

# Large Group Leader Guide

## Today's Suggested Schedule

### Prelude: Setting the tone for the experience

See the Getting Ready pages at the end of this document for a detailed description of what you'll need for today. In the Prelude folder of your curriculum, you'll find a variety of other resources to help you prepare.

### Small Group (15 minutes)

#### Social: Providing time for fun interaction

1. Opening Activity

### Large Group (35 minutes)

#### Worship: Inviting people to respond to God

#### Story: Communicating God's truth in engaging ways

- Opener
- Worship "Silent Night" from Silent Night (The King Is Born) and "Extra, Extra [It's Christmas Time]" from Extra, Extra It's Christmas Time single)
- Bible Story (sections about God's Big Story are included as optional)
- Prayer

### Small Group (25 minutes)

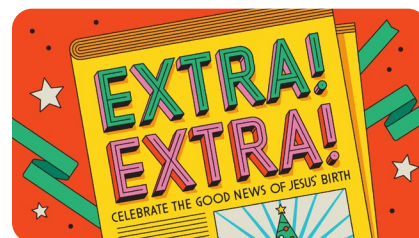
#### Groups: Creating a safe place to connect

1. Bible Story Review: Follow the Clues (K–1st grade), Journey to Jesus (2nd–3rd grade), Bible Story Extension (4th–5th Grade)
2. Application Activity: Celebrate All Year Long (K–1st grade), Celebrate Jesus All Year Long (2nd–3rd grade), Take a Snapshot (4th–5th Grade)
3. Memory Verse Activity: Move Around Verse (K–1st grade), Catch the Verse (2nd–3rd grade), Verses to Take with You (4th–5th Grade)
4. Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss

### Home: Prompting action beyond the experience

- Parent Cue Card (Print or Email)
- Devotionals for Kids
- [Parent Cue App](#) and [ParentCue.org](#)

THIS MONTH



### Today's Bible Story

## The Wise Men Visit Jesus Matthew 2:1-12

### Bottom Line

**Celebrate Jesus all year long.**

### Memory Verse

**"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord."  
Luke 2:11 NIV**



### Inclusive Pro Tips

Loud sounds, bright lights, and large groups can be overwhelming or overstimulating for some children. To create a more inclusive large group experience, consider offering adaptive tools like noise-canceling headphones, sunglasses, sensory-friendly items, or access to modified spaces.

25 MINUTES

# Story

10 MINUTES

# Worship

**AUDIO:** Play high-energy music as kids enter.

**SLIDE:** Theme

**Optional Video:** Theme Loop

→ **Host enters.**

**Optional Video:** Countdown

**Optional Video:** Theme Intro

**Optional Video:** Theme Loop

## ① Opener

**HOST:** “Hi, friends! Welcome to *[Name of environment]*! I know Christmas is over, but today we’re going to see that we can celebrate Jesus all year long. Jesus is God’s greatest gift to us, and He’s a gift for our entire lives.

“We’re going to start celebrating the greatest gift by playing a game!

→ **Create two piles of various-sized boxes (*big and small*), all wrapped in different types of wrapping paper (*Christmas, birthday, all occasion, etc.*) on stage. In the back of the stage, hang two large stars from the ceiling. Make the two piles of gifts equidistant from the stars.**

“To play this game, I need ten volunteers to make up two teams of five. Who wants to play?”

→ **Select ten volunteers. Divide the volunteers into two teams of five. Instruct each team to form a single-file line behind the piles of gifts on stage.**

“The goal of this game is to make a tower, stacking one gift on top of the other.

“When I say go, the first person will grab a gift, go to the back of the room, and put their gift under the star. Then they’ll run back. Once they reach their team, it will then be the next person’s turn to grab a gift and run to the back. They must place their gift on top of the other gift, not beside it. This will continue until all the gifts have been stacked.

25 MINUTES

# Story

10 MINUTES

# Worship

Note: We've suggested worship songs below from Amazing Kids Worship and Orange Kids Music. We've created these songs to be developmentally appropriate for elementary and preteen kids, incorporating simple, direct language, fun dance movements, and upbeat, current arrangements.

