



GETTING READY

1. Opener/Closer

What You Need:

- Host
- Christmas attire for the Host (same as last week)
- Decorated Christmas tree on stage
- Clear plastic container filled with jingle bells; one for each kid plus 15-30 extras
- Index cards; one for each small group
- Markers; one for each small group
- Large bucket or bin to collect the bells

Music and Sound Effects (SFX):

- Upbeat music to use as kids enter and exit the room
- Fun Christmas music (suggestion: "Jingle Bells")

Large Group Visuals:

- Theme Slide
- Compassion Slide
- Blank Bottom Line Slide
- Bottom Line Slide
- Blank Memory Verse Slide
- Memory Verse Slide

What You Do:

2. Bible Story

What You Need:

- Storyteller
- Bible
- One boy volunteer
- One girl volunteer
- Two biblical headpieces
- Large “Joseph” and “Mary” nametags
- Three index cards for the multiple-choice questions (see “What You Do”)
- Piece of cardstock with “THE LAW” in large letters (written on both sides)
- Piece of cardstock with a very rough map of Nazareth and Bethlehem, with a dotted line in between (written on both sides)
- Baby doll
- Blanket

Large Group Visuals:

- Blank Bottom Line Slide
- Bottom Line Slide

What You Do:

- Create “THE LAW” and the map posters. Make sure to draw them on both sides of the posters, so the kids both in the audience and on the stage can see them.
- Look at the script, and write the three multiple-choice questions and answers on the index cards.

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.

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 should treat others the way I want to be treated.

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: *Theme Slide*

Host enters in Christmas attire.

Opener

HOST: “Hello, friends! Christmas is coming, and I can’t WAIT! Raise your hand if you’re excited about Christmas. *(Pause for response.)* Yep. Me too.

“Raise your hand if you like hot chocolate. *(Pause for response.)* Raise your hand if you like snow. *(Pause for response.)* Raise your hand if you like sugarplums. *(Pause.)* Um . . . I’m not exactly sure what those are. *(Pause.)* Wait—I know! Raise your hand if you like PRESENTS! *(Pause for response.)*

“I thought so! I love Christmas because we celebrate how God gave us the very BEST present we could ever receive. He gave us the gift of His Son, Jesus. It was the ultimate example of what we’re talking about this month: compassion.

CG: *Compassion Slide*

“Compassion is caring enough to do something about someone else’s need.

“God knew we needed a Savior, and He did something about it. He sent us His Son. That’s why Christmas is such a super-awesome day—we get celebrate how God sent Jesus to save the world. That’s what I call an amazing gift!

“Speaking of gifts, I’m hoping you can help me with one of MY gifts that I want to give someone. You see, I’ve got this big container full of jingle bells.

Pull out the container of jingle bells. Hold one up and jingle it.

“Awesome gift, right? Well, I’ve got a question for you. How many jingle bells do you think are in here? Do you have any idea? Well, don’t say it out loud yet, because we’re going to try to guess. I’ll give you a hint. It’s more than zero, and it’s less than 500.

“Take a minute to circle up with your group and come up with a number. We’ll see which group can get closest to the actual number of bells.

SFX: *Fun Christmas music (suggestion: “Jingle Bells”)*

Hand out an index card and marker to each Leader.

“Leaders, go ahead and write down your group’s guess on this card. Put your name on it, too. Hold your card in the air when you’re ready.

Collect all the index cards and markers. Quickly put the cards in numerical order so you can keep them straight.

“Let’s see. [Leader’s name]’s group said [number]. [Leader’s group] said [number].

Go through everyone’s guesses, from lowest to highest. As you do, take mental note of which one is closest to the answer.

“Those were all really good guesses. Are you ready to hear the answer? *(Pause for response.)* There are [number] bells in this container, which means that [Leader’s name]’s group—you were the closest. Great job!

Hold up the container of jingle bells.

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.

CG: Blank Bottom Line Slide

SETTING UP THE STORY

STORYTELLER: “Hi, everyone! I just love the Christmas season with all the lights and decorations, all the fun music, and all the beautifully wrapped gifts under the Christmas tree.

“I love giving gifts, and I love receiving gifts. Don’t you? I’ve been given a lot of gifts over the years, but there’s one gift that stands out to me as the greatest gift EVER. As we get started, I need a couple of you to play a part in the story. Who wants to be up here on stage?”

Choose an older boy and older girl (with their hands raised) to be Joseph and Mary. Bring them up on stage.

“Great! Just for today, we’re going to pretend that [boy’s name] and [girl’s name] are Joseph and Mary.

Put the headpieces and nametags on “Joseph” and “Mary.”

“Joseph and Mary lived in a town called Nazareth, and they were getting ready to have a baby. Who was the baby? (*Pause for response.*) Right—Jesus, the Son of God.”

CAESAR MAKES A LAW

STORYTELLER: (*Hold up the Bible.*) “Let’s pick up the story in the book of Luke, chapter 2.

Open the Bible to Luke 2:1-3 (NirV) and read.

“In those days, Caesar Augustus made a law.

Hold up “THE LAW” poster. Let the audience see it, and then hand it to Joseph.

“It required that a list be made of everyone in the whole Roman world. It was the first time a list was made of the people while Quirinius was governor of Syria. Everyone went to their own town to be listed.

“Let’s think about this for a second. (*Point to Joseph and Mary.*) Joseph and Mary were about to have a baby. They found out about this new law from Caesar Augustus. It said they had to travel all the way to BETHLEHEM to be counted. A trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem would have taken them almost a week! Let’s see if you can figure out what they did.

