



MARY AND JOSEPH

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 1:18–25; Luke 1:26–38

FOCUS VERSES: Isaiah 7:14, John 1:14; John 4:25–26;
1 John 4:9

Summary: An angel appeared to Mary, a young woman engaged to Joseph. He told her she would conceive a Son, Jesus. Jesus would be the Son of God and reign forever. When Joseph learned of Mary's pregnancy, he considered breaking off the engagement, but an angel appeared to him in a dream, confirming the Child was from God and that Jesus would save the people from their sins. Jesus was the promised Messiah!



MONTHLY *Memory Verse*

For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

(ISAIAH 9:6)



Jesus is the Messiah.

HE

WHAT DOES MESSIAH MEAN?

The Messiah is God's promised Rescuer who He promised to send to rescue people from sin. Jesus is that promised Messiah!

WE

HOW DOES THE PROMISE OF JESUS SHOW GOD'S LOVE FOR US?

God promised Jesus would be "Immanuel," which means "God with us." He also promised Jesus was coming to save us from our sin.

ME

HOW IS GOD INVITING ME TO RESPOND?

Kids will be given the opportunity to reflect on the truth they learned about God and respond accordingly.

Pray for each regular attendee by name. Pray for those who might visit your group for the first time. Pray specifically for kids who are typically overlooked by others. Pray that they would be made to feel special and valued. Also pray for kids who are typically doing the "overlooking." Ask God to show them other kids who need to feel valued. Pray that these kids would work to make others feel included and special.

Before Kids Arrive

- Go through your supply tub and make sure you have all the supplies you need for the morning. (we do sometimes make mistakes 😊)

Arrival

Kids will be with their parents for worship and be dismissed to meet you in the Bridge Kids Lobby. During the kids blessing, come to the Bridge Kids Lobby and get your Attendance Book.

Welcome kids and verify you have all kids listed in the book (and that all kids ARE listed in the book. Any kids not listed will need to be checked in by the Welcome Desk).

Big Group

When prompted, take your group to the Big Group Room. If any brought their Bibles, have them place their names on the slips of paper and place in the proper container.

Please sit with your few and help them be good listeners.

After Big Group

Welcome the kids to your group.

Ask: What was the best part of your week? What was the worst part of your week?

Ask: How did God use those experiences to grow you as a disciple of Jesus?

Ask: How can I pray for you (write them on the journal page).

Start With Prayer Requests – this builds relationship.

You will pray at the end of the service



Leader TRAINING

LEADER TRAINING TOPIC: PACE YOURSELF

Sometimes we are our own greatest challenge in managing our time within our small groups.

- **Have a general plan.** As you read your lesson and prepare for the week, think about how long you want to spend in each section. Perhaps even jot down what time you want to transition to the next activity and stick to it!
- **Make every minute count.** Remember that every minute with your kids is valuable. Prioritize helping kids retain the Brite Idea and reinforcing the deep truths they are learning about God. Discipleship moments are more important than making sure the craft is perfect.
- **Overplan.** It is better to have too much to do and not get it all done than to complete every activity and have thirty minutes left.
- **Trust the Holy Spirit.** Sometimes a discussion happens that derails everything. If it helps kids grow closer to Jesus, connect in a more authentic way or go deeper in discipleship, trust the Holy Spirit and let your plans go.

NAVIGATING A BROKEN WORLD: NEGATIVE NEWS MEDIA

Our culture thrives on 24/7 news coverage. In a recent study, two-thirds of kids said that “consuming news makes them feel smart and knowledgeable.”* Even if the kids in your group aren’t watching the news, the adults in their world likely are. Unfortunately, today’s culture emphasizes negative news reports. All of this negativity can paint a very hopeless picture for kids. There may be kids in your group who feel hopeless about our world or feel there is no good news. Kids will learn Mary and Joseph received news that would have definitely been scary. However, that scary news was bringing hope into our dark world. When kids talk about scary events in the world, encourage them to focus on the good news that Jesus brings us and that one day He will fix our broken world.

