



GETTING READY

1. Welcome/Closer

What You Need:

- Host
- One Christmas plate per team (like a wide dinner charger)
- 10 bean bags for each team

Music and Sound Effects (SFX):

- Upbeat music to use as kids enter and exit the room
- Music to play during the game

Large Group Visuals:

- Theme Slide

What You Do:

- Download and print this week's tech sheet for everyone helping with Large Group.
- Download the slides and have them ready to use. If you do not have CG capabilities, you have Orange's permission to enlarge and print the slides on paper.
- Download music from a resource such as iTunes® and have it ready to play..
- A 252 Media Package is available for purchase to go along with each curriculum tier. These graphic motion loops are included in the package. For more information, visit Store.ThinkOrange.com.

- Opening Game: For the opening game, you can play with as many teams as you have room to have them on stage. Alternatively, you can have all the Small Groups compete from the audience. You'll need one large Christmas plate or tray and 10 bean bags per team.

2. Communicator Script

What You Need:

- Communicator
- Bible
- Small whiteboard
- Dry erase marker

Large Group Visuals:

- One Big Story Intro Video
- Blank Key Question Slide
- Key Question Slide

What You Do:

- Download the slides and have them ready to use. If you do not have CG capabilities, you have Orange's permission to enlarge and print the slides on paper.
- The One Big Story Intro Video is available with the monthly download. You can find it in the "Prelude" folder under "Monthly Planning."
- Have a small white board (about 8.5" x 11") and dry erase marker on stage for the Communicator to use during the Word section of the script

3. Worship

What You Need:

- Alive Again
- Good Grace

The Weary World Rejoices

Bible Story: The Weary World Rejoices (The Coming Birth of John the Baptist) • *Luke 1:5-25; 57-80*

Bottom Line: You can have joy because anything is possible with God.

Key Question: What's the most amazing thing you've ever seen?

Memory Verse: *Always be joyful because you belong to the Lord. I will say it again. Be joyful!* Philippians 4:4 (NIRV)

Life App: Joy—Finding a way to be happy, even when things don't go your way

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: *Theme Slide*

Host enters

Welcome

Opener

HOST: “Merry ‘Not Quite Christmas,’ and welcome to *[Name of Environment]!* Mmmmm, can you smell it? The smell of peppermint, hot apple cider, pine needles on a fresh Christmas tree, and the sweet scent of body odor? Oh, wait. I think that’s coming from someone on the front row. I know someone who’s getting a stick of deodorant for Christmas. Am I right?!”

Host sniffs his or her own shirt.

“Oh wait. That might actually be me. Moving on! Speaking of Christmastime odors, my personal favorite Christmas smell is a freshly baked plate of cookies. There’s nothing better than the way your house fills up with that smell once you open the oven and set them down to cool. Mmmmmm, I can smell it now, and I’m sure you can, too. Now it would be a complete Christmastime disaster if you were asked to carefully set those delicious Christmas cookies on the dining room table and dropped the plate of them on the floor. Because I’m such a nice person, today’s game will actually train you in how to balance your Christmas cookies.”

“In this game, each team will get a fun Christmas plate and 10 bean bags. We’ll call the bean bags ‘cookies’ to keep it simple. Teams will form a single-file line and will stand about seven or eight feet away from the person who is holding the Christmas plate. Kids in line will toss one cookie toward the kid holding the plate who must catch the cookies on his or her plate without dropping the plate or the cookies.”

“Now, you may think this sounds easy. ‘All I’ve got to do is catch bean bags on a plate? EASY!’ But you couldn’t be more wrong. You see, the more cookies on the plate, the harder the plate is to balance. You could get six cookies deep, lunge for a stray cookie chucked your way and then BOOM! Christmas disaster. The goal is to avoid all Christmas cookie disasters.”

“Okay! Let’s get our teams ready; decide which kid will be holding the plate during the first round of this game, and then we’ll get ready to play ‘Cookie Toss!’”

