



DECEMBER THEME

UNBOXED

Find the Joy

BIBLE STORY

Matthew 2:1-12

Led by the Light | The Wise Men Visit Jesus

Spark Story Bible, pg. 218-223
Wise Men

BOTTOM LINE

You can have joy when you search for God

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 need to make the wise choice and with God's help...I can!

FOR LEADERS ONLY

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

Key Question: How can you find joy all year long? Joy isn't something we can only find during the Christmas season. God offers joy to us each and every day. Sometimes we just aren't sure where to start. We pray that families discover how they can choose joy as they grow in their relationship with Jesus.

In **Matthew 2:1-12**, we see how the announcement of Jesus' birth was far-reaching. Wise men from the East saw a star that set them on an adventure to find a promised King of Israel. When they finally found Jesus, they worshiped him as king. God protected Jesus and the Wise Men from Herod's plot to kill Jesus.

Bottom Line: You can find joy when you search for God. Jesus is the promised One sent from God to show us how to live and love. That story isn't something we can keep to ourselves. It's a story we need to share with everyone.

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. Ask God to help kids understand that they can keep the joy they feel at Christmas time all year long! Pray that your kids will feel God's presence each and every time they seek God, and that this would bring them joy throughout their lives.

•• EARLY ARRIVER

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

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- As kids arrive, ask them: "Have you ever lost something that you needed to find? Tell us about it. What was lost? Did you find it? How did it feel to find/not find it?"
- After discussing the opening question, begin playing a game of "I Spy."
—Say, "I spy something that is _____." Fill in the blank with the item's color, size, first letter, or another descriptor.
—Allow kids to take turns asking yes-or-no questions and/or guessing what the item is until someone guesses correctly.
—The winner gets to be the next spy.
—Continue playing as long as you have time.



•• **I'M GOING ON A TRIP..**

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

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Sit together in a circle.
- Instruct kids to create a packing list for a trip. Start by asking them to think about the things they normally take when they go somewhere overnight.
 - For the first round, everybody should come up with and share an item that begins with the first letter of their first name.
 - For the next round, everybody should come up with and share an item that begins with the first letter of their last name.
 - If you have time for a third round, have kids come up with items in alphabetical order. The first person says an “a” word, the second person says a “b” word, etc. You can help each other with the difficult letters, or just skip them altogether.

What You Say: “Packing for a trip is fun as you look forward to going to a new place or visiting friends and family. **[Transition] Today in Sunday CM worship/WOW family worship, we are going to hear/we heard about three people going on a long journey who packed some pretty unique things to take along with them.”**

[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.

•• **THE HUNT IS ON** [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: “Search-and-Find Picture” activity page, Bible

What You Do:

- Hand the “Search-and-Find Picture” to one of your group members and challenge them to find the first item listed.
- When he finds the item, he should attempt to answer the first review question (*below*).
- Then, he should pass the “Search-and-Find Picture” to the person sitting next to him. That person should try to find the second item and answer the second review question.
- Continue until all items have been found and all questions have been answered.
- Use can look up and re-read today’s Bible story (*Matthew 2:1-12*) if you need some help remembering the details.

Review questions:

- Where was Jesus born? (*Bethlehem*)
- How did God tell the wise men that Jesus had been born? (*A star*)
- Why did the wise men want to go see Jesus? (*Because they wanted to worship him*)
- What was the name of the king in Jerusalem? (*Herod*)
- How did King Herod feel when he found out the wise men were searching for Jesus? (*Angry*)
- Was he happy that Jesus was born? (*No*)
- Why wasn’t King Herod happy? (*Because he was king and didn’t want his power to be threatened*)



- How did the wise men find baby Jesus? (*They followed the star that God gave them*)
- What did the wise men bring to Jesus? (*Gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh*)
- What did God tell the wise men in a dream after they saw Jesus? (*To not go and tell Herod*)
- What is today's bottom line? (*You can find joy when you search for God*)
- What are some ways we can search for God today? (*Answers vary, but could include: reading the Bible, going to church, attending Children's Ministry, talking with friends and family about times and places that they have encountered God, etc.*)

What You Say: "Although the items around our Christmas tree may bring a smile to our faces, they don't come close to the real joy we can find in Jesus! That's why the wise men searched so long and hard for him. There will be times throughout our weeks where our joy may be put to the test. Maybe your brother or sister won't let you have a turn with the TV or your mom makes your least favorite food for dinner. Whenever you are thinking that you need a little joyful nudge, tell yourself that **[Bottom Line] you can find joy when you search for God.**"

●● **SEARCHING FOR GOD** [Live for God | Application Activity]

Made to Imagine | An activity that promotes empathy and facilitates biblical application through role-play and reenactment

What You Need: "Searching for God" journals, markers, pens

What You Do:

- Provide each kid with a journal. Set out markers where everyone can share them.
- Encourage kids to begin by only decorating the front and back covers of their journals.
- Once they have finished, instruct kids to open their journals to the first page.
- Explain that they can use this journal throughout their week to search for God every day.
- Prompt them with examples such as:
 - "Maybe you looked for God in your day and saw a beautiful sunset that made you think of God and God's amazing creation!"
 - "Maybe your brother was really getting on your nerves and God helped you calm down and be kind to him anyway."
- Hand out pens and give kids a few moments to fill out Day One of their journal by thinking through how they saw God in their day today.
- Prompt them with more examples such as:
 - "Maybe you hung out with your friends at church today and they reminded you of God's love!"
 - "Maybe you had a little bit of a bad attitude this morning but your mom still forgave you and it reminded you of how God forgives us."
- Walk around and help kids as needed.

What You Say: "The truth is, we can see God all day long if we just look and pay attention. God is everywhere! From the beautiful nature outside to the friends and family who show us love, God shows up through many people, places, and things. This week, I want you to wake up each morning and ask God to help you see God throughout your day. Whenever you do, I want you to flip open your journal and write down your thoughts and feelings. I am confident that this will be one of your best weeks yet because **[Bottom Line] you can find joy when you search for God.**" **[Make It Personal]** (*Share a personal example from a time when you really needed joy and you found God through a friend, or God provided something you needed. Or perhaps you simply saw God's creativity through nature and it gave you joy.*)

●● **A JOYFUL NOISE!** [Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

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

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- As a group brainstorm some "joyful" sounds (*for example: Yippee! Yahoo! Wool!, etc.*)