ELEMENTARY GLOSSARY

Messiah: the promised Savior

Rescuer: the Messiah, or special One, God had promised would come to save His people from sin

Sin: anything we think, say or do that disobeys God

*For more resources on this topic, check out: <https://pin.it/4OuDfVn8u>

Small Group ROADMAP

1

BELONG (10 MINUTES)

Goal: For kids to experience God's love through a welcoming community

NAME GAME

SUPPLIES: None

ANGEL DICE GAME

SUPPLIES: Printable page, coloring supplies, die

OR

2

BELIEVE (10 MINUTES)

Goal: For kids to discover who God is by engaging with the Bible

ECHO VERSE

SUPPLIES: Bibles, teaching slide

MESSIAH ORNAMENT

SUPPLIES: Bibles, printable page, scissors, hole punch, pipe cleaner (1 per 2 kids), coloring supplies

OR

3



DISCIPLESHIP DISCUSSION (10 MINUTES)

Goal: To engage kids in faith conversations that help them navigate a broken world with biblical wisdom

4

BECOME (10 MINUTES)

Goal: For kids to learn to follow Jesus by applying faith to their lives

BEANBAG TOSS GAME

SUPPLIES: Bible, Take-Home page, coloring supplies, printable pages, beanbags (1 per kid)

WITH ME PRAYERS

SUPPLIES: Bible, Take-Home page, coloring supplies

OR

5



SMALL GROUP WRAP-UP (5 MINUTES)

SUPPLIES: Take-Home page, coloring supplies



ECHO VERSE

SUPPLIES:

Bibles, teaching slide

PREP:

Print or show the Memory Verse teaching slide (Image 03).

ADAPTATION FOR DIFFERENT LEARNERS:

For kids who are hard of hearing, a visual cue for the leader starting and stopping could be helpful (e.g., open hand when starting and closed hand when stopping).

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. *Lead kids to find Isaiah 9:6 in their Bibles. Read the verse aloud together.*
2. **Discuss:** What does "to us a Son is given" mean?
3. **Discuss:** Why did God send Jesus to Earth?
4. **Discuss:** What message did the angel give to Mary and Joseph? Why was this such important news? When had this message of hope been said before?
5. **Say:** God's promises echoed all throughout the Old Testament! It was repeated over and over again that the Messiah, the promised Savior, was coming!
6. **Say:** Let's echo our verse! I will say a part of the verse and you will be my echo; you will need to say it exactly how I say it.
7. *Here are a few ways to say the verse: loud, whisper, sad, happy, robot, slow, with an accent, etc.*
8. *Begin reciting each part of the verse and have kids echo it back to you.*
9. *As the kids get more comfortable with the verse, say the whole verse.*
10. *After a few times, allow a few kids to be the leader.*

ACTIVITY WRAP-UP:

God sent Jesus as the Messiah, the promised Savior. He was born, lived a perfect life and then died on the cross for our sins. At Christmas we celebrate God sending Jesus to Earth as a baby! God is a promise keeper!



Discipleship DISCUSSION

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR FOLLOWERS OF JESUS?

Discuss: How does this story show God is a promise keeper?

Say: Since the garden of Eden, God promised His people He would send a Rescuer—the Messiah. He promised this Messiah would come through Abraham’s and King David’s families. In today’s story, He made the same promise to Mary and Joseph. And Jesus came and fulfilled that promise!

BUT WHAT ABOUT... NEGATING NEWS MEDIA?

Discuss: Have you ever heard someone say, “Everything just seems hopeless!?” What caused them to say that?

Discuss: Does the news or social media usually talk about hopeful things or negative things? What are some examples?

Say: All of the negative news we see on TV or on social media can make us feel like life really is hopeless. The good news is that we aren’t trusting in the world for our hope. The hope God gives us through Jesus is greater than anything this world could give us. Yes, the news is full of bad things happening in the world, but God gives us hope! We know that He is in control. We know that He has given us a way to live forever with Him, and that one day, all of the sickness, violence and terrible things in the news will be gone. He will make all things new!



WITH ME PRAYERS

SUPPLIES:

Bible, Take-Home page, coloring supplies

PREP:

Print the Take-Home page (1 per kid).

