Group

Teacher Guide

GRADES 3 & 4

Winter

Teach as Jesus Taught!®

Grades 3&4

Teacher Guide • Winter

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Group

Group resources really work!

This Group resource incorporates our R.E.A.L. approach to ministry. It reinforces a growing friendship with Jesus, encourages long-term learning, and results in life transformation, because it's:

R·E·A·L
RELATIONAL EXPERIENTIAL APPLICABLE LIFELONG

Relational
Person-to-person interaction enhances spiritual growth and builds Christian friendships.

Experiential
What we experience through action and discussion sticks with us up to 9 times longer than what we simply hear or read.

Applicable
The aim of ministry is to equip people to be both hearers and doers of God's Word.

Lifelong
Experiences transform the heart, moving faith beyond the walls of church and into everyday life for years to come.

We know you care about kids...

We do, too!

That's why we attempt to ensure that all crafts, toys, and gizmos meet or exceed national safety standards—*and* are produced by manufacturers that don't use child labor or abuse their labor force. You can order Group resources knowing that in addition to caring for *your* kids, you're also caring for children elsewhere.

Let's keep kids safe!

We strive to provide products that are mechanically reliable and hold together during normal, intended usage. Items are also checked for flammability, and both paint and surface coatings are checked for heavy metals—including lead.

You can help your children stay safe by seeing that toys and gizmos are used as designed, for the purposes designed, and that any broken pieces are disposed of promptly and properly. We value your feedback. If you become aware of a problem affecting the safety of any of our products, please inform us immediately.

Group's Hands-On Bible Curriculum®

Group®

Hands-On Bible Curriculum®, Grades 3 & 4, Winter

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* Due to the way Christmas falls, we recommend moving the lessons as needed to line up Lesson 3 with the week of Christmas.

Welcome to the Adventure!

Third- and fourth-graders are a ton of fun. They are discovering that their minds work in amazing ways. They are uncovering mountains of new concepts in school in math, science, literature, and relationships. They are determining their filters for the way they view the activities and people in the world around them. You have a most important role in helping them grow in the most important area of their lives—their relationship with Jesus Christ.

These children want to have fun while they are uncovering truths about God and his world. Using these active, hands-on, and participatory activities that involve you and them, learning can become an exciting adventure. Our master teacher, Jesus, used active learning 2,000 years ago, and it still works today!

Third- and fourth-graders learn quickly and don't want to sit still. They enjoy figuring things out and making choices, so we can give them situations to do just that. They want to use all of their senses, interact with others, and work together in pairs or small groups, so engage them in all forms of active learning and object lessons. They want to do it themselves, so allow for trial and error. These children want to belong, so involve everyone. Make sure no one is left out. Most of all just enjoy them. They will want to be with you if you want to be with them.

Here are a few helpful do's and don'ts to make experiential learning work best for your kids:

• **Do think outside the learning-space box!** Move tables so students can move around freely and work in groups. Scope out other areas, such as a foyer, a parking lot, or a fellowship hall, that could be used for activities.

• **Don't turn down the volume!** Recognize the difference between good "learning noise" and a situation needing your attention. Active-learning activities often are fast-paced and noisy.

• **Do take advantage of teachable moments.** An activity that bombs may provide a wonderful opportunity for learning if you ask questions such as "Why didn't this work?" "How is this like what happens in real life?" or "What can we learn from this experience?"

• **Don't show children the contents of the Learning Lab® before they are used in the lessons.** Keep them guessing what's coming next!

• **Do get to know your children.** Be aware of the attitudes they bring with them. They may be dealing with family, school, or relationship issues. Encourage students to share their feelings as they participate in activities.

• **Don't forget—experiential learning is fun and captivating!** Enjoy it! A positive experience learning about God within the safe boundaries of your classroom will lead to more positive experiences with God outside the classroom. What a great way to encourage your students to discover the joy of the Lord firsthand and to grow in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ!

Be aware that some children have food allergies that can be dangerous. Know your children, and consult with parents about allergies your kids may have. Also, be sure to read food labels carefully as hidden ingredients can cause allergy-related problems.

Making the Most of Your Hands-On Bible Curriculum®

⚠ **WARNING:**
CHOKING HAZARD—
Small parts. Not for children under 3 years.

Module Introductions Within each quarter of Hands-On Bible Curriculum, there are three modules. Each module has a theme that runs throughout the lessons. The introduction to each module includes an overview of the lessons and a chart listing the Bible Point and Scripture used in each lesson.

Bible Point There's one point that you want your children to take home at the end of your lesson. That's the Bible Point. You'll see it referenced in the margin as well as italicized and underlined in the lesson. We've designed for it to be repeated numerous times during the lesson so no one will miss it.

