CELEBRATE WONDER®

All Ages (3–12)

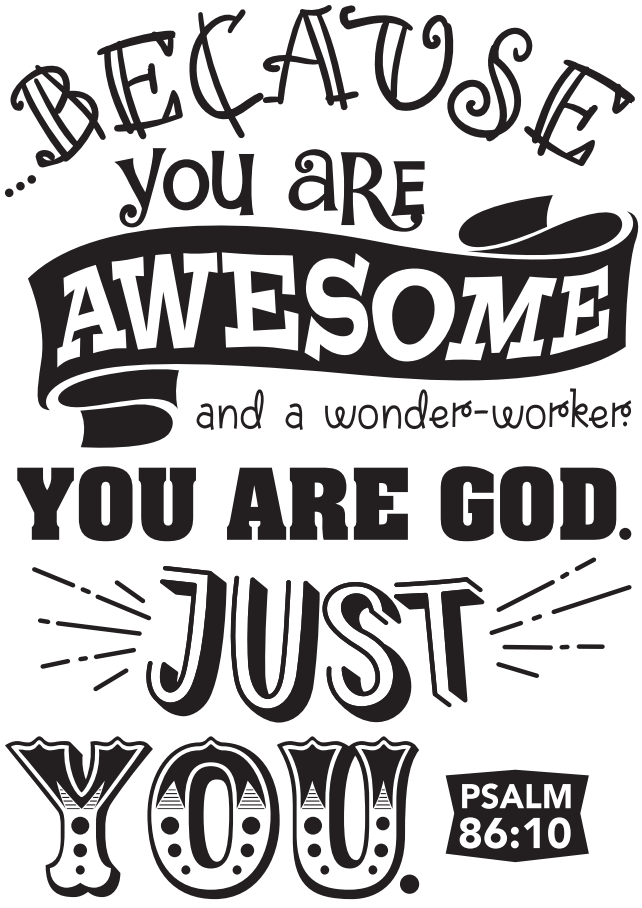
Winter 2021–22

Leader Guide

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE
FALL 2021–SUMMER 2022

CELEBRATE WONDER®

Fall 2021	Winter 2021–22	Spring 2022	Summer 2022
UNIT 1: RECONCILIATION	**UNIT 1: ADVENT**	**UNIT 1: LENT**	**UNIT 1: SPIRIT**
Joseph and His Brothers Genesis 37	Mary's Good News Luke 1:26-38	Ten Men with Skin Disease Luke 17:11-19	Pentecost Acts 2:1-41
Joseph in Egypt Genesis 39:20–40:23	Mary and Elizabeth Luke 1:39-66	A Blind Man Is Healed Luke 18:35-43	Philip and the Ethiopian Acts 8:26-40
Joseph Saves the Day Genesis 41:1-57	Jesus' Birth Luke 2:1-20	The Last Supper Matthew 26:17-35	Spiritual Gifts 1 Corinthians 12:1-11
Joseph and His Brothers Reunited Genesis 42:1–46:34	Simeon and Anna Luke 2:21-38	In the Garden Matthew 26:36-46	Fruit of the Spirit Galatians 5:22-23
UNIT 2: AWE	**UNIT 2: JOURNEY**	**UNIT 2: HOLY WEEK**	**UNIT 2: PRAISE**
The Baby in the Basket Exodus 1:8-14; 2:1-10	Jesus in the Temple Luke 2:41-52	Peter's Denial Matthew 26:69-75	David Dances 2 Samuel 6:12-19
God Speaks to Moses Exodus 3:1-22	Jesus' Baptism Luke 3:1-22	Palm Sunday John 12:12-19	Shout with Joy Psalm 100
Moses and the Pharaoh Exodus 5:1–13:9	Temptation in the Desert Luke 4:1-13	Easter John 20:1-18	Praise the Lord Psalm 150
Crossing the Sea Exodus 13:17–14:31	Jesus in the Synagogue Luke 4:14-30	Breakfast on the Beach John 21:1-19	Mary's Song Luke 1:46-55
Moses and Miriam Celebrate Exodus 15:1-21	Jesus Heals Luke 4:38-44		Salt and Light Matthew 5:13-16
UNIT 3: TRUST	**UNIT 3: WONDER**	**UNIT 3: PROCLAIM**	**UNIT 3: SCRIPTURE**
The Wilderness Exodus 15:22–17:7	The Five Friends Luke 5:17-26	Paul Is Changed Acts 9:1-20	Wise Writings Proverbs 6:6-8; 10:1; 17:17
The Ten Commandments Exodus 19:1–20:21	Healing the Man with the Withered Hand Luke 6:6-11	Paul Escapes with Help Acts 9:21-25	Everything Has a Season Ecclesiastes 3:1-8
A House for God Exodus 25:1–31:18; 35:4–40:38	A Servant Is Healed Luke 7:1-10	Paul and Timothy Acts 16:1-5; 2 Timothy 1:5-7	Paul Writes to the Corinthians 1 Corinthians 12:12-31
Elizabeth and Zechariah Luke 1:5-25	Jairus's Daughter Luke 8:40-42, 49-56	Paul and Silas in Prison Acts 16:16-40	Paul Writes to the Philippians Philippians 4:8-9, 13
		Shipwrecked Acts 27:1-44	



Celebrate Wonder All Ages is a curriculum that honors the spiritual life of children. *Celebrate Wonder All Ages* will engage children in open-ended exploration and inquiry of the Bible. Through experiential activities, spiritual practices, and reflection, *Celebrate Wonder All Ages* serves as a biblical guide to help children make meaning for their lives. This curriculum seeks to deepen children's faith formation and to create a safe space for children to ask big questions and claim their spiritual identity as children of God.

Please visit **CokesburyKids.com,** where you can find training videos, blog posts, free stuff, and more.

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DECEMBER 5

15 Session 2 Mary and Elizabeth
DECEMBER 12

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DECEMBER 19

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DECEMBER 26

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JANUARY 9

55 Session 7 Temptation in the Desert
JANUARY 16

63 Session 8 Jesus in the Synagogue
JANUARY 23

71 Session 9 Jesus Heals
JANUARY 30

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FEBRUARY 6

87 Session 11 Healing the Man with the Withered Hand
FEBRUARY 13

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FEBRUARY 20

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FEBRUARY 27

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What Is...

Celebrate Wonder All Ages is a curriculum that seeks to celebrate spirituality through wonder. Children are naturally spiritual beings and everyday theologians. We want children to recognize and name this spirituality found within themselves and in all the world around them.

This curriculum is based on spiritual practices, which are incorporated through play, discovery, biblical exploration, faith conversation, and relationship. Children who participate in *Celebrate Wonder All Ages* will come to know and use spiritual practices as a way to deepen their faith and to grow in their spiritual identity as children of God. These spiritual practices then become building blocks for holy moments and enrich the faith lives of each and every child. We hope you will come wonder with us as we celebrate the Spirit of God in the lives of children.

The Components of...

Spiritual Practice

A spiritual practice is an intentional activity or ritual that helps you be aware of God's presence. For children, this means simple and tangible practices to connect to God's love.

Teaching children spiritual practices provides them with tools needed to fully know themselves as children of God. This is important because children who are equipped with these helpful daily practices can develop deeper connections to encounter the divine.

Children are innately spiritual. Their curiosity and wonder are a model for faith in action. Through spiritual practices, they can remain connected to this natural spirituality. Spiritual practices come in all shapes and sizes. In *Celebrate Wonder All Ages,* they are typically simple and interactive practices for the children to develop their own ways to feel God's presence and to know their identity as children of God.

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Peaceful Place

The Peaceful Place is a space for the children to spend quiet time with God. Children enjoy having a comfortable place with quiet activities when they are feeling stressed or overwhelmed. Create a feeling of softness and rest by using soft rugs, pillows, and stuffed animals to snuggle with in the area. Each week there will be suggested books and quiet activities you can choose from. Since you know your children and what they need, you are invited to also include your own contributions to the Peaceful Place.

Wonder Table

A Wonder Table is similar to a worship altar found in many worship spaces. It is a holy space meant to help the children see and know God is present. We encourage you to use a smaller table that the children can see and interact with.

Each week there are suggested items to place on the table that coordinate with the church liturgical year and the Bible story. Suggested items include a Bible, a candle, a colored cloth, and so forth. The table can be used as a gathering area for the story time and for participating in spiritual practices.

Wonder Box

The Wonder Box is a special place to hold a special item that connects to the Faith Word and to the Bible story. Each week there will be a suggested item to place in the box. The Wonder Box is very special and is kept on the Wonder Table. Each week you will reveal what is inside and discuss its importance.

We encourage you to make your own Wonder Box. It can be any shape or size, but it's best if it has a lid. You can create your own box for the children, or you may wish to include the children in the creation process. The goal is for the children to come to know this box as very special. The Wonder Box is another way for the children to engage in the Bible story and to focus on the lesson.

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Core Resources

CELEBRATE WONDER ALL AGES has been adapted to make it easy for ministry with children and families to happen, no matter what your church's current reality is. Whether you're meeting in-person all in one room, sending materials home for families to use together, offering a large group opening and small groups in-person or virtually, or hosting an intergenerational gathering for your whole church, CELEBRATE WONDER ALL AGES will work for you. The CELEBRATE WONDER ALL AGES Kit contains a Leader Guide, Reproducible Kids' Book, Class Pack, and CD-ROM! The CD-ROM has digital copies of the Leader Guide and Reproducible Kids' Book.

Kit:

Leader Guide

Reproducible Kids' Book

Class Pack

CD-ROM

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Core Resources

Celebrate Wonder DVD

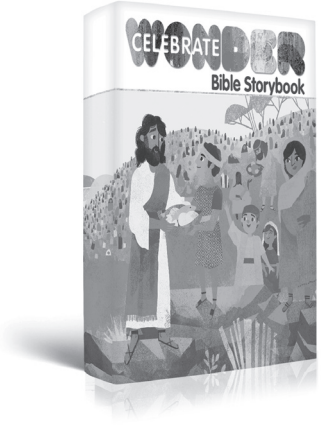
The *Celebrate Wonder DVD* features a child host who will engage the children through storytelling, life application, and exploration of the Faith Word. The DVD includes a music video and thirteen sessions (one for each Sunday) that are 3–5 minutes each.

CEB Bible

This interactive Bible includes four-color icons and illustrations throughout, with a wealth of notes, historical facts, book introductions, devotionals, and other interactive elements to capture inquisitive young minds. The *Deep Blue Kids Bible* encourages a thirst for God's timeless message. For children ages 7–12.

Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook

A colorfully illustrated children's Bible storybook that will engage the children through simple storytelling and open-ended questions that encourage the children to wonder about the Bible story and make connections between the Bible and their lives. Includes 150 stories!



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Supplies

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These are basic supplies you will want to have readily available. All supplies will be listed above the activity in the Leader Guide.

- Box of tissues
- Card stock
- CD player
- Chenille stems
- Colored and white copy paper
- Colored pencils
- Computer and printer
- Construction paper
- Cotton balls
- Cotton swabs
- Crayons
- DVD player
- Glue, gluesticks
- Hand-washing supplies
- Index cards
- Lunch-sized paper bags
- Markers (washable and permanent)
- Metal brads
- Mural paper
- Napkins
- Paintbrushes
- Paper bowls
- Paper clips
- Paper cups
- Paper or plastic table coverings
- Paper plates
- Paper punch
- Paper streamers
- Paper towels
- Pencils
- Plastic containers for paint and water
- Posterboard
- Projector or television
- Resealable plastic bags
- Ribbon
- Scissors (adult and safety)
- Smocks
- Stapler, staples
- Stickers
- Tape (clear, masking, and double-stick)
- Tissue paper
- Washable paint
- Watercolor paints
- Watercolor pencils
- Wet wipes
- Wooden craft sticks
- Yarn

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Your savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:11)

Mary's Good News – Luke 1:26-38

Prepare to Wonder

Faith Word: ADVENT

Today is the second Sunday of Advent. In the lesson, we define Advent as a time when we wait and prepare for the birth of Jesus. Our spiritual practice for the next few Sundays will be on exploring Advent through presence.

Advent is the beginning of the church year. The church year (called the liturgical year) begins four Sundays prior to Christmas. It is traditionally a time of preparation and waiting for the birth of the Christ Child.

In our story this week, Mary is visited by the angel of the Lord, Gabriel, and told she will have a baby and she will name the baby Jesus. Mary is confused and probably afraid of Gabriel's words. She is not married; how could she have a baby? Gabriel reassures her not to be afraid, that God is pleased with her. Mary accepts Gabriel's words with joy and tells the angel she is a servant of God and will do what God wants her to do.

Mary then starts the time of waiting and preparing for the birth of Jesus. She has much to do, not just to prepare physically for the birth, but also to prepare herself spiritually. She had faith in God, so she presented herself to God to fulfill what God had planned. She was present, but how did she prepare? I'm sure she prepared in all the necessary ways: blankets, diapers, a place for him to sleep. How did she prepare her heart? Did she spend time in prayer? Did she share with people she knew would understand her unusual position of expecting a baby without being married?

Today we may wait and prepare in many ways for the birth of Jesus. We have Advent wreaths and calendars to mark off the days. We have Christmas programs and decorating to help us be present with God as we wait.

Spiritual Practice for Adults

The second week of Advent, we light the candle of Love. As you light the candle, ask God to be present with you and hear your prayer. Lift up a name of someone who needs to feel God's love today. Lift the name up in prayer throughout the day. In the evening, thank God for being present with you and hearing your prayer.

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Come Together

Come Together

Supplies: *Class Pack, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, Wonder Box, purple cloth, battery-operated candle, Advent candle*

Prepare Ahead: *Set up a Wonder Table (see p. 3) with a purple cloth, battery-operated candle, and a Wonder Box (see p. 3). Display the Unit 1 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 10 & 15) and Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 22). Place the Advent candle inside the Wonder Box.*

- Point to the Unit 1 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 22), and invite the children to wonder about what the word *Advent* means.
- Invite the kids to join you in a circle.

SAY: This month we are talking about stories at the beginning of Jesus' life. Our story today is about Mary learning that she will be Jesus' mother.

- In this curriculum, we recommend reading stories from the *Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook*. Allow an elementary-age child to read the story, "Mary's Joy" (pp. 192–3), from the storybook.

PRAY: Dear God, thank you for choosing Mary to be Jesus' mother. Amen.

Mary's Good News – Preschool

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Mary's Good News" (Reproducible 1A) for each child.*

- Invite the preschoolers to use crayons to color the picture. Share that God sent an angel with a message for Mary.

SAY: What are some of the ways God speaks to us?

Advent Calendar – Younger Elementary

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons*

Prepare: *Photocopy "Advent Calendar" (Reproducible 1B) for each child.*

- Hand out a copy of "Advent Calendar" to each child.

SAY: During the season of Advent, we count down to Christmas. This Advent calendar will help you count down the days at home. For each day, color the numbers in the box either red or green.

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- Since today is December 5, kids can begin to color in the numbers for days 1–5.
- Younger or older kids may want to do this activity, too, or take one home. Prepare extra copies of the page.

What's the Word? – Older Elementary

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, pencils or markers*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "What's the Word?" (Reproducible 1C) for each child.*

- Hand out a copy of Reproducible 1C to each child.

ASK: What's written on this page?

SAY: The message comes from today's Bible story. But what does it say? Some of the letters are correct. Other letters have been switched out with symbols or numbers that resemble the missing letters. Try to figure it out, but if you get stuck, look for the answer in Luke 1:30-31 in a *Common English Bible*.

- Invite the kids to solve the message on the page.

ASK: What is the message on the page?

Christmas Thoughts – All Ages

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, red and green card stock, hole punch, ribbon, scissors, a large jar, optional: a Christmas tree*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Christmas Thoughts" (Reproducibles 1D and 1E) onto red or green card stock. Cut all the cards apart and use a hole punch to make a hole where you see indicated on each card. Thread a piece of ribbon through each hole and place the twelve cards in a large jar.*

- Place the jar next to a Christmas tree in your classroom. If you don't have a Christmas tree, that's okay. Designate a place in your classroom where the "Christmas Thoughts" cards can be hung after they are pulled out of the jar.
- Invite one kid to pull a card from the jar, and have the child read it aloud. If the child cannot read the card, ask a volunteer to help.
- Have the child hang the card on the tree or elsewhere. Invite each kid to respond to the prompt on the card.
- There are twelve cards. Plan to pull four cards from the jar this week. Then pull four more cards next week (December 12) and four cards the following week (December 19).

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Wonder Time

Interactive Bible Story

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Mary's Good News" (Reproducible 1F) for each child.*

- Invite several readers to take turns reading the story one section at a time.

ASK: What do you think will happen to Mary next?

Share a Story

Supplies: *Celebrate Wonder DVD, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, TV, DVD player*

- Invite the children to join you, sitting in a circle on the floor.
- Watch the Session 1 video (Celebrate Wonder DVD).

Wonder with Me

Supplies: *Class Pack, Wonder Box, scissors*

Prepare Ahead: *Lay out the Wonder Story Mat for Unit 1 (Class Pack—pp. 7 & 18). Cut out the four Bible story figures (Class Pack—p. 6).*

- Place the Wonder Box on the Unit 1 Wonder Story Mat.
- Show the children the Unit 1 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 22).

SAY: Today's faith word is *Advent*. Advent is a time we wait and prepare for the birth of Jesus. Advent can be full of excitement, like baking cookies, or it can be a time of quiet reflection as we watch the flames on Advent wreath candles.

- Hold up the communication device figures.

SAY: Sometimes we aren't physically present with someone, but we can still share with them the awe and wonder of waiting for the birth of Jesus.

WONDER together:

- ❍ How can you share the awe and wonder of Advent with someone you love who lives far away?
- ❍ What does it feel like to wait for something you really want?
- ❍ What can we do to help us wait patiently?

- Place the figure of the smartphone on its matching shadow on the Wonder Story Mat.

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- Read the message on the phone to the kids.
- Open the Wonder Box to reveal the second candle of Advent.

WONDER: How do you think the Advent wreath helps us wait for Christmas?

Experience Wonder

Clothespin Angel Ornament

Supplies: *wooden clip-type clothespins, coffee filters, gold or silver chenille stems, string, markers, glue or tape, scissors*

Prepare Ahead: *Cut the chenille stems into fourths. Make a circle out of each chenille stem, leaving enough on one end to place inside the clip of the clothespin. Cut pieces of string about six inches long. Tie the ends of each piece of string together to form a hanging loop.*

- Give each child a clothespin and a coffee filter. Show the children how to scrunch the coffee filter in the middle and place inside the clip part of the clothespin.
- Have the children clip the end of the chenille stem into the top clip of the clothespin. Have the children draw a face on the front of the clothespin.
- Place the string loop inside the clothespin clip and tape or glue the clip together.

SAY: One of the ways we can prepare for Christmas is to make ornaments. Today we are going to make an angel ornament to help us remember that the angel Gabriel visited Mary to tell her she would have a special baby.

WONDER: If God sent an angel to you today, what do you think God's message to you would be?

Examine the Bible Verse

SAY: Our Unit 1 Bible verse is Luke 2:11. Find it in your Bibles.

ASK: Is the Book of Luke in the Old or New Testament? *(New)* Where is Luke located in the New Testament? *(third book)* In what chapter of Luke is our verse located? *(2)* What is the verse number? *(11)*

SAY: Our Bible verse tells us about the good news of Jesus' birth.

- Gather the kids around the Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 10 & 15). Read it together.

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Peaceful Place

Supplies: *Leader Guide—p. 113, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, book: "Mary, the Mother of Jesus" by Tomie dePaola, child-friendly Advent wreath, Nativity set, music player with headphones and Christmas music playlist, card-making supplies, crayons or markers*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy the Unit 1 Faith Word coloring sheet (Leader Guide—p. 113) for each child. Make extra copies of the Unit 1 Faith Word coloring sheet to leave in the Peaceful Place this month.*

- Assist the children, as needed, as they interact with the items provided.
- Have the children make Christmas cards for someone special.
- Have each child color the Faith Word coloring sheet.

Tip: *All of the supplies/activities suggested for the Peaceful Place are optional.*

Go in Peace

Spiritual Practice – Exploring Advent Through Presence

SAY: A spiritual practice is something we do to help us be present with God. Advent is a time we can be present with God as we wait and prepare for the birth of Jesus.

- Guide the children through a spiritual practice:
    - ❍ Gather around the Advent wreath and light the first and second candles on the wreath. As you light the candles, have the children sing, "Getting Ready for Christmas," to the tune of "This Is the Way."

SING: This is the way we light our candles, light our candles, light our candles. This is the way we light our candles, getting ready for Christmas!

SAY: The second candle on the Advent wreath is to remind us of the love Jesus brings. Look at the circle of the Advent wreath. The circle is a symbol to remind us that Jesus' love and peace are eternal and never stop. Think of someone you love.

PRAY: Repeat after me: "God, thank you for *(have the children share the name of someone they love)*. Amen."

- Bless the children before they leave. Touch each child as you say this blessing: "May you be filled with the love of Jesus during this season of Advent."

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Family Spiritual Practice

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book; Leader Guide—pp. 111, 112*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Celebration Chart" (p. 111) and "Family Letter" (p. 112) for each child.*

SAY: Let's take a look at your Take-Home Pages *(Reproducibles 1F–1G).* Ask your family to read the Bible story and participate in this week's spiritual practice with you. There's an extra activity for you to do sometime this week.

- Send home a copy of the Take-Home Pages, a copy of the Family Letter, and a copy of the Celebration Chart with each child.

Supplemental Activities

Preschoolers – Great Joy Game

- Have the children stand arm's length apart.
- Tell the children to repeat after you and follow your motions. Recite the words in a sing-song voice.
    - ❍ Sweep, sweep, went the broom. *(Pretend to sweep with a broom.)*
    - ❍ The angel came to Mary's room. *(Fold hands as if in prayer.)*
    - ❍ Peace to you! Don't be afraid! *(Shake head no.)*
    - ❍ You know the promise God has made. *(Cross hands over heart.)*
    - ❍ You will have a baby boy. *(Pretend to rock baby.)*
    - ❍ He will bring the world great joy! *(Clap hands four times.)*

SAY: Mary was surprised when Gabriel came to her with the message she would have a baby. God can surprise us in many ways. We aren't usually surprised by angels in today's world.

WONDER: Have you even been surprised by God? How might God surprise us today?

Early Elementary – Angel Message Relay

Prepare Ahead: *Use masking tape to create a start line and a turn-around line for each team.*

SAY: In the Bible story, the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary to share the good news of her pregnancy. Gabriel said, "Don't be afraid, Mary! I have good news to tell you. You're going to have a baby named Jesus!"

SAY: Let's have a relay race. We're going to pretend to be Gabriel and move how we think he might have moved. I wonder how an angel moves and appears.

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- Split the children into teams, and have each team line up behind the start line you created. Give these directions:
    - ❍ When I say, "Go," the first person on each team will move to the turn-around line and back.
    - ❍ Without running, each person will move however she or he thinks an angel might move. This could be pretend flying, jumping, and so forth.
    - ❍ When you get back to your team, say, "Good news, Mary!" and the next person in line will go.
- Make sure the children are lined up in their places. Then count back from five and say "Go." The first team to finish the relay with every team member wins.

Older Elementary – Share-the-Message Charades

Supplies: *index cards, pen or pencil*

- Invite the group to brainstorm nouns from today's story. Write each noun on each index card. Examples: Mary, Gabriel, baby, news, and so forth.
- Encourage one child at a time to draw a card and act out the noun on the card. The rest of the group will guess what the child is pretending to be.

WONDER: Why do you think this story is important for us to hear every year?

Intergenerational Activity – Bible Verse Cookies

Supplies: *two or more packages of refrigerated sugar cookie dough, tubes of decorating icing, disposable plates, nitrile gloves, cookie sheets, spatula, napkins, wet wipes, markerboard or large sheet of paper, marker*

Tip: *You may choose to save some class time by making the cookies at home instead.*

SAY: This month we are waiting for Christmas. Let's decorate these cookies with letters that will help us learn this month's Bible verse.

