



## LESSON 1: INTERMEDIATE SMALL GROUP

### Hope

#### MAIN IDEA

Jesus, the Messiah, fulfilled God's promise of a king and savior, though he arrived in a humble and unexpected way. His life and mission were part of God's divine plan, and we should place all our hope in him because he is the only one who can truly save us.

#### BIBLE PASSAGES

- Luke 2:8-20
- Isaiah 7:14

#### MEMORY VERSE

All right then, the Lord himself will give you the sign. Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel (which means 'God is with us').

Isaiah 7:14, NLT



Prepare your heart to teach.  
Plan for the lesson.



Connect with the kids and make them feel heard and cared for. (15 minutes)



Facilitate activity and study to help kids know and love Jesus. (20-25 minutes)



Lead kids to live out the mission of the Gospel. (5-10 minutes)

## Prepare



Prepare your heart to teach.  
Plan for the lesson.

### QUESTIONS

- How can you be praying for the students this week?
- Are there any specific students or requests you can pray for?
- Are there any adaptations that you can make to the lesson this week to better serve the kids in your small group or make your small group more effective?

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Bible
- Name tags
- Snacks, 1 per child
- Printout 2A-2D, 1 set per small group
- Printout 3, several copies per small group
- Large sheet of paper or poster board
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- Construction paper
- Scissors
- Glue or tape
- (Optional) Popsicle sticks

## Connect



Connect with the kids and make them feel heard and cared for.  
(15 minutes)

## Small Group Session 1

### ICE BREAKER

Distribute name tags and snacks. Choose one of the following icebreaker activities to do together while children eat their snack:

- Option 1: Ask the children to share their highs and lows (the best and worst things that happened to them either today or from the past week).
- Option 2: Ask the children to take turns sharing how they're feeling today using the "How Are You Feeling?" chart (from the CKC Games Bag).

### PRAY TOGETHER

Collect prayer requests from the students. The leader or a student can pray for the entire group or a leader can pair up students and invite them to pray for one another.

### INTRODUCTION

Ask,

- **What are the best parts about Christmas?**
- **Why do we get excited about Christmas?**
- **Why do we celebrate Christmas?** (It's celebrating the birth of Jesus.)
- **Do you like the wait for Christmas day to come?**
- **What do you think people were awaiting in Jesus' time since there was no Christmas yet?**

Say, **For many years, God's people suffered, experiencing trials, oppression, slavery and fear. God sent prophets to give hope that a messiah was on the way.**

**Do you know what a prophet is?** (a person chosen to speak for God and to guide the people of Israel)

**A prophet called Samuel came to one of the kings of Israel, King David, and told him this:**

Read 2 Samuel 7:12-13 for students.

### DEFINITION

**Messiah:** Jesus is the deliverer or savior who came to save people from their sins. The Messiah was to be the chosen King who would have a kingdom that would last forever.

### ACTIVITY: MATCHING FOR A KING

Explain to students that they will be playing a matching game. Pass out Printouts 2A-2D, and have students choose which pictures represent a king best.

Have students use the pictures to choose what objects they would expect with the coming of a king, the Messiah.

**If you heard that a king was going to be born, what do you expect him to look like?** (Take answers.)

As we look at the birth of Jesus, we will see that he was not born in the way you might expect as the Messiah and King, but he was born in a special way.

## Heart



Facilitate activity and study to help kids know and love Jesus.  
(20-25 minutes)

## Small Group Session 2

LEADER NOTE

### INTRODUCTION

Ask,

**Have you ever been excited for a gift, but you got something different?**

**Have you ever gotten a gift that was better than you expected?**

Say, **Sometimes we think we will get a gift, but it isn't what we expected. Sometimes it's even better than we expected!**

**As we get ready for Christmas, we can get excited with the anticipation of fun, gifts, and celebration. There will be times when gifts are different than we expect, but that can be a good thing.**

**As we look at Jesus, the Messiah, born as the King of the Jews, his birth was different than anyone expected, but it was a special birth. The birth of Jesus was the promise God kept to his people. Jesus was the person the people could put their hope in to save them.**

Consider sharing a personal example of receiving an unexpected gift or a gift that was better than you expected.

