

Get Ready for Christmas

Leader Guide: Lesson 1

Elementary: Grades 3 – 6
“An Angel Comes to Visit”

Series Verse

But the Angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord,”
Luke 2:10-11 NIV

The Point of the Lesson:

Each child will learn that God specializes in making the impossible possible. They will realize and that God is bigger than all of their hurts and struggles and that God is bigger than all of their successes. They will also learn that no matter how hopeless a situation may be at home or school, God is always capable of doing a miracle in their life, just like He did in the life of Mary.

The Power of God’s Word:

For nothing is impossible with God.
Luke 1:37 NIV

The Prayer of Each Child:

Dear God, Thank you for helping me understand that all things are possible with you. Sometimes I have my doubts and sometimes I believe I may just be in a hopeless, helpless situation and then I hear a story about how you did a miracle in the life of Mary and Joseph and really the entire world. I know you are a God of miracles and a God of hope. This week I will remember this and let it comfort me when I feel like I am in a hopeless situation with my family or friends. Thank you for all you have done for me and most of all for dying on the cross for my sins. In Jesus Name, Amen

The Lesson in a Word:

Hope

Prepare: (Before service)

Object Lesson: Christmas List (The longer the better...maybe use adding machine paper) with a list of things that the MC wants for Christmas, such as a Starbucks Gift Card, an iPod, a new shirt, a skateboard, a teddy bear, etc.

Game Materials: Rolls of white toilet paper (2 per group)

Student Handouts: *There are two handouts for students. One is a Family EnterAction Guide that is given out (one per family only) the first couple of weeks of a new series. We recommend passing out coupons (Provided on CD) to all the students that direct the parents to a central pick up location, such as the Children's Information Booth at your church, so that those parents who are interested, pick them up and you aren't sending several home to the same family.*

Photocopy & spiral bind **EnterAction Guides** (Provided on CD or purchase ahead of time from www.empoweringkids.net).

Photocopy **Student Handouts** (Provided on CD) There are two artwork options available to you on the CD, either the full color one in Adobe Acrobat Reader (.pdf format) or the one in Microsoft Word (.doc format). The one in the PDF format, is completely ready to go and just needs to be duplicated, but cannot be altered. (We recommend using this one.) The one in Word format, can be changed so that you can add your church name, logo or anything else you would like before duplication. (Note: This format does not include the color artwork for the background, so you would need to use this along with the artwork template.) If you have questions here, please feel free to call Empowering Kids at 1-866-EMPOWER (USA only) or 949-855-0512 (International) or email us at Mary@empoweringkids.net, and we will be happy to help you with this.

Pencils (enough for all the students)

G3 Game: Mickey Mouse Gloves or other large, silly gloves. (1 per group)

Preview: (5 minutes)

During Check In Time:

We recommend that you have a variety of games and activities available for your kids to interact with after they have checked into your program. Some ideas for this are board games, a large Lego table, crafts or bead projects, a large whiteboard and markers (just for the kids), video games (be sure to screen the games for appropriate-ness), large floor games (rug or beach type games), drawing paper and markers, and a snack bar if possible. Have a signal, like a certain song that is played each week, to let the kids know when it is time to clean up and come sit down for the program to begin.

Welcome from MC:

Hey everyone, welcome to (Name of your church). We are so glad you are here with us today. We are going to have a great time together worshipping God and getting to know Him better. I have something exciting to tell you all! Today is the FIRST day of a brand new series! That's right, we are starting a series, all about Easter, since that is the holiday we are all getting ready for right now. What's that? You aren't getting ready for Easter? Christmas, you say?? That's right! It IS ALMOST Christmas time! And that is what our new series is about, Getting Ready for Christmas!

Object Lesson: (Holding Christmas List)

I brought my Christmas list with me today. Yep, here it is. These are all the things I am HOPING to get for Christmas. Let's see, there's a Starbucks Gift Card, an iPod, a new shirt, a skateboard, a teddy bear, I was HOPING that you guys would ask what I wanted for Christmas. Christmas is a time of Hope. But not that kind of hope actually! In our video today, we will learn what kind of Hope Christmas is all about! But for now, let's get to know the people around you. Turn to the person next to you and ask them the answer to this Kid Connect Question up on screen. Then tell them your answer.

Kid Connect Question: (Provided on CD on Power Point)

Would you rather have an angel show up and talk to you or have them send you an email?

