WEEK 1
LESSON GUIDE

BIG IDEA

Jesus is the savior God promised.

BIBLE

An Angel Appears to Mary: Luke 1:26–38; Jeremiah 33:14–16

ABOUT THIS WEEK

Some of our favorite gifts are things that were promised to us—a new baseball glove, a computer, or a special trip with our family. This week, we'll hear about how the angel Gabriel told Mary the joyful news that she will carry God's own son. When he was born, people realized just how special this gift would be—**Jesus is the savior God promised.**

WHAT? What are we talking about today?

ACTIVITY | Christmas Cookie Pictionary

- INSTRUCTIONS: *For this activity, cut out a bunch of circles using brown or tan construction paper to resemble cookies. If you'd like to make less, make one or two, laminate them, and use dry-erase markers. Prepare a list of toys on small pieces of paper or have a master list from which you can whisper the words to draw. Have one kid draw a picture of the assigned toy in 30 seconds. After time's up, have them pass it to someone in the group to guess what it is. Keep passing the cookie until someone gets the correct answer. Invite a new person to draw and repeat.*
    - *Some words you can include in your list: stuffed animal, LEGOs, book, basketball, race car, slinky, playdough, slime, telescope, board game, scooter, skateboard, tablet, video game.*
- There's so much excitement around Christmas—toys, presents, even cookies! **All of it is so much fun, but is that what Christmas is all about?**
- Sure, those things bring us a lot of happiness, but Christmas is about much more. It's about Jesus and a forever-lasting joy!
- We have joy and celebrate because Jesus came to save us. But Jesus didn't just appear on a whim one day. Jesus came to earth to fulfill a promise from God!

QUESTION | What are you looking forward to the most this Christmas?

- INSTRUCTIONS: *Ask the following questions. You can have every kid shout their answer but then ask a few kids to share their answers with everyone. Comment briefly on their answers—and have fun with this!*
- There are so many wonderful things about Christmastime. But Christmas isn't for another few weeks, and waiting for the day to arrive can be challenging! It helps to find joy in the waiting—the building up of the anticipation.
- **What are you looking forward to the most this Christmas?**

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- We know what we are waiting for—to celebrate Jesus' birth! Long ago, God's people didn't know what to expect or how long the wait would be.
- In today's Bible story, we'll find that God's people were waiting for a really long time for the very first Christmas day to come because that would mean God's promised savior would be here!

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

SCRIPTURE | Luke 1:26–38 (An Angel Appears to Mary)

- INSTRUCTIONS: *Read the passage and retell the Bible story using the Scripture segments and talking points provided below.*
- Hey everyone! Welcome to my workshop! I am the "Toy Maker." I love making toys because I know they bring so much joy to kids everywhere... especially around Christmastime!
- As much as I love what I do, I have to say sometimes I get a little sad because I think the real joy of Christmas gets lost beneath all the presents, decorations, and mugs of hot cocoa. Not that these things are bad! But maybe not as important as what God—the "Joy Maker," if you will—gave all of us. I'll tell you all about it as I work on this toy.
- Our *Joy Story* begins with a promise. God promised to send a savior.
    - Do you all know what a savior is? Simply said, a savior is someone who saves or rescues.
    - God's people were in need of a savior. They had experienced all sorts of hardship under evil kings who took them from their homes and spread them out in different lands. God sent special messengers, called prophets, to encourage the people to stay faithful to God. God had not forgotten them and would indeed send a savior.
- Let's read Luke 1:26–28.
    - What kind of savior do you think the people were hoping for?
    - But it would be over 400 years since the people last heard from God that the promise would finally come true. And the message came from an angel to Mary.
    - I don't know about you, but if an angel appeared to me, I'd be very frightened. But angels in the Bible always appeared when there was an important message to be shared.
- Let's read Luke 1:28–33.
    - The angel told Mary that she would have a baby—a baby boy named Jesus. And this baby would not be like any other baby born before. This baby would be the Son of God, the savior that God had promised hundreds of years ago!
    - After Mary heard all of this from the angel, she had one question. Mary asked simply, "How can this happen?"
- The angel answered in Luke 1:35–37. Let's read it!
    - The angel assured Mary that God would make it all happen. The angel reminded Mary that every promise from God is true.
    - After all, her relative Elizabeth was about to have a baby, and nobody thought that would even be possible because of her old age! (We'll learn more about her story next time.)
- Let's read Luke 1:38 to see what Mary said.
    - Mary decided to trust and obey God. Very soon, she would be carrying the savior of the world in her belly! What an honor to be a part of God's story in this way!
    - This *Joy Story* is just beginning, though. The people had waited a very long time for a savior, but God had been planning on sending the savior for a long time, too. That meant there was more to this plan that we'll talk about the next time you visit my workshop!

BIG IDEA | Jesus is the savior God promised.

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- INSTRUCTIONS: *Introduce the kids to today's Big Idea:*
- Let's say the Big Idea together joyfully! **Jesus is the savior God promised!**

STORY | A Story About Promises

- INSTRUCTIONS: *Share a personal story about a time you or someone you know made a promise that wasn't kept. You may also choose to show this clip from "Toy Story 2" to discuss further how it feels when a promise or relationship is broken.*
    - *View the clip beforehand to ensure it's a good fit for your context. Read this for more information on legally using copyrighted material for educational purposes.*
- It's easy to make a promise but it's often easier to break one. We say things we might mean in the moment but forget to follow through to the end. When a promise to us is broken, we can feel hurt, betrayed, and alone.
- When God's people didn't hear from God for roughly 400 years, they probably thought God had forgotten about them. They might have given up hope that the savior would come as promised.
- But the truth was that God had not forgotten. Just as the people were waiting, God was waiting for the right moment. And when that moment came, God delivered on the promise.
- **Jesus is the savior God promised!**

SCRIPTURE | Jeremiah 33:14–16

- INSTRUCTIONS: *Read the passage aloud and invite kids to jump when they hear words from the Big Idea in this passage (promise, savior).*
- God was talking to the prophet Jeremiah about the future—but remember, this is from the Old Testament, written hundreds of years before Jesus was born.
    - God made a promise to the people of Israel and Judah. A promise is when you say you will do something and you really mean it, so people will trust you to keep your word.
    - **What do you think this promise is?**
    - God promised to send a savior to do what is right and save the people. This savior would come from King David's family.
    - **Who do you think this savior is?**
    - Jesus! Jesus comes from the family of King David.
- This passage says Jesus will be called *"The Lord Our Righteous Savior,"* because Jesus will take away the sins of the world, sin being the thing that separates us from God. Jesus would save the world by connecting us back to God. And he has! **Jesus is the savior God promised.**

VIDEO | Teaching Video (Week 1)

- INSTRUCTIONS: *Play this week's episode of Grow TV. (https://vimeo.com/933129871/4c0d324f67)If you're short on time, show the illustrated Bible story video. (https://vimeo.com/996205985/742b01aa9b)*

MEMORY VERSE | Luke 1:46-47 (NIV)

- INSTRUCTIONS: *Learn the memory verse together using any combination of the resources provided: memory verse coloring page, sign language motions, or choose from this list of our favorite memorization techniques!*
- "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior."

PRAYER

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- God, it's amazing how you love us. Jesus is the savior you promised. Now we can have so much joy. Thanks for showing us how much you love us. Help us share the joy we have with others. Amen.

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