Play the game multiple rounds with a different kid holding the plate each time. If you want to mix up the game after the first or second round, you can add rules like “all cookie tossers must toss with left hands only” or “plate holder can only use one hand, like a waiter.” This should serve to challenge the older kids a bit more.

“Great job during our game. Now you’re well all trained cookie keepers. I only hope that when the time comes, you remember your training well and make me proud. Now, leaders, gather up all your game materials. In just a moment I’ll come around and pick those up, but for now, help me welcome *[name of worship leader]* to the stage!”

Host initiates applause. Worship Leaders enter as Host exits.

Worship

WORSHIP LEADER: “

Communicator enters as Worship Leaders exit.

COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT

VIDEO: *One Big Story Intro*

CG: *Blank Key Question Slide*

INTRODUCTION

COMMUNICATOR: “Before we get started with today’s Bible story, let’s play another game. Here’s how it works—I’ll give you a challenge. After I say the challenge, you’ll tell me if the challenge is possible or impossible. Now, if you think the challenge is possible, I want to see you show me how it’s done. So don’t say something’s possible unless you’re ready to back it up. If you understand the instructions, say ‘Christmas Cookies.’ *(Pause for response.)*”

“Alright, first up: Licking your elbow. Possible or impossible? *(Pause for response.)*”

If kids say “Possible,” ask one kid to try to prove it.

“Alright, that was . . . interesting. Next up: Talking while breathing in through your mouth. Possible or impossible? (*Pause for response.*)

If kids say “Possible,” ask one kid to try to prove it.

“You know, technically, it is actually possible to do that. Fun fact: apparently, 1% of the population, mostly musicians, can actually do this. Anyways, next up: Touching your tongue to the bottom of your chin. Possible or impossible? (*Pause for response.*)

If kids say “Possible,” ask one kid to try to prove it.

“Last one: Legend says that no man or woman has ever been able to successfully use their foot to kick themselves in the backside. But I want to know: what do you say? Possible or impossible? (*Pause for response.*)

If kids say “Possible,” ask one kid to try to prove it.

“Full disclosure: I knew that last one was possible, I just wanted to see if you guys would actually do it. So uh, congratulations? You’re all winners. Everyone, have a seat!”

Wait for kids to be seated.

TENSION

COMMUNICATOR: “Now those things may seem difficult, but they’re still within the realm of possibility. I mean, there are some pretty flexible people out there who can do some wild stuff. But what happens when we face something that truly seems impossible? How can we face life with joy when things don’t seem to be turning out the way we expected, and we don’t see a way out of whatever we’re going through? What do we do then? Well, I guess we could give up, but I’m pretty sure there’s a better way. We might just need some help figuring out what that is.”

“Thankfully, the writers of the Bible included all sorts of times when people faced something they thought was impossible. Let’s head there and see what we can find out.”

TRUTH

COMMUNICATOR: “At the beginning of the book of Luke, we meet a guy named Zechariah. Zechariah was a priest in the temple, which is similar to our churches today. He took care of the church, helped people as they prayed, read God’s Word to people who couldn’t read, and helped people who came to the temple.”

“Zechariah was married to a woman named Elizabeth who was, as you could probably guess, was pretty old, too. Zechariah and Elizabeth trusted God, and they loved him with all of their heart. They worked so hard to do what was right in God’s eyes. Unfortunately, there was something that always bothered them. You see, Zechariah and Elizabeth had never been able to have any children. But they kept trusting God. They stayed faithful, and they did what God has always asked them to do.”

“One day, Zechariah went to the temple like he usually did, ready to do his normal work. But when he arrived at the temple, Zechariah was chosen to be the priest who got to go all the way into the Holy Place to burn incense. Not every priest was chosen to do this, so this was a big deal! While he was in there, the rest of the priests gathered outside to pray and worship.”

