

## WEEK 5 LESSON GUIDE



### BIG IDEA

Everyone is invited to worship Jesus.

### BIBLE

**The Magi Visit Jesus:**  
Matthew 2:1–12; Psalm 148

## ABOUT THIS WEEK

Most of us know what it's like to be left out, which is why we try so hard to make sure everyone has a gift at Christmas. This week, we'll hear how Magi made a long trip to look for Jesus, deliver gifts, and worship him after his birth. God invited these men from a far off place to bring gifts and see Jesus because **everyone is invited to worship Jesus.**

## LARGE GROUP TIME

Hey everyone! I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas. Now that Christmas day has passed, does that mean the Joy Story is over? No way! The birth of Jesus was just the beginning of all that God had in store for the world. Did you know that Christmas originally lasted for twelve days? That's why we have that song, "The Twelve Days of Christmas." Christmas Day might have passed, but the party has just begun.

**WHAT?** *What are we talking about today?*

### ACTIVITY | Constellation Art

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, divide kids into teams and give each team a stack of twenty [star-shaped sticky notes](#) (regular sticky notes are fine, too). Have them work together to arrange their sticky notes into a shape that reminds them of Christmas. Alternatively, you could call out different words (candy cane, hot cocoa, the word "Joy," Christmas tree, gift box, or snowflake) and have them rearrange the stars each round to form the right shapes. They must use every sticky note!*
  - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Level up the fun for preteens by turning this activity into a competition. Have two teams go head to head to be the first to arrange all their sticky notes into the shape that you call out.*
  - ✂ **ACCESSIBILITY HACK:** *Simplify this activity by drawing simple constellations, such as [these](#), on butcher paper or a board then having the kids place the star-shaped sticky notes on the dots.*
- The sky is full of stars—so many stars that for thousands of years, people have seen patterns or shapes called constellations. It's like connect-the-dots but with stars in the sky.
- For this challenge, you had to use every star in your collection—no star could be left out! A constellation wouldn't be the same if some of the stars were missing.
- In today's Bible story, we'll learn about a group of people who followed a star because they wanted to be part of the celebration of Jesus. Wise, wouldn't you say?

**ACTIVITY | Galaxy Tag**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, start with one person being “it” (with larger groups, you can start with two to three kids being “it”). In this version of tag, everyone is a star, and the one who is “it” will try to tag other stars. Once a star is tagged, they lock arms with the existing stars to form a galaxy. The single stars try to evade the galaxy. The game ends when everyone is a part of the galaxy. Tell kids they can only walk or move on their knees for smaller spaces so that they won’t have to move around too much.
  - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Play *Shoulders, Knees, Star!* Preteens pair up with a star shaped object, like [these](#), on the floor in the middle of the group. Call out commands, such as having to touch their knees, toes, eyes, then call out “star!” The first kid to grab the star wins, then pairs up with another kid who won to play again until there is one last winner. The kid who lost can stand behind the kid who won. Each time a kid wins, they can pass the extra star to the kids behind them.
- A star by itself is a star. But a star in a group with other stars forms a galaxy. In this game, we have stars that want to become a galaxy, and the only way to do that is to get more stars to join them.
- Stars are brilliant on their own. Constellations are wondrous. And galaxies are far more amazing than words can describe. In God’s creation, stars are part of something much bigger.
- Today’s Bible story will help us remember how much God loves and includes everyone!

**QUESTION | How far did you travel?**

- **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!
- **Did anyone travel to visit you this Christmas? How far did they travel?**
- **Did you travel to visit anyone this Christmas? Where did you go? How did you get there? By car? Train? Airplane?**
- Today, we’ll be talking about some people who traveled a very long way because a star pointed the way to Jesus!

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

**SCRIPTURE | Matthew 2:1–12 (The Magi Visit Jesus)**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Set up a simple workbench with some tools and toys like you did in previous weeks. This week, wrap a box with gift wrap and tie it with ribbons as you tell the Bible story. (If you are doing the Big Idea reveal afterward, you could wrap that box!)
- Hello! Welcome back to my workshop! It’s a little slow today because Christmas is over. The decorations are coming down, and before you know it, it will be January. A whole new year is about to begin. But there is always joy left to give away! Just because Christmas day is over doesn’t mean our story is over. I want to share one more very important Joy Story with you.
- **Let’s read Matthew 2:1–2.**
  - The Magi, who are sometimes called “Wise Men,” traveled from the east to Jerusalem. Many people think that they came from a place called Babylon.
  - **Can you guess how far the trip from Babylon to Jerusalem was?** That’s about 900 miles (1,450 kilometers) of traveling. And just think—they didn’t have any cars or trains or planes back then. They had to ride on animals or walk, and it would have taken about ten days to make the trip. That takes some dedication!
- These Magi were making this trip to see a king, but not King Herod. The Magi saw an unusual star in the sky and knew from their studies that it was a sign that a king was born.
  - **How do you think King Herod felt when he heard that a new king was born? Let’s read Matthew**

**2:3–6 to find out!**

- King Herod was not happy! He did not like the idea that there was another king besides him ...a king that the Magi traveled hundreds of miles to come and worship! So Herod came up with a not-very-nice plan.
- **Let's read Matthew 2:7–8.**
  - Herod asked the Magi to report back to him once they found this new king. He said that he ought to go and worship, too.
  - **Do you think that Herod was telling the truth?** I don't think so, either. Herod was actually making a plan to get rid of Jesus!
- **What do you think the Magi did? Let's read Matthew 2:9–12.**
  - The Magi kept following the star, which went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where Jesus was. And when they saw Jesus and his mother, Mary, they bowed and worshiped him. They knew this was the savior God promised to send long ago.
  - Jesus was the greatest gift the world would ever know, but the Magi gave Jesus gifts, too—gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. You might not know what some of these are, but just know they are very expensive items you would usually bring for a king!
  - When it was time for them to leave, they had a dream that told them not to go back to Herod, so they went home by a different route.
- These Magi were from so far away. They came from a different country, had a different culture, and probably spoke different languages. But it didn't matter. God is for every person in every country around the world. God sent Jesus as a gift for everyone, including the Magi, the shepherds, you, and me!

**BIG IDEA | Everyone is invited to worship Jesus.**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Create as many gift tags as there are Big Idea words (six for this week). A simple way to do this is to cut wrapping paper into little rectangles, fold them over, and write the word on the inside. Attach each tag to a different toy and place them inside a large gift box. Invite kids to come up and pull out a toy and read the word aloud (or show it to a leader to read for them). After all the toys have been brought out, arrange the toys in order and have everyone say the Big Idea together. You could also do this without the toys and have kids draw out one gift tag at a time from the box.*
- Let's say the Big Idea together joyfully! **Everyone is invited to worship Jesus!**

**STORY | A Story About Invitations**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Share a personal story about a time when someone helped you belong by inviting you to a party, a club, or to sit at their table. You may also choose to show [this clip](#) from "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" or [this clip](#) from "Toy Story 4" to show how God loves even those of us who feel like "misfits!" We always suggest viewing the clip beforehand to make sure you think it's a video that will be a good fit for your context! For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)*
  - ✂ **ACCESSIBILITY HACK:** *Read the book "[You Are So Wonderful](#)" by Jacqueline J. Lewis instead.*
  - Most of us know what it feels like to feel left out. It's not a great feeling. It feels like you're missing out on something special or fun. So when someone reaches out to invite you, it can be pretty exciting to feel included and cared for!
  - A lot of people missed out when Jesus was born. They were waiting for a savior but weren't paying attention to what God was doing. The ones who did notice were shepherds in a nearby field and the Magi from a faraway land. These people might have been considered "misfits" and were probably the last ones anyone would have ever expected to be among the first to see the savior God promised.
  - God wants everyone to meet, know, and love Jesus because Jesus is the way to meet, know, and love God.
- Everyone is invited to worship Jesus!**

### ACTIVITY | Worship Around The World

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, queue up versions of popular Christmas songs in different languages, such as *"Away in a Manger" in Navajo*, *"Come All Ye Faithful" in Swahili*, *"Silent Night" in Spanish*, and *"Hark the Herald Angels Sing" in 7 different languages*. You can start by playing only the first ten to fifteen seconds to see if they can guess what it is before listening to the whole song. You can also see if kids can identify how "Jesus" is said in different languages!
- Christmas isn't only celebrated here in this country. People all over the world celebrate Christmas, too, just like you and me. Why? Because Jesus is the savior God promised, who came at the perfect time and is God's greatest gift, bringing joy to the whole world.
- Let's listen to these popular Christmas songs in other languages to remind us that **everyone is invited to worship Jesus!**

### SCRIPTURE | Psalm 148

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read the passage aloud and invite kids to jump every time they hear the word "praise." (Get ready for a lot of jumping!)
- **What word did you see repeated over and over again?** "Praise" is repeated thirteen times in this psalm!
- Just like the Old Testament prophecies, this psalm was written way before Jesus was born, by someone in Jesus' family tree—King David. David had a lot to praise God about. He seems like one joyful guy! David had experienced God's great love for him throughout his life—even when he made mistakes. David definitely had a *Joy Story*, and this psalm he wrote invites all of creation to praise God.
- Jesus brings joy to the whole world, including the fish, the ocean, the birds, the sky, the weather, the animals, the mountains, the trees—everything! All of creation, including you and me, are invited to worship God, not just for making all these good things but for giving us Jesus!
- **What would your own psalm of praise sound like?** Let's try one together:
  - Praise the Lord, all you (*name something from creation*).
  - Praise the Lord, from (*name a place you like to go*).
  - Praise the Lord, for (*name something you want to thank God for*).
  - Praise the Lord!
- **Everyone**—and everything—**is invited to worship Jesus!** Not just the shepherds in the field or the Magi from a faraway place. Not just you or me. Everything God created is invited to worship Jesus!

### VIDEO | Joy Story, Episode 5

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

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

### REFLECTION | Time For Toys

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Like previous weeks, provide a box of [assorted fidget toys](#) that kids can manipulate as they think and share. Encourage kids to choose a different one each week to give everyone a chance at all of the different types. Play a Christmas song of your choice and give kids time to play and chat freely with their neighbors (because they will want to talk about the toy they got!) before you invite them to focus on today's reflection questions. Since this is the last week, feel free to let kids take their fidgets home!
- In today's *Joy Story*, we learned that the Magi traveled hundreds of miles to see and worship Jesus.
- Today, we don't have to travel around the world to talk to Jesus. He is always with us. We can talk to him anytime about anything! We can praise and worship him whenever we want, wherever we want. But Jesus isn't just for you and me. He is for every single person on earth.

- **Everyone is invited to worship Jesus. Do you know anyone you could invite?**
- **What would happen if everyone who knew Jesus would invite just one other person to know Jesus?**
- **What keeps you from inviting others to know Jesus?**
- The star pointed the way for the Magi. We can be like that star for others when we shine our light bright and let people see how much we love Jesus. When we welcome people like that, we remind the world that **everyone is invited to worship Jesus.**

## RESPONSE | Joy Tree

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Use your version of the Christmas tree you set up in Week 1. Hand out this week's ornament [printable](#) that they can write or draw their response on. Punch a hole at the top and loop some string through it to create an ornament to put on the tree. At the end of your programming, invite kids to locate all of their ornaments on the tree to take home!
  - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** With the New Year coming up, take some time to talk to kids about what they're looking forward to in the upcoming year. Have them reflect on some of the things they might want to work on, including how they can be more bold in their relationship with God and with others and how they can invite the people around them to worship Jesus.
- **Who is someone you can invite to worship Jesus with you?**
- You can name more than one person—the more, the merrier since **everyone is invited to worship Jesus!**

## 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

- God, your love is so great that everyone in the world can be part of it. Thank you for sending Jesus to save us, wherever we are. Help us remember that there are people all around the world who still don't know you yet. Help us to invite people we know to come and know Jesus, too. Amen.

## SMALL GROUP TIME

### DISCUSSION

- **SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS**
  - **How did the Magi know how to find where Jesus was?** *They followed a star.*
  - **Why did Herod also want to know where Jesus was?** *He said he wanted to worship the new king but secretly he wanted to get rid of him.*
  - **What did they do when they finally met Jesus?** *They worshiped Jesus and presented him with gifts—gold, myrrh, and frankincense.*
  - **Read Psalm 148:5. How do you imagine that parts of God's creation like the stars, the mountains, and the animals praise God?**
- **APPLICATION QUESTIONS**
  - **What are ways you can worship Jesus?**
  - **What can we do to let more people know they are invited to worship Jesus with us?**
  - **How do we let people know that Jesus is for everyone?**

### ACTIVITY | Star Invitations

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, print the printable on cardstock paper (yellow, if possible) and have kids cut out the triangle. Then, have them fold along the dotted lines. Check out [this tutorial](#) for instructions on how to fold the paper into a star. On the inside, have them write or draw a picture for the person they want to invite, and let them decorate the star with glitter glue and gem stickers. Encourage kids to create as many invites as they'd like!
- ✂ **ACCESSIBILITY HACK:** Kids with disabilities want to be able to do things independently, so try not to offer help right away. When necessary, pair kids with a leader or peer for activities that require additional support, but follow kids' cues about whether or not they'd like to be partnered up.
- Just like the bright star pointed the way to Jesus for the Magi, we can be the stars that point others to Jesus, too. Use this card to invite a friend or a relative to church. **Everyone is invited to worship Jesus!**