Pick up the index card and read the three options.

“Did they . . .

- a. Throw themselves on the ground and throw a temper tantrum?
- b. Pretend they didn’t hear about the new law?
- c. Obey the law and travel to Bethlehem to be counted?

“What do you think: A, B, or C?” (*Pause for response.*)

A LONG, LONG JOURNEY

STORYTELLER: “Let’s look in the Bible and see what happened.

Open the Bible to Luke 2:4-5 (NirV) and read.

“So Joseph . . .

(To Joseph) “Raise your hand, Joseph!

Joseph raises his hand.

“Joseph went also. He went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea.

Hold up the “map.” Let the audience see it, and then hand it to Joseph.

“That is where Bethlehem, the town of David, was. Joseph went there because he belonged to the family line of David. He went there with Mary . . .

(To Mary) “Raise your hand, Mary!

Mary raises her hand.

“He went there with Mary to be listed. Mary was engaged to him. She was expecting a baby.

“All right—the correct answer was C! Joseph and Mary obeyed the law and traveled all the way to Bethlehem to be counted. They finally arrived, and Mary could tell that her baby was about to be born.

Pick up the index card and read the three options.

“Did they . . .

- a. Stay in a super-nice, very expensive hotel so they'd be really comfy?
- b. Head over to the very best hospital in town to get the very best treatment for their new baby?
- c. Stay with smelly animals because there was no room for them anywhere else?

"Believe it or not, the correct answer is C! They didn't stay at a super-nice hotel or the best hospital in town. Nope. The city was full, and there was no room for them anywhere—except where the animals lived."

HE'S HERE!

STORYTELLER: "What do you think Joseph and Mary did about that? How did they act?"

Pick up the index card and read the three options.

"Did they . . .

- a. Say, 'No way!' and turn around and go home?
- b. Stay in the barn but complain constantly about how terrible it was?
- c. **[Basic Truth] Trust God no matter what?**

"Let's see.

Open the Bible to Luke 2:6-7 (NirV) and read.

"While Joseph and Mary were there, the time came for the child to be born. She gave birth to her first baby.

Hand the baby doll and blanket to Mary.

"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.

"Once again, the answer is C! Joseph and Mary didn't waste time complaining about their situation. They didn't turn around and go home. They trusted God and believed He had a plan for them. And there, probably surrounded by piles of hay and with smelly animals all around, baby Jesus was born. Jesus—the greatest gift, God's only Son.

"You did a great job guessing, everybody. Let's give our volunteers a hand, too!"

Take the props from Joseph and Mary and put them in the bin. Dismiss them to their seats.

WRAPPING UP THE STORY

STORYTELLER: *[Bottom Line]* "God gave us the greatest gift when He sent us Jesus.

"For hundreds of years, God's people had been waiting for God to send a rescuer. They thought He might send a mighty warrior. No one imagined that the Savior of the world would be a baby. But that little baby would grow up and change the whole world.

CG: Bottom Line Slide

[Bottom Line] “God gave us the greatest gift. He gave us Jesus so we could have a relationship with Him that would last forever.

“Let’s pray and thank God for sending us the best gift EVER.”

CG: Blank Bottom Line Slide

Pray

STORYTELLER: “Thank You, God, for giving us the greatest gift. You sent Your only Son to be our rescuer—to save us from our sins so that we could be part of Your family forever. Thank You for giving us such an amazing reason to celebrate at Christmas. We love You, and we ask these things in Jesus’ name, amen.”

Host enters as Storyteller exits.

Closer

HOST: “It’s true—Jesus is the best gift EVER in the history of the world! We give gifts today as a way to remember how God gave US the greatest gift when He sent His Son for us. When you’re opening presents around the tree in just a few days, remember that the reason we give is because God gave us Jesus on that very first Christmas.

CG: Bottom Line Slide

[Bottom Line] “God gave us the greatest gift.

“He knew that we needed a Savior because of our sin problem. We sin—we do wrong things. And since God is perfect, our sin separates us from Him. But God made a way for us to have a relationship with Him without sin being in the way. He sent His Son, Jesus. When Jesus died on the cross, He took care of our sin problem for good. All we have to do is believe and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Then we can have a personal relationship with God that will last forever!

“That’s what our Memory Verse says in John 3:16. If you know it, say it with me.

CG: Blank Memory Verse Slide

CG: Memory Verse Slide

“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 (NIRV).

“God showed compassion to us. We can show compassion to others, too. After all, presents don’t just come in boxes under the Christmas tree. We can give the gift of compassion anytime. We give not only to show others that we care, but also to reflect to others how God gave us Jesus, the best gift ever.

“Think about how you can make others your mission. Think about how you can take on our Undercover Christmas challenge and **[Basic Truth] treat others the way you want to be treated**. Spend time with someone doing their favorite thing. Write a silly song to make someone laugh. Give your energy to help do chores around the house. Cleaning your room would be an awesome gift for your parents—believe

me!

Note: We suggest giving your kids and families a tangible way to show compassion by connecting them with a project through Compassion International. Take time before dismissal to promote a project of your choice, such as raising money for items in the [Compassion Gift Catalog](#).

“It’s time to head to Small Group now so you can talk some more about God’s greatest gift. Have an awesome time!”

Dismiss kids to their small groups.

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

CG: Theme Slide

Optional CG (Media Package): Theme Loop Video