ADAPTATION FOR DIFFERENT LEARNERS:

For kids with hearing needs, place them close to the leader.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. **Discuss:** What does it mean that Jesus is the Messiah?
2. **Discuss:** How does the promise of Jesus show God's love for us?
3. **Discuss:** Why did the angel tell Mary and Joseph to name the baby Jesus?
4. **Say:** God loves us so much, He sent Jesus to save us from our sin.
5. **Say:** There is another name for Jesus that the Bible teaches us—Immanuel. It means "God with us." Through Jesus, God would come as a human and be with His people.
6. **Discuss:** When do you need to remember that God is with you?
7. **Say:** Today we will learn a simple prayer that we will pray as a group. For this prayer, you repeat the sentence, "God, when I _____, You are with me." Each time you say the sentence, you put something new in the blank. For example, "God when I get up in the morning, You are with me. God, when I brush my teeth, You are with me. God, when I am afraid, You are with me."
8. **Say:** I will get the prayer started. After I pray a sentence aloud, someone else will go next. You can pray aloud when you have something you want to pray and you can pray multiple times.
9. *Begin the prayer time. When the group is out of ideas, finish the prayer.*
10. **Pray:** Thank You for choosing to be with us always. Amen.

ACTIVITY WRAP-UP:

Today we learned Jesus is the Messiah. As we learn truths about God, we can respond to Him. We can tell Him our feelings, we can pray, or we can decide to do something or change something.

Lead kids to the "Me Question" box on their Take-Home pages and discuss possible responses. Have kids choose a prompt and write/draw their response.



Wrap-Up

CHOOSE YOUR Challenge

Say: We want to respond to God and remember what He has taught us today. We also want to use what He's taught us during the coming week. As we become more like Jesus, our lives change!

Read the challenges from the Take-Home page aloud. Ask kids to mark which one they want to choose for this week.

SUPPLIES:

Take-Home page, coloring supplies

PREP:

Print the Take-Home page (1 per kid).



PRAYER

God, thank You for the promise of Jesus as our Messiah and Rescuer. Thank You for always being with us! Amen.



SAY GOODBYE!

Tell kids goodbye and thank them for being a part of your group.

As kids wait to be picked up, encourage them to complete the activities on the back of the Take-Home page. As kids work, ask relationship-building questions, such as, "What are you looking forward to this week?" or "What do you do for fun?"

As parents arrive at pickup, look for opportunities to connect with them, pointing out the Take-Home page their kid is bringing home.

Extra Time?

- Work on Books of the Bible
- Work on Memory Verse
 - ERASE A WORD: Write on a white board, erasing one word at a time after the class repeats the verse out loud to you.
 - BEAN BAG: Have children toss a bean bag to each other and when they catch the bean bag they say the next word in the verse
 - POPCORN: Have children sit in a circle and jump up in turn and say the next word of the verse, sitting down quickly after saying their word
 - HAND MOTIONS: Either you or the kids make up hand motions to key words or phrases of the verse. Practice and then have a competition between boys and girls.

Greet parents at the door. Make sure you match their security tag with Attendance Book. Have them initial Attendance Book (their security tag and child's nametag can be given to Welcome Desk for nametag ball.)

Hand each parent:

- Any craft/activity page

BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

After 10:00 Services:

- Erase whiteboard.
- Place Prayer Journal and Curriculum book in supply tub.
- Return Prayer Sheet, KidMin Team Member Report (if needed) and Attendance Book to Welcome Desk

After 11:45 Services:

- Erase whiteboard.
- Make sure chairs are stacked (kids can do this)
- Turn off TV by:
 - Close PowerPoint
 - Power off computer
 - Turn off TV
- Put everything away – all tables should be completely empty
- Place Prayer Journal and Curriculum book in supply tub.
- Return Prayer Sheet, KidMin Team Member Report (if needed) and Attendance Book to Welcome Desk
- Take supply tub to Resource Room



JESUS IS BORN

BIBLE PASSAGE: Luke 2:1–21

FOCUS VERSES: John 3:16, Mark 1:15; Mark 16:15, Philippians 2:6–8

Summary: The promised Savior is here! Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem, and Mary gave birth to a baby boy. A large group of angels appeared to shepherds and announced that Jesus had been born. They said that this was good news of great joy. Jesus was the Savior. After the angels went away, the shepherds rushed to see the baby. They praised God for all He had done and shared what they had seen and heard. Mary treasured all of these things in her heart.