## ACTIVITY OPTION 1: HOPE TREE

Ask, **What does it mean to hope in Jesus?**

**Hope in Jesus is the confidence that he is always with us, guiding us, and that we can trust in his promises.** Read out loud Hebrews 10:23, NLT.

Ask, **What are some examples of things you hope for, like hoping for a sunny day, a good grade, or something fun you would like to do?**

Draw a large tree trunk and branches on the poster board or paper. Make sure it's big enough to hold many leaves. Hand out the construction paper and scissors. Help the students cut out leaf shapes if they need assistance. Consider coming with pre-cut leaves or using sticky notes as an alternative.

Give each child several paper leaves or sticky notes.

Ask the children to think about things they hope for in Jesus. Encourage them to write or draw one hope on each leaf. Younger children can draw pictures representing their hopes if they can't write yet.

Have the children come up one by one to share their hopes and then glue or tape their leaves onto the tree branches.

As each child places their leaf, say, **Our hope in Jesus means that we are trusting in him. Just like we trust a chair to hold us up, or a car to get us from one place to another.**

Once all the leaves are on the tree, step back and admire the Hope in Jesus Tree.

Say, **Look now that it's full of hopes. Just like the tree has grown and become more beautiful with our hopes, our lives can be filled with growth through hope in Jesus.**

**Whenever we feel down or uncertain, we can think about the Hope in Jesus Tree and remember all the things we are looking forward to through Jesus.**

For older students, discuss the difference between general hope and hope in Jesus, emphasizing the importance of faith and trust in him. Optionally, take a picture of the Hope in Jesus Tree to share with parents or to keep as a reminder.

## ACTIVITY OPTION 2: HOPE STABLE

First, take 5 popsicle sticks and glue them together, making a house or stable shape. Next, take a white piece of card stock and trace around the outside. Cut it out just inside of the tracing. Allow students to color or draw the nativity on the paper. This could include Jesus in a manger, Mary, Joseph, animals, and a star. Have students write the word "Hope" on their paper or on the stable. For the final part, glue the paper on the back.

Say, **Today is a day to celebrate hope. Because of Jesus, we have hope, because Jesus is the King and Messiah who entered our world to be able to experience life and all that we go through. Jesus came to die for our salvation despite our own sin. We have hope.**

## ILLUSTRATION

Talk to the students about having something to look forward to, like a vacation, Christmas break, gifts, etc. and how it gives us hope.

Say, **When we feel tired or bored with school, having something exciting to look forward to can give us the energy to push through difficult times.**

**Similarly, God's people were struggling under the control of another nation that dictated their actions. They were frustrated with their situation but held onto the hope that God would keep His promise to send the Messiah to save them and be the King they needed.**

**The promised King did come, though in an unexpected way. It was different, but it was a better way—God's way.**

## Hands



Lead kids to live out the mission of the Gospel.  
(5-10 minutes)

## Small Group Session 2

### LEADER NOTE

### WRAP IT UP

Say, **Jesus is the chosen Messiah, sent by God to bring hope to the world. Jesus' birth was simple and unexpected, but it was still wonderful and part of God's plan to bring the King who was to bring hope to God's people.**

Ask,

- **What are some things that you put your hope in every week?** (chairs, cars, people like parents or teachers)
- **When we put our hope in a teacher, what are we hoping or trusting them for?** (We are trusting they are teaching something important and true.)
- **Why can we put our hope in Jesus?**
- **What are we putting in our hope in Jesus for?** (Jesus saves us from our sins.)

This is a great place to pull out the Gospel Hand and talk about the salvation we have through faith in Jesus. Consider focusing on the hope that we have because everyone who believes in Jesus will be saved from their sins.

### RESPONSE & REFLECTION

Print out the memory verse.

On the back side of the card, encourage students to draw a picture of the first Christmas. Ask them to bring the card back next week to share their picture with the small group. Give an incentive if they bring it back next week (i.e., a ticket).