

DECK THE HALLS

COUNTDOWN TO CHRISTMAS



WEEK
THREE
DECEMBER 2023

SMALL GROUP
PRETEEN

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

CREATING A SAFE PLACE TO CONNECT
25 MINUTES

MADE TO CONNECT

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



3. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

[TALK ABOUT GOD | BIBLE STORY REVIEW]

WHAT YOU NEED: No supplies needed

WHAT YOU DO:

Ask:

- Share your favorite part about the story of the first

Christmas.

- Even if your Christmas falls short of what you'd hoped for, what's something you can still be joyful about?
- Why is it important to celebrate Jesus' birth?
- Why does Jesus top every other gift we've been given or have yet to receive?

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

Repeat the Sounding Joy

Jesus Is Born
Luke 2:1-7

TODAY'S KEY QUESTION

What makes your
Christmas joyful?

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. 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."

Isaiah 9:6, NIV

MONTHLY VIRTUE

Christmas—Celebrating Jesus,
God's greatest gift

BASIC TRUTH

I can trust God no matter what.

DECK THE HALLS

COUNTDOWN TO CHRISTMAS



WEEK
THREE
DECEMBER 2023

SMALL GROUP
PRETEEN

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

CREATING A SAFE PLACE TO CONNECT
25 MINUTES

MADE TO EXPLORE

an activity that extends learning through hands on experimentation and discovery



4. VERSES TO TAKE WITH YOU [HEAR FROM GOD]

WHAT YOU NEED: Bibles,

WHAT YOU DO:

- Make sure each kid has a Bible.
- Together, look up John 3:16 using the Bible Navigation Tips below, if needed.

Finding verses with 4th-5th graders: Ask kids to tell you if the book of the Bible they're looking for is in the Old Testament or New Testament. If it's in the Old, instruct kids to flip slowly, starting at the front of the Bible and heading toward the back, until they find the book they're looking for. If it's in the New, instruct kids to start flipping from the back, going forward to find the book they're looking for. Once they find the book, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. First, have them find the chapter they're looking for. Then explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Tell kids to find the verse within the chapter they've already found.

- Invite a volunteer to read John 3:16 two words at a time.
- Ask the other kids to echo the words back as the volunteer says them two words at a time.
 - Choose one word from John 3:16 that you feel describes our greatest need. Explain why you chose that word.
 - What word from this verse do you think best describes what God did to help us with our greatest need? Share why you chose that word.
 - If you could choose a word from this verse that makes you feel joyful, what word would it be? Explain your choice.
- If time allows, play the game again.
- This time, challenge the kids to say John 3:16 backwards.
- Allow them to refer to their Bibles if needed.

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

Repeat the Sounding Joy

Jesus Is Born
Luke 2:1-7

TODAY'S KEY QUESTION

What makes your
Christmas joyful?

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. 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."

Isaiah 9:6, NIV

MONTHLY VIRTUE

Christmas—Celebrating Jesus,
God's greatest gift

BASIC TRUTH

I can trust God no matter what.

DECK THE HALLS

COUNTDOWN TO CHRISTMAS



WEEK
THREE
DECEMBER 2023

SMALL GROUP
PRETEEN

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

CREATING A SAFE PLACE TO CONNECT
25 MINUTES

MADE TO REFLECT

an activity that creates space for personal understanding and application



5. MAKE IT PERSONAL WITH PRAYER

[PRAY TO GOD | PRAYER ACTIVITY]

WHAT YOU NEED: No supplies needed

WHAT YOU DO:

- Share that you're going to use a familiar Christmas carol, "Joy to the World," as a prayer focus.
- Explain that you'll pause after each phrase of the first verse of the song and give them time to respond together in prayer.

WHAT YOU SAY:

"Joy to the world! The Lord has come . . .! We can have joy because Jesus came into the world to be our Savior and Lord. Let's ask God to give us joy that goes beyond Christmas gifts or fun celebrations—a joy that finds a way to be happy, even when things don't go our way. *(Pause for kids to pray silently or out loud.)*

"The next part of the song says, 'Let earth receive her King . . .! Jesus wants to be our Savior and help us find the joy that comes in following Him. Because of Jesus, our broken relationship with God can be restored. Take time to thank Jesus for being our Savior. *(Pause.)*

"The song continues, 'Let every heart prepare Him room . . .! God wants us to give Jesus the place He deserves in our hearts and in our lives—FIRST PLACE. Let's ask God to show us how to give Jesus more room in our life and to forgive us when we haven't been following in the way we should.'" *(Pause.)*

"The first verse ends with the words, 'And heaven and nature sing . . .! Imagine every part of creation singing praises to God all at one time. That would be an AMAZING sound. Let's close our prayer time by giving thanks to our great God."

"Dear Jesus, You are the reason we celebrate Christmas. Help us to not get so caught up in the lights and gifts that we lose sight of what is most important—YOU. You bring 'joy to the world,' and we are so glad You came to save us. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

Note: If kids would enjoy it, close your group time by singing "Joy to the World" together.

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

Repeat the Sounding Joy

Jesus Is Born
Luke 2:1-7

TODAY'S KEY QUESTION

What makes your Christmas joyful?

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. 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."

Isaiah 9:6, NIV

MONTHLY VIRTUE

Christmas—Celebrating Jesus, God's greatest gift

BASIC TRUTH

I can trust God no matter what.