



DECEMBER THEME



BIBLE STORY

Luke 2:1-7

How He Loves | Jesus Is Born
Spark Story Bible, pg. 212-213
Jesus Is Born, pt. 1

BOTTOM LINE

God LOVED us so much that God gave us a Savior

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)

LIFE APP

Christmas | Celebrating Jesus, God’s greatest gift

BASIC TRUTH

I can trust God no matter what

●● THEME OVERVIEW

Key Question: What are you giving this Christmas? Christmas is all about God’s love for us. God loved us so much that God gave us God’s one and only Son. God’s gift to us should compel us to give to others. We hope that as we answer this question, we start to see the ways we can show our love for others by giving of ourselves. We can give gifts, but we can also give our time and attention to help others know how much we love them and how God loves them too!

As we kick off the week of Christmas, we head to **Luke 2:1-7** and discover more about when Jesus was born. From a human perspective, this whole situation must have seemed crazy to Mary and Joseph. Not only was Mary expecting the baby who would save the world, but now she and Joseph had to travel to Bethlehem for the census. When they arrive, there’s no room for them to stay except for the place they keep the animals. As hectic as this moment was, this is just how God wanted Jesus to enter the world.

[Bottom Line]: God loved us so much that God gave us a Savior. Looking back over the stories included in the Bible, time and again it comes back to God’s love for God’s creation. Right from the start, God wanted to have a relationship with us. Even when we messed that up with our sin, God continued to love and make a way to rescue us. Jesus is proof that God loves us unconditionally.

●● WOW @home

What You Do: Watch this week’s WOW @home in the comfort of your family’s @home prayer + worship spot. The video can be found on popmn.org/youtube or facebook.com/popchildrens. Then use this Family Guide, GodTime & ParentCue cards, and FAITH5 daily devos as personal devotionals and to keep the conversation going...

●● CHRISTMAS CHARACTER GUESS WHO [Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

Made to Connect | An activity that invites kids to share and collaborate with others while growing their understanding

What You Need: Paper, scissors, pen, tape, Bible or Spark Story Bible

What You Do:

- Before gathering your family together, cut a piece of paper into 8 cards and write the following Christmas story characters on them—one character per card: Mary, Joseph, Sheep, Cow, Camel, Donkey, Baby Jesus, Innkeeper
- Tape a card of a Christmas character or animal to each family member’s back. Don’t let them see what their card says.
- Instruct players to walk around and ask “yes” or “no” questions to other

players to guess the Christmas character or animal on their back.

- If you have fewer than 8 players, give players a new card when they guess correctly. Continue playing until all 8 characters or animals have been guessed.
- Then, read the first part of the Christmas story from Luke 2:1-7 or the first two pages of “Jesus is Born” from the Spark Story Bible (p. 212-213).

What You Say: “I just love the Christmas story. God promised to send a Savior, and God did. God had a plan to make things right. God showed us just how much God loves us by sending Jesus! Let’s try to reenact the story by choosing one of the characters from our cards to pretend to be. As I re-read the story, act out your part and remember **[Bottom Line] God loved us SO much that God gave us a Savior.**”

•• **GOD LOVED _____** [Live for God | Application Activity]

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

What You Need: Gift bag or box, and enough treats so everybody can have one

What You Do:

- Before gathering your family together, put enough treats in a gift bag or box so everybody can have one when the game is done. Try to keep the contents of the bag/box a secret.
- When ready, encourage your family to sit in a circle.
- Give the gift to the person whose birthday is closest to today.
- Pass the gift bag around the circle as you slowly say the [Bottom Line], including the name of the person who started with the gift like this: “God loved [person’s name] so much that God gave [person’s name] a Savior.”
- The person holding the gift bag/box at the end starts a new round. Everybody will say this person’s name in place of “us” for this round.
- Repeat, until everybody has had a turn to start a round. (*Note: some people may have several turns before the last person gets to start a round.*)
- After the final round, the person who ends up with the gift gets to open it and pass out the treats inside. Enjoy a snack together as you engage your family in the conversation below.

