

Dec. 13th 2020

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 (NIRV)

Monthly Life App: Christmas—Celebrating Jesus, God's greatest gift

Basic Truth: I can trust God no matter what.

Small Group Connect (10 Minutes)



1. **Introduce** yourself, and **welcome** new kids by name.
2. Kids **share** what happened during the past week.
3. **Check up** on past week's prayer requests and events.
4. **Discuss** the welcome question: "Ask them about the best and worst part of their week."
5. **Activity**

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 firm 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?

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- 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?

6. Coloring pages and toys for play time.

7. **Transition to Large Group:**

Lead your group to the Story Experience area.

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Small Group Activity (20 Minutes)

*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: “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

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.

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.

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.

“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!

“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

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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! **[Bottom Line] 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.)

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Small Group Discussion (10 Minutes)

1. Say the Bottom Line and Bible Verse together:

[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

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.

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 **[Bottom Line] you can have joy because God has a plan for you.**”

. Pray and Dismiss

[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

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

What You Say:

“We can have joy. 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 **[Bottom Line] 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 **[Bottom Line] you can have joy because God has a plan for you.**

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2. Check Out & Parent Pick-up

Kids should stay in the Small Group until their parents arrive to pick them up and show the 3 digit tag that matches the number on the name tag of the child being picked up.

1. **Talk** about doing the God Time Cards and send one home with each child.

When a kid from your small group leaves, **say** something positive and specific to their parent.

2. **Encourage** families to do the God Time Card together and read the Parent Cue.