We've chosen these specific songs that amplify our teaching content for this month. We recommend that you use these songs as scripted below, or combined with other popular worship songs that your kids know and love. Be sure to share the links to these songs with parents so they can stream them at home or in the car! Songs can be purchased at store. [thinkorange.com](http://thinkorange.com) or for free with APlay.

"If the stack of gifts falls, your team must bring all the gifts back to your team's pile of gifts and start over. The first team to stack all their gifts successfully wins. Are you ready? (*Pause and see if anyone has any questions.*)

"Alright, since you are ready, let's go!"

**AUDIO:** Upbeat music

→ **Play the game, comment on the action, and select a winner.**

"Excellent work, teams. You may have noticed that these weren't all Christmas-wrapped gifts. They are for all kinds of events and special occasions. That's because we can celebrate Jesus not just at Christmas, but every day of the year.

"Let's go celebrate Him now with worship."

## ② Worship

→ **Worship Leaders enter as Host exits.**

**WORSHIP LEADER:** "Hey, everyone! Are you ready to sing and celebrate? Even though Christmas is over, Jesus is still the best gift ever, and we can celebrate His coming all year! We have some special songs today that help us remember the best gift ever! Let's start with a song called 'Silent Night.'

**AUDIO:** "Silent Night (*The King is Born*)" / track 1 from Silent Night (*The King is Born*)

**SLIDE:** Memory Verse

"Before we sing our last song, let's recite our Memory Verse together. Our Memory Verse is part of the message that the angel said to the shepherds on the night Jesus was born, but it is good news for all year! It's Luke 2:11 NIV:

*"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord."*

25 MINUTES

# Story

10 MINUTES

# Worship

Note: We're so excited to be going through key stories of the Bible this year and learning more about its Author—God! It's God's Big Story! But to provide you with flexibility as you experience God's Big Story in your own unique setting, there's more than one way to use the following script!

If you want to follow "God's Big Story," read the following script straight through. Each week will build on the previous ones. But, if your church wants to teach a Large Group session without connecting it to what has come before, two sections in the script below are optional—"God's Big Story Opener" and "God's Big Story Closer." *(Or if you are joining us at some point throughout the year, you can opt out of the God's Big Story part and just join us as we journey through the rest of the story of Scripture!)* We're going to go through the Bible as we teach throughout the year, but whether or not you share God's Big Story each week is up to you!

Whatever way you decide to use the following, know that we're praying diligently for you—we're asking God to help kids see and believe that He loves them, He invented them, and He wants to be their closest Friend. Forever. It's an honor to get to know God with you through the Bible this year!

"Now I'll say a part, and you repeat it after me!"

"Today in the town of David,"

**KIDS:** "Today in the town of David,"

**WORSHIP LEADER:** "a Savior has been born to you."

**KIDS:** "a Savior has been born to you."

**WORSHIP LEADER:** "He is the Messiah, the Lord."

**KIDS:** "He is the Messiah, the Lord."

**WORSHIP LEADER:** "Great job! Every time we remember these words, we celebrate the amazing gift of Jesus. Now, let's pray together and thank God for sending us His Son.

**WORSHIP LEADER:** "Dear God, thank You for loving us so much that You sent Jesus to be our Savior. Help us to celebrate Jesus not just today, but every day. We love You, and we're so grateful for Your gift. In Jesus' name, Amen.

**WORSHIP LEADER:** "Alright, let's sing one more time and celebrate Jesus, the best gift we've ever been given!"

**AUDIO:** "Extra, Extra (*It's Christmas Time*)" / track 1 from Extra, Extra (*It's Christmas Time*) single

"Great job, everyone! Let's go ahead and sit down and hear our true story from the Bible today.

## ③ Bible Story

**SLIDE:** Theme Background

→ **Storyteller enters as Worship Leaders exit.**

### INTRODUCTION

→ **Set a small table on the side of the stage so the Storyteller can set their Bible on it and read from it. Make the prop box accessible to the Storyteller.**

25 MINUTES

# Story

10 MINUTES

# Worship

**STORYTELLER:** “Hi, everyone! Even though Christmas is over, the good news that God loves you is still good news! This week, we’re going to look at a story of some people who celebrated Jesus long after the first Christmas!”

“But before we dive into that true story from the Bible, let me tell you something amazing we’ve been doing this year! We’re going through the key stories of the Bible! By the end of the school year, we will have looked at the key stories of the Bible from cover to cover!”

“Why are we going through the key stories of the Bible? Well, part of the reason God gave us the Bible is so we could know Him! He wants to be our close, close friend. So as we go through the Bible this year, our intention is to learn more about God!”

### GOD’S BIG STORY OPENER (OPTIONAL)

**STORYTELLER:** “We’re going to go through God’s Big Story in the Bible together so we can learn about God! (*Gesture to slide.*)”

**SLIDE:** God’s Big Story

“Let me catch you up on where we’ve been in God’s Big Story so far!”

“You might remember that, in the beginning, God created everything. He made the world, the animals, people ... everything! God made the first people for the same reason He made all people—to be His close, close friends. But sadly, the first people God made chose to turn away from Him and sin. God wanted people to be close to Him, but they couldn’t anymore. Pain, sickness, and death entered the world too.”

“But God didn’t want to leave things that way. So He put His rescue plan in motion right from the start!”

“God was going to rescue everything through a family! God chose a man named Abraham and promised that his family would bless the whole world. Abraham had a great-grandson named Joseph, who became a leader in Egypt and saved his family—God’s people. Over time, God’s people grew but were enslaved by a new Pharaoh. God’s people cried out to God—‘Help us!’ they said—and God heard them! God freed His people and brought them to the super-nice home He had designed for them, the Promised Land.”

25 MINUTES

# Story

10 MINUTES

# Worship

“Some time after God’s people were settled in the Promised Land, they asked for a king like the other nations around them. God gave them a king, and then many more kings (**and one queen**) followed. Sadly, after a long time of turning away from Him, God allowed His nation to be split in two—into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. Prophets spoke for God saying, ‘Come back to Me!’ But the northern kingdom of Israel was destroyed, and the southern kingdom of Judah was taken captive. After years in exile, some of God’s people returned to rebuild their homeland, while others stayed in foreign lands.

“During that sad time, God kept sending messages to His people about the Rescuer He had promised long ago. ‘God’s Rescuer is going to come like this!’ the prophets said. But for years and years, nothing happened.

“And then it did! God sent Jesus, the Rescuer we needed, just like He promised!

“And that’s where we are in God’s Big Story!”

## SETTING UP THE STORY

**STORYTELLER:** “Today we’re continuing our journey through the Bible in the book of Matthew, the first book of the New Testament.

“I’ll need four actors who want to come up on stage and help me tell today’s Bible Story. Can I get four volunteers who want to do some acting?”

- **Choose four kids whose hands are raised and call them up on stage. Give three kids robes and a wooden dowel rod. Give the other kid the star on a stick.**

“Great! You three will be our Wise Men! And you will be our star!”

- **Position the three Wise Men on one side of the stage and the kid with the star on the other.**

“We’re not sure if there were three Wise Men, but that’s what we’ll use to get started on our Bible Story. When God kept His promise and sent Jesus, He put a star in the sky.

- **Instruct the kid with the star on a stick to hold up the star on a stick. Nod to the kid to acknowledge the star.**

25 MINUTES

# Story

10 MINUTES

# Worship

"And some Wise Men, who were far from Bethlehem, saw that star!

## A NEW STAR

**STORYTELLER:** "The Wise Men knew this star was special. They knew that it meant a new king had been born.

"So they got on their camels and followed the star.

"Okay, actors, we're not sure if the Wise Men rode camels, but let's pretend. And let's pretend that stick you have is a camel. So you Wise Men are going to ride your 'camels' around like a stick horse!

"And star, this is where you come in! The Wise Men followed the star, so I want you to slowly walk around the stage—anywhere on the stage that you want to! You can go in a zigzag pattern, or a curvy line, as long as the Wise Men can follow you on their pretend camels. And Wise Men, you follow that star on your camels!

"Is everybody ready? Okay, star, go! The Wise Men will follow you!

- **Allow the "star" to lead the "Wise Men" around the stage. This should be comedic! If you need to, comment on the action to increase the enthusiasm. After a minute or so, continue reading.**

"Okay, star and Wise Men, you can stop. That was a long, long journey.

