



WEEK  
**FOUR**  
DECEMBER 2023

LARGE GROUP  
**3-5** YEAR  
-OLDS  
STAGE

## TODAY'S SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

### BIBLE STORY

Happy Birthday, Jesus!

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY, JESUS!**  
**LUKE 1:26-33, 38; 2:1-21**

### 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.*

All Aboard   
Train Car Decorating  
Box of Lights

### LARGE GROUP

**20**  
MIN

#### **WORSHIP: Inviting people to respond to God**

#### **STORY: Communicating God's truth in engaging ways**


"Silent Night," and "Happy Birthday Jesus"  
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.*

Party Verse  
Birthday Cupcakes   
Gifts of Choice  
Drive Your Train  
Decorative Topper  
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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SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

10 MINUTES

## BIBLE STORY

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## KEY QUESTION

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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 "Happy Birthday Jesus," available on OrangeKidsMusic.com; Optional Dance Moves Videos for "Silent Night," available in the Media Package if you subscribe or from OrangeKidsMusic.com, and "Happy Birthday Jesus," available from OrangeKidsMusic.com

*Worship Leader enters.*

**WORSHIP LEADER:** "Friends, I'm SO excited to see you today! My name is [your name]. Raise your hand if you're SO excited it's almost Christmas. Me, too! I'm so excited to celebrate Jesus' birthday! God gave us Jesus to show how much God loves us! **How do you know God loves you?"**

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

**WORSHIP LEADER:** "You've got it! Stand up on your feet and sing this out with me.

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

"God loves us so much that He gave us Jesus! 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 that together.

*Lead children to say the memory verse with the motions.*

"God loves you and God loves me SO much that God gave us Jesus! **How do we know God loves us?"**

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

**WORSHIP LEADER:** "Yes! Jesus is God's Son, and we celebrate Jesus' birthday on Christmas. Let's celebrate! Sing this out with me.

*Lead children in singing "Happy Birthday, Jesus."*

"As we celebrate Christmas with family and friends, let's tell everyone about what God has done! **God gave us Jesus!**



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WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

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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:** Sheet cakes; cake boards or platters; frosting; angel tree topper or other angel decoration; silver sprinkles; small baby decoration; shredded wheat cereal; green sprinkles; large marshmallows; candy canes; resealable plastic bag; a box; a table; and fun Christmas sweater, headband, or necklace from previous weeks; Optional dummy cakes or foam blocks in place of sheet cakes

*Preset the table and cakes in the center of the storytelling area, behind the Christmas Story train.*

*Host enters.*

**HOST:** "Oh, hi friends! Welcome to [your environment or story time]! I'm [your name]! Do you know what special day we're celebrating? (*Pause.*) Shout it out if you know. (*Pause.*) Yes! Christmas! Christmas is when we celebrate Jesus' birthday! And I'm making some awesome birthday cakes to say 'HAPPY BIRTHDAY' to Jesus!

"All that's left to do is decorate. I brought this bag of decorations. Let's see what we can find.

*Pull out angel decoration.*

"Look! It's like the angel who told Mary she would have Baby Jesus!

*Place the angel on the first cake then add silver sprinkles.*

"Next, some silver sprinkles. Perfect! Let's do another!

*Pull out a small baby decoration.*

"This can be Baby Jesus! But what about some hay for the manger?

*Pull out the bag of shredded wheat cereal.*

"Ah-ha! Cereal that looks just like hay! I can use it to make the manger where Baby Jesus slept!

*Put the shredded cereal on the second cake then place the baby on the hay.*

"I'll just tuck Baby Jesus in on the comfy hay. (*Pause.*) This is looking so good! (*Pause.*) I wonder if there's anything I can use for green grass. We have to have green grass for the shepherds and their sheep.

*Pull out green sprinkles, marshmallows, and candy canes.*

"WOW! Look! I can use green sprinkles for grass.



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PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

10 MINUTES

*Pour green sprinkles on the third cake.*

"Marshmallows for sheep.

*Put marshmallows on cake.*

"And candy canes for shepherds. The candy canes look kind of like the sticks the shepherds carried.

*Put candy canes on the cake.*

"There! All I need now are some birthday candles. What do you think? Pretty cool, right?

"Our Bible story is all about Jesus' birthday! Enjoy the story while I go look for some birthday candles. Bye!"

*Storyteller enters as Host exits.*

## STORY

**WHAT YOU NEED:** "Birthday Cake" Activity Page; cardstock; cardboard box; brightly colored butcher paper in various colors or paint and paintbrushes; construction paper; tinsel garland; scissors; packaging tape; utility knife; party horn or blow-out; confetti; bowl; Bible; and train whistle, train engineer costume, Christmas story train engine, and "Mary and Angel," "Joseph and Mary on Donkey," "Baby Jesus" and "Shepherd and Sheep" 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, carrying 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 is going to help us learn 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!"

*Kneel next to the "Angel and Mary" train car.*

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

*Point to Mary in the picture on the train car.*



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**3-5** YEAR  
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STAGE

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

10 MINUTES

"God gave Mary an important message by sending an angel!

*Put on angel wings.*

(Option: Display Story Image W4 01)

"The angel gave Mary a VERY important message. Mary was surprised and a little afraid when she saw the angel. But the angel said, 'Do not be afraid, Mary! God says you are going to have a baby and you will call Him Jesus.'

"WOW! That IS a very important message! Mary was going to have a baby! And not just any baby. Mary was going to have Jesus! (Pause.) Jesus is special because Jesus is God's Son!

*Pick up confetti from train car and throw it in the air.*

"Hooray for Jesus!

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

*Lift the flaps on the "Joseph and Mary" train car to reveal Joseph and Mary.*

(Option: Display Story Image W4 02)

". . . had to travel to a town called Bethlehem. Did Mary and Joseph stay in a big fancy castle, or did they stay in a stable where animals live? (Pause.) Yes, Mary and Joseph stayed in a stable where animals live.

*Pull animal cutouts from "Baby Jesus" train car and slide craft sticks into slits.*

"Because there were no rooms anywhere else. And that's where Baby Jesus was born!

(Option: Display Story Image W4 03)

"On the same day Jesus was born, there were shepherds out in a field taking care of their . . . ?

*Point to the shepherds and sheep on the "Shepherds and Sheep" train car.*

"Right again! The shepherds were taking care of their sheep! While the shepherds were watching their sheep, God sent an angel to tell them that Jesus had been born.

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

(Option: Display Story Image W4 04)

"At first, the shepherds were afraid, but the angel told them, 'Don't be afraid! God's Son, Jesus, has been born!' Then the shepherds got excited. What did the shepherds do? (Pause.)

*Run in place really fast.*



WEEK  
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LARGE GROUP  
**3-5** YEAR  
-OLDS  
STAGE

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

10 MINUTES

"Yes! Stand up and run in place with me.

*Lead children to run in place really fast.*

"Great job! You can sit down. The shepherds ran as fast as they could to find Baby Jesus!

*(Option: Display Story Image W4 05)*

"When the shepherds got to the stable, they saw Mary and Joseph and Baby Jesus, just like the angel said they would.

"And that is why we celebrate Christmas! Christmas is when **God gave us Jesus**. It's Jesus' birthday!

*Pull party horn/blow-out from "Birthday Cake" train car and blow party horn/blow-out.*

"Happy birthday, Jesus! (Pause.) Hey! Let's all sing 'Happy Birthday' to Jesus! Stand up, and let's sing!"

**CHILDREN AND STORYTELLER:** "Happy birthday to you! Happy birthday to you! Happy birthday, dear Jesus. Happy birthday to you!"

*Blow party horn/blow-out and toss confetti.*

**STORYTELLER:** "Happy birthday, Jesus! Yay, Jesus! Woo-hoo! God loves us so much that **God gave us Jesus!** And Christmas is when we celebrate Jesus' birthday!

"Thanks for singing with me. You can sit back down.

"Now that you know Christmas is all about when **God gave us Jesus**, if anyone ever asks, '**How do we know God loves us?**', all you have to say is '**God gave us Jesus!** **How do we know God loves us?**'"

**CHILDREN AND STORYTELLER:** "**God gave us Jesus!**"

**STORYTELLER:** "One more time for Jesus' birthday! **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, we want to say, 'Happy birthday' to Jesus today! Thank You for loving us so much that You sent Your Son to be our friend forever. We love You, God. In Jesus' name, we pray, amen.

"Merry Christmas, everyone! Bye!"

*Host enters as Storyteller exits, carrying Bible.*



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**3-5** YEAR  
-OLDS  
STAGE

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

10 MINUTES

# OUTRO SKETCH

**WHAT YOU NEED:** Birthday candles

Host enters, carrying birthday candles.

**HOST:** "Wow! Christmas is all about Jesus's birthday! God loves us so much that He 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!"

"I think our train birthday cake is a fun way to say, 'Happy birthday' to Jesus! All I have to do is put the birthday candles on it!"

Put a few candles on the cake.

"Now we're ready to say, 'Happy birthday' to Jesus! Can you say, 'Happy birthday' to Jesus with me? (*Pause.*) One, two, three."

**CHILDREN AND HOST:** "Happy birthday, Jesus!"

**HOST:** "Merry Christmas, everyone! [**Transition**] And 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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**3-5** YEAR  
-OLDS  
STAGE

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

## 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
- "Happy Birthday Jesus," 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 "Happy Birthday Jesus,"

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:

- Sheet cakes—four per large group
  - Optional dummy cakes or foam blocks in place of sheet cakes
- Cake boards or platters to hold cakes
- Frosting
- Angel tree topper or other angel decoration
- Silver sprinkles
- Small baby decoration
- Shredded wheat cereal
- Green sprinkles
- Large marshmallows
- Candy canes
- Resealable plastic bag
- Box to hold props
- Table
- Fun Christmas sweater, headband, or necklace from previous weeks

#### WHAT YOU DO:

- Frost the cakes or dummy cakes.
- Crush the shredded wheat cereal and place in a resealable plastic bag.

## 3. BIBLE STORY

#### WHAT YOU NEED:

- "Birthday Cake" Activity Page
  - 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 box - Recycle a cardboard box to make the "Birthday Cake" train car. If following our example on Pinterest ([bit.ly/44U6BjS](https://bit.ly/44U6BjS)), use the following size:
  - Medium box, 15" x 12" x 10" ([bit.ly/3w5uQfz](https://bit.ly/3w5uQfz))-one per Large Group
- Brightly colored butcher paper or wrapping paper in a variety of colors
- Construction paper for train wheels





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-OLDS  
STAGE

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

## GETTING READY

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

- Tinsel garland
- Scissors
- Packaging tape
- Utility Knife
- Bible
- Party hat
- Party horn or blow-out
- Items from previous weeks: train whistle, train engineer costume, Christmas story train engine, and "Mary and Angel," "Joseph and Mary," "Baby Jesus," and "Shepherd and Sheep" train cars

• *Optional cardstock*

### LARGE GROUP VISUALS:

- Story Image W4 01
- Story Image W4 02
- Story Image W4 03
- Story Image W4 04

### WHAT YOU DO:

- Copy "Birthday Cake" 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.
- To make the "Birthday Cake" train car:
  - Assemble one medium box and tuck the top flaps inside the box (*or cut off flaps*), leaving the box open on top.
  - Secure flaps with packaging tape.
  - Wrap the prepared box with brightly colored butcher paper.
  - *Option: If boxes do not have markings or if you use brown kraft paper, consider taping a large piece of construction paper behind Activity Page.*
  - Add wheels by cutting two circles out of construction paper and taping onto medium box near the bottom corners.
  - Tape "Birthday Cake" picture onto the train car.
  - Place party hat and horn inside the 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 "Shepherd and Sheep" train car. Secure with packaging tape.
- Reset the train cars from previous weeks:
  - "Angel and Mary" train car - Place angel wings and

bowl of confetti in train car.

- "Joseph and Mary on Donkey" - Lower the flaps to cover the picture.
- "Baby Jesus" - Place animal face cutouts inside the train car.
- "Shepherd and Sheep" - Place the dowels with angel garland inside the train car.
- 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](http://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](https://bit.ly/FL_ChristmasTrain)