



GETTING READY

1. Opener/Closer

What You Need:

- Host
- Fun Christmas attire for the Host
- *Optional:* “Front door” scene on stage (see Week 1)
- Large shipping box, like an Amazon® box
- A note card that says “Winter Wonderland”
- Handheld microphone

Music and Sound Effects (SFX):

- Upbeat Christmas music to use as kids enter and exit the room
- “Winter Wonderland” instrumental track
- Three or four more instrumental Christmas tracks (suggestions: “Jingle Bell Rock,” “White Christmas,” “Rockin’ Around the Christmas Tree,” “It’s Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas,” “Sleigh Ride”)

Large Group Visuals:

- Theme Slide
- Joy Slide
- Blank Bottom Line Slide
- Bottom Line Slide

2. Bible Story

What You Need:

- Storyteller
- Two kid volunteers (one boy and one girl)
- Bible
- Tent with a sign on it that says “temple”
- Robe and beard for the boy playing Zechariah
- Robe and head covering for the girl playing Elizabeth
- Dry-erase board
- Dry-erase marker
- Eraser
- Baby doll

Large Group Visuals:

- One Big Story Intro (Video)
- Blank Bottom Line Slide
- Bottom Line Slide

What You Do:

- The One Big Story Intro Video is available with the monthly download. You can find it in the “Prelude” folder under “Monthly Planning.”
- Place the costume pieces and dry-erase props on the stage so the Storyteller can easily access them.
- Pre-write “I can’t speak!” on the dry-erase board.

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.

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 Christmas music as kids enter.*

CG: *Theme Slide*

Host enters, dressed in fun Christmas attire.

Opener

HOST: "Hi, everyone! I'm so glad you're here! This is [your environment's name], and my name is [your name]. If you don't already know, this is a great place to come and have fun and learn more about God!"

“This month we’re talking about joy.

CG: Joy Slide

“Joy is finding a way to be happy, even when things don’t go your way.

CG: Theme Slide

“It can be tough when things don’t go exactly like you planned. But the joy God gives us doesn’t depend on whether life is going just right. True joy comes when we remember what’s true about God and when we remember that *[Basic Truth]* we can trust Him no matter what.

“This time of year, we see a lot of shipping boxes by people’s front doors, right? I mean, everywhere I go, I see delivery trucks and boxes. In fact, there ought to be one around here somewhere . . . (*look around and then spot the shipping box by the ‘front door’ on stage.*) Here it is! Let’s see what’s inside.

*Open the box and read the “Winter Wonderland” note card inside.
Look confused at first. Then, when the music starts, you realize what’s happening.*

SFX: “Winter Wonderland” instrumental track

“Ohhhhhhh, I know! We can ‘unbox’ some fun Christmas songs together!

SFX: Fade out music

“I love Christmas music, and I know you do, too. Let’s see how well we know the words! We’ll start a famous Christmas song, and we’ll all sing along together. But then, when I do this . . .

Wave your arms above your head.

“ . . . we’ll stop the song, and we’ll see if your LEADERS can finish the words correctly.

“We don’t want to give away the answer, so when you see me do this . . .

Wave your arms above your head.

“ . . . that’s when you need to stop singing, okay?

“Let’s try it with our first song: *(hold up the piece of paper)* ‘Winter Wonderland’!

SFX: “Winter Wonderland” instrumental track

Sing the song with the kids for a while. When you get to the pre-determined stopping point, wave your arms to cue everyone to stop singing, as the tech volunteer pauses the track.

Note: The missing lyrics should be somewhat difficult to get (maybe from an obscure part of the song), but they don’t need to be TOO difficult. The humor will come from the Leaders singing/crooning into the microphone.

SFX: Pause the music (at the pre-determined stopping point)

“All right, Leaders—raise your hand if you know what comes next.

Choose a Leader and have him/her sing the line into the microphone.

“Amazing! (To the Leader) You really know your lyrics.

Go through three or four more songs. If for some reason you stump the Leaders and no one knows the lyrics, you can sing them yourself.

“That was super fun! How about a big hand for our brave Leaders? (Pause for response.)

“Now let’s keep the music going and worship God together.”

Worship Leaders enter as Host exits.

Worship

Storyteller enters as Worship Leaders exit.

VIDEO: One Big Story Intro

CG: Blank Bottom Line Slide

SETTING UP THE STORY

STORYTELLER: “Hi, everyone! It’s so cool to see how everything in God’s Big Story had led up to the birth of Jesus.

“For many years, God had spoken to His people through prophets like Isaiah and Micah. People knew that God would send a Savior one day, just like He promised. But then, a long time passed. The Israelites were being ruled by the Romans, but they wanted so badly to be free.

“I’ll need a few volunteers to help tell today’s story. Who would like to pretend to be Zechariah and Elizabeth? Don’t worry, I’ll tell you what you need to do!”

Choose an older boy and an older girl and give them the costume pieces. Give Zechariah a beard and a robe. Give Elizabeth a robe and a head covering.

ZECHARIAH IS CHOSEN

STORYTELLER: (*Pointing to Zechariah*) “Zechariah was a priest, which meant he had an important job working in the temple—which is like a church. Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth (*point to Elizabeth*) faithfully served God.