Play: (5 Minutes)

Here is a quick game to play with the kids to get them moving and having fun. Should take approximately five minutes if you move it quickly.

Game: Angel Tree

Divide children into two or more groups. Each group chooses one person (could be a student or leader) to be decorated as an angel. Each group gets 1-2 rolls of toilet paper and 5 minutes to decorate their person. The MC chooses the best angel.

Transition for MC:

Hey, great job, everybody on your angels. It was fun pretending to have an angel here with us today. Well, in today's story we are going to hear about someone who had a real angel come to visit them.

Praise: (15 Minutes)

This is a time of corporate worship through singing and music. We suggest 3 Christmas Songs that are lively and kid friendly, but not about Santa, reindeer or elves. Some good ones that kids enjoy are Jingle Bells, Joy to the World, Hark the Herald Angels Sing, Silent Night, We Wish You a Merry Christmas, O Holy Night, We Three Kings or The Little Drummer Boy.

Process: (15 Minutes)

This process includes the 10-15 minute teaching video, practice point and memory verse. On the DVD Menu Screen, choose Lesson 1 and then select Lesson 1 on the sub menu to play all of the following pieces to the Lesson.

Lesson in a Word: Hope

Memory Verse:

For nothing is impossible with God.

Luke 1:37 NIV

What Should I See?

How would you feel if an angel came to talk to you? Well, that's what happened to Mary. Mary, a young lady, was going to get married to a man named Joseph. Joseph was a carpenter. One day Mary had a very special visitor. The visitor was the angel, Gabriel. Gabriel was sent from God to give Mary a message. He said, "Rejoice! You are very blessed! The Lord is with you!"

Mary was scared at first but Gabriel told her not to be afraid. He told her that God was very pleased with her. He said that she was going to have a baby, but not just any baby. She was going to have God's Son and she was to name him "Jesus." Mary was confused about how she could have a baby because she was not yet married to Joseph. Gabriel told her, "This baby will be the Son of God. He will save His people from their sins." He said, "Your cousin, Elizabeth, will also have a baby." He reminded Mary that nothing is impossible with God."

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary said. "I will do whatever the Lord wants me to do." Then Gabriel, the angel, left Mary. Mary packed her things and went to see her cousin, Elizabeth, right away. When Elizabeth saw Mary, she knew that something very special was going to happen. She knew that Jesus was coming and that Mary would be His mother. She was so happy to see Mary and hear the good news. Mary was happy to see Elizabeth. She sang a song of praise to the Lord, thanking Him for choosing her to carry God's Son, Jesus. She was glad to be chosen by God to be Jesus' mother.

Source: Luke 1:26-56

What's The Key?

Wow, what a great story. First an angel comes to visit Mary and then he tells her that she is going to be the mother of Jesus! That is a lot of important information in one day isn't it? Well, you may have never had an angel visit you, maybe you never will but here is the really cool thing. That doesn't mean it can't happen. Even though this story happened many years ago we still have the same God and He wants us to remember that He can still perform miracles today.

What's That To Me?

If God can still do miracles today then we can count on Him for hope. Not the kind of hope like we think of. The kind of hope that God thinks of. You see, the kind of hope that God talks about is a sure thing. We may say that we "hope" we get a good grade on a test, or we "hope" we make the soccer team at school. You see, God says that nothing is impossible with Him. That's right, nothing is impossible. That means we can always have hope. You may be having a hard time right now. I know it's hard to go through tough times, but how do we make it through? By having Hope and we have that hope because with God ALL things are possible.

How Should I Be?

How should I be? Well, after hearing that God performed a miracle birth of His Son Jesus and after He reminds us that with Him all things are possible. I think we should take Him at his word. After all, God hasn't changed. What a great time of the year to expect a miracle! This week, I'm going to trust God in the most difficult and even hopeless situation. Do you know why? Because I am going to take God at His word and I am going to remember what He told me this week and I am going to put my trust and Hope in Him. After all, He is the one who said, "Nothing is impossible with God."

Practice Point:

God performs miracles so I will ask
God to help me with an impossible task

Practice: (35 Minutes)

On the Resource CD, select Power Point Game and then select Lesson 1 to show the first slide. Press the arrow key to advance to the next slide.

