



LESSON 3: INTERMEDIATE SMALL GROUP

Joy

MAIN IDEA

Jesus is the King who offers hope and joy to all who believe in him. Jesus is the only way to come to God.

BIBLE PASSAGES

- Acts 20:35
- Isaiah 7:14
- Matthew 22:37-39
- Philippians 2:3-4
- Matthew 2:1-16

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 2 (Optional: Copies for each student)
- Printout 3, several copies per each small group
- Blank index cards or cardstock cut into small cards (approximately 3 inches by 4 inches)
- Markers
- Colored pencils or crayons
- Scissors
- Glue
- (Optional) Stickers
- (Optional) Rubber stamps and ink pads
- (Optional) Decorative paper punches
- Hole punch
- Ribbon or string

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: GIFTS CAN BRING JOY!

Ask,

- **What was the best gift you have ever received?**
- **Why was it the best gift you have ever received?**
- **Why do you like getting gifts?**
- **Do you enjoy giving gifts to others?**

Say, **Gifts can bring so much joy! Receiving gifts from others or giving a gift to someone else can bring a great deal of joy to our lives. Giving and receiving gifts can show we are thankful. Gifts can also be for celebrating a special occasion, and show love.**

Let's take some time creating gifts for someone close to us.

ACTIVITY: GIFTS FOR OTHERS

Choose from one of the following options:

Option 1: Homemade Cards

Use blank cardstock or heavy paper. Provide students with decorating supplies (markers, colored pencils, stickers and stamps, etc.). Discuss the importance of how a simple message can brighten someone's day.

Option 2: Inspirational Bookmarks

Use blank cardstock or heavy paper cut into bookmark-sized strips (approximately 2 inches by 6 inches). Provide students with decorating supplies (markers, colored pencils, stickers and stamps, etc.). Encourage students to create personalized bookmarks with inspirational messages to give to friends, family, or classmates.

Option 3: DIY Compliment Cards

Say, **This activity is to encourage others by creating and giving out personalized compliment cards. Sharing kind words to others can be an incredible gift. It can give encouragement, and it can be more meaningful than giving an item to bless others.**

Use blank index cards or cardstock cut into small cards (approximately 3 inches by 4 inches).

Provide students with decorating supplies (markers, colored pencils, stickers and stamps, etc.). Other materials to consider: decorative paper punches, hole punch, and ribbon or string.

Explain the concept of compliment cards: Small cards that contain positive messages or compliments for others. Discuss the importance of compliments and how they can make someone feel valued and appreciated.

Say, **By making and giving encouraging gifts to others, we can bring great joy to their lives. We can also experience joy by doing something special for someone else.**

When we care and love others enough to give them a heartfelt gift, it can bring so much joy. Today we will be talking about the first Christmas when Jesus was born. That first Christmas celebrating Jesus' birth, there were three men who brought gifts as they came to meet Jesus and worship him as the new King.

LEADER NOTE

Your students may not have time to complete this activity in session 1. You may choose to come back in session 2 and allow them to finish or choose a second activity to work on in session 2.

Heart



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

Small Group Session 2

LEADER NOTE

INTRODUCTION

Finish your “Gifts for Others” activity you chose for small group session 1, or allow students to choose another option to work on while you discuss the large group lesson and read some passages of scripture.

Say, **The wisemen were excited to meet the new King that was born. They wanted to worship Jesus and brought gifts to give to him.**

Gifts are a great way to show appreciation and can bring great joy to the person who receives them.

- **Have you ever been more excited and experienced more joy giving a gift to someone?**
- **Why do you think we can get so much joy from giving a gift?**

Let’s take a look at three bible passages that might help us understand why we can get so much joy when we give gifts.

Read aloud Acts 20:35.

- **How can we be more blessed by giving gifts than we can when we get gifts?**
- **Why does giving gifts and considering helping others bring us joy?**

If your students are struggling to stay engaged, consider going around your small group asking specific students a question. You may also consider giving tickets to each student as they answer a question.

Read Matthew 22:37-39.

- **What is the greatest commandment?**
- **What is the second greatest commandment?**
- **Who is your neighbor?** (Jesus said anyone you meet can be your neighbor.)
- **How can we love others like we love ourselves?** (By thinking about what they need.)

Read Philippians 2:3-4

- **Is it easier to think about ourselves or about others’ needs?**
- **How do we take care of our own interests?**

Say, **It might seem backwards at first, but taking care of the needs of others can bring so much more joy to our lives than when we try to make ourselves happy.**

This is because God has created us to love others as much as or even more than we love ourselves. Each person is created in the image of God. God loves us so much that he considered our needs, and since we are created in God's image, when we love others and look at what they need, it allows us to experience joy.

Even though the three wisemen from our story brought gifts for Jesus, the greatest gift on the first Christmas was that God would send Jesus to be born as a baby. Jesus is the greatest gift God gave us!

Jesus brought peace, hope, and joy into the world when he was born.

ACTIVITY: GOSPEL HAND

Lead your students through the Gospel Hand (Printout 2), sharing with them that God loves us so much that he sent Jesus to give his life for us so that we could be saved!

ACTIVITY: JOYFUL JESUS ORNAMENTS

Using cardstock or construction paper, print and cut out various shapes for ornaments (Printout 3). Make sure they are large enough to decorate.

Have the students use markers, crayons, stickers, and other decorative items to decorate their ornaments. Encourage them to think about the joy Jesus brings to Christmas as they decorate.

On each ornament, have the students write or draw something that represents the joy Jesus brings to Christmas. This could be a word (like "love", "peace", "hope", or "joy"), a small picture (like a nativity scene, a cross, or an angel), or a short sentence (like "Jesus is the reason for the season.").

Encourage the kids to hang their ornaments on their Christmas tree at home or give them as gifts to family and friends.

Hands



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

Small Group Session 2

WRAP IT UP

Ask,

- **What did you write or draw on your ornaments?**
- **Why does what you wrote or drew bring you joy?**

Say, **Jesus' birth brings joy to the world, and we can share that joy with others during the Christmas season. We can experience joy by sharing the greatest gift, and that is telling others about Jesus.**

RESPONSE & REFLECTION

Print out the memory verse.

Encourage students to think through the Gospel Hand this week. Challenge them to think through each part of the Gospel. See if they have any questions and to be prepared to bring any questions for next week. Consider making extra copies of the Gospel Hand for students to take home and write their questions on the back of the paper.

If time allows, go through the memory verse with students. Finish in prayer for the students to be brought into peace with God through faith in Jesus.