



TODAY'S SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

Joyful, Joyful

Gabriel Appears to Mary
Luke 1:26-56

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

You can have joy because
God has a plan for you.

MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

Today in the town of David a
Savior has been born to you.
He is the Messiah, the Lord.
Luke 2:11, NIV

MONTHLY LIFE APP

Christmas—Celebrating Jesus,
God's greatest gift

BASIC TRUTH

I can trust God no matter what.

PRELUDE: Setting the tone for the experience

See the **Getting Ready** pages at the end of this document for a detailed description of what you'll need for today.

In the **Prelude** folder of your curriculum, you'll find a variety of other resources to help you prepare.

SMALL GROUP

15
MIN

SOCIAL: Providing time for fun interaction

Early Arriver
Opening Activity

LARGE GROUP

35
MIN

STORY: Communicating God's truth in engaging ways WORSHIP: Inviting people to respond to God

Welcome/Opener
Worship ("Christmas This Year" from *Jingle Jam Wrapped Up* and "Joy to the World (Glory to the King)" from *Joy to the World (Glory to the King)* single)
Bible Story
Bottom Line
Prayer
Closer

SMALL GROUP

25
MIN

GROUPS: Creating a safe place to connect

Bible Story Review: Craft Stick Nativity-Part 1
Application Activity: Joy Stealers
Memory Verse Activity: Candy Cane Verse
Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss

HOME: Prompting action beyond the experience

Parent Cue Card (print or email)
GodTime devotional for kids
Studio252.tv
Parent Cue App



PRELUDE SOCIAL STORY WORSHIP GROUPS HOME

PROVIDING TIME FOR FUN INTERACTION
15 MINUTES

MADE TO CONNECT

an activity that invites kids to share and collaborate with others while growing their understanding



Before kids arrive, take a few moments to pray for them. Thank God that even in the midst of unforeseen and difficult circumstances, He has a plan for us. Pray that today you will be able to encourage kids that joy is possible in hard times because God has a plan for us. Ask God to help you trust His perfect plan for your life and the life of your small group kids.

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1. EARLY ARRIVER

WHAT YOU NEED: Offering container

WHAT YOU DO:

- Greet kids by name as they arrive and ask them about their week.
- Encourage any kids who brought an offering to place it in the offering container.
- Ask "would you rather" Christmas-style questions below.

Would you rather:

- Have a snowball fight or make a gingerbread house?
- Be able to eat only Christmas cookies or only candy canes this Christmas season?
- Wear a full-zip up snowsuit (even inside) or mittens on your hands every day for a week?
- Eat a huge bowl of figgy pudding or a large slice of last year's fruit cake? (*Figgy pudding is generally a form sweet and savory cake with a sour-sweet layer of honey, fruits, and nuts and a savory filling of pork sweetmeats.*)
- Have candy cane legs or gumdrop eyes?
- Get one amazing Christmas gift or ten "just okay" gifts?
- Build a snowman or a snow fort?
- Wash your hair with cranberry sauce or mashed potatoes and gravy?
- Have to sing "Jingle Bells" at the top of your lungs every time you walk through a doorway or have to sing "The 12 Days of Christmas" every time someone says "Hello" to you?
- Have Christmas tree tinsel for hair or Christmas tree lights for fingernails?
- String a mile-long popcorn garland or wrap 100 Christmas presents?
- Eat a gingerbread house or live in a gingerbread house?
- Have a partridge in a pear tree or six geese a laying?



PRELUDE SOCIAL STORY WORSHIP GROUPS HOME

PROVIDING TIME FOR FUN INTERACTION
15 MINUTES

MADE TO PLAY

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



2. OPENING ACTIVITY

WHAT YOU NEED: "How To: Christmas Edition" Activity Pages, paper, and pencils

WHAT YOU DO:

- Let the kids choose a partner. Give each pair a "How To: Christmas Edition" Activity Page (*Pairs will have a different page from others, but give the same page to at least two pairs and compare and contrast their steps.*)
- Encourage pairs to think through the steps to complete each activity and draw pictures to show each step.
- Give pairs a few minutes to complete the page.
- Allow each pair to share their steps with the group. Compare and contrast the steps of pairs with the same page.