MONTHLY *Memory Verse*

For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

(ISAIAH 9:6)



The promised Savior was born.

HE

WHY DID JESUS COME AS A BABY?

Jesus is fully God and fully man, making it possible for Him to take our place and die for our sin.

WE

WHY IS THE BIRTH OF JESUS GOOD NEWS?

We can be forgiven and live forever with Jesus! We can share this good news with everyone.

ME

HOW IS GOD INVITING ME TO RESPOND?

Kids will be given the opportunity to reflect on the truth they learned about God and respond accordingly.

Pray for each regular attendee by name. Pray for those who might visit your group for the first time. Pray specifically for kids who are typically overlooked by others. Pray that they would be made to feel special and valued. Also pray for kids who are typically doing the "overlooking." Ask God to show them other kids who need to feel valued. Pray that these kids would work to make others feel included and special.

Before Kids Arrive

- Go through your supply tub and make sure you have all the supplies you need for the morning. (we do sometimes make mistakes 😊)

Arrival

Kids will be with their parents for worship and be dismissed to meet you in the Bridge Kids Lobby. During the kids blessing, come to the Bridge Kids Lobby and get your Attendance Book.

Welcome kids and verify you have all kids listed in the book (and that all kids ARE listed in the book. Any kids not listed will need to be checked in by the Welcome Desk).

Big Group

When prompted, take your group to the Big Group Room. If any brought their Bibles, have them place their names on the slips of paper and place in the proper container.

Please sit with your few and help them be good listeners.

After Big Group

Welcome the kids to your group.

Ask: What was the best part of your week? What was the worst part of your week?

Ask: How did God use those experiences to grow you as a disciple of Jesus?

Ask: How can I pray for you (write them on the journal page).

Start With Prayer Requests – this builds relationship.

You will pray at the end of the service



Leader TRAINING

LEADER TRAINING TOPIC: AVOID TIME WASTERS

→ The best way we can manage our time is to be proactive in eliminating things that waste our time.

- **Have your supplies ready.** Before the lesson begins, check that you have everything you need and you can easily access it. Don't lose valuable discipleship time looking for pencils!
- **Avoid rabbit trails.** Some topics may turn into great discipleship moments, but many times when kids get engrossed in conversation that is totally unrelated to the lesson, it is a major distraction. Refocus on what is most important.
- **Manage prayer requests.** Prayer is never a waste of time, but sometimes sharing requests can lead to many distractions. Consider a group prayer journal, sharing in pairs or limiting everyone to one request.

NAVIGATING A BROKEN WORLD: WHAT IS CHRISTMAS ABOUT?

In the classic movie, *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, Charlie Brown becomes very discouraged. His friends are focused on gifts, lights and the Christmas play, and it all feels very commercial to Charlie Brown. He exclaims, "Isn't there anyone who knows what Christmas is all about?" His best friend Linus steps in, quoting Luke 2, sharing about the birth of Jesus. Our culture loves the superficial parts of Christmas but doesn't celebrate the true reason for the holiday. Kids in your group probably know that Christmas is about Jesus, but they are likely focused on many other things. Take the opportunity in your group to keep the focus on Jesus. If conversations slide toward presents, gently guide them back to the main topic. Honor families' traditions, such as Santa (this is not the time or place to have that conversation!) but steer kids back to focusing on Jesus. During this lesson, you can help kids learn that the very best thing to happen to us is the whole reason we celebrate Christmas.

