

WEEK 3

LESSON GUIDE



BIG IDEA

Jesus makes everything new.

BIBLE

An Angel Appears to Joseph in a Dream:
Matthew 1:18–25; Isaiah 43:16–19

LARGE GROUP TIME

What's up, everybody? Welcome to our third week of City of Angels! In our series this month, we've heard God-given messages about Jesus through God's special messengers, angels! I'm looking forward to seeing what the angels have in store for us today!

WHAT? What are we talking about today?

ACTIVITY | Angels We Have Hidden on High

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Get an angel tree topper (something [like this](#)) that you'll use every week this month like "Elf on the Shelf." Hide the angel in plain sight next to a [car air freshener](#). Have kids silently search the room and once they find the angel, have them return to their seats and make a "halo" by making a circle with their hands above their heads. Remind kids not to shout out the answer or point conspicuously so everyone can have the joy of finding it themselves!
- Okay, now that all of you have located the angel, **did anyone notice what the item closest to it is?** It's a car freshener!
- You know, in the city, there are lots and lots of cars. For example, in Los Angeles, it's hard to get places if you don't have a car. And for most car owners, there's nothing like the smell of a brand new car. We even have a name for it: New car smell.
- Today, we'll see what "newness" has to do with angels and the story of Jesus.

ACTIVITY | Uncover the Art

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give each kid a copy of the printable printed on white cardstock paper on which you've already written the hidden message with white crayon. This week's message is "All new." If you have a large group, invite older kids to write the message themselves, or have them help you prep the printables beforehand. Set up watercolor stations so kids can paint over the wings to reveal the hidden message. Use colored pencils if watercolor isn't available.
- Hmm . . . interesting. I wonder what "All new" has to do with angels. **Any guesses?**

QUESTION | Is New Better?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Ask kids questions about different concepts of newness. Use the questions below and come up with some of your own!

- **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** *Talk with kids about newness through the concept of how damaged things can be made new again. Give everyone a small toy or another object kids would want to hold, but scribble on each item ahead of time with a dry or wet erase marker. Talk about how it seems like this object is no longer good but it can be made new again when you erase it off with a moist cloth!*
- There are many different ways we can think of the word "new." Let's talk about how new things make us feel and if they're always better.
 - **What does it feel like to move into a new home?**
 - **How does it feel to receive a new toy, electronic device, or clothes?**
 - **What if you had to get a new device and you lost all your old games and photos?**
 - **How do you feel about a new haircut?**
 - **How do you feel about a new school year?**
 - **How about moving to a new school?**
- We all have different feelings and attitudes about new things, some of them are great and some . . . not so much. But today, we're going to be talking about a kind of new that's always great!

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

LESSON: | Matthew 1:18–25 (An Angel Appears to Joseph in a Dream)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read aloud the Bible passage. Then, tell this week's Bible story from Matthew 1:18–25 as a storyteller sharing history with young people in their town — assume a name or occupation that's familiar to your town (like an ice cream vendor, street performer, or a friendly elderly person like an "abuela."). Ask another volunteer to play the angel, Gabriel. You may choose to record this segment beforehand and show them as videos.*
- Hey, there! (*Introduce yourself as the storyteller character of your choosing.*) I'm glad you're here — I've been wanting to share another story I heard a while back when I was a kid growing up in these streets. I guess I could've just texted or emailed it to you, but that's not how they did it back in my day. And not back in Bible days either.
- The story I'm about to tell you is another angel story, and because we're in *City of Angels*, we might even hear it directly from an angel!
 - **Gabriel:** Hey, people! Is it storytime? Because I've got a story for you!
- Wait, I have a story, too. Maybe it's the same story?
 - **Gabriel:** Is it the one about that one guy in that one place?
- It is the same story! Well, since you're here, I'll let you tell it.
 - **Gabriel:** Okay, so this story, I gotta be honest, I'm not sure if I was the one this happened to. After a few thousand messenger jobs, they all start to run together in my head, you know? So, it could've been me or one of my other angel friends. But anyway, the message that God wanted to give was for a man named Joseph.
- Friends, you remember Joseph, right? He was the one Mary was going to marry?
 - **Gabriel:** Right. Now if you remember, the message I gave Mary was that she was going to have a baby. Which was great news. But not so much for Joseph, because it wasn't his baby. He and Mary weren't even officially married yet.
- Ah. He didn't know yet that the baby was Jesus. Joseph probably thought the worst.
 - **Gabriel:** Yeah, probably. But he cared about Mary and he didn't want her to get hurt. So, he was thinking about calling off the engagement quietly so nobody would have the chance to start any wild rumors.
- What a sensible guy. But something happened that change his mind, right?
 - **Gabriel:** Of course! God asked one of us angels to talk to Joseph in a dream and give him this message: Don't be afraid to marry Mary. What's happening to her is God's plan and she is going to give birth to the child of God. This child will one day grow up and is going to save all people. This child will be called "God with us," or Immanuel.
- That's a lot to hear in a dream. Did Joseph remember the dream when he woke up? I tend to forget a lot of my dreams.

