



WEEK
THREE
DECEMBER 2023

LARGE GROUP
3-5 YEAR
-OLDS
STAGE

TODAY'S SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

BIBLE STORY

The shepherds run to Jesus.

THE SHEPHERDS
LUKE 2:8-21

MEMORY VERSE

"God loved the world so much
that he gave his only Son."

JOHN 3:16, GNT

KEY QUESTION

How do we know
God loves us?

BOTTOM LINE

God gave us Jesus.

BASIC TRUTH

God loves me.

PRELUDE: Setting the tone for the experience

See the **Getting Ready** pages at the end of this document for a detailed description of what you'll need for today.

In the **Prelude** folder of your curriculum, you'll find a variety of other resources to help you prepare.

SMALL GROUP


15
MIN

SOCIAL: Providing time for fun interaction

Offer one or more of these activities as preschoolers arrive.

Moving Down the Track

Maze of the Shepherd

Gathering Sheep 

LARGE GROUP

20
MIN

WORSHIP: Inviting people to respond to God

STORY: Communicating God's truth in engaging ways

"Silent Night," and "Jesus Is"

Bible Story

Prayer

SMALL GROUP

25
MIN

GROUPS: Creating a safe place to connect

Offer as many of these activities as your time, facilities, resources, and leadership allow.

Christmas Ornament

Story Train 

Which One Is It?

Find Baby Jesus

Stand Up Train

Journal and Prayer

HOME: Prompting action beyond the experience

Going Home

Memory Verse Card

Parent Cue Card (*print or email*)

Parent Cue App



This symbol indicates an activity with potential allergens. Be sure to post allergy alert sign and inform parents at drop-off.



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LARGE GROUP

ENGAGE CHILDREN'S HEARTS THROUGH A DYNAMIC AND INTERACTIVE WORSHIP, BIBLE STORY, AND PRAYER EXPERIENCE IN A LARGE GROUP SETTING.

WORSHIP

WHAT YOU NEED: "Memory Verse Card" from Week One in Bible; instruments or music player; this month's worship song, "Silent Night," included in your monthly files; and "Jesus Is," available on OrangeKidsMusic.com; Optional Dance Moves Video for "Silent Night," available in the Media Package if you subscribe or from OrangeKidsMusic.com, and "Jesus Is," available from OrangeKidsMusic.com

Worship Leader enters.

WORSHIP LEADER: "Friends, I'm SO excited to see you today! My name is [your name]. Are you ready to worship? There are SO many reasons to say, 'Thank You, God!' And the BIGGEST reason of all is because God gave us Jesus! That's what Christmas is all about. God gave us Jesus to show that He loves us. **How do we know God loves us?**"

CHILDREN AND WORSHIP LEADER: "**God gave us Jesus.**"

WORSHIP LEADER: "Stand up and sing this with me.

Lead children in singing "Silent Night," this month's worship song.

"I just love that song! Thanks for singing with me. I'm so glad God sent Jesus!
How do we know God loves us?"

CHILDREN AND WORSHIP LEADER: "**God gave us Jesus.**"

WORSHIP LEADER: "Yes! The Bible teaches us that 'God (flat hand with thumb to forehead, pull down) loved the world (cross arms over chest) so much (pull hands away from each other) that he gave his only Son,' (rock arms like a baby) John 3:16. (Open hands like a book.) Let's say our memory verse together with the motions.

Lead children to say the memory verse with the motions.

"Way to go, friends! **God loves me**, and God loves you, so He sent Jesus! **How do we know God loves us?**"

CHILDREN AND WORSHIP LEADER: "**God gave us Jesus.**"

WORSHIP LEADER: "God gave us the BEST gift ever when He gave us Jesus! Let's sing this together.

Lead children in singing "Jesus Is."



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"Thanks for worshipping with me today! **[Transition]** And now it's time to turn around, sit down, and shake the wiggles out (*wiggle hands*) so we can hear (*cup hands behind ears*) what the story's all about!"

Host enters as Worship Leader exits.

INTRO SKETCH

WHAT YOU NEED: Plush sheep and Christmas sweater, headband, or necklace; train whistle; and cardboard train costume from previous weeks

NOTE: The Host will wear fun Christmas attire with train costume and use a train whistle all month.

