



## Three Men Find a Baby

**Bible Story:** Three Men Find a Baby (Wise men discover Jesus) • *Matthew 2:1-12*

**Bottom Line:** Discovering what God says helps you know Jesus.

**Memory Verse:** “Your word is like a lamp that shows me the way. It is like a light that guides me.” *Psalms 119:105 (NirV)*

**Life App:** Knowledge—learning something new so you can be better at whatever you do.

**Basic Truth:** I can trust God no matter what.

### **Plug-In: (Small Groups, 15 minutes)**

Welcome kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up. Get ready to experience today's story. *Before kids arrive, pray for each regular attendee by name. Pray for those who might visit your group for the first time. Pray that each kid would take away something specific today; that they would each leave encouraged to get to know Jesus better and that they would have some ideas about how to do that.*

#### **1. Early Arriver Idea**

**What You Need:** Offering container; a pile of random small objects (toys, office supplies, whatever you have on hand)

#### **What You Do:**

- Greet kids as they arrive and encourage them to place their offering in the container.
- After a few moments of chatting, place the pile of objects in the center of your circle.
- Let all the kids get a good look at the objects, and then have the kids turn around with their backs to the center.
- Remove an object from the pile and then let kids turn back and guess what's missing.
- Play a few rounds as time allows.
- Tell kids there's a piece of the Christmas story that we didn't tell during December and left out of our nativity scenes! Let them guess the missing part of the story and tell them that we'll hear all about it today.

Lead your group to the Large Group area.

## **ConnectGroups: (Small Groups, 25 minutes)**

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible story applies to real life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

### **1. Follow the Stars (*memory verse activity*)**

**What You Need:** Bibles, “Follow the Stars Verse Cards” Activity, basket of small prizes; 1 prize for each kid

#### **What You Do:**

- Make sure the trail of verse cards leading to the prize basket has been set up.
- Gather your group in a circle near the starting star and look up the verse together (Psalm 119:105), using the navigation tips below and pairing pre-readers with older kids. If you have a strong reader in the group, let him or her read the verse aloud.

***Finding verses with a multi-age group:*** Guide all kids to open their Bibles to the front and find the table of contents. (*Hold up a Bible opened to the table of contents to show the kids what the page looks like.*) When the kids find the table of contents, ask a middle elementary kid (2<sup>nd</sup> -3<sup>rd</sup> grade) to find Psalms in the list under “Old Testament.” When the kid finds Psalms, lead them to look at the page number beside the word and say it aloud, explaining that the number tells them on what page they can find Psalms. Ask older elementary kids (4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade) to help younger ones find the correct page in their own Bibles. When they all find Psalms, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. Ask a kindergartner or 1<sup>st</sup> grader to find chapter 119, and give time for all the kids to turn the pages to find it. Explain that the small numbers are verse numbers, and ask a middle elementary kid to find verse 105 in chapter 119. Then, read the verse aloud slowly, especially for your pre-readers; or ask older elementary kids to read it to the group.

- Then, encourage the group to follow the stars to the basket of treats. Ask older kids to be kind to younger kids and let them pick up most of the stars.
- Bring the basket back to your small group area for discussion and handing out prizes.

#### **What You Say:**

“Just like God put the star in the sky to guide the wise men to Jesus, God gave us His Word to guide us like a lamp and a light so we can find Jesus, too. We’ve seen so far that **[Bottom Line] discovering what God says helps us know Jesus** and we just followed a path of light-giving stars to a treasure. The wise men had expensive gifts to give and lots of money to undertake such a large journey, but they needed Jesus, the true treasure. We can know a lot about a lot, but we need to follow God’s Word to know Jesus.”

### **2. Wise Men Race (*application activity / review the Bible story*)**

**What You Need:** Paper cups; 1 for each kid, markers, decorative items (*optional*)

#### **What You Do:**

- Give each kid a paper cup and encourage kids to decorate their cups to resemble a wise man from the Bible story. If you’re using the optional items, they can make crowns and clothes for their men.
- When everyone is finished, ask kids to line their wise men up on one side of your group’s area.
- Ask review questions about the Bible story. For older kids, ask them individually. For younger kids, they can answer as a group.
- Some questions might be:
  - Where did the wise men come from? (*The Far East*)
  - What did they follow? (*A star*)
  - What did they think they would find? (*A Savior*)
  - What town did they go to first? (*Jerusalem*)
  - Which king did they find first? (*King Herod*)

