

DECK THE HALLS

COUNTDOWN TO CHRISTMAS



WEEK
ONE
DECEMBER 2023

SMALL GROUP
2-3

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

PROVIDING TIME FOR FUN INTERACTION
15 MINUTES

MADE TO CONNECT

an activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding



Before kids arrive, take a few moments to pray for them. Start by thanking God for being faithful. Think of a couple of promises you're especially grateful for and praise God for those specific promises. Pray for your few, that they would be ready to celebrate God's greatest gift, Jesus, and would leave Small Group feeling hopeful about any hard things they're facing.

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

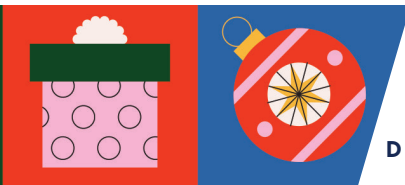
I can trust God no matter what.

1. EARLY ARRIVER

WHAT YOU NEED: Offering container

WHAT YOU DO:

- Greet kids by name as they arrive.
- Invite kids who brought an offering to put it in the offering container.
- Invite the kids to sit in a circle.
- Pick a kid to go first.
- Ask them to share one word related to Christmas.
 - This could be an object, a place, a person, etc.
- Ask the kid to the left of the first kid to share another word they closely associate with that word.
 - For example, if the first kid says "tree," the second kid says something like "decorations" or "presents."
- Play multiple rounds until everyone arrives.



CREATING A SAFE PLACE TO CONNECT
25 MINUTES

MADE TO CREATE

an activity that explores spiritual ideas through the process of drawing, building, and designing



1. FAITHFUL CHAIN

[LIVE FOR GOD | APPLICATION ACTIVITY]

WHAT YOU NEED: Strips of green and red construction paper, glue sticks or tape, and pens

WHAT YOU DO:

- Give each kid two red strips and two green strips of construction paper and a pen.
- Set out the glue sticks or tape.
- Instruct the kids to write a way they can be faithful on two of the strips, for example:
 - I will practice praying.
 - I will turn in my homework on time.
 - I will get my chores done when my parents ask me to, etc.
- When done, invite the kids to write ways God has been faithful on the remaining two strips, for example:
 - God kept the promise to send Jesus.
 - God kept the promise to send a rescuer to save us from our sins.
 - God makes something good happen out of something bad.
 - God promises to be with us all the time, etc.
- Ask the kids to share what they wrote on each strip.
- Demonstrate how to make a paper chain by looping two strips together and securing it with glue or tape.
- Encourage the kids to create one long chain with their strips.

WHAT YOU SAY:

“Wow! You came up with some amazing ways you can practice being faithful every day. Being faithful is not always easy. When someone isn’t faithful and breaks a promise, how does it make you feel? (*Invite responses—sad, disappointed, hopeless, etc.*)

“Did you know that there are over 3,000 promises that God has made to us in the Bible? And did you know that God always keeps those promises? Your list of ways God has been faithful is a great reminder to us that God always keeps promises.

“God fulfilled the promise to send Jesus, and God promised to one day make everything right in this broken world. When things in our lives aren’t going well, we tend to think the worst. But even in those times, God is there with us. God is with us when we feel lonely, sad, and upset because things didn’t go the way we thought they would. God is with us when we’re confused and feel like there is no hope.

“No matter what you’re going through, God wants you to have hope that something good could come out of something bad. The truth that **you can have hope because God is faithful** is one of the many things we can celebrate during Christmas. [**Make It Personal**] (**Tell kids how remembering God’s faithfulness in the midst of a hard time gave you hope to keep going and keep believing.**)

“So, **you can have hope because God is faithful!**”

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CREATING A SAFE PLACE TO CONNECT
25 MINUTES

MADE TO EXPLORE

an activity that extends learning through hands on experimentation and discovery



3. MEMORY VERSE IN MOTION

[HEAR FROM GOD | MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY]

WHAT YOU NEED: Bible marked at Isaiah 9:6

WHAT YOU DO:

- Invite a volunteer to open the Bible to Isaiah 9:6.
- Remind kids how to find the verse by using the tips below.

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Finding verses with kindergartners: Guide kids to open the Bibles to the marked page. Point to "Isaiah" at the top of the page as you say, "Isaiah." Then guide kids to find the big number 9 on the page. Explain that this is the chapter number. Finally, guide them to look under the big 9 for the little 6; this is the verse number. Tell them to leave their finger on the verse as you read the verse aloud. Then lead everyone to say the verse together.

Finding verses with 1st graders: Guide kids to open their Bibles to the front and find the table of contents. Hold up a Bible opened to the table of contents to show the kids what the page looks like. When the kids find the table of contents, lead them to find "Isaiah" in the list under "Old Testament." You can help by telling them that Isaiah starts with the letters I-S. When the kids find Isaiah, lead them to look at the page number beside the word. Explain that the number tells them on what page they can find Isaiah. Help the kids find the page. When they find Isaiah, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. Help them find chapter 9. Explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Help them find verse 6 in chapter 9.

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

You can have hope
because God is faithful.

- Read the entire verse out loud to the group.
- Explain that Isaiah spoke these words from God long before Jesus was born and God made a promise and kept it because God is faithful!
- Tell kids that this month, we'll work on memorizing the first two sentences of the verse.
- Re-read the first two lines out loud.
 - "A child is born to us. A son will be given to us." Isaiah 9:6a (NirV)
 - "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given." Isaiah 9:6a (NIV)
- Invite the kids to work together to create motions for the verse.
- Be available with suggestions like those below if kids get stuck.
 - "A child is born to us" or "For to us a child is born"—rock a baby (*a child*), thumbs to chest (*to us*)
 - "A son will be given to us" or "To us a son is given"—rock a baby (*a son*), palms out to accept a gift (*will be given/is given*), thumbs to chest (*to us*)
 - "Isaiah 9:6"—open hands like a book

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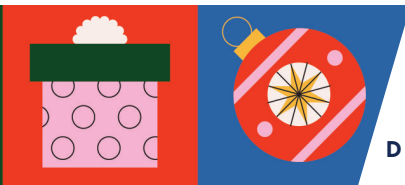
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WHAT YOU SAY:

"This month is Christmas—celebrating Jesus, God's greatest gift! God made a promise to send us Jesus! Did God keep that promise? (Yes!) Isaiah spoke these words hundreds of years before the promise came true! And now we celebrate Jesus—the greatest gift—because God did what was promised. God is faithful! Remember **you can have hope because God is faithful!**"



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4. PRAY AND DISMISS

[PRAY TO GOD | PRAYER ACTIVITY]

WHAT YOU NEED: Advent Ornament" Activity Page and markers or colored pencils

WHAT YOU DO:

- Ask the kids to sit in a circle.
- Give each kid an ornament from the "Advent Ornament" Activity Page.
- Set out the markers or colored pencils.
- Instruct the kids to write their name on the back of the triangle.
- Invite the kids to recite the Bottom Line with you a few times, putting extra emphasis on "hope."
- Inform the group that they will color a different word on the ornament each week and will have the opportunity to assemble the ornament and take it home later in the month.
- Point out the Christmas tree.
- Ask the kids to find "HOPE" on the Christmas tree and color the letters and the tree.
- Discuss what hope means as kids color the first section of their ornament.
 - Hope means believing that something good can come out of something bad, like when you lose your favorite toy but you don't throw a fit because you can ask someone to help you find it later. It's when you have a bad day at school, but you are still excited to hang out with your friend after school because they know exactly how to cheer you up. It's when you get sick and have to stay home, but instead of making everyone else bad because you feel bad, you think about all the things you can do with your family while you're home, like a movie night. It's when you make a mistake on your art project, but you get some help turning it into something you think the teacher will still love.
- Collect the ornaments and store them for future weeks.
- Close your group time in prayer.

WHAT YOU SAY:

"You can have hope because God is faithful is the best news ever! Since God never breaks a promise, you can trust God to be faithful at all times, no matter what. This means you are never without hope! God is always with you, helping you face the most impossible situations. God is working behind the scenes to make something good come out of something bad. That is something to be thankful for! Let's pray.

"Dear God, thank You for always keeping Your promises and being faithful. We know You love us. We know You will never leave us. You are faithful, and that's why we can have hope. Thank You for sending Jesus to rescue us and be our best friend forever. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."