“As Zechariah was inside Holy Place, something unexpected happened Check out what Luke tells us. *(Read directly from Luke 1:11)*”

“Then an angel of the Lord appeared to Zechariah. The angel was standing at the right side of the incense altar,” (NirV).

“Wow, right? Can you imagine Zechariah just doing his thing in the Holy Place and being caught by surprise? I think surprise was an understatement. Luke tells us that he was terrified! But we can cut him a break; I’m sure anyone of us would have been terrified, too. But like so many stories of angels in the Bible, the angel tells Zechariah not to be afraid. Then he told Zechariah some incredible news.”

“(Read directly from Luke 1:13b-14,16-17b) Your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will have a child. It will be a boy, and you must call him John. He will be a joy and delight to you. His birth will make many people very glad . . . He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. And he will prepare the way for the Lord,” (NirV).

“But when Zechariah heard the news from Gabriel, he wasn’t quite sure this could be true. He said, *(Read directly from Luke 1:18) ‘How can I be sure of this? I am an old man, and my wife is old too,’ (NirV).*

“When Zechariah said this, the angel spoke: *(Read directly from Luke 1:19-20) ‘I am Gabriel. I serve God. I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. And now you will have to be silent. You will not be able to speak until after John is born. That’s because you did not believe my words. They will come true at the time God has chosen,’*” (NirV).

“Catch that? Zechariah wouldn’t be able to speak a single word until after his son John was born, because he didn’t believe the angel’s words!”

“But God was faithful and kept His promise. Elizabeth became pregnant, and nine months later, she gave birth to a baby boy. Her neighbors and relatives had heard how God had answered her prayers, and they were full of joy. They wanted to name the baby Zechariah after his father . . . but Elizabeth said he must be named John.”

“This seemed strange to them, as no one in their family was named John. Everyone assumed the happy couple would use a family name. They weren’t sure what to think about what Elizabeth said, so they asked Zechariah what he wanted to do.”

“Remember, this whole time Zechariah hadn’t been able to talk at all, so he asked for something to write on. He wanted to be as clear as possible. He wrote this:”

Write “His name is John” in large letters on the white board.

“His name is John. Everyone was amazed—and right away, Zechariah could speak again!”

“Everything happened just as the angel had said—Zechariah and Elizabeth had a baby, they named him John, and Zechariah got his voice back. After John was born, Zechariah praised God along with all of his neighbors. People all over the town talked about the impossible thing God had done.”

“And there’s still more to our story. Because John didn’t just bring joy to others through his birth. John would grow up to prepare people’s hearts for the most amazing gift of all: Jesus, the Son of God. The Savior of the world. Amazing, right?!”

APPLICATION

COMMUNICATOR: “The story of Zechariah and Elizabeth might seem so impossible to us, but God often uses the impossible to show us that He’s greater than any limit we can put on Him. The truth is God can still do the impossible.”

“God cares about YOU! He knows your name, your favorite song, what makes you scared, and what makes you smile. And not just for you—but for everyone in the world. That might seem impossible, but that’s how BIG God is.”

“Even on your worst day or when life is unexpected or nothing seems to be going right, you can have joy because of what Jesus did for us.”

LANDING

COMMUNICATOR: “This week, remember that God cares about you. Even when things don’t always go our way, we can have joy by knowing that anything is possible with God. As you head back to small groups, think about this.”

CG: Key Question Slide

“What’s the most amazing thing you’ve ever seen?” Maybe it was the ocean or the mountains. Maybe it was a sunset you saw in your town. It could be you’ve seen someone do something you never thought was possible. Think about what you’ve seen. Why was it so amazing? And what could you learn about God from it?”

“If you’re having trouble thinking of something, don’t worry. You’ll have a chance to talk more about amazing things in Small Group. Before we head out though, let’s pray and thank God that He can do the impossible! Let’s pray.”

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

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

CG: Theme Slide

