



K3 LG Guide

1. OPENER/CLOSER

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Host
- Paper chain made from red, green, and white construction paper, connected as interlocking rings that are stapled together—with the rings labeled from 1 to 25, and the names of the games written on the inside of the rings for specific days (see “What You Do”)
- Permanent marker
- Kid-safe scissors
- Box of supplies for each small group, containing:
 - Large piece of green craft paper (big enough to wrap around an adult)
 - “Ornament Cutouts” printed from the LG Assets PDF and cut out (one set per group)
 - Various other supplies for the group to use to turn their leader into a Christmas tree (tinsel, battery-powered lights, etc.)
 - Tape (two rolls per group)
- Host’s phone
- Stockings hung on stage, numbered 1 through 4 (keep these on stage all month for the week 5 game)—ideally, hang these on hooks so you can easily take them down and put them back up again

Micah 5:2, Isaiah 9:6-7, and Isaiah 7:14-15

3. BIBLE STORY

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Storyteller
- Three Small Group Leaders (no need to pre-select them)
- Bible, pre-marked with sticky notes at Isaiah 9:6-7, Isaiah 7:14-15, and Micah 5:2
- Light source(s) for the room, such as night lights, so that the room won’t be completely dark when you turn out the lights
- Flashlight
- Theme Background Slide
- Bottom Line Slide
- Story Images 1-5

WEEK 1

In our first week, we start in **Micah 5:2, Isaiah 9:6-7, and Isaiah 7:14-15**, where we discover how prophets predicted that God would send a Savior. No one could have expected that it would take hundreds of years before Mary, Joseph, or any of the shepherds or wise men came on the scene. The prophets wrote these promises to offer hope to God’s people as they faced exile. Even though it took time, God kept these promises, and because of that, we can still have hope today.

Bottom Line: **You can have hope because God is faithful.** Much of what we celebrate at Christmas is an incredible reminder that God can be trusted no matter what. We can have hope because, when all seemed hopeless, God made promises to save the world and then followed through with Jesus. No matter what we face in life, we can have hope and trust that God is at work and can help us get through our circumstances.

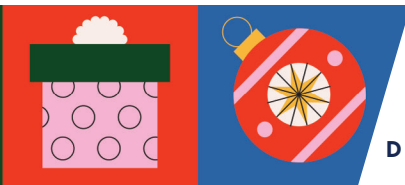
CHRISTMAS is about celebrating Jesus, God’s greatest gift.

HEADS UP: IDEAS TO KEEP IN MIND AS YOU TALK ABOUT CHRISTMAS WITH KIDS

The Christmas season can be an interesting time for families as they navigate how they’ll celebrate with their kids and extended family and friends. It’s important to keep in mind that not everyone will experience this season the same way. Some go all out with presents, while others keep it low-key. Christmas can be a time when people feel grief from losses over the past year or the pain of current health situations. Christmas can also expose some of the socioeconomic differences among the people who attend your church. It’s important to keep all of these things in mind as you talk about Christmas plans, what kids want for Christmas, or what kids are hoping for this year. Have a plan in place to make sure ALL kids feel at home in your church. Also, remind your Small Group Leaders and Storytellers that it’s not our job to tell kids what to think and believe about Santa Claus, Elf on the Shelf, or any of the traditions that people have. Just meet kids where they are and direct them back to their parents for these sorts of questions.

DECK THE HALLS

COUNTDOWN TO CHRISTMAS



WEEK
ONE
DECEMBER 2023

LARGE GROUP
K-3

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

Goodness and Light
Jesus Is Promised
Micah 5:2; Isaiah 9:6-7; 7:14-15

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

You can have hope
because God is faithful.

MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

"A child will be born to us.
A son will be given to us."
Isaiah 9:6a, NIV

MONTHLY VIRTUE

Christmas—Celebrating Jesus,
God's greatest gift

BASIC TRUTH

I can trust God no matter what.

LARGE GROUP

ENGAGE KIDS' HEARTS THROUGH A DYNAMIC AND INTERACTIVE BIBLE STORY, WORSHIP, AND PRAYER EXPERIENCE IN A LARGE GROUP SETTING.

AUDIO: PLAY HIGH-ENERGY MUSIC AS KIDS ENTER.

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP

Host enters.