"After that long journey, the Wise Men arrived in Jerusalem during the time of King Herod. This is what happened:

- **Open the Bible to Matthew 2:2-3 (NirV) and read.**

*[The Wise Men] asked, "Where is the child who has been born to be king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose. Now we have come to worship him."*

*When King Herod heard about it, he was very upset.*

## WISE MEN

**STORYTELLER:** "Herod was the king at that time, and he wasn't thrilled about this news of a new king. He secretly called the Wise Men and told them to tell him where the child was so he

25 MINUTES

## Story

10 MINUTES

## Worship

could worship Him too. But King Herod didn't want to worship Jesus. He wanted to find Jesus and stop Him.

"The Wise Men left where King Herod was and continued on their way to find the king.

"Star, this is where I need you again!

→ **Put the toddler baby doll on one side of the stage.**

"Let me read you all what the Bible says. Star, this will tell you what to do:

→ **Open the Bible to Matthew 2:9 (NirV) and read.**

*The star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them. It finally stopped over the place where the child was.*

"Okay, star, I want you to do what you did before! But this time, end up here above this toddler Jesus. And Wise Men, follow that star on your camels!"

→ **Let the kid actors travel around the stage for a minute or so. When the Wise Men arrive at the toddler Jesus prop, give them each a wrapped gift.**

**STORYTELLER:** "When the Wise Men saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with joy. They worshiped Him and gave Him gifts. "Wise Men, bow down and give toddler Jesus your gifts.

"And these weren't just any gifts. The Wise Men brought Jesus gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Things you would give a king, not just any child. They recognized Jesus as a great, great king."

"After worshiping Jesus, the Wise Men were about to start their long journey home. King Herod wanted to know where Jesus was, but God wanted to protect Him and the Wise Men. So this happened:

→ **Open the Bible to Matthew 2:12 (NirV) and read.**

God warned them in a dream not to go back to Herod. So they returned to their country on a different road.

"So the Wise Men went home a different way.

"Let's thank our actors for helping us tell our true story from the



25 MINUTES

# Story

10 MINUTES

# Worship

Bible today. Thanks, actors! You can put your costumes and props here in this prop box and take a seat. ***(Lead a round of applause as the actors return to their seats.)***

## WRAPPING UP THE STORY

**STORYTELLER:** “Like the Wise Men showed us, we can celebrate Jesus any time—not just at Christmas! They came to Jesus long, long after that first Christmas, but they still gave Him their very best, and they worshiped Him. They showed Him how worthy He is.

“You can do the same thing! You can give Him your very best and worship Him all year long. You can do that in January, in June, in September! You can celebrate Jesus all year long!

**SLIDE:** Bottom Line

“That’s our Bottom Line today: ***[Bottom Line]*** Celebrate Jesus all year long. Say that with me!

→ **Host enters and joins in.**

**STORYTELLER, HOST, and KIDS:** ***[Bottom Line]*** “Celebrate Jesus all year long.”

## GOD’S BIG STORY CLOSER (OPTIONAL)

**STORYTELLER:** “Let’s take a look at the progress we made in God’s Big Story this week!

**SLIDE:** God’s Big Story

“This week we’re right up here a little bit past this picture of God’s Big Story, ‘The Birth of Jesus.’ ***(Gesture to slide.)*** Jesus is just a toddler in the story we read today, so we are on the path just after Jesus was born!

“This week we talked about the Wise Men who came to worship Jesus! After years and years, God had kept His promise, and He put a star in the sky to celebrate it. We needed rescue, and God sent a Rescuer. The Wise Men lived far away from Bethlehem, but they saw the star in the sky and knew it was for a king. Jesus is a King, He is the King of kings. And the people would find out in the coming years that this King had left heaven to come to earth, and give up His life to break that curse we were under. This King would be our Rescuer! The Wise Men came to worship a king—and Jesus is the King of kings, who would save us all.

25 MINUTES

## Story

10 MINUTES

## Worship

"Let's put the next image on our timeline!"

**SLIDE:** Week 4 Timeline Image

→ **If you're making a timeline of printed images on your wall, take this moment to place today's timeline image on the clothesline.**

"This week we talked about the Wise Men who came to celebrate Jesus!"

### WHAT'S OUR PART IN THE STORY?

**HOST:** "You know, the Wise Men celebrated Jesus long after Jesus was born. The first Christmas had long come and gone, and the Wise Men were still giving Jesus gifts and showing Him how wonderful He is.

"You can do that too! You can celebrate Jesus all year long, you don't have to just celebrate Him during the Christmas season!"

**STORYTELLER:** "Exactly! The Wise Men gave Jesus their very best gifts. We don't have gold, frankincense, and myrrh, but we do have our skills and our lives and our love. We can give God our very best every day—showing His love, His forgiveness, and His kindness everywhere we go, every single day.

"If someone is lonely, we can invite them into what we're doing. If someone needs help on their math and we understand it, we can help them! If someone is going through something hard, we can listen as they share why they're hurt. We can show the compassion and kindness Jesus showed. That's a way we can celebrate Jesus all year long!"

"We can also carry over the joy of Christmas all year. God loves us every day, and we can live in that great love every day! We are the much-loved ones all of the time!"

"And the Wise Men worshiped Jesus. They showed Him how great He is with their lavish gifts. We can tell God how great He is in our worship. And when you see God's goodness in the world—in your friend's laughter, in a puppy's romp, or in a gorgeous sunset—in your heart you can say, 'Wow, God, You're awesome.'"

"Celebrating Jesus doesn't just have to be limited to the Christmas season! You can live in Jesus' love and share it all

25 MINUTES

# Story

10 MINUTES

# Worship

year long.

“Let’s finish our time together by talking to the God who loves you all year long!”

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## ③ Prayer

**STORYTELLER or HOST:** “God, thank You for sending Jesus, Your greatest gift. Help us to celebrate Him and Your great love, not just at Christmas, but every single day. We love You, and we’re so grateful for Jesus. Amen.”

→ **Dismiss kids to their small groups.**

**AUDIO:** Play high-energy music as the kids exit.

**SLIDE:** Theme

**Optional Video:** Theme Loop

## PLANNING

# Getting Ready: Opener

## What You Need

- Host
- Different-sized boxes (large and small) wrapped in wrapping paper for a variety of occasions
- Two cardboard or poster board stars (these will need to hang from the ceiling or be taped to the wall in the back of the room)

## Music and Sound Effects

- Upbeat music to use as kids enter the room
- Upbeat music to use as kids play the game

## Large Group Visuals

- Theme Slide
- Memory Verse Slide

## Optional Videos

- Theme Loop
- Countdown
- Theme Intro

## What You Do:

1. Download the slides or optional videos and have them ready to use. If you do not have screen capabilities, you have Orange's permission to enlarge and print the slides on paper.
2. Refer to week 1 to confirm that your church has appropriate licensing to perform or play music and sound effects in your kids' environments.
3. *Optional: Download a countdown video from a royalty-free site. Load it into your presentation software and have it ready to play during the Opener. You could also keep time on a smartphone or watch. Note: Some presentation software, such as ProPresenter, includes a built-in countdown clock that can be overlaid on a still image.*
4. Gather at least 5-10 boxes for each team, two teams total. Boxes should be of various sizes.
5. Wrap boxes in different wrapping paper. Pick different wrapping paper for all kinds of occasions.
6. Hang two stars from the ceiling in the back of the room (or tape to the back wall).

## APlay

Get the most out of your curriculum with APlay! [JoinAPlay.com](https://www.joinaplay.com) is an all-in-one media organization and presentation tool. Experience all of your Orange Curriculum media assets, now pre-built and fully customizable. No more sorting through multiple download folders.

APlay is free with your curriculum subscription and packed with features to help your weekly experience run smoother. APlay gives you more time to focus on what truly matters — more ministry, less media management with Apple TV-based media solutions.