ELEMENTARY GLOSSARY

Savior: the only One who can save us from our sins

Hypostatic Union: Jesus is both fully divine and fully human

Small Group ROADMAP

1

BELONG (10 MINUTES)

Goal: For kids to experience God's love through a welcoming community

CHRISTMAS Pictionary

SUPPLIES: Whiteboard, dry-erase markers, whiteboard eraser

OR

NO ROOM IN THE INN!

SUPPLIES: Paper (1 per kid minus 1), painter's tape, upbeat worship Christmas music, music player

2

BELIEVE (10 MINUTES)

Goal: For kids to discover who God is by engaging with the Bible

VERSE HOP

SUPPLIES: Bibles, teaching slide

OR

NATIVITY SCENE

SUPPLIES: Bible, printable pages, kid scissors (1 per kid), coloring supplies

3



DISCIPLESHIP DISCUSSION (10 MINUTES)

Goal: To engage kids in faith conversations that help them navigate a broken world with biblical wisdom

4

BECOME (10 MINUTES)

Goal: For kids to learn to follow Jesus by applying faith to their lives

NATIVITY BINGO

SUPPLIES: Bible, Take-Home page, coloring supplies, printable pages, scissors, paper bag

OR

CANDY PRAYERS

SUPPLIES: Bible, Take-Home page, coloring supplies, printable page, fun size M&M'S™ packets (1 per kid)

5



SMALL GROUP WRAP-UP (5 MINUTES)

SUPPLIES: Take-Home page, coloring supplies



VERSE HOP

SUPPLIES:

Bibles, teaching slide

PREP:

Print or show the Memory Verse teaching slide (Image 03).

ADAPTATION FOR DIFFERENT LEARNERS:

Kids who can't hop can serve as the pace-keeper, signaling when it's time for the group to say the next word and hop.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. *Lead kids to find Isaiah 9:6 in their Bibles. Read the verse aloud together.*
2. **Discuss:** What does this verse promise?
3. **Discuss:** Why did God promise to send a Savior?
4. **Discuss:** What message did the angels give the shepherds? Where did they go?
5. **Discuss:** Why was Jesus born as a baby?
6. **Say:** Jesus was born as a baby and lived a perfect life because He is both fully God and fully man. This made it possible for Jesus to take our place and die for our sin.
7. **Say:** Let's keep practicing our verse by pretending like we are the shepherds hurrying to go see baby Jesus!
8. *Have kids line up against a wall. Say the first part of the verse together: "For to us a Child is born." Then let them hop forward once each time they say a word. For extra fun, see who can hop the farthest on each word!*
9. *Repeat hopping to the verse as time allows and consider having kids move like different nativity characters across your space.*

ACTIVITY WRAP-UP:

We celebrate Jesus' birth at Christmas because He is God's promised Savior! Jesus is fully God and fully man, making it possible for Him to take our place and die for our sin. That is what makes Christmas so special!



Discipleship DISCUSSION

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR FOLLOWERS OF JESUS?

Discuss: How does this story show God is a promise keeper?

Say: Jesus, the Messiah God had promised His people, was born! The angels proclaimed to the shepherds the Savior had been born. God kept His promise in an unexpected and surprising way.

BUT WHAT ABOUT ... WHAT IS CHRISTMAS ABOUT?

Discuss: What are some of your favorite Christmas traditions?

Discuss: Why do you think most people celebrate Christmas?

Discuss: What is Christmas really about?

Say: People all over the world celebrate Christmas. While they may know that the holiday is about Jesus' birth, many people don't focus on that. Decorations, presents, parties and so many other things become the focus. People may talk about "peace" and "joy" during this season, but not everyone realizes that peace and joy come from Jesus, not from gifts. Some people believe Christmas is all about family. Family is very important, and spending time with them at Christmas is a good thing. Too often we focus on all of the good things about Christmas without truly focusing on WHO Christmas is all about. Isaiah 9:6 reminds us: *For unto us a Child is born.* What are some ways you could focus on Jesus this Christmas season?



CANDY PRAYERS

SUPPLIES:

Bible, Take-Home page, coloring supplies, printable page, fun size M&M'S™ packets (1 per kid)

PREP:

Print the Take-Home page (1 per kid). Print the printable page.

