

K3 LG Guide

1. OPENER/CLOSER

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Host
- Worship Leaders to help with the game (optional)
- Paper chain with the days of leading up to Christmas, from week 1 (see week 1 script for details)
- "Christmas Carol Fill-in Sheets" printed from the LG Assets PDF, on a clipboard
- Pen
- 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

Luke 2:1-7.

3. BIBLE STORY

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Storyteller
- Kid and leader volunteers
- Bible
- Prop box containing:
 - Small blanket or hand towel (to use as a "saddle")
 - Shepherd's crook
 - Head covering and/or fake beard for the kid playing Joseph
 - Head covering for the kid playing Mary
 - Basket with a blanket and baby doll inside

WEEK 3

In week three, we head to the familiar Christmas passage in **Luke 2:1-7**. On the surface, it might have seemed like nothing was going right for Mary and Joseph: a census, no room for them to stay, not to mention giving birth in place where a whole lot of animals were sleeping. In spite of all that, Jesus was born! God's rescue plan to save the world was in motion, and as we remember how Jesus was born, we can always find joy!

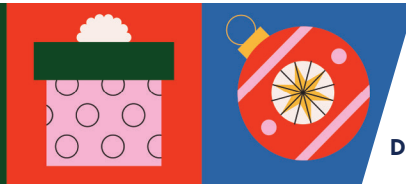
Bottom Line: You can have joy because God sent Jesus.

We all know that Christmas is about Jesus, but sometimes it's just too easy to think Christmas is only about lights, decorations, and presents. Those things aren't bad, but it's important that we use those things to stay focused on the truth of what we celebrate at Christmas. God loved us enough to send Jesus to rescue us. Knowing that can help us find joy no matter what is happening around us this Christmas season.

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.



PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

Repeat the Sounding Joy
Jesus Is Born
Luke 2:1-7

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

You can have joy
because God sent Jesus.

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, friends! Can you believe that Christmas Day is almost here?"

SLIDE: VIRTUE

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME TRANSITION TO VIRTUE

"Christmas is all 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. Because of what Jesus did for us on the cross, we can have a relationship with God that will last forever. **THAT'S** why Jesus is the greatest gift we could ever receive!"

"Today is December [date], so that means Christmas is getting really close. Let's get caught up on our countdown.

Point to the paper chain.

"Who wants to come up here and take a few rings off of our paper chain? It's getting a lot shorter, isn't it?"

Select a kid to come 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 17, then you'll remove rings 11 through 17.)

DECK THE HALLS

COUNTDOWN TO CHRISTMAS



WEEK
THREE
DECEMBER 2023

LARGE GROUP
K-3

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

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 paper ring) "Play Christmas Carol Fill-in! (to audience) Yes! I LOVE doing fill-ins! I'll need a little help from all of you to fill in the missing words, then I'll sing the Christmas carols we've all created together. What a great way to celebrate!

Use the Christmas Carol Fill-In Sheets to know which words to fill in. Give the kids the prompts noted on the sheets. Explain the parts of speech so the kids know what you're talking about (for example: a noun is a person, place, or thing; an adjective is a word that describes something, etc.).

Ask the kids to raise their hands and call on them to shout out words for each blank. Be sure to choose kids from all parts of the room—not just up front. Write the words that the kids give you in the blanks.

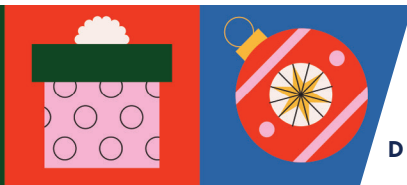
(after you've filled in the blanks) "Okay, I think it's time to perform these Christmas carols—with the new lyrics and all. Here we go!

Perform the songs with the new fill-in words, a cappella. You may want to have the Worship Leaders come out and help you—but keep in mind you'll all need to read from the same sheets with the words filled in. Have fun and ham it up! Take a dramatic bow at the end.

"Thank you, thank you, everyone! Those were some very creative new lyrics. Now let's keep the fun going and sing some REAL worship songs together."

DECK THE HALLS

COUNTDOWN TO CHRISTMAS



WEEK
THREE
DECEMBER 2023

LARGE GROUP
K-3

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

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HOME

10 MINUTES

WORSHIP

Worship Leaders enter as Host exits.

