Luke 2:6-7 NIV*) ‘While Joseph and Mary were there, the time came for the child to be born. She gave birth to her first baby. It was a boy. She wrapped him in large strips of cloth. Then she placed him in a manger. That’s because there was no guest room where they could stay.’”

“Okay, so most of us have heard this story so many times before, but let that sink in. Not only did they have to travel all the way to Bethlehem, but also once they got there, they couldn’t find anywhere to stay! Did you catch where they put the baby after He was born? (*Pause and point to the nativity scene*) In a manger. What even is a manger? It is a food trough for animals. And in the part of the world where Jesus was born, they usually carved them out of rock! So what does that tell you about Jesus? He was born where the animals were kept in a place like this. (*Point to nativity scene.*)

“But THIS is where Jesus was born.”

Put Mary and Joseph in the Nativity scene with the baby Jesus in the center.

“And later on, the nativity scene starts to fill up as shepherds arrive (*Add shepherds to the nativity scene*) and even later on—maybe a couple of years later—the wise men show up, yet probably not to this place where Jesus was born. But at Christmas, we like to keep them all together. (*Add wise men to the nativity scene.*)”

“This is the first Christmas. This is how God sent His one and only Son into the world to save us. This is how God gave us the greatest gift.”

APPLICATION

COMMUNICATOR: “But back to the question we started with. Is the birth of Jesus just about what happened in a nativity scene like this around two thousand years ago? Or does this event matter in other areas of our life here and now?”

CG: *Nativity scene set in Bethlehem*

“This is what we typically think of, right? The birth of Jesus certainly mattered that day. But does it matter here?”

CG: Nativity scene in a classroom

“Now that may seem confusing, but here’s what I mean. When you are sitting in your classroom at school or walking through the hallways, does the birth of Jesus matter? Does God sending His Son into the world to save us change the way we treat others at school or do our school work?”

“If the birth of Jesus mattered then, then it matters now, too!”

“What about here?”

CG: Nativity scene on a sports field

“When you’re playing on the team or going up against opponents, does the birth of Jesus matter? Does God sending His Son into the world change the way we act on the field, in the locker room, and toward people on the other team?”

“If the birth of Jesus mattered then, then it matters now, too!”

“What about here?”

CG: Nativity scene in a family scene

“When you’re at home with your family, does the birth of Jesus matter? Does God sending His Son into the world change the way we deal with the frustrations we have with our siblings or how we show respect to our parents?”

“If the birth of Jesus mattered then, then it matters now, too!”

“Two thousand years ago God gave the greatest gift. But now we have the opportunity in ALL of these areas to show God’s love and give to others. We can show compassion for those who are hurting, just like God showed compassion for us. And this is not just something we do only in December. The birth of Jesus matters in March and July. It matters in your classroom, on the soccer field or basketball court, in your home, and with your friends.”

LANDING

COMMUNICATOR: “As you go to small group today, brainstorm some other places in your life that the birth of Jesus matters. Talk about how God gave and then discuss this question:

CG: Key Question Slide

“**What are some ways you can give?** God gave us Jesus, a gift that means a much on April 22nd as it does on December 25th. And as we respond to God’s gift, how can we have compassion toward others and give to them throughout the entire year. Think about how you can do that not just next week at Christmas but every day. Before we head to Small Group, let’s pray.

Communicator leads group in a prayer related to what they just heard. After prayer, Communicator dismisses kids to Small Group.

SFX: Play high-energy music as the kids exit.