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WHAT YOU SAY:

"Great job, everyone! It's important to have a plan when you build a snowman or make Christmas cookies. **[Transition] Did you know that God has a plan? He does! Come on, let's go!**"

Lead your group to the Large Group area.

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CREATING A SAFE PLACE TO CONNECT
25 MINUTES

MADE TO IMAGINE

an activity that promotes empathy and facilitates concrete application through role-play and reenactment



*** 1. CRAFT STICK NATIVITY—PART 1**
[TALK ABOUT GOD | BIBLE STORY REVIEW]

WHAT YOU NEED: "Mary" and "Angel" Activity Pages OR small scraps of fabric/felt/construction paper and fine point markers; six-inch jumbo craft sticks, markers, white glue, clear tape, gold or silver pipe cleaners

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NOTE: For the next three weeks, you will create a craft stick nativity, adding different people from that particular week's Bible story to the set. You may choose to send home the angel character. You will need the Mary character next week. So, collect and keep available for next week.

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

**You can have joy because
God has a plan for you.**

WHAT YOU DO:

- Pass out two jumbo craft sticks to each kid to create an angel and Mary from today's Bible story.
- If providing the Activity Pages, give each kid an angel and Mary cut out to color then glue to their sticks.
- If providing scraps of fabric/felt/construction paper, assist the kids in wrapping or gluing a small scrap to each craft stick to create the angel and Mary.
 - Draw a line around the face so kids know where to add the head covering and dress for Mary.
 - They can use their own creative license to make the angel.
- Encourage kids to draw in the facial features with a fine point marker.
- Guide the kids to twist a small piece of the pipe cleaner into a circle to create a halo for the angel and attach to the top of the craft stick with clear tape.
- Once the kids have finished decorating their characters, use the dialogue below as they act-out today's Bible story.

MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

**Today in the town of David a
Savior has been born to you.
He is the Messiah, the Lord.**
Luke 2:11, NIV

WHAT YOU SAY:

"Mary was an ordinary girl from an ordinary town. She grew up learning the Jewish scriptures and was engaged to a carpenter named Joseph. She probably had a plan or an idea of how her life would go, but one day, all of that changed. Gabriel, an angel sent from God, appeared to Mary with a VERY special message. God had a big plan for Mary. What was that plan? Mary would have a baby. But not just any baby. Gabriel told her she would have a son named Jesus. He would be great, the Son of the Most-High God.

MONTHLY LIFE APP

**Christmas—Celebrating Jesus,
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"The angel also told Mary that her cousin, Elizabeth, would have a baby even though she was old. All these things seemed impossible to Mary, but still she said, 'I am the Lord's servant. May it be so.' Mary visited Elizabeth and stayed with her for many weeks. Mary was full of joy because God had chosen her to be a part of His BIG plan!



WEEK
TWO
DECEMBER 2020

SMALL GROUP
K-1

PRELUDE SOCIAL STORY WORSHIP GROUPS HOME

CREATING A SAFE PLACE TO CONNECT
25 MINUTES

(* 1. CRAFT STICK NATIVITY–PART 1, CONTINUED)

“If you had been Mary, how would you have felt if an ANGEL suddenly appeared to you with a special message? Show me the face you might make if an angel appeared right in front of you! I would probably be frightened at first. (*Show frightened face.*) But then, I would have LOTS of questions. And Mary DID ask questions, but then she said something amazing. You can read it in Luke 1:38. Mary said, ‘I serve the Lord. May it happen just as you have said.’

“Mary knew that God’s plans were bigger and better than any plan she may have come up with on her own. And she was right! God made you and me for a purpose. Just like God had a plan for Mary, God has a plan for you! **You can have joy because God has a plan for you.**”

[Make it Personal] (Tell your few about a time when God showed you His plan for your life. Maybe you moved to a new city or chose a different college or career because God led you there. Talk about how you found joy by following God’s plan for you.)



