Group

Leader Guide

Kids Own Worship

Children's Church

It's church...just for kids!

WINTER

Leader Guide

WINTER • CHILDREN'S CHURCH

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Group
Real. Bold. Love.

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

Relational
Learner-to-learner interaction enhances learning and builds Christian friendships.

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

Applicable
The aim of Christian education is to equip learners to be both hearers and doers of God's Word.

Learner-based
Learners understand and retain more when the learning process takes into consideration how they learn best.

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.

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Don't just teach about the Bible. Change lives!

KidsOwn Worship® is a resource God will use to change the lives of the children in your church.

KidsOwn Worship sessions encourage people to focus on the one most important thing in life: *a growing relationship with Jesus*. In Luke 10:41-42 (the Martha and Mary story), Jesus said, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed." Every session in KidsOwn Worship helps students focus on this one thing, a growing relationship with Jesus. Whether they're studying Bible stories from the Old Testament or the New Testament, learners will be challenged to grow closer to Jesus every week.

You'll be thrilled at the way KidsOwn Worship encourages learners to weave faith into life. By providing meaningful activities, great discussions, and personal challenges, KidsOwn Worship takes learners past head knowledge of the Bible and into heart- and life-change.

With KidsOwn Worship, students of all ages will

- experience God's story in fresh, fun, meaningful ways;
- understand God's Word by doing surprising, fun stuff;
- discover the adventure of applying God's truth to everyday life;
- build a forever friendship with Jesus—the best friend they could ever have!

Welcome to KidsOwn Worship: Church for your kids.

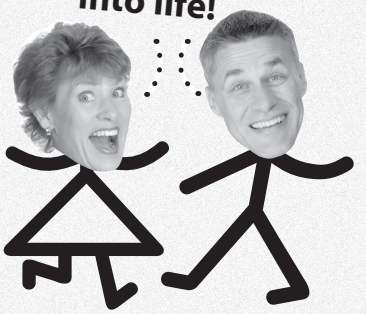
Children's church is where your preschoolers and elementary children build their worship foundation. It's where they focus on God in a personal way—and experience children's worship through uplifting songs and fun, memorable Bible learning.

We know you don't want to just teach about the Bible in your children's church; you want to change lives through worship that touches minds and hearts in amazing ways! Thanks to KidsOwn Worship, your preschool and elementary children will experience worship through memorable songs and impactful Bible learning. It's flexible, easy-to-plan and—most importantly—effective in helping your kids grow a personal relationship with Jesus.

While KidsOwn Worship can be used in conjunction with any Sunday school curriculum, it works particularly well with FaithWeaver NOW and FaithWeaver Friends. Together, your families will learn about the same important Bible passages—allowing them to grow in faith as families.

We're so glad you've decided to touch the heart of God and change the hearts of your kids with KidsOwn Worship. We know you'll help kids grow closer to God!

Weave faith into life!



Thom Schultz
Joani Schultz

Thom and Joani Schultz
Chairman and Chief Creative Officer
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KidsOwn Worship also works hand in hand with FaithWeaver NOW and FaithWeaver Friends. All three of these great programs follow the same Scope & Sequence to help reinforce the Bible message throughout the week. FaithWeaver NOW is available for infants–adults.

Staffing Your Children's Church

To help make your children's church experience strong, it is important that you have at least one adult helper no matter how many children attend your children's church. In addition, we recommend that you recruit at least one helper for every 15 children.

Song Leader

You may want to recruit a song leader who can lead your children in a powerful worship experience. Give the DVD to the song leader, and let your song leader know which songs will be sung each week and what discussion he or she is responsible for.

Preschool Leader

You may decide to keep all the children together during the entire worship time or to separate the preschoolers and elementary students during "Let's Learn the Point!" If you decide to separate preschoolers for this section, recruit a preschool leader, and make sure there's a room where the preschoolers can meet.

Staffing for Your Children's Church Size

If your children's church is made up of 30 or fewer children, you'll be able to run an effective children's church program with two leaders—one to present material or lead worship songs, the other to gather supplies and help children with their individual needs.

If you have more than 30 children in your children's group, we suggest that you use a small-group format, which we call Praise Crews, for discussions. Using Praise Crews will change both the number of volunteers and the kind of volunteers you'll need (see below). Each Praise Crew will need a responsible teenager or an adult helper to build relationships and help with individual needs.

Involving Older Children

If you have older elementary children or preteens who want to be involved in children's church, consider forming a children's worship team. It's a great way to help children learn to serve, and you'll find that many children are eager to participate on a worship team. Hold regular rehearsals to help the worship-team children learn the song lyrics and motions. Be sure to rotate children into the worship team often so that many children get a chance to learn how to serve.

Important Legal Information

By purchasing KidsOwn Worship you also buy the right to use the material, songs, and lyrics as often as you like. Please remember that this content is copyrighted material and can only be used within your children's ministry program. This right does not grant permission to post material on the Internet or to sell, reproduce, or redistribute this material in any manner. To request permission for this, please visit group.com/permissions.

What Do Praise Crew Leaders Do?

- Arrive early and be ready to welcome the kids in your Praise Crews.
- Worship enthusiastically! If you put your heart into worshipping God, kids will, too!
- Listen carefully to directions and help each child participate in the worship activities and the discussion that follows.
- Gently redirect kids who get off track or start misbehaving. It's your job to help kids have an awesome experience at KidsOwn Worship.

Session 1

John the Baptist Prepares the Way for Jesus

Mark 1:1-8

Worship Theme:

We can welcome Jesus into our lives.

Weaving Faith Into Life:

Children will make a change in their lives to prepare to welcome Jesus.

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
1 Let's Praise God! *(up to 25 minutes)*	**Sing** • "Joy to the World!" • "Come, Thou Almighty King" • "Fairest Lord Jesus" • "Shalom" • "I Have a Friend"	**KidsOwn Worship Kit:** *KidsOwn Worship* DVD **Classroom Supplies:** cleaning supplies,1 to 3 sheets of newsprint, crayons and markers, tape, video equipment

Preschool

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
2 Let's Learn the Point! *(up to 25 minutes)*	**Straightening the Road** Learn about the Bible story by cleaning a cluttered road.	
	Welcoming Jesus Sing about welcoming Jesus.	**Classroom Supplies:** Large sheet of poster board, marker, scissors
	Welcome Signs Welcome Jesus by making signs.	**Classroom Supplies:** 1 sheet of poster board per 4 children, scissors, markers

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
2 Let's Learn the Point! *(up to 25 minutes)*	* **"Straight Road"** Watch a video about building a road, and see how John prepared people for Jesus.	**KidsOwn Worship Kit:** *KidsOwn Worship* DVD **Classroom Supplies:** Video equipment
	* **Introductions** Practice introducing Jesus to each other.	
	* **Change My Heart** Ask God to purify their hearts in preparation for Jesus.	**KidsOwn Worship Kit:** *KidsOwn Worship* DVD **Classroom Supplies:** Paper and pencil per child, video equipment

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
3 Let's Pray! *(up to 10 minutes)*	**The Offering** Give their offerings and talk about the love Jesus brings.	**Classroom Supplies:** Offering bowls, photocopies of "Advent Symbols and Jesus Puppet" (at the end of Session 2), scissors
	My Home Is Your Home Tell Jesus their home is his home in two languages.	
	"I'm Trusting You" Sing a song as a closing prayer.	**KidsOwn Worship Kit:** *KidsOwn Worship* DVD **Classroom Supplies:** Video equipment

* Starred activities can be used successfully with preschool and elementary children together.

Customize your session to fit your needs. You can separate preschoolers and elementary children for Section 2.

Or, if you keep the children all together for the entire worship session, we suggest you choose from the starred activities.

John the Baptist Prepares the Way for Jesus

Mark 1:1-8

The first two words of Mark's Gospel remind us of Genesis 1:1. The similarity was probably intentional. Mark saw Jesus' life, ministry, death, and resurrection as the beginning of the gospel. The word *gospel*, derived from the Old English *godspel*, means "good news." Mark intended that his writings in this book be seen as only the beginning of the good news about Jesus!

Mark began his Gospel by launching into a quotation from the Old Testament. He likely did this because his audience accepted the Old Testament without question. By connecting what he was saying about Jesus with the words of the prophets, Mark built validity for his own message in the minds of his readers.

Some question why Mark said the quotation is from Isaiah when in reality the first verse of it is from Malachi 3:1. This was a common practice among New Testament writers—they saw the witness of two prophets as stronger than one, so they mentioned together two quotations on the same topic. And crediting both to Isaiah would have been acceptable, since Isaiah was the first of the prophetic books in their canon and "Isaiah" was sometimes considered the title for the collection of prophetic books.

By using the quotation from Isaiah in Mark 1:3, Mark emphasized to his readers the kingly nature of Jesus. In those days, a servant was often sent ahead of the king to call out to everyone along the way that the king was coming. In addition, a servant may have been sent ahead to clear obstacles from the path to make the king's travel smooth and unobstructed.

The last half of this passage shows that John the Baptist did what was prophesied in the Old Testament: He came to prepare the way—and more specifically, the people—for Jesus' coming. As people repented in response to John's preaching and confessed their sins, their hearts were prepared to accept their coming King.

John the Baptist's choice of clothing was not accidental: He was identifying himself with the prophet Elijah, who dressed the same way (2 Kings 1:8). His was the clothing of the poor, and his food was also that of the very poor. John was humbling himself, knowing how great Jesus would be. In those days, it was the job of the lowest servant to untie a visitor's sandals and wash his feet. John let people know that as eloquent and persuasive as his preaching might be, he was the lowest of the low in comparison with the glory of the coming Savior, Jesus.

Devotion for Leaders

During Advent, we anticipate the birth of Jesus. His birth, death, and resurrection make our lives in heaven possible. Prepare to celebrate your friend and Lord, Jesus Christ!

Weaving Faith Into Your Life: There is always much to do before Christmas. But Jesus cares more about our hearts than about gifts and decorations. We can prepare our hearts by repenting of actions and attitudes that are unworthy of those who call Jesus friend and Lord. What do you need to repent of? Prepare to welcome Jesus by living a life worthy of him.

Why We Worship for Leaders

We spend much of our lives preparing for things to come. Each morning we prepare for the day by washing and dressing. We spend years in school preparing for the demands of life and career. We prepare for guests by cleaning our homes and cooking good food.

John the Baptist's message was that a Savior was coming and the people needed to get ready for him. John the Baptist told people to turn from their sins, to start leading holy lives of service to others, and to look for the coming Christ.

By preparing for the Messiah, those who responded to John's message showed they understood that someone important was coming. They recognized that the Christ was about to appear. Their preparations were an act of worship. In the same way, as you and the children in your children's church prepare for the Christmas season, you are engaging in acts of worship. The King is coming. Prepare to welcome him into your hearts.

Easy Prep for Leaders

Let's Praise God!

- Make sure your video equipment is ready.
- Tape newsprint on the walls to make a mural that's long enough for all the children to work on at the same time. Put crayons and markers nearby.

"Straight Road"—Watch "Straight Road" before the children arrive.

The Offering—Photocopy an "Advent Symbols and Jesus Puppet" (at the end of Session 2) for each child. Cut the heart from each paper. Set the papers aside for other sessions.

Preschool Activities—Refer to the preschool pages for preparations.

1 Let's Praise God!

Play KidsOwn Worship music videos as children arrive. Ask some children to stand at the door and welcome everyone who comes into the room. Ask these greeters to smile, shake hands, and say, "Welcome!"

As kids enter, put them to work cleaning the room. Have dust cloths, window cleaner and paper towels, and brooms or a vacuum cleaner ready. If the children ask why you want them to clean, tell them you're getting ready for something special. Make sure you have enough cleaning tasks to keep everyone busy for 5 to 10 minutes.

When the children have spent 5 to 10 minutes cleaning the room, begin the worship service.

Say **Hello, everyone! Welcome to children's church. You can come and find your seats now. Thank you all so much for working so hard to get our room ready for the special event I mentioned.**

Ask
- **When is it important to prepare your house for a special event by cleaning?** (When we have guests; when we're celebrating something.)
- **Why do people get ready for important events by cleaning house?** (To make it look nice; because important people are coming.)

Say **In today's worship session, we're going to talk about getting ready for Jesus. Right now, Christians all over the world are getting ready for Christmas. We call this time of getting ready Advent. The word *advent* means arrival.**

Ask
- **What kinds of things do we do to get ready for Christmas?** (Buy gifts; decorate the Christmas tree; send Christmas cards; read the story of Jesus' birth.)

Say **The Bible tells us God loves us so much that he sent his Son to us. Jesus comes to us in the name of love, and he brings us hope. That's why Christmas is such a special time of year. Let's celebrate that love by singing.**

Sing "Joy to the World!"

Say **Advent is a time to prepare to receive the King. Jesus came to the world as a baby, but right from the very start he was a king. Let's sing about welcoming and worshipping the King.**

Sing "Come, Thou Almighty King."

Say **Jesus is the king we serve, and Jesus is the king we welcome at Christmas. A lot of our preparation for Christmas includes stuff like buying gifts for others, decorating our homes, and baking goodies. But none of that really prepares us to welcome Jesus into our hearts.**

Ask
- **What can we do to welcome Jesus?** (We can tell him we love him; we can worship Jesus; we can turn away from our sins.)
- **What makes Jesus so special that we spend all this time and effort getting ready for him?** (He saved us from our sins; Jesus loves us, no matter what.)

Say **Let's take a few minutes to create a praise banner that tells Jesus why we think he's so special. Take a crayon or marker, and find a place along the wall where I've taped up newsprint. Write or draw several words or pictures that show why Jesus is so special.**

Give kids several minutes to write on the newsprint. Then have them return to their seats. Read or describe several items from the newsprint.

Say **Jesus truly is the king we serve. There's no one more special than Jesus. We're going to sing a song about how wonderful Jesus is. The first verse of this song was written more than 300 years ago. It uses words that we don't use in our everyday speech. The title of this song is "Fairest Lord Jesus." Let's talk about what that means. We don't use the word *fairest* very often. But listen to this saying, and see if you can tell me what fairest means: Mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the fairest one of all?**

Ask • **What does *fairest* mean?** (Most beautiful; the best; the greatest.)

Say **To be fair, in this sense, is to be good and beautiful. This song tells us that Jesus is the best and most beautiful one there is. It says that Jesus rules all nature. Next it says that Jesus is "of God" and that he's the Son of Man. That means Jesus is God and human at the same time. Then the song says we'll cherish Jesus.**

Ask • **What does *cherish* mean?** (To love; adore.)

• **Next the song says we'll honor Jesus. What does *honor* mean?** (To respect; to worship.)

Say **The song says Jesus is our glory, joy, and crown. That means Jesus is everything that is good, gives us great joy, and is the king we serve.**

The next verse of the song tells us that Jesus is a beautiful Savior who's in charge of every country. And then, because it's so important, the song says again that Jesus is both God and man. The rest of the song talks about all the things Jesus deserves because of who he is. The song says that forever and ever Jesus deserves glory, honor, praise, and adoration. Let's sing this song together. Praise Jesus in your hearts while you sing.

Sing "Fairest Lord Jesus."

Say **In Bible times, God promised that he would send a Savior. That Savior is Jesus. At Christmastime we celebrate the birth of Jesus. Jesus was born about 2,000 years ago. But in Bible times, people were still waiting for Jesus to come. You see, thousands of years before the first Christmas, God promised he would send a Savior. People who were faithful to God waited and trusted God for years and years before Jesus was born. God told them what Jesus would be like long before Jesus was born. Listen to what the Bible says about Jesus. This was written hundreds of years before Jesus was born.**

"For unto us a child is born; unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder. These will be his royal titles: 'Wonderful,' 'Counselor,' 'The Mighty God,' 'The Everlasting Father,' 'The Prince of Peace.' His ever-expanding, peaceful

government will never end. He will rule with perfect fairness and justice…He will bring true justice and peace to all the nations of the world" (Isaiah 9:6-7, *The Living Bible*).

Ask • **What do these verses tell you about Jesus?** (He's amazing; Jesus came to save us and help us.)

Say **Christmas and Advent are about welcoming this wonderful Prince of Peace into our lives. The song we're going to sing has the Hebrew word "Shalom" which means "peace." By singing this song, we're asking God to send peace, the Prince of Peace, into their lives. Let's sing "Shalom."**

Sing "Shalom."

Say **God kept his promise. God sent Jesus to be the Savior of the world. God sent Jesus to love us. Because Jesus is such a wonderful Savior, we love him, serve him, and honor him with our lives. Today we'll get ready to welcome Jesus into our lives. Let's tell our friend Jesus how much we love him.**

Sing "I Have a Friend."

2 Let's Learn the Point!

Preschool Activities, pages 13-14

At this time, have the preschool leader invite the preschoolers to go to their own room for this section of activities. Tear out the Preschool Activities page, and give it to the preschool leader. Have the preschool leader bring the preschoolers back to participate in Let's Pray! with the older children. If you prefer to keep all the children together, do the starred (*) activities. They will work well with both elementary and preschool children.

Elementary Activities

* "Straight Road"

Show the video "Straight Road." It shows a construction crew building a road and leveling the uneven places and paving.

(continued on page 15)

John the Baptist Prepares the Way for Jesus

Session 1

Mark 1:1-8

Worship Theme:

We can welcome Jesus into our lives.

Easy Prep for Leaders

Welcoming Jesus—Draw a simple door on a large sheet of poster board, leaving a 3-inch margin on all sides of the door. Draw a doorknob at the right side of the door. Cut along the top, right side, and bottom of the door. Leave the left side uncut to act as a hinge.

Welcome Signs—Cut sheets of poster board into fourths, and write, "Welcome, Jesus!" on each section.

Using Theo

Consider using Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet today in these ways:

- Have Theo lead the preschoolers from the main worship area to the preschool room.
- Have Theo help clutter and unclutter the road in "Straightening the Road."
- See the KidsOwn Worship Kit for a puppet skit created to tie in to this week's worship session.

Straightening the Road

Say **Let's act out our Bible story today. First we have to get ready. Today's story is about a road. But the road was so crooked and cluttered that it was hard for people to use it. To get ready for our story, let's make a road through our room and clutter it with all kinds of stuff.**

Use chairs or rope to mark both sides of a "crooked road" that'll go through your classroom. Encourage the children to clutter the road with blocks and toys. For fun, you may even have the children sit on the road to clutter it.

Say **There was a man named John the Baptist.**

Choose one child to play John.

Say **John the Baptist knew that Jesus was coming. He wanted the people to get ready for Jesus. But John knew that it would be hard for Jesus to come to town because the road was crooked and cluttered. So John told everyone to make the road straight and to get rid of all the clutter. He said, "We have to get ready for Jesus! Make the road straight."**

Have "John" wander throughout the room saying, "We have to get ready for Jesus! Make the road straight." Have the children sit in the road until John tags them; then they can get up and move to the side of the road. When all the children have been tagged, have them put away the rest of the clutter and straighten out the road.

Say **Soon it was time for Jesus to come.**

Choose a child to play Jesus and stand at one end of the road.

Say **The people were ready for Jesus. The road was straight and clear.**

Have the rest of the children stand at the other end of the road and wave to "Jesus."

Say **The people welcomed Jesus.**

Have the children wave and call out welcoming greetings as "Jesus" walks along the "road" and into "town."

Repeat the story if you'd like to.

Preschool Leader Tip

If you have older preschoolers, explain that John didn't tell the people to really straighten and unclutter a road. Instead, John meant for the people to prepare their hearts.

Welcoming Jesus

Choose one child to play Jesus. Hold the poster-board door you cut out before the session so that the bottom edge just rests on the floor. Have "Jesus" stand behind the door. Have the rest of the class sing the following song. Have "Jesus" knock on the floor when the lyrics indicate that he or she should. Choose another child to open the door when "Jesus" knocks. Then have children clap when they discover "Jesus" behind the door. Play until everyone has had a chance both to open the door and to play Jesus.

Have children sing the following song to the tune of "Looby Loo."

Sing **It's almost Christmastime.**
It's very hard to wait.
Jesus is coming soon.
I'll welcome him into my heart.

He knocks upon the door.
He knocks upon the door.
I open it up and let him in.
Jesus is welcome here.

Welcome Signs

Say **Often when you drive into a town, a welcome sign tells you that you've entered the town and that it's a friendly place to visit. Many businesses and stores also hang welcome signs in their front doors. Many people place welcome mats in front of their doors. We like to let people know we're glad they've come.**

We want Jesus to know that he's welcome here with us. Let's make welcome signs for him.

Give each child a section of poster board and crayons or markers. Encourage the children to draw pictures that will welcome Jesus.

While the children are drawing, ask questions such as, "How do you get ready for Jesus or Christmas at your house?" and "Tell me about your picture—what would you like to tell Jesus?"

When children have finished, let them use their welcome signs in a parade back for The Offering.

(continued from page 12)

Ask

- **How did John the Baptist prepare people for Jesus?** (He showed them how to make a way for Jesus; he helped them make room for him in their hearts.)
- **How was John's teaching like building a road?** (When people build a road, they have to make a way for the road to go; it takes room to put a road, and Jesus needs room to live in our hearts.)
- **Why is it important to prepare for Jesus?** (Because Jesus wants to be part of our lives; we can't be near Jesus unless our hearts are ready for him.)
- **What can you do to get ready for Jesus?** (I can turn away from the bad things I do; I can stop sinning.)

Say **John was an important person. There are several Johns mentioned in the Bible. This John was Jesus' cousin. We often call him John the Baptist because he baptized people and reminded them that they needed forgiveness for their sins. John's job was to prepare people to meet Jesus and to introduce Jesus to the world.**

* *Introductions*

Ask

- **What does it mean to introduce someone?** (To tell others who that person is; to help people get to know each other.)
- **What kinds of things do we tell about someone when we introduce people?** (We tell the person's name; where the person is from; how we know that person.)

Say **John introduced Jesus this way: "Someone is coming soon who is far greater than I am, so much greater that I am not even worthy to be his slave. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with God's Holy Spirit!"** (Mark 1:7-8, *The Living Bible*). **Remember that John was a powerful man in his day. He had many followers.**

Ask

- **What does John's introduction tell us about Jesus?** (That Jesus is even more powerful than John; that Jesus is worthy to be worshipped.)

Say **A good introduction tells you something important about a person. John did a good job introducing Jesus because he let people know that Jesus was going to be the greatest person they could ever meet. We can be like John when we let people know that same thing.**

Let's pretend that we have John the Baptist's job: We get to introduce Jesus to people who've never met him.

Have kids form pairs. Have partners take turns introducing Jesus to each other. While one partner is introducing Jesus, the other partner should pretend

that he or she has never heard of Jesus before. Encourage the introducers to think of specific things about Jesus' character or specific things he's done. Give kids a minute or two to do this.

Ask

- **What did your partners tell you about Jesus?** (That he forgives me; Jesus loves me for who I am; Jesus wants to be my friend.)
- **Remember that you're pretending that you didn't know anything about Jesus. What would you think about Jesus based on what your partner told you about him?** (I'd want to be his friend; I'd be excited to meet him.)

Say **John had a very important job to do. He told people that Jesus was coming. He explained who Jesus was. And he helped people get ready for Jesus. Now that we know about the One who's coming, let's prepare ourselves for his arrival.**

* Change My Heart

Say **The Bible says that John told people to change their hearts and their lives to get ready for Jesus.**

Ask

- **What do you think that meant? How can people change their hearts and lives?** (Jesus wants us to turn away from our sin; we can change our attitudes.)

Say **Psalm 51:10 puts it like this: "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."**

Ask

- **What's a pure heart?** (It's a heart without sin; a heart that's ready for Jesus.)

Say **Let's spend some time purifying our hearts so we can get ready for Jesus' coming.**

Hand out white paper and pencils. Have the children tear heart shapes from the paper. Then encourage the children to take several minutes to talk with God about the cleanliness of their hearts. Have kids write or draw at least one way they can change their hearts and lives to get ready for Jesus.

Play "Create in Me a Pure Heart" while the children are talking to God. After giving kids two or three minutes, invite volunteers to share what they'll do to prepare their hearts for Jesus. Be respectful of each child's privacy; many children may prefer not to share this information with others.

Say **Advent is about preparing for Jesus to come. Every year we prepare our hearts for Jesus just as the people in the Bible prepared their hearts for the coming of their Messiah. But there's a difference between those people and us. We're not preparing for the Christ child to actually be born—that happened about 2,000 years ago. Instead, we're preparing to welcome Jesus into our hearts and into our lives.**

3 Let's Pray!

The Offering

Say **Today we talked about God's love.**

Ask • **Why is love important at Christmas?** (Because Jesus is love; God sent Jesus to show his love.)

Say **That's right. Christmas is about God loving us so much that he sent his Son, Jesus, to the earth to love us and help us and save us from our own sins. Advent is about getting ready to welcome Jesus with open hearts.**

Distribute the paper hearts you cut from the "Advent Symbols" handout.

Say **Hold your paper heart by the edges face up in front of you. This will symbolize your desire to let Jesus into your life so he can be on your side.**

Have kids place their offerings on their paper hearts. Pass the offering bowls, and encourage kids to pour their offerings to God into the bowl, just as we pour our hearts out to God.

Say **When you get home today, put the heart in your room. It will be your reminder that Jesus is love and that Jesus is coming soon.**

My Home Is Your Home

Say **Sometimes when we welcome someone into our homes, we say, "My home is your home." In Spanish we would say, "Mi casa es su casa."** (Mee kahsah ace soo kahsah.) Have the group repeat the expression in both languages. **Does that mean we give people our home when they come to visit? In a sense, we do give people our home to use while they're visiting. When we say, "My home is your home," we're saying, "You are a welcome guest. We hope you will feel at home here."**

We say the same thing to Jesus sometimes, but we don't say, "My *home* is your home." Instead we say, "My *heart* is your home." We often use the idea of our heart to mean the very middle of us where all our feelings and thoughts live. We want Jesus to feel welcome, to feel at home with us. Let's tell Jesus that we want to welcome him into our lives and our hearts.

Pray this prayer with your children, allowing them to respond to each phrase with "My heart is your home."

Pray **Jesus, we are glad you are with us.**
(My heart is your home.)
We know you'll never go away.
(My heart is your home.)
Thanks for your love and forgiveness.
(My heart is your home.)
We praise you because you are a great and mighty God.
(My heart is your home.)
You are welcome with us always.
(My heart is your home.)

"I'm Trusting You"

Close your worship session with this song.

Sing "I'm Trusting You."

Encouragement for Leaders

Remember as you teach your students that what you say may very well bless the hearts of adults at home!

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WEEK	BIBLE STORY	THEME
Week 1	John the Baptist Prepares the Way for Jesus	We can welcome Jesus into our lives.
Week 2	God Dwells With Us	Jesus lives in us.
*Week 3	Jesus Is Born	Jesus' birth is something to celebrate.
Week 4	Faithful People Thank God for Jesus	We can praise God for Jesus.
Week 5	Wise Men Find Jesus	Jesus is worthy of our worship.
Week 6	John Baptizes Jesus	God wants us to believe in Jesus.
Week 7	Jesus Surprises Nathanael	God is all-knowing.
Week 8	Disciples Follow Jesus	Jesus is our leader.
Week 9	Jesus Demonstrates His Authority	Jesus has awesome power.
Week 10	Jesus Heals, Prays, and Preaches	God wants us to depend on him.
Week 11	Jesus Calms a Storm	Jesus takes care of us.
Week 12	Four Friends Help a Paralyzed Man	God is a forgiving God.
Week 13	Jesus Heals the Blind Man	God is merciful.

*Due to the way Christmas falls, we recommend rearranging lessons as needed so week 3 lines up with Christmas.

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Group

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