



WEEK ONE – DECEMBER 2024 – PRETEEN

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

Key Question: *Why is Jesus important to you?*

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.

Key Question: Why is Jesus important to you? As we start the month of December, Christmas is on everyone’s mind. It’s the perfect time to help preteens consider not just what they believe, but why. This week, we’ll talk about how God always had a plan to send Jesus, the light of the world. We pray that this question will help preteens to be open to asking questions so they can grow in their faith and make it their own.

9:05 - 9:20 | 11:05 – 11:20 | EARLY ARRIVERS ACTIVITY

Opening Small Group Activity

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

What You Need: Gift bows

What You Do:

- Welcome kids as they arrive and invite them to place their offering in the FATW bag.
- Ask kids to sit in a circle with their hands on the floor.
- Place 10 gift bows in a random pattern in the middle of the circle on the floor.
- Let the kids know that the game you are going to play has a secret rule!
- Start the game off by saying this prompt:
 - “I’m having a Christmas party, and I invited some friends! Can you guess how many friends are coming?”
 - *NOTE: The secret to this game is the number of outstretched fingers you are showing. As you explain the game, don’t reveal this secret! Kids will naturally think that the number or color of bows represents the number of friends you have invited to the party. Keep your hands visible but don’t make the number of fingers you’re holding out too obvious.*
- Let the kids take turns sharing their guesses about how many guests are coming.
- Once everyone has shared their guess, congratulate any kids who guessed correctly.
- Rearrange the bows and repeat with a different number of outstretched fingers, letting the kids take turns sharing their guesses again.
- Encourage kids who think they know the secret to keep making correct guesses until everyone catches on or time runs out.
- As you finish, share the game's secret with the entire group.

What You Say:

“That was fun! Before we began this game, I had a plan. Did anyone guess the rule correctly? (Invite responses.) You had some great guesses. Figuring out the rule took some concentration and a little help. That’s when things began to make sense! [Transition] In today’s Bible story, we’re going to hear about a plan that didn’t seem to make sense but turned out to be the BEST plan EVER. Let’s go find out more.”

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

Bible Story Extension

[Talk About God | Bible Story Review]

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

What You Need: Bibles, pens, “Gift Tag Review” Activity Page

What You Do:

- Form two teams within your group.
- Instruct the teams to gather in different areas of your group space.
- Give each team a Bible, pens, and 10 gift tags from the “Gift Tag Review” Activity Page.

- Invite a kid on each team to look up John 1:1-5.
 - Provide help as needed.
- Encourage the kid to read the verse aloud to their teams.
- Challenge the teams to work together to identify ten words that stick out to them from the Scripture reading.
- Encourage teams to work together to write each word on separate gift tags.
- When the teams are finished, invite them to the front of your group space.
- Invite teams to share the words on their gift tags and why those words stuck out to them.
- Remind the kids that God always had a plan to send Jesus.
- Ask:
 - How is Jesus the Light of the World?
 - If you had to explain why God sent Jesus in only one sentence, what would you say?
 - God always had a plan to send Jesus. How do each of us fit into that plan?
- Remind kids that people turned away from God, but God had a plan from the start! God sent Jesus, God's WORD, to be a human and live here on earth and make His home with us.
- Say a word from the Scripture reading, and if the team wrote that word down, have them place those tags together in a line.
- Have the groups work together to organize their gift tags.
- Give the kids a few moments to observe the words they chose that were the same as the other team.

Make It Personal With Prayer

[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

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

What You Need: Gift bows

What You Do:

- Divide the kids into groups of three (a group of two is ok) and give each group a bow.
- Give the kids the following prompt and encourage them to take turns sharing their answers.
 - “Jesus is important to me because . . .”
- Instruct kids to pass the bow to the next person who wants to share in their group.
- Encourage the groups to expand on why Jesus is important to them.
- If kids need prompts to get them thinking, share the following questions with the groups.
 - How has Jesus shown that He loves you?
 - When you think of Jesus, what’s the first thing that comes to mind?
 - In what ways is Jesus a special gift?
- Gather the kids back together in your group space and close in prayer by inviting a kid who is willing to pray aloud to do so.