- Was King Herod happy to hear about the newborn king? (*No, he didn't want another king in his town.*)
  - What town was Jesus in? (*Bethlehem*)
  - How many gifts did the wise men bring? (*Three*)
  - What were the gifts? (*Gold, frankincense and myrrh*)
  - Did they take the same way home? (*No, they took a different route because God warned them not to go back to Herod.*)
  - What did they have that made them recognize the new star God put in the sky? (*Knowledge*)
- For each question kids get right, their wise man may move a step (or 3, whatever you decide) towards the other side of the small group area. The game ends when all the wise men are in the same place. (Or if you have mostly older kids, the game ends when one kid gets his wise man back to the small group space.)

### **What You Say:**

“Your wise men sure displayed some impressive knowledge in this race! In our Bible story, we heard that the wise men studied what God had said through the prophets in the Old Testament, and so they were ready to follow the star to Jesus. We have been learning a lot this year about how God keeps His promises and we’ve been increasing our knowledge about what God says. And since **[Bottom Line] discovering what God says helps you know Jesus**, we’re getting to know Jesus more and more when we read God’s words, the Bible, and when we talk about Jesus with our families and friends who know Him. What kinds of things do we know about who Jesus is, by hearing the story of the wise men? (*Allow for answers*) Yes, we know He is a king, we know He was sent by God who put the new star in the sky, and we know that He is worthy of the best gifts we have. We’ve come to know Jesus quite a bit better because of this story!”

### **\* 3. Who Is Jesus? (application activity)**

**What You Need:** Bibles, “Star Verses Scripture Strips” Activity Page, large pieces of paper or poster board, markers

### **What You Do:**

- Divide the group into pairs or trios, with at least one strong reader on each team.
- Give each team a Bible, some markers, and a large piece of paper.
- Direct kids to look up the verse on the Star Verse Scripture strip, and discuss amongst themselves what the verse says about who Jesus is. Then, help them cooperate to make a poster that shows that fact.
- When everyone is finished, let each team have a minute or so to present their posters to the group.

### **What You Say:**

“Look at all these things we’ve learned about Jesus! Because **[Bottom Line] discovering what God says helps you know Jesus**, we now know that Jesus is a king who rules the universe, that Jesus is a shepherd who takes care of us, Jesus is a healer who makes us strong, and Jesus is a teacher who makes us wise. We can know these things about Jesus, but what does it take to really know Jesus? Well, for me it was like this . . . **[Make It Personal] (Share an age-appropriate time when you experienced Jesus as shepherd, comforting you in loneliness or sadness; or as teacher, when you followed His wisdom to speak life or to go the extra mile; or as a healer when your health or peace was restored by prayer; or when you marveled at creation and its King.)**

“Jesus really is all of those things, and we can know Him by spending time with Him in prayer, by reading the Bible, and by talking with other people who know Him, too. You all shared how you know Jesus when you told us about your posters. We all want to know Jesus better, so

sharing knowledge, which is “learning something new so you can be better at whatever you do”, is a fantastic way to do that!”

*Discussion questions:*

- Can you remember any of the promises God made about Jesus from our Christmas season? How did those promises help the wise men and others know what to expect about Jesus?
- Has God told us things that help us know what to expect about Jesus? (Look up and read Colossians 1:15-17.) Can we expect Jesus to be powerful? Can we expect Him to be steady and trustworthy to hold everything together? Can we expect Him to care for us, and all of creation? How do you know?
- Can anyone give an example when He has been these things to them or someone they know? ***[Make It Personal] (This is a great opportunity for you to share a personal story, especially if kids need a similar story to get them started thinking of what they can share.)***

## **Pray and Dismiss**

**What You Need:** The posters from “Who Is Jesus?” activity

**What You Do:**

- Let teams gather around their posters, and tell them that, when prompted, they should say what they discovered about Jesus in God’s Word.
- Remind kids to be reverent while praying.

**What You Say:**

“Dear God, we are thankful that ***[Bottom Line]*** **discovering what God says helps you know Jesus.** Thank You, God, for showing us that Jesus is (*go around the circle and let kids say together what they discovered about Jesus and drew on their poster*). Thank You for sending Jesus to us and telling us who He is in Your Word, amen.”

As adults arrive to pick up, make sure kids take their Wise Men home. Show off the posters your small group has made and help kids tell their families what they discovered in God’s Word.