CREATING A SAFE PLACE TO CONNECT
25 MINUTES

MADE TO IMAGINE

an activity that promotes empathy and facilitates concrete application through role-play and reenactment

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2. JOY STEALERS

[LIVE FOR GOD | APPLICATION ACTIVITY]

WHAT YOU NEED: Throw pillow, cardstock, marker, and masking tape

WHAT YOU DO:

- Make a "JOY" sign on the cardstock.
- Instruct the kids to sit in a tight circle on the floor.
- Tape the "JOY" sign to the front of the pillow and place it in the center of the circle.
- Read the scenarios below. Each scenario represents a situation where it might be easy to lose our joy.
- The kids will listen to the entire scenario then rush to the center to "steal" the Joy pillow. Once stolen, ask the kid holding the pillow to share how you might turn the scenario around to find joy anyway.
- If the kid with the pillow has trouble coming up with an answer, allow the rest of the group to brainstorm ideas. Some ideas are listed below in case kids are stumped.
- Place the pillow back into the center of the circle and repeat with the remaining scenarios.

Scenarios:

- Your dad forgot to get the cookies for your holiday party at school. *(You remind him in the car on the way to school, so he makes a quick stop at the store to buy your favorite frosted cookies.)*
- Your mom bought you a different bike than the one you actually wanted. *(You realize the bike is cooler than the one you picked out online.)*
- You dropped the gift you made for your mom at school. *(You ask your teacher if she can help you fix it, and she does.)*
- You forgot to get a gift for your sister for Christmas. *(You decide to make her something this year.)*
- Your little brother ate the rest of the gumdrops, and now you can't finish the roof on your gingerbread house. *(You decide to use cereal to cover the rest.)*
- You built a snowman in the front yard. The next day, the snow melted, and your frosty friend is gone. *(You splash in the puddles left by the melted snow.)*
- Your sister ate the last homemade Christmas cookie. *(You convince your mom to let you help make a new batch of cookies.)*
- Your parents tell you that instead of traveling to your grandparents this year, you'll need to stay home. *(You could video chat with your grandparents or invite them to travel to see you, instead.)*
- Your dog jumps up to catch a fly and knocks over the Christmas tree. *(You get to decorate your tree twice this year!)*
- When you try to use the remote-controlled car you got for Christmas, it won't work. *(Your dad calls the company, and they ship you a new one. In the meantime, you take apart the broken one, figure out why it won't work and fix it. Now, you have TWO remote-controlled cars!)*



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PRELUDE SOCIAL STORY WORSHIP GROUPS HOME

CREATING A SAFE PLACE TO CONNECT
25 MINUTES

(2. JOY STEALERS, CONTINUED)

WHAT YOU SAY:

“Every day, we face situations that could steal our joy. But real joy isn’t about things going your way. Joy is about remembering that God loves us and that His plans for us are good. Because God loves us, He put a plan in place to send His only Son, Jesus, to the world. God promised to send a Savior, and He did! **You can have joy because God has a plan for you!**”



CREATING A SAFE PLACE TO CONNECT
25 MINUTES

MADE TO MOVE

an activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and taps into the energy in the body

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

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3. CANDY CANE VERSE

[HEAR FROM GOD | MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY]

WHAT YOU NEED: Bibles and candy canes

WHAT YOU DO:

- Open a Bible to Luke 2:11 and read it aloud to the group.
- This week, talk about the second phrase found in the verse: A Savior has been born to you.
- Ask . . .
 - Who is the Savior? (*Jesus*)
 - Do you know what the word "Savior" means? (*A person who saves someone or something. God sent Jesus to save us! Because sin—stuff we do that we know is wrong—separates us from God, He sent Jesus so that everyone who believes in Him can be a part of God's family forever!*)
- Have the kids sit in a circle on the floor.
- Hold up a candy cane so that it makes a "J" and point out how "JOY" starts with a "J."
- Hand the candy cane to the kid your left.
- Repeat the words of the verse together as you pass the candy cane around the circle.
- When you get to the reference (Luke 2:11), whoever holds the candy cane gets to keep it and sit in the center of the circle.
- Repeat, passing a new candy cane around the circle.
- Allow the last kid to keep each candy cane and move to the center. Guide kids to spread out as more kids move to the center of the circle.
- Encourage kids to hold onto their candy canes and NOT open them yet!
- Continue until there are more kids in the center than in the outer circle.
- Then, stop the game and give the rest of the kids a candy cane.