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): COUNTDOWN

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME

OPENER

HOST: "Merry Christmas, everybody! I've been waiting all year to say that! This is my very favorite time of year because there are just so many fun things to do. I love to 'deck the halls' and decorate for Christmas. I love to bake Christmas treats and Christmas songs. What fun things do you like to do during the Christmas season? (Take a few responses.)

"Those are all great ways to celebrate! And do you know WHY we celebrate Christmas in the first place?

SLIDE: VIRTUE

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME TRANSITION TO VIRTUE

"Christmas is about **celebrating Jesus, God's greatest gift.**

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): VIRTUE TRANSITION TO THEME

"God loved us enough to send Jesus to be our Savior. That's definitely worth celebrating in a BIG way!

"One of my favorite Christmas traditions is to make a countdown to Christmas.

Point to the paper chain.

"See this paper chain hanging across the stage? Each of these rings represents one day. Each week, we'll take down the rings from the week before so we can count down to when Christmas will be here! And, each week when we take down the rings, the ring for that day will give us a fun activity to do together.

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COUNTDOWN TO CHRISTMAS



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10 MINUTES

"Now, let's see. I need a volunteer to come up here and help me pull off the first few rings in the chain.

Select a kid to come up and help you cut or tear off the correct number of numbered rings of the paper chain, including the one for today. (For example, if it's Sunday, December 3, then you'll remove rings 1, 2, and 3.)

Have the kid hand you the rings so you can read the game, then dismiss them back to their seat. Read the game from the paper ring marked with today's number.

(reading from the paper ring) "Turn your leader into a Christmas tree! (to audience) YES! This is going to be amazing!

"Here are some supplies for each small group.

Give a box of supplies to each small group: green craft paper, printed "Ornament Cutouts," tinsel, battery-powered lights, tape.

"You'll have two minutes to decorate your Small Group Leader and turn them into a Christmas tree! Are you ready? Three . . . two . . . one...GO!

AUDIO: FUN CHRISTMAS MUSIC

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): COUNTDOWN (5-MINUTE VERSION, CUED UP TO 2 MINUTES)

If you're not using an on-screen countdown, set a timer on your phone for two minutes.

As the kids are decorating their leaders, move around the room and cheer them on. When the time is up, go around to each group and showcase their work. This game won't have a winner, just lots of zany fun!

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP

"Wow! I'm so impressed! Look at this forest of beautiful Christmas trees. All of you are really great decorators!

"All right, leaders, you can undecorate yourselves and put the supplies back in the box. Let's keep celebrating as we sing some Christmas songs and worship God together."

Collect the boxes of supplies.

DECK THE HALLS

COUNTDOWN TO CHRISTMAS



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10 MINUTES

WORSHIP

Worship Leaders enter as Host exits.

WORSHIP LEADER: "I just LOVE Christmastime! I love that everywhere we look, there is goodness and light. We have the love of Jesus, and I want to share it with everybody. Everybody say, 'Go tell it!' (*Get a reaction.*) Say it again: 'Go tell it!' (*Get a reaction.*) Great job! Let's sing and thank God for sending Jesus to us.

AUDIO: "GO TELL IT" / TRACK 1 FROM GO TELL IT SINGLE

OPTIONAL VIDEO: "GO TELL IT" LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO

"Yes—we'll share God's love wherever we go! Before we continue in worship, watch this.

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): LIVE LOUD VIDEO FROM GET REEL

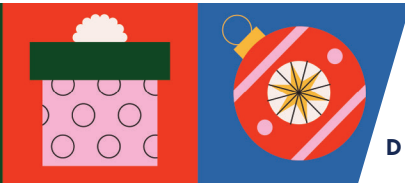
"God has always been faithful. God promised to send a Savior, and God's promise came true when Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Listen to these words from Psalm 89:1: 'Lord, I will sing about your great love forever. For all time to come, I will tell how faithful you are.' (*NirV*) This next song is a new version of 'Silent Night.' It says, 'The King is born. The King is born. In a manger, Christ the Lord.' Sing along once you catch on."

AUDIO: "SILENT NIGHT (THE KING IS BORN)" / TRACK 1 FROM SILENT NIGHT (THE KING IS BORN) SINGLE

OPTIONAL VIDEO: "SILENT NIGHT (THE KING IS BORN)" LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO

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COUNTDOWN TO CHRISTMAS



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BIBLE STORY

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

Storyteller enters as Worship Leaders exit.