WORSHIP LEADER: "It's so fun when we come together to sing and celebrate Jesus! This first song is all about the JOY that Jesus gives us. Jesus came to earth to be our Savior. Let's sing from our hearts and bring joy to the world!"

AUDIO: "JOY TO THE WORLD (GLORY TO THE KING)" / TRACK 1 FROM JOY TO THE WORLD (GLORY TO THE KING) SINGLE

OPTIONAL VIDEO: "JOY TO THE WORLD (GLORY TO THE KING)" LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO

"Jesus is the very BEST gift we could ever receive! He brings peace, love, and joy to our lives—every single day. As we read in Romans 3:24: 'The free gift of God's grace makes us right with him. Christ Jesus paid the price to set us free.' (NirV) Let's lift our voices and sing, because God sent Jesus to save us!"

AUDIO: "GREATEST GIFT REMIX" / TRACK 1 FROM GREATEST GIFT REMIX SINGLE

OPTIONAL VIDEO: "GREATEST GIFT REMIX" LIVE LYRICS OR DANCE MOVES MUSIC VIDEO



PRELUDE

SOCIAL

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GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

BIBLE STORY

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

Storyteller enters as Worship Leaders exit.

SETTING UP THE STORY

STORYTELLER: “Hi, everyone! Today, we get to tell THE Christmas story. We’ll take a look at the time Jesus was born in Bethlehem, which you can read in Luke, chapter 2. *(Hold up Bible.)*”

“Of course, there was a lot that led up to Jesus’ birth. From the very beginning, God had a plan to bless the whole world through one family, the Israelites. But over and over again, God’s people kept turning away. Eventually, they were attacked by foreign nations.

“Still, God had a good plan. God spoke through people called prophets and promised to send a Rescuer. After hundreds of years, God sent an angel to a young woman named Mary. The angel told Mary that she was going to have a very special baby. She would be the mother of Jesus!

“As I tell you what happened next, I thought it might be fun if we tried something new. I’ll use statues to tell the story. But there’s a twist—the statues just might be you! Throughout the story, I’ll choose some of you to join me on the stage to become a statue for a scene. Sound good? *(Pause for response.)* Then let’s get started!”

JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM

STORYTELLER: “One thing you should know about the time Jesus was born is that God’s people lived in a place that had been taken over by the Romans. That meant the Jewish people had to pay taxes to the Roman government. I think we need a statue to represent the Roman emperor, Caesar Augustus. Raise your hand if you want to be a statue!

Choose a kid with his hand raised. Bring the kid up and have him stand still with one hand pointing in the air.

(to the kid) “Very good! You look exactly like Caesar Augustus. Now hold that pose for me, okay?”

(to audience) “The emperor, Caesar Augustus, ordered that all the people had to be counted. That way he could make them pay taxes. This meant that Mary and her husband Joseph had to travel from Nazareth, where they lived, to Joseph’s family home, which was Bethlehem.

“All right *(to the kid playing Caesar Augustus)* Caesar, you did a great job. You can have a seat.

The first kid goes back to his seat.

(to audience) “We need three more statues for Mary and Joseph’s journey. Raise your hand if you want to be one of the statues.

Choose two kids—a boy and a girl—with their hands raised. Also bring up a Small Group Leader.



Have the leader get on all fours like a donkey, then lay a small blanket or towel across their back. Give the boy a shepherd's crook and a head covering and/or beard, and have him stand in front of the leader (the donkey). Give the girl a head covering and have her sit on the "donkey" sideways, with both legs on the same side.

(to the actors) "Okay, perfect! Now freeze. *(to audience)* Here we have Mary, Joseph, and their trusty donkey. Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem so they could be counted. Without any cars or airplanes, this was a really long journey. It would have taken close to a week for them to get there!"

NO ROOM!

STORYTELLER: "Mary and Joseph might have been planning to stay with relatives when they arrived in Bethlehem. But once they got there, there were no guest rooms available anywhere!"

(to the actors) "All right, my statue friends. Let me see you look worried. *(Pause.)* Good. Now hold that pose!"

(to audience) "Now, there's no innkeeper mentioned in the Bible. But just so we can tell the story, let's have someone else come up and play an innkeeper on stage. Who wants to play another statue?"