- **Gabriel:** Oh yeah, he sure did. I think a part of him knew all along that God was behind this, so when he heard the message in the dream, he didn't hesitate to accept it as the truth. Joseph married Mary as planned and followed God's plans for them.
- It seems like God knew all along that Mary and Joseph would be the perfect couple for the job. They obeyed God instead of being swayed by their confusing situation.
 - **Gabriel:** Ain't that the truth! I've met a lot of humans throughout time, but these two were really special. Well, gotta run. Thanks for letting me share this story with you!
- Thank you, angel Gabriel!
- Wasn't that neat? Even though Joseph was confused and things looked broken, when Joseph was shown God's way, he found out he could be a part of something new and much better!

BIG IDEA | Jesus makes everything new.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *On a large piece of bulletin board paper, write this week's Big Idea somewhere on it, and then roll up the paper. You'll be adding to this wall art every week, so conserve space when writing the Big Idea. You might want to recruit a volunteer to write it using [mural lettering](#) or graffiti art (or look up tutorials like [this one](#) to do it yourself). During the fourth week, you'll invite kids to add their names and other art to this "wall" and put it up somewhere in your space.*
- *[Unroll bulletin board paper to reveal what it says.]*
- **Jesus makes everything new!**
- This doesn't mean Jesus will take your old toys and make them all shiny again. It means when we have Jesus in our lives, our lives are no longer the same. Because of Jesus, we are made new.
- Joseph hadn't met Jesus yet, but when he heard from the angel that the baby Mary was carrying was God's child, Joseph knew right away that even though he was in a little bit of a sticky situation, this new thing God was doing through Jesus would be the best thing ever. And it was. And it is!

MEMORY VERSE | Luke 2:10 (NIV)

- "But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people!'"
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *This game is Red Light, Green Light: Christmas edition! Print the freeway signs printables and place them throughout the room. Play some Christmas music — which is "green light" — and have kids "drive" around the city, pretending to hold a steering wheel. When the music stops — which is "red light" — everyone rushes to find the first freeway sign, which is the first part of the memory verse. Start the music, and when the music stops again, kids will stop at the second freeway sign, which is the second part of the verse. Play until you get to the last freeway sign and have everyone recite the full verse together.*

PRETEEN HACK: *Split preteens into teams and give each team a set of words from the memory verse all scrambled up (these can be written on index cards or printed out). Have teams work together to put the verse in order during "green light" but they have to freeze during "red light." The first team to put the verse in order, then run to tag the person that's "it" while their back is turned.*

WEDNESDAY NIGHT MATERIAL...

Recap Lesson (above) for those that weren't there on Sunday.

VIDEO | City of Angels, Episode 3

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play this week's episode of [Grow TV](#).*

VIDEO | Just Like New

- Let's watch a video about new things creating beauty in our world. In the same way that Mary and Joseph were okay with doing something new, we can do that, too!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Watch a [video](#) on city beautification that demonstrates the power of doing something new (For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)). The*

new garden space was created for kids to learn in places that would normally be taken up by housing, a road, or businesses. Be prepared to read the written parts on the screen. Follow up with the listed questions.

- **How did this new thing benefit everyone?**
- A beautiful and healthy garden could exist in the middle of a busy city. Jesus can do even more amazing things in our hearts and in the world around us. And since we have Jesus, we have a direct connection to God.
- As followers of God, it's our job to let people know about the way **Jesus makes everything new!**

OBJECT LESSON | New Old Coins

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Hide old coins around the room for kids to find (tarnished pennies work best). Show how they can make their coin look new by soaking their old coin in a vinegar and salt solution, then rinsing it off in a bowl of water. Consider providing gloves or tweezers to prevent kids from getting vinegar on their fingers. Watch [this video](#) to get an idea of how this experiment will work.*
- **Have you ever walked down a city street and found a coin on the ground?** Sometimes, the coins are shiny, but most of the time, they've been worn out by wind, dirt, and from many years of being passed around and stepped on.
- I've hidden a lot of pennies around the room before you got here. We're going to go on a hunt, and when you've found one penny, come back here for a follow-up activity.
- **What do you notice about the penny you pulled out of the water?**
- The vinegar and salt solution helped clean the pennies to make them all shiny!
- The value of the coin doesn't change because it's cleaner, just like how God's love for us doesn't change even though we sin or make mistakes.
- But God made a way for us to be our best selves, and that was through Jesus. Because of Jesus, we have a way to be forgiven of our sins and have new life.
- That's what we're talking about when we say **Jesus makes everything new.**

SCRIPTURE | Isaiah 43:16–19

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Isaiah 43:16–19.*
- Even though Isaiah wasn't an angel sent from heaven, he was given lots and lots of messages to deliver to God's people.
- In the passage we just read, we see Isaiah mentions one big way God helped the Israelites in the past.
 - It was the time when God rescued the Israelites out of Egypt and then split the Red Sea so they could walk safely through it to the other side to escape the enemy.
- That's incredible enough, but in verse 19, God tells Isaiah, "I am doing a new thing!"
- God is reminding the people through Isaiah that not only was God able to do something so unthinkable back then, but God will also do newer, better things in the future.
- So, while it's important to remember and thank God for all the good things God has done for us before, we can look forward to even greater things now because **Jesus makes everything new.**

NOW WHAT? What does God want us to do about it?

