## 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.



Introduce the story of the Gospel. (10-15 minutes)



Play large group games. (25 minutes)

## **Prepare**



Prepare your heart to teach.
Plan for the lesson.

#### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Bible
- ☐ Printout 1, two copies
- ☐ (Optional) Name tags for characters in skit
- ☐ (Optional) Flashlight

#### QUESTIONS

- How can you be praying for the student this week? Are there any specific students or requests you can pray for?
- Are there any changes and additions needed for the Large Group Lesson?
- Is there anything specific you need to communicate to the small group leaders?

## Large Group



Introduce the story of the Gospel. (10-15 minutes)

#### INTRODUCTION

Start with the "Who is Jesus" call and response.

#### Ask,

- Has there been a time when you were surprised or scared?
- What or who surprised you? (Leader might consider sharing a personal story.)
- Have you seen those videos of a family member surprising someone?

The person is surprised, but their shock quickly turns to excitement! Being surprised by a gift can be a great way to show that you love someone.

Throwing a surprise birthday party takes thoughtful planning, time, and most importantly, love for the person the party is for.

Today we are going to hear from Mary who was surprised by some incredible information.

Good readers or leaders are recommended for this skit.

#### SKIT (BASED ON LUKE 1:16-38)

Pick students to play the following characters. Provide name tags for each character.

#### Characters:

- Narrator (leader)
- Gabriel, the angel
- Mary

Printout 1 contains the script.

WRAP IT UP

- What is the first thing the angel Gabriel said to Mary?
- How did Mary respond? (She was confused and disturbed.)
- What was the good news that Mary received from Gabriel? (That she was going to have a baby.)
- What was the baby's name? (|esus.)
- What was he going to be called? (Son of the Most High, the Son of God.)
- What was God going to give this baby? (The throne of King David, and he will reign forever.)
- How did Gabriel explain that Mary would have a baby? (Through the power of the Holy Spirit.)
- What was Mary's response to all this news? (She said she is the Lord's servant.)

Say, Mary was surprised by seeing the angel Gabriel in her house but was also confused by his message. She was hearing from one of God's angels that she was in God's favor and he was going to use her to help have a babynot just any baby though. She was going to have Jesus, who is the Son of God.

She responded with obedience after hearing this message. She was willing to be God's servant and be a part of his plan to send Jesus, his Son, to rule and reign as King forever.

God sent Jesus because he loves us very much!

God's plan to send Jesus was all part of God's loving plan to save us from our sin. We are going to focus more on God's love for us by sending Jesus in small groups.

Close in prayer, and dismiss into small groups.

## Games



Play large group games. (25 minutes)

#### MATERIALS NEEDED

- ☐ Jingle bells, 1 per child
- ☐ 10 cups numbered 1-10 on the inside
- ☐ Painter's tape
- ☐ Green long-sleeve shirt and pants, or a green dress
- ☐ (Optional) Green felt or fabric for additional embellishments
- ☐ Safety pins or fabric glue
- ☐ Tinsel garlands
- Mini Christmas ornaments (plastic or felt for safety)
- ☐ Star or angel tree topper (for a hat or headband)
- ☐ (Optional) Battery-operated string lights
- ☐ Ribbon or bows
- □ Scissors
- ☐ Hot glue gun and glue sticks (adult use only)
- ☐ (Optional) Fabric marker
- ☐ Device to play music
- Chairs

#### LARGE GROUP GAME: JINGLE BELL TOSS

Materials: Jingle bells (enough for each student to have one), set of ten cups with a value written inside (1-10), painter's tape

Object of game: Get your jingle bell in the highest-value cup

How to play: Set up a set of paper cups with values written inside of them for each group. The values can be as simple as single-digit numbers (for younger students) or as complex as mixed fractions (for those wanting a challenge!).

Place a piece of painter's tape at a specific distance from each set of cups. Split your class up into small groups. Give each student in each group a jingle bell to play with. Have students take turns throwing their jingle bell into a cup.

Once everyone has had a turn, add up the numbers that have a jingle bell inside. The group with the highest total is the winner!

#### LARGE GROUP GAME: HUMAN CHRISTMAS TREE

Materials: Green long-sleeve shirt and pants or a green dress, green felt or fabric (optional), safety pins or fabric glue, tinsel garlands, mini Christmas ornaments (plastic or felt for safety), star or angel tree topper (for a hat or headband), battery-operated string lights (optional), ribbon or bows, scissors, hot glue gun and glue sticks (adult use only), fabric marker (optional)

Object of game: Decorate your "tree" within the time limit

How to play: Divide players into teams. Each team should have one designated "tree" (the person who will be dressed up). Create 2 or more teams (each team can have 2-4 players).

Lay out all the materials in a central area where each team can access them easily. Each team must dress their designated "tree" using the provided materials within the time limit.

Emphasize safety: No sharp objects, heavy ornaments, or items that could cause discomfort.

Mention that creativity and a festive spirit will be judged (if you have judges).

Game Start: Set a timer for 10-15 minutes, depending on the age of the participants and the number of decorations.

Play festive music to set the mood (optional). Teams work together to dress their "tree" using the materials provided. They can wrap tinsel, attach ornaments, and add any other decorations to make their "tree" look festive. Ensure that all teams use safety pins, fabric glue, or hot glue under adult supervision to attach decorations securely.