1. Total Recall (10 Minutes)

Question 1: What was the name of the angel who came to Mary? (Gabriel)

Question 2: What was Mary's going to get married to? (Joseph)

Question 3: What was Mary supposed to name her baby boy? (Jesus)

Question 4: The angel Gabriel told Mary someone else was pregnant, what was her name? (Elizabeth)

Question 5: We know the angel Gabriel visited Mary. What angel visited Elizabeth? (It was Gabriel as well)

Question 6: After the angel Gabriel visited Mary, where did Mary go? (Elizabeth's Home)

Question 7: Was Elizabeth Mary's cousin or sister? (cousin)

Question 8: The lesson in a word is _____. (Hope)

2. "Live It" Testimony on Video (5 Minutes)

This 5 minute video shows either Craig or Ande sharing personal stories of how they have lived out the lesson in their own lives. On the DVD Menu Screen, choose Lesson 4 and then select Live-It on the sub menu screen.

Question: How do you live out hope in your life?

3. Memory Madness (10 Minutes)

There is a slide on the Power Point Lesson that shows the verse, which you use at this time. Each team participates in their group trying to recite the week's verse with the hand motions. Show the slide and give the kids a couple of minutes to practice the verse together. Then take the slide away and give each group a chance to recite the verse. The MC gives points to the teams according to how well they do on the Memory Madness Challenge.

For nothing is impossible with God.

Luke 1:37 NIV

4. G3 Video Game (5 Minutes) *Note: This series includes a mystery guest, which is a silhouette of Saint Nicholas, that we call "Nick." We suggest that you watch this first and see if it is something that you feel comfortable showing your kids.*

Here is a fun video game to play with your kids! The students will each vote, by a show of thumbs up or thumbs down, whether they think the "mystery guest" who is being interviewed about the story, will get the question right or wrong. On the DVD menu screen, select Lesson One, and then on the sub menu screen, select G3. The video will pause when it is time for you to ask the kids whether they think the person will answer the question right or wrong. Assign one adult or student leader (with a Mickey Mouse glove) to the front of each

group, who will take a quick census of the thumb votes and decide what most of the group thinks the answer will be. This leader then uses his large Mickey Mouse glove to show the group vote of either thumbs up or thumbs down. After the short pause, the video will continue playing and will reveal whether the 'man on the street' got the answer right or wrong. Expect to hear lots of cheering if the students guessed correctly or moans if they were wrong! Its lots of fun and reinforces some key concepts from the lesson in a creative way!

Question 1: What was the name of the angel that visited Mary? (Gabriel)
"Nick's" answer was, Rudolph. He answered the question WRONG.

Question 2: Does God still perform miracles today? (Yes)
"Nick's" answer was, yes. He answered the question RIGHT.

Question 3: Finish this sentence. "For nothing is _____ with God. (Impossible)
"Nick's" answer was, impossible. He answered the question RIGHT.

WEEKLY HANDOUT

At this point, have several leaders help to quickly pass out the Student Handouts and pencils to all the students. (We don't recommend doing it earlier in the class, like upon check in, because they may leave them somewhere, roll them up, make paper airplanes, you get the idea...) This can be done in large group, by having them turn around and use their chairs to write on. Or split the students into small groups and have them answer the questions around tables with leaders facilitating the discussion of questions. Either way, allow time for the students to fill in their personal answers and then give them an opportunity to share their answers with the group. You can keep these groups consistent or mix them up each week, depending on what your church needs and demographics of the kids in your service. Remember make it fit your program!

Things to Do Here:

Question 1: Why should I have hope in a difficult situation?

Question 2: Who is my hope found in?

Question 3: Where do I learn more about God's hope?

**Allow the students a chance to fill in the information on the tear off flap portion of the Student Handout and turn them in to leaders. This provides them with a chance to share prayer requests, questions or comments with you! You may even want to have a special box or mailbox where they can drop those prayer requests in for you to read later. Be sure that someone on the Children's Ministry Staff at the church follows up on these prayer needs and that the kids are prayed for during the week.

Things to Do at Home:

Lastly, kids are dismissed to go and play games as they wait for their parents to pick them up. They take the student handout home and finish the last 3 questions during the week. You may want to offer an incentive of some type to students who return with their handout the following week, to encourage them to finish it at home.

Question 1: Read Luke 1:26-56 and write down one thing that you find amazing in this story.

Question 2: Is there a situation in your life that you need to put your HOPE in God to help you through it. Write the problem down here.

Question 3: Share this problem with your Mom, Dad, Grandpa or Grandma and ask them to pray with you about the situation. After you have done that, write the name of the person you shared it with on this line. _____