- Write the following letters on the markerboard or large sheet of paper: *Y, S, I, B, T, I, D, C, H, I, C, T, L.*
- Invite the kids to use decorating icing to put one of the letters you wrote on each cookie. If you have extras, invite one or more kids to put stars or snowflake design on the additional cookies.
- Use nitrile gloves to put the cookies in the correct order of the verse. Then point to each letter as you recite the verse:

SAY: This month's Bible verse says, "Your savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord," (Luke 2:11, CEB).

- Invite the kids, youth, and adults to eat the cookies.

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Your savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:11)

Mary and Elizabeth – Luke 1:39-66

Prepare to Wonder

Faith Word: ADVENT

The Advent candle for the third Sunday of Advent is the Joy candle. If your church uses purple candles, the Joy candle is the pink one. We have already heard about the joy Elizabeth and Zechariah experienced when the angel gave them news of a son to be born to them. Last week we heard about Mary's joy at the announcement of the upcoming birth of Jesus. Today, the two stories come together as Mary travels to see her cousin Elizabeth.

Mary greeted Elizabeth upon her arrival. When she did, Elizabeth's child leapt in her womb. Elizabeth told Mary that the child jumped for joy in the presence of the Lord. Elizabeth knew that her baby knew that Jesus was God's Son, even while both were still in the womb. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and told Mary that God has blessed her and her baby. Elizabeth also wondered why she was given the honor of God's Son visiting her.

Elizabeth, by her presence and words, must have reassured Mary that God had chosen her for a very special job. Mary joyfully praised God with a song that has become known as the Magnificat. Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months. It must have been comforting for Mary to have the presence of Elizabeth as she waited for the coming baby. What joy the two must have felt preparing together for the birth of their sons.

Spiritual Practice for Adults

The third week of Advent we light the candle of Joy. As you light the candle of Joy, reflect on the symbolism of the circle representing God's eternal love. Ask God to be present with you and hear your prayer. Lift up a name of someone who brings you joy. Lift the name up in prayer throughout the day. In the evening, thank God for being present with you and hearing your prayer.

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Come Together

Come Together

Supplies: *Class Pack, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, Wonder Box, purple cloth, battery-operated candle, picture of a musical note*

Prepare Ahead: *Set up a Wonder Table (see p. 3) with a purple cloth, battery-operated candle, and a Wonder Box (see p. 3). Display the Unit 1 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 10 & 15) and Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 22). Place the picture of a musical note inside the Wonder Box.*

- Point to the Unit 1 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 22), and invite the children to wonder about what the word *Advent* means.
- Invite the kids to join you in a circle.

SAY: This month we are talking about stories at the beginning of Jesus' life. Our story today is about Mary sharing good news with her relative Elizabeth.

- In this curriculum, we recommend reading stories from the *Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook*. Allow an elementary-age child to read the stories, "Mary and Elizabeth" (pp. 194–5) and "Mary's Song" (pp. 196–7), from the storybook.

PRAY: Dear God, thank you for giving us many ways to share good news. Amen.

Mary and Elizabeth – Preschool

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Mary and Elizabeth" (Reproducible 2A) for each child.*

- Invite the preschoolers to use crayons to color the picture of Mary and Elizabeth.

SAY: Mary shared good news with Elizabeth. Who do you share good news with?

What's Wrong? – Younger Elementary

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons*

Prepare: *Photocopy "What's Wrong?" (Reproducible 2B) for each child.*

- Hand out a copy of "What's Wrong?" to each child.

SAY: Mary was going to have a baby! Mary wanted to share her good news with her relative, Elizabeth. But ten things are wrong in the picture. Can you find them?

- Invite the kids to look for what's wrong in the picture and circle the items. Why do those items not belong?
- Invite the kids to color the picture.

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How Did They Feel? – Older Elementary

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, pencils or markers*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "How Did They Feel?" (Reproducible 2C) for each child.*

- Hand out a copy of "How Did They Feel?" to each child.

SAY: Mary and Elizabeth were going to have babies! Complete the words on the page to find related words for how they might have felt.

- Invite the kids to figure out the words on the page by filling in the missing letters. If they need some hints, the answers are: *stunned, unexpected, wonder, eye-opener, revelation, astonished, shocked,* and *amazed*. The bonus word is *surprise*.

ASK: What words did you find? What's the bonus word?

Verse Out of Order – All Ages

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, red and green card stock, scissors, gluesticks*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Verse Out of Order" (Reproducible 2D) onto red or green card stock for each kid in your class.*

- Hand out a copy of "Verse Out of Order" to each child, allowing the kids to choose either a red or green copy of the page.

SAY: The words of this month's Bible verse can be found in the boxes on the page. But the words are in the wrong order. Cut the boxes apart and use Luke 2:11 to find the correct order. Paste the boxes down onto a separate sheet of card stock.

- Hand out additional sheets of red and green card stock. The kids who cut the Bible verse boxes apart from a red sheet may want to glue them down in the correct order to a green sheet (and vice versa).
- Invite the kids to use a *Common English Bible* to find the correct order.
- Have the kids share the Bible verse aloud.

Wonder Time

Interactive Bible Story

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book*

Prepare Ahead: *Potocopy "Mary and Elizabeth" (Reproducible 2F) for each child.*

- Invite several readers to take turns reading the story one section at a time.

ASK: What do you think will happen to Mary next?

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Share a Story

Supplies: *Celebrate Wonder DVD, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, TV, DVD player*

- Invite the children to join you, sitting in a circle on the floor.
- Watch the Session 2 video (Celebrate Wonder DVD).

Wonder with Me

Supplies: *Class Pack, Wonder Box, scissors*

Prepare Ahead: *Lay out the Wonder Story Mat for Unit 1 (Class Pack—pp. 7 & 18). Cut out the three remaining Bible story figures (Class Pack—p. 6), if not already done.*

- Place the Wonder Box on the Unit 1 Wonder Story Mat.
- Show the children the Unit 1 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 22).

SAY: Today's faith word is *Advent*. Advent is a time we wait and prepare for the birth of Jesus. Advent can be full of excitement, like baking cookies, or it can be a time of quiet reflection as we watch the flames on Advent wreath candles.

- Hold up the communication device figures.

ASK: Whom did Mary share the good news with this week?

WONDER together:

- ❍ Was there a part of the story that brought you joy?
- ❍ How do you think Elizabeth felt when Mary came to visit?
- ❍ What do you think Elizabeth and Mary did during the visit?

- Place the tablet figure on the matching shadow on the Wonder Story Mat.
- Open the Wonder Box to reveal the musical note of Advent.

WONDER: Why might a musical note remind us of joy?

Experience Wonder

Good News Worth Sharing

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, smartphone or camera*

Prepare Ahead: *For this activity, refer back to the "Christmas Thoughts" activity you may have started last week (p. 9). If you did not start the activity last week, you may choose to do so now. Or simply refer to the prompts provided on Reproducibles 1D and 1E.*

ASK: What was the good news that Zechariah and Elizabeth were given in our Bible story a few weeks ago?

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- Zechariah and Elizabeth were told they would have a baby. The baby grew up to be John the Baptist.

SAY: In today's Bible story, Mary shared the good news she received with Elizabeth. Mary was going to have a baby too! Let's look back at the Christmas Thoughts we've been talking about.

- Invite the kids to look at the Christmas Thoughts your class has hung up on the Christmas tree or somewhere else in the classroom. (You may also just look at Reproducibles 1D and 1E.)
- Invite the kids to choose one Christmas Thought to share with the class.
- As each kid shares, take a few candid pictures using your smartphone.

SAY: When we share good news with others, you can see the joy on our faces! Take a look at the pictures I took while you were telling your stories.

- Invite the kids to look at the pictures you took.

Examine the Bible Verse

SAY: Our Unit 1 Bible verse is Luke 2:11. Find it in your Bibles.

ASK: Is the Book of Luke in the Old or New Testament? *(New)* Where is Luke located in the New Testament? *(third book)* In what chapter of Luke is our verse located? *(2)* What is the verse number? *(11)*

SAY: Our Bible verse tells us about the good news of Jesus' birth.

- Gather the kids around the Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 10 & 15). Read it together.

Peaceful Place

Supplies: *Leader Guide—p. 113, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, book: "All the Colors of Christmas" by Matthew Paul Turner, child-friendly Advent wreath, Nativity set, music player with headphones and Christmas music playlist, card-making supplies, crayons or markers*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy the Unit 1 Faith Word coloring sheet (Leader Guide—p. 113) for each child.*

- Assist the children, as needed, as they interact with the items provided.
- Invite the children to draw a picture of a gift they'd like to give to someone special.
- Have each child color the Faith Word coloring sheet.

Tip: *All of the supplies/activities suggested for the Peaceful Place are optional.*

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Go in Peace

Spiritual Practice – Exploring Advent Through Presence

SAY: A spiritual practice is something we do to help us be present with God. Advent is a time we can be present with God as we wait and prepare for the birth of Jesus.

- Guide the children through a spiritual practice:
    - ❍ Gather around the Advent wreath and light the first, second, and third candles on the wreath. As you light the candles, have the children sing, "Getting Ready for Christmas" to the tune of "This Is the Way."

SING: This is the way we light our candles, light our candles, light our candles. This is the way we light our candles, getting ready for Christmas!

SAY: The third candle on the Advent wreath is to remind us of the joy that Jesus brings. Think of someone who brings you joy.

PRAY: Repeat after me: "God, thank you for *(have the children share the name of someone who brings them joy)* and the joy they bring. Amen."

- Bless the children before they leave. Touch each child as you say this blessing: "May you be filled with the joy of Jesus during this season of Advent."

Family Spiritual Practice

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book; Leader Guide—pp. 111, 112*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Celebration Chart" (p. 111) and "Family Letter" (p. 112) for each child.*

SAY: Let's take a look at your Take-Home Pages *(Reproducibles 2F–2G)*. Ask your family to read the Bible story and participate in this week's spiritual devotion with you. There's an extra activity for you to do sometime this week.

- Send home a copy of the Take-Home Pages, a copy of the Family Letter, and a copy of the Celebration Chart with each child.

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Supplemental Activities

Preschoolers – Jump for Joy

- Have the children stand arm's length apart.
- Tell the children to repeat after you and follow your motions.

SAY: Jump for joy! Jump for joy! Mary will have a baby boy! *(Jump up and down.)*

SAY: Mary went to see Elizabeth and stay with her a while. Elizabeth was waiting to give birth to her first child. When Mary hugged Elizabeth, Elizabeth's baby jumped for joy! *(Jump up and down.)*

SAY: Then Elizabeth said a blessing for Mary and her boy. Jump for joy! Jump for joy! Mary will have a baby boy! *(Jump up and down.)*

WONDER: Who do you like to visit at Christmastime? What do you like to do when you visit? Who would you like to surprise with a visit?

Early Elementary – Christmas Wreath

Supplies: *paper plates, stick-on bows, scraps of ribbon, Christmas wrapping paper, glue, yarn, cotton swabs, scissors, hole punch*

Prepare Ahead: *Cut the center out of the paper plates. Cut the yarn into six-inch pieces. Punch out two holes in the paper plate and tie the yarn through each hole for a hanger. Place glue on the cut-out center of the paper plates.*

- Give each child a wreath, glue, and cotton swab. Show the children how to use the cotton swabs to apply glue to the supplies and place them on the wreath.
- Invite each child to create a Christmas wreath using the supplies provided.

SAY: We hang wreaths on our door before Christmas to remind us that Christmas is coming.

ASK: Do you notice anything similar about the wreaths we are making and the Advent wreath?

SAY: They are both circles, and a circle reminds us that God is always with us and that God's love never ends. When we wait during Advent, we use the wreath to help us remember that God is always present with us and God's love never ends!

WONDER: What else helps you remember that God is with you always? How do you feel knowing that God will always love you, no matter what?

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Older Elementary – Sharing Joy

Supplies: *construction paper, stickers, markers, old Christmas cards, and so forth*

SAY: We talk a lot about *presents (emphasize the word)* at Christmastime. We all have a list of what we want. We have been talking about *presence (emphasize the word)* the last few weeks. They sound almost the same, but they have very different meanings.

ASK: What do you think the word *present* means? What do you thing the word *presence* means? Can presence be a present?

SAY: Let's make a present for someone today. We are going to make Christmas cards to give to people in our church who can't be with us in person. We will be spreading joy when we give the cards away.

- Let the children create cards with the supplies you have provided.

WONDER: How do you feel when you give someone a present? How do you feel when you get a present from someone? How do you feel when you are together with friends or family?

Intergenerational Activity – Cocoa Recipes

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book; small jars (one for each participant); varieties of cocoa mix, chocolate chips, candy, and spices (see Reproducible 2E); spoons*

Tip: *Make a photocopy of Reproducible 2E for every two to three participants. Place the different ingredients in disposable bowls. Make spoons available.*

SAY: This week let's make some hot cocoa to give as a gift. At the end of the activity, we'll make some hot cocoa to enjoy ourselves.

- Invite the participants to refer to Reproducible 2E to fill a jar with the ingredients listed on the page. Each participant should choose one recipe on the page.
- Encourage the adult participants to help ensure that kids and youth add appropriate amounts of ingredients to the jars.
- Once the participants have filled a jar with cocoa ingredients, invite them to seal the jars.

SAY: Who would you like to give your jar of cocoa to?

- Invite the participants to share the names of the persons with the class.
- Once the participants have made their jars, invite them to make their own cup of cocoa using the hot water (or milk).

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Your savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:11)

Jesus' Birth – Luke 2:1-20

Prepare to Wonder

Faith Word: ADVENT

The time of waiting and preparing for the birth of Jesus is almost over. The Advent season will soon come to a close with the birth of the baby Jesus, in a manger in Bethlehem.

The second chapter of Luke is a familiar one to most of us. Caesar Augustus dominated the Roman Empire and ordered everyone to travel to their hometowns to be registered. The registration of each person was to ensure that taxes were paid by everyone in the empire. Since Joseph was from the house of David, Mary and Joseph had to travel to Bethlehem, even though Mary was about to give birth.

Jesus was born in humble circumstances in Bethlehem. Travelers during this time often stayed in a guestroom in the home of a family they may not know. Since so many people were in Bethlehem, Mary and Joseph could not find a guestroom to stay in. A manger filled with straw was Jesus' first bed. A manger is simply the place where the family's stock was fed.

Shepherds were quietly tending their sheep, when the angelic pronouncement that a savior had been born in Bethlehem. The surprise they felt at one angel's pronouncement must have turned to awe when the entire sky was filled with a heavenly host. The shepherds quickly went to find the baby and confirm what the angels had announced. When they found the baby in the manger, they hurried off to tell others of the holy birth. Mary was left to remember the events and to consider them carefully. I wonder what she must have been thinking.

Spiritual Practice for Adults

As you light the candles in the Advent wreath this week, take time to remember the hope, love, and joy you have felt this season. The fourth candle in the Advent wreath is the candle of Peace. Jesus was born to bring peace to the world, to give us hope of a better future, to celebrate the big and small things joyfully, and to share God's love with all people. Reflect on these things as you light a candle and pray.

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Come Together

Come Together

Supplies: *Class Pack, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, Wonder Box, purple cloth, battery-operated candle, baby Jesus figure*

Prepare Ahead: *Set up a Wonder Table (see p. 3) with a purple cloth, battery-operated candle, and a Wonder Box (see p. 3). Display the Unit 1 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 10 & 15) and Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 22). Place the baby Jesus figure inside the Wonder Box.*

- Point to the Unit 1 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 22), and invite the children to wonder about what the word *Advent* means.
- Invite the kids to join you in a circle.

SAY: This month we are talking about stories at the beginning of Jesus' life. Our story today is about the angels announcing the birth of Jesus to the shepherds.

- In this curriculum, we recommend reading stories from the *Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook*. Allow an elementary-age child to read the stories, "Jesus Brings Joy" (pp. 198–9) and "Joyous News" (pp. 200–1), from the storybook.

PRAY: Dear God, thank you for the birth of Jesus. Amen.

Jesus' Birth – Preschool

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Jesus' Birth" (Reproducible 3A) for each child.*

- Invite the preschoolers to use crayons to color the picture.

SAY: It was time for Jesus to be born! What holiday do we celebrate Jesus' birth?

Shepherds' Maze – Younger Elementary

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons*

Prepare: *Photocopy "Shepherds' Maze" (Reproducible 3B) for each child.*

SAY: Help the shepherds find their way to meet baby Jesus! Then color the picture.

- Invite the kids to work out the solution to the maze.
- Encourage the kids to color the picture.

ASK: Why do you think the shepherds went to find baby Jesus and his family?

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Nativity Crossword – Older Elementary

Supplies: *CEB Bible, Reproducible Kids' Book, pencils or markers*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Nativity Crossword" (Reproducible 3C) for each child.*

- Hand out a copy of "Nativity Crossword" to each child.

SAY: Today's Bible story tells us about Jesus being born. Solve the crossword puzzle using the clues on the page.

- Invite the kids to use the clues to fill in the crossword puzzle. You may want the kids to use Luke 2 in a *Common English Bible* to help solve the puzzle.
- Have the kids work together, if you wish.

ASK: What answers did you find to solve the puzzle?

Pets Survey – All Ages

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, clipboards, pencils*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Pets Survey" (Reproducible 3D) for each kid.*

- Hand out a copy of "Pets Survey" to each child, along with clipboards if available. Hand out pencils to the kids too.

SAY: Use this sheet to find out about the pets your classmates might have.

- Preschoolers may need some help writing their answers. Pair elementary kids with preschoolers. Invite the pairs to interview each other about pets they may have. Instruct the older kids to help write down answers for the preschoolers.
- Bring the class back together. Lead a discussion about the activity.

ASK: What did you learn about the pets your classmates may have?

- Invite the kids to share what they learned.

SAY: In today's Bible story, Mary and Joseph had to go to Bethlehem. There was a census being taken. A census is like this activity. During a census, people are asked about the people in a family, their names, and other information. During the census, Jesus was born.

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Wonder Time

Interactive Bible Story

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Jesus' Birth" (Reproducible 3F) for each child.*

- Invite several readers to take turns reading the story one section at a time.

ASK: How do you think Mary and Joseph felt when the shepherds arrived?

Share a Story

Supplies: *Celebrate Wonder DVD, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, TV, DVD player*

- Invite the children to join you, sitting in a circle on the floor.
- Watch the Session 3 video (Celebrate Wonder DVD).

Wonder with Me

Supplies: *Class Pack, Wonder Box, scissors*

Prepare Ahead: *Lay out the Wonder Story Mat for Unit 1 (Class Pack—pp. 7 & 18). Cut out the remaining two Bible story figures (Class Pack—p. 6), if not done already.*

- Place the Wonder Box on the Unit 1 Wonder Story Mat.
- Show the children the Unit 1 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 22).

SAY: Today's faith word is *Advent*. Advent is a time we wait and prepare for the birth of Jesus.

- Hold up the communication device figures.

ASK: When we are waiting and preparing for the birth of Jesus, we can share the story of Christmas with others. Remember the angel shared with Mary, Mary shared with Elizabeth, the angel shared with the shepherds, and the shepherds shared with everyone they met. There are lots of ways to share good news.

WONDER together:

- ❍ How else can we share good news today?
- ❍ Who shares the stories of baby Jesus with you?
- ❍ What is your favorite way to share good news?

- Place the smartwatch figure on its matching shadow on the Wonder Story Mat.

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- Show and read the text messages to the kids.
- Open the Wonder Box to reveal the baby Jesus figure.

WONDER: I wonder what we will do this week as we wait during the final days of Advent until Christmas.

Experience Wonder

Shepherds' Game

Supplies: *wool dryer balls or small balls (at least one for each kid in your class), two laundry baskets, masking tape*

Prepare Ahead: *Turn your classroom into a small "soccer field" in the following way. Use masking tape to mark a line dividing the classroom in half. Place one laundry basket at one end of the classroom. Place the other laundry basket at the other end of the classroom.*

- Put the wool dryer balls (or other small balls) on the floor.

SAY: Some shepherds were invited to meet baby Jesus and his family. Shepherds were people who took care of sheep. They had to take them out to graze in the fields, then bring them back home. In this game, our dryer balls are the sheep! Your team must work to herd as many sheep into your pen *(laundry basket)* as you can.

- Divide the class into teams. You can play this game a variety of ways, but the easiest is to put an equal number of dryer balls on each side of the line. Then teams must lightly kick their dryer balls into the laundry basket on the opposite side of the room. The first team to put all of the dryer balls in their goal wins.
- Another more competitive version would be to have fewer dryer balls on the "field" and have the teams compete to put all the dryer balls into their goal.
- Play multiple rounds as time allows.

Examine the Bible Verse

SAY: Our Unit 1 Bible verse is Luke 2:11. Find it in your Bibles.

ASK: Is the Book of Luke in the Old or New Testament? *(New)* Where is Luke located in the New Testament? *(third book)* In what chapter of Luke is our verse located? *(2)* What is the verse number? *(11)*

SAY: Our Bible verse tells us about the good news of Jesus' birth.

- Gather the kids around the Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 10 & 15). Read it together.

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Peaceful Place

Supplies: *Leader Guide—p. 113, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, book: "Room for a Little One: A Christmas Tale" by Martin Waddell, child-friendly Advent wreath, Nativity set, music player with headphones and Christmas music playlist, card-making supplies, crayons or markers*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy the Unit 1 Faith Word coloring sheet (Leader Guide—p. 113) for each child.*

- Assist the children, as needed, as they interact with the items provided.
- Invite the children to draw a picture of today's story.
- Have each child color the Faith Word coloring sheet.

Tip: *All of the supplies/activities suggested for the Peaceful Place are optional.*

Go in Peace

Spiritual Practice – Exploring Advent Through Presence

SAY: A spiritual practice is something we do to help us be present with God. Advent is a time we can be present with God as we wait and prepare for the birth of Jesus.

- Guide the children through a spiritual practice:
    - ❍ Gather around the Advent wreath and light four candles on the wreath. As you light the candles, have the children sing, "Getting Ready for Christmas" to the tune of "This Is the Way."

SING: This is the way we light our candles, light our candles, light our candles. This is the way we light our candles, getting ready for Christmas!

SAY: The fourth candle on the Advent wreath is to remind us of the peace that Jesus brings. As we pray today, follow me as I touch my fingers and say the prayer. This will help you connect to God.

PRAY: Touch your pinkie finger: "God gives us hope"; touch your next finger:"God gives us love"; touch your middle finger: "God gives us joy"; touch your index finger: "God gives us peace"; touch your thumb: "God gave us Jesus. Amen."

- Bless the children before they leave. Touch each child as you say this blessing: "May you be filled with the hope, love, joy, and peace of Jesus all year."

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Family Spiritual Practice

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book; Leader Guide—pp. 111, 112*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Celebration Chart" (p. 111) and "Family Letter" (p. 112) for any child who does not already have copies.*

SAY: Let's take a look at your Take-Home Pages *(Reproducibles 3F–3G).* Ask your family to read the Bible story and participate in this week's spiritual practice with you. There's an extra activity for you to do sometime this week.

- Send home a copy of the Take-Home Pages, a copy of the Family Letter, and a copy of the Celebration Chart with each child.

Supplemental Activities

Preschoolers – Build-a-Stable Dress-up

Supplies: *large cardboard boxes; stuffed animals that would be found in a stable; manger; baby doll; blanket; shepherd, angel, Mary, and Joseph costumes*

- Have the children work together to build the stable and set up the props. Let the children dress up in costumes and act out the story.

SAY: Mary and Joseph traveled a long way to get to Bethlehem. They may have walked or ridden on a donkey. Either way, I am sure they were tired. Then they couldn't find a place to rest, except a place where animals slept and ate. But how wonderful that the shepherds came to visit them!

WONDER: How do you think Joseph and Mary felt when they finally got settled? How do you think the shepherds felt when they saw baby Jesus? What part of this story do you like the best?

Early Elementary – Nativity Painting

Supplies: *card stock, paintbrushes, cups of water, watercolor paints, device connected to the internet*

Prepare Ahead: *Set out the art supplies. Pull up this web page: http://the-creative-business.com/24-famous-paintings-nativity/*

SAY: The story of Jesus' birth is very important for Christians. For two thousand years, Christians have been telling the story of Jesus' birth. Artists have drawn the picture, called the Nativity, in many ways too.

- Show your class some of the Nativity paintings.

ASK: Which of these paintings is your favorite guess of what Jesus' birth looked like?

- Invite the children to paint their own versions of the Nativity.

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Older Elementary – Improv Retelling

SAY: We've heard this week's story every year because it's important. I bet you all know it so well that you could act out the story without any practice. Let's try.

- Give parts to the children who want to act out the story.
- Invite the children to improvise a retelling of this week's Bible story.
- If there is time, invite the other groups of kids to watch the improv retelling.

ASK: What makes this story so special? What could you leave out without changing the meaning of the story?

Intergenerational Activity – Make a Christmas List

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, colored pencils*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Christmas List" (Reproducible 3E) for each participant before class.*

- Hand out a copy of "Christmas List" to each participant.

ASK: When Christmastime comes, do you ever make a list? What kinds of things go on your list?

- Invite the participants to talk about their lists. Children may talk about a gift list for items they'd like to receive. Adults might make a list for gifts to buy, parties to plan, items to bake or cook, and so forth.

SAY: We are going to make a different kind of Christmas list today.

- Invite the kids to make a list of activities they'd like to do with friends or family this Christmas season.
- Have adults, youth, and older-elementary kids help the younger kids as they write down ideas. Very young children can draw their ideas on the back of the page.
- Ask the participants to share their ideas with the group.

SAY: Christmas began with a celebration of Jesus' birth. Mary and Joseph were happy to see their baby. The shepherds were happy to meet baby Jesus and his family. We can celebrate Christmas by spending time with people we love.

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Your savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:11)

Simeon and Anna – Luke 2:21-38

Prepare to Wonder

Faith Word: ADVENT

Jesus is born, and the waiting is over. Actually, waiting is not over for everyone. In our Bible story this week, we meet Simeon and Anna in the temple. Mary and Joseph have come to the temple for the ritual purification of Mary and the dedication of the baby Jesus. This was done to fulfill the requirement of Jewish law. While at the temple, Jesus is immediately recognized as a special baby by Simeon and Anna.

Simeon takes Jesus in his arms and praises God. A long time ago, God spoke to Simeon and told him he would not die until he saw the Messiah. Simeon praised God and rejoiced that God's words had been fulfilled: baby Jesus was the Messiah. Mary and Joseph were amazed at the wonderful words Simeon said.

Anna was also present at the temple on that special day. She was a devout widow who spent her days in the temple fasting and praying. Like Simeon, she was very old. When she saw Jesus, she also praised God and declared to everyone who could hear that the baby Jesus was the Messiah.

Simeon and Anna waited for years and years for the promised Messiah. They never stopped hoping the day would come and, when it did, they knew immediately that the baby Jesus was "the" Gift from God.

As we see, with Anna and Simeon, waiting is a part of a bigger story in the Bible. Anna and Simeon did not sit by waiting for God to casually plop Jesus in their lap. They prayed, stayed faithful, and kept their eyes and hearts open to recognize Jesus when he was presented. We, too, must actively wait and be prepared to see and hear the words God speaks to us.

Spiritual Practice for Adults

Light all the candles on the Advent wreath, including the Christ candle. Offer your presence to God and sit silently as you imagine God's love washing over you.

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Come Together

Come Together

Supplies: *Class Pack, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, Wonder Box, white cloth, battery-operated candle, white pillar candle (Christ candle)*

Prepare Ahead: *Set up a Wonder Table (see p. 3) with a white cloth, battery-operated candle, and a Wonder Box (see p. 3). Display the Unit 1 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 10 & 15) and Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 22). Place the Christ candle inside the Wonder Box.*

- Point to the Unit 1 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 22), and invite the children to wonder about what the word *Advent* means.
- Invite the kids to join you in a circle.

SAY: This month we are talking about stories at the beginning of Jesus' life. Our story today is about baby Jesus being brought to the temple.

- In this curriculum, we recommend reading stories from the *Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook*. Allow an elementary-age child to read the story, "Simeon and Anna (pp. 202–3), from the storybook.

PRAY: Dear God, thank you for giving a family and community to Jesus. Amen.

Simeon and Anna – Preschool

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Simeon and Anna" (Reproducible 4A) for each child.*

- Invite the preschoolers to use crayons to color the picture.

SAY: Jesus was born! What holiday do we celebrate Jesus' birth?

Hidden Pictures – Younger Elementary

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons*

Prepare: *Photocopy "Hidden Pictures" (Reproducible 4B) for each child.*

SAY: When Simeon and Anna saw Mary's baby, they knew Jesus was the Savior they had been waiting to find. Find ten hidden winter items in the picture. Color the page.

- Invite the kids to look for the hidden items in the picture.

ASK: What items did you find? What did the items you found have to do with winter?

SAY: Simeon and Anna met baby Jesus and his family. Simeon and Anna knew that Jesus was the Savior.

- Invite the kids to color the page.

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Hidden Bible Verse – Older Elementary

Supplies: *CEB Bible, Reproducible Kids' Book, pencils or markers*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Hidden Bible Verse" (Reproducible 4C) for each child.*

- Hand out a copy of "Hidden Bible Verse" to each child.

SAY: Simeon and Anna saw Mary's baby. They knew Jesus was the Savior they had been waiting to find. Look up Luke 2:11 *(CEB)* to find the words of the Bible verse hidden on the page. Write the verse in the space on the page and color the picture.

- Invite the kids to find the words to this month's Bible verse.

ASK: What does this month's Bible verse say?

- Invite the kids to share the words of this month's Bible verse.

Stars and Constellations – All Ages

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, clipboards, pencils*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "December Stars and Constellations" (Reproducible 4E) for each child.*

- Hand out a copy of "December Stars and Constellations" to each child.
- Invite the kids to look over the stars, constellations, and star pictures on the page.

ASK: Do you recognize any of the star pictures on the page?

- Invite the kids to share any star pictures they recognize. This sheet shows the same stars and constellations that we saw in November. We are using the same star chart because the sky has not changed significantly. Use this opportunity to see if any kids in your class have tried to find star pictures in the sky.

SAY: This fall, we began looking at the night sky to see star pictures. If you are having trouble finding these shapes, here's a tip.

- Point to Orion on the star chart.

SAY: Orion is the figure of a man. His belt has three bright stars that are pretty easy to find in the winter sky. If you can find the belt, you might be able to find some of the other stars and constellations on the sheet.

- Invite the kids to take the sheets home and look at the sky.

SAY: Looking at stars gives me a sense of awe.

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Wonder Time

Interactive Bible Story

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Simeon and Anna" (Reproducible 4F) for each child.*

- Invite several readers to take turns reading the story one section at a time.

ASK: What do you think it was about baby Jesus that Simeon and Anna saw that made them declare he was the Messiah?

Share a Story

Supplies: *Celebrate Wonder DVD, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, TV, DVD player*

- Invite the children to join you, sitting in a circle on the floor.
- Watch the Session 4 video (Celebrate Wonder DVD).

Wonder with Me

Supplies: *Class Pack, Wonder Box, scissors*

Prepare Ahead: *Lay out the Wonder Story Mat for Unit 1 (Class Pack—pp. 7 & 18). Cut out the final Bible story figure (Class Pack—p. 6), if not done already.*

- Place the Wonder Box on the Unit 1 Wonder Story Mat.
- Show the children the Unit 1 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 22).

SAY: We said the definition for *Advent* is a time when we wait and prepare for the birth of Jesus. Waiting for the birth of Jesus is just part of the story. Simeon and Anna waited many years to see Jesus. Like Simeon and Anna, we wait to learn more about Jesus. That is why we continue to read the Bible stories and learn about Jesus.

- Hold up the communication device figures.

ASK: When Simeon and Anna saw Jesus, they praised God. But they also told everyone that Jesus was the special baby they had been waiting to meet. Jesus was the special gift God had sent to the people.

WONDER together:

- ❍ What was the best gift you received at Christmas?
- ❍ How did it feel to wait for Christmas to open the gift?
- ❍ Are you waiting for something special now?

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- Place the computer figure on the matching shadow on the Wonder Story Mat.
- Show and read the messages to the kids.
- Open the Wonder Box to reveal the Christ candle.

WONDER: What do you think this candle has to do with our story?

Experience Wonder

Waiting Games

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Waiting Games" (Reproducible 4D) for each participant before class.*

- Have older kids pair up with younger kids.
- Hand out a copy of "Waiting Games" to each pair of children.

SAY: Take a look at the games on this page. Read the games and then decide which ones could be played right now in class. Other games will need to be played with a parent or other adult at a time when you are waiting for something.

- Invite the pairs to read over the games on the page. Older kids will need to read the games aloud to younger kids.
- Have the pairs play any of the games they can. Some games will not work during class.

ASK: Which games were you able to play during class? Which ones will you need to play later?

- Invite the class to share what they learned from the page. Find out which games they played.

ASK: When have you had to wait for something good to happen?

SAY: Sometimes it can be hard to wait. Simeon and Anna waited for God's Savior to come. Take this page home. Invite an adult who cares for you to take pictures of the boxes on their phone. Sometime when you find yourself waiting, ask the adult who saved the pictures on their phone to play one of the games described.

- Invite the kids to share any other games they've played during times of waiting.

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Examine the Bible Verse

SAY: Our Unit 1 Bible verse is Luke 2:11. Find it in your Bibles.

ASK: Is the Book of Luke in the Old or New Testament? *(New)* Where is Luke located in the New Testament? *(third book)* In what chapter of Luke is our verse located? *(2)* What is the verse number? *(11)*

SAY: Our Bible verse tells us about the good news of Jesus' birth.

- Gather the kids around the Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 10 & 15). Read it together.

Peaceful Place

Supplies: *Leader Guide—p. 113, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, book: "I Can Praise God" by Naomi Joy Krueger, child-friendly Advent wreath, Nativity set, music player with headphones and Christmas music playlist, card-making supplies, crayons or markers*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy the Unit 1 Faith Word coloring sheet (Leader Guide—p. 113) for each child.*

- Assist the children, as needed, as they interact with the items provided.
- Invite the children to draw a picture of today's story.
- Have each child color the Faith Word coloring sheet.

Tip: *All of the supplies/activities suggested for the Peaceful Place are optional.*

Go in Peace

Spiritual Practice – Exploring Advent Through Presence

SAY: Spiritual practice is something we do to help us connect to God. It doesn't have to be the same spiritual practice all the time, but it can be. This month we have been using the Advent wreath to connect us to God. We will light all the candles on the Advent wreath, and we will add this big white candle. This is the candle that was in the Wonder Box, and it is called the Christ candle. We light this candle after Jesus has been born.

- Guide the children through a spiritual practice:
    - ❍ Gather around the Advent wreath and light all of the candles on the wreath. As you light the candles, have the children sing, "Getting Ready for Christmas" to the tune of "This Is the Way."

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SING: This is the way we light our candles, light our candles, light our candles. This is the way we light our candles, getting ready for Christmas!

PRAY: Touch your pinkie finger: "God gives us hope"; touch your next finger: "God gives us love"; touch your middle finger: "God gives us joy": touch your index finger: "God gives us peace"; touch your thumb: "God gave us Jesus. Amen."

- Bless the children before they leave. Touch each child as you say this blessing: "May you be filled with the hope, love, joy, and peace of Jesus all year."

Family Spiritual Practice

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book; Leader Guide—pp. 111, 112*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Celebration Chart" (p. 111) and "Family Letter" (p. 112) for any child who does not already have them.*

SAY: Let's take a look at your Take-Home Pages *(Reproducibles 4F–4G).* Ask your family to read the Bible story and participate in this week's spiritual practice with you. There's an extra activity for you to do sometime this week.

- Send home a copy of the Take-Home Pages, a copy of the Family Letter, and a copy of the Celebration Chart with each child.

Supplemental Activities

Preschoolers – Ring 'round Baby Jesus

Supplies: *baby doll*

- Have the children stand in a circle. Place the baby doll in the middle of the circle.

SAY: Simeon and Anna waited and waited for a special gift from God. Baby Jesus was that special gift. When Simeon and Anna saw baby Jesus, they praised God. Let's praise God for Jesus too.

- Sing the words to the tune of "Ring Around the Rosie." Sing several times and change the word *ring* to other movement words *(tiptoe, skip, hop).*

SING: Ring 'round baby Jesus,
A very special baby.
Praise God for Jesus.
We all shout, "Hooray!"

WONDER: How do you think Simeon and Anna knew Jesus was a special baby? How do you think Mary and Joseph felt when they heard Simeon and Anna praise God for their baby?

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Early and Older Elementary – Christmas Gift Blessing

Prepare Ahead: Invite the children in your group to bring one of the gifts they received on Christmas.

SAY: We are all very lucky. We got gifts that bring us joy! We received gifts that help us play. Maybe the gifts even help us get to know our families and friends better. We got gifts that celebrate unique things about us. I got the gift of *(name a gift you received)*, and it brings me joy because I love *(hobby or unique quality about yourself)*.

ASK: What gift did you bring today?

- Invite the children to show their gifts one at a time.

SAY: God wants us all to find delight in our lives. God made all people to experience joy and play and love. God wants these things for each of us because God delights in us. Each of you is special to God. I am going to say a blessing for our gifts, and while I do, please hold up your gift.

PRAY: Dear God, we thank you for our good gifts—those we hold up now and those so small and invisible to our own understanding. We ask that you bless these gifts. May they inspire creativity, collaboration, and connection within ourselves, with you, and with our communities. Help us recognize how lucky we are and share with others our abundance. It is in Christ's holy name. Amen.

Intergenerational Activity – Help in the Nursery

Tip: Today's Bible story about Simeon and Anna meeting baby Jesus and his family is a great opportunity for different generational groups in your church to help care for babies and very young children in your church. Work with your nursery coordinator to make part of today's session take place in the nursery.

If you don't have babies or very young children in your church, then you might consider asking parents with babies to visit your classroom today.

- Invite the participants to play with the babies in your church. Have them wash their hands, and supervise their play closely.
- After some time has passed, gather your class together (youth and adults may be included as well). Discuss the experience.

ASK: What did you enjoy about playing with the babies today?

SAY: When Jesus' family brought him to the temple, Simeon and Anna rejoiced. They knew they were meeting God's Savior.

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"You are my Son, whom I dearly love; in you I find happiness." (Luke 3:22)

Jesus in the Temple – Luke 2:41-52

Prepare to Wonder

Faith Word: JOURNEY

Luke tells us the story of Jesus' visit to the temple with his parents when he was twelve years old, just like they did each year. When they go to leave, Jesus is missing!

At first, we may find it difficult to understand how Joseph and Mary didn't realize Jesus was left behind in Jerusalem. By Jewish custom, at the age of thirteen a male child becomes a man. Therefore, at the age of twelve, although Jesus was still a child, he was close to being regarded as a man. Plus, they were traveling with many others who were making this pilgrimage. The Bible tells us Jesus' parents assumed he was with their relatives and friends.

When Joseph and Mary returned to Jerusalem, they found Jesus at the temple. Even as a child of twelve, Jesus was a participant in the teaching and learning occurring at the temple. Encourage the children you teach to remember that no matter what age they are, they are important in the church family. They can listen and ask questions, and they can also teach and be an example for others.

There is a special activity today. Set it up like this: Photocopy Reproducible 5A onto card stock. Color and cut out the picture of the boy Jesus. Next, open a Bible and place the picture at Isaiah 61. Then hide the Bible with Jesus somewhere in the church building. This location is Clue 2. Next, photocopy Reproducibles 5D and 5E. Find another location to hide these sheets. This location is Clue 1. Finally, you'll need to make copies of Reproducibles 5A, 5B, and 5C for your class. These sheets will be handed to the kids at the beginning of class. It will help the kids understand how the treasure hunt works and will help them get Clue 1 from you!

Spiritual Practice for Adults

It is often assumed, as adults, we are supposed to know everything, and that simply isn't possible. Even as adults, we are learning, growing, and wondering. This week take time to journal. Write down the questions of faith you have. Then challenge yourself to use the phrase the next time a child in your care asks you a question you aren't sure about: "I don't know. Let's find out together."

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Come Together

Come Together

Supplies: *Class Pack, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, Wonder Box, white cloth, battery-operated candle, paper map*

Prepare Ahead: *Set up a Wonder Table (see p. 3) with a white cloth, battery-operated candle, and a Wonder Box (see p. 3). Display the Unit 2 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 12 & 13) and Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 4). Place the map inside the Wonder Box.*

- Point to the Unit 2 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 4), and invite the children to wonder about what the word *journey* means.
- Invite the kids to join you in a circle.

SAY: This month we are talking about stories from Jesus' life. Our story today is about Jesus when he was still a boy.

- In this curriculum, we recommend reading stories from the *Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook*. Allow an elementary-age child to read the story, "Jesus in the Temple" (pp. 204–5), from the storybook.

PRAY: Dear God, thank you helping us grow in wisdom every day. Amen.

Jesus in the Temple – Preschool

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Jesus in the Temple" (Reproducible 5A) for each child.*

- Invite the preschoolers to use crayons to color the picture.

SAY: Jesus went to the temple as a boy. But then, Mary and Joseph couldn't find him! Today we are going to look for Jesus too.

Solve the Code – Younger Elementary

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons, paper*

Prepare: *Photocopy "Solve the Code" (Reproducible 5B) for each child.*

SAY: When Jesus' family went to Jerusalem for Passover one year, Jesus wanted to stay and learn in the temple. But Mary and Joseph couldn't find him!

- Invite the kids to use a separate sheet of paper to write out the key to the code on the sheet, where A=26, B=25 . . . Y=2, and Z=1.

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- The answer to the coded message is: "Ask your teacher for Clue One." Be prepared to give the whole class Clue 1 when both the younger- and older-elementary kids have finished working on the sheets. Clue 1 should lead the kids to the location in your church building where you have hidden copies of Reproducibles 5D and 5E.

Finding Jesus Treasure Hunt – Older Elementary

Supplies: *CEB Bible, Reproducible Kids' Book, pencils or markers*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Finding Jesus Treasure Hunt" (Reproducible 5C) for each child.*

- Hand out a copy of "Finding Jesus Treasure Hunt" to each child.

SAY: In today's Bible story, Mary and Joseph are looking for Jesus. We are going to look for Jesus around the church building today. Read the information on the page to get ready for the treasure hunt.

- Invite the kids to read over the information on the page.
- When you gather the whole class together, have the older-elementary kids tell the Bible story. Then move on to the activity below.

Finding Jesus Treasure Hunt: Clue 1 – All Ages

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, clipboards, pencils*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy Reproducibles 5D and 5E. Hide these sheets somewhere in your church building. You may hide them anywhere you choose. The kids will be expecting you to give them Clue 1, so you may choose to give hints about the location of Reproducibles 5D and 5E. Here are some suggestions:*
Church Kitchen: The place where food gets prepared.
The Sanctuary: The place where we come together and worship.
The Library: The place where you can find lots of books.
Youth Classroom: The place where eighth-graders go to learn about God.

- Once the kids guess the location for this step in the treasure hunt, go to that spot. You will need to bring pencils and crayons along with you to that location. If the kids created a code key for solving Reproducible 5B, bring a copy of the code key along.
- Once they find the copies of Reproducibles 5D and 5E, invite the kids to work on one of the sheets. Younger kids will probably want to work on Reproducible 5D (a coloring page) and older kids will probably want to work on Reproducible 5E (a coded message).

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SAY: In this week's Bible story, Jesus was in the temple as a boy. But Mary and Joseph couldn't find him! These sheets give us more clues to help us find where Jesus is hidden in our church building.

- Invite the kids to share how they completed the reproducible sheets.
- Both reproducible sheets give clues that will be needed at the final location where you have hidden a Bible with Jesus inside. The coloring page with a Bible indicates that a Bible is the hiding place. The coded message tells the class where in the Bible to look. Don't give anything away! Instead, invite the class to work together to suggest solutions to the treasure hunt.
- Reproducible 5E instructs the kids to ask you for Clue 2. Clue 2 should lead to the location of the Bible with Jesus in it. Continue the treasure hunt after the story.

Wonder Time

Interactive Bible Story

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Jesus in the Temple" (Reproducible 5F) for each child.*

- Invite several readers to take turns reading the story one section at a time.

ASK: Mary and Joseph couldn't find Jesus! They went looking all over the temple area until they found him. How is that like our treasure hunt today?

Share a Story

Supplies: *Celebrate Wonder DVD, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, TV, DVD player*

- Invite the children to join you, sitting in a circle on the floor.
- Watch the Session 5 video (Celebrate Wonder DVD).

Wonder with Me

Supplies: *Class Pack, Wonder Box, scissors*

Prepare Ahead: *Lay out the Wonder Story Mat for Unit 2 (Class Pack—pp. 8 & 17). Cut out the five Bible story figures (Class Pack—p. 19).*

- Place the Wonder Box on the Unit 2 Wonder Story Mat.
- Show the children the Unit 2 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 4).

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SAY: The definition for *journey* is to faithfully follow where God leads. We are following Jesus' journey this month as he grows and follows where God leads him.

- Point to the Wonder Story Mat.

WONDER together:

- ❍ Where do you think Jesus will go on his journey?
- ❍ How do you think the teachers at the temple felt when they listened to Jesus ask questions and teach them?
- ❍ What questions do you have about God and faith?

- Place the figure of the temple on the Wonder Story Mat at Jerusalem.
- Open the Wonder Box to reveal the map.

WONDER: What do you think this map has to do with today's story?

Experience Wonder

Finding Jesus Treasure Hunt: Clue 2

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book*

Prepare Ahead: *Hide the Bible with the picture of Jesus inside somewhere in your church building. It could be anywhere you choose. Come up with Clue 2 using the suggestions provided at the bottom of page 41 or create your own clue.*

- Once the kids have figured out the answer to Clue 2, take the class to the final location of the treasure hunt.
- Tell the kids "warmer" and "colder" as they search the room for Jesus. If your class has not yet made the connection that Jesus is hidden in a Bible, you may need to provide further hints. Refer back to Reproducibles 5D and 5E as you gently suggest where the picture of Jesus is hidden.
- Once Jesus has been found, return to your classroom for the rest of today's session.

Examine the Bible Verse

SAY: Our Unit 2 Bible verse is Luke 3:22. Find it in your Bibles.

ASK: Is the Book of Luke in the Old or New Testament? *(New)* Where is Luke located in the New Testament? *(third book)* In what chapter of Luke is our verse located? *(3)* What is the verse number? *(22)*

SAY: Our Bible verse tells us how God felt about Jesus.

- Gather the kids around the Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 12 & 13). Read it together.

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Peaceful Place

Supplies: *Leader Guide—p. 114, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, book: "Old Turtle: Questions of the Heart" by Douglas Wood, paper, crayons or markers*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy the Unit 2 Faith Word coloring sheet (Leader Guide—p. 114) for each child. Make extra copies of the Unit 2 Faith Word coloring sheet to leave in the Peaceful Place this month.*

- Assist the children, as needed, as they interact with the items provided.
- Invite the children to create a sign showing a cause they would like to speak up about.
- Have each child color the Faith Word coloring sheet.

Tip: *All of the supplies/activities suggested for the Peaceful Place are optional.*

Go in Peace

Spiritual Practice – Exploring Jesus' Journey Through Scripture

SAY: Spiritual practice is something we do to help us connect to God. It doesn't have to be the same spiritual practice all the time, but it can be. This month we are learning about journey, following where God leads us. We are hearing stories about Jesus' journey. Today he went to the temple and used his voice to ask questions and teach others about God's love.

- Guide the children through a spiritual practice:
    - ❍ Lead the children through the following litany.

SAY: God gave you a special call and leads you on your journey.

KIDS SAY: I have a special call. God leads me on my journey.

SAY: Your voice is important!

KIDS SAY: My voice is important!

PRAY: Dear God, thank you for leading me on my journey. Help me to follow your call. Amen.

- Bless the children before they leave. Touch each child as you say this blessing: "May you feel God's presence as you journey through the day."

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Family Spiritual Practice

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book; Leader Guide—pp. 111, 112*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy Reproducibles 5F–5G for each child. Photocopy "Celebration Chart" (p. 111) and "Family Letter" (p. 112) for any child who does not have these.*

SAY: Let's take a look at your Take-Home Pages *(Reproducibles 5F–5G).* Ask your family to read the Bible story and participate in this week's spiritual practice with you. There's an extra activity for you to do sometime this week.

- Send home a copy of the Take-Home Pages, a copy of the Family Letter, and a copy of the Celebration Chart with each child.

Supplemental Activities

Preschoolers – Follow the Leader

- Invite the children to play "Follow the Leader" with you.
- Encourage them to follow your movements and sounds.
- After you have given them a few directions, choose one child to become the leader.
- After the child has given a few directions to the group, choose another child to be the leader.
- Play until everyone has had an opportunity to be the leader.

SAY: Jesus was a child in today's story, and he was teaching the leaders. This means he was a leader too! You can be a leader today and every day. Your voice is important!

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Early and Older Elementary – Table Talk Cards

Supplies: *index cards, pens or pencils*

SAY: Jesus talked with the teachers and leaders of his faith community. He asked questions and gave answers. The leaders were amazed by what Jesus said and asked. I bet there are adults in your life who are amazed by what you say and ask.

ASK: If you could ask the adults in your life anything, what would you ask them? If you could tell the adults in your life anything, what would you tell them?

- Invite the children to write down their questions and thoughts on index cards.

SAY: This week invite your families to talk about the questions you wrote down. Tell them what you think and see what questions they have.

- Send the index cards home with the kids to have conversations with their families.

Intergenerational Activity – Treasure Hunt (continued)

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book*

- Invite your class to reset the treasure hunt using the same locations and clues you created before class.
- Have the youth and adult classes follow the clues for the treasure hunt as outlined in this session. Instruct your class not to give anything away! See if the youth and adults can solve the clues and find where Jesus is hidden.

SAY: We had fun searching for Jesus today.

ASK: Do you think it was fun for Mary and Joseph when they couldn't find Jesus?

- Invite the kids to consider how Mary and Joseph might have felt.

SAY: Jesus was a kid, like you! He grew and grew. He became wise, and God was pleased with him. I think God is pleased with you too!

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"You are my Son, whom I dearly love; in you I find happiness." (Luke 3:22)

Jesus' Baptism – Luke 3:1-22

Prepare to Wonder

Faith Word: JOURNEY

It has been several weeks since we read about the birth of Elizabeth and Zechariah's son, John. Thirty years later, John is in the wilderness baptizing people in the River Jordan and exhorting people to acknowledge their sin and accept God's forgiveness. John encouraged people to be baptized to show they had changed their hearts.

Some people questioned whether John was the Christ, but John told them that one more powerful than him was coming. John was speaking of Jesus, whom John claimed was so much greater than he that John was not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. Untying sandals was a servant's job.

Though each of the four Gospels tell of Jesus' baptism, each Gospel writer treats it differently. In Luke, the actual baptism of Jesus is only referred to, not described. Luke spends the first twenty verses of the third chapter talking about John the Baptizer and his ministry. It is only after describing John's arrest that Luke takes two verses to mention Jesus' baptism: "When everyone was being baptized, Jesus also was baptized" (Luke 3:21).

In Matthew and Mark, the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, descends on Jesus as he emerges from the water. In Luke, the Spirit, as a dove, descends on Jesus while he was praying. Accompanying the Spirit, a voice from heaven declares, "You are my Son, whom I dearly love." This week's lesson provides an opportunity to remind the children in your class that God has chosen them, just as God chose Jesus.

Spiritual Practice for Adults

Water is a very important symbol in Christianity. It is a symbol of life and God's divine power. Sit next to a body of water or hold a cup of water. Touch the water. How does it feel? Pray this prayer: Dear Creator of Life, you parted the waters from the land. You parted the water for Moses and the Israelites. You came to us in the waters of a womb. You declare your love for us through the sprinkling of water. Thank you for your love. Thank you for your presence. Amen.

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Come Together

Come Together

Supplies: *Class Pack, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, Wonder Box, green cloth, battery-operated candle, seashell*

Prepare Ahead: *Set up a Wonder Table (see p. 3) with a green cloth, battery-operated candle, and a Wonder Box (see p. 3). Display the Unit 2 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 12 & 13) and Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 4). Place the seashell inside the Wonder Box.*

- Point to the Unit 2 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 4), and invite the children to wonder about what the word *journey* means.
- Invite the kids to join you in a circle.

SAY: This month we are talking about stories from Jesus' life. Our story today is about Jesus being baptized by John the Baptizer.

- In this curriculum, we recommend reading stories from the *Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook*. Allow an elementary-age child to read the story, "Jesus' Baptism" (pp. 206–7), from the storybook.

PRAY: Dear God, thank you for showing Jesus that he was loved by you. Thank you for loving us as your children too. Amen

Jesus' Baptism – Preschool

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Jesus' Baptism" (Reproducible 6A) for each child.*

- Invite the preschoolers to use crayons to color the picture.

SAY: Jesus went to the Jordan River to be baptized. While he was there, he was baptized. He heard a voice say, "I love you dearly."

Mindful Coloring – Younger Elementary

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons or markers*

Prepare: *Photocopy "Mindful Coloring" (Reproducible 6B) for each child.*

SAY: In today's Bible story, Jesus was baptized by John the Baptizer in the river. Color the waves on the page using colored pencils. Use only "cool" colors. Cool colors include shades of green, blue, and purple.

- Invite the kids to color the page using cool colors.

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ASK: How does the pattern on this page remind you of water?

SAY: Water plays an important part in today's Bible story.

John the Baptist's Words – Older Elementary

Supplies: *CEB Bible Reproducible Kids' Book, pencils or markers*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "John the Baptist's Words" (Reproducible 6C) for each child.*

- Hand out a copy of "John the Baptist's Words" to each child.

SAY: In today's Bible story, John baptized Jesus in the Jordan River. Before Jesus was baptized, some people thought John was the Messiah (the Savior). Decode the message to see what John said to the people.

- Invite the kids to use the code on the page.
- Have the kids share the answer they found.

Bible Verse Stones – All Ages

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book; nine small, flat stones; permanent markers; large, shallow, plastic tub; drop cloth or tarp; water; optional: small water toys*

Prepare Ahead: *Make photocopies of Reproducible 6E. Put the drop cloth or tarp down on the table or floor of your classroom. Fill the shallow, plastic tub with water and place it on the drop cloth or tarp. Place the nine stones and permanent markers on the drop cloth or tarp next to the water tub.*

SAY: In this week's Bible story, Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River. Today we are going to make Bible verse stones and play in the water.

- Invite the kids to select one stone. Have them refer to Reproducible 6E.
- Direct them to each choose one word from this month's Bible verse: "You are my Son, whom I dearly love." (Luke 3:22a)
- Have each kid use a permanent marker to write their one word from the Bible verse onto one of the stones. Be sure to have one kid write the Bible reference on a stone. Help preschoolers to write their words as necessary.
- Allow the permanent ink to dry (less than a minute). Then invite the kids to place their stones in the tub of water.
- Invite the kids to push the stones around in the tub until the stones are in the correct order to read the Bible verse.
- Allow the kids to play in the water using the optional water toys. Remind the kids that the water should stay inside the tub as much as possible.

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Wonder Time

Interactive Bible Story

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Jesus' Baptism" (Reproducible 6F) for each child.*

- Invite several readers to take turns reading the story one section at a time.

ASK: What is your favorite part of today's story?

Share a Story

Supplies: *Celebrate Wonder DVD, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, TV, DVD player*

- Invite the children to join you, sitting in a circle on the floor.
- Watch the Session 6 video (Celebrate Wonder DVD).

Wonder with Me

Supplies: *Class Pack, Wonder Box, scissors*

Prepare Ahead: *Lay out the Wonder Story Mat for Unit 2 (Class Pack—pp. 8 & 17). Cut out the four remaining Bible story figures (Class Pack—p. 19), if not done already.*

- Place the Wonder Box on the Unit 2 Wonder Story Mat.
- Show the children the Unit 2 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 4).

SAY: The definition for *journey* is to faithfully follow where God leads. We are following Jesus' journey this month as he grows and follows where God leads him.

- Point to the Wonder Story Mat.

WONDER together:

- ❍ Why do you think part of Jesus' journey included the Jordan River?
- ❍ How does it feel to be God's child?

- Place the figure of the dove on the Wonder Story Mat at the Jordan River.
- Open the Wonder Box to reveal the seashell.

WONDER: What does this seashell make you think of?

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Experience Wonder

Water Experiments

Supplies: *several cups and glasses, a supply of water, a roll of paper towels, food coloring (two colors), ice, a kettle with hot water, drinking straws*

- Prepare to show a few properties of water using a few simple science demonstrations:
    - ❍ **Capillary Action:** Place two cups of water side by side. Take a few sheets of paper towel (connected) and twist them into a long shape. Drop some food coloring (any color) into one water cup. Drop food coloring (a different color) into the other cup. Place the ends of the twisted paper towel into each cup. What happens? The water will be absorbed, and the paper towel will turn colors!
    - ❍ **States of Matter:** Bring liquid water, ice, and a kettle with hot water to the table. Talk about how water can exist in three different forms: as a solid (ice), liquid, and gas (steam).
    - ❍ **Sticky Molecules:** Dip a drinking straw into a glass of water. Put your finger over the hole at the top of the straw. Pull the straw out of the water and place it in an empty glass. Remove your finger. The water will go into the empty glass. Water molecules are very "sticky." They will stick to your skin. (Think about when you get out of a pool and how the droplets of water stick to you.)

SAY: Water is an important resource. It helps us to clean our houses and our bodies. We drink water to stay alive. Water is important in today's Bible story too.

Examine the Bible Verse

SAY: Our Unit 2 Bible verse is Luke 3:22. Find it in your Bibles.

ASK: Is the Book of Luke in the Old or New Testament? *(New)* Where is Luke located in the New Testament? *(third book)* In what chapter of Luke is our verse located? *(3)* What is the verse number? *(22)*

SAY: Our Bible verse tells us how God felt about Jesus.

- Gather the kids around the Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 12 & 13) Read it together.

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Peaceful Place

Supplies: *Leader Guide—p. 114, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, book: "A Bucket of Blessings" by Kabir Sehgal & Surishtha Sehgal, paper, water in a tub*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy the Unit 2 Faith Word coloring sheet (Leader Guide—p. 114) for each child.*

- Assist the children, as needed, as they interact with the items provided.
- Invite the children to play gently in the water.

Tip: *All of the supplies/activities suggested for the Peaceful Place are optional.*

Go in Peace

Spiritual Practice—Exploring Jesus' Journey Through Scripture

SAY: Spiritual practice is something we do to help us connect to God. This month we are learning about journey, following where God leads us. We are hearing stories about Jesus' journey. Today he went to the river to be baptized. He heard the voice of God say, "You are my Son. You make me so happy!"

- Guide the children through a spiritual practice:
    - ❍ Invite the children to close their eyes and join you in a prayer meditation.
    - ❍ **SAY:** Imagine a flowing river. The sun is shining on your face. You hear the sounds of water moving lazily along. You put your feet in the river. You feel the cool water moving around your toes. A friend walks up beside you. Who is it? Your friend sits down beside you. You're happy your friend came to be with you today.

PRAY: Dear God, thank you for the people who are with me on my journey, like John and Jesus. Thank you for my friends and family. Amen.

- Bless the children before they leave. Touch each child as you say this blessing: "May you feel God's presence as you journey through the day."

Family Spiritual Practice

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book; Leader Guide—pp. 111, 112*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy Reproducibles 6F–6G for each child. Photocopy "Celebration Chart" (p. 111) and "Family Letter" (p. 112) for any child who does not have these.*

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SAY: Let's take a look at your Take-Home Pages *(Reproducibles 6F–6G).* Ask your family to read the Bible story and participate in this week's spiritual practice with you. There's an extra activity for you to do sometime this week.

- Send home a copy of the Take-Home Pages, a copy of the Family Letter, and a copy of the Celebration Chart with each child.

Supplemental Activities

Preschoolers – Dove Relay

Supplies: *painters' tape, optional: white crepe paper*

Prepare Ahead: *Using painters' tape, create a start line and a turn-around line. Cut four pieces of crepe paper, each about two feet in length.*

- Divide the children into two teams, and line each team up behind the start line. Give the first person in each line two pieces of crepe paper, one for each hand.
- When you say, "Go," the first person in line will flap their arms, pretending to fly, all the way to the turn-around line and back. This child will pass the pieces of crepe paper to the next child in his or her line.
- Keep going until everyone has pretended to be a flying dove.

SAY: In today's story, Jesus saw the Spirit of God, and it looked like a dove.

ASK: How else may God's Spirit look?

Early Elementary – Friendship Bracelets

Supplies: *yarn, pony beads*

Prepare Ahead: *Cut yarn into one-foot pieces. Each child will need two pieces of yarn. Tie a knot at the end of each piece of yarn.*

SAY: John is an important person in Jesus' story. Jesus and John both had different journeys, but they came together at the Jordan River. John baptized Jesus there.

ASK: Is there someone in your life who is important to you? Who?

SAY: We're going to make friendship bracelets for these important people and one for ourselves to remind us we are always connected to the people we love.

- Invite the children to string pony beads onto yarn to create bracelets.
- Help the children tie a knot at the other end of the string when they are finished stringing beads.
- Tie one of the bracelets on the child.
- Remind the children to give one of the bracelets to their important person.

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Older Elementary – Name Art

Supplies: *paper, colored pencils*

SAY: Jesus heard God say, "You are my Son. I find happiness in you." We are also children of God. When people are baptized, the pastor will say the first and middle name of the person being baptized. The pastor doesn't use the person's last name because that person is a part of the family of God.

ASK: Have you ever seen a baptism or have you been baptized? What do you remember about that?

SAY: We're going to make name art to help us remember we are children of God, and God calls us each by name.

- Invite each child to write her or his name in the middle of a sheet of paper.
- Encourage them to outline the letters with colored pencils. Have them continue outlining until the whole page is covered in color.

Intergenerational Activity – Baptism Art

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, watercolor paints, cups of water, paintbrushes, paper towels, additional sheets of white card stock, optional: salt, painting smocks*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Jesus' Baptism" (Reproducible 6A) onto white card stock for each participant.*

- Have the participants choose to paint the picture from Reproducible 6A or to make their own original creation on white card stock.
- Make the watercolor paints, cups of water, paintbrushes, and paper towels available to the participants.

SAY: We learned that Jesus was baptized in today's Bible story.

ASK: What did Jesus hear when he was baptized?

- Invite the kids to share what they learned in the story with the youth and adults. A voice (God) told Jesus he was dearly loved by God. Jesus understood he was God's own child.
- Invite the participants to paint the picture of Jesus being baptized or to paint their own picture in response to the Bible story we heard today.
- To add an interesting effect, salt can be sprinkled on wet watercolor paint to make a pattern.

ASK: Why are we baptized?

- Invite the participants to help clean up after the paintings are finished.

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"You are my Son, whom I dearly love; in you I find happiness." (Luke 3:22)

Temptation in the Desert – Luke 4:1-13

Prepare to Wonder

Faith Word: JOURNEY

Temptation is a part of the human experience. The temptation story reminds us of Jesus' humanity. The way Jesus dealt with temptation can be an example for us.

It is apparent Jesus has been raised in the Jewish faith. All of his responses to his tempter in the wilderness come from Scripture. When tempted to turn stones into bread, Jesus replies with words from Deuteronomy 8:3: *"People don't live on bread alone."* When Jesus is tempted with power, offered all the kingdoms of the world, he responds with words based on Deuteronomy 6:13: *"You will worship the Lord your God and serve only him."*

The tempter attempts to beat Jesus at the Scripture game. In tempting Jesus to throw himself off the highest point in the temple, the tempter quotes Psalm 91:11-12. Jesus does not deny these words, but points out that it is also written in Deuteronomy 6:16: *"Don't test the Lord your God."*

Are we then to go around quoting Scripture in order to resist temptation? While this might work in some situations, to do so entirely would be missing the point. Jesus had studied Scripture. He had been raised in the faith and was therefore prepared when faced with temptation. He had a solid foundation and understanding upon which to draw. Such a foundation will help the children make wise choices when faced with temptation in their own lives.

Spiritual Practice for Adults

Along the journey of life we will all be tempted to do things we shouldn't do. One of the ways we can follow Jesus' example is by stopping, breathing, thinking, and then deciding what we should do next. We can remember God's presence in our breath and remember our values when we think. This week when you are tempted, try to stop, breathe, think, and then decide.

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Come Together

Come Together

Supplies: *Class Pack, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, Wonder Box, green cloth, battery-operated candle, stone*

Prepare Ahead: *Set up a Wonder Table (see p. 3) with a green cloth, battery-operated candle, and a Wonder Box (see p. 3). Display the Unit 2 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 12 & 13) and Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 4). Place the stone inside the Wonder Box.*

- Point to the Unit 2 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 4), and invite the children to wonder about what the word *journey* means.
- Invite the kids to join you in a circle.

SAY: This month we are talking about stories from Jesus' life. Our story today is about Jesus being alone out in the desert wilderness.

- In this curriculum, we recommend reading stories from the *Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook*. Allow an elementary-age child to read the story, "Temptation in the Desert" (pp. 208–9), from the storybook.

PRAY: Dear God, thank you for helping Jesus when he was all alone. Thank you for helping us when we are alone too. Amen.

Temptation in the Desert – Preschool

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Temptation in the Desert" (Reproducible 7A) for each child.*

- Invite the preschoolers to use crayons to color the picture.

SAY: Jesus went to the desert to be alone with God. While he was there, he was tempted. But Jesus stayed true to his faith and values.

Temptation in the Desert – Younger Elementary

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons or markers*

Prepare: *Photocopy "Temptation in the Desert" (Reproducible 7B) for each child.*

SAY: In today's Bible story, Jesus stays in the desert alone. Help Jesus walk through the desert wilderness. Find a path from the bottom of the page to the top.

- Invite the kids to color the page.

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ASK: How did we find a path for Jesus in the desert?

SAY: We will learn more about why Jesus was in the desert in today's Bible story.

Fill in the Blanks – Older Elementary

Supplies: *CEB Bible, Reproducible Kids' Book, pencils or markers*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Fill in the Blanks" (Reproducible 7C) for each child.*

- Hand out a copy of "Fill in the Blanks" to each child.

SAY: A summary of today's Bible story appears on the page, but some of the words are missing. Use context clues to put the words at the bottom of the page in the blanks.

- Invite the kids to work together if they wish.
- If the kids get stuck, have them refer to Luke 4:1-13 (CEB).

Candleholder Decorating – All Ages

Supplies: *one-inch tissue paper squares, clear plastic cups, Mod Podge, paintbrushes, paper cups or bowls*

Prepare Ahead: *Before class, pour a bit of Mod Podge into a paper cup for each child.*

- Hand one clear plastic cup to each kid in your class.

ASK: What are some different uses for candles?

- Invite the kids to "paint" Mod Podge onto their cups.
- Encourage them to stick on squares of tissue paper to make a stained glass effect.
- Have the kids add a layer of Mod Podge over the tissue paper. Assure them that the Mod Podge will dry clear.

SAY: Candles are something we use to provide light. We use candles in worship, too, to help us remember that God's presence is with us.

- Have the kids set their candle holders aside to dry.

Wonder Time

Interactive Bible Story

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Temptation in the Desert" (Reproducible 7F) for each child.*

- Invite several readers to take turns reading the story one section at a time.

ASK: What happened to Jesus in today's Bible story?

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Share a Story

Supplies: *Celebrate Wonder DVD, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, TV, DVD player*

- Invite the children to join you, sitting in a circle on the floor.
- Watch the Session 7 video (Celebrate Wonder DVD).

Wonder with Me

Supplies: *Class Pack, Wonder Box, scissors*

Prepare Ahead: *Lay out the Wonder Story Mat for Unit 2 (Class Pack—pp. 8 & 17). Cut out the three remaining Bible story figures (Class Pack—p. 19), if not done yet.*

- Place the Wonder Box on the Unit 2 Wonder Story Mat.
- Show the children the Unit 2 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 4).

SAY: The definition for *journey* is to faithfully follow where God leads. We are following Jesus' journey this month as he grows and follows where God leads him.

- Point to the Wonder Story Mat.

WONDER together:

- ❍ Why do you think part of Jesus' journey included being tempted in the desert?
- ❍ When you are having a hard time with wanting to do something you shouldn't, what do you do?
- ❍ Is there a story from the Bible that helps you live the way God wants you to live?

- Place the rock figure (Class Pack—p. 19) on the Wonder Story Mat at Jericho.
- Open the Wonder Box to reveal the stone.

WONDER: Why do you think we have a stone in our Wonder Box today?

Experience Wonder

Practice Quiet Time

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, battery-operated candle*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Time Alone with God" (Reproducible 7E) for each child.*

- Have your class practice a time of quiet.

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SAY: We learned that Jesus spent time alone with God in today's Bible story. Jesus didn't talk to anyone while he was alone, but he may have talked to God. Let's play a quick "Quiet Game" to practice being quiet.

- Play a "Quiet Game." The first person to talk, laugh, or make some noise is "out." Play the game for a few minutes.

SAY: Being quiet can be hard. That's why it's good to practice. We are going to have a time of quiet to end our session today.

- Have an older kid in your class turn on the candle.

ASK: Why are we lighting the candle?

SAY: Candlelight helps us think about God's presence with us. You can focus your attention on your candle as we practice being quiet.

- Invite the kids to stay quiet as they watch the candlelight. If the kids have trouble staying quiet, you might try having them take deep breaths. See if your class can be very quiet for five minutes.
- Hand out copies of Reproducible 7E. Invite older kids to pair with younger kids. Have them look over the sheets and follow the directions on the page.

Examine the Bible Verse

SAY: Our Unit 2 Bible verse is Luke 3:22. Find it in your Bibles.

ASK: Is the Book of Luke in the Old or New Testament? *(New)* Where is Luke located in the New Testament? *(third book)* In what chapter of Luke is our verse located? *(3)* What is the verse number? *(22)*

SAY: Our Bible verse tells us how God felt about Jesus.

- Gather the kids around the Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 12 & 13). Read it together.

Peaceful Place

Supplies: *Leader Guide—p. 114, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, book: "Strega Nona" by Tomie dePaola, sand tray*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy the Unit 2 Faith Word coloring sheet (Leader Guide—p. 114) for each child.*

- Assist the children, as needed, as they interact with the items provided.
- Invite the children to trace in the sand with their fingers.

Tip: *All of the supplies/activities suggested for the Peaceful Place are optional.*

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Go in Peace

Spiritual Practice – Exploring Jesus' Journey Through Scripture

SAY: Spiritual practice is something we do to help us connect to God. This month we are learning about journey, following where God leads us. We are hearing stories about Jesus' journey. Today he went into the desert wilderness. He was alone, but he was also with God. When he was tempted to do things he knew he shouldn't, he relied on his faith to help him say no. Jesus stopped, took a deep breath, thought about what he learned from Scripture, and then made the right decision. We can stop, breathe, think, and decide too.

- Guide the children through a spiritual practice:
    - ❍ **SAY:** This is a special poem from the Book of Psalms that brings comfort to many people when they need to be reminded that God is always with them. Let's read it together.
    - ❍ Read Psalm 23.

PRAY: Dear God, thank you for being with me on my journey. Amen.

- Bless the children before they leave. Touch each child as you say this blessing: "May you feel God's presence as you journey through the day."

Family Spiritual Practice

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book; Leader Guide—pp. 111, 112*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy Reproducibles 7F–7G for each child. Photocopy "Celebration Chart" (p. 111) and "Family Letter" (p. 112) for any child who does not have these.*

SAY: Let's take a look at your Take-Home Pages *(Reproducibles 7F–7G).* Ask your family to read the Bible story and participate in this week's spiritual practice with you. There's an extra activity for you to do sometime this week.

- Send home a copy of the Take-Home Pages, a copy of the Family Letter, and a copy of the Celebration Chart with each child.

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Supplemental Activities

Preschoolers – Prayer Beads

Supplies: *chenille stems, chunky beads or pony beads*

SAY: Jesus turned to his faith when he had a tough time. Sometimes he turned to Scripture, and sometimes he prayed to God. When we have a tough time, we can do these things too! We're going to make prayer beads to help us pray when we are having a tough time.

- Give each child a chenille stem and invite the child to string ten beads onto it.
- Help the children twist the ends of the chenille stem together. This will make their prayer beads resemble a bracelet.

SAY: I am going to lead us through a prayer using our prayer beads. I will name things we are thankful for. Each time I name something, touch a bead.

PRAY: Dear God, thank you for families. Thank you for friends. Thank you for food. Thank you for homes. Thank you for plants. Thank you for animals. Thank you for church. Thank you for the Holy Spirit. Thank you for Jesus. Thank you for always being with us. Amen.

SAY: You can take home your prayer beads and use them to help you pray.

Early Elementary – Prayer Stones

Supplies: *two-inch garden stone for each child, paint pens, stickers*

SAY: Jesus turned to his faith when he had a tough time. Sometimes he turned to Scripture, and sometimes he prayed to God. When we have a tough time, we can do these things too! We're going to make prayer stones to help us pray when we are having a tough time.

- Give each child a garden stone.
- Encourage them to decorate the stones with paint pens and/or stickers.

SAY: I am going to lead us through a prayer. While we pray, hold your stone in your hand and think about God's love surrounding you.

PRAY: Dear God, sometimes life gets messy and hard, but we know you are always with us. Help us feel how close you are. Help us feel your love. Amen.

SAY: Anytime you feel alone, you can pull out your stone and remember that God is with you.

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Older Elementary – Doodle Prayers

Supplies: *CEB Bible, paper, colored pencils*

SAY: Jesus turned to his faith when he had a tough time. Sometimes he turned to Scripture, and sometimes he prayed to God. When we have a tough time, we can do these things too! We're going to listen to a passage of Scripture. While I read, I invite you to close your eyes and listen. The second time I read the passage, I invite you to doodle what comes up for you. This is called doodle praying.

- Invite the children to close their eyes and take a deep breath. Read Psalm 84:1-4.
- Read Psalm 84:1-4 and encourage the kids to doodle the words or images that come up while they listen. Give them extra time to draw. You might read the passage again.
- Invite the children to share what they drew and wrote with the group, if they would like.

Intergenerational Activity – Make Bread

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, bread-making ingredients and supplies listed on Reproducible 7D, access to an oven, small disposable plates, disposable knives, butter or jam, napkins*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Make Bread" (Reproducible 7D) for every two to three participants. Look over the ingredients and instructions on the sheet. Baking bread might take awhile, so decide if some adults can help from start to finish. Then you may choose to bring your class (and other classes) in for part of the process.*

SAY: In today's Bible story, Jesus is tempted to turn the stones in the wilderness into bread! Jesus answers that humans don't live by bread alone, but by the words from God. Let's work together to make some delicious bread.

- Put the participants into small groups of two to three. Make sure each group has at least one adult or a mature youth participant.
- Hand out the copies of Reproducible 7D to each group. Invite the groups to follow along using the directions on the page.
- Be prepared to have the adults you choose keep an eye on the baking bread until it's finished. Bring the participants back together (after class, for example) to try the bread.

SAY: In today's Bible story, Jesus is tempted to turn the stones in the wilderness into bread! Jesus answers that humans don't live by bread alone, but by God's words.

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"You are my Son, whom I dearly love; in you I find happiness." (Luke 3:22)

Jesus in the Synagogue – Luke 4:14-30

Prepare to Wonder

Faith Word: JOURNEY

Synagogues are places of worship for Jewish people. In Jesus' time, Jewish people gathered together in the synagogue for worship and for teaching the Scriptures and the law. After Jesus' baptism and his experience being tempted in the wilderness, Jesus began to teach in the synagogues. The Bible tells us it was Jesus' custom to go to the synagogue on the Sabbath. Jesus' visit to the synagogue in Nazareth is significant for two reasons: because Nazareth was his hometown, and because of the Scripture Jesus read that day.

During worship in a Jewish synagogue at that time, there were usually several readers. Each would read a part of Scripture and then preach on the text. The Bible tells us Jesus stood to read from the scroll and then sat down to teach. This was the customary practice at the time. Jesus read a passage that essentially announced what his ministry was to be about: bringing good news to the poor, proclaiming release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind. It could be said that Jesus was reading his mission statement.

The last part of the story is more difficult to understand. The crowd in the synagogue turns on Jesus. In verse 22, we are told they are amazed at the words that he spoke. In verse 29, they are attempting to hurl him off a cliff! It has been speculated that the crowd became upset when Jesus insisted his message was for everyone. The people of Nazareth may have wanted Jesus to spend extra time in Nazareth and were upset when this was not Jesus' plan.

Spiritual Practice for Adults

We will all be called to do something that others may not like. Maybe it's taking a new job and your current employer is unhappy. Maybe you have to draw a boundary with a friend to keep from gossiping. Whatever it is, we will never be able to make everyone happy. When this happens next, detach with love. Remember that God is also on the journey with this person, and ask God to care for each of you.

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Come Together

Come Together

Supplies: *Class Pack, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, Wonder Box, green cloth, battery-operated candle, scroll*

Prepare Ahead: *Set up a Wonder Table (see p. 3) with a green cloth, battery-operated candle, and a Wonder Box (see p. 3). Display the Unit 2 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 12 & 13) and Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 4). Place the scroll inside the Wonder Box.*

- Point to the Unit 2 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 4), and invite the children to wonder about what the word *journey* means.
- Invite the kids to join you in a circle.

SAY: This month we are talking about stories from Jesus' life. Our story today is about Jesus being in the synagogue. It was like the church where we come to worship and learn about God.

- In this curriculum, we recommend reading stories from the *Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook*. Allow an elementary-age child to read the story, "Jesus in the Synagogue" (pp. 210–1), from the storybook.

PRAY: Dear God, thank you for helping us to learn and worship together. Amen.

Jesus in the Synagogue – Preschool

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Jesus in the Synagogue"(Reproducible 8A) for each child.*

- Invite the preschoolers to use crayons to color the picture.

SAY: Jesus told people that he was sent by God to do good work.

Find the Hidden Word – Younger Elementary

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons or markers*

Prepare: *Photocopy "Find the Hidden Word" (Reproducible 8B) for each child.*

SAY: The synagogue is where Jesus worshipped God each week. Find the hidden letters that spell the word SYNAGOGUE on the page. Color the letters. Then color the rest of the page.

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- Invite the kids to find the hidden letters on the page.

ASK: What are the letters you found? What do they spell?

SAY: We will learn more about what happened when Jesus read in the synagogue.

Reading Backwards – Older Elementary

Supplies: *CEB Bible, Reproducible Kids' Book, pencils or markers*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Reading Backwards" (Reproducible 8C) for each child.*

SAY: In today's Bible story, Jesus opened a scroll and read it out loud in his home synagogue (kind of like a church). The Scripture Jesus read is printed on the page, but it is written from right to left. Rewrite the words onto a separate sheet of paper so the Scripture can be read more easily.

- Refer to Luke 4:18-19 in a *Common English Bible*.

My Sunday Comic – All Ages

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, pencils, colored pencils or crayons, optional: Sunday comics from a newspaper*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "My Sunday Comic" (Reproducible 8D) for each child.*

ASK: What do you do on Sundays?

- Invite the kids to think about the things they do on Sundays. They might come to church and Sunday school, eat lunch with family, and do different activities during the day.
- Invite the kids to fill in the comic panels on the reproducible page to make a comic illustrating their typical Sundays.
- Have the kids share their comics with the rest of the class when they are finished.

SAY: Jesus came to the synagogue to worship God and to learn. We come to our church to worship and learn.

Wonder Time

Interactive Bible Story

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Jesus in the Synagogue" (Reproducible 8F) for each child.*

- Invite several readers to take turns reading the story one section at a time.

ASK: What happened to Jesus in today's Bible story?

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Share a Story

Supplies: *Celebrate Wonder DVD, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, TV, DVD player*

- Invite the children to join you, sitting in a circle on the floor.
- Watch the Session 8 video (Celebrate Wonder DVD).

Wonder with Me

Supplies: *Class Pack, Wonder Box, scissors*

Prepare Ahead: *Lay out the Wonder Story Mat for Unit 2 (Class Pack—pp. 8 & 17). Cut out the two remaining Bible story figures (Class Pack—p. 19), if not done yet.*

- Place the Wonder Box on the Unit 2 Wonder Story Mat.
- Show the children the Unit 2 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 4).

SAY: The definition for *journey* is to faithfully follow where God leads. We are following Jesus' journey this month as he grows and follows where God leads him. In today's story, Jesus journeys to the synagogue where he reads a scroll of Scripture.

- Point to the Wonder Story Mat.

WONDER together:

- ❍ Why do you think Jesus read this Scripture?
- ❍ What does it mean to be faithful?
- ❍ Why do you think the people were angry with Jesus?

- Place the figure of the scroll on the Wonder Story Mat near Nazareth.
- Open the Wonder Box to reveal the scroll.

WONDER: What did the scroll Jesus read say?

Experience Wonder

Make a Scroll

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, at least two paper towel tubes, tape, additional paper, markers or colored pencils*

Prepare Ahead: *Make a few photocopies of "Make a Scroll" (Reproducible 8E). Use the Bible passages written out earlier from the activity on Reproducible 8C (Reading Backwards).*

- Hand out a few copies of "Make a Scroll" to the class.

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SAY: In Jesus' time, Scripture was written on scrolls. Scrolls were made from animal skins that were stitched together. Scribes wrote on the animal skins. Then the long, stitched pages were rolled up. Follow the directions on the page to make a scroll.

- Invite the kids to use the directions on Reproducible 8E to make the long line of Bible passages into a scroll. If you only have two or three papers from the "Reading Backwards" activity, you may want to have the kids make a few more now using the extra paper provided.

SAY: Take the pages you wrote the Bible passages on earlier. Lay them end to end and tape them all together. Then place a cardboard tube at one end of your taped pages. Tape the cardboard tube as you see in the illustration on the page.

- Invite the kids to finish making their scrolls. Have them roll up the scroll.

Examine the Bible Verse

SAY: Our Unit 2 Bible verse is Luke 3:22. Find it in your Bibles.

ASK: Is the Book of Luke in the Old or New Testament? *(New)* Where is Luke located in the New Testament? *(third book)* In what chapter of Luke is our verse located? *(3)* What is the verse number? *(22)*

SAY: Our Bible verse tells us how God felt about Jesus.

- Gather the kids around the Bible Verse Poster. (Class Pack—pp. 12 & 13). Read it together.

Peaceful Place

Supplies: *Leader Guide—p. 114, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, book: "For the Beauty of the Earth" by Folliot S. Pierpoint, paper, crayons*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy the Unit 2 Faith Word coloring sheet (Leader Guide—p. 114) for each child.*

- Assist the children, as needed, as they interact with the items provided.
- Invite the children to write or draw what they feel God is calling them to do.
- Have each child color the Faith Word coloring sheet.

Tip: *All of the supplies/activities suggested for the Peaceful Place are optional.*

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Go in Peace

Spiritual Practice – Exploring Jesus' Journey Through Scripture

SAY: Spiritual practice is something we do to help us connect to God. This month we are learning about journey, following where God leads us. We are hearing stories about Jesus' journey. Today Jesus goes to the synagogue to worship God. We come to church to worship God.

- Guide the children through a spiritual practice:
    - ❍ **SAY:** We're going to take a prayer walk around our church building. As we walk, we will notice the church and the community around it. We will pray to God about what we see. If you notice something you'd like us to all notice, raise your hand and I will let you tell us what you see.

PRAY: Dear God, thank you for spaces where we can come together to worship you. Amen.

- Bless the children before they leave. Touch each child as you say this blessing: "May you feel God's presence as you journey through the day."

Family Spiritual Practice

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book; Leader Guide—pp. 111, 112*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy Reproducibles 8F–8G for each child. Photocopy "Celebration Chart" (p. 111) and "Family Letter" (p. 112) for any child who does not have these.*

SAY: Let's take a look at your Take-Home Pages *(Reproducibles 8F–8G).* Ask your family to read the Bible story and participate in this week's spiritual practice with you. There's an extra activity for you to do sometime this week.

- Send home a copy of the Take-Home Pages, a copy of the Family Letter, and a copy of the Celebration Chart with each child.

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Supplemental Activities

Preschoolers – Worship Dancing

Supplies: *device connected to Wi-Fi*

SAY: We learned that Jesus worshipped God in the synagogue. Worship can include different activities. Sometimes worship includes dancing. Today we will dance our praise and worship for God.

- Using your device, go to the *Celebrate Wonder: Celebration Songs* Spotifiy playlist: *https://rb.gy/vaedao*
- Invite the children to dance praises for God.

SAY: We can worship God in lots of ways.

Early Elementary – Worship Cube

Supplies: *foam, wooden, or cardboard cube; marker*

Prepare Ahead: *Purchase a large foam cube (craft supply store) or make a large cube from cardboard. You may also find a large wooden cube at your craft store or hardware store. On each side of the cube, write directions for worship (see below).*

- Use these directions to complete your preparation: 1) Sing a song, 2) Pray together, 3) Read a Scripture, 4) Give a friend a high five, 5) Dance to a song, 6) Pat a friend on the back.

SAY: We learned that Jesus worshipped God in the synagogue. Worship can include different activities. This Worship Cube will help us to worship.

- Have one kid toss the Worship Cube onto the floor and see what side is facing up.
- Invite the class to follow the direction for worship (sing a song, dance to a song, pat a friend on the back, and so forth).
- Continue in this way until the ways of worship have been tried.

SAY: We have many ways to worship God!

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Older Elementary – Worship Jar

Supplies: *large glass jar, index cards, marker or pen*

Prepare Ahead: Obtain a large glass jar. You will write directions for worship on six index cards and place them in the jar.

- Use these directions to complete your preparation: 1) Sing a song, 2) Pray together, 3) Read a Scripture, 4) Give a friend a high five, 5) Dance to a song, 6) Pat a friend on the back.
- Show the Worship Jar to the kids in your class.

SAY: We learned that Jesus worshipped God in the synagogue. Worship can include different activities. This Worship Jar will help us to worship.

- Have one kid pull a card from the Worship Jar.
- Invite the class to follow the direction for worship *(sing a song, dance to a song, pat a friend on the back, and so forth).*
- Continue in this way until the ways of worship have been tried.

SAY: We have many ways to worship God!

Intergenerational Activity – Gingerbread Church

Supplies: *one or more gingerbread house kits, wax paper, disposable knives, paper towels, wet wipes, plastic sandwich bags (to send pieces of the gingerbread structure home)*

Prepare Ahead: *Look over the instructions from the gingerbread house kits before class.*

- Have the participants get into groups, with a mix of different ages in each group.

SAY: In today's Bible story, Jesus went to the synagogue in his hometown. The synagogue was a lot like our church building. People would come there to worship and to learn.

- Instruct the groups to work together to build their gingerbread house using the kit.
- Invite the groups to use the decorations in their kit to make their gingerbread house look more like a church.
- You may need to plan for this activity to start during class, but have the groups finish afterwards if time is limited. Once the groups have finished, invite them to share their creations.
- Take the structures apart. Share the pieces and eat them together, or send pieces home in plastic sandwich bags.

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"You are my Son, whom I dearly love; in you I find happiness." (Luke 3:22)

Jesus Heals – Luke 4:38-44

Prepare to Wonder

Faith Word: JOURNEY

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all recount the story of Jesus healing Peter's mother-in-law. In Luke, Peter is referred to as Simon and had not yet become one of Jesus' disciples. We don't often think about the disciples' families. Simon Peter was obviously married, since he had a mother-in-law. She appears to have lived in Peter's house with Peter and his wife, which was common practice at the time. As no father-in-law is mentioned, it is likely Peter's mother-in-law was a widow.

When Jesus arrived at Peter's house, he finds Peter's mother-in-law sick with a fever. In the Gospel of Luke, the story says Jesus ordered the fever to go away. The very next verse tells of the woman serving Jesus a meal. This is not an attempt to illustrate Jesus and others in the house as demanding, but rather to demonstrate the immediacy and completeness of the woman's recovery. Peter's mother-in-law felt so much better that she was ready to get up and serve Jesus out of her gratitude.

After Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law, people with all kinds of sicknesses were brought to Jesus. Luke tells us Jesus put his hands on each one of them and healed them. The Gospels contain many stories of Jesus healing people. Jesus cared about people. He cared not only for their spiritual well-being, but also for their physical well-being. Healing was a way for Jesus to show his compassion for people, as well as serving as a sign of the power that was given him by God.

When we follow Jesus' example of how to live, we will show compassion for those around us. Opportunities to care for others present themselves every day.

Spiritual Practice for Adults

Along life's journey we are given opportunities to follow Jesus' example and extend care to those around us. How might you extend care to someone in your life or community this week? Pray to God for opportunities to help someone this week.

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Come Together

Come Together

Supplies: *Class Pack, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, Wonder Box, green cloth, battery-operated candle, paper heart*

Prepare Ahead: *Set up a Wonder Table (see p. 3) with a green cloth, battery-operated candle, and a Wonder Box (see p. 3). Display the Unit 2 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 12 & 13) and Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 4). Place the heart inside the Wonder Box.*

- Point to the Unit 2 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 4), and invite the children to wonder about what the word *journey* means.
- Invite the kids to join you in a circle.

SAY: This month we are talking about stories from Jesus' life. Our story today is about Jesus healing Peter's mother-in-law.

- In this curriculum, we recommend reading stories from the *Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook*. Allow an elementary-age child to read the story, "Jesus Heals" (pp. 212–3), from the storybook.

PRAY: Dear God, thank you for healing people. Please be with the people we know who are sick today. Amen.

Jesus Heals – Preschool

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Jesus Heals" (Reproducible 9A) for each child.*

- Invite the preschoolers to use crayons to color the picture.

SAY: Jesus went from place to place healing people.

Help a Friend – Younger Elementary

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons or markers*

Prepare: *Photocopy "Help a Friend" (Reproducible 9B) for each child.*

SAY: Peter's mother-in-law was sick. When Jesus saw her, he had compassion for her. Have you had compassion for and helped a friend? Use crayons to draw a time when you helped a friend.

- Invite the kids to draw a picture of a time when they helped a friend.

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ASK: How did you help the friend?

SAY: We will hear how Jesus helped by healing in today's Bible story.

Healing Word Search – Older Elementary

Supplies: *CEB Bible, Reproducible Kids' Book, pencils*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Healing Word Search" (Reproducible 9C) for each child.*

SAY: Jesus traveled around teaching about God's kingdom and performing miracles. Many times, Jesus healed people who were sick. Find the words related to the healings Jesus performed during his ministry.

- Invite the kids to solve the word search.
- Have the kids work together if they wish.

Stars and Constellations – All Ages

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "January Stars and Constellations" (Reproducible 9E) for each child.*

- Invite the kids to look over the star pictures on the page.

ASK: Do you recognize any of the star pictures on the page?

SAY: This sheet shows some of the same stars and constellations that we saw in December, along with new ones that are familiar as winter stars and constellations.

- Use this opportunity to see if any kids in your class have tried to find star pictures in the sky.

SAY: This fall, we began looking at the night sky to see star pictures. If you are having trouble finding these shapes, here's a tip.

- Point to Orion on the star chart.

SAY: Orion is the figure of a man. His belt has three bright stars that are pretty easy to find in the winter sky. If you can find the belt, you might be able to find some of the other stars and constellations

- Invite the kids to take the sheets home and look at the sky!

SAY: Looking at stars gives me a sense of awe!

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Wonder Time

Interactive Bible Story

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Jesus Heals" (Reproducible 9F) for each child.*

- Invite several readers to take turns reading the story one section at a time.

SAY: Jesus went to the synagogue to worship God. After Jesus left, he used the power of God to heal Simon's mother-in-law. Then Jesus healed many others.

Share a Story

Supplies: *Celebrate Wonder DVD, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, TV, DVD player*

- Invite the children to join you, sitting in a circle on the floor.
- Watch the Session 9 video (Celebrate Wonder DVD).

Wonder with Me

Supplies: *Class Pack, Wonder Box, scissors*

Prepare Ahead: *Lay out the Wonder Story Mat for Unit 2 (Class Pack—pp. 8 & 17). Cut out the final Bible story figure (Class Pack—p. 19), if not already done.*

- Place the Wonder Box on the Unit 2 Wonder Story Mat.
- Show the children the Unit 2 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 4).

SAY: The definition for *journey* is to faithfully follow where God leads. We are following Jesus' journey this month as he grows and follows where God leads him. In today's story, Jesus journeys to Peter's house and heals Peter's mother-in-law.

- Point to the Wonder Story Mat.

WONDER together:

- ❍ How does it feel to have a fever?
- ❍ What do you think Peter's mother-in-law felt when her fever went away?
- ❍ Why would Jesus heal people?

- Place the figure of the heart on the Wonder Story Mat near Capernaum.
- Open the Wonder Box to reveal the heart.

WONDER: Why should we show compassion to one another?

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Experience Wonder

Cheer Packages

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book; party favor bags; party favors or kids' meal toys, small packs of crayons, dollar-store coloring books, and so forth; crayons or markers*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Cheer Package Tags" (Reproducible 9D). Purchase small trinkets for the children to put into Cheer Packages*

- Hand out copies of Reproducible 9D to the class.

SAY: Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law, and it cheered her up so much that she made a meal for Jesus and his friends to show her gratitude. We all need cheering up from time to time. Today we are going to assemble Cheer Packages for our pastor to take to people from our church community who are in the hospital.

- Invite the kids to assemble Cheer Packages using the items you've purchased.
- Encourage the children to decorate the Cheer Package Tags and attach them to the bags.

SAY: These will certainly cheer our church family up!

- Give these packages to the pastoral team who is responsible for hospital visits.

Examine the Bible Verse

SAY: Our Unit 2 Bible verse is Luke 3:22. Find it in your Bibles.

ASK: Is the Book of Luke in the Old or New Testament? *(New)* Where is Luke located in the New Testament? *(third book)* In what chapter of Luke is our verse located? *(3)* What is the verse number? *(22)*

SAY: Our Bible verse tells us how God felt about Jesus.

- Gather the kids around the Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 12 & 13). Read it together.

Peaceful Place

Supplies: *Leader Guide—p. 114, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, book: "How to Heal a Broken Wing" by Bob Graham, paper, crayons*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy the Unit 2 Faith Word coloring sheet (Leader Guide—p. 114) for each child.*

- Assist the children, as needed, as they interact with the items provided.
- Invite the children to make thank-you cards for someone who has cared for them when they were sick.

Tip: *All of the supplies/activities suggested for the Peaceful Place are optional.*

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Go in Peace

Spiritual Practice – Exploring Jesus' Journey Through Scripture

SAY: Spiritual practice is something we do to help us connect to God. This month we are learning about *journey,* following where God leads us. We are hearing stories about Jesus' journey. Today Jesus went to Peter's house and healed his mother-in-law. Part of Jesus' ministry included caring for the bodies of the people in his community.

- Guide the children through a spiritual practice:
  - ❍ **SAY:** We're going to do a body prayer.
  - ❍ **PRAY:** Christ be with us. *(Spread out your arms.)*
    Christ before us. *(Place your arms in front of your body.)*
    Christ behind us. *(Turn around.)*
    Christ in us. *(Place your hands on your chest.)* Amen.

PRAY: Dear God, thank you for being with me on my journey. Amen.

- Bless the children before they leave. Touch each child as you say this blessing: "May you feel God's presence as you journey through the day."

Family Spiritual Practice

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book; Leader Guide—pp. 111, 112*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy Reproducibles 9F–9G for each child. Photocopy "Celebration Chart" (p. 111) and "Family Letter" (p. 112) for any child who does not already have these.*

SAY: Let's take a look at your Take-Home Pages *(Reproducibles 9F–9G).* Ask your family to read the Bible story and participate in this week's spiritual practice with you. There's an extra activity for you to do sometime this week.

- Send home a copy of the Take-Home Pages, a copy of the Family Letter, and a copy of the Celebration Chart with each child.

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Supplemental Activities

Preschoolers – Pretend Play

Supplies: *adhesive bandages, stuffed animals and baby dolls, medical toys*

SAY: Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law.

ASK: Who helps heal people today?

SAY: Doctors, nurses, parents, emergency medical workers, dentists, veterinarians, and so many others! Let's pretend to heal our stuffed animals and baby dolls.

- Invite the children to pretend to be modern-day healers.

Early Elementary – Picture My Family

Supplies: *large sheets of drawing paper, pencils, crayons, colored pencils*

- Hand out large sheets of drawing paper, pencils, crayons, and colored pencils to the kids.

SAY: When Jesus got to Peter's house, Peter's mother-in-law was sick and Jesus used God's power to heal her.

- Have the participants think about the people in their families. Try to get them to think about as many people in their families as they can.
- Invite the kids to draw a picture of the people in their families. They can include grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins, and their immediate families too.
- Use this activity to help kids understand the relationship between Peter and the woman who was healed. The woman was his mother-in-law. Who in their family has a mother-in-law?

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Older Elementary – Blob Tag

SAY: In Jesus' time, people who were sick were excluded from the community. Jesus healed the people in his community because he wanted to make sure no one was excluded. He wanted everyone to be included.

ASK: Who is excluded in our community? How can we help include them?

SAY: Jesus' dream is to have everyone be together. To celebrate this, we are going to play Blob Tag. One person will be "IT." When IT tags someone, that person will join hands with IT and tag the class together. If you get tagged, you join hands with the "blob," until everyone has gotten tagged and is a part of the blob.

- Choose one child to be IT.
- Play Blob Tag until everyone has been tagged.
- Continue playing until everyone is tired and ready to move on.

SAY: I am grateful for the ways Jesus showed us how to include others. I encourage you to be on the lookout for people who are left out and find ways to include them.

Intergenerational Activity – Ways to Help

Supplies: *large sheet of paper or markerboard, markers*

- Lead a discussion with the participants in your class. The youth and adults may be more aware of the way your church is helping others in your community.
- Kids naturally want to help. Sometimes churches forget to include kids in opportunities for helping in the community. Use this discussion to help find ways for the kids too.

ASK: What are some of the ways our church is helping other people in our community?

- Invite the participants to share the ways your church helps. Write the answers down on the large sheet of paper or markerboard.

SAY: We learned that Jesus' ministry involved teaching people about God and healing people using God's power. Our church teaches people about God. Our church also helps people in our community in many ways.

- Begin to discuss ideas for ways the kids in your class could help too. Perhaps there are programs or activities happening in the life of your church where kids could be included as helpers. Be creative and write down the ideas that are generated on the large sheet of paper or markerboard.
- Think about people in your church who are leaders in various ministries. Who will need to be included as you plan to include the kids in your class?

SAY: We have many ways to help people in our community!

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All the people were beside themselves with wonder. Filled with awe, they glorified God, saying, "We've seen unimaginable things today." (Luke 5:26)

The Five Friends – Luke 5:17-26

Prepare to Wonder

Faith Word: WONDER

Today we read about a man healed by Jesus. The man was paralyzed, lying on a cot. The crowds were thick with people wanting to get a glimpse of the man who could heal the sick and who taught with authority. Because the crowds were so great, the house where Jesus was teaching was surrounded on all sides. Four men, friends of the paralyzed man, carried him on his cot to where Jesus was. But how would they get him in to see Jesus? Should they just give up and turn away? No, they did something extraordinary to get their friend in front of Jesus. They lowered him, cot and all, through the roof tiles into the room where Jesus was!

Roofs at the time were significantly different than the ones we have today. They were less permanently constructed. The roof tiles were placed along with wooden beams and straw mats. This style of roof meant that roofs had to be routinely maintained based on weather and other factors. To make a hole in this house's roof was a bold move, but not one of permanent destruction for the owner of the house.

What is more surprising about the story isn't the hole in the roof, but rather Jesus' response to the man on the cot. Jesus' ministry was all about seeing, truly seeing, who was left out of the community and making ways for those people to be brought back into the community. This man was a whole person, and he was paralyzed. His inability to walk meant that he was often left out. He and his friends came to Jesus with the hopes that they'd all be able to be back together again, and Jesus did just that. Jesus' ministry was filled with acts that gave people a sense of awe and wonder!

Spiritual Practice for Adults

This month we will explore wonder through faith. Most of the time, we have engaged our faith through moments of wonder. I wonder what it will be like to see wonder through the lens of faith. How might you focus your prayers and service on faith this month? Spend some time with God and journal about what it means to you to be a person of wonder-filled faith.

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Come Together

Come Together

Supplies: *Class Pack, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, Wonder Box, green cloth, battery-operated candle, small toy house or picture of a house*

Prepare Ahead: *Set up a Wonder Table (see p. 3) with a green cloth, battery-operated candle, and a Wonder Box (see p. 3). Display the Unit 3 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 9 & 16) and Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 21). Place the house inside the Wonder Box.*

- Point to the Unit 3 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 21), and invite the children to wonder about what the word *wonder* means.
- Invite the kids to join you in a circle.

SAY: This month we are talking about stories from Jesus' life. Our story today is about Jesus healing a man who couldn't walk.

- In this curriculum, we recommend reading stories from the *Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook*. Allow an elementary-age child to read the story, "The Five Friends" (pp. 214–5), from the storybook.

PRAY: Dear God, thank you for loving everyone. Help us find ways to include everyone in our church, schools, and community. Amen.

The Five Friends – Preschool

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "The Five Friends" (Reproducible 10A) for each child.*

- Invite the preschoolers to use crayons to color the picture.

SAY: Jesus went from place to place healing people.

The Five Friends – Younger Elementary

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons or markers*

Prepare: *Photocopy "The Five Friends" (Reproducible 10B) and "The Five Friends Story" (Reproducible 10C) for each child.*

- Invite the kids to look over the pictures from Reproducible 10B.
- Have the kids read the words in the boxes found on Reproducible 10C.

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SAY: The pictures from today's story are out of order. Color the pictures and cut them apart. Then, use 10C to paste the pictures down in the right order.

- Invite the kids to share the correct order for today's Bible story.

True or False – Older Elementary

Supplies: *CEB Bibles, Reproducible Kids' Book, pencils*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "True or False" (Reproducible 10D) for each child.*

SAY: Read the statements related to today's Bible story. Some are true; some are false. Use Luke 5:17-26 (CEB) to mark which statements are true and false.

- Invite older elementary kids to answer the true or false questions on Reproducible 10D using the directions provided on the page.
- Encourage the kids to use Luke 5:17-26 to find the answers. Tell the kids to avoid guessing the answers.
- You may choose to have the kids work together to answer the true-or-false questions.

Fold-up Bible Verse – All Ages

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, scissors*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Fold-up Bible Verse" (Reproducible 10E) for each child. You may choose to copy the reproducible page onto various colors of paper.*

- Hand out a copy of "Fold-up Bible Verse" to each child.
- Invite a volunteer to read the words on the page aloud to the rest of the class.

SAY: When Jesus performed miracles, taught people about God, and healed people who were separated from their communities, people were amazed and filled with awe! We will be hearing stories all this month about ways Jesus healed people and shared God's love.

- Invite the kids to use scissors to carefully cut on the heavy, outer, solid line on the page.
- Then have the kids fold the page on the dotted lines. This will fold the Bible verse page into a smaller size.

SAY: We will hear how a man folded up his mat and walked home in today's story. You can put your copy of the folded-up Bible verse in your pocket and pull it out anytime you want to remember how amazing Jesus is.

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Wonder Time

Interactive Bible Story

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "The Five Friends" (Reproducible 10F) for each child.*

- Invite several readers to take turns reading the story one section at a time.

SAY: Five friends were very determined! Four of the friends carried their friend on a cot up onto a roof so he could see Jesus.

ASK: What have you done to help a friend?

Share a Story

Supplies: *Celebrate Wonder DVD, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, TV, DVD player*

- Invite the children to join you, sitting in a circle on the floor.
- Watch the Session 10 video (Celebrate Wonder DVD).

Wonder with Me

Supplies: *Class Pack, Wonder Box, scissors*

Prepare Ahead: *Lay out the Wonder Story Mat for Unit 3 (Class Pack—pp. 11 & 14). Cut out the four Bible story figures (Class Pack—p. 3).*

- Place the Wonder Box on the Unit 3 Wonder Story Mat.
- Show the children the Unit 3 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 21).

SAY: The definition for *wonder* is to be curious and explore the mystery of God. The people who witnessed the miracles Jesus performed were filled with wonder. How was Jesus able to heal people who were sick for a long time? We can be full of wonder about Jesus, God, the Bible, faith, and lots of other things!

- Point to the Wonder Story Mat.

WONDER together:

- ❍ What do you think the crowd thought in this story?
- ❍ What can you do to help a friend this week?
- ❍ Why do you think Jesus healed the man on the mat?

- Place the figure with the words "Curiosity helps us . . . " near the illustration on the Wonder Story Mat of the five friends.
- Read the words on the figure to the kids and wonder together.

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- Open the Wonder Box to reveal the house.

WONDER: When have you been as determined as the five friends?

Experience Wonder

Five Friends Relay

Supplies: *two blankets, two pillows or two stuffed animals, masking tape*

Prepare Ahead: *Create a start line and a finish line at opposite ends of the classroom using the masking tape. Clear tables and chairs as needed to create open lanes for the kids to walk quickly from the start line to the finish line. Alternatively, play this game in a big open space inside the church or outside if weather permits.*

- Divide the class into two teams. Make sure both teams have an equal number of younger and older kids.
- Have each team stand behind the start line.
- Hand one blanket to two members of each team. Hand them a pillow or stuffed animal as well. Invite them to stretch the blanket taut. Place the pillow or stuffed animal on the stretched blanket.

SAY: In today's Bible story, friends carried another man on a mat to see Jesus. In this game, you and your partner should carry the pillow *(stuffed animal)* down to the finish line.

- Have each pair carry the pillow or stuffed animal on their "stretcher." If the pillow or stuffed animal falls off, have them stop, place it back on the blanket, and continue.
- When each pair gets to the finish line, instruct them to carry the blanket and pillow back to the start line for the next pair.
- Play the game until every team member on both teams has had a turn.

Examine the Bible Verse

SAY: Our Unit 3 Bible verse is Luke 5:26. Find it in your Bibles.

ASK: Is the Book of Luke in the Old or New Testament? *(New)* Where is Luke located in the New Testament? *(third book)* In what chapter of Luke is our verse located? *(5)* What is the verse number? *(26)*

- Gather the kids around the Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 9 & 16). Read it together.
- Have the kids say the Bible verse with you.

ASK: What is the reference for our verse? *(Luke 5:26)*

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Peaceful Place

Supplies: *Leader Guide—p. 115, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, book: "Amazing Grace" by Mary Hoffman, crayons, pretend medical play toys*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy the Unit 3 Faith Word coloring sheet (Leader Guide—p. 115) for each child. Make extra copies of the Unit 3 Faith Word coloring sheet to leave in the Peaceful Place this month.*

- Assist the children, as needed, as they interact with the items provided.
- Invite the children to pretend to be modern-day healers.
- Encourage the children to color the Unit 3 Faith Word page.

Tip: *All of the supplies/activities suggested for the Peaceful Place are optional.*

Go in Peace

Spiritual Practice – Exploring Wonder Through Faith

SAY: Spiritual practice is something we do to help us connect to God. This month we are exploring *wonder,* to be curious and explore the mystery of God. We are hearing stories about the people whom Jesus healed. Today a man who couldn't walk was brought by his friends to Jesus. They were all so determined to see Jesus, they made a hole in the roof!

- Guide the children through a spiritual practice:
  - ❍ **SAY:** We're going to do a body prayer.
  - ❍ **PRAY:** Christ be with us. *(Spread out your arms.)*
    Christ before us. *(Place your arms in front of your body.)*
    Christ behind us. *(Turn around.)*
    Christ in us. *(Place your hands on your chest.)* Amen.

PRAY: Dear God, thank you for giving us curiosity and wonder to learn more about you and how you work in our world. Amen.

- Bless the children before they leave. Touch each child as you say this blessing: "May you be full of wonder your whole life through. Amen."

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Family Spiritual Practice

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book; Leader Guide—pp. 111, 112*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy Reproducibles 10F–10G for each child. Photocopy "Celebration Chart" (p. 111) and "Family Letter" (p. 112) for any child who does not already have these.*

SAY: Let's take a look at your Take-Home Pages *(Reproducibles 10F–10G)*. Ask your family to read the Bible story and participate in this week's spiritual practice with you. There's an extra activity for you to do sometime this week.

- Send home a copy of the Take-Home Pages, a copy of the Family Letter, and a copy of the Celebration Chart with each child.

Supplemental Activities

Preschoolers – Graham Mat Snack

Supplies: *graham crackers, bear-shaped graham crackers, vanilla icing, plastic spoons, paper plates, napkins*

Prepare Ahead: *Create a snack setup for each child—a paper plate with one graham cracker broken into four rectangles, four bear-shaped graham crackers, and a spoon filled with vanilla icing.*

SAY: Jesus healed a man who was paralyzed. He was lying on a mat when his friends lowered him to Jesus.

ASK: How have your friends helped you?

SAY: That's amazing! Let's make a snack that reminds us of today's story.

- Give each child a snack setup.
- Encourage the kids to put icing on each graham rectangle, then attach one bear-shaped graham cracker to each rectangle.
- Invite the kids to eat their snacks.

Early Elementary – Block Center

Supplies: *blocks, people figures*

SAY: Jesus healed a man who was paralyzed. He was lying on a mat when his friends lowered him through a roof to Jesus. Let's use block and/or people figures to retell the story.

- Encourage the children to build a house and then retell today's story.

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Older Elementary – What Makes a Good Friend?

Supplies: *paper, pencils or pens*

SAY: In Jesus' time, people who were sick were excluded from the community. Jesus healed the people in his community because he wanted to make sure no one was excluded. He wanted everyone to be included. In today's story, a group of friends went to see Jesus to help one of the group. They were great friends!

ASK: What makes a good friend?

- Invite the children to take some time writing out a list of things that makes a good friend.
- If someone would like to share his or her list, allow that child to.

Intergenerational Activity – Experiencing Wonder

Supplies: *folded pages from Reproducible 10E (used earlier in the session), pictures from nature and outer space (printed from the internet or shown on a phone or tablet), a candle and lighter (if allowed), large sheet of paper or markerboard and marker*

Prepare Ahead: *Find pictures of nature and outer space from the internet. Be prepared to share the pictures in class by printing them out or by having them ready to share using your phone or a tablet.*

SAY: Our world is full of wonderful things!

- Share the pictures you found from nature and outer space.
- Encourage the participants to reflect on things in nature that fill them with a sense of awe or wonder.
- Make a list of things that inspire awe and wonder on the markerboard or large sheet of paper.
- Invite a participant to read the words of this month's Bible verse using one of the folded pages from Reproducible 10E (used earlier in the session).

ASK: How does the Bible verse for this month relate to today's Bible story of the man who was healed by Jesus?

- When the man in our Bible story was healed by Jesus, everyone was filled with a sense of awe and wonder.

SAY: God does amazing things in our world every day. When we look at the sky and see the clouds or stars, when we see an amazing animal, or when we see someone recover from an illness, we are filled with a sense of wonder and awe!

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All the people were beside themselves with wonder. Filled with awe, they glorified God, saying, "We've seen unimaginable things today." (Luke 5:26)

Healing the Man with the Withered Hand – Luke 6:6-11

Prepare to Wonder

Faith Word: WONDER

In today's Bible story, Jesus heals a man with a "withered" hand. Many healing stories from Jesus' life and ministry are challenging from a modern, medical point of view. What does it mean that the man had a withered hand? Some believe that the man had some form of paralysis or arthritis in his hand. It may have been a lifelong ailment. We know that Jesus healed those who were suffering for many years.

Jesus' ministry was all about seeing, truly seeing, who was left out of the community and making ways for those people to be brought back into the community. The man in today's story probably needed accommodations to be a part of the community. Maybe he couldn't do the kind of work he wanted to do. Or maybe people looked at him strangely or felt sorry for him. Jesus wanted him to be a full member of the community. Jesus' ministry was filled with acts that gave people a sense of awe and wonder!

We want to show sensitivity as we teach kids about miraculous healings in the Bible. God still heals today, and we can experience healing in lots of ways. Use this opportunity to teach your class to pray for those in need of healing. Look for ways your class can help those in need. Also, be careful in the language you use about different illnesses or physical disabilities. Those with illnesses or disabilities were marginalized by the society in which Jesus lived and worked, and many disability advocates still feel that this is true today.

Spiritual Practice for Adults

This month we will explore wonder through faith. Most of the time, we have engaged our faith through moments of wonder. I wonder what it will be like to see wonder through the lens of faith. How might you focus your prayers and service on faith this month? Spend some time with God and journal about what it means to you to be a person of wonder-filled faith.

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Come Together

Come Together

Supplies: *Class Pack, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, Wonder Box, green cloth, battery-operated candle, stress ball*

Prepare Ahead: *Set up a Wonder Table (see p. 3) with a green cloth, battery-operated candle, and a Wonder Box (see p. 3). Display the Unit 3 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 9 & 16) and Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 21). Place the stress ball inside the Wonder Box.*

- Point to the Unit 3 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 21), and invite the children to wonder about what the word *wonder* means.
- Invite the kids to join you in a circle.

SAY: This month we are talking about stories from Jesus' life. Today we will hear about a man who had a hand that Jesus healed.

- In this curriculum, we recommend reading stories from the *Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook*. Allow an elementary-age child to read the story, "Healing the Man with the Withered Hand" (pp. 216–7), from the storybook.

PRAY: Dear God, thank you for loving everyone. Help us find ways to include everyone in our church, schools, and community. Amen.

Jesus Heals a Man's Hand – Preschool

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Jesus Heals a Man's Hand" (Reproducible 11A) for each child.*

- Invite the preschoolers to use crayons to color the picture.

SAY: Jesus went from place to place healing people.

Valentine's Day Card – Younger Elementary

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons or markers, scissors*

Prepare: *Photocopy "Valentine's Day Card" (Reproducible 11B) for each child.*

- Hand out copies of "Valentine's Day Card" to each child.

SAY: Tomorrow is Valentine's Day. Make a Valentine's card for someone special! Cut out the card and color the design. Then fold the card and write a special note.

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- Invite the kids to cut out the card from the page.
- Have the kids use crayons or colored pencils to color the picture on the card.
- Invite the kids to fold the card and write a note to someone special.

Valentine's Pixel Art – Older Elementary

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, colored pencils, graph paper*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Valentine's Pixel Art" (Reproducible 11C) for each child.*

- Hand out a copy of "Valentine's Pixel Art" and a sheet of graph paper to each kid. Make colored pencils available.

SAY: Use a piece of graph paper to re-create one or more of the Valentine images on the page. Use colored pencils to color in squares on the graph paper.

- Invite older-elementary kids to use the patterns from Reproducible 11C to make pixel art on the sheets of graph paper.
- Encourage the kids to help each other as needed.
- Invite the kids to share their pixel art with the class.

A Healed Hand – All Ages

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons or markers*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "A Healed Hand" (Reproducible 11D) for each child.*

- Hand out a copy of "A Healed Hand" to each child.
- Invite the kids to color the hand on the page.
- Have the kids write their names on the page.

SAY: In today's Bible story, Jesus healed a man's hand. The man had a hand that was "withered."

- Discuss the meaning of "withered hand." In the Bible, modern, medical terms are not always given. We believe that the man's hand had some kind of paralysis or arthritis. It may also have been smaller or in some way disfigured. Use sensitivity whenever you discuss stories of healings with children.
- Invite the kids to crumple up the reproducible page.
- Have the kids exchange crumpled pages with one another. Kids should uncrumple and flatten out their partner's page.

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Wonder Time

Interactive Bible Story

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Healing the Man with the Withered Hand" (Reproducible 11F) for each child.*

- Invite several readers to take turns reading the story one section at a time.

SAY: Jesus healed a man with a withered hand. Some were shocked that Jesus would heal someone on God's special day, the Sabbath.

Share a Story

Supplies: *Celebrate Wonder DVD, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, TV, DVD player*

- Invite the children to join you, sitting in a circle on the floor.
- Watch the Session 11 video (Celebrate Wonder DVD).

Wonder with Me

Supplies: *Class Pack, Wonder Box, scissors*

Prepare Ahead: *Lay out the Wonder Story Mat for Unit 3 (Class Pack—pp. 11 & 14). Cut out the Bible story figures (Class Pack—p. 3).*

- Place the Wonder Box on the Unit 3 Wonder Story Mat.
- Show the children the Unit 3 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 21).

SAY: The definition for *wonder* is to be curious and explore the mystery of God. The people who witnessed the miracles Jesus performed were filled with wonder. How was Jesus able to heal people who were sick for a long time? We can be full of wonder about Jesus, God, the Bible, faith, and lots of other things!

- Point to the Wonder Story Mat.

WONDER together:

- ❍ Why were there angry people in this story?
- ❍ Why do you think Jesus healed the man with the withered hand?
- ❍ Do you think Jesus did the right thing when he broke the rules? Is there ever a time when you should break the rules?

- Place the figure with the words "Every day, there's something…" on the Wonder Story Mat near the picture of Jesus healing the man's hand.
- Read the words on the figure to the kids and wonder together.

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- Open the Wonder Box to reveal the stress ball.

WONDER: What do you think this has to do with today's story?

Experience Wonder

February Bible Verse Cards

Supplies: *CEB Bible, Reproducible Kids' Book, card stock, scissors, optional: laminator and laminating supplies*

Prepare Ahead: *Make one or more photocopies of "February Bible Verse Cards" (Reproducible 11E) onto white or colored card stock. Cut the cards apart and laminate them if you wish.*

Place the cards around the classroom. During the activity, the kids will search around the room until they find all the Bible verse cards. Plan to make some cards easier to find (for younger kids) and some harder to find (for older kids).

SAY: I have hidden some Bible verse cards around the room.

- Tell the class how many cards are hidden. You may also want to pull the older kids aside and ask them to avoid picking up the cards which are very easy to find.

SAY: Once you have found all the cards, bring them to the table. We will use our Bible verse poster *(or a Bible)* to put the cards in the correct order.

- Have the kids search for all the Bible verse cards.
- Invite the class to work together to put the cards in the correct order of the Bible verse.
- Remind them to use the Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 9 & 16) for this month or to use a Bible turned to Luke 5:26 (CEB).
- Kids may want to try putting the cards together into the original rectangle shape that appears on Reproducible 11E.

Examine the Bible Verse

SAY: Our Unit 3 Bible verse is Luke 5:26. Find it in your Bibles.

ASK: Is the Book of Luke in the Old or New Testament? *(New)* Where is Luke located in the New Testament? *(third book)* In what chapter of Luke is our verse located? *(5)* What is the verse number? *(26)*

- Gather the kids around the Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 9 & 16). Read it together.
- Have the kids say the Bible verse with you.

ASK: What is the reference for our verse? *(Luke 5:26)*

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Peaceful Place

Supplies: *Leader Guide—p. 115, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, book: "God's Dream" by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, crayons, pretend medical play toys*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy the Unit 3 Faith Word coloring sheet (Leader Guide—p. 115) for each child.*

- Assist the children, as needed, as they interact with the items provided.
- Invite the children to pretend to be modern-day healers.
- Encourage the children to color the Unit 3 Faith Word page.

Tip: *All of the supplies/activities suggested for the Peaceful Place are optional.*

Go in Peace

Spiritual Practice – Exploring Wonder Through Faith

SAY: Spiritual practice is something we do to help us connect to God. This month we are exploring *wonder,* to be curious and explore the mystery of God. We are hearing stories about the people that Jesus healed. Today a man with a withered hand was healed by Jesus. His need was more important than Jesus' need to follow the rules.

- Guide the children through a spiritual practice:
    - ❍ **SAY**: We're going to do a body prayer.
    - ❍ **PRAY:** Christ be with us. *(Spread out your arms.)*
      Christ before us. *(Place your arms in front of your body.)*
      Christ behind us. *(Turn around.)*
      Christ in us. *(Place your hands on your chest.)* Amen.

PRAY: Dear God, thank you for giving us curiosity and wonder to learn more about you and how you work in our world. Amen.

- Bless the children before they leave. Touch each child as you say this blessing: "May you be full of wonder your whole life through. Amen."

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Family Spiritual Practice

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book; Leader Guide—pp. 111, 112*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy Reproducibles 11F–11G for each child. Photocopy "Celebration Chart" (p. 111) and "Family Letter" (p. 112) for any child who doesn't already have these.*

SAY: Let's take a look at your Take-Home Pages *(Reproducibles 11F–11G)*. Ask your family to read the Bible story and participate in this week's spiritual practice with you. There's an extra activity for you to do sometime this week.

- Send home a copy of the Take-Home Pages, a copy of the Family Letter, and a copy of the Celebration Chart with each child.

Supplemental Activities

Preschoolers and Early Elementary – What's Missing?

Supplies: *tray, bread towel, miscellaneous toys*

Prepare Ahead: *Arrange several toys on the tray.*

SAY: In Jesus' time, people who were sick were left out. This meant they were missing from family gatherings, worship, and work. We're going to play a game that helps us notice what's missing.

- Show the kids the tray of toys.
- Cover the tray with the towel and then remove a few toys.
- Uncover the tray and invite the children to name which items are missing.

SAY: We have to notice who is missing and do our best to include them, just like Jesus.

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Older Elementary – God of Great Mystery

Supplies: *an array of art supplies*

SAY: God is a God of great mystery. God asks me to wonder about how things work. God asks me to wonder how our world could be better. It's our call as followers of Jesus.

ASK: What is God like?

SAY: Today you get to create anything that reminds you of God. Maybe it's a picture of what you think God looks like. Maybe its a sculpture of your favorite animal or person. God is a great mystery. Make something that helps you wonder about God.

- Invite each child to make a piece of art.

Intergenerational Activity – Helping Hands

Supplies: *gardening tools, trash bags, nitrile gloves*

SAY: Jesus calls us all to help one another and our world. One of the ways we can be helpers is by cleaning up our outdoor space.

- Invite everyone to spend some time picking up trash, weeding flower beds, and organizing the playground toys.

ASK: What are other ways you can help this week?

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All the people were beside themselves with wonder. Filled with awe, they glorified God, saying, "We've seen unimaginable things today." (Luke 5:26)

A Servant Is Healed – Luke 7:1-10

Prepare to Wonder

Faith Word: WONDER

Over the past few weeks, your class has learned about ways that Jesus healed many people and helped them become full members of the community. Through his teaching about the kingdom of God, his acts of caring, and through miraculous healings, Jesus showed the full extent of God's love for all. So far, these acts of love have mostly been shown to people inside the Jewish community. This week we see how even those outside the Jewish faith are worthy to receive God's love.

In today's story, a centurion (the leader of a Roman army) had a servant who was very sick. The servant was about to die. When the centurion heard that Jesus was near, he asked some of the Jewish people for help. The centurion was not Jewish, but he had helped the community and built their synagogue. When the Jewish people found Jesus, he went with them. As Jesus came close to the centurion's house, some people came out and stopped him: "The centurion says not to trouble yourself. Just say the word, and the servant will be healed!" The centurion knew all Jesus had to do was say the word. Jesus was amazed! He had never seen faith like this, not even among the Jewish people! The centurion's servant became well.

We live at a time when many believe you must summon up a lot of faith for God to act on your behalf. But that is not always true. This story teaches that, like Matthew 17:20, faith need only be as big as a mustard seed. A little faith can make a BIG difference in our world.

Spiritual Practice for Adults

This month we will explore wonder through faith. Most of the time, we have engaged our faith through moments of wonder. I wonder what it will be like to see wonder through the lens of faith. How might you focus your prayers and service on faith this month? Spend some time with God and journal about what it means to you to be a person of wonder-filled faith.

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Come Together

Come Together

Supplies: *Class Pack, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, Wonder Box, green cloth, battery-operated candle, 100 pennies*

Prepare Ahead: *Set up a Wonder Table (see p. 3) with a green cloth, battery-operated candle, and a Wonder Box (see p. 3). Display the Unit 3 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 9 & 16) and Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 21). Place the 100 pennies inside the Wonder Box.*

- Point to the Unit 3 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 21), and invite the children to wonder about what the word *wonder* means.
- Invite the kids to join you in a circle.

SAY: This month we are talking about stories from Jesus' life. Today we will hear about a servant who was healed by Jesus.

- In this curriculum, we recommend reading stories from the *Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook*. Allow an elementary-age child to read the story, "A Servant Is Healed" (pp. 218–9), from the storybook.

PRAY: Dear God, thank you for loving everyone. Help us find ways to include everyone in our church, schools, and community. Amen.

A Servant Is Healed – Preschool

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "A Servant Is Healed" (Reproducible 12A) for each child.*

- Invite the preschoolers to use crayons to color the picture.

SAY: Jesus went from place to place healing people.

Matching Helmets – Younger Elementary

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons or markers*

Prepare: *Photocopy "Matching Helmets" (Reproducible 12B) for each child.*

- Hand out a copy of "Matching Helmets" to each child.

SAY: Today's Bible story tells us about a commander in the Roman army who was in charge of 100 soldiers. Draw a line between the matching helmets on the page.

- Invite the kids to find the matching helmets and draw lines between the matches.

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Ways to Make 100 – Older Elementary

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, pencils, graph paper*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Ways to Make 100" (Reproducible 12C) for each child.*

- Hand out a copy of "Ways to Make 100" to each kid.

SAY: Today's Bible story tells us about a commander in the Roman army. He was in charge of 100 soldiers. On this page, there are some addition, subtraction, and multiplication problems. Fill in the blanks to make all of the answers equal 100.

- Have the kids solve the problems working together if needed.

Paper Airplane Messages – All Ages

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids Book, crayons or markers, copy paper*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Paper Airplane Instructions" (Reproducible 12D) for every two or three children.*

- Hand out at least one sheet of copy paper to each kid.
- Direct the kids to look at the Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 9 & 16) for this month. Depending on the size of your class, figure out how to divide up the words on this month's Bible verse so that each paper contains a few of the words from this month's verse.
- Have the kids write their assigned words on their papers. Younger kids may need help.

SAY: Use the instructions on the sheet to fold a paper airplane that will fly in loops!

- Instruct the kids to try folding the sheet of paper using the picture instructions from Reproducible 12D.
- Once the papers have been folded into airplanes, invite the kids to toss them in the air.
- Have the kids retrieve the planes and unfold them.
- Instruct the class to arrange the papers so the Bible verse is in order.
- Today's Bible story has a theme of a message being sent to Jesus. Discuss how the planes flew through the air carrying a message: this month's Bible verse.

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Wonder Time

Interactive Bible Story

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "A Servant Is Healed" (Reproducible 12F) for each child.*

- Invite several readers to take turns reading the story one section at a time.

SAY: Jesus healed a servant. The servant worked for a Roman centurion. That means the Roman was in charge of 100 soldiers. Romans and Jews, like Jesus, didn't really get along. But Jesus helped the Roman and the servant.

Share a Story

Supplies: *Celebrate Wonder DVD, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, TV, DVD player*

- Invite the children to join you, sitting in a circle on the floor.
- Watch the Session 12 video (Celebrate Wonder DVD).

Wonder with Me

Supplies: *Class Pack, Wonder Box, scissors*

Prepare Ahead: *Lay out the Wonder Story Mat for Unit 3 (Class Pack—pp. 11 & 14). Cut out the two remaining Bible story figures (Class Pack—p. 3), if not done already.*

- Place the Wonder Box on the Unit 3 Wonder Story Mat.
- Show the children the Unit 3 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 21).

SAY: The definition for *wonder* is to be curious and explore the mystery of God. The people who witnessed the miracles Jesus performed were filled with wonder. How was Jesus able to heal people who were sick? We can be full of wonder about Jesus, God, the Bible, faith, and lots of other things!

- Point to the Wonder Story Mat.

WONDER together:

- ❍ Why do you think Jesus healed a servant?
- ❍ Do you think the Roman was brave to ask help from a Jew, someone his country was not kind to?
- ❍ What do you think the servant felt in the story?

- Place the figure with the words "There is never one way to wonder!…" on the Wonder Story Mat, near the scene of Jesus outside the centurion's home.
- Read the words on the figure to the kids and wonder together.

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- Open the Wonder Box to reveal the 100 pennies.

WONDER: What could 100 pennies have to do with today's story?

Experience Wonder

Start a Plant

Supplies: *CEB Bible, clear plastic cups, starter soil, different kinds of vegetables seeds, different kinds of flower seeds, water, permanent markers, veggies to snack on, ranch dressing, disposable plates, napkins*

- Hand out a disposable, plastic cup to each kid. Make permanent markers available and help the kids to write their names on their cups.
- Invite each kid to use her or his cup to scoop up some starter soil.
- Invite the kids to choose a couple of seeds to plant in their starter soil. Have the kids place the seeds in their cups.
- Have a few extra cups handy. Have the kids use the extra cups to scoop a little more starter soil. Invite the kids to cover their seeds with the additional soil.
- Have the kids add some water to their cups. Place the cups in a sunny spot in your classroom until the end of today's session. Prepare to send the cups home today.
- Be sure to instruct your class to place their cups in a sunny spot at home.

SAY: Don't forget to water your seeds when the soil starts to feel dry.

- Invite the kids to snack on some veggies while you look up a Bible verse in a *Common English Bible*.
- Have a volunteer look for Matthew 17:20 in the Bible. Invite the volunteer to read the verse aloud.

SAY: Some people think you need a BIG faith for BIG things to happen. But Jesus taught us that even if you put a small amount of faith in God, BIG things can still happen—just like the centurion in today's story. He had faith that Jesus could do an amazing miracle, and Jesus did! Jesus healed the servant.

Examine the Bible Verse

SAY: Our Unit 3 Bible verse is Luke 5:26. Find it in your Bibles.

ASK: Is the Book of Luke in the Old or New Testament? *(New)* Where is Luke located in the New Testament? *(third book)* In what chapter of Luke is our verse located? *(5)* What is the verse number? *(26)*

- Gather the kids around the Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 9 & 16). Read it together.

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- Have the kids say the Bible verse with you.

ASK: What is the reference for our verse? *(Luke 5:26)*

Peaceful Place

Supplies: *Leader Guide—p. 115, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, book: "How Do I Pray for Grandpa?" by Laura Alary, crayons, pretend medical play toys*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy the Unit 3 Faith Word coloring sheet (Leader Guide—p. 115) for each child.*

- Assist the children, as needed, as they interact with the items provided.
- Invite the children to make get-well cards for people on the church's prayer list.
- Encourage the children to color the Unit 3 Faith Word page.

Tip: *All of the supplies/activities suggested for the Peaceful Place are optional.*

Go in Peace

Spiritual Practice – Exploring Wonder Through Faith

SAY: Spiritual practice is something we do to help us connect to God. This month we are exploring *wonder,* to be curious and explore the mystery of God. We are hearing stories about the people whom Jesus healed. Today a servant of a Roman centurion was healed by Jesus.

- Guide the children through a spiritual practice:
  - ❍ **SAY:** We're going to do a body prayer.
  - ❍ **PRAY:** Christ be with us. *(Spread out your arms.)*
    Christ before us. *(Place your arms in front of your body.)*
    Christ behind us. *(Turn around.)*
    Christ in us. *(Place your hands on your chest.)* Amen.

PRAY: Dear God, thank you for giving us curiosity and wonder to learn more about you and how you work in our world. Amen.

- Bless the children before they leave. Touch each child as you say this blessing: "May you be full of wonder your whole life through. Amen."

Family Spiritual Practice

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book; Leader Guide—pp. 111, 112*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy Reproducibles 12F–12G for each child. Photocopy "Celebration Chart" (p. 111) and "Family Letter" (p. 112) for any child who does not already have these.*

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SAY: Let's take a look at your Take-Home Pages *(Reproducibles 12F–12G)*. Ask your family to read the Bible story and participate in this week's spiritual practice with you. There's an extra activity for you to do sometime this week.

- Send home a copy of the Take-Home Pages, a copy of the Family Letter, and a copy of the Celebration Chart with each child.

Supplemental Activities

Preschoolers – Just Say the Word

Supplies: *the Celebrate Wonder Celebration Spotify playlist, a soft ball, a Wi-Fi-connected device*

SAY: The centurion had faith in Jesus' power. He believed that all Jesus had to do to heal his servant was to say the words, "Be healed!" The centurion believed Jesus could make his servant well without even seeing him. Jesus just had to say the word, and the servant was healed.

ASK: What makes words so powerful?

SAY: We can stand up for others like the centurion did in today's story. We can just say the word and help! Let's play a game.

- Invite the children to sit in a circle.
- Pass the ball around the circle while you play part of a song on your device.
- Stop the song. The child who is holding the ball should shout, "Just say the word!'
- Keep playing until every child has had an opportunity to shout.

Early Elementary – Pass the Message

SAY: The centurion asked some friends to pass a message to Jesus. The friends told Jesus the centurion needed help for his servant. Jesus got the message and started to head to the centurion's house. Let's pass some messages in a game like "Telephone."

- Invite the children to sit in a circle with you. Whisper one of the following messages into the ear of the child to your right. That child will whisper what he or she heard into the ear of the child to his or her right. Keep going all the way around the circle. The last child in the circle will say the message out loud. Mix up the circle and go again.
- Some message ideas:
    - ❍ Jesus healed the servant.
    - ❍ Jesus loves you and me.
    - ❍ I believe Jesus can just say the word too!

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Older Elementary – Advocate

Supplies: *markerboard or large sheet of paper, marker*

SAY: The centurion advocated for the servant. This means that when the servant couldn't speak up for himself, the centurion spoke up for him.

ASK: Have you ever spoken up for someone? What happened?

- Invite the children to brainstorm ways they can advocate for others at church, at school, and in their neighborhoods.

Intergenerational Activity – Just Say the Word

- In today's Bible story, the centurion says that if Jesus will just "say the word," his servant will be well. Play a game of "Simon Says" to help your class think about following directions.

SAY: In today's Bible story, we heard Jesus healed the centurion's servant.

ASK: How did Jesus heal the servant?

SAY: Jesus was going to the house. But before he got there, Jesus got a message. The centurion knew that if Jesus were to "say the word," his servant would be healed. Jesus didn't even go to the house or see the servant! Yet, the servant was still healed!

- Invite the kids (and other participants) to play "Simon Says."
- Choose a leader (Simon) to give directions. When the leader says something like, "Simon says jump up and down," the other participants should jump up and down.
- If the leader does not say, "Simon says," before giving the direction, the participants should not follow the instruction. If they do, the participants are out. Choose new players to be "Simon" after a couple of rounds.
- Invite the kids to discuss the game. What did they enjoy? What were the best directions that were given?

SAY: When God chooses to do something, it is done. Jesus was able to heal and teach people about God in amazing ways. We can show care and teach others about God too.

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All the people were beside themselves with wonder. Filled with awe, they glorified God, saying, "We've seen unimaginable things today." (Luke 5:26)

Jairus's Daughter – 8:40-42, 49-56

Prepare to Wonder

Faith Word: WONDER

Over the last thirteen weeks, your class has been hearing stories from the very beginning of Jesus' life. During Advent, we prepared for the celebration of Jesus' birth and Christmas. Your class learned that Jesus grew and became wise. He was baptized by John and spent forty days alone in the desert. When Jesus returned home, he began his ministry. We have chosen to focus our attention on Jesus' ministry of care and healing. We have learned that Jesus healed people who couldn't walk, who had lifelong paralysis, and today we'll see that Jesus even raised people from the brink of death!

It is important to understand the context of Jesus' healing works. In ancient times, prophets would prove their authority from God by performing miracles. Jesus performed many miracles demonstrating that his power came from God. In other words, while miraculous healing can happen, it's not typically something we see every day. Children know that people sometimes get sick, even die. Help your class understand that we can pray for our friends and family. We can have peace in our hearts that God loves those we love. Help the kids think of practical ways we can show care for others too.

Next quarter, we will begin to turn our attention toward the end of Jesus' life and ministry. Easter Sunday is April 17. Now is a good time to help the kids review the stories we've heard this quarter as we look ahead to the miracle of Jesus' resurrection from the dead!

Spiritual Practice for Adults

This month we will explore wonder through faith. Most of the time, we have engaged our faith through moments of wonder. I wonder what it will be like to see wonder through the lens of faith. How might you focus your prayers and service on faith this month? Spend some time with God and journal about what it means to you to be a person of wonder-filled faith.

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Come Together

Come Together

Supplies: *Class Pack, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, Wonder Box, green cloth, battery-operated candle, bedtime lovey (a stuffed toy a child might sleep with)*

Prepare Ahead: *Set up a Wonder Table (see p. 3) with a green cloth, battery-operated candle, and a Wonder Box (see p. 3). Display the Unit 3 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 9 & 16) and Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 21). Place the bedtime lovey inside the Wonder Box.*

- Point to the Unit 3 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 21), and invite the children to wonder about what the word *wonder* means.
- Invite the kids to join you in a circle.

SAY: This month we are talking about stories from Jesus' life. Today, we will hear about a little girl who was healed by Jesus.

- In this curriculum, we recommend reading stories from the *Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook*. Allow an elementary-age child to read the story, "Jairus's Daughter" (pp. 220–1), from the storybook.

PRAY: Dear God, thank you for loving everyone. Help us find ways to include everyone in our church, our schools, and in our community. Amen.

Jairus's Daughter – Preschool

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Jairus's Daughter" (Reproducible 13A) for each child.*

- Invite the preschoolers to use crayons to color the picture.

SAY: Jesus went from place to place healing people.

Match the Pictures – Younger Elementary

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons or markers*

Prepare: *Photocopy "Match the Pictures" (Reproducible 13B) for each child.*

- Hand out a copy of "Match the Pictures" to each child.
- Direct the kids to look over the page from Reproducible 13B.

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SAY: Today's Bible story tells us about a girl who was sick and looked dead. But Jesus healed her and told her to wake up! Think about the other stories we've learned this month. Match the stories we've been learning with the pictures on the page.

- Invite the kids to share their answers with one another.

Scrambled Words – Older Elementary

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, pencils, graph paper*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Scrambled Words" (Reproducible 13C) for each child.*

- Hand out a copy of "Scrambled Words" to each kid.

SAY: We've been learning Bible stories about Jesus healing others. In many of the stories, someone helps bring a friend or family member to Jesus to receive healing. Unscramble the letters to find the helpers. Then use the numbered boxes to solve a final clue at the bottom of the page.

- Have the kids unscramble the words, working together if needed.
- Invite the kids to share their answers with the whole class.

February Stars and Constellations – All Ages

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "February Stars and Constellations" (Reproducible 13E) for each child.*

- Invite the kids to look over the star pictures on the page.

ASK: Do you recognize any of the star pictures on the page?

- This sheet shows some of the same stars and constellations that can be seen throughout the year. Use this opportunity to see if any kids in your class have tried to find star pictures in the sky.

SAY: Stars in the sky change each season. But when you face North, you can see constellations and star pictures that are in the sky throughout the year! Face North and try to find these star pictures. Finding the Big Dipper is a good place to start.

- Point to the Big Dipper on the star chart.

SAY: At this time of year, you will find the Big Dipper high in the Northern Sky after sunset. As the night goes on, the Big Dipper will move West.

SAY: Looking at stars gives me a sense of WONDER!

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Wonder Time

Interactive Bible Story

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Jairus's Daughter" (Reproducible 13F) for each child.*

- Invite several readers to take turns reading the story one section at a time.

SAY: Jairus asked Jesus to help his daughter. Jairus thought his daughter was dead, but Jesus knew she just looked like she was dead. Jesus healed her and told her to get up, and he told her parents to make her a snack.

Share a Story

Supplies: *Celebrate Wonder DVD, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, TV, DVD player*

- Invite the children to join you, sitting in a circle on the floor.
- Watch the Session 13 video (Celebrate Wonder DVD).

Wonder with Me

Supplies: *Class Pack, Wonder Box, scissors*

Prepare Ahead: *Lay out the Wonder Story Mat for Unit 3 (Class Pack—pp. 11 & 14). Cut out the remaining Bible story figure (Class Pack—p. 3), if not already done.*

- Place the Wonder Box on the Unit 3 Wonder Story Mat.
- Show the children the Unit 3 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 21).

SAY: The definition for *wonder* is to be curious and explore the mystery of God. The people who witnessed the miracles Jesus performed were filled with wonder. How was Jesus able to heal people who were sick? We can be full of wonder about Jesus, God, the Bible, faith, and lots of other things!

- Point to the Wonder Story Mat.

WONDER together:

  - ❍ Why do you think Jesus didn't want anyone to know about the miracle he did?
  - ❍ What do you think the little girl ate after she woke up?

- Place the figure with the words "Sometimes it is hard to have faith. . . ." on the Wonder Story Mat, near the picture of Jesus watching the little girl.

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- Read the words on the figure to the kids and wonder together.
- Open the Wonder Box to reveal the bedtime lovey (stuffed animal/toy).

WONDER: The little girl was asleep. What helps you sleep at night?

Experience Wonder

Story Matching: Bible Knowledge

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, pencils, crayons, large sheet of paper, marker, a way to hang the sheet of paper on the wall of your classroom*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Story Matching" (Reproducible 13D) for each child.*

- Invite the kids to work in pairs (younger kids with older kids). Have the pairs follow the directions on the page.
- Invite the kids to make a big list on a large sheet of paper. Encourage everyone to write on the list the miraculous healings they can remember Jesus performed.

ASK: What did Jesus do in today's Bible story? Do any of the words on our list relate to today's Bible story?

- Invite the kids to write down a sentence (or draw a picture) of something they learned from today's Bible story.

Examine the Bible Verse

SAY: Our Unit 3 Bible verse is Luke 5:26. Find it in your Bibles.

ASK: Is the Book of Luke in the Old or New Testament? *(New)* Where is Luke located in the New Testament? *(third book)* In what chapter of Luke is our verse located? *(5)* What is the verse number? *(26)*

- Gather the kids around the Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 9 & 16). Read it together.
- Have the kids say the Bible verse with you.

ASK: What is the reference for our verse? *(Luke 5:26)*

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Peaceful Place

Supplies: *Leader Guide—p. 115, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, book: "Bear Feels Sick" by Karma Wilson, crayons, pretend medical play toys*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy the Unit 3 Faith Word coloring sheet (Leader Guide—p. 115) for each child.*

- Assist the children, as needed, as they interact with the items provided.
- Invite the children to make get well cards for people on the church's prayer list.
- Encourage the children to color the Unit 3 Faith Word page.

Tip: *All of the supplies/activities suggested for the Peaceful Place are optional.*

Go in Peace

Spiritual Practice – Exploring Wonder Through Faith

SAY: Spiritual practice is something we do to help us connect to God. This month we are exploring *wonder,* to be curious and explore the mystery of God. We are hearing stories about the people that Jesus healed. Today a sick little girl was healed by Jesus.

- Guide the children through a spiritual practice:
    - ❍ **SAY:** We're going to do a body prayer.
    - ❍ **PRAY:** Christ be with us. *(Spread out your arms.)*
      Christ before us. *(Place your arms in front of your body.)*
      Christ behind us. *(Turn around.)*
      Christ in us. *(Place your hands on your chest.)* Amen.

PRAY: Dear God, thank you for giving us curiosity and wonder to learn more about you and how you work in our world. Amen.

- Bless the children before they leave. Touch each child as you say this blessing: "May you be full of wonder your whole life through. Amen."

Family Spiritual Practice

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy Reproducibles 13F–13G for each child.*

SAY: Let's take a look at your Take-Home Pages *(Reproducibles 13F–13G).* Ask your family to read the Bible story and participate in this week's spiritual practice with you. There's an extra activity for you to do sometime this week.

- Send home a copy of the Take-Home Pages with each child.

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Supplemental Activities

Preschoolers – Asleep-and-Awake Game

SAY: The little girl was sick and in a very deep sleep, but Jesus healed her. Let's pretend to be asleep when I turn the lights off and awake when I turn the lights on.

- Invite the children to play the game until everyone is ready to move on. Fake snoring is encouraged!

Early and Older Elementary – Learning Self-care

Supplies: *CEB Bible, crayons, a collection of items to relieve stress (for example: stress balls, pillows, balls of play dough, fidget spinners, and coloring books), a timer*

SAY: We've been learning about all the wonderful work Jesus did in his ministry with others. When we read the stories, we feel like Jesus was around other people all the time. But that's not quite true.

- Have a volunteer find Mark 1:35-38 in a *Common English Bible*.
- Invite the volunteer to read the Bible passage out loud.

ASK: What does the Bible passage tell us?

SAY: Jesus felt the need to get up early in the morning. He went somewhere quiet and prayed to God. The time Jesus spent alone helped him care for others.

- Place the stress-relief items on the table.
- Place additional reproducible pages, crayons, and colored pencils on the table.
- Invite the kids in your class to look at the items, but instruct them not to touch the items until you say it's okay.

ASK: Would any of these items help you have a few quiet moments?

- Set the timer for five or six minutes. As the timer runs, invite the kids to be quiet. During the quiet time, invite the kids to color one of the additional reproducible pages you copied earlier.
- As the kids color, invite them to pass the other stress-relief items around the table.
- After the time ends, brainstorm some ideas for finding a time of quiet this week.

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Intergenerational Activity – Bible Quiz

Supplies: *large sheet of paper or markerboard, markers, coin*

- Divide the class into two teams. Have a good mix of ages on each team. Flip a coin to see which team will answer questions first.
- Ask the first team a Bible question (below). If the team gets the question right, they get a point. If they get the question wrong, they do not get a point. Turn to the other team for the next question. Mark points on the large sheet of paper.
- After the class has answered about half of the questions below, read these words:

SAY: Rule change! Now questions are worth TWO points!

- Continue play. If you run out of questions, come up with your own. You may also invite the opposite team to ask questions.

SAY: During the game, I changed the rules. When Jesus healed people, he used the power of God to "change the rules." Today Jesus even changes "the rules" about life and death!

- Use these questions below for the Bible Quiz:
    - ❍ What is the name of the Savior? *(Jesus)*
    - ❍ Did people in Nazareth (Jesus' hometown) believe he was the Savior? *(No, they chased him out of the town.)*
    - ❍ Who told Mary she would have a baby? *(angel, Gabriel)*
    - ❍ Who was going to have a baby besides Mary? *(Elizabeth)*
    - ❍ In what town was Jesus born? *(Bethlehem)*
    - ❍ Why couldn't Mary and Joseph find Jesus when he was twelve? *(Jesus was in the temple, talking to the teachers.)*
    - ❍ How long did Jesus spend in the desert? *(forty days)*
    - ❍ When four men carried another man on a mat, how did they get the man into the house to be healed? *(through a hole in the roof)*
    - ❍ Did Jesus have to touch a person to heal them? *(No. In one story, he did not even go to see the person, but the person was healed.)*
    - ❍ Who was the first person we heard about Jesus healing? *(Simon Peter's mother-in-law)*
    - ❍ Was Jesus willing to heal people on the Sabbath? *(Yes!)*
    - ❍ Who baptized Jesus? *(John)*

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CELEBRATE WONDER® Celebration Chart

Place this chart on your refrigerator, kitchen table, or in an easy-to-access place. Throughout the week, have your child mark a space each time he or she completes an item on the chart. When a vertical, horizontal, or diagonal line is completed, celebrate together!

CELEBRATE				
I made peace after a fight.	*I tried to see someone else's view.*	*I showed peace.*	*I prayed for peace.*	*I was kind to a family member.*
I wondered about something.	*I noticed awe in nature.*	*I asked a hard question.*	*I saw God working in the world.*	*I learned something new.*
I trusted God.	*I was trustworthy today.*	*Free Celebration!*	*I shared something important with a friend or family member.*	*I trusted in God's love.*
I prayed.	*I spent time with my Bible.*	*I wondered about a Bible story.*	*I talked about a Bible story.*	*I learned a new Bible story.*
I played with a new friend.	*I went outside.*	*I cooked something.*	*I saw God in a friend.*	*I helped someone in my family.*

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Celebrate Wonder Family Letter

Celebrating Advent with Kids

Waiting can be terribly difficult for any one of us. Throw in the commercialization of Christmas, and waiting can become extremely challenging for children. It can create anxiety and exhaustion for the whole family! How can we help cultivate a spiritual practice of waiting with our children during this season of Advent? Here are some ideas that might help us engage our children appropriately and joyfully in this beautiful liturgical season.

Give yourself time for quiet theological reflection.

Your children are watching your example. If you are stressed out, exhausted, and feeling Grinchy, they will learn that this is how one prepares for Christmas. Together, create a quiet space. You can even make an Advent wreath together for this special place. Each day, light the candles on your wreath and tell your child that this light reminds us of God's love. Then, read from a *CEB Bible* or the *Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook* and pray. This ritual of self-care and theological reflection will show your children that part of what it means to be a child of God is loving yourself enough to tend to your soul.

Explain to your children what Advent is.

SAY: Advent is when all of Jesus' followers practice waiting. For about four weeks, everyone waits together for Christmas. Many churches celebrate together each Sunday while they reflect on hope, love, joy, and peace. Many have an Advent wreath they light each Sunday to guide them through the time of waiting like a countdown clock. No matter what people do to prepare for Jesus' birth, it is all done with a spirit of waiting. While we wait, we learn to love like God loves.

ASK: Why do you think we need to practice waiting? What can we do together to prepare for Christmas? *(There are no right or wrong answers.)*

Attend worship services together.

Advent is a wonderful time to teach children how to be a part of the congregation. The rituals engage all ages because each week has a Faith Word and an explanation about the theological significance of that word. They will begin connecting what you are doing in your home with the greater community of believers.

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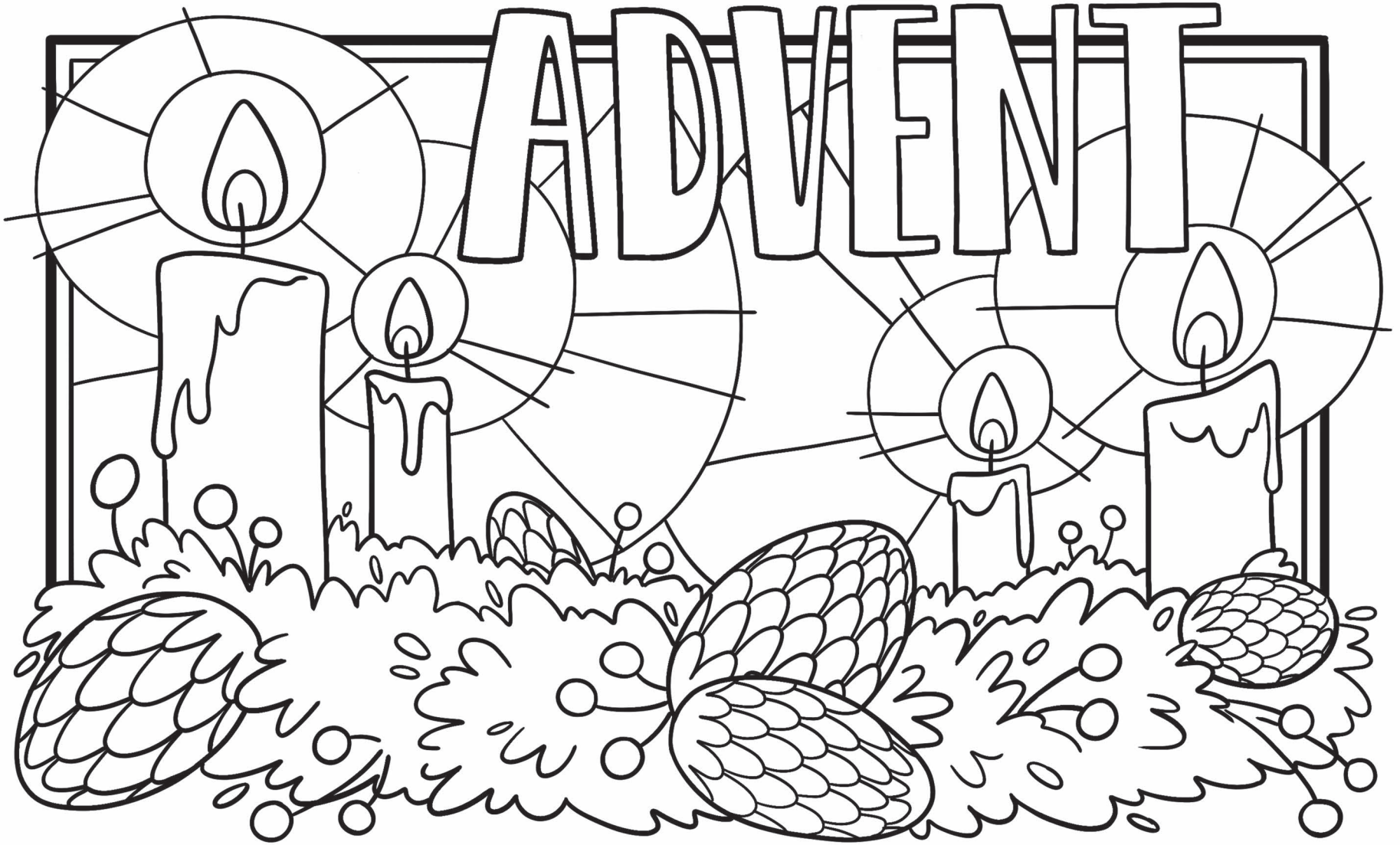
CELEBRATE WONDER®

Faith Word—Unit 1



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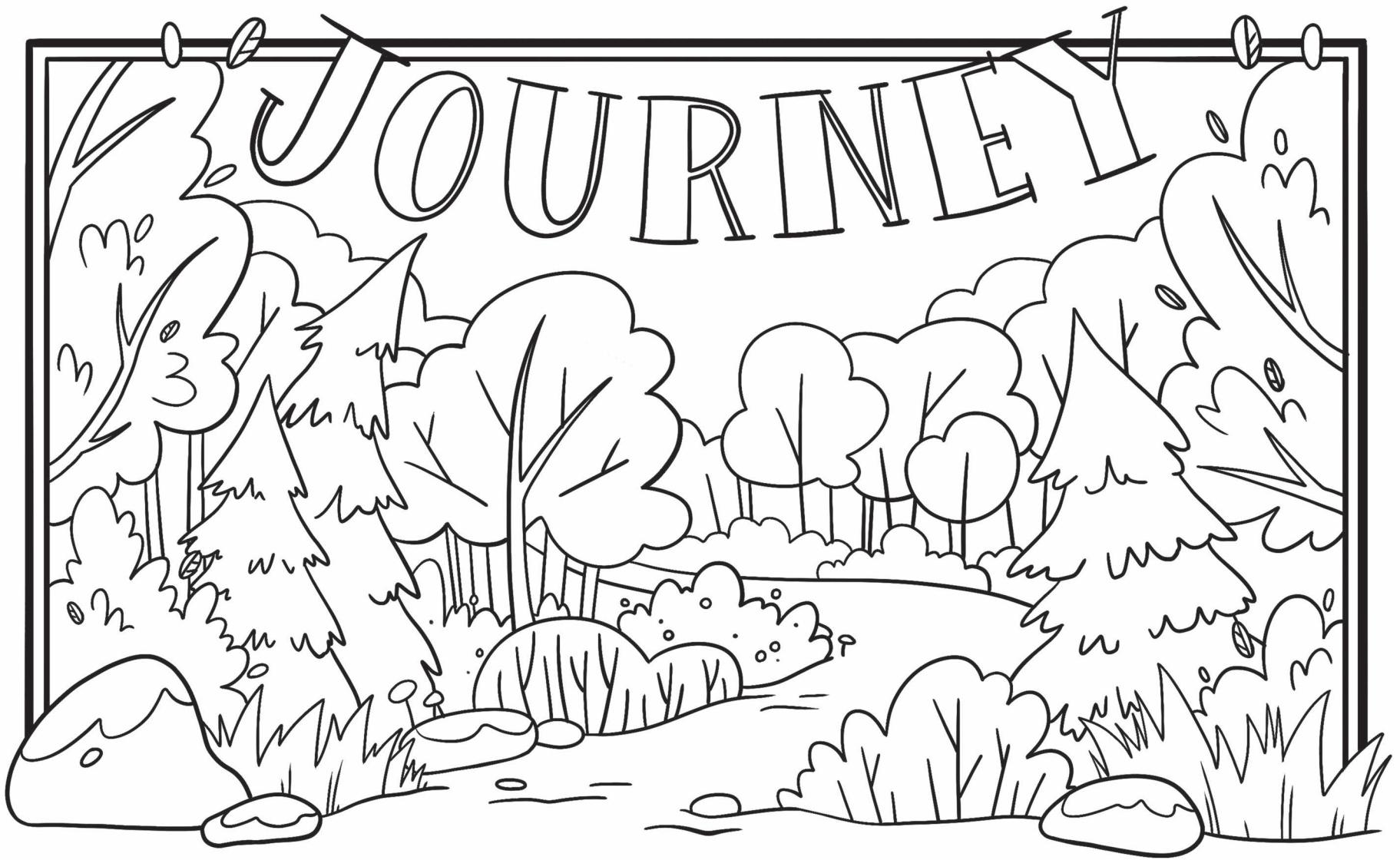
CELEBRATE WONDER®

Faith Word—Unit 2



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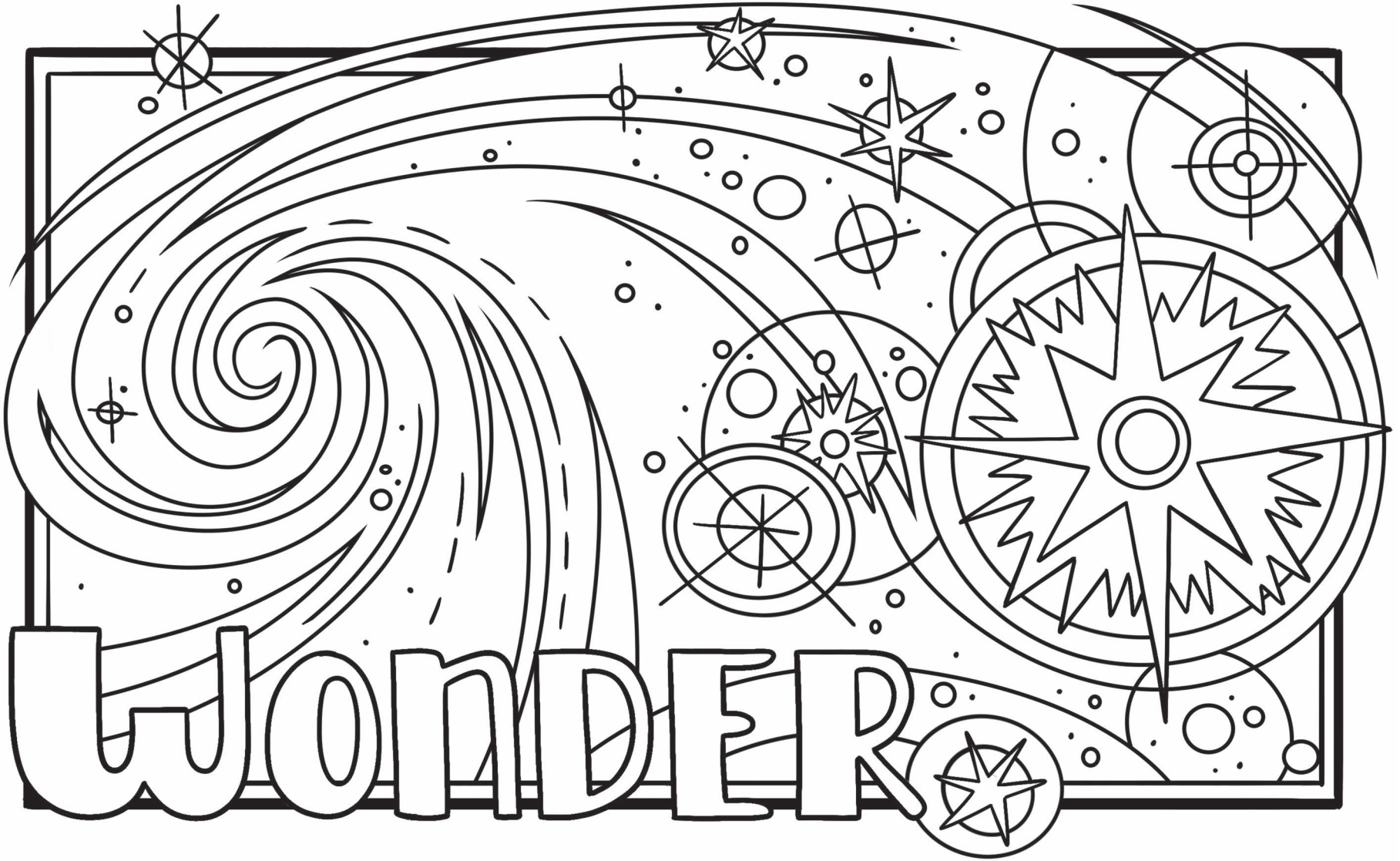
CELEBRATE WONDER®

Faith Word—Unit 3



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Using This Kit in a One-Room Ministry

Everything you need to lead faith formation with all ages in one classroom is found in this Kit.

Each week start by reviewing the session. Read the "Prepare to Wonder" section and do the spiritual practice for adults. This background information helps you navigate any questions your class may have. The spiritual practice helps prepare your heart for the coming class time.

When your class gathers, start by inviting the children into the classroom to mark their attendance on the Attendance Chart (Class Pack). Tell the children what Faith Word they will learn about that week. Let the children choose to do something from the Peaceful Place while you wait to start.

When you are ready to begin, invite all the children to join you to read the story from the *Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook*. Then guide the preschoolers to do the coloring page, the younger-elementary kids to do their reproducible, and the older-elementary kids to do their reproducible. There is also always one activity everyone can do together. You may choose to do this instead of or in addition to the reproducible activities.

Next, your whole class will participate in an interactive retelling of the Bible story, watch the session's video from the *Celebrate Wonder DVD,* and wonder together. You will use the Wonder Story Mat (Class Pack), Faith Word Poster (Class Pack), and Wonder Box (see p. 3) during this time.

Then your class will respond to the story. There are activities to choose from: an all-ages activity, the Peaceful Place, and supplemental activities.

Finally, you will gather the group back together to participate in a spiritual practice and a blessing. You will send home the Take-Home Reproducible that has a retelling of the week's Bible story, a spiritual practice for the family to do together that week, and a pen-and-paper activity that each child can do on her or his own that week.

We have also included supplemental activities—one for preschoolers, one for early-elementary kids, one for older-elementary kids, and one for intergenerational groups. If your group leans more heavily with one of these ages, you are welcome to include one of these activities in your session.

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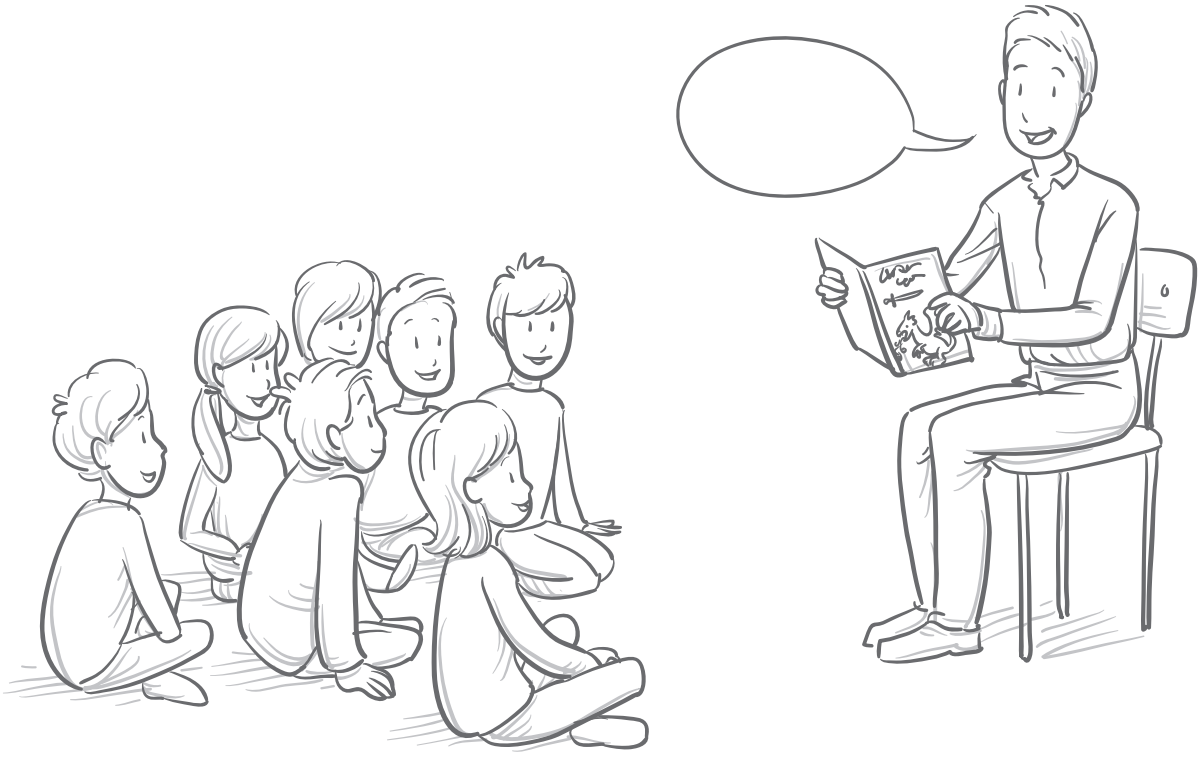
Using This Kit in a One-Room Ministry

You know your kids best. You know your volunteers best.

Some groups prefer to have more time to work alone, and some prefer to have more time to work together.

Some volunteers want to be able to choose their own activities, and some want you to have worked all of that out before they enter the room to lead the session. The most important part of ministry is connecting with one another as you grow together in God's love.



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Using This Kit in an Age-Graded Ministry

Everything you need to lead faith formation with each age group in their own space is found in this Kit.

Each week start by reviewing the session. Read the "Prepare to Wonder" section and do the spiritual practice for adults. This background information helps you navigate any questions your class may have. The spiritual practice helps prepare your heart for the coming class time. Include this page in the packet you prepare for each volunteer.

Preschool Groups

Start by inviting the children into their classrooms to mark their attendance on the Attendance Chart (Class Pack). Tell the children what Faith Word they will learn that week. Let the children choose to do something from the Peaceful Place while you wait to start.

When you are ready to begin, invite all of the children to join you to read the story from the *Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook*. Then guide the preschoolers to do the coloring page. Next, your class will listen to an interactive retelling of the Bible story, watch the session's video from the *Celebrate Wonder DVD,* and wonder together. You will use the Wonder Story Mat (Class Pack), Faith Word Poster (Class Pack), and Wonder Box (see p. 3) during this time.

Then your class will respond to the story. There are activities to choose from: an any-ages activity, the Peaceful Place, and the supplemental activity for preschoolers. Choose one activity for everyone to do together, and then allow the children to play in the Peