



# Leader Guide

The Birth of Jesus

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### Story of God- Leader Info

#### Big Idea:

God loves us so much that He came to earth as Jesus to rescue us and make a way to unite us back to Him.

#### Scripture:

Matthew 1-2, Luke 1-2

#### Memory Verse:

“She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

Matthew 1:21

“Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.”

Luke 2:10-11

Kids' City is changing up the lessons a little bit! We are starting on a journey together to understand the Story of God, and grow closer to Him and know Him better along the way! The lessons each week will now be chronological stories from the Bible told to the kids orally in a Story-formed way.

Stories are the most powerful form of communication we have. Stories speak to the mind, the body, and the emotions —our spirits. In a story, we can identify with situations we have never been in. Every culture and society of people that have ever existed has been this way. We are all storytellers and we all LOVE stories.

#### **Jesus was a GREAT storyteller!**

The disciples came up and asked, “Why do you tell stories?” Jesus replied, “You’ve been given insight into God’s kingdom. You know how it works. Not everybody has this gift, this insight; it hasn’t been given to them. Whenever someone has a ready heart for this, the insights and understanding flow freely. But if there is no readiness, any trace of receptivity soon disappears. That’s why I tell stories: to create readiness, to nudge the people toward receptive insight.”

*Matthew 13:10-13 (The Message)*

#### **Goals of Telling the Story**

**-To understand, experience, and intersect with God’s story.**

-To become a ‘story-formed’ kids and people whose lives are daily shaped by the truths of the Story.

-To make disciples of Jesus who make disciples.

-To see and experience God’s “Redemptive Arc” throughout history as found in the Bible—seeing the connection between all of the stories— and seeing the Bible as one big story.

-To be moved by a Story that points to a God who constantly pursues us and desires to know us.

-To see the intersection of ours’ and the kids’ stories with God’s Story.

-To understand our identity differently in light of God’s story, who he is, and who he created us to be.

-To “live in the gospel”, seeing the world differently, seeking to further God’s Kingdom - to live missionally.

-To become excited about the biblical narratives, reading and learning more about them in the Bible.

-To learn to retell these stories and help others to see how they can find themselves in God’s story.

## Introduction in Small Groups

### Intro

Questions for the Kids about their week and to get them thinking about the lesson they will be going over.

1. What happened this past week that was really awesome?
2. What happened this past week that was a bummer?
3. What is your favorite

### Expected Behaviors

Go over the Expected Behaviors for the kids while they are in small group before Large Group begins.

1. Be respectful of others
2. Only one student speaks at a time
3. Listen quietly when others are speaking
4. Keep hands and feet to yourself
5. Follow the directions given by your leaders

## Large Group

### Game

Have the kids play a game of Heads Up Seven Up with 4 people up front before the lesson begins.

### Prayer, Offering, and Communion

Pray for the kids as they begin a new lesson, and ask the kids if they have anything specifically they would like to pray about! Pray for their requests during the week. Collect the offering if the kids have any, after the prayer. For the kids that have been baptized they can take communion at this time. Explain to the children that communion is a time for us to remember the sacrifice Jesus made for us on the cross and thank Him for all He has done for us!

### Review the Story from Last Week

**Review the last stories a bit, focusing more on the most recent story, Judges, Kings & Prophets.**

What patterns do you notice about God in these stories?

How did God share the instructions for his covenant with Moses and the people of Israel?

What do you remember about “atonement”?

At this point in the story, how long has it been since God has spoken to his people through the prophets?

**Tell the Story** (Don’t just read it—know it and bring it to life!)

Now 400 years had passed since God had spoken to his people. The Israelites, called Jews, had been under the control of other nations for hundreds of years. They were now ruled by the Romans, the most powerful empire that had ever existed. The Jews were still waiting and hoping for a king who would come to save them and lead them into victory.

Finally, God sent an angel to a young woman named Mary in the town of Nazareth. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph who was a descendant of King David.

The angel, named Gabriel, appeared to her and said, “Don’t be afraid Mary, God has chosen to bless you! You will become pregnant and have a son and you are to name him Jesus (which means ‘God saves’). He will become a king whose kingdom will never end!”

Mary asked the angel, “But how can I have a baby? I am still a virgin.”

The angel replied, “This will happen supernaturally by God’s Spirit, so this baby will be called God’s Son. Remember... nothing is impossible with God!”

Mary said, “I am God’s servant. May everything you have said come true!”

After that Mary sang to God thanking him for choosing to bless her. And just as the angel had said, Mary became pregnant.

When Joseph found out that Mary was expecting a child, he decided to break off their engagement quietly. The law would have permitted him to have her killed if she had an affair.

But one night Joseph had a dream. An angel appeared to him and said, “Joseph, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. The child in her is from God. You are to give him the name Jesus for he will save the people from their sins.”

So Joseph took Mary as his wife, but he did not sleep with her until after the baby was born.

Months later, as Joseph and Mary were traveling to Bethlehem, the time came for Mary to give birth. No rooms were available for them at the local inns so they found an animal stable, and that is where their baby was born.

They named the boy Jesus, meaning “the Lord is salvation,” just as the angel had told them. Mary wrapped him in strips of cloth and laid him in a feed trough.

That night a group of shepherds were out in the fields taking care of their sheep when an angel suddenly appeared and frightened them. The angel said, “Don’t be afraid, I am bringing good news for everyone! The one who will save you, the Messiah, has been born tonight in Bethlehem! You will know it’s him when you find a baby in a stable wrapped in strips of cloth.”

The shepherds said to each other, “Let’s go to Bethlehem as fast as we can to see the miracle God told us about.”

When the shepherds ran into town they found Joseph, Mary and the baby in the stable just as the angel had said.

After this they went and told everyone what they had heard and seen—and the people were truly amazed!

A few months later, wise men traveled from distant lands to find the newborn king. A star had guided them from the east to Bethlehem and stopped over the place where Mary and Joseph were living. As the wise men entered the house they were overcome with joy and knelt down and worshipped Jesus. They brought him expensive gifts of gold, spices and perfumes.

Eventually Joseph and Mary moved back to Nazareth where Jesus grew strong, wise and full of God’s grace. When Jesus was twelve years old, he and his family attended the annual Passover Festival in Jerusalem. (Do you remember the first Passover?)

On the way home, Joseph and Mary assumed that Jesus was in their caravan but traveling with some of their other relatives. Later, when they stopped to sleep for the night, they realized he was nowhere to be found. In a panic, Joseph and Mary went back to Jerusalem to look for Jesus.

Three days later they finally found him—he was in the temple courts discussing deep questions with the religious teachers. The teachers were all amazed at his understanding and insights. His parents didn’t know what to think.

“Son!” his mother said to him. “Why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been frantic and have searched for you everywhere.”

“But why did you need to search?” Jesus asked. “You should have known that I would be in my Father’s house.” But Joseph and Mary didn’t understand what he meant. So Jesus returned to Nazareth with his parents and was obedient to them. His mother thought deeply about what had happened.

Jesus grew in both height and wisdom, and was loved by God and everyone who knew him.

## Retell the Story

This may seem redundant, but it is very effective in helping your kids remember and own the story. You will want to help them retell the story by giving them leading questions like: So, where did the story begin? What happened in this story leading up to Jesus’ birth? What happened after it?

## Dialogue

Remember **this is a dialogue, not a quiz**. The questions are a good start to draw out observations about the story, and the “answers” are just there to help you guide kids toward some key ideas.

- 1. What did we learn about Joseph? ...about Mary?**
- 2. What was unique about Jesus’ birth? Where was he born?**
- 3. Why do you think it was important for Jesus to be born of a virgin mother?**
- 4. Who was Jesus a descendant of? How might this be important?**
  - David—he’s the promised king
  - Abraham—he’s the promised one through whom all the nations would be blessed
- 5. What can we learn from the shepherds and how they responded to the angel?**
- 6. What else did you hear in this story that reminds you of what the prophets said about the promised Messiah?**

See the end of the previous story for a list of prophecies...

- 7. What does the name Jesus mean?**
  - The Lord is salvation
  - Another name given to Jesus was Emmanuel, which means ‘God with us’!
- 8. We have all probably heard this story before as part of “The Christmas Story.” What jumps out at you as new or different?**

## Application (Optional questions that may help apply the story)

- 9. What questions do you have about the story? What do you wonder about?**
- 10. What will you remember most about this story?**
- 11. How does this story make a difference in your life?**
- 12. What do you imagine people thought when they had been told the Messiah had been born?**

- 13. How would you have reacted? Would you have expected his entrance to the world to be different?**
- 14. If God sent Jesus to give the world a great gift, why do you think we focus so much on what we get at Christmas?**
- 15. How can we best celebrate and remember the birth of Jesus? What can YOU do to celebrate this personally?**

## Activity

There is a color sheet and a word search for the kids to work on after the lesson is finished. Also, you could look up the passages with the children in the Jesus Storybook Bible and read them if there is extra time.

## Extra Time Activities

If there is extra time, have the kids look up the passages from the story and read them out loud.