Host enters, wearing the cardboard train costume and carrying plush sheep and train whistle.

HOST: "Hi, friends! Welcome to [your environment's name or story time]! I'm [your name]. Do you want to play a game with me? (*Pause for response.*) Great!"

Put plush sheep down in the center of storytelling area.

"Today, I want to be a REALLY fast train! I'll start here and go all around the [room/stage] really fast to pick up my sheep. Can you make the train sounds to help me go really fast? (*Pause for response.*) Yay! Let's practice.

"When I blow my train whistle (*hold up train whistle*), I want you to move your arms like this (*bend arms at elbows and move in a circle like train wheels*) and say 'Chugga-chugga, chugga-chugga, chugga-chugga, chugga-chugga (*pull hand down*) choo-choo!' Let's practice. Ready?"

Blow train whistle.

CHILDREN AND HOST: (*Move arms like a train.*) "Chugga-chugga, chugga-chugga, chugga-chugga, chugga-chugga (*pull hand down*) choo-choo!"

HOST: "Great job! But trains go very SLOW at first. This time, let's start off really SLOW then speed up so I can make it all the way back to my sheep. Are you ready? Let's start slow."

Blow train whistle and move slowly through the audience.

CHILDREN AND HOST: (*Slowly move arms like a train.*) "Chugga-chugga, chugga-chugga, chugga-chugga, chugga-chugga (*pull hand down*) choo-choo!"

HOST: "Faster!"

Blow train whistle and pick up the pace.

CHILDREN AND HOST: (*Move arms faster like a train.*) "Chugga-chugga, chugga-chugga, chugga-chugga, chugga-chugga (*pull hand down*) choo-choo!"

HOST: "And faster!"



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Blow train whistle and move as quickly as you safely can to reach the sheep.

CHILDREN AND HOST: (Move arms faster like a train.) "Chugga-chugga, chugga-chugga, chugga-chugga, chugga-chugga (pull hand down) choo-choo!"

Pick up sheep triumphantly.

HOST: "Whew! That was pretty fast! It would be so cool to really go that fast on a train! Today, our Bible story is about some people who RAN really fast! Let's listen to the story so we can hear why they were running so fast. See you later!"

Storyteller enters as Host exits with the sheep.

STORY

WHAT YOU NEED: "Shepherd and Sheep" and "Angels" Activity Pages; cardstock; cardboard boxes; brightly colored butcher paper or wrapping paper in a variety of colors; construction paper; thin wooden dowel rods; tinsel garland; rope; scissors; packing tape; utility knife; Bible; and train whistle, train engineer costume, Christmas story train engine, "Mary and Angel," "Joseph and Mary on Donkey," and "Baby Jesus" train cars from previous weeks; *Optional Story Images* and cardstock

Preset the Christmas story train in the storytelling area.

Storyteller enters, dressed like a train engineer, and carries a train whistle and Bible.

STORYTELLER: "Hello, friends! I'm [your name], and I can't wait to tell you a true story from the Bible.

Open Bible for children to see, then set it down.

"And our Christmas train will help us learn all about the true story of Christmas! Are you ready for a story? (Listen for response.) Fantastic! When I blow my whistle, I want everyone to say, 'ALL ABOARD!' Get ready!"

Blow train whistle.

CHILDREN AND STORYTELLER: "ALL ABOARD!"

STORYTELLER: "The true story of Christmas begins with a girl named Mary.

Point to Mary on the "Angel and Mary" train car.

God sent an angel (point to angel) to tell Mary that she would have a baby, and the baby would be named. Say it if you know it! (Pause.) JESUS! Yes! And Jesus is special because Jesus is God's Son!

"Not long after that, Mary and Joseph . . .

Point to Joseph and Mary on the "Joseph and Mary" train car.



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"had to travel to a town called Bethlehem. Mary and Joseph didn't stay in a super-fancy place. They stayed in a stable where animals live because there were no rooms anywhere else. And that's where Baby Jesus was born.

Point to Baby Jesus on "Baby Jesus" train car.

