



WEEK ONE – DECEMBER 2024 – SECOND/THIRD

Bible Story: *The Word* | John 1:1-5, 14

Bottom Line: *God always had a plan to send Jesus.*

Memory Verse: “[Mary] is going to have a son. You must give him the name Jesus. That’s because he will save his people from their sins.” Matthew 1:21 (NirV)

Basic Truth: *I can trust God no matter what*

Series Overview: Have you ever stopped to listen to a group of carolers and then joined them to go spread some more Christmas cheer with others? Music is such a big part of Christmas, but it’s not the main reason we celebrate. That’s why this December, we’re singing loudly as we jam out to our Christmas Playlist to celebrate Jesus, God’s greatest gift! 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 get in the mix this Christmas season, let’s take time to remember the reason we celebrate in the first place: Jesus, the greatest gift the world has ever known.

Bottom Line: **God always had a plan to send Jesus.** Much of what we celebrate at Christmas is an incredible reminder that God can be trusted no matter what. Since the very beginning, God made a promise to save the world and then followed through with Jesus. Because of Jesus, we can celebrate the opportunity to have a relationship with God that lasts forever.

9:00 - 9:15 | 11:00 – 11:15 | EARLY ARRIVERS ACTIVITY

Opening Small Group Activity

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

What You Need: N/A

What You Do:

- Gather your group together.
- Explain to the kids that you will hum a Christmas song.
- Choose a familiar Christmas song and begin humming it.
- When you're done humming, ask the group to guess the song.
- Call on a kid to share their answer.
- Continue calling on different kids to guess until the song is named correctly.
- After the song is guessed, encourage the group to sing the beginning of the song together.
- Continue playing by humming a different Christmas song with each new round.
- Invite kids to take turns humming Christmas songs for the rest of the group to guess, as time and interest allow.

What You Say:

“That was so fun! Great job guessing and singing the beginning lines of those Christmas songs. Every song has to start somewhere, right? Speaking of beginnings, I’m really excited for what’s next. *[Transition]* **Today we’re going to discover when the best gift we could ever receive really began!**”

9:20 - 9:50 | 11:20 – 11:50 | LARGE GROUP

Large Group Overview: We kick off week 1 at the very beginning. In John 1:1-5, 14, we learn that before there was anything, even life itself, there was the Word. Jesus was this Word — a light that became a human to shine in the darkness and show us Who God is. We get to see the plan God had for us from the very beginning and celebrate because of the gift of Jesus.

9:50 – 10:10 | 11:50 – 12:10 | SMALL GROUP

The Best Plan Ever

[Talk About God | Bible Story Review]

Imagine: an activity that promotes empathy and facilitates biblical application through role-play and reenactment

What You Need: “Timeline Cards” Activity Page, butcher paper, markers, and pencils (or pens)

What You Do:

- Explain that kids will work together in groups to create pictures and descriptions to review different parts of today’s Bible Story.
- Divide the kids into three groups.
- Give each group a large piece of butcher paper, markers, and a card from the “Timeline Cards” Activity Page.
- Encourage each group to use the supplies to draw pictures and write descriptions for their timeline card.
 - Kids can copy the titles and descriptions from their “Timeline Cards” Activity Page card, or put them in their own words.
- Once groups are finished, bring everyone together.
- Inform the groups that they will be creating a timeline to understand the story of Jesus as told by John.
- Instruct the groups to work together to lay the timeline sections in order in your group space.

- Direct each group to stand behind the drawing on their piece of butcher paper.
- In order, give each group a chance to explain the illustrations and descriptions.

What You Say:

“When did the plan for Christmas really begin? (Invite responses.) That’s right! The plan for Christmas began in the very beginning, before the world was created. It’s easy to think Christmas began when Jesus was born as a baby, right? But Jesus has always been there! He was with God when God made the world since He IS God. God made everything through Jesus! Without Jesus, we wouldn’t exist because all life comes through Him.

*“God made people and wanted to be with them, but people turned away from God and broke that relationship. Thankfully God loves us and wants to have a relationship with us, so **[Bottom Line]** God always had a plan to send Jesus! Jesus came to Earth to rescue us, and that’s worth celebrating! No matter how dark and broken this world seems sometimes, it can never stop the light of Jesus.*

“When we look at Jesus and how He loved and helped others, we see what God is really like! We can know God because of Jesus. And that makes Jesus’ birth at Christmas even more amazing than we could ever imagine!”

Verse in Motion!

[Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

Explore: an activity that extends learning through hands on experimentation and discovery

What You Need: Bibles, and “Verse Cards” Activity Pages

What You Do:

- Divide kids into groups of two (or three) and give each group a Bible.

- Guide kids to look up Matthew 1:21 using the following Bible Navigation Tips:
 - ***Finding verses with 2nd and 3rd graders:*** Guide them 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 Matthew in the list under “New Testament.” When the kids find Matthew, lead them to look at the page number beside the word. Explain that the number tells them on what page they can find Matthew. Help the kids find the page. When they find Matthew, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. Help them find chapter 1. Explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Help them find verse 21 in chapter 1.
- Read the verse together aloud several times.
- Instruct the kids to sit in a circle.
- Place the cards from the “Verse Cards” Activity Page in the center of your group in the correct order.
- Explain to the kids that they will be replacing each part of the verse with a motion.
- Begin by reading the words on the first card, and asking the kids to come up with motions they think best represents those words.
- Flip the first card over (so it’s face down) and invite the group to do the motions to that card and recite those missing words from memory.
- Then, instruct the kids to come up with motions for the next card.
- Flip that card over (so it’s face down), and direct the group to do the motions to the first and second card while reciting those words from memory.
- Continue this for each of the cards until all the words have been replaced with motions.
- Repeat the Memory Verse motions together a few times while reciting the Memory Verse.

What You Say:

“The angel came to Joseph in a dream and told him that Mary was going to have a special baby boy! The angel instructed Joseph to name the baby ‘Jesus.’ I’m so

*glad that **[Bottom Line]** God always had a plan to send Jesus and this plan started even before Jesus came to Earth. Nothing could stop God's perfect plan! Knowing this, we can always have hope—even when things don't go the way we think they should—and that's worth celebrating!*

“Let's use these Memory Verse motions all month to help us celebrate Jesus!”

Dear God, we are so thankful that You always had a plan to send Jesus to rescue us so that we could have a relationship with You. We know You love us so much because You gave us the best gift ever! Help us to remember that You are always with us no matter what we're going through. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.”

As adults arrive to pick up, encourage the kids to share the **[Bottom Line]** God always had a plan to send Jesus!