LEADER TIP:

Alert parents to any allergies and provide alternatives as needed. For a food-free option: give everyone the corresponding colors of pom-poms in a paper bag.

ADAPTATION FOR DIFFERENT LEARNERS:

For kids struggling with anxiety to pray in front of others, use echo prayers: the leader prays a phrase that is repeated.

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. **Discuss:** What did the angels tell the shepherds about baby Jesus?
2. **Discuss:** Why is the birth of Jesus good news?
3. **Say:** God sent Jesus as the promised Savior. Jesus came to rescue us from our sins so we can have a relationship with God. That is good news!
4. **Discuss:** How can we respond to this news?
5. **Read:** Mark 1:15 and Mark 16:15.
6. **Say:** We can believe in Jesus and share that good news with others! Let's do a prayer activity to respond to the good news of Jesus' birth! I will give you each a packet of candy and we will use them to pray.
7. *Pass out the candy. Encourage kids that they will be allowed to eat their candy at the end of the activity but need to have self-control during the prayer.*
8. *Choose one kid to pick one M&M from their packet and notice the color.*
9. *Say a prayer based on the prompt that corresponds to the color of candy.*
10. *Choose another kid to pick an M&M from their packet. If it is a color that has already been prayed for, choose another kid to pick a new color of candy.*
11. *Continue until you have prayed all the prompts.*
12. *Give kids time to eat their candy.*

ACTIVITY WRAP-UP:

Today we learned the promised Savior was born. As we learn truths about God, we can respond to Him. We can tell Him our feelings, we can pray, or we can decide to do something or change something.

Lead kids to the "Me Question" box on their Take-Home pages and discuss possible responses. Have kids choose a prompt and write/draw their response.



Wrap-Up

CHOOSE YOUR *Challenge*

Say: We want to respond to God and remember what He has taught us today. We also want to use what He's taught us during the coming week. As we become more like Jesus, our lives change!

Read the challenges from the Take-Home page aloud. Ask kids to mark which one they want to choose for this week.

SUPPLIES:

Take-Home page, coloring supplies

PREP:

Print the Take-Home page (1 per kid).



PRAYER

God, thank You for sending Jesus as our Savior. At Christmas, we get to celebrate Jesus' birth! Thank You that Jesus is the best gift we could ever get! Amen.



SAY GOODBYE!

Tell kids goodbye and thank them for being a part of your group.

As kids wait to be picked up, encourage them to complete the activities on the back of the Take-Home page. As kids work, ask relationship-building questions, such as, "What are you looking forward to this week?" or "What do you do for fun?"

As parents arrive at pickup, look for opportunities to connect with them, pointing out the Take-Home page their kid is bringing home.

Extra Time?

- Work on Books of the Bible
- Work on Memory Verse
 - ERASE A WORD: Write on a white board, erasing one word at a time after the class repeats the verse out loud to you.
 - BEAN BAG: Have children toss a bean bag to each other and when they catch the bean bag they say the next word in the verse
 - POPCORN: Have children sit in a circle and jump up in turn and say the next word of the verse, sitting down quickly after saying their word
 - HAND MOTIONS: Either you or the kids make up hand motions to key words or phrases of the verse. Practice and then have a competition between boys and girls.

Greet parents at the door. Make sure you match their security tag with Attendance Book. Have them initial Attendance Book (their security tag and child's nametag can be given to Welcome Desk for nametag ball.)

Hand each parent:

- Any craft/activity page

BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

After 10:00 Services:

- Erase whiteboard.
- Place Prayer Journal and Curriculum book in supply tub.
- Return Prayer Sheet, KidMin Team Member Report (if needed) and Attendance Book to Welcome Desk

After 11:45 Services:

- Erase whiteboard.
- Make sure chairs are stacked (kids can do this)
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 - Power off computer
 - Turn off TV
- Put everything away – all tables should be completely empty
- Place Prayer Journal and Curriculum book in supply tub.
- Return Prayer Sheet, KidMin Team Member Report (if needed) and Attendance Book to Welcome Desk
- Take supply tub to Resource Room