"On the same day that Jesus was born, there were some shepherds in a field taking care of their sheep. *(Point to the shepherds and sheep on the fourth train car.)*

(Option: Display Story Image W3 01)

"Hmm . . . what do sheep sound like? *(Pause.)* Yes! When I count to three, let's make a sheep sound together. One . . . two . . . three!"

CHILDREN AND STORYTELLER: "Baa-baa! Baa-baa!"

STORYTELLER: "Wow! You sound just like the sheep the shepherds were watching!"

"While those shepherds watched their sheep, guess Who sent an angel to tell them that Jesus had been born. *(Pause.)* YES! GOD!"

(Option: Display Story Image W3 02)

"God sent an angel to tell the shepherds about Baby Jesus!"

"There was bright light shining all around! The shepherds were so afraid, but the angel told them, 'Don't be afraid! God's Son, Jesus, has been born! You will find Him in a manger.'"

"And then . . .

Pull angel garland on dowels from the "Shepherd and Sheep" train car, and place dowels in holes on top flap to reveal angel garland.

(Option: Display Story Image W3 03)

". . . the whole sky filled with angels! All of the angels were praising God and singing, 'Glory to God in the highest!'"

"Everyone, stand up with me. Let's pretend to be the angels singing to God. Hold out your pretend angel wings like this. *(Demonstrate.)* And let's say, 'Glory to God in the highest!' Ready?"

CHILDREN AND STORYTELLER: "Glory to God in the highest! Glory to God in the highest!"

STORYTELLER: "You sound wonderful! Okay, you can sit back down. *(Pause.)* What do you think the shepherds did next?"

Run in place really fast.



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"The shepherds ran as fast as they could to go to find Baby Jesus! (*Stop running.*)

(*Option: Display Story Image W3 04*)

'When the shepherds got to the stable, they saw Mary and Joseph and Baby Jesus. Baby Jesus was all wrapped up and lying in a manger, just like the angel said.

"The shepherds were so excited about Jesus that they ran and told everyone in town the good news! (*Run in place.*) Jesus, God's Son, had been born! (*Stop running.*) God loves us so much that **God gave us Jesus!**

"And that's how we know God loves us. **God gave us Jesus!** So when I ask you, '**How do we know God loves us?**', I want you to say, '**God gave us Jesus!**' Let's try it! **How do we know God loves us?**"

CHILDREN AND STORYTELLER: "God gave us Jesus!"

STORYTELLER: "Again! How do we know God loves us?"

CHILDREN AND STORYTELLER: "God gave us Jesus!"

STORYTELLER: "Yay! God gave us Jesus! [Transition] Our story time is over (*pick up and close Bible*), but we're not through. Let's talk to God because God loves you!"

PRAYER

STORYTELLER: "Dear God, Thank You for loving us so much that You gave us Jesus. Help us go and tell everyone the good news about Jesus like the shepherds did. We love You, God. In Jesus' name, amen.

"I'll see you next time. Bye!"

Host enters as Storyteller exits, carrying Bible and train whistle.

OUTRO SKETCH

WHAT YOU NEED: No supplies needed

Host enters.

HOST: "Wow! The shepherds were so excited that God gave us Jesus, they ran to see Him! Then they ran to tell everyone the good news that God gave us Jesus!"

"I think I (*point to self*) got the story. Did you (*point to children*) get it? If you did, say, 'Got it!' Get it?" (*Cup one hand behind ear.*)

CHILDREN AND HOST: "Got it!"

HOST: (Give two thumbs-up.) "Good! We can pretend to be trains as we chugga-chugga out of here. [Transition] Because now it's time for more Bible fun. There's more to learn. Come on, everyone!"

Host dismisses small groups and exits.



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GETTING READY

HERE'S EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW TO GET READY FOR THIS WEEK

Gather children for a Large Group time that includes interactive worship, the introductory sketch, and the Bible story. The Stage Script is written for those who gather their preschoolers together from multiple rooms and have a larger space on which to present the Bible story. If you are pulling your children to a rug on one side of your preschool space, you may benefit from using the Rug Script.

WORSHIP: INVITING PEOPLE TO RESPOND TO GOD (10 MINUTES)

A Worship Leader and live instruments are recommended to sing along with the music tracks. Encourage children to be active during worship by incorporating the appropriate hand motions.