REFLECTION | One Word Project

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Pass out blank Christmas cards or postcards and have kids write one word that will help them remember today's Bible story. Encourage them to decorate the card and make it colorful.*
 - **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** *This week, instead of using blank index cards, provide kids with [blank ornaments](#) they can decorate as they please!*
- The message Joseph got from the angel in his dream gave him the assurance he needed to take a bold step into this new, unknown situation.
- Joseph knew what was ahead wouldn't be easy, but the news God was with him — in a big way through Jesus — was all he needed to obey.
- **What one word will help you remember this week's Bible story?**
- Keep this word with you throughout the week to remember the angel's message and what it meant for the whole world.

ACTIVITY | The Cards You're Dealt

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Pass out a playing card to each kid. Have kids stand in a circle. Go around the circle and have any two kids hold up their cards to show the group. Declare to the group that the winner is the one who is holding the higher card (but don't tell them that's why they won). Have another two kids hold up their cards, then let kids figure out who the winner is by noticing the pattern. After everyone seems to catch on, change the rules without telling them. Start saying the kid with the lower card is the winner until kids catch on that you changed the rule. Change the rules a few more times (by color, by suit, or by height or age of kid holding the card). Consider using giant [playing cards](#) so they're easier to see.
- There's a saying that goes, "Play the cards you're dealt." This means we need to accept and make the most of the things we have in our lives.
- **How did it feel to figure out the new rule only to learn that an even newer rule was in effect?**
- It might have been puzzling or frustrating, but because I changed the rules, different people got opportunities to win, even though your cards didn't change.
- Sometimes, you might feel like your life is not as great as someone else's. But instead of feeling down about it, we can be joyful anyway with the things we have, and we can have hope God will turn things around for us, too.
- **Jesus makes everything new**, and everything includes me and you!

MEMORY VERSE | Luke 2:10 (NIV)

- "But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people!'"
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** This game is Red Light, Green Light: Christmas edition! Print the freeway signs printables and place them throughout the room. Play some Christmas music — which is "green light" — and have kids "drive" around the city, pretending to hold a steering wheel. When the music stops — which is "red light" — everyone rushes to find the first freeway sign, which is the first part of the memory verse. Start the music, and when the music stops again, kids will stop at the second freeway sign, which is the second part of the verse. Play until you get to the last freeway sign and have everyone recite the full verse together.
 - **PRETEEN HACK:** Split preteens into teams and give each team a set of words from the memory verse all scrambled up (these can be written on index cards or printed out). Have teams work together to put the verse in order during "green light" but they have to freeze during "red light." The first team to put the verse in order, then run to tag the person that's "it" while their back is turned, wins!

PRAYER

- Dear God, thank you for sending Jesus into our broken world to make everything new. You make us new when we talk, act, and live the way you want us to. We know you're the only one who can restore everything that you've made, including us and everyone around us. Please make us newer and better every day. Amen.

SMALL GROUP TIME

DISCUSSION

- How did Joseph hear from the angel?
- What did the angel tell Joseph he needed to do?
- What did the angel tell Joseph Jesus would do?
- Read Isaiah 43:18–19. What new thing do you think God is talking about here?
- What are some things in this world that are broken or old that could be made new?
- What is something new that God might want you to do that you're unsure of?
- How does Jesus make things new?

ACTIVITY | Something New Ornament

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Make tree ornaments using recycled, "old" materials like paper plates, popsicle sticks, cotton balls, mismatched buttons, and anything else you decide. When the kids are finished designing their ornament, glue a paperclip on the back to use as a hook. Glue a piece of paper that says, "Jesus makes everything new" on the front of the ornament. (See a worked example [here](#).)

- **PRETEEN HACK:** *Create a fun urban Christmas photobooth and provide them with a dry erase board where they can write in a goal for the new year. Snap a photo (using Polaroid or Fujifilm Instax) or send a digital copy to their parents and remind preteens about how Jesus is making them new, too. Take it further by putting their photo into a frame ornament or getting them made on photo sites like Shutterfly.*
- Let's be reminded that **Jesus makes everything new** throughout Christmas by making beautiful tree ornaments out of recycled materials.
- If we can turn these old items into something festive for our Christmas trees, imagine what Jesus can do with our hearts! The possibilities are endless!