

252 GROUPS

Curriculum Materials for 2nd and 3rd Grades

CREATE THE ENVIRONMENT:

What are you wrapped up in? Use wrapping paper to decorate in addition to your normal Christmas trees, greenery and twinkling lights. As an unexpected surprise, you may even wrap up things that are always on your stage and in your hallways. You can wrap up the front of pictures and hang them back up on the wall with a bow. You also might want to set up a mantle of sorts (this could be used in week two to hang your lists) and hang giant stockings with names they'd recognize (to be used in weeks one and three).



**BEFORE KIDS LEAVE THE 5TH GRADE,
WE WANT THEM TO UNDERSTAND 3 BASIC TRUTHS:**

FAITH I can trust God no matter what.

WISDOM I need to make the wise choice.

FRIENDSHIP I should treat others the way I want to be treated.

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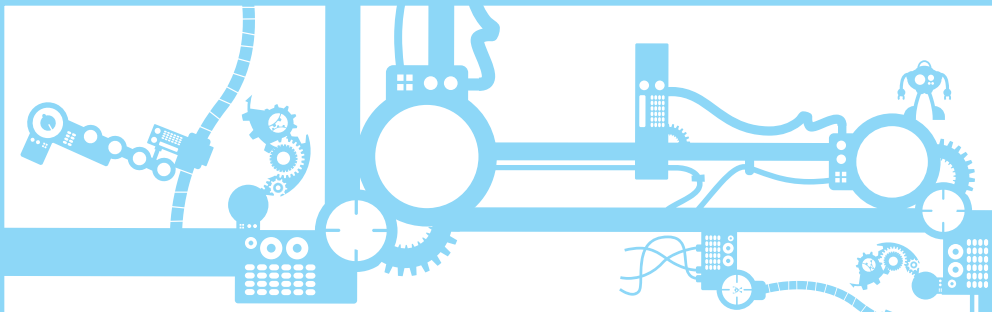
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STATEMENT OF FAITH

252 GOOD-TO-KNOW TERMS

SMALL GROUP LEADER

One consistent leader for the same 8-10 children all year

- We suggest you start and end in small group so kids connect relationally with one leader and other similar-aged peers.
- If you have multiple small groups meeting in one room, try using circle area rugs to give each group their own spot.
- Offer as many of the activities as your time, space, and resources allow.

ABOUT GOD

God is the one and only true God, yet He exists in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. God is the Creator, so everything belongs to Him and is under His control. God is holy, so He is righteous, majestic, and loving. God is all knowing and purposeful, so He's at work to bring about His will. No person, thing, or idea compares to God.

ABOUT PEOPLE

People are made in God's image and for His pleasure. But everybody falls short of God's intention, or ideal, for people. In other words, everyone has sinned. As a result, we are all separated from Him, even though He wants an intimate relationship with each of us.

ABOUT THE BIBLE

God reveals Himself to us through the Bible, and it is 100% accurate, reliable, and authoritative.

ABOUT SALVATION

That's why Jesus—God's Son—came and lived on this earth, died, and rose again. God offers His free gift of salvation to all who believe in Jesus and accept Him as Savior—the only way to be forgiven and reconciled to God. Anyone who accepts this gift is adopted as a son or daughter into God's family and will live with Him forever in heaven.

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Virtue:

GENEROSITY

Making someone's day by giving something away.

**FOR LEADERS ONLY****GOD VIEW: THE CONNECTION BETWEEN GENEROSITY AND GOD'S CHARACTER, AS SHOWN THROUGH GOD'S BIG STORY**

James 1:17 says, "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights." So, we know that God is the Giver of all good things. But we also know that God's generosity has a purpose.

God gives generously to us so that we may be generous toward others. The Bible says, "You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God." *2 Corinthians 9:11, NIV* In other words, God gives generously to us so we will have time, emotional energy, patience, and a wealth of resources to give to others. Then, when we are generous with all we have been given, others will see us and be thankful to God.

So many times we think that our ability to be generous is connected to our riches. We are afraid to give

because we don't know if we have enough, and we think generosity is for those who have more than we do to give. But the cool thing about generosity is that we're not generous because we are rich, we are rich because we are generous. When we choose to give generously to others, we are blessed with everything that really matters in life.

This month, let's think about how:
 (1) *We can show generosity because of what God has done.*
 (2) *God instills generosity in us as we respond to His goodness.*
 (3) *God uses generosity in us to influence our families, friends, and neighbors.*
Remember: A virtue is something God does in us to change the world around us.

This week, we're discovering: How to get wrapped up in what Christmas is really about. Our Bible

story from two different accounts (**John 3:16-17; Luke 2:1-18**) tells us about the greatest gift ever—Jesus' birth! Bottom Line: **God gave the greatest gift when He gave us Jesus.**

In one of the busiest times of year, it's important to take time to remember who gave first. We can stop and remember how amazing it is that God sent His Son to show us a new way to live and later made it possible for us to live with Him forever. Basic Truth: **I can trust God no matter what.**

God is the ultimate example of generosity. We give because God gave to us. God's original gift is our motivation for giving freely to others. Our memory verse reminds us that no matter how much stuff or money we have, we can all **"Be rich in good deeds ... be generous and willing to share."** 1 Timothy 6:18, NIV

252 GROUPS

Curriculum Materials for K-5th Grades

DEC

WEEK
3

SMALL
GROUP
2-3

HERE'S A SNEAK PEEK OF WHAT YOU'LL BE DOING IN 2ND AND 3RD GRADE THIS WEEK:



PLUG IN

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES TO FOCUS THE ENERGY

- Ideas for Early Arrivers
- Nativity Pre-run



POWER UP

INTERACTIVE LARGE GROUP EXPERIENCE
TO ENGAGE THE HEART

- Opener
- Worship
- Bible story
- Prayer and Worship
- Closer



CATCH ON

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES TO MAKE THE CONNECTION
(CHOOSE TWO OR MORE OF THESE ACTIVITIES)

- Rank That Gift
- Nativity Re-run
- Catch a Memory
- Prayer

DISMISSAL

- Prayer, share and reflect on today's lesson before leaving

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BIBLE STORY

The Great Gift Exchange (Jesus is born) • John 3:16-17; Luke 2:1-18

BOTTOM LINE

God gave the greatest gift when He gave us Jesus.

MEMORY VERSE

"Be rich in good deeds ... be generous and willing to share." 1 Timothy 6:18, NIV

BASIC TRUTH:

I can trust God no matter what.

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WEEK
3

PLUG IN
10-15 min

POWER UP
20-25 min

CATCH ON
25-30 min

GETTING READY**PLUG IN: FOCUS THE ENERGY** *(Choose one or both of these activities.)***Early Arriver**

- An interesting offering container

Nativity Pre-run

- All of the same supplies for "Nativity Re-run" activity below

CATCH ON: MAKE THE CONNECTION *(Choose as many of these activities as you like.)*

* If you don't have time to do all these activities, be sure to do activity #4. Activity #1 is also particularly good for children who need to move around in order to stay engaged (not just for boys).

Rank That Gift *(application activity)*

- 5 to 8 different small objects that kids might want for Christmas
- Small wooden cross
- Small gift bags or wrapping paper for each object; wrap the objects (including the cross) just like you would wrap Christmas presents

Nativity Re-run *(application activity / review the Bible story)*

- "Nativity Re-run" (Activity Page); one set of characters per group
- Popsicle or craft sticks
- Crayons
- Glue
- Safety scissors

Catch a Memory *(memory verse activity)*

- Bibles
- A ball

Prayer

- None, but you will need to be in a quiet place

Additional Resources:

- Make copies on cardstock of this week's GodTime and Parent Cue cards.

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**WEEK
3****PLUG IN**
10-15 min**POWER UP**
20-25 min**CATCH ON**
25-30 min

BIBLE STORY:

THE GREAT GIFT EXCHANGE

John 3:16-17; Luke 2:1-18

BOTTOM LINE:

God gave the greatest gift when He gave us Jesus.

MEMORY VERSE:

"Be rich in good deeds ... be generous and willing to share."
1 Timothy 6:18, NIV

BASIC TRUTH:

I can trust God no matter what.

PLUG IN: FOCUS THE ENERGY

Focus the energy on today's Bible story in a Small Group setting with an engaging discussion question and an interactive opening activity.

Before students arrive, pray for each regular attendee by name. Pray for those who might visit your class for the first time. Pray that God would help the kids in your group to be amazed in a fresh or new way today that the greatest gift ever given is Jesus. Help them to focus and to be changed by the knowledge that God sent Jesus for them. We can give generously because of what God gave us first.

1. EARLY ARRIVER IDEA

What You Need: interesting offering container

What You Do:

Ask the kids about the best thing they've ever gotten for Christmas. What made it so good? Do they think there's anything better than that? If so, what?


2. NATIVITY PRE-RUN

What You Need: supplies needed for "Nativity Re-run"

What You Do:

Allow kids to begin coloring, cutting, and preparing this activity. The most important part will be gluing the characters to Popsicle sticks so the glue has time to dry before Small Group time begins.

What You Say:

"A lot of us have heard this story before, haven't we? But today, we get to be a part of the action!  **Let's head off to Large Group to see what we can learn about the birth of Jesus!"**

Lead your group to the Large Group area.



Apply
go and do



Impress
impress this upon their minds



Personalize
a personal story from the heart



Recycle
important things to say over and over



Transition
making a transition from one leader to another

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**WEEK
3**

PLUG IN
10-15 min

POWER UP
20-25 min

CATCH ON
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BIBLE STORY:

THE GREAT GIFT EXCHANGE

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1 Timothy 6:18, NIV

BASIC TRUTH:

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CATCH ON: MAKE THE CONNECTION

Make the connection of how today's Bible story applies to real life experiences through interactive activities and discussion questions.

1. RANK THAT GIFT (*application activity*)

What You Need: wrapped objects that kids might want for Christmas, wooden cross

What You Do:

As a Small Group, each gift will be unwrapped and the group will rank the objects based on their worth. When your group comes to the small wooden cross, use this time as a discussion about the gift of Jesus. (*Hint: To make this activity more challenging and visual, line the gifts up as you unwrap them in order of most valuable to least. Maybe put a quarter or dollar bill next to the most valuable side. This will help them "see" what you're saying and you'll constantly be rearranging.*) You can ask them, "So, are you saying that this should go here because it's more valuable than that?" and see if they agree.

When you've evaluated each gift, ask kids why we say that Jesus is a gift. Are they confused about that at all? Allow kids to ask anything they want about the Christmas story and do your best to answer. It's okay to say, "I don't know," write down their question, and follow up next week if you need to go find the answer! Letting kids ask questions in a safe place can be your priceless Christmas gift to them this week.

What You Say:

! **"God gave the greatest gift when He gave us Jesus.** God was providing us with the only way to have a friendship with Him, a guide to a life full of adventure and a reason to have hope when times seem darkest. That's a gift that money can't buy! 🦶 **All we have to do is accept the gift with a grateful heart!"**

♥ **Share with your group about when you first believed in Jesus and how your life and understanding of God has changed since then.**



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3**
PLUG IN
10-15 min

POWER UP
20-25 min


CATCH ON
25-30 min
2. NATIVITY RE-RUN (*application activity / review the Bible story*)

What You Need: "Nativity Re-run" Activity Pages, Popsicle sticks, crayons, glue, safety scissors

What You Do:

Before Large Group, kids colored each character of the day's story, cut it out, and glued it to the Popsicle stick. The characters should be dry now. Invite the kids to finish coloring and decorating the characters (if needed), and then re-tell the story in their own words using the Popsicle stick characters. They could use just a table or the whole room as their stage, whatever your environment is more conducive to. (Kids could even do a "puppet show," using a couple kids as the puppet "booth" that the puppet masters hide behind.)

What You Say:

"The Christmas story is a story about generosity. God didn't have to give us anything, let alone His one and only Son. God wasn't only making our day by giving something away; He was making our whole lives better—forever! **! God gave the greatest gift when He gave us Jesus.**  **And because God first showed generosity by giving US the greatest gift, we should also give to others."**

3. CATCH A MEMORY (*memory verse activity*)


What You Need: Bibles and a ball*

**You can also use a large plastic ornament or a jingle bell for a more festive touch!*

What You Do:

Look up the memory verse together as a group. After that, form a circle. Give one kid the ball and have them say the first word of the verse. Instruct the group to pass the ball for every word—backwards, forwards, across, high, roll. Challenge your group to do it faster and faster!

What You Say:

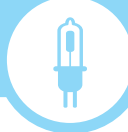
! "God gave the greatest gift when He gave us Jesus. Another great gift He gave us was the Bible. The Bible is like a letter sent from God to us with instructions on how to live the best life possible! God is a great example of giving generously because not only did He give us Jesus, but He also gave us the Bible. God is a giver and it makes Him happy to give.  **So when we follow God's example and are generous with our stuff and our time, we're showing others how great our God is."**

Virtue:**GENEROSITY**

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**WEEK
3**



PLUG IN
10-15 min



POWER UP
20-25 min



CATCH ON
25-30 min

*** PRAY AND DISMISS**

What You Need: no supplies

What You Do:

Find a quiet spot and explain to kids that one very creative way to pray is to use your imagination when you talk to God. Read the following aloud to your group to walk them through the night that God gave us the greatest gift. Tell kids to lay down flat on their backs and close their eyes. The prayer takes approximately three to six minutes.

What You Say:


(Slowly) "Imagine that you are lying on a cloud. Wouldn't that be a fun place to pray?"

"Keep your eyes closed but imagine that you are looking up at the night sky. The stars are brighter than you have ever seen them and there are more of them too. Look all over the sky, as far as you can. See them twinkle? One star seems to shine brighter than all the rest. It shines so brightly; your eye always keeps coming back to it. Slowly, you notice that this star is shining down on the earth like a small and faint sunbeam. You start to move to the place where the sunbeam meets the earth. Can you hear the dry earth crackle beneath your feet as you walk? Hear your footsteps. Hear the breeze through the palm trees. It sounds like rain. Feel the cool desert breeze against your face. You're getting closer.

"As you come closer to the place, you enter an old town and hear people's voices. They are laughing. Plates are clanging in the windows above you. It feels like the whole city is having a party. You smell bread baking and strangers smile as you pass them by. The golden glow from the oil lamps in the windows lights your way as you follow the star. As you walk, you find yourself stopped right in front of an inn. Looking up at the sky, you see the star shining just behind the building. Making your way to the corner of the building, you notice a very faint light coming from the opening of the cave where the animals sleep. Taking a few steps closer, you hear voices. They are very quiet but happy. You smell hay and animals as you come closer.

"Finally, you are at the cave opening. As you carefully look inside, you see two donkeys, a goat, chickens, and sheep huddled closely together. And nearby, there's a family. There is a woman lying down and a man kneeling beside her. You come a bit closer and the woman smiles at you. She is holding something in her arms. She lowers what she is holding to reveal a newborn baby. Her face is glowing and the man is smiling too. You reach out gently and touch the head of the baby. He's sleeping. His head is fuzzy and warm.

"Heavenly Father, thank You for this precious gift. This is the child You promised would come to save us, the one You promised would be the way back to You. Thank You for always keeping Your promises. Thank You for loving us so much.

 **Help me to love Jesus and live a grateful and generous life.** *(Pause.)*

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WEEK
3



PLUG IN
10-15 min



POWER UP
20-25 min



CATCH ON
25-30 min

"If there is anything else you want to pray, you can do that now. When you're done, just open your eyes and sit up quietly until every one else is finished.

"The story you heard today was true. Everything in the Bible is true. God loves you so much that He sent Jesus to earth to live and later, to die for us. What an amazing gift. So no matter what, always remember that! **God gave us the greatest gift when He gave us Jesus.**"

Give each child a GodTime card. Pass out Parent Cue cards as adults arrive to pick up their child(ren).