STORY: COMMUNICATING GOD'S TRUTH IN ENGAGING WAYS (10 MINUTES)

Choose an adult or teenager who relates well to preschoolers to tell the Introductory Sketch. If possible, use the same person for an entire month, as the Host role stays the same each month.

Choose an engaging adult to tell the Bible story. This person should be able to command the attention of preschoolers and control the group through animated storytelling. These scripts are written to be "told" and not "read." Advanced preparation is necessary.

1. WORSHIP

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Leader(s)
- Instruments or music player
- "Memory Verse Card" from Week One, placed in Bible at John 3:16

MUSIC AND SOUND EFFECTS:

- This month's worship song, "Silent Night," included in your monthly files
- "Jesus Is," available from OrangeKidsMusic.com

OPTIONAL VIDEOS (AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE):

- Dance Moves Music Video for "Silent Night," available in the Media Package if you subscribe or from OrangeKidsMusic.com
- Dance Moves Music Video for "Jesus Is," available from OrangeKidsMusic.com

WHAT YOU DO:

- Download all songs (*available on OrangeKidsMusic.com*) and have them ready to use.

2. INTRO/OUTRO SKETCH

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Plush sheep
- Christmas attire (*sweater, headband, etc.*), train whistle, and cardboard train costume from previous weeks

3. BIBLE STORY

WHAT YOU NEED:

- "Shepherd and Sheep" and "Angels" Activity Pages
- New images will be added each week to the story train. Activity Pages for individual weeks can be found in each week's folder.
- Cardstock
- Cardboard boxes - Recycle a cardboard box to make the "Shepherd and Sheep" train car. If following our example on Pinterest (bit.ly/44U6BjS), use the following size:
 - Medium boxes, 15" x 12" x 10" (bit.ly/3w5uQfz)-one per Large Group
- Brightly colored butcher paper or wrapping paper in a variety of colors
- Construction paper for train wheels and flaps
- Thin wooden dowel rods—two per large group
- Tinsel garland (*silver or gold*)
- Scissors
- Packaging tape
- Utility knife
- Items from previous weeks: train whistle, train engineer costume, Christmas story train engine, and "Mary and Angel," "Joseph and Mary," and "Baby Jesus" train cars
- Bible
- *Optional cardstock*

LARGE GROUP VISUALS:

- Story Image W3 01
- Story Image W3 02
- Story Image W3 03
- Story Image W3 04



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WHAT YOU DO:

- Copy "Shepherd and Sheep" on cardstock and cut off copying directions.
- A new image will be added each week to the story train. Individual image files can be found in each week's folder, and a complete set of images can be found in Prelude.
- Copy "Angels" on cardstock and cut out.
- To make the "Shepherd and Sheep" train car:
 - Assemble one medium box. Tape one of the long top flaps in place. Tuck the other flaps inside and secure with tape or simply cut off the extra flaps.
 - Wrap with brightly colored paper.
 - In the top flap, cut two holes that are the width of the dowels.
 - Tape "Shepherd and Sheep" picture onto the train car.
 - Trim the dowel rods to 20 to 24-inches with a utility knife.
 - Cut an 18-inch section of tinsel garland.
 - Tape the angel cutouts to the garland.
 - Tie garland to the end of each dowel.
 - Put the dowel rods and attached angel garland inside the Sheperd and Sheep train car.
- Cut small holes near the bottom of the short sides of the box.
- Cut a short section of tinsel and thread through the first hole to connect the train car with the "Baby Jesus" train car. Secure with packaging tape.
- Storyteller wears train engineer costume and carries train whistle and Bible.
- *NOTE: See previous weeks' Getting Ready for directions on building train engine and previous train cars. Save all train cars for the month.*
- *Option: Copy the Optional Story Images on cardstock or download them to display on a screen.*

SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

WONDER, LOOK AT GOD'S STORY: First Look offers weekly introductory sketches and Bible stories on the DVD titled "Wonder, Look at God's Story." This DVD is available for purchase at OrangeStore.org or as part of your monthly Media Package.

FIRST LOOK PINTEREST PAGE

- Visit our Pinterest page to see craft samples and suggested supplies. bit.ly/FL_ChristmasTrain