What You Say: “When we open gifts on Christmas morning, does someone look at the gift tags and pass out each person’s gift before we start opening? Do we ever do that thing where we count up how many gifts we each have to open to see who has the most? Sometimes, we forget that ALL of us, every single person, has already been given the best gift ever. And it’s not a shirt that’s itchy or a toy you will break or outgrow. God chose to send Jesus, God’s only Son, to us. We celebrate Christmas and give gifts as a reminder of the GREATEST gift of all. **[Bottom Line] God loved us so much that God gave us a Savior, and that Savior is JESUS!**”

•• **MEMORY VERSE HOPSCOTCH** [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: Bible, paper, markers

What You Do:

- Write out the words of today’s verse as indicated below—one word/phrase per piece of paper.
“Today / in the town / of David / a Savior / has been born / to you. / He is / the Messiah, / the Lord,” / Luke 2:11.
- Create a hopscotch pattern by laying out the ten verse phrases on the floor.
- Open the Bible to Luke 2:11. Ask for a volunteer to read the Memory Verse to your family.
- Talk about the phrase: He is the Messiah.
- ASK:

—Do you know what “Messiah” means? Messiah means “anointed one.” Special oil was poured over those who God chose for a special job (*usually kings or prophets who spoke for God*). Jesus came as the King of ALL Kings—the promised Savior who God sent to save everyone. This is the most important job God ever gave to anybody!

- Encourage family members to hop, one at a time, along the hopscotch path as everyone repeats the verse.
- After two or three rounds, flip one page over to hide the words.
- As the next person takes their turn, repeat the verse again, including the hidden words. From this turn on, each person who hops through the path should flip another page over.
- Continue in the same way until all pages are flipped and your family can say the verse from memory.

What You Say: “Whew! Raise your hand if you’re tired. That was a lot of hopping! Jesus came as our Savior, our Messiah or anointed one, to do something only he could do! Why did God send Jesus? Because God LOVES us. Christmas is about celebrating Jesus, the greatest gift EVER. This year, as we gather around the tree to open gifts, remember the BEST gift has already been given to us! **[Bottom Line] God loved us so much that God gave us a Savior.**”

●● **PRAY** [Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

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

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Gather your family in a circle and teach them the five-finger prayer using the dialogue below.
- You will use your fingers to pray for each group of people as you repeat the [Bottom Line].

What You Say: “Have you ever heard of the five-finger prayer? Each finger represents a different group of people to pray for. I want you to point to each finger as I explain how to pray...

“Your **thumb** is for the people closest to you, like your family and friends.

“Your **index or pointer finger** is for people who teach or help you, like your teachers, coaches, and pastors.

“Your **middle finger** is the tallest. It’s for the people who lead us, like government, work, or school leaders.

“Your **ring** finger is the weakest finger. It’s for those who are sick or most in need.

“And finally, your **pinky**, is for you. So, let’s pray together and point to our fingers as we go. I will say a sentence prayer for each group, then I want you to say, **[Bottom Line] ‘God loved us so much that God gave us a Savior.’**”

YOU: (*hold up your thumb*) “For our parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, caregivers, brothers, and sisters, help them know this Christmas that...”

ALL: **[Bottom Line] “God loved us so much that God gave us a Savior.”**

YOU: (*add your index finger*) “For our teachers, coaches, pastors, doctors, therapists, nurses, and first responders, help them know this Christmas that...”

ALL: **[Bottom Line] “God loved us so much that God gave us a Savior.”**

YOU: (*add your middle finger*) “For our leaders in government, business, and school, help them know this Christmas that...”

ALL: **[Bottom Line] “God loved us so much that God gave us a Savior.”**

YOU: (*add your ring finger*) “For those who are sick, hurting, or in need, help them know this Christmas that...”

ALL: **[Bottom Line] “God loved us so much that God gave us a Savior.”**

YOU: (*add your little finger*) “For each of us, we ask that You help us remember this Christmas that...”

ALL: **[Bottom Line] “God loved us so much that God gave us a Savior.”**

YOU: “God, thank you for loving us SO much that you sent Jesus for everyone. We love you. Amen.”

•• ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Looking for a devo for your kids? Looking for a personal devotional? Want to keep the conversation going? Check out the following resources at popmn.org/cm. Use them this week to continue the conversation around our **[Bottom Line]: God loved us so much that God gave us a Savior.**

GodTime Card | A 4-day devotional for elementary-aged kids based on the weekly theme kicked off on WOW @home

ParentCue | A tool for parents based on the weekly theme. Also available as an app, it sends alerts and encouragement specific to the age of your children (parentcue.org)

FAITH5 | A 6-day family devotional based on Faith Inkubators' FAITH5

•• WHAT'S NEXT

Set a reminder to join us for WOW @home on Christmas Eve, Thursday 12/24, at 6:00 pm live at [facebook.com/popchildrens](https://www.facebook.com/popchildrens) or anytime after that at popmn.org/youtube for a time of worship centered around the **[Bottom Line]: God's peace is for everyone.**