



CHRISTMAS | WEEK 1 | DECEMBER 3, 2023

Elementary Lesson

Goodness and Light

Monthly Virtue: Christmas: Celebrating Jesus, God’s greatest gift

Bible Story: Goodness and Light (Jesus Is Promised) • Micah 5:2, Isaiah 9:6-7, Isaiah 7:14-15

Key Question: How does knowing God has a plan give you hope in your everyday life?

Basic Truth: I am loved by God no matter what so I can trust God to guide me.

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 (NirV)*

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

With the busyness of the Christmas season, it's easy to lose sight of why we celebrate in the first place. We forget that at the time of the first Christmas, God's people were anticipating a Rescuer who would come and save the world. That's what makes a countdown like an advent calendar so powerful. It allows us daily moments to stop and reflect on God, who loved us so much and sent Jesus to be our Savior. That's why this December, we're "decking the halls" and taking the whole the month to focus on nothing but Christmas. We're celebrating Jesus, God's greatest gift! We can't wait to shine a spotlight on crucial moments in the story of Jesus' birth as we count down to Christmas. The best gift God ever gave was Jesus. Because of Jesus, it's possible for us to have a relationship with God that will last forever. As we take this month to count down to the fun of Christmas Day, let's take time to remember the reason we celebrate in the first place: Jesus, the greatest gift the world has ever known.

Pre-Service Check List

- HUDDLE AS TEAM → You're in this together! Pray together and talk about the activities for the day.
- PLAY MUSIC
- PUT OUT TOYS → A welcoming environment is important! We want it to be obvious from the moment kids walk in that they belong HERE!
- PUT ASIDE DISTRACTIONS
- ENGAGE WITH KIDS

Morning Flow

Doors Open 9:15/11:00	Large Group Starts 9:35/11:20	Small Group Starts 10:05/11:50
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Key Question: What are you hoping for? Hope is a word that gets tossed around a lot at Christmas, but kids might not get the chance to really talk about it. That's why we start with a question about hope. We all have expectations about what we need or want out of life. We pray that, through answering this question, kids will find a safe place to discuss the ways they're trusting God to meet their needs.

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.

LARGE GROUP

COUNTDOWN AND WELCOME (3 Minutes)

(VIDEO: COUNTDOWN, SLIDE: KIDCITY EXPECTATIONS)

LGL: “Welcome everyone! I’m so glad you are able to come hang out with us in KidCity today. My name is [INSERT NAME]. We are going to have a lot of fun today, but before we do let’s go over these announcements/KidCity Expectations.

(SLIDE: BAPTISM) *(Said on the fourth weekend of the month only)* “Today are baptisms at Hope. Baptism is a way of telling the world that you love God and have made the decision to follow Him with your life. It’s a big deal! Is there anyone here who is getting baptized today? *(Pause and if someone is, go ahead and give them a high five and get the kids to clap).* Awesome!”

(SLIDE: KIDCITY EXPECTATIONS) “Now, let’s quickly go over our KidCity Expectations (rules) so we can make sure that we make the most of our time today: *(Don’t dwell on these too long, but make sure you review them briefly so we can set everyone up for success.)*

1. Be Kind
2. Be Safe
3. Have Fun

LARGE GROUP GAME (5 Min)

ONE HOOF, TWO HOOF, NONE

(No Supplies)

It’s finally here...December! All this month we will be learning about the reason for the season - Jesus. This month is all about CHRISTMAS!

(SLIDE: VIRTUE) “Christmas is celebrating Jesus, God’s greatest gift.

God promised that a Savior - called the Messiah - was coming, and He let His people know what to look for through different prophecies - which we are going to talk about today. But our memory verse for the month describes who Jesus was to be...

(SLIDE: 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 (NirV)*”

That’s good news and a reason to celebrate! Before we talk about that, let’s play a classic KidCity game called ‘One Hoof, Two Hoof, None’

(SLIDE: ONE HOOF, TWO HOOFS, NONE)

HOW TO PLAY:

- **EXPLAIN.** A slide will appear showing a reindeer holding up either one hoof, two hooves, or none. Kids will have to hold up either one arm, two arms, or none. After they've locked in their guess by holding up their arms (or none), go to the next slide. If a kid is **MATCHING** the slide, then they are out and need to sit down. Play until either one kid remains or you run out of time.
- **FOR FASTER ROUNDS:** Have kids who match the screen remain **IN** the game and everyone else sits down.

That was so fun! Now everyone stand up and we will sing some Christmas worship songs!

WORSHIP (6-7 Minutes)

(VIDEO: STAR OF THE MORNING, SILENT NIGHT)

BIBLE STORY (12 Minutes)

(Nesting Christmas Boxes with 'Hope', 'Joy', and 'Love')

Christmas, of course, is all about celebrating Jesus, God's greatest gift! And as we celebrate Jesus this month, each week we'll take a closer look at a word that helps us countdown to the big day. The word for this week is...

Each week you will open the Christmas box that has more boxes nesting inside of each other. Pull out the one corresponding to that week and stack them. Week 1 should have 2 boxes (the plain, big one and the one that says 'Hope'). Week 2 should have 3 boxes, etc.

(SLIDE: HOPE)

HOPE! So, to kick us off, I was wondering . . . what are some of the things we hope for? Take a moment and tell a few people next to you something you're REALLY hoping for right now.

Give kids a chance to chat with each other for a few moments.

"Okay, let's hear from some of you. What are you really hoping for right now? We'd love to hear!

LGL walks around the room and has kids respond with what they are hoping for.

"Okay those were great. I love how we heard about everything from grades in school to Christmas presents to people and pets who you'd like to feel better. It seems like we always have things we hope for, but especially at this time of year. For some reason Christmas is a time of year when the idea of hope really shows up.

Now . . . let me ask you a different question about hope. Raise your hand if you've ever had a time when you were hoping for something, but it was taking forever to happen. *(Pause for responses.)*

Yeah, me too! And maybe all that waiting started to get to you and you started to get frustrated—can anyone relate to that? Raise your hand if that’s you! *(Pause for responses.)* Yep, same here!

“In all that frustration and waiting, what should we do? How do we cope? Where do we turn? Do we give up hope or find some sort of strength to keep waiting? After all, chances are pretty high that hope is even more important in times like those.

“Those are really important questions for us to think about. Thankfully, we can find all sorts of hope in this book right here *(hold up the Bible)*, the Bible! And in the Bible, we can find all sorts of truth to help us as we ask hard questions, and not just questions about hope, questions about . . . anything! Remember, the people who wrote the Bible had personal experiences with God. And God inspired them to write about those experiences so people like us could learn from them, thousands of years after they were first written! Let’s dive in and see what we can discover about hope!

(VIDEO: BIBLE STORY 5 MIN)

“Isn’t it amazing to think that long before Jesus was ever born, God had this all planned out? God knew how Jesus would come into the world, and God knew exactly what we needed in a Rescuer. Now, I’m sure when Isaiah and Micah shared these words with God’s people—who were definitely in a time of uncertainty—it was hard for them to see how God’s plan would all happen. They might have even struggled to believe in a king who would reign with fairness and justice forever and ever. After all, they had seen many kings do the exact opposite. But these words from God were meant to give hope. God had a plan . . . and He had not forgotten the people of Israel or Judah!

In the same way, we can have confidence in God and in His Word to us. Whatever God promises us through the Bible, He is faithful in seeing it to completion. We can know that God is dependable and trustworthy. Even when things seem dark and hopeLESS, we can still have HOPE because God is with us through it all and has a plan.

Our Basic Truth today says it this way...

(SLIDE: BASIC TRUTH) ‘I am loved by God so I can trust God to guide me.’

Let’s turn to the person next to you and answer our Key Question for the day.

(SLIDE: KEY QUESTION) ‘How does knowing God has a plan give you hope in your everyday life?’

Have kids turn and talk to their shoulder partner for 60 seconds. Your KQ slide on Playlister will keep track of time for you. While kids are talking, walk around and listen in to what they are saying and give prompts if needed. Don’t try to resolve anything, kids will have a further discussion within their small group time.

Ok friends, come back together in 3, 2, 1....

I heard some great thoughts floating around. You are going to have more of a chance to talk about this in small group time, but for now let's pray and dismiss.

“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 we can trust you no matter what. We love you, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.”

DISMISS TO SMALL GROUPS

SMALL GROUP

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Kids learn best through play and through conversation. Both are equally important, so be sure to give time to both!

KEY QUESTION (K-5th)

(No Supplies)

Spend some time coming together and talking about the Key Question. There aren't any right or wrong answers but use this time to help kids have a discussion about what they just learned and encourage them to grow in their faith. Try to keep the conversation spiritually based. Why does what we are talking about matter in light of what God has done for us?

Key Question: 'How does knowing God has a plan give you hope in your everyday life?'

(Answers will vary: the hard things I'm going through now won't necessarily last forever, with God's help I can grow spiritually and learn every day, I don't have to feel like things are randomly happening - God can use all things for my good and His glory, etc.)

PROMISE MAKER, PROMISE KEEPER (K-5th)

(Scrap Paper or Index Cards - 1 per kid, Crayons, Scissors [4th-5th], Tape [4th-5th], "Christmas Tree Hope" - 1-2 sets per group precut [K-3rd] AND 1 per kid to take home [K-5th])

What You Do:

- Give each kid a paper scrap or an index card and marker.
- Encourage the kids to think of a promise someone made to them or to someone else.
- Instruct the kids to draw a picture to represent that promise or write it on their paper.
 - Invite kids to draw on more than one card if they have multiple examples.
- Collect the cards.
- Lay the cards out on the floor in front of you.
- Instruct the kids to raise their hand if the promise they shared was a promise that was kept.
- Explain that sometimes, we make promises that we don't keep—we forget, we mess up and don't follow through, we get busy or distracted, or we just don't feel like keeping the promise we made.
- Emphasize that God isn't like us—God is faithful which means we can trust God will always do what God said. God isn't just a promise maker, God is a promise keeper.
- Arrange the cards (or have the kids arrange) the cards so they form the word "HOPE"

- Pull out the “Christmas Tree Hope” strips and read what they say. Have the kids stack them from longest to shortest so it forms a Christmas tree shape. Place the star at the top.
 - *For 4th-5th: Have them cut out the sheets, arrange them, and tape them. They can also color the strips so they look like a decorated Christmas tree.*
- Tell kids that because God is faithful and keeps promises, we can put our HOPE and trust in God.
- Explain that HOPE is believing something good can come out of something bad.
- Encourage the kids to think of something hard they might be going through, maybe with a brother or sister or friend.
- Ask:
 - How does knowing that God is faithful help you have hope even in hard situations?
 - How has God kept each of the promises found in the verses we read?
 - In what ways do these promises give you hope?
 - How do these promises show God’s faithfulness?
- ***[Make It Personal] (Give your own example of a tough thing you’re facing. How does knowing God is faithful to keep promises help you have HOPE today? Remember to keep all examples age appropriate.)***

What You Say:

“The Bible is FULL of God’s promises. Some are promises already kept—like God’s promise to send Jesus! And some are promises God is STILL keeping, like the promise to guide, help, and love us, no matter what.

“I’m so glad that God isn’t like us. God never makes a promise that God is too busy or distracted to keep. God always, ALWAYS keeps promises. Because of God’s faithfulness, we can have hope. We can have hope on sunny days when everything is going our way. And we can have hope on days when nothing is going the way we wanted it to go. ***[Bottom Line] You can have hope because God is faithful.***”

FINAL ACTIVITY: Biblical Literacy (K-5th)

(“Memory Verse Phrases” and “Verse Layout” Activity Pages, Two Hopscotch Grids, Floor Tape)

What You Do:

- Lay the “Memory Verse Phrases” cards inside the hopscotch grids according to the “Verse Layout” Activity Page.
- Make sure each kid has a Bible.
- Together, look up Isaiah 9:6 using the Bible navigation tips below.

Finding verses with 2nd and 3rd 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.” 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.

- Read the verse together a few times.
- Divide your group into two teams.

- Direct each team to line up in front of one of the hopscotch grids.
- Instruct the kids to take turns hopscotching down the grid.
- As they hop into a section, direct them to recite the verse phrase inside that section.
- Give the teams a few minutes to become proficient with the verse.
- Share that the two teams will race against each other to see who can finish first, but there is a catch!
- Direct the first kid from each team to compete against the other by hopping into section one and removing the phrase.
- Instruct them to carry the phrase with them while they hopscotch to the end of the grid, and they recite the verse.
- When that kid is done, direct them to join their teammates at the end of the line.
- Once the first kid has jumped through the grid, prompt the second kid to hop through the grid saying the verse, including the missing phrase, while removing the phrase from section two.
- Continue until all phrases have been removed.

What You Say:

“Great job, everyone! Many years before Jesus was born, Isaiah—the author of the verse we are learning—wrote about Him. He said that a child and a Son would be given to us. Who do you think Isaiah was referring to? *(Invite responses.)* That’s right! Jesus!

“God sent His Son to make things right. The verse continues to say, ‘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)* Jesus came not just to rescue us from our sins, but also give us advice and peace in every situation. Because He is all these things, we can always have hope when we trust in Jesus. He helps us and is with us forever. **[Bottom Line] You can have hope because God is faithful.**”

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.”