Bible Verse These words, straight from God's Word, show the biblical basis for the lesson. The Bible verse appears in boldface in the lesson.

Teacher Enrichment This part of the lesson is just for you. If you can, read it early in the week. It includes an explanation of the Bible passage and some suggested ways to pray during the week so you'll be prepared, heart and mind, for your important hour with your children.

This Lesson at a Glance This valuable chart shows you the big picture for your lesson. You can quickly see what supplies you'll need and what needs to be done before you begin. A minute on this page will save you 10 during your lesson!

The Jesus Connection To us, this is the most important thing—making the connection between the story and Jesus, the reason for the story. You'll find a Jesus Connection in every lesson, set apart in a box. We want children to find Jesus every week in your class, so don't miss this part of the lesson.

***Hands-On Bible*® Connection** We want all kids to use their Bibles every week. The *Hands-On Bible* is, in our estimation, the best way to get kids into this important book. It's the Bible that kids not only read but also do! In every lesson, you'll find a quick, fun way to get your kids involved in using their Bibles. The tip is in a box that you can't miss.

Teacher Tips You'll find these in the margin throughout the lesson. They're just to give you additional ideas to enhance what you're doing. They vary from alternative ideas for activities to age-level insights.

"Hands-On Fun at Home" Papers These photocopiable pages suggest family activities that will reinforce what your students learned in class.

"There is only one thing worth being concerned about."

—Luke 10:42

What is this one thing?
It's the whole reason for this curriculum—

it's the whole reason for Sunday school. It's what we (and you) want your kids to know! Check out what Thom and Joani Schultz (Group's chairman and chief creative officer) have to say about the one thing and what it means in your life.

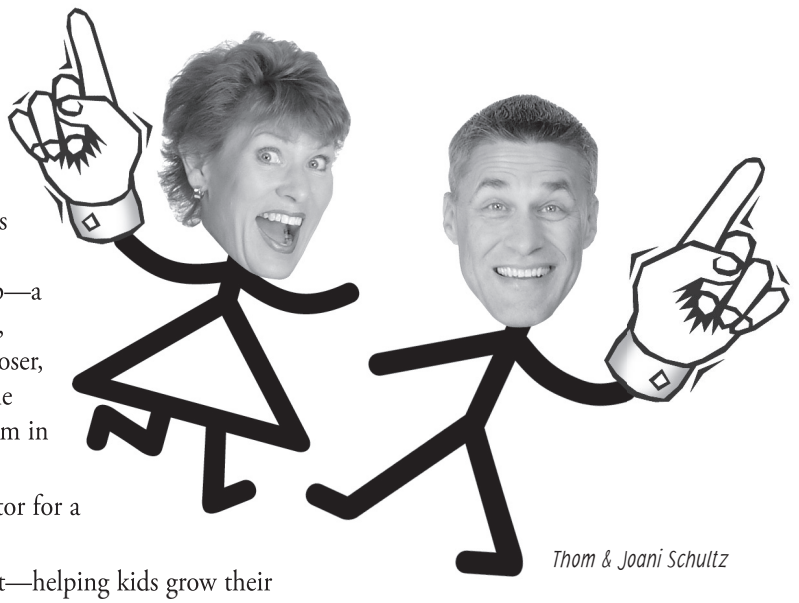
In Luke chapter 10, Jesus visits the home of Mary and Martha. As Martha worries about preparing dinner and being a busy servant, she gets upset because Mary isn't helping. But Jesus tells her, "There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her."

Martha was doing good work. In fact, she was serving the Lord. But Jesus made his priority for us clear. He wants to have a loving relationship with us even more than he wants us to serve him.

Many might say Jesus is the one thing. But no, it's a **growing relationship with Jesus.** Martha would have identified serving Jesus as the one thing. But Mary better understood the *real* one thing.

We believe that the church, like Martha, is often distracted by many things. It tends to deprioritize the one thing. Many other well-intentioned things get in the way. Churches and Christians can get sidetracked with an emphasis on rules, political positions, appearances, social action, secondary goals, theological disputes, solemnity, rituals, and more. To the spiritually hungry, churches often seem more preoccupied with these distractions than the one thing.

If the church wishes to pursue a growing relationship with Jesus, it will need to rethink and reprioritize its ministry. A one-thing ministry emphasizes relationship. And we believe a relationship with Jesus resembles in many ways a human-to-human relationship—a friendship. The process of attraction, getting acquainted, enjoying one another's company, having fun, growing closer, and forming a bond of love and devotion is a natural one that lends clues to how a one-thing relationship may form in the context of church ministry.



Thom & Joani Schultz

How can we build a church that becomes an incubator for a one-thing relationship, for *real* friendship with Jesus?

That's what Hands-On Bible Curriculum is all about—helping kids grow their friendships with Jesus. As they experience the Scriptures and do the activities, they're building that relationship in a real and relevant way.

What's the most important thing your church can do for kids? Help them choose the one thing. And use tools like Hands-On Bible Curriculum to make it a reality.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR THIRD- AND FOURTH-GRADERS

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Most:

- Work quickly and with good fine-motor coordination.
- Want frequent repetition of activities they've enjoyed.
- Are interested in active games and organized activities.

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

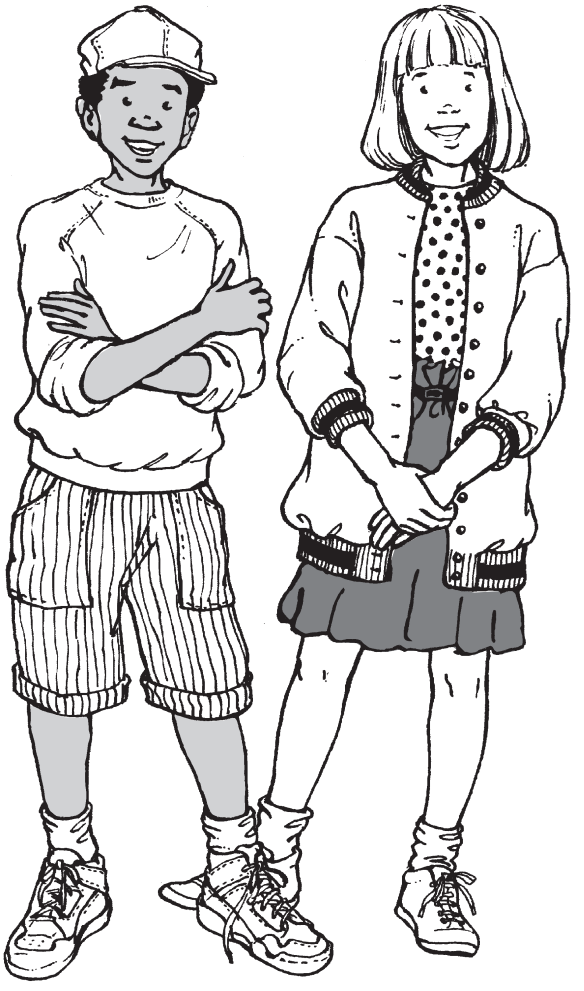
Most:

- Have feelings that may be hurt easily.
- Are sensitive to praise and criticism from adults.
- Are developing the ability to empathize with others.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Most:

- Want to be part of a group.
- Enjoy extended group projects.
- Are able to accept limited constructive criticism.
- Naturally avoid interaction with the opposite sex.



MENTAL DEVELOPMENT

Most:

- Can read well.
- Like to be challenged but don't like to fail.
- Need to feel independent; don't always want help from teachers.
- Understand cause and effect; like to arrange and organize information.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Most:

- Are able to accept that there are some things about God we don't understand.
- Are ready to relate individual Bible events to the scope of Bible history.
- Recognize the difference between right and wrong; able to make deliberate choices about actions.

Jesus' Birth

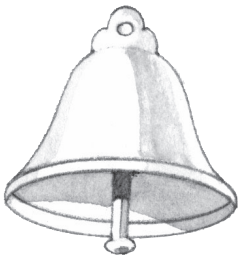
How many days until Christmas? Ask your class, and they'll know! They'll also tell you how hard it is to wait. Yet the people of the Old Testament waited centuries for the Messiah to come. In this module, the Christmas story begins in the Old Testament and unfolds in the Gospel of Matthew. And what a story it is—an angel appearing in a dream, the birth of a special baby, a wicked king, visitors from distant lands, and a hair-raising escape!

Third- and fourth-graders have heard the Christmas story before, but these lessons will help kids experience the unfolding drama of the birth of the Messiah. As kids meet Old Testament prophets, worry with Joseph, travel with the wise men, and flee to Egypt, they will understand that the birth of Jesus is more than just a good story. Jesus' birth, the long-awaited gift from God, brings the promise of new life to your kids today!

Four Lessons on Jesus' Birth

Lesson	Bible Point	Page	Bible Basis
1	Jesus is the Messiah.	11	Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:2
2	We can trust God's plans.	21	Matthew 1:18-25
3	Jesus is God's greatest gift.	31	Matthew 2:1-12
4	God helps us when we're in danger.	43	Matthew 2:13-23

The Signal



During these lessons, your attention-getting signal will be ringing the *bell* found in the Learning Lab. Ring the *bell* whenever you want to get kids back together. In response to the *bell*, kids will immediately stop talking, raise their hands, and focus on you for their next instructions.

Tell kids about this signal—and practice it—before each lesson begins. Explain that it's important to respond to this signal quickly so the class can do as many fun activities as possible. During the lessons, you'll be prompted when to use the signal.

The Time Stuffer

Times of transition are an important part of teaching children. Unfortunately, not everyone in your class works at the same pace or even arrives at the same time to your class. Set up the following ongoing project so that kids can work on it during downtimes or while waiting for others.

During this module, kids will be exploring and celebrating the birth of Jesus. Set up a small artificial Christmas tree in your classroom to make the room more festive. However, don't put any ornaments on this tree. Instead, set out supplies for making ornaments, such as craft foam, scissors, glitter glue, colorful string, wrapping paper, lace, and other craft items. Let children use their extra time to work on original ornaments that reflect what they're learning in these lessons.

As children finish their ornaments, they may hang them on the tree. When children have created several ornaments, read Matthew 2:11. Ask kids to reflect on the gifts that God has given them. Challenge children to consider how they might use these gifts to brighten the lives of others, just as the ornaments they've created brighten the class Christmas tree.

When the module is completed, they may take their ornaments home.

Bible Point ► Jesus is the Messiah.

Bible Verse

"For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

Growing Closer to Jesus

Students will
- understand the meaning of the word *Messiah*,
- learn how the birth of Jesus fulfilled prophecy,
- discover why we need a Messiah, and
- tell how they'll spread Jesus' light.

Teacher Enrichment

Bible Basis

■ **Prophets predict Jesus' birth.**

Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:2

Some people find it hard to believe that these passages predicting the coming of Jesus were written about 700 years before his birth! Amazingly, God gave details to Isaiah and Micah about the coming Messiah at about that time.

A baby born to a virgin—now that's something even harder to believe for most! And the debate rages about whether the word in Isaiah 7:14 really refers to a virgin or just to a young woman. In its original context, it likely refers to a young woman, Isaiah's wife (see Isaiah 8:3). But in Matthew 1:23, Matthew connects this passage with the birth of Jesus to Mary and quotes the passage using the Greek word for "virgin." He leaves little question that this was to be seen as a clearly miraculous birth, in ultimate fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy.

Isaiah 9:6-7 are probably the most-often quoted Old Testament verses during the Christmas season. And there's no question that these verses refer to Jesus. Only he could fill the incredible roles ascribed to him here. And only he is God's Son, whose coming was predicted to us so long ago!

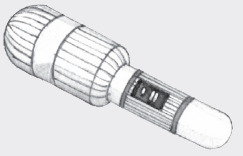
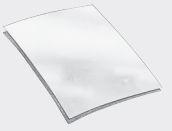
Prayer

- Read Matthew 1:18-25.
- What aspects of the prophecies about Jesus' birth are most meaningful to you?
- Pray: Lord, thank you for coming to earth as a human baby. Help me express my belief in you to the children in my class by…

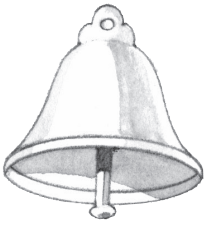
Before the Lesson

- Collect the necessary items for the activities you plan to use, referring to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies listed on the chart.
- Make photocopies of the "Hands-On Fun at Home" handout (at the end of this lesson) to send home with your children.
- Pray for your students and for God's direction as you teach the lesson.

This Lesson at a Glance

	What Children Will Do	Classroom Supplies	Learning Lab Supplies
Attention Grabber	**Saved by the Bell—**Freeze in awkward positions and wait for a signal to move again; then read Isaiah 9:6.	Bible	
Bible Exploration & Application	**The Proof of a Prophet—**Compare prophets and look up Scriptures to discover how Old Testament prophecies about Jesus' birth came true.	Bibles, newsprint, marker, "Messages" handout (p. 19)	
	Mission Accomplished—Search for a hidden object, and read Colossians 1:21-22 to find out how God's perfect plan came together in the birth of Christ.	Bibles	
	A Message of Love—Wait for an expanding message of love to appear.	Bowl of warm water	
	The Names of Jesus—Make up motions to represent names for Jesus, and repeat Isaiah 9:6.	Marker, poster board	
Closing	**Spread the Light—**Read Isaiah 9:6 and John 1:4-9, and tell how they'll walk in Jesus' light this week.	Bible, flashlight	

Welcome

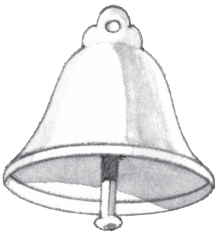


Welcome kids as they arrive. Then explain that whenever you ring the *bell*, they are to stop talking, raise their hands, and focus on you. Explain that it's important to respond to the signal quickly so the class can do as many fun activities as possible.

Attention Grabber

■ *Saved by the Bell*

SUPPLIES: *Bible*



Say: **Let's play a game. I'm going to give you a set of instructions. Follow each instruction as quickly as you can. When I say "freeze," freeze immediately, and hold your position until I ring this *bell*. One more thing—when you're frozen, you can't laugh.**

Read the following list of actions. Say "freeze" when kids are in awkward positions, and then wait about 20 seconds before you ring the *bell* to allow them to move again.

- **Touch your nose with your foot.**
- **Yawn as wide as you can, and stretch your arms wide.**
- **Make a scary face, and try to frighten someone.**
- **Stand on one foot, and hold your arms above your head.**
- **Balance on four fingers and one foot.**

When you've read all the instructions, have kids sit down where they are, and ask:

• **What was hard about this game?** (Not laughing; staying frozen in place in a strange position.)

• **How did you feel while you were waiting for the *bell*?** (Impatient; uncomfortable.)

• **What's hard to wait for in real life?** (Christmas; birthdays; weekends; going on a vacation.)

Say: **Waiting isn't easy, especially at Christmas. It's hard to be patient when we're waiting for something good. In our game, you were uncomfortable as you waited for me to ring the *bell*. Each time I rang the *bell*, I gave you freedom to move again.**

Ask: • **What's the hardest thing you ever had to wait for?** (Getting a new puppy my parents promised; going on a vacation with my grandparents.)

Share a waiting experience of your own. Then say: **It's hard to wait a few weeks for Christmas. It's even hard to wait a minute to get out of an uncomfortable position. So can you imagine waiting hundreds of years for a promise to come true? But people did wait! It must've been an awfully good promise for people to wait that long.**

Ask: • **Any guesses about what that promise was?** (That Jesus would come; that God would forgive us.)

Say: **In Old Testament times, God gave messages to people called prophets. The prophets passed on God's messages to the rest of the people. Listen to what the prophet Isaiah said.**

Have a volunteer read aloud ►**Isaiah 9:6.** Then say: **The prophet Isaiah announced that God would send a Messiah, or Savior, to save his people from their enemies. ►*Jesus is the Messiah.* Let's see what else the prophets had to say.**

teacher tips

Repeating the Bible Point over and over will help the children remember it and apply it to their lives. Help children learn one point that will stay with them for days and even years to come.

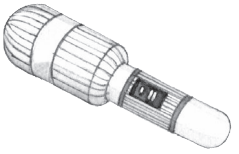
◄**BIBLE VERSE**

◄**BIBLE POINT**

Bible Exploration & Application

■ *The Proof of a Prophet*

SUPPLIES: *Bibles, newsprint, marker, "Messages" handout (p. 19)*



Before class, make two copies of the "Messages" handout, and inflate the *inflatable microphone*. Also, write these pairs of Scripture references on a large sheet of newsprint: **Isaiah 7:14** and **Matthew 1:20-23**; **Micah 5:2** and **Matthew 2:1**; and **Jeremiah 23:5** and **Luke 2:4**.

Say: **Before we go any further, let's find out more about prophets. I need two volunteers to be prophets.**

Choose two volunteers to stand in front of the class. Give a "Messages" handout to each of the volunteers.

Say to the rest of the class: **These are our two prophets. They're important people, so listen carefully to them.**

Give the *inflatable microphone* to the first prophet. Have the prophets take turns holding the *inflatable microphone* and reading their messages. Do nothing when kids respond to Prophet #1, but do everything Prophet #2 says.

After the prophets have read their messages, and you've responded only to Prophet #2, ask:

• **If we were to continue this game, how would you respond to Prophet #1?** (I would ignore that prophet; I wouldn't listen anymore.)

• **How would you respond to Prophet #2?** (I'd follow this prophet; I'd believe this prophet's words were true.)

Have kids give the two prophets a round of applause. Put the *inflatable microphone* aside for later use.

Say: **The way you judged these two prophets today is the same way people in Old Testament times judged which prophets were from God. The proof of a true prophet was if the prophecies came true and the teaching lined up with other information in the Bible. Let's see what three prophets in the Bible had to say about Jesus' birth.**

Have kids count off by threes. Send all the Ones to one corner of the room, all the Twos to another corner, and all the Threes to another corner. Give each group a Bible. Have each group choose one or two Readers who will read the Scripture passages and a Reporter who will share what the group has learned with the rest of the class.

Say: **Ones, look up the first pair of Scriptures to find out what the prophecy was and if it came true. Twos, look up the second pair of Scriptures. Threes, look up the third pair.**

Circulate among the groups, and help kids find the Scripture passages in their Bibles. Allow about three minutes for kids to find and compare their Scriptures; then ring the *bell* to bring everyone together. Have Reporters tell about each prophecy and how it came true. (Ones: A virgin would have a baby; Mary was a virgin and the angel told Joseph and Mary their baby was from God. Twos: A mighty ruler would be born in the small town of Bethlehem; Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Threes: A wise ruler will come from David's family; Jesus came from David's family.)

Ask: • **Do you think Isaiah, Micah, and Jeremiah were true prophets of God? Why or why not?** (Yes; what they said came true.)

Bible Insight

Micah wasn't the only prophet who used a Davidic element in the foretelling of the Messiah. But he was the only prophet who cited Bethlehem as the birthplace of the coming Messiah. Also, the prophecy of Micah extended the sphere of the Messiah's influence to the entire world, not just to the people of Israel.

Say: **There are many other prophecies in the Old Testament that tell amazing details about Jesus' birth, life, death, and resurrection. ►*Jesus is the Messiah* promised through the prophets hundreds of years before that special birth in Bethlehem. Let's find out more about what the Bible says about the Messiah.**

◄BIBLE POINT

■ Mission Accomplished

SUPPLIES: *Bibles*

Before class, hide the two *foam stars* separately in your classroom. Try to hide the stars so kids will have trouble finding them.

Say: **Hundreds of years before Jesus' birth, God's people lived in the land of Israel. But when they sinned, God allowed them to be conquered by the army of Babylon. The army of Babylon burned the city of Jerusalem and took almost all the people back to Babylon as captives. Many of the prophecies about Jesus' birth were written while God's people were captives. They longed to go back to their homeland. They believed the Messiah would set them free. They were anxious for the Messiah to come and help them, and they were always waiting and looking for his arrival.**

Let's do some looking of our own. Have kids form two groups. **I've hidden two *foam stars* somewhere in this room. Each group will try to find a star. Discuss in your group a spot where you think a star might be hidden. Then choose a Finder who will go to that spot and see if you're correct. Take turns being the Finder until you find a star or until I call time. When I say "go," you can start looking.**

Give kids a few moments to choose a spot and a Finder, and then say "go." If the first Finder doesn't find a star, offer kids clues to help them find the stars. After each group has found a star, or after five minutes, call time. If groups haven't found the stars, reveal their hiding places. Then ask:

• **What was it like looking for the stars?** (It was easy since we found ours on our second try; it was too hard since our star was hidden in an impossible place.)

• **How did you feel not knowing where you would find the stars?** (Frustrated; curious.)

• **How did my clues help you find the stars?** (The clues were too hard; the clues made it easier.)

• **How was looking for the stars like the Israelites looking for the Messiah?** (They didn't know where to look; they were hoping to find the Messiah right away like we were hoping to find the star right away.)

• **How were my clues like the messages God gave to the prophets?** (They helped people not to give up; they helped people know what to look for.)

Say: **In our last activity, we heard how the prophets gave the people messages from God about the Messiah. Those messages were kind of like the clues I gave you in this activity. My clues helped you find the stars, and the prophets' messages helped the people find the Messiah when he came.**

Ask: • **Why do you think God gave the prophets those messages about the Messiah?** (So people would have hope; so people wouldn't give up looking for Jesus.)

• **Why do you think God sent Jesus?** (To save us; to help us; to love us.)

teacher tips

Encourage active participation as students report back by following up kids' answers with questions such as, "What did you mean by that?" and "Can you tell me more?"

teacher tips

If you have a small classroom, consider hiding the stars in a nearby closet or adjacent classroom.

Give each group a Bible. Have a volunteer in each group read aloud **Colossians 1:21-22**. Then ask:

• **What do you think this passage means?** (We were sinful; we were apart from God; now we can be holy.)

Say: **To *reconcile* means to "make right or close again."** Ask someone in each group to hold up the group's star. **See how the center of the star can be removed?** Pause while kids remove the centers. Have two volunteers hold the stars and the centers on opposite sides of the room. **That's how God's people were before Jesus, the Messiah, came. ►*Jesus is the Messiah* who came to make us right, or reconciled, with God again. Without Jesus, we can't really know or be close to God. There's a big hole in our understanding. But God sent Jesus so we can be close to God again.** Have kids replace the centers in their stars.

BIBLE POINT►

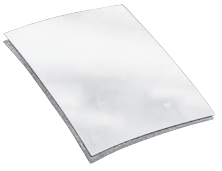
BIBLE POINT►

►*Jesus is the Messiah* who came for God's people long ago, and he's our Messiah today.

Return the *foam stars* to the Learning Lab for later use.

■ A Message of Love

SUPPLIES: *bowl of warm water*



Before class, cut a heart shape from the *growing sponge*. Gather everyone around the bowl of warm water. Keep the *growing sponge* out of sight. Have children form pairs, and ask each pair to think of a way to introduce an important announcement. For example, they might say, "Ladies and gentlemen!" as if they were circus ringleaders; they might act like broadcasters announcing a news story; they might toot on an imaginary trumpet; or they might sing a commercial jingle. Give kids a few minutes to think, and then allow everyone to present their introductions.

In your best announcer's voice, say: **Welcome, everyone! I come here today bearing a message to you by way of the great prophets Micah and Isaiah! We learned about the prophets and their message that ►*Jesus is the Messiah.* And then we learned about how their messages helped the people find the Messiah. Now, we are going to learn why the Messiah came to earth! This message I am bringing to you is about what Jesus will give you! This message is the coolest, best message ever!**

BIBLE POINT►

Still impersonating an announcer, ask:

• **What message do you think this could be?** (A message about God; that God loves us.)

Place the *growing sponge* into the warm water. Then as the sponge is expanding, say: **Even though the prophets knew the Messiah was coming, God's people were still very anxious and curious about what this message meant.**

Once the heart expands fully, have kids return to their pairs to discuss these questions:

• **Were you excited to see this message? Explain.** (Yes, I wasn't sure what would happen; not really, because I was sure I knew what was going to happen.)

• **Do you think people in Bible times were excited to hear about the Messiah coming? Explain.** (Yes, because they had waited for so long; yes, because it meant they were going to be saved.)

• **What does it mean to you to know that Jesus loves you?** (It makes me feel special; I feel glad to know someone important loves me.)

Say: ►***Jesus is the Messiah,*** **and his love for each one of us is what brings us to God. It's easy to forget how much Jesus loves us. But when we share our love for him, his love for us keeps expanding, just like this sponge. That's always exciting! Let's thank God for his love for each of us, and ask him to help us share that love with a specific person this week. We'll take turns praying and saying the name of someone we'll share Jesus' love with this week.**

Pray: **Dear God, thank you for loving me. Please help me share your love with** [name] **this week. Amen.**

Allow each child to pray. If children don't feel comfortable praying aloud, encourage them to pray silently. Return the sponge to the Learning Lab for use in a later lesson.

◄**BIBLE POINT**

Research shows that kids remember about 90 percent of what they do, but less than 10 percent of what they hear. Kids need to be actively involved in lively experiences that bring home the lesson's Bible Point!

■ *The Names of Jesus*

SUPPLIES: *marker, poster board*

Before class, prepare four pieces of poster board by writing one of the following names of Jesus on each one: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Say: **Our verse from the Bible today is Isaiah 9:6, which says, ►"For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." This verse is a prophecy that foretells that ►*Jesus is the Messiah,* and it also tells us names for Jesus.**

◄**BIBLE VERSE**

◄**BIBLE POINT**

Have children form four groups, and give each group one of the signs. Explain that each group needs to come up with a motion or action that represents the name on their poster-board sign. Allow a few minutes for kids to work together. Then say the first part of the verse aloud. When you come to the part with the royal titles, point to each group in order so that kids can do their motion or action. Then have everyone say the verse aloud together and do the motions they've learned from the other groups.

HANDS-ON BIBLE

Give each child a paper plate. Provide markers, scissors, index cards, ribbon, and a hole punch for children to use. Make sure children have their *Hands-On Bibles*.

Say: **The names of Jesus that we're told of in Isaiah 9:6 are called royal titles. Open your *Hands-On Bible* to Isaiah 9. Read the "Royal Mobile" activity at the end of Isaiah 9, and follow the directions.**

Children will make mobiles to help them remember this week's Bible verse.

After children complete the activity, say: **Hang your royal mobile in your room at home so it can remind you that ►*Jesus is the Messiah.***

◄**BIBLE POINT**

Closing

■ *Spread the Light*

SUPPLIES: *Bible, flashlight*

Gather kids in a circle. Have two volunteers read **Isaiah 9:6** and **John 1:4-9**; then ask:

• **Why do you think the Bible calls Jesus "the light"?** (Because he shows us the way to heaven; because he brightens our lives.)

• **How can we have the light Jesus gives in our own lives?** (By loving Jesus; by having Jesus as our friend.)

Say: ►***Jesus is the Messiah.*** **His birth brought light into a dark and troubled world. We can share in his light when we have his forgiveness for our sins. When we love Jesus, we can spread his light to the people around us. I'm going to shine a flashlight on each person here. When I shine the light on you, tell one specific thing you'll do to spread the light and love of Jesus this week. For example, you might share about the real meaning of Christmas with someone who doesn't know, or you might show Jesus' love by sweeping a neighbor's walkway or saying something kind to someone who is feeling down.**

Shine the light on each person in the room (including yourself!), and have everyone share. Encourage children to share specific actions instead of general ones like "I'll be nice." Then close with a prayer similar to this one: **Dear Jesus, you are our Messiah and our light. Thank you for helping us leave the darkness of our sin behind. Help us share your light with others this week. Amen.**

Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.

Photocopy the "Hands-On Fun at Home" handout (at the end of this lesson) for this week, and send it home with your kids. Encourage kids and parents to use the handout to spark meaningful discussion on this week's topic.

Messages

Prophet #1

1. If you smile your biggest smile, the teacher will pat you on the head.

2. If you wink, the teacher will wink at you.

3. If you say, "Mary had a little lamb," the teacher will say "baa."

Prophet #2

1. If you shake hands with someone, the teacher will pat you on the head.

2. If you put your thumbs in your ears and wave, the teacher will, too.

3. If you say, "O little town," the teacher will say, "of Bethlehem."

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Hands-On Fun at Home

Lesson 1

Bible Point

Jesus is the Messiah.

Bible Verse:

"For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

Talk It Over

Read Isaiah 9:6 together. Then answer these questions together:

- How does each of the royal titles given to Jesus describe him?

_____

- What does it mean to know that Jesus has these names and qualities?

_____

- What other words or names describe Jesus?

_____

Way to Pray

Make a bouquet of Christmas greetings. Tape paper clips to the tops of straws to make flower "stems." Place the stems in a vase. When cards begin to arrive for your family, put each day's cards on stems, and arrange them in the vase. At dinner have family members take turns choosing cards and reading the greetings. After you've read all the cards, pray for the people who sent them.

Idea!

Make an Advent streamer you can use each Christmas season. Cut four lengths of different-colored ribbon to represent the four weeks until Christmas. Glue or pin the ribbons to a Christmas ornament. Decorate an index card for each day until December 25. Fold each card in half. Write the date on the outside; on the inside, write one thing you can do that day to spread Jesus' light. Staple the folded cards onto the ribbons, and hang the finished streamer in your room. Have fun bringing Jesus' light to people every day!

Check It Out

Read John 1:4.

Look around you. Are there Christmas lights in your home, church, or community yet? How do they remind you of Jesus?

Read Luke 1:30-33.

What do you think Mary thought about while she waited for Jesus to be born?

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Teacher Guide

GRADES 3 & 4

Winter

Teach as Jesus Taught!®

JESUS USED EVERYDAY OBJECTS—a mustard seed, a fig tree, a lost coin—to teach his disciples the truths that would change the world. With Hands-On Bible Curriculum, you can teach as Jesus taught, using fun surprises that children can touch, see, and smell to relate eternal truths they won't forget.

This quarter your 3rd- and 4th-graders will learn these important Bible lessons:

JESUS' BIRTH

Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:2	Jesus is the Messiah.
Matthew 1:18-25	We can trust God's plans.
Matthew 2:1-12	Jesus is God's greatest gift.
Matthew 2:13-23	God helps us when we're in danger.

FOLLOWING JESUS

John 3:1-21	Following Jesus means learning all we can about him.
Matthew 8:5-13	Following Jesus means having faith.
Matthew 19:16-30	Nothing should get in the way of following Jesus.
Luke 10:38-42	Following Jesus is the best thing we can do.
John 4:1-26; 39-42	Jesus wants everyone to follow him.

JESUS' PARABLES

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23	We can help others believe in God.
Luke 10:25-37	God wants us to love our enemies.
Matthew 18:23-35	God wants us to forgive others.
Luke 15:1-32	God wants us to be happy when others are happy.

Also available:

AWARD-WINNING HANDS-ON BIBLE®

God's Word comes alive with hundreds of fun, interactive activities. It also coordinates with Hands-On Bible Curriculum!

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