



LESSON 4: INTERMEDIATE SMALL GROUP

Love

MAIN IDEA

God loves us so much that he sent Jesus to be born as a baby. Jesus is the Son of God, and is the greatest gift of love God has ever given.

BIBLE PASSAGES

- Luke 1:26-38
- Isaiah 7:14
- John 3:16
- 1 John 4:9-10

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
- Paper or cardstock for each student
- Box of markers for each small group
- Several white crayons for each small group
- Measuring tape, one per small group
- Printout 2, one per small group
- (Optional) Printout 3, one per student
- (Optional) Glue
- (Optional) Colored paper

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,

- **Have you ever been surprised by a gift?**
- **Why did that person surprise you with a gift?**

Say, **Getting gifts helps us feel loved and appreciated. Gifts are a great way we can show love to another person. We like to get and receive gifts from the people we are closest to and who we love the most.**

- **Have you ever thought about how much God loves you?**

God loves us so much, and he wants to give us gifts because he loves us so much.

- **What's the greatest gift God could give you?**

The Bible tells us that God created us to know him and be with him. God is perfect and lives in a perfect place called heaven. God wants us one day to be with him, but our sins separate us from God.

- **Does anyone know what sin is?** (Sin is anything we think, say, or do that goes against what is right.)
- **Can you give an example of sin?**

Just like we should be punished when we do something wrong, there is a punishment for sin. The punishment for sin is death and eternal separation from God.

The greatest gift God has given is his only son, Jesus. God sent Jesus to be born on the first Christmas, because Jesus is the only way for us to know God and to be with God forever.

ACTIVITY: MESSAGE OF GOD'S LOVE

Hand a piece of paper or cardstock to each student. Allow students to use markers to draw the outline of a heart or ornament. Using a white crayon, have students write a message of God's love.

Examples: "God loves me!", "I am loved by Jesus!", or "Jesus is God's gift."

Make sure students press firmly when writing the message. Then allow students to use their favorite color of marker to fill in the color. This will highlight their message and reminder. Darker colors help create a greater contrast and make the message easier to see.

Say, **Today in a large group, we get to hear about a message that a woman named Mary got from God. Her message was special and showed God's love for her and for all people!**

Heart



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

Small Group Session 2

INTRODUCTION

Consider asking students to read the passages. Turn to Luke 1:26-38 and have a student summarize the passage for the group. Ask,

- **Why do you think Mary was confused and scared when the angel appeared?** (She was surprised to have an angel talking to her and unsure of what the angel meant by saying she was favored by God.)
- **How did the angel help Mary not be scared?** (The angel told Mary that she was favored by God, and she would have a son.)
- **What was the name Mary was to give her son?** (Jesus.)
- **How did Mary respond to the angel's news that she would have a son?** (She said, "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true.")

ILLUSTRATION: A GIFT IS FREE

Read John 3:16.

- **When you get a gift, who pays for it? Does the person getting the gift pay for it?** (No. The person who is giving the gift is the one who pays for the gift.)
- **Why is sending Jesus as a gift a way to show us how much God loves us?** (Because everyone who believes in Jesus will be saved and not perish.)

Read 1 John 4:9-10.

- **How does God show his love for us?**
- **Why did God send Jesus?** (So that we might have eternal life.)
- **Does God love us just because we love him?** (No!)
- **How is it real love that God sent Jesus to be a sacrifice for our sins?** (God loves us, not just because we love him.)

Say, **God loves us enough to send Jesus even when we didn't love him. God's love for us is so great for us that God still sent Jesus to be a sacrifice for our sins.**

HELPFUL HINT

Consider giving students a ticket when they answer a question to keep them engaged. You may also consider going around in a circle and asking each student a question.

ACTIVITY: WHO IS JESUS?

Lead your students through the “Who is Jesus?” activity (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: TOO BIG TO MEASURE

Use a measuring tape to measure several children, and let them help you measure several items. You can also use the measuring tape to measure out the length of interesting items such as a T-rex tooth (6-12 inches), the world’s largest waffle (8 feet across), a mammoth tusk (10-15 feet), the world’s largest flower bloom (3 feet across), a Stegosaurus tail spike (2 feet), or the world’s longest mustache (14 feet).

- **Can you name some things that are too big to measure with a tape measure?** (Like oceans, planets, and stars.)

God’s love is even greater than all those combined—it’s immeasurable!

- **How far does outer space extend above the earth?**

It stretches endlessly for millions, billions, and trillions of miles! No one has been able to measure its vastness. Sometimes, you might think your sins are too great for God to keep loving you, but that’s not true. He knows we never truly deserve his love, yet he never stops loving us because his love is beyond measure.

Hands



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

Small Group Session 2

WRAP IT UP

Because God's love is so great, God sent his perfect Son, Jesus, to die on the cross and be punished for our sins instead of us. At Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus, but God sent him to show how much he loves us.

God will never stop loving you with his immeasurable, great love no matter how many times you mess up. In fact, he's looking forward to showing you his great love forever and ever in heaven someday.

If you've already trusted Jesus to save you from sin, thank him for his immeasurable love. Whenever you see something big, remember God's love is bigger!

If you've never believed in Jesus to save you from sin before, stop and think about how much love God showed for you when he sent Jesus to take the punishment you deserve for sin. He promises that if you will trust that Jesus really is God's Son who really did die on the cross and come back to life to save you from your sins, you will be saved from sin and he will love you forever. You can believe in Jesus to save you from sin today and enjoy God's love that's way too big to measure.

RESPONSE & REFLECTION

Print out the memory verse.

Ask,

- **Do you have any questions about believing in Jesus?**
- **Is there anything keeping you from believing in Jesus today?**

If students are ready to believe in Jesus, consider leading them in prayer. Remind them that it is faith in Jesus that saves them and not just saying words in a prayer.

Example of Salvation Prayer:

**"Lord Jesus, I confess that I have sinned against you.
I turn from my sin right now.
I believe that you died on the cross to pay the punishment for my sins.
I receive you as the Lord and Savior of my life. I give my life to you.
In Jesus' name, amen."**

Say, God loves you! Believing in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior is about more than avoiding Hell; it's about being able to spend eternity with the God who loves you and wants to know you personally.

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.