

WEEK 2 LESSON GUIDE



BIG IDEA

God sent Jesus
at the perfect time.

BIBLE

Zechariah, Elizabeth, And John:
Luke 1:5–25, 57–66

ABOUT THIS WEEK

Waiting over 400 years for a gift to arrive seems impossible, but that's how long God's people waited for a savior. This week, we'll hear the joyful news that Zechariah and Elizabeth will have a son who will prepare the way for Jesus. Even though God's people had been waiting a long time for a savior, **God sent Jesus at the perfect time**, and John would help get everything ready for him.

WELCOME TIME

ACTIVITY | Snowbuddy Stack

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, give each kid a handful of jumbo marshmallows to see how high they can stack them before falling down. For the first round, give them only ten seconds. Then, allow them to play more freely before moving on to the next activity.
 - ✂ **TODDLER HACK:** Play this game with white boxes instead of large marshmallows since toddlers will put everything in their mouths, including marshmallows that have fallen on the floor!
- We are one week closer to Christmas, and I can't contain my joy! When I think about Christmas, I think about there being snow. Let's stack up our marshmallow snow buddies to see how tall we can make them!
 - But ... you only have *ten* seconds! **Ready, set, stack!**
 - After activity. **Do you want more time?**
 - Okay, let's try again, but I won't count to ten this time.
- Today's Bible story is all about how God does everything at the perfect time!

ACTIVITY | Candy Cane Connect

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, prepare a [medium-sized container](#) and fill it with individually wrapped candy canes. Provide kids with their candy cane and have them take turns trying to pick one out of the bin using the curved part of their candy cane. Set one or two minutes on a screen, phone, or analog countdown timer. See if kids can collect all the candy canes before time runs out.
 - ✂ **TODDLER HACK:** Hide the candy canes in a bin filled with other items such as toddler-age toys or crinkle paper. Have toddlers dig through and find the candy canes and count them together.
- Great job collecting all those candy canes—another thing that reminds us of Christmas!
 - **How did it feel to race against the clock?**
 - **How did you feel when time ran out?**
- Sometimes, it feels like time is going too slow, and other times, it's going way too fast. Today, we are going to learn that no matter how it feels to us, in God's eyes, it's always the perfect time!

STORY TIME

SCRIPTURE | Luke 1:5–25, 57–66 (Zechariah, Elizabeth, and John)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Teach this Scripture passage by reading from a preschool-friendly Bible translation, Bible storybook, or using the talking points provided below! Use the prop from last week for the angel Gabriel and different toys for Zechariah and Elizabeth. Show each figure when talking about them in the Bible story. Consider sitting on a rug with kids in a half circle to make this more cozy.
- Welcome back to the Joy Story corner! We're going to learn all about why the birth of Jesus gives us so much joy.
- **What noise do you make when you're filled with joy?**
- Before Jesus was born, there was a different baby that was born. This other baby wasn't the savior, like Jesus. But he was important. He would grow up and tell everybody about Jesus!
 - **Who remembers the name of the angel who told Mary she would give birth to baby Jesus?**
 - That's right, it was Gabriel! The angel Gabriel told Mary that Jesus was the savior God promised.
 - But before Gabriel talked to Mary, the angel spoke to someone else.
- Mary had a family member named Elizabeth. Elizabeth and her husband Zechariah were very old. They didn't have any kids. This made them very sad.
 - **Can you make a sad face?**
 - Yes, Elizabeth and Zechariah were that sad.
- But one night, while Zechariah was at the temple, Gabriel showed up. The angel told Zechariah that he and Elizabeth would have a baby!
 - **Everyone yell, "Surprise!"**
 - Zechariah was very surprised.
- Zechariah wasn't sure about this, but sure enough, Elizabeth had the baby God promised. They had a baby named John, and when John grew up, he would get everybody ready for Jesus.
- God had John be born at the perfect time so that Jesus could be born at the perfect time!

BIG IDEA | God sent Jesus at the perfect time.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Prepare five wrapped boxes in advance, each containing a different toy with a Big Idea tag attached (use one of the Big Idea graphics provided or write your own). Label each box with a number corresponding to the week. This week, invite a couple of kids to unwrap box #2. If you have a [recordable plush](#) available, you could record yourself saying the Big Idea in advance, reset it each week, and gift wrap it in the box again. Once unwrapped, say the Big Idea aloud for the kids (or squeeze the tummy if using a recording) and have kids follow along with the motions below.
- What's the Big Idea of today's Joy Story?
 - **God sent** (Point up.)
 - **Jesus** ("[Jesus](#)" in ASL)
 - **at the perfect** (Touch index finger and thumb together.)
 - **time** (Point to wrist like a watch.)

VIDEO | Joy Story, Episode 2

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

ACTIVITY | What's The Big Idea?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play a version of "Red Rover" where kids chant, "Hey (kid's name), hey (kid's name), what's the Big Idea?" Have the kids stand in two lines, holding hands and facing each other. Each team calls out the

name of someone on the other team to run between any pair of kids on their team and break the handhold. Before they run, the kid called has to recite the Big Idea (invite leaders and other kids to help). If the kid cannot separate the line, they must join the opposing team. Play until one team is down to two players.

✂ **TODDLER HACK:** Play a version of "Ring Around The Rosy" by holding hands with toddlers in a circle and chanting, "God sent Jesus at the perfect time." At the word "time," invite toddlers to sit down as fast as they can!

- Wow! What a fun game. You had to think about who to send and when each time to win the game as a team.
- This game reminds us that God knew exactly when to send Jesus to the world. Everyone had been waiting for the savior for a really long time, but only God knew when the right time was.
- First, God gave Zechariah and Elizabeth the gift of baby John so that when John grew up, he could get everyone ready for Jesus. Then, **God sent Jesus at the perfect time!**

PRAYER

- Dear God, you know everything and have a plan for us. Thank you for sending Jesus at the perfect time. Amen.

SHARING TIME

SNACK | Cookie Clocks

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Using store-bought or pre-made sugar cookies, decorate the cookie like a clock by adding Skittles or M&Ms around the perimeter of the cookie and pretzel sticks for the clock hands. See this [image](#) for an example.
- **What sound does a clock make?** Tick tock, tick tock! The round part of a clock is called a "face," just like how we have faces, too!
- **What face would you make if you were ...**
 - **Waiting in line for a roller coaster?**
 - **Waiting in bed for the wake-up clock to ring?**
 - **Waiting at the table for dinner to be ready?**
 - **Waiting until you can calm down after you got angry with your friend?**
 - **Waiting for Christmas morning?**

ACTIVITY | Circle Time

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Pass around a customizable snow globe (choose from [classic globes](#), [mason jar kits](#), and [plastic kits](#)). Each week, you can insert a picture of anything you'd like—a small toy, a laminated photo of one of the kids in your ministry, a photo of you or one of your volunteers as a preschooler, or even hand-drawn pictures of your kids made! Invite kids to shake the globe each time it's passed to them. After it's passed around the circle once, ask one of the questions and invite the kids to call out their responses.
- **What was the name of the angel that visited Zechariah?** Gabriel.
- **What message did Gabriel give to Zechariah?** Zechariah and Elizabeth would have a baby.
- **What was the baby's name? What would he do when he grew up?** John. He would get people ready for Jesus.
- **Tell about a time you had to wait for what you wanted.**
- **The birth of baby John shows that God sent who else at the perfect time? Jesus!**
- Let's say our Big Idea together: **God sent Jesus at the perfect time.**

ACTIVITY | Joy Tree Ornament

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Each week, invite the kids to create a paper ornament to represent what they learned. The

kids will create their joy tree ornament using the provided [ornament template](#), a hole puncher, and ribbon or twine. You may choose to have leaders write the Big Idea on the ornament for them. This week, help kids draw clock numbers and hands or fill the space with drawings of how they spend their time in a day. Have kids write their names on the back and hang it up on a tree in your space (it can be a tree outline with green tape on a wall), or take it home. Consider printing on cardstock or laminating their finished work to make them last longer.

- This ornament can hang on a tree—or anywhere we want—to help us remember our Big Idea: **God sent Jesus at the perfect time.**

MEMORY VERSE | Luke 1:46–47 (NIV)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Help kids learn this month's memory verse by setting the words (and the Scripture reference) to the tune of "We Wish You A Merry Christmas." You can also have kids repeat the verse after you in small chunks, say them using silly voices, or create simple hand motions for keywords.
- **"My soul glorifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior."**

PLAY TIME

ACTIVITY | Coloring Page

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Print and distribute [the coloring page](#) along with crayons or markers. You can review today's Bible story, Big Idea, and memory verse as the kids color.

ACTIVITY | Joy Mail

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Create a Christmas card mailing center for pretend play. If possible, create a [cardboard mailbox](#) (a large, clean trash bin with a swivel lid would work also). Set up a table containing cards or stationery. Kids can decorate with pictures or stickers. Afterward, they can put their cards in the mailbox. For added fun, consider mailing these to their families for a fun surprise during the week.

✂ **TODDLER HACK:** If you have decorated your space, toddlers will probably want to touch and play with everything! Be sure your classroom is full of things they are welcome to play with and explore, like toy nativity sets, empty gift boxes, and shatterproof ornaments.

ACTIVITY | From The Joy Box

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Each week, provide a box of different toys kids can play with. You can guide them to use the toys to build something they remember or reenact parts of the Bible story! This week, provide [sand timers](#), [kitchen timers](#), [liquid timers](#), and [learning clocks](#) to help reinforce today's Big Idea.