



CHRISTMAS | WEEK 2 | DECEMBER 10, 2023

## Elementary Lesson

# Repeat the Sounding Joy

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

**Bible Story:** Repeat the Sounding Joy (Jesus Is Born) • *Luke 2:1-7*

**Key Question:** How would you share the good news of Jesus with others?

**Basic Truth:** I am made for a purpose so I can tell people about God.

**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.*

**Key Question:** How would you share the good news of Jesus with others? We sing songs like “Joy to the World” that can remind us why joy is such a huge part of Christmas. Beyond that, we want kids to start thinking about how they can personalize that joy through their own relationship with Jesus. That’s why we kick off Small Group with a question that gets them thinking about why they can have joy this Christmas. We pray this becomes a great conversation that leads them to a stronger relationship with Jesus, the most important reason we can find joy!

In week two, 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 a 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!

#### 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



## 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)

#### CANDY CANE NOSER

(Candy Canes – 1 per contestant)

The countdown to Christmas continues! Only 2 more weeks to go. Let’s remind ourselves of this...

**(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. 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 game.

**(SLIDE: CANDY CANE NOSER)**  
**(VIDEO: CANDY CANE NOSER EXAMPLE)**

**HOW TO PLAY:**

- **CHOOSE CONTESTANTS.** Choose 3-8 people to play at a time. Pass out a candy cane to each player.
- **YELL "GO!"** They will start with their candy canes in their mouth, and race to see who can get it to hang from their nose first, by only using the muscles in their face.

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

**WORSHIP (6-7 Minutes)**

**(VIDEO: SILENT NIGHT, JOY [Christmas])**

**BIBLE STORY (12 Minutes)**

**(Nesting Christmas Boxes with 'Hope', 'Joy', and 'Love' - 4 boxes total)**

Christmas music is definitely a way to celebrate Jesus, God's greatest gift. As well as a great way to talk about our next countdown to Christmas word: JOY!

*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: JOY)**

This makes me wonder. I know some people are crazy about Christmas music. How many of you have been listening to Christmas music for weeks now? *(Pause for responses.)* Has anyone been listening for a few months, maybe since October or November? *(Pause for responses.)* Wow! How about all year?! *(Pause for responses.)* I see those hands. That's amazing! I get it, though—some of those Christmas songs are just too good to listen to them only during the Christmas season. Music this time of year has a way of putting a smile on our faces and making us feel happy. But let's be honest, sometimes life can be hard, especially at Christmas. And joyful music or not, we might not feel like getting up and dancing around.

This brings up a pretty big question: How can we still find a way to have joy even when we're not happy or life is difficult or we're just not in the Christmas spirit? Now, this isn't meant to be a downer, but it's important to remember that this season can be hard on some of us. Thankfully, finding joy—the sort of joy God can give us—isn't based on what we're going through. But that doesn't mean we won't still have questions and need some help to figure out how to find that joy.

"If that's you, I'm glad you're here. We have an amazing story from the Bible to help answer our questions about joy. In fact, we can find all sorts of answers in the Bible to some of our biggest questions in life. Let's head there now and UNWRAP some answers together.



## **(VIDEO: BIBLE STORY 5 MIN)**

This was the first Christmas. This was how Jesus, God's one and only Son, came into the world . . . into the mess, to save us. There may be some pretty cool gifts you receive this month, and some of those will make you really happy! But make no mistake . . . THIS is how God gave us the GREATEST gift . . . and we can have joy because God sent Jesus. And even when we don't feel like celebrating . . . or dancing . . . even when life doesn't turn out the way we hoped . . . we can still have JOY because God sent Jesus!

"And you know what? Now we get to be like God in how we share this great gift with others! Two thousand years ago, God GAVE the greatest gift. But now we have the opportunity in so many ways to show God's love and share with others. And remember, this isn't just something we do in December. Jesus matters throughout the entire year. God giving Jesus to rescue us matters in your classroom, on the soccer field or basketball court, in your home and with your friends. This is the GREATEST gift . . . and Jesus can bring you JOY all year long!

Our Basic Truth today says it this way...

**(SLIDE: BASIC TRUTH)** 'I am made for a purpose so I can tell people about God.

If I were to talk to someone about why I think Jesus is God's greatest gift, this is what I would say...

*Below is a suggested script, but if you want to tell your testimony (make sure it is age-appropriate) of how your life is better because you have a relationship with Jesus this would be a great time to share! Try to keep it brief.*

'My life before I asked Jesus to be my Lord and Savior was a very selfish one. I just kind of did my own thing, and I didn't really have hope or joy in anything significant. But then I realized that I needed Jesus to save me from my selfishness and give me purpose and hope and joy! I needed to have a right relationship with God, and I knew that I could only have that through believing that Jesus came to Earth, died on the cross, and rose again. I had to trust Jesus with my life and promise to follow Him and ask Him to forgive me of my sins. My life now has completely changed! I can know that God can use every situation - good or bad - for my good and His glory. He can change your life too!'

Our Key Question today is going to let you practice sharing the good news of God's gift to us with others...

**(SLIDE: KEY QUESTION)** 'How would you share the good news of Jesus with others?'

*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.

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."

## **DISMISS TO SMALL GROUPS**



## SMALL GROUP

**Monthly Virtue: Christmas: Celebrating Jesus, God's greatest gift.**

**Bible Story: Repeat the Sounding Joy (Jesus Is Born) • Luke 2:1-7**

**Key Question: How would you share the good news of Jesus with others?**

**Basic Truth: I am made for a purpose so I can tell people about God.**

**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)**

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

### KEY QUESTION (K-5<sup>th</sup>)

(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 would you share the good news of Jesus with others?'**

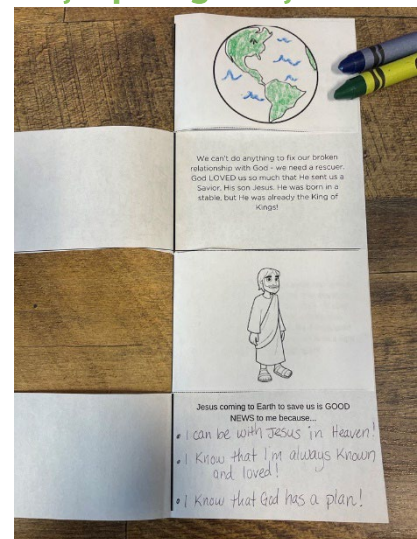
*(Answers will vary: GOD LOVED the world so much that He wanted to create a way for us to have a relationship with Him. GOD GAVE us Jesus to take the punishment for our sin upon himself by dying on the cross and rising again. WE BELIEVE that we can't do anything to save ourselves - only through acknowledging Jesus' sacrifice can we have a relationship with God. WE RECEIVE God's gift of eternal life and salvation by trusting in God and following Him with our lives. etc.)*

### CHRISTMAS RETELLING (K-5<sup>th</sup>)

**("Christmas Retelling [K-1 OR 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>]" Activity Pages - print double-sided, flip long side; Scissors, Pens, Crayons)**

**What You Do:**

- Keep the conversation going from your Key Question discussion using this activity page.
- Pass out the activity page (either the one with pre populated pictures or blank ones) and have kids fold in half long-ways so either the pictures or the blank squares are on the outside. Have kids cut just the dotted lines so that they can pull the tab so it reveals the text underneath.
- READ the texts out loud. Either have kids color the pictures or draw their own on the front side. The pictures should help communicate what the text is saying.
- On the last section, kids will need to fill in why it is GOOD NEWS to THEM that Jesus came to Earth. This is a great opportunity to



discuss how they would talk to their friends about the importance of having a relationship with Jesus.

- Have kids share what they have done/said.

## FINAL ACTIVITY: Biblical Literacy (K-5<sup>th</sup>)

("Ornament Verse" Activity Pages - 2-3 sets - precut and hole punched, Yarn or Tinsel Garland - 2 per group, Bibles)

### What You Do:

- Make sure each kid has a Bible.
- Together, look up Isaiah 9:6 using the Bible navigation tips below and read it out loud.

*Finding verses with 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

- Set the Bibles aside but keep them open to Isaiah 9:6.
- Designate a safe play area and scatter the cards from the "Ornament Verse" Activity Page all over the floor.
- Split your group into 2-3 teams (each team should have a set of cards available to them)
- At your signal, instruct the kids to find all of the verse pieces (they can all go at once or you can do a relay style) and then string them in verse order onto the yarn/tinsel.
- Allow the kids to refer to the Bibles, as needed.
- Once done, have teams wrap one member of their team like they are wrapping ribbon on a tree.
- Check verse orders and declare a winner!
- Collect the ornaments and scatter them all over the environment again.
- Play additional rounds, as time allows.
- Recite the verse together.

### What You Say:

"What are some Christmas traditions you enjoy doing every year? (*Invite responses—decorate the tree, put up lights, hang ornaments, go to the Christmas service, give, and receive gifts, etc.*)

Those are all so much fun! Do you know that the absolute BEST gift you can ever receive is Jesus? Isaiah, who wrote this verse a long time ago, told everyone that Jesus was coming to rescue us from our sins and make everything that was wrong right again. That is why we celebrate Christmas.

"Real joy comes from knowing that God loves us. God showed that love to us by giving us the most amazing gift ever. God sent Jesus to rescue us and be our forever friend. That can bring you joy, no matter what's going on in your life. So always remember **[Bottom Line] you can have joy because God sent Jesus!**"

## PRAY

“Dear God, thank You for reminding us today that Mary and Joseph found a way to be happy, even when things did not go their way. That’s what joy is! Thank You for keeping Your promise to send Your Son. Because of Jesus, our broken relationship with You can be restored, and one day You will make everything right again. Please help us always remember to have joy because You sent Jesus. We pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.”