



Leader Guide

A War Story

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Big Idea:

Christmas is a story of invasion and conquest, the beginning of the end of the Great War between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness. Bethlehem is the beachhead for God's campaign to regain the territory lost in the battle against sin and evil.

Scripture:

Matthew 2

Memory Verse:

"The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work."

1 John 3:8

It's becoming Christmas time! Here at Kids' City we are learning the next few weeks that the Christmas story isn't just one story, but a number of stories within a story! The kids are going to experience four often untold stories and the meaning and impact they had on the birth of Jesus.

Leader Info: Story-Formed People

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)*

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.

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 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 are you most excited about this week?
4. What is your favorite Thanksgiving food?
5. What do you think of most when you hear about the Christmas story?

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 the dart game for the first 5-8 minutes. In the dart game you shoot other people with darts if they look at you. The individual who is shot has to lay down on the ground. Another person can come and pull the fake dart out of a person's neck to save them.

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!

Story Time (Don't just read it—know it and bring it to life!)

The next four weeks at Kids' City we are going to learn that the Christmas story isn't just one story, but a number of stories within a story. We are going to experience four often untold stories and the meaning and impact they had on Jesus being born.

(Show a clip from the first scene in the Chronicles of Narnia.)

How many of you all have ever seen a war movie or clips of a war like this one. Is it scary? Are a lot of people injured or hurt, and maybe a few die because of the violence? Is there usually one side of the war that is evil and the other side that is good? This scene from The Chronicles of Narnia is depicting some of the things that occurred during World War II. Do you sometimes think that times when our country is not in war that it is much safer and peaceful? We are going to watch another clip from the Chronicles of Narnia now.

(Show a clip from the war in the end of The Chronicles of Narnia.)

What are some things you noticed? *(There are a bunch of weird creatures, one side is good, one side is evil, there is a lot of violence)*

This week we are going to talk about the war story within the Christmas story. Does anyone remember the first story we told here in Kids' City a few months ago about a being called Lucifer? What did Lucifer do? *(Yes! He rebelled against God and led a third of the other angels in heaven to rebel with him. God kicked them all out of Heaven because he is so pure and holy that the disobedient angels could no longer be with him.)* Does anyone remember the second story we told here in Kids' City? Yes it was about Adam and Eve! Does anyone remember what Adam and Eve did? *(They ate the forbidden fruit in the garden of Eden and were forced to leave God's protection and presence.)*

Ever since the fall of Lucifer (who is called Satan) and the angels that followed him (who are called demons) and Adam and Eve's first sin, the spiritual world has been at war with each other. In the beginning, the world was God's Kingdom. Humans were created to show His Kingship on the earth- we were made in God's image! But our sin and disobedience to God caused the earth and everything God had given to us to become a place where evil is. Since this time Satan and his army have sought to kill and destroy God's creation and the people God loves. He is waging a war against God that continues today.

Does anyone know what the world was like when Jesus was born? Was it pretty and beautiful and was everything going perfectly? *(Allow the kids to answer)* It was not a pretty or safe world at all. At this time a foreign government had come and taken over the place where Jerusalem was. They were a very bad and harsh government. They did many evil things to the people that lived there and would often kill and hurt them.

Read The King of All Kings Story in the Jesus Storybook Bible (p. 192-199).

Dialogue about the Story

Why did the three Wise Men get excited about the star that God put in the sky?

They had been waiting for the star

It meant that a new king was born

What did the Wise Men bring as a gift for the baby king?

Frankincense, gold, and myrrh- precious treasures for a king

Where did the Wise Men travel first and who did they meet with?

They went to Jerusalem because it was a very important place where kings and palaces were.

They went to visit King Herod because he would know where the baby king was.

Did Herod know where the new king was?

No... He was very jealous of the new baby king!

He wanted to be the only king!

Where did the Wise Men find out the king was?

Herod's advisors told the Wise Men where God had said the baby king would be- in Bethlehem

The star they had seen in the East moved again, showing them the way to Bethlehem.

Was the baby king born in a place that normal kings are with a palace and guards in a big city, with tons of wealth and gold?

No! He was born in a really-not-so-nice-at-all part of town, down a dirt road in a tiny little house!

What did the Wise Men find in Bethlehem?

They found a baby King on His mother's knee in the tiny house!

What did they do when they saw the little King?

They knelt before Him and bowed their heads and gave Him all of their treasures.

This little King was the King God had promised to David and the people of Israel hundreds of years earlier. He was not the typical type of king though. He was the Prince of Heaven, but came to earth to become poor. He was the Mighty God, but came as a helpless baby. This King had not come to be a boss over everything, but to be a servant. This King Jesus was the warrior of all warriors, but he came to save and to destroy what Satan had done on earth.

Satan told Jesus that he had all the power over all of the kingdoms of the earth. (Luke 4:6). Jesus came to take it all back. Christmas and Jesus' birth means war against Satan and his work on the earth. Jesus is a warrior, the leader of troops marching into battle. Herod knew that Jesus' birth meant war: that's why he was very jealous of him and wanted to kill Him before Jesus could do what He came to do. Everyone is in this war and has the option of following Jesus as their leader or not following Him. Everyone has a side. Whenever Jesus was born in Bethlehem the beginning of the end of the war happened. Jesus' coming means that the war was won, but several battles still continue.

Jesus is like a military soldier in the spiritual battle that is occurring all around us today. We can fight evil today and the attacks the enemy makes against us by clinging to Jesus and obeying and listening to everything He says and following what He does. We do this by being in prayer with Him and reading the Bible. Like Ephesians 6 says the Word of God is the sword by which we fight the attacks Satan and his army makes against us.

Activity

Have the children work on the color sheet. There is also a Thanksgiving craft they can work on too.

Extra Time Activities

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