



DECEMBER THEME

UNBOXED

Find the Joy

BIBLE STORY

Luke 2:1-20

O Night Divine | Jesus is Born
Spark Story Bible, pg. 212-217
Jesus is Born

BOTTOM LINE

You can have joy because God sent
God's Son

MEMORY VERSE

"Rejoice in the Lord always, I will say
it again: Rejoice!"
Philippians 4:4 NIV

LIFE APP

Joy | Finding a way to be happy, even
when things don't go your way

BASIC TRUTH

I can trust God no matter what

FOR LEADERS ONLY

GOD VIEW: the connection between **JOY** and God's character, as shown through God's big story.

Key Question: What's the best part of Christmas this year? No matter what is happening at home, Christmas can be a joyful experience because God sent Jesus to be our Savior. Because families might have a hard time seeing why they can be joyful, we start with a question that gets them thinking about the great things that might happen during Christmas this year.

In **Luke 2:1-20**, we read that God didn't announce Jesus' birth to kings or government officials. Rather, God sent an angel choir to announce this news to a bunch of shepherds on a hillside. The shepherds ran to find Jesus, where they worshiped him. They were so full of joy that they made sure to tell everyone what they saw when they left.

Bottom Line: You can have joy because God sent God's Son. Christmas is the perfect time to talk about joy. God's people had waited so long for God to send the Savior. When Jesus was born, the shepherds knew they needed to celebrate big. We pray that the families in your ministry will do the same when they remember the real reason we celebrate Christmas.

SOCIAL: PROVIDING TIME FOR FUN INTERACTION

Welcome kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up. Get ready to experience today's story.

Before kids arrive, **PRAY** for each group member by name. Pray that your kids would not just hear the story of God sending Jesus, but that they would also understand the depth and importance of this miraculous gift. Ask God to be present in the joy that today's message brings. Pray that your kids, like the shepherds, will be inspired to worship Jesus and share the great news of Jesus' birth with others!

•• EARLY ARRIVER IDEA

Made to Move | *An activity that increases the oxygen in the brain and taps into the energy in the body*

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Lead kids in singing Christmas songs together.
- If you want to open it up to suggestions from the kids, feel free, but try to balance secular and Christ-centered songs.

•• JOYFUL GIFTS

Made to Connect | *An activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their*



understanding

What You Need: Copy paper, crayons

What You Say: “Sometimes we get gifts...maybe for special days in our lives. Can you think of some times when you’ve been given a gift? *(pause for them to brainstorm times like birthday, holidays)* So fun! Getting a gift is fun, isn’t it? In fact, sometimes gifts even bring us joy. They make us so happy we can’t help but tell about it. Can you think of the best gift you got so far this year? Let’s take a minute and draw it, then we’ll have a chance to each share about our special gift.”

What You Do:

- Hand out copy paper and set the crayons where everybody can share them.
- As kids work, encourage them to tell everyone about the gift they chose and why.
- **[Make It Personal]** *(Do this activity with the kids, and make sure to share about your item.)*

What You Say: “Those are some great gifts. I can see why they filled you with joy. **[Transition]** Today in Sunday CM worship/WOW family worship, we are going to hear/we heard about the gift that brings the most joy ever!”

[Sunday Leaders: Lead your group to Fellowship Hall for Children’s Ministry worship. Wednesday Leaders: Continue with the study.]

GROUPS: CREATING A SAFE PLACE TO CONNECT

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible story applies to real life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

●● **STORY IN A GIFT BOX** [Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

Made to Play | An activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group

What You Need: “Nativity Story Gift Box” coloring pages, crayons, Spark Story Bible

What You Do:

- Hand out a “Nativity Story Gift Box” coloring page to each member of your group.
- Set out crayons where everybody can share them, and invite kids to color.
- While kids are coloring, read “Jesus is Born” from the Spark Story Bible (p. 212-217). Prompt kids to hold up their gift box whenever their picture is mentioned in the story. *(You can set out any extra coloring pages and let kids work together to figure out where they fit into the story as well.)*

What You Say: “This is such a great story. In fact, it’s the greatest story ever told! Thanks so much for helping me tell it. **[Bottom Line]** You can have joy because God sent God’s Son, Jesus. He is the best gift ever! He’s the reason we have Christmas, because Christmas is when we celebrate Jesus being born. Christmas is a giant birthday party for Jesus! But no matter what day of the year it is, **[Bottom Line]** you can have joy because God sent God’s Son. Jesus came to earth to show us God’s great love. That fills me with so much joy! I hope it brings you joy, too.”

●● **JESUS IN THE MANGER** [Live for God | Application Activity]

Made to Create | An activity that explores spiritual ideas through the process of drawing, building, and designing

What You Need: “Jesus and Manger” cards, straws, clear tape

What You Do:



- Hand out a “Baby Jesus” card, a “Manger” card, and a straw to each kid in your group.
- Help them tape one picture to the straw. The top of the picture should be even with one end of the straw, and the picture should be facing away from the straw.
- Then, help them tape the other picture back-to-back with the first picture.
- Show kids how to hold their straw between their palms and twirl it quickly back and forth.
- Tell kids to watch the pictures as they twirl the straw, as it will look like Jesus is in the manger!

What You Say: “That is so cool! Jesus is in the manger! Today’s story is so amazing, because it tells us about Jesus being born, which is the greatest gift ever! **[Make It Personal]** *(Briefly share a story from your life about how knowing and/or following Jesus has been a great gift for you.)* I have joy because God sent God’s Son, and **[Bottom Line]** **you can have joy because God sent God’s Son**, too. And do you know what else? You can tell others about how they can have joy because God sent God’s Son. Take your craft home, and use it to tell others today’s Bible story about Jesus.”

•• **JOYFUL VERSE** [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: No supplies needed

What You Say: “We have a new memory verse this month! This one reminds us that we can find joy in God’s amazing love for us! Let’s learn it together...Rejoice in the Lord always, I will say it again: Rejoice! It’s a pretty great one, isn’t it? Let’s work on it together to plant it in our hearts. Repeat after me...”

Rejoice in the Lord always (*Rejoice in the Lord always*) I will say it again (*I will say it again*) Rejoice! (*Rejoice!*)

What You Do:

- Repeat the verse multiple times.
 - Each time, instruct the kids to do a movement that’s a little more joyful or exaggerated than the last.
 - So, the first time through, they’ll just be sitting at their table space.
 - Then, the second time, they’ll stand up but stand still.
 - Then they’ll jump a little bit, then a little higher, then really high, then high with their arms raised, and so on, until they jump as high as they can with their arms and legs spread as wide as they can when they say the verse.

What You Say: “Why should we always be joyful? Because God loves us so very much! That is so awesome! And do you know what else is awesome? **[Bottom Line]** **You can have joy because God sent God’s Son**. Christmas is all about joy. We can have joy all the time because of Jesus, the Savior of the World!”

PRAY AND SEND

Bring your time to a close with prayer and encouragement to live out in your daily lives what you’ve experienced and learned in your time together

Made to Reflect | An activity that creates space for personal understanding and application

What You Need: Kids’ crafts from the “Jesus in the Manger” activity, GodTime Cards, Parent Cue Cards (*Sunday groups only*)

What You Do:

- Hand out kids’ crafts from the “Jesus in the Manger” activity.
- Tell kids to think of someone they can tell today’s Bible story to by using their craft. Invite them to share about that person.