Choose a kid with her hand raised to play the innkeeper. Have the innkeeper stand next to the other three actors and cross her arms like she's saying no.

(to the actors) "Aaaaand hold that pose. That's looking great. *(to audience)* We have some really talented statue actors here at [your environment's name]!"

"There was no room available. And so Mary and Joseph ended up in the only place there was still room . . . where the animals stayed.

(to the actors) "Innkeeper, donkey, you did a great job. You can head back to your seats.

The kid playing the innkeeper and the leader go back to their seats.

(to audience) "Now we need some animal friends! Who wants to be an animal statue?"

Choose three or four kids with their hands raised to come play the animals. Have Mary and Joseph stand together, and have the "animals" get on all fours and surround them.

(to the actors) "I love it! Aaaaannnd freeze."

JESUS IS BORN

STORYTELLER: *(to audience)* "While they were there, the time came for Mary to have her baby. Mary wrapped baby Jesus in a blanket and laid Him in the animals' feeding trough, or manger.

Bring out the basket with the baby doll and hand it to Mary.

(to the actors) "Mary, Joseph, animals—show me how happy you are. *(Pause.)* There you go! Freeze. What a beautiful sight!"



"Here's how this is described in Luke, chapter 2.

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. 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.

(to audience) "Let's all give a big hand to ALL of our statue actors."

Take the basket back from Mary. Dismiss all of the kids to their seats.

WRAPPING UP THE STORY

STORYTELLER: "Mary and Joseph looked at Jesus, and they knew that God's promise had come true! God had sent Jesus to be our Rescuer. Jesus had come to save all people, everywhere. And His kingdom will never end.

"I don't know about you, but my heart just fills up with joy when I think about the Christmas story. I feel so happy to know that God loved us enough to send Jesus FOR us. Jesus is the greatest gift we could ever receive, and that's what we celebrate at Christmas!

SLIDE: BOTTOM LINE

"You can have joy because God sent Jesus.

"Let's pray and thank God for giving us this kind of joy."

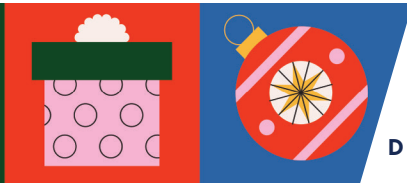
SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

PRAY

STORYTELLER: "God, thank You so much for sending Jesus to be our Savior! You brought JOY to the world when You sent Jesus for us. As we celebrate Jesus' birth, help us remember how much You love us. Because that will give us the kind of joy that nothing in this world could ever take away. We are so thankful for all that You have done for us. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

DECK THE HALLS

COUNTDOWN TO CHRISTMAS



WEEK
THREE
DECEMBER 2023

LARGE GROUP
K-3

PRELUDE

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HOME

25 MINUTES

CLOSER

Host enters as Storyteller exits.

HOST: "I'm sure it wasn't easy for Mary and Joseph as they were traveling all those miles to Bethlehem. I'm sure they were worried about what was to come since they were going away from where they lived . . . and they knew Mary was going to have her baby.

"But of course, God had a good plan for their story! Mary and Joseph knew that God was doing something amazing in their lives, because they had heard the angels' words about Jesus and how He would be the promised Savior. Jesus was born, right there in Bethlehem. And Mary and Joseph were filled with joy because they saw how God's promise had come true.

"Did you know that we can choose joy in our lives today? We can choose to remember all the good things God has done. We can think about how much God loves us and how God sent Jesus for us. That will always be true—whether things around you are going great, or even if you feel worried or confused.

SLIDE: BOTTOM LINE

"You can have joy because God sent Jesus.

"We can find joy because of our relationship with Jesus. Jesus is God's Son, and He is the Savior of the world! All of us have sinned and made bad choices, but when Jesus died on the cross, He made a way for us to be forgiven. That's how much He loves us. And that, my friends, is a reason to have joy!

"The truth is, we can choose joy in any situation. We can choose to **[Basic Truth] trust God no matter what.**

This is a great opportunity to share a personal story of a time you chose joy and trusted God when you were going through a hard time.

"I know being here with all of you gives me so much joy. It's been a lot of fun hanging out with you. And now you get to go to Small Group and talk some more about the joy God gives us!"

Dismiss kids to their small groups.

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

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP