

STUMIN

SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

MIDDLE SCHOOL FOCUS

SHAKE IT UP

DECEMBER 14, 2022

Week 2 of a 3-week series
about the joy of Jesus
coming to Earth

BOTTOM LINE

Shake it up by putting Jesus
at the center of Christmas.

SCRIPTURE

*After Jesus was born in
Bethlehem in Judea, during
the time of King Herod,
Magi from the east came to
Jerusalem and asked, "Where
is the one who has been
born king of the Jews? We
saw his star when it rose and
have come to worship him."*

- Matthew 2:1-2 NIV

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To point students toward
focusing on Jesus this
holiday season

>> BEFORE GROUP

THINK ABOUT THIS: The goal this week is to encourage your students to find balance. It's certainly not to give them a guilt trip about enjoying any of the traditional, exciting parts about Christmas. There's nothing wrong with Christmas movies, time off school, presents, treats, and more. We simply want students to know that there's so much more for us in Jesus. At times, the Christmas season can make that harder to see simply because there are so many things competing for our attention. Be careful not to shame students who fully embrace the fun of Christmas or speak about any parts of the season as if they're "bad" or "wrong". Rather, encourage them to look for ways to invite Jesus into their season. Help them find ways to experience Jesus in every part of this Christmas and the ones to come!

>> DURING GROUP

This guide is a suggestion, not a formula. Adjust the questions and activities as needed, and don't feel like you need to do, or ask, everything you see here.

DISCUSS THIS:

- In your opinion, who is the most joyful Christmas character from a movie or TV show? Why did you choose that character?
- When you think about Christmas, what's the first thing you think of?
- What's one thing that might distract you from focusing on Jesus at Christmas?
- Why is it so easy to be distracted from focusing on Jesus during the holiday season?
- What might happen if you focused more on Jesus during the Christmas season?
- Together, let's brainstorm a bunch of ways we can focus on Jesus during the Christmas season, both as a group and individually.

DO THIS:

Prompt your students to set a reminder on their phone for each day this holiday season that says, "Focus on Jesus." For students who don't have phones, they can simply write the message on a sticky note, on their mirror, or in some place they'll see it often.

Hand out the provided copies of this week's StuMin Family Daily Devotional. Challenge your group to "shake it up by putting Jesus at the center of Christmas" by setting aside time every day to read through the day's devotion either on their own or with their family. Make sure kids are aware that they are able to download the devotional every week from our website (popmn.org), or read them on social media by following StuMin on Facebook or Instagram (@popstumin).

STUMIN

SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

HIGH SCHOOL FOCUS

SHAKE IT UP

DECEMBER 14, 2022

Week 2 of a 3-week series
about the joy of Jesus
coming to Earth

BOTTOM LINE

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GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To point students toward
focusing on Jesus this
holiday season

>> BEFORE GROUP

THINK ABOUT THIS: This week's conversation is all about balance. If your students love the fun, festive parts of Christmas, that's great! You don't want to inadvertently lead them to believe they're bad or wrong for getting into the holiday spirit. Instead, you want to encourage them to find ways to bring their focus back to Jesus—the source of joy in this and every season. The goal isn't to abandon all things Christmas and only think about Jesus. Rather, it's to encourage students to find balance, shifting their focus to Jesus in big and small ways and reflecting on His presence throughout the season.

>> DURING GROUP

Create meaningful conversations. Adjust the questions as needed and ask thoughtful follow-up questions as the conversation unfolds. Don't feel like you need to answer every question.

DISCUSS THIS:

- What part of the Christmas season brings you the most joy?
- How much attention do you typically give Jesus during the holiday season? Do you incorporate Jesus into family traditions or other celebrations? On a scale of 1 to 10, how often do you think about Jesus during the holiday season?
- What gets in the way of you focusing on Jesus during Christmas?
- What might change about the way you experienced the holiday season if you focused more on Jesus?
- Think about the things that make up your Christmas season. What would it look like to include Jesus in some of those things this year?
- If you feel like you are already including Jesus in your holiday celebrations, what are some ways that you do that?
- What's one way you plan to focus on Jesus this holiday season?

TRY THIS:

Leaders: Share with your group how you personally choose to put Jesus at the center of Christmas. You can share a personal story from your family or time in high school, or an intention that you have to focus on Jesus this Christmas. Then, challenge your group to ask their parents or other Christian role models in their lives to share ways that they have chosen to put Jesus at the center of Christmas.

Hand out the provided copies of this week's StuMin Family Daily Devotional. Suggest that your group "shake it up by putting Jesus at the center of Christmas" by setting aside time every day to read through the day's devotion either on their own or with their family. Make sure kids are aware that they are able to download the devotional every week from our website (popmn.org), or read them on social media by following StuMin on Facebook or Instagram (@popstumin).