



SERIES OVERVIEW

Happy birthday, Jesus! We celebrate Jesus' birthday because Jesus is God's Son. God's Son deserves a celebration as big as Christmas itself and a birthday bash as big as the one we're going to give Him this month! He is that special!

So gather up all the birthday excitement and Christmas spirit you have, because we are going to party all month long! It's not just balloons and party hats, though. We are sharing the true story that God gave us His only Son, Jesus, and He is worth our best celebration!

WEEKLY MAIN POINTS

Week 1: The angel told Mary she would have a special baby.

Week 2: Not everyone knew Jesus is God's son.

WEEK 3: THE ANGELS TELL ABOUT JESUS.

Week 4: Happy Birthday, Jesus!

WEEKLY BIBLE STORIES

Week 1: The Angel and Mary • Luke 1:26-33, 38, 46

Week 2: Jesus Born in a Stable • Luke 2:1-7

WEEK 3: SHEPHERDS • LUKE 2:6-18

Week 4: The Christmas Story • Luke 1:26-33, 38, 46; 2:1-18

SERIES MEMORY VERSE



"God



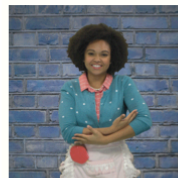
loved the world



so much



that He gave



His only son."



John 3:16

"God (*point up*)
loved the world (*hug yourself*)
so much (*stretch arms wide*)
that He gave (*place hands together with palms up*)
His only son." (*pretend to cradle a baby*)
John 3:16, GNT (*open hands like a book*)

KID CONNECT

KID CONNECT is all about eGROUP CONNECTIONS: for you to make connections with your eGroup and for the kids to make connections with each other. It's okay if you don't complete all the activities - some activities will work better for your group than others. Begin Kid Connect when doors open. **KID CONNECT ENDS WHEN THE WORSHIP EXPERIENCE BEGINS.**

KEY QUESTION

Why is Jesus special?
(*Jesus is God's son.*)

MAIN POINT

The angels tell about Jesus.

BIBLE STORY

Shepherds
Luke 2:6-18

MEMORY VERSE

"God
(*point up*)
loved the world
(*hug yourself*)
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(*place hands together with palms up*)
His only son."
(*pretend to cradle a baby*)
John 3:16, GNT
(*open hands like a book*)

COLORING PAGE

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

What you need: crayons, coloring pages, Quest check-in sheet

What you do: Place the crayons in the center of the circle and give each child a coloring page. *Write children's names and tag numbers on the Quest check-in sheet as children arrive.*

DURING THE ACTIVITY

What you do: Instruct children to color their coloring page. As children color, get to know them by asking what they have done today or what they are going to do.

AFTER THE ACTIVITY

What you do: Make sure children's names are on their page and set the pages aside until children are picked up at the end of the worship experience.

KID CONNECT

CHRISTMAS COVER-UP

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

What you need: giant game board (1), cover cards (32), Quest playing cards (1 set)

What you do: Spread the giant game board across the center of the eGroup. Divide children into four teams and seat each team on a different side of the game board. Each team should be given eight COVER CARDS showing the same picture (one team with cupcakes, one team with party hats, one team with party blowers, and one team with balloons.)

Shuffle the QUEST PLAYING CARDS. Hold the deck with the playing cards face-down. Without showing the cards, place one card on each space on the giant game board (see picture in sidebar).

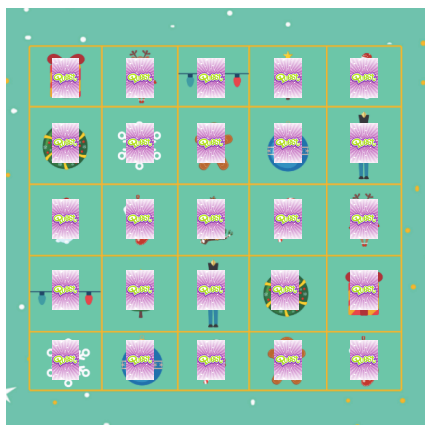
DURING THE ACTIVITY

What you do: Explain teams will take turns turning over one of the playing cards on the board. If a team turns over a Red Rabbit or Green Gorilla card, tell children Red Rabbit and Green Gorilla are pretending to be silly Christmas elves, so these animals will take away any cards with their pictures on them and hide them under a Christmas tree! Remove the Red Rabbit or Green Gorilla card from the game, replacing it with a new face-down card. That team's turn is then over; they don't get to put down a cover card on that space. If a team turns over any other card, they can remove the playing card and cover the space with one of their cover cards.

The goal of the game is to be the first team to cover four spaces in a row. Once a team covers four spaces in a row horizontally, vertically, or diagonally, they win!

Activity modifications:

- **For larger groups**, the Red Rabbit/Green Gorilla play option can be removed to keep the game moving more quickly.
- **For younger groups**, let teams compete to be first to cover three spaces in a row instead of four.
- **For younger groups**, instead of giving each team their set of cover cards, keep the cover cards for each team and give them a cover card only when it's time for them to cover a space.



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GROUP CONNECT

ONCE THE WORSHIP EXPERIENCE BEGINS

NATIVITY SCENE

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

What you need: stable mat (1), nativity cards (1 set of 12)

What you do: Seat children in a circle. Place the stable mat in the center of the group. Spread out the nativity pieces around (not on) the stable mat.

What you say: "Welcome to the best birthday celebration ever! This month we're celebrating Jesus' birthday. Jesus is the most special person ever born because He is God's son, so His birthday is definitely worth celebrating in a big way! As we get our celebration going, let's put together a picture of what it looked like the night Jesus was born!"

DURING THE ACTIVITY

What you do: Explain that after each child introduces themselves, they will get to choose a piece from the nativity set and answer the question on the back before placing it on the stable mat. Introduce yourself to the group, then choose a piece from the nativity set, answer the question, and place the piece on the stable mat. Encourage each child to do the same.

After all children are introduced, pass out a Quest animal sticker to each child. Have each child place it next to their name tag.

What you say: "We are the (insert animal name) today! There are two very special rules to remember so we can have the most fun. The rules to follow are:

1. Be Safe - How can we be safe? (*keeping our hands to ourselves, sitting when others are sitting, walking instead of running, following the rules*)
2. Be Kind - How can we be kind? (*listening when others are talking, sharing, obeying leaders, sitting on our bottoms so others can see*)

If you can obey our special rules and are ready to have fun then put one hand in the middle and repeat after me:

I am (*allow response*)

a (insert animal group name) (*allow response*)

I will (*allow response*)

be kind and safe! (*allow response*)

On the count of three everyone, say 'Go (insert animal name)!'

1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . .

Go (insert group name)!"

AFTER THE ACTIVITY

What you say: "Now that we all know each other and we know the rules, we're ready to hear our Bible story!"

KEY QUESTION

Why is Jesus special?
(*Jesus is God's son.*)

MAIN POINT

The angels tell about Jesus.

BIBLE STORY

Shepherds
Luke 2:6-18

MEMORY VERSE

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John 3:16, GNT
(*open hands like a book*)

BIBLE CONNECT

BIBLE CONNECT is all about BIBLE CONNECTIONS: for kids to make connections with the Bible and learn to love the Bible! Children will make connections to the Bible in two ways: by hearing and talking about the Bible story and practicing the memory verse. Begin Bible Connect after the *Get To Know You* activity. **AFTER BIBLE CONNECT CHILDREN HEAD TO FREE PLAY AND LARGE GROUP.**

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SHEPHERDS LUKE 2:6-18

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

What you need: *The Beginner's Bible*, Bible story stickers

What you say: "We can find true stories in God's book, the Bible!"

DURING THE ACTIVITY

What you do: Show and read the Bible story from pages 277-281 in *The Beginner's Bible*. Ask the Bible story review questions. Each time a child answers a question correctly, give the child a sticker. If children can't remember the answer, take time as an eGroup to look back through the Bible story and find the answer together.

What you say: "Let's see how much you remember from our Bible story!"

1. "Who were watching the sheep in the fields?" (*the shepherds*)
2. "Who showed up in the fields with God's light shining all around?" (*an angel*)
3. "Did the angel want the shepherds to be afraid or not afraid?" (*not afraid*)
4. "Did the angel have good news or bad news?" (*good news*)
5. "Where did the angel tell the shepherds the Savior had been born?" (*in Bethlehem*)
6. "Did a choir of angels or another flock of sheep show up to sing praises to God?" (*a choir of angels*)
7. "Did the shepherds stay with their sheep or rush to Bethlehem?" (*They rushed to Bethlehem.*)
8. "Did the shepherds find baby Jesus?" (*yes*)
9. "Did the shepherds tell everyone about baby Jesus or did they keep Him a secret?" (*They told everyone about baby Jesus.*)

AFTER THE ACTIVITY

What you say: "The angels were so excited about Jesus being born that they couldn't wait to tell people about Him! They told the shepherds Jesus was born and sent them to see the special baby. Why is Jesus special?" (*Jesus is God's son.*)

BIBLE CONNECT

During the memory verse activity children will learn and practice the Bible verse together.

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VERSE VOICES

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

What you need: no supplies

What you say: "Our Bible verse shares the best news ever, that God sent Jesus to Earth because He loves us so much!"

DURING THE ACTIVITY

What you do: Say the memory verse and do the motions in front of the children. After showing them once, encourage children to practice the memory verse with you using different voices. You can use all of the voice options or choose a few, depending on time and interest.

What you say: "I am going to say our memory verse. Everyone watch me! (*Demonstrate the memory verse as shown in the sidebar.*) Now let's do it all together! Are you ready? (*Say the memory verse with the motions several times.*) Now let's try the verse in some silly voices!"

- "Say the verse in an excited voice, like you were just invited to the best birthday party ever!"
- "Say the verse in a scared voice, like Mary when she first saw the angel!"
- "Say the verse in a beautiful singing voice like an angel!"
- "Say the verse in a deep voice, like you're one of the cows in the stable where Jesus was born!"
- "Say the verse in a whisper voice, like you're trying not to wake up baby Jesus!"
- "Say the verse in an echoing voice, like you're shouting the good news and it's echoing around the world!"
- "Say the verse as fast as you can, like you're running to tell everyone the good news!"
- "Say the verse as slowly as you can, like you're on the long, slow journey to Bethlehem!"

AFTER THE ACTIVITY

What you say: "Great job, friends! We celebrate Jesus' birthday because Jesus is God's Son, and God sent Jesus to us because He loves us!"

What you do: Tell children they will have the opportunity to say the memory verse on their own during Free Play. Each child who can say the memory verse correctly will get a stamp and will then get to choose a Quest animal prize before they leave!

YOU CONNECT

YOU CONNECT is about the eGroup leader (**YOU!**) helping children make connections with the main point and their lives. You Connect activities reinforce the main point with fun and engaging activities. **BEGIN YOU CONNECT AFTER LARGE GROUP.**

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THE BEST GIFT EVER

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

What you need: gift cards (10), Baby Jesus card (1)

What you say: "As Christmas gets closer, we can't wait to tell people about all the special gifts we want to get. But sometimes we forget we already have the most special gift — Jesus! Let's play a game to help us remember the best gift we can ever get!"

DURING THE ACTIVITY

What you do: Show children the Baby Jesus card. Explain you will hide the Baby Jesus card under one of the gift cards and children will take turns guessing which gift card Baby Jesus is hidden behind.

Ask children to spin around in their spot to face outside the circle and then close their eyes. Hide the Baby Jesus card under one of the gift cards. Tell children to open their eyes and turn around, then ask a child to guess which gift Baby Jesus is hiding behind. Pick up the gift card the child chooses.

If the child guessed correctly, ask the children to share what they see on the back of the gift card. Hold up the gift card and say, "[item on gift card] would be a special gift, but who is the best gift ever? (*Pause for children to respond as you hold up the Baby Jesus card.*) Jesus!"

If the child guessed incorrectly, ask the next child to guess. Once a gift card has been discussed, set the card aside. Continue until all gift cards have been discussed.

AFTER THE ACTIVITY

What you say: "Some of the gifts on those gift cards looked pretty awesome, but they'll never be as special as having Jesus be our best friend forever! Why is Jesus special? (*Jesus is God's son.*) Let's bow our heads and close our eyes and thank God for sharing His special son with us. *Dear God, we believe Jesus is Your Son and that You gave Him to us to be our friend forever. Please help us tell everyone the good news that Jesus wants to be their friend forever, too. We love You, God! In Jesus' name, amen.*"

YOU CONNECT

CELEBRATION COUNTDOWN

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

What you need: foam dice (1), action card (1)

What you do: Seat children in a circle.

What you say: "There is only **ONE** week left until our special Birthday Bash for Jesus, so we need to get ready for the party! Since we have **ONE** week left in our Celebration Countdown, watch carefully for the number one today. Every time we roll a one with our foam dice, everyone should stand up and shout, 'ONE WEEK TO THE BIRTHDAY BASH!'"

DURING THE ACTIVITY

What you do: Roll the foam dice and lead children in doing one of the actions listed by that number on the action card. However, if a one is rolled, lead children in standing and shouting, 'ONE WEEK TO THE BIRTHDAY BASH!' instead of performing the action on the card. Repeat as long as time and interest allow.

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DISMISSAL

KEY QUESTION

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MEMORY VERSE

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QUEST DISMISSAL CARD GAMES

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

What you need: Quest playing cards

What you do: Choose one of the card games to play with your group as parents arrive to pick children up.

CATCH OLLIE

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

What you do: Deal the cards evenly among the children by placing cards in a face-down pile in front of each child. Stack any extra cards face-up in the center of the group.

DURING THE ACTIVITY

What you do: Instruct children to take turns turning over the top card from their pile and placing the card face-up in the middle of the group. The next child will do the same by placing the card from the top of their personal pile on top of the card in the center. Play continues this way until someone turns over an Ollie card on top of the center pile. When the children see Ollie, they will compete to be the first to "catch" Ollie by covering the card with their hand. The child who catches Ollie first takes all the cards from the middle and puts them at the bottom of their stack. A child wins when they have collected all of the cards! (NOTE: If time runs out or if children are disengaging with the game, the player with the most cards can be declared the winner.)

FACE-OFF

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

What you need: Quest playing cards (1 deck)

What you do: Deal the whole deck of cards evenly among all children. Each child should have a small stack of cards face-down on the floor in front of them.

DURING THE ACTIVITY

What you do: Instruct children to flip over their top card and place it on the floor close to the center of the circle. The highest card (two is lowest; ace is highest) wins that hand and takes the cards from the center. These cards can be added to their personal stack. Continue having children flip over their top card and allowing the child with the highest cards to take all the cards from the center. When a child runs out of cards, the child is out. The player to collect all the cards first is the winner!

If two people both play the card with the highest value, they will compete in a "face-off." Each child will lay down three cards, face-down, and then flip the fourth card face-up. The highest cards wins all the cards played!

DISMISSAL

MATCHING

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

What you do: Spread out the playing cards face-up and encourage children to help you find 10 matching pairs of cards. Set aside the other playing cards; they will not be used in the game.

Seat children in a circle. Shuffle the matching pairs together and lay them face-down in the center of the eGroup in a 4-by-5 grid.

DURING THE ACTIVITY

What you do: Children will take turns flipping over two cards. If the two cards match, the child can hold onto the two cards until the end of the game. If the two cards do not match, the child will return them to the same spots, face-down. The child with the most matches at the end wins!

eGL Note: If there are more than 10 children in the eGroup, split children into two smaller groups. Encourage children to help you create another set of 10 matching pairs of cards. Create another 4-by-5 card grid and allow each group to play with their own set of cards.

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