If using battery-operated string lights, teams should carefully weave the lights through the decorations, ensuring the battery pack is easily accessible and secure. Add a star or angel tree topper to the head of the "tree".

Once the time is up, each team presents their "tree" to the judges or audience. Judges (or the audience) can evaluate based on creativity, festive appearance, and overall execution.

Give out awards for various categories such as "Most Creative Tree", "Best Use of Materials", Most Festive Tree", etc. Small prizes or certificates can be given to the winning teams.

#### LARGE GROUP GAME: CHRISTMAS MUSICAL CHAIRS

Materials: Device to play music, chairs

Object of game: Sit on a chair when the music stops

How to play: Begin playing the music, and instruct the children to walk in a circle around the chairs. Stop the music suddenly after a short period (random intervals work best). When the music stops, each player must quickly find a chair to sit on.

The player left standing without a chair is out of the game. Remove one chair from the circle.

Restart the music and continue the game. Each time the music stops, remove one chair and eliminate one player. Keep playing until only one chair and two players remain. The player who sits on the last chair when the music stops is the winner.

Remind the children to walk and not run to avoid any accidents. Emphasize that the game is about having fun rather than just winning, to keep the atmosphere light and enjoyable.

Variation: For a festive twist, you can use holiday music or decorate the chairs with holiday-themed decorations.

## Love

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#### **BIBLE PASSAGES**

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- 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.

#### 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

#### 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?

#### 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? (|esus.)
- 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.")

Say, Mary was willing to be part of God's plan. Even though she was very shocked at first when the angel appeared in front of her, she was willing to love and serve God.

Show a picture of a Christmas present.

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.)

Read John 3:16.

 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.

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

HELPFUL HINT

#### 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.

#### OPTIONAL ACTIVITY: JESUS LOVE ME TO PIECES

Print out the Jesus Loves Me to Pieces (Printout 3).

Have each of the children write their name (or help them do this) on the bottom line on their paper. Then, have students cut or tear 1-inch pieces of colored paper. Gather pieces of colored paper and glue them to the heart. You may just scribble glue on the heart and let the kids arrange the pieces however they may.

### **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.

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

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

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- 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.

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## 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

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 lesus 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 lesus?
- 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 lesus 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 lesus.

### **Printout 1A**

#### **CHARACTERS**

- Narrator (leader)
- Gabriel, the angel
- Mary

#### SCENE 1: THE ANGEL VISITS MARY

**Narrator:** Mary is a young woman who lives in the small town of Nazareth in Israel. Mary is alone in her home, busy with her daily chores. Suddenly, a bright light fills the room, and Gabriel, the angel, appears.

**Gabriel:** (Appearing with a radiant glow) Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!

**Mary:** (Startled and confused) What... What does this mean? (Pauses, looking worried)

**Gabriel:** (Gentle and reassuring) Don't be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God! You will have a baby and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!

Mary: (Astonished) But how can this happen? I am a virgin.

**Gabriel:** (Calmly) The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will be with you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God. What's more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! People used to say she was not able to have children, but she is pregnant with a son and is now in her sixth month. For the word of God will never fail.

**Mary:** (Bowing her head in acceptance) I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true.

**Gabriel:** (Smiles, then disappears.)

## **Printout 2**

## WHO IS JESUS?

lesus is the Son of God.

Jesus came from heaven to earth.

He lived a perfect life.

He died on the cross to pay for our sin.

His body was buried in the ground.

Three days later, he rose from the dead victorious!

He is in heaven now preparing a place for you and me!

Right now he sits on a throne in heavenly places.

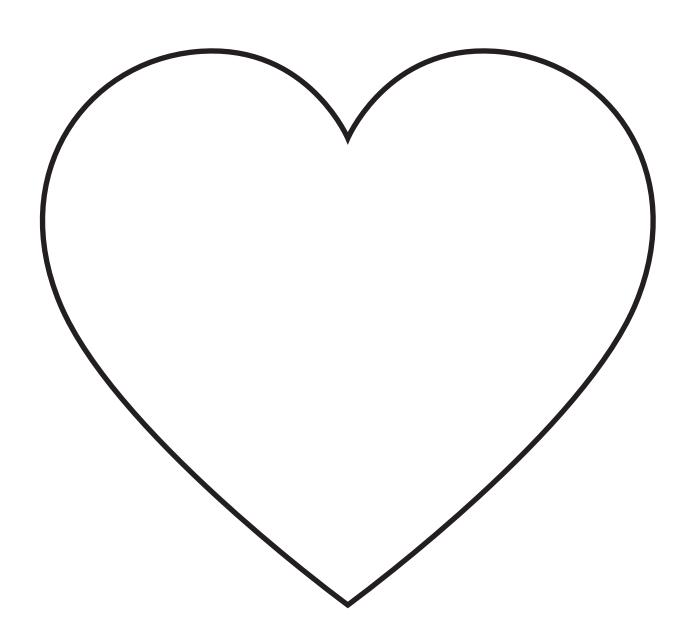
There he prays to the Father for each and every one, and sends the Holy Spirit to all God's children.

One day he will come again as the eternal king, and he will turn every wrong thing, right!

crossroadskidsclub.com/whoisjesus

## **Printout 3**

# Jesus Loves Me to Pieces



## **Memory Verse Cards**

#### 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

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