“Zechariah and Elizabeth were pretty old at this point, and although they had prayed to have children, they still didn’t have any.

“Two times each year, Zechariah went to the temple to serve God.

Guide Zechariah to walk over to the ‘temple’ tent and go inside. Zip the door closed behind him.

“He was chosen to enter the Holy Place inside the temple while the other priests prayed outside.”

THE VOICE OF AN ANGEL

STORYTELLER: “While Zechariah was inside, alone, an angel appeared to him! It was the angel Gabriel. Here’s what the angel said.

Open the Bible to Luke 1:13 (NirV) and read.

“Do not be afraid, Zechariah. Your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will have a child. It will be a boy, and you must call him John.

“Wow! Can you imagine what that must have been like for Zechariah? An angel from God told him that he and Elizabeth would have a son . . . and that they should name him John! The angel went on to tell Zechariah that John would be a very special person with an important part to play in God’s Story.

Open the Bible to Luke 1:14-17 (NirV) and read.

“He will be a joy and delight to you. His birth will make many people very glad. He will be important in the sight of the Lord. . . . He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. And he will prepare the way for the Lord.

(Point toward the tent) “This was a lot for Zechariah to take in.

(To Zechariah) “Zechariah, can we see your shocked face?

Unzip the tent so Zechariah can stick his head out with a shocked face. Then have him go back inside and zip it up again.

“Zechariah asked the angel how he could be sure this would happen. How could he and Elizabeth have a baby if they were old?

“The angel responded:

Open the Bible to Luke 1:19-20 (NirV) and read.

“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.

“Zechariah came out of the temple . . . and sure enough, he couldn’t speak.

Open the tent and motion to Zechariah to come out, Hand him the dry erase board that says “I can’t speak!” and have him hold it up so the audience can see it.

“The other priests realized that Zechariah had seen a vision from God.”

NAME THAT BABY

STORYTELLER: “Sure enough—just as the angel said—Elizabeth became pregnant and gave birth to a baby boy.

Give the baby doll to Elizabeth.

“Zechariah and Elizabeth’s neighbors and relatives were full of joy because of what God had done for them. The neighbors and relatives figured the child would be named Zechariah like his father.

“But Elizabeth said . . .

Have Elizabeth point upward.

“No! . . . He must be called John (Luke 1:60 NIV).

“They asked Zechariah about the name, and he asked for something to write with.

Take the dry erase board from Zechariah, erase it, and write: "His name is John."

"Zechariah wrote that the baby should be named John, and immediately, Zechariah could speak again! (To Zechariah) Say something, Zechariah. (Pause for response.)"

"Zechariah praised God because he was so full of joy."

WRAPPING UP THE STORY

STORYTELLER: "Just as the angel had said, John had already brought great joy to his parents. And remember, he would grow up to have an important part in God's Big Story. John would go on to prepare people's hearts for Jesus, the Savior—the most amazing gift of all."

"Let's give our volunteers a hand as they head back to their seats!"

Take the props back and dismiss the volunteers to their seats.

"God had done something amazing for Zechariah and Elizabeth. They were very old, and they had given up on having a child, but then God gave them John. What had seemed impossible came true!"

"Things that might SEEM impossible to us aren't impossible for God. ANYTHING is possible for Him. And when we remember that God can do the impossible, we can have joy."

"Remember this:

CG: Bottom Line Slide

[Bottom Line] "You can have joy because anything is possible with God."

“Let’s pray.”

CG: Blank Bottom Line Slide

Pray

STORYTELLER: “Dear God, it’s so good to know that nothing is impossible with You! Help us to remember that when we find ourselves in situations that might seem impossible. Please help us to choose joy even when we’re facing something that seems too big to handle. We know that there’s nothing we might face that’s too big for You. We love You, and we ask these things in Jesus’ name, amen.”

Host enters as Storyteller exits.

Closer

HOST: “Wow. Imagine what that must have been like for Elizabeth and Zechariah! It sure seemed like they were too old to have children. But anything is possible for God. He can do things that might SEEM impossible.

CG: Today’s Story Image

Optional: Place Today’s Story Image on your timeline.

“Zechariah and Elizabeth were able to have a baby boy, just like the angel said. And their baby, John, would grow up and tell everyone about the Savior God had promised.

CG: Timeline

“When we look back at God’s Story, we can see how people had been separated from God because of sin. John was an important part of the story, because God sent him as a messenger to prepare the way for Jesus.

“God’s Story is so big that nothing could ever stand in the way. He is always in control. Nothing is impossible for Him. We can have joy when we remember that anything is possible with God!

“Say this with me.”

CG: Bottom Line Slide

KIDS and HOST: [Bottom Line] “You can have joy because anything is possible with God.”

HOST: “So when you feel like your Christmas gifts aren’t as good as everyone else’s, or if you don’t have a gift at all, or when you have to face something really tough and you don’t know what will happen next, remember, [Basic Truth] you can trust God no matter what. No matter what happens, we can have joy, because anything is possible with God!

“I’ll see you next time!”

Dismiss kids to their small groups.

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

CG: Theme Slide