



DECEMBER THEME

**PUT A BOW
ON IT**

BIBLE STORY

Luke 2:1-7

(Luke 1; Matthew 1:20-21)

#JOY (Jesus is Born)

Spark Story Bible: Jesus is Born (p. 212)

BOTTOM LINE

I can choose 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 content
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

This WEEK: In **Luke 2:1-7**, we read Luke's account of Jesus' birth. Jesus was God's Son, yet God chose to have him born in a place where they kept the animals. It was dirty and smelly, but that didn't matter. Mary and Joseph were thrilled because they had a Son, Jesus. And Jesus was the fulfillment of God's promise to rescue the world.

Bottom Line: I can choose joy because God sent God's Son. Christmas lights and presents are fun and can bring joy during the Christmas season. But none of that compares to the joy we experience when we believe that Jesus is God's Son.

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 regular attendee by name. Pray for those who might visit your group for the first time. Pray that your kids would not just hear the story of God sending Jesus, but that they would understand the depth and importance of God's Son being given to us. Ask God that each kid would lean into the childlike joy God has placed in each of them and that they would be full of life as everyone encounters them this week because of the great news they heard today!

•• EARLY ARRIVER IDEA

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Ask your group the following questions:
 - What is the best gift you have ever received?
 - How did that gift help you?

•• BEST GIFT EVER

What You Need: "Random Gift" activity pages

What You Do:

- Tell kids that you have a funny problem that you need help with. You can make up a problem based on what your kids think is funny, or use one of the ones below:
 - My garden is full of weeds and bunnies are eating my flowers! What should I do?
 - I lost my keys and I need to get to church...now!
 - My cat ate the lunch I had packed for school!
- Tell kids that you think one of these presents might be able to help solve your problem.
- Then give each kid a "Random Gift" activity page, but before you do, make sure kids



know not to open them!

- Instruct kids to pass the presents to the right.
- After about 20 seconds, call, "Stop!" and ask kids to stop passing the gifts. Randomly choose a kid to open his present.
- Ask the group if this present will solve your "problem."
- The kid who was chosen sits out for subsequent rounds. Continue playing until all gifts have been opened.

What You Say: "It doesn't seem like any of these gifts are helping with our problem! **[Transition]** These gifts may not be super awesome, but today in Large Group Worship/WOW Family Worship we will learn/we learned about the best gift ever.

[Sunday Leaders: Lead your group to the Family Room for Large Group 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.

•• **BEST GIFT EVER...CONTINUED!** *(application activity/review the Bible story)*

What You Need: Spark Story Bible, "Best Gift Ever" activity cards

What You Do:

- Read "Jesus Is Born" from the Spark Story Bible (p. 212-217).
- When you finish reading the story, talk about how the gifts they opened earlier weren't really that great. They were kind of random and didn't really do anything.
- Then hand each kid a "Best Gift Ever" figure. Let kids show each other their different manger scene pieces.
- Talk to your group about how together, these pieces form the scene where Jesus was born.
- Guide them to work together to create a manger scene using their gifts.
- Ask kids why the second set of gifts is so much better than the first set.

What You Say: "FINALLY! A gift that actually does us some good. I think this gift deserves a celebration. On the count of three, let's jump up in the air and yell, 'Jesus brings me joy!' One, two, three! ('Jesus brings me joy!') Wow! You guys can jump really high. I'm so thankful that God sent God's Son so we can all have joy. **[Make It Personal]** *(Tell the kids about a time when Jesus brought you lots of joy.)* **[Bottom Line]** I can choose joy because God sent God's Son."

•• **JOY DELIVERY SERVICE** *(application activity)*

What You Need: Envelopes, "I Can Have Joy" activity page, crayons, paper bag

What You Do:

- Give each kid one envelope and one "I Can Have Joy" activity page.
- Help them fold their paper and put it in their envelope. Encourage them to write "JOY" on the front of their envelope. Allow them to decorate their envelope with crayons.
- After kids are finished, instruct them to form a line.
- Choose one helper to hold the mailbag, and place him about 15 feet away from the group.
- When you say, "Go!" kids will run, one at a time, to the mailbag and put their envelopes in the bag.
- Kids should go to the back of the line and sit down once they've put their mail in the bag.
- If you have time, redistribute the envelopes and play again. See if the group can go faster.



- When you are done, give the kids their envelope back and encourage them to take it home to share with their friends and family.

What You Say: “Have you ever gotten mail before? Me too! I’ve gotten some really cool things in the mail, but the best thing that was ever sent to me was definitely Jesus. No matter what life sends my way, **[Bottom Line] I can choose joy because God sent God’s Son.**”

•• **YOU’VE GOT MAIL** (*memory verse activity*)

What You Need: Envelope with memory verse inside of it, crayons

What You Do:

- Open the envelope with your group.
- Read the memory verse aloud and see if anyone can say it from memory.
- Then place the paper in the middle of the group and ask kids to gather around it.
- Cross out various words and challenge the kids to say the verse without leaving those words out.
- Start with crossing out one key word, and move up in difficulty by crossing out four or five words.

What You Say: “We have had a day FULL of opening presents and packages. It kind of reminded me of Christmas morning! What a great reminder for us as we open gifts with our families that we’ve already been given the best gift ever. We may get excited about a cool toy or a new jacket, but **[Bottom Line] I can choose joy because God sent God’s Son.**”

PRAY AND SEND

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Give the kids a couple minutes to share about the best gift they’ve ever gotten. Let each kid describe his most favorite present or something he hopes to receive this year.
- Then ask if anyone can guess what the actual best gift ever is. (*Jesus!*)
- Pray a prayer of thanks to God for sending God’s Son—the best gift ever!

What You Say: “Dear God, you are so good to us! Thank you for taking care of us, providing for us, and for giving us the thing you knew we needed most—your Son. We want to take this time to just sing praises of thankfulness for the best gift ever. Help me to always be thankful and remind me that **[Bottom Line] I can choose joy because God sent God’s Son.**”

[Apply] Give each parent a Faith Five Family Tools as they come to pick up their child and remind them to use it as a family devotional tool this week.

Let them know we talked about how we can be joyful because God already sent us the best gift ever! Ask kids to show parents their envelopes with baby Jesus inside.