



WEEK THREE – DECEMBER 2024 – SECOND/THIRD

Bible Story: *Born to Save | Luke 2:1-7*

Bottom Line: *Celebrate because God sent a Savior*

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: Celebrate because God sent a Savior. We all know that Christmas is about Jesus, but sometimes it’s easy to make it all about the lights, decorations, and presents. Those things aren’t bad, but it’s important that we stay focused on the truth of what and WHO we celebrate at Christmas. God loved us enough to send Jesus to rescue us. Knowing that can help us celebrate Jesus, the true reason for the season.

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: Candy canes and timer

What You Do:

- Greet each kid by name as they arrive.
- Invite kids who brought an offering to place it in the FATW bag.
- Invite your group to form a standing circle.
- Give each kid one candy cane, but hold on to the extra one.
- Instruct the kids to hold the straight part of the candy cane with only one hand, with the hook side facing down.
- Direct the kids to place their free hand behind their back.
- Explain to the kids the goal is to see how fast they can pass the dangling candy cane around the circle, using only the hook part of their candy canes.
- Choose a kid to start.
- Place the extra candy cane you're holding onto the curved part of the candy cane of the kid who is starting the game.
- Start the round and start the timer—prompting kids to pass the dangling candy cane from one kid to the next using only their candy cane as a hook.
- Play several rounds, timing each round to see if the kids can beat their previous time.
- Set the candy canes aside for the Pray and Dismiss Activity.

What You Say:

“When you hold your candy cane like this, what letter does it look like? (Invite responses.) Yeah! Our candy canes do look like the letter ‘J.’ [Transition] The best Christmas gift we could ever receive starts with a ‘J’ too. Let’s discover more!”

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

Large Group Overview: In week three, we head to Luke 2:1-7 for the birth of Jesus! This Word that God had promised from the beginning had finally arrived as a humble baby. It may not have been as everyone thought, such as a warrior or someone with high status, but it was exactly what the world needed. God’s rescue plan to save the world was in motion, and as we remember how Jesus was born, we can always find a reason to celebrate!

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

Match Review

[Talk About God | Bible Story Review]

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

What You Need: “Memory Game Cards” Activity Page

What You Do:

- Invite the kids to sit in a circle.
- Shuffle the two sets of cards from the “Memory Game Cards” Activity Page.
- Set the cards face down in a grid pattern in the center of the circle.
- Instruct the kids to take turns flipping two cards over to find matching pairs.
- If a kid flips over a match, instruct them to share what their cards have to do with today’s Bible Story.
- Play until all cards are matched.

What You Say:

“What are some of the crazy and unplanned things that happened to Mary and Joseph? (Invite responses. Kids might say: Mary’s pregnancy, the angel’s visit to

Mary, Joseph’s dream, the long trip to Bethlehem, no guest room to stay in, having baby Jesus in a room where animals were kept, etc.)

“Mary and Joseph found a way to have joy even though things did not go their way. They chose joy in a very difficult situation because they trusted that God was at work. By choosing joy, they were able to see what really mattered: God sent a Savior as a tiny baby to be born in an unexpected place . . . and to bring joy to everyone.

*“Because of Jesus, our relationship with God can be restored, and one day, God will make everything in this world right again. Just like Mary and Joseph, we can choose to have joy when things don’t go our way because Jesus came to rescue us and bring joy to everyone. So, this Christmas let’s **[Bottom Line]** celebrate because God sent a Savior!”*

***[Make It Personal]** (Share an age-appropriate story about when something didn’t go your way, and you asked God to help you get through it. How did it turn out? How did remembering that God sent Jesus change your attitude?)*

Pray + Dismiss

[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

Reflect: an activity that creates space for personal understanding and application

What You Need: Candy Canes

What You Do:

- Invite the kids to sit in a circle.
- Give each kid a candy cane.
- Instruct the kids to lay the candy canes down in front of them so it resembles a “J.”
- Give the group a few minutes to reflect on how they can choose to have *joy* when unexpected things happen because *Jesus* came to rescue us.
- Close the group time in prayer.

What You Say:

“Dear God, thank You for sending Jesus to be our Savior and bring us joy, peace, and hope. Just like Mary and Joseph, help us to trust in You, to celebrate the gift of Jesus, and to have joy when unexpected things happen in our lives. Help us to remember that You are always with us. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.”

As adults arrive to pick up, consider sending kids home with a candy cane and encourage them to share the Memory Verse