## PLANNING

# Getting Ready: Worship

## What You Need

- Worship Leader(s)

## Music and Sound Effects

- "Silent Night" from Silent Night (The King Is Born)
- "Extra, Extra (It's Christmas Time)" from Extra, Extra (It's Christmas Time) single

## Optional Videos

*Available for Purchase*

- "Silent Night" Dance Moves Video or Live Lyrics Video (available through [Store.ThinkOrange.com](http://Store.ThinkOrange.com))
- "Extra, Extra (It's Christmas Time)" Dance Moves Video or Live Lyrics Video (available through [Store.ThinkOrange.com](http://Store.ThinkOrange.com))

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## What You Do:

1. Download all songs and have them ready to use. Note: Make sure your church has obtained licensing rights to play or perform music. You can obtain a license to perform worship music from Christian Copyright Licensing International ([www.ccli.com](http://www.ccli.com)). It covers over 200,000 worship songs for congregational singing. You are responsible for including the copyright information on all songs reproduced under the Church Copyright License (including song lyrics projected onscreen). This includes the song title, writer credit(s), copyright notice, and your church's CCLI license number. You can include this information on one of the lyric slides, or you can create a separate slide detailing this information, but the copyright information must appear at least once for each song you play or perform.

For example:

"Hallelujah" words and music by John Doe  
 ©2000 Good Music Co.  
 CCLI License # 0000

2. Dance Moves Videos and Live Lyrics Videos are available for many Orange Kids Music songs. For more information, visit [Store.ThinkOrange.com](http://Store.ThinkOrange.com).

## PLANNING

# Getting Ready: Bible Story

## What You Need

- Storyteller
- Host
- Bible
- Table
- 4, 3-foot thick wood dowel rods (like these: <http://bit.ly/46GGrUT>)
- Yarn
- "Large Star" Activity Page
- Toddler doll (a doll that is not a baby to represent toddler Jesus)
- 3 small cardboard boxes (these will be wrapped to be the gifts from the Wise Men)
- Non-Christmas or birthday wrapping paper (like polka dots or stripes)
- 3 kids' robes (biblical-style for the Wise Men to wear)
- Prop box

## Music and Sound Effects

- Upbeat music to use as kids exit the room

## Large Group Visuals

- Theme Background Slide
- Bottom Line Slide
- Theme Slide

## Optional Video

- Theme Loop

## What You Do:

1. Download the slides and have them ready to use. If you do not have screen capabilities, you have Orange's permission to enlarge and print the slides on paper.
2. Confirm that your church has appropriate licensing to perform or play music and sound effects in your kids' environments (see above under Opener).
3. Before group time, create a star hanging from a dowel rod. To do that, print two copies of the "Large Star" Activity Page and cut them out. Tape the two stars together to create a double-sided star. Tape where the hole punch will be on the star to reinforce the hole punch. Hole punch the double-sided star near the top of the star. Dangle the star from the dowel rod using about a foot of yarn. Tape the yarn securely to the dowel rod.
4. Wrap the three gifts with holiday-neutral wrapping paper. (Feel free to use three holiday-neutral gifts from the Opener.)
5. Put all of the props in the prop box.

## Optional for God's Big Story

- Clothesline and clothespins for the timeline in your room
- God's Big Story Slide
- Week 4 Timeline Image Slide
- We recommend that you create a timeline in your Large Group room that you can add to throughout this curriculum year as we travel through the Bible. This can be a simple clothesline or a section of the wall where you can hang the printed Timeline Images in order, week by week. We'll provide a Timeline Image for each week of the curriculum. There are two versions of each Timeline Image—a slide and a print version. A digital [God's Big Story poster](#) is available as well in the Orange Store.

## PLANNING

# Getting Ready

## Video Enhancements for Your Environment

*Available in your media files and APlay.*

Our Large Group scripts are interchangeable with these videos so you can plug and play the way you need to each week.

**For 252 Kids (kindergarten through 3rd grade):**

→ StoryLab: Invite elementary kids to engage with inquisitive young hosts as they explore core biblical truths and stories in a STEAM-inspired setting.

**For 252 Preteen (4th and 5th grade):**

→ The So & So Show: Guide preteens to explore questions of faith through a YouTube-style show full of humor and lots of zany fun.

**Additional environment enhancements including:**

- Motion graphics, including loops
- Themed transitions
- Countdown videos (30 seconds, 60 seconds, and 5 minutes)