SETTING UP THE STORY

STORYTELLER: "Hi, everyone! As we celebrate Christmas this month, it's good to go back and look at everything that led up to the birth of Jesus. (*Hold up Bible.*)

"God had a plan to bless the world through one family, the Israelites. But God's people kept turning away from God and going their own way. Sometimes Israel would have a good king who followed God, but their next king would end up leading the people to forget about their relationship with God completely.

"The people must have wondered if things would ever get better . . . because their world must have seemed pretty dark.

Walk to the light switch. Make sure that the kids see you do this, so they can be prepared for the room to go dark. Also, it would be a good idea to have at least some dim light source(s) so the room isn't in complete darkness.

LIGHTS: OFF (VERY DIM)

SLIDE: STORY IMAGE 1 (BLACK SCREEN)

"But God continued to speak to the Israelites through prophets who shared God's words with the people. Even in this time of trouble, there were little glimmers of hope.

SLIDE: STORY IMAGE 2 (TUNNEL, WITH FARAWAY LIGHT)

(*referencing the screen*) "Have you ever been driving through a tunnel and you saw the light at the far end? You know the light is coming, even though you're in the darkness. It was kind of like that for the Israelites. They had HOPE because of the words God spoke through prophets like Isaiah and Micah."

A CHILD WILL BE BORN

STORYTELLER: (*Hold up Bible.*) "The prophet Isaiah lived during a time when God's people were being threatened by other nations. Isaiah spent his whole life sharing God's words during the reign of four different kings. Sometimes, Isaiah spoke with warnings and challenges. But often, he shared words of hope.

"Isaiah said that a time was coming when God would send a Rescuer to make everything right.

"Could I have a Small Group Leader read Isaiah's words for us?"

Give the Bible and a flashlight to a Small Group Leader. Have them stand up, open the Bible to Isaiah 9:6 (NirV)—which should be pre-marked—and use the flashlight to read.

LEADER: "A child will be born to us. A son will be given to us. He will rule over us. And he will be called Wonderful Adviser and Mighty God. He will also be called Father Who Lives Forever and Prince Who Brings Peace." (NirV)



STORYTELLER: (to the leader) "Thanks, [leader's name]. (to audience) Did you hear those words that Isaiah used to describe the Savior? The Savior would be our Wonderful Adviser . . . our Mighty God . . . our Father Who Lives Forever . . . our Prince Who Brings Peace.

"[Leader's name], could you read the next part for us?"

Leader reads Isaiah 9:7 (NirV), still using the flashlight.

LEADER: "There will be no limit to how great his authority is. The peace he brings will never end. He will rule on David's throne and over his kingdom. He will make the kingdom strong and secure. His rule will be based on what is fair and right. It will last forever. The Lord's great love will make sure that happens. He rules over all." (NirV)

STORYTELLER: (to the leader) "Thank you, [leader's name]. You can have a seat.

Take the Bible and flashlight back from the leader.

"(to audience) Isaiah was giving people a reason to hope. He was helping them see that things would get better. Even though things might have seemed dark, the Savior was coming!"

SLIDE: STORY IMAGE 3 (TUNNEL, WITH THE LIGHT A LITTLE CLOSER)

GOD WITH US

STORYTELLER: "Isaiah's words were a promise from God about who the Savior would be and what He would be like. Through Isaiah, God also explained HOW the Savior would arrive."

Give the Bible and a flashlight to a different Small Group Leader. Have them stand up, open the Bible to Isaiah 7:14-15 (NirV)—which should be pre-marked—and use the flashlight to read.

LEADER: "The Lord himself will give you a sign. The virgin is going to have a baby. She will give birth to a son. And he will be called Immanuel. He will still be very young when he can decide between right and wrong." (NirV)

STORYTELLER: (to the leader) "Thanks for your help, [leader's name].

Take the Bible and flashlight back from the leader and have them sit down.

"Through Isaiah, God promised that this King would be born to a young woman. He would be named Immanuel, which means 'God with us.' God would come to live with us in the form of a person! These words also must have given the people a lot of hope."

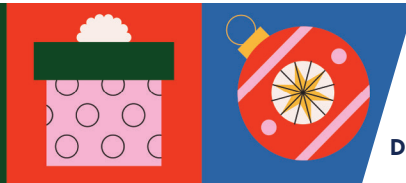
SLIDE: STORY IMAGE 4 (TUNNEL, WITH THE LIGHT A LITTLE CLOSER)

OUT OF BETHLEHEM

STORYTELLER: "Isaiah wasn't the only person who God told about this plan. God spoke to many prophets about the Savior who was to come.

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COUNTDOWN TO CHRISTMAS



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LARGE GROUP
K-3

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

"A prophet named Micah lived around the same time as Isaiah. Micah also spoke about the One who God would send to make everything right. Through Micah, God explained WHERE the Savior would be born. Listen to these words from God."

Give the Bible and a flashlight to a different Small Group Leader. Have them stand up, open the Bible to Micah 5:2 (NirV)—which should be pre-marked—and use the flashlight to read.

LEADER: "Bethlehem . . . you might not be an important town in the nation of Judah. But out of you will come for me a ruler over Israel. His family line goes back to the early years of your nation. It goes all the way back to days of long ago." (NirV)

STORYTELLER: (to the leader) "Thank you, [leader's name]."

Take the Bible and flashlight back from the leader and have them sit down.

"This was a promise that God would send a King to be born in the town of Bethlehem. This gave the people hope for what God would do when the time was right."

SLIDE: STORY IMAGE 5 (TUNNEL, WITH THE LIGHT A LITTLE CLOSER)

WRAPPING UP THE STORY

Walk to the light switch and turn it on.

LIGHTS: ON

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

STORYTELLER: "As we look back on these promises from God, we can clearly see the hope that was to come. God spoke through Isaiah and Micah about a King who would be filled with wisdom . . . would love and protect . . . and would bring peace between people and God. This King would reign and live forever!"

"The people could see God's promise, far away. But in the meantime, they had hope that it would come true.

"We know that the Savior DID come when Jesus was born in Bethlehem. God is faithful. God's promises will always come true. That truth brought hope to God's people back then . . . and it brings hope to us today!"

SLIDE: BOTTOM LINE

"You can have hope because God is faithful.

"Let's pray and thank God for giving us hope!"

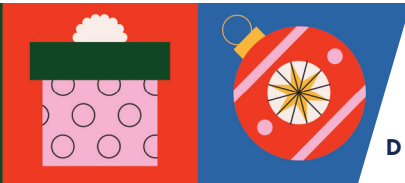
SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

PRAY

STORYTELLER: "Dear God, thank You for being so good to us! Even before You sent Jesus to rescue us, You spoke through Isaiah and Micah to let everyone know that Jesus was coming. You gave hope then, and You give us hope now! We are so thankful that **[Basic Truth] we can trust you no matter what.** We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

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COUNTDOWN TO CHRISTMAS



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25 MINUTES

CLOSER

Host enters as Storyteller exits.

HOST: "When God sent Jesus, that meant God's promises from Isaiah and Micah had come true! As we look back at the time BEFORE Jesus was born, we can see that God is faithful. God's promises are true. And that should give us hope!"

SLIDE: BOTTOM LINE

"You can have hope because God is faithful.

"At Christmas, we celebrate how God was faithful to send Jesus, our Savior. (*Hold up Bible.*) And we know from the Bible that one day, God will make everything right again. So, no matter what happens, you can KNOW that God loves you, and that God will be faithful to make things right in the end.

Share a personal and age-appropriate example of when you went through a hard time but you had hope because God was with you.

"For our memory verse this month, we'll get to learn part of what Isaiah shared with the people in Isaiah 9:6.

SLIDE: MEMORY VERSE

A child will be born to us. A son will be given to us. (Isaiah 9:6a, NIV)

"Can you say that with me?"

KIDS AND HOST: "A child will be born to us. A son will be given to us." (Isaiah 9:6a, NIV)

HOST: "Great job! I love to think about how God promised to send Jesus, even before Jesus was born! You can head to Small Group now and talk about that some more."

Dismiss kids to their small groups.

AUDIO: PLAY HIGH-ENERGY CHRISTMAS MUSIC AS THE KIDS EXIT.

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP