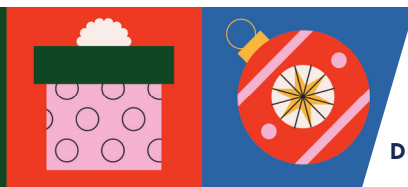


DECK THE HALLS

COUNTDOWN TO CHRISTMAS



WEEK
FIVE
DECEMBER 2023

SMALL GROUP
2-3

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

PROVIDING TIME FOR FUN INTERACTION
15 MINUTES

MADE TO CREATE

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



Before kids arrive, take a few moments to pray for them. Thank and praise God for loving us enough to send Jesus to sacrifice for us. Ask God to help you share God's love with others, including the kids in Small Group. Pray that each of your kids will have a joyful, carefree, and fun Christmas Day.

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

Following Yonder Star

Wise Men
Matthew 2:1-12

1. EARLY ARRIVER

WHAT YOU NEED: "Star" Activity Page, craft sticks, glue or tape, and 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.
- Give each kid a card from the "Star" Activity Page and a craft stick.
- Set out the glue or tape.
- Encourage the kids to glue or tape the star to the top of the craft stick.
- As they make their craft, talk to kids about their plans for New Year's Eve.
- Ask:
 - Are you doing anything fun for New Year's Eve?
 - Will you get to stay up late?
 - Do you have any traditions on New Year's Day?
 - What are some of the things you want to do or places you want to go this year?
- Save star crafts for the "Opening Activity."

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

Celebrate Jesus all year long.

MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

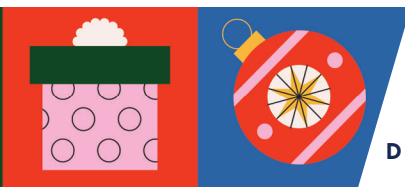
**"A child will be born to us.
A son will be given to us."**
Isaiah 9:6a, NIV

MONTHLY VIRTUE

**Christmas—Celebrating Jesus,
God's greatest gift**

BASIC TRUTH

I can trust God no matter what.



MADE TO EXPLORE

an activity that extends learning through hands on experimentation and discovery



* 2. JESUS LEADS THE WAY

[LIVE FOR GOD | APPLICATION ACTIVITY]

WHAT YOU NEED: "Stickers" and "Verses" Activity Pages, compasses, and tape; *Optional: "Compass Template" Activity Page instead of compasses; smart phone*

WHAT YOU DO:

- Tape the four "Verses" Activity Page signs in the corresponding north, south, east, and west parts of the Small Group area.
 - You can use the compass or a compass app on your phone to help you determine where to tape the different signs.
- Give each kid a compass or "Compass Template" Activity Page.
- Give each kid a "Stickers" Activity Page label.
- Instruct the group to stick the sticker on the back of their compass.
- Encourage the kids to examine the face of their compass.
- Tell them that compasses help you find your way when you are lost and that there are four directions on every compass. The E stands for East. The W stands for West. The S stands for South. And the N stands for North.
- As you call out one of the letters (E, W, N, or S), direct the kids to use their compass to move in that direction to find the matching sign from the "Verses" Activity Page.
 - NOTE: If using the "Compass Template" Activity Page, use the compass feature on a smart phone to show the group the correct direction to move in.
- Once the group finds the sign that corresponds to the called direction, instruct the kids to read the verse on the sign together.
- Invite the kids to discuss the meaning of the verse and practical ways they can apply it in their lives.
 - Suggestions could include praying, reading the Bible, or seeking help from trusted adults when confused.
- Continue until you have read and discussed all four verses.

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

Following Yonder Star

Wise Men
Matthew 2:1-12

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

Celebrate Jesus all year long.

MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

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Isaiah 9:6a, NIV

MONTHLY VIRTUE

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BASIC TRUTH

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WHAT YOU SAY:

"We can celebrate every day because Jesus leads the way. Why do you think it's important to let Jesus lead the way every day—not just at Christmas or on Sundays? *(Invite responses. Encourage the kids to base their responses on the verses they just read.)*

"This month, we focused on four words we might hear a lot about during Christmastime: hope, peace, joy, and love. Because of Jesus, we can have hope, knowing that God is faithful. We can have peace because God has a plan. We can have joy because God sent Jesus. And we can show God's love because we know that God's love is for everyone. These are big reasons we should **celebrate Jesus all year long**. When you choose to remember God's gift and stay connected to Jesus all year, you can live with hope, peace, joy, and love each day. You can show love to God and others.

DECK THE HALLS

COUNTDOWN TO CHRISTMAS



WEEK
FIVE
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SMALL GROUP
2-3

PRELUDE

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GROUPS

HOME

CREATING A SAFE PLACE TO CONNECT
25 MINUTES

(* 2. JESUS LEADS THE WAY, CONTINUED)

[Make It Personal] (Share with the kids how you choose to remember God's gift and stay connected to Jesus all year. Maybe you read your Bible and pray every day or do something for others.)

"Celebrate Jesus all year long."



MADE TO PLAY

an activity that encourages learning
through following guidelines and
working as a group



3. VERSE HUM

[HEAR FROM GOD | MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY]

WHAT YOU NEED: Prepared paper and painter's tape

WHAT YOU DO:

- Tape the prepared page with Isaiah 9:6a somewhere visible to the kids.
- Direct the kids to sit facing the verse.
- Invite the kids to recite the verse a few times.
- Select a kid to be the "guesser."
- Instruct the guesser to stand with their back to the verse.
- Direct a kid to stand up and touch one of the words from the verse so everyone can see it.
- Instruct the group to recite the verse and substitute the selected word with a hum.
- Invite the guesser to guess the missing word while still standing with their back to the verse.
- If the guesser struggles to recall the missing word, direct them to ask for help by saying, "I need help."
- Instruct the first kid to stand up to whisper the missing word in the guesser's ear.
- Continue until everyone has had a chance to be the guesser.

WHAT YOU SAY:

"Great job of remembering the words from this verse! Long ago, when Isaiah wrote this verse, the people of Israel were going through a difficult time. They were about to be taken away from their homes to live in a foreign land. They were in a dark place.

"But Isaiah's message wasn't just for the people of Israel. It was for everyone in the whole world, including us. Isaiah told us that a special child would be born who would change everything. That child is Jesus. When Jesus grew up, He showed us perfectly what it means to love God and love others. And then He gave us His life in our place. When we choose to accept God's incredible gift and follow Jesus, we will get to live forever with God.

"The good news is that we don't just celebrate Jesus on Christmas Day. We need the hope, peace, joy, and love that Jesus brings every single day of our lives. That's why it's important to remember and celebrate Jesus not just during Christmas but **celebrate Jesus all year long.**"

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

Following Yonder Star

Wise Men
Matthew 2:1-12

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

Celebrate Jesus all year long.

MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

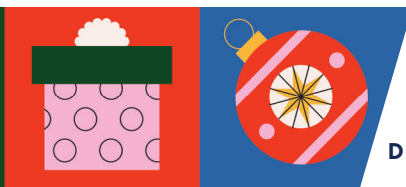
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HOME

CREATING A SAFE PLACE TO CONNECT
25 MINUTES

MADE TO REFLECT

an activity that creates space
for personal understanding
and application



4. PRAY AND DISMISS

[PRAY TO GOD | PRAYER ACTIVITY]

WHAT YOU NEED: No supplies needed

WHAT YOU DO:

- Gather your few to sit in a tight circle.
- Remind them that while it's important to **celebrate Jesus**

all year long, we can also celebrate Jesus all DAY long!

- Lead your few in the call and response prayer below as you talk about four times of day we can remember to celebrate Jesus.

WHAT YOU SAY:

"The Bible gives us an idea of four times of day we can think about God. You can find these times of day back in the Old Testament in the book of Deuteronomy. The first time is when you rise—that's when you first wake up. The second is as you go—so that could be driving along in the car, walking somewhere, taking the bus, or anytime you're on the go! The third is at home. And the fourth is when you go to sleep!

"I want us to pray together today. When I point to you, I want you to say, 'Celebrate Jesus!' When I point, what do you say? *(Pause.)* Yes, celebrate Jesus! Let's pray.

"God, we love You. When we get up in the morning, help us to . . . *(Point to the kids who say, "Celebrate Jesus!")* When we're going from one place to the next, help us to . . . *(Point to the kids.)* When we sit down to eat, help us to . . . *(Point to the kids.)* And when we lie down to go to sleep, help us to . . . *(Point to the kids.)* Thank You for sending Jesus to rescue us. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

As adults arrive to pick up, encourage the kids to point out the calendar pages on the floor as they explain that we can **celebrate Jesus all year long**.

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

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