WHAT YOU SAY:

"The angel told Mary she would have a baby. Mary wasn't sure how everything would work out, but she chose to trust God's plan. God sent His only Son, Jesus, as our Savior because He loves us. That's a huge reason to have JOY. Every time you see a candy cane this Christmas, turn it around so you see the 'J' and remember that **you can have joy because God has a plan for you.**"



CREATING A SAFE PLACE TO CONNECT
25 MINUTES

MADE TO REFLECT

an activity that creates space
for personal processing
and application



4. PRAY AND DISMISS
[PRAY TO GOD | PRAYER ACTIVITY]

WHAT YOU NEED: Candy canes from previous activity

WHAT YOU DO:

- Have the kids hold onto their candy canes as you pray.
- As you finish praying, allow the kids to open their candy

canes and enjoy their treats!

WHAT YOU SAY:

“We can have joy even when our candy canes are all gone. We have joy when things don’t go our way. We can have real joy, joy that’s bigger than happiness, when we remember that God has a plan for each one of us. Let’s thank God today that **you can have joy because God has a plan for you.**”

“Heavenly Father, thank You for the plan You had for Mary. Thank You for sending Jesus to save us. Thank You for the joy we can ALWAYS have when we remember that You have a plan for us. We know that Your plan is the best plan ever. We love You. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

As adults arrive to pick up, encourage the kids to show off their Mary and angel puppets as they retell the story and talk about how **you can have joy because God has a plan for you.**

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GETTING READY

HERE'S EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW TO GET READY FOR THIS WEEK

SOCIAL: PROVIDING TIME FOR FUN INTERACTION (15 MINUTES)

Welcome kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up. Get ready to experience today's story. **(Choose one or both of these activities.)**

In the Prelude folder of your curriculum, you'll find a general summary of Social Distancing Recommendations. Please refer to this document so you can plan your Small Group experience with health and safety in mind.

1. EARLY ARRIVER

Made to Connect: an activity that invites kids to share and collaborate with others while growing their understanding

WHAT YOU NEED:

- An offering container

2. OPENING ACTIVITY

Made to Play: an activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and/or working as a group

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Print the "How To: Christmas Edition" Activity Pages; one page for every two kids (pairs will have different pages).
- Paper
- Pencils

GROUPS: CREATING A SAFE PLACE TO CONNECT (25 MINUTES)

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible story applies to real life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

(Choose as many of these activities as you like.)

** If you don't have time to do all these activities, be sure to do activity #1.*

* 1. CRAFT STICK NATIVITY—PART 1 [TALK ABOUT GOD | BIBLE STORY REVIEW]

Made to Imagine: an activity that promotes empathy and facilitates concrete application through role-play and reenactment

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Print the "Mary" Activity Page on cardstock; one cutout for each kid
- Print the "Angel" Activity Page on cardstock; one cutout for each kid
- Six-inch craft sticks; two for each kid
- White glue
- Gold or silver pipe cleaners, one for every three kids
 - Cut the pipe cleaners into three even pieces.
- Clear tape
- Markers
- (Optional) scraps of fabric/felt/construction paper and fine point markers instead of the Activity Pages copied on cardstock

NOTE: You can either offer scraps of fabric, felt, or construction paper for kids to use to cover the craft sticks and create the clothing; OR copy the "Mary" and "Angel" Activity Pages and cut out for kids to color and glue to the front of each craft stick.

2. JOY STEALERS [LIVE FOR GOD | APPLICATION ACTIVITY]

Made to Imagine: an activity that promotes empathy and facilitates concrete application through role-play and reenactment

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Throw pillow; one for each small group
- Cardstock
- Marker
 - Write the word "JOY" in large print on the cardstock, sized to fit the front of the throw pillow.
- Masking tape

3. CANDY CANE VERSE [HEAR FROM GOD | MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY]

Made to Move: an activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and taps into the energy in the body

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Bibles
- Candy canes; one for each kid



WEEK
TWO
DECEMBER 2020

SMALL GROUP
K-1

PRELUDE SOCIAL STORY WORSHIP GROUPS HOME

GETTING READY

HERE'S EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW TO GET READY FOR THIS WEEK

4. PRAY AND DISMISS

[PRAY TO GOD | PRAYER ACTIVITY]

Made to Reflect: an activity that creates space for personal processing and application

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Candy canes from previous activity

HOME: PROMPTING ACTION BEYOND THE EXPERIENCE

- Print on cardstock or email this week's GodTime devotionals and Parent Cue cards.
- Tell parents about our additional family resources: **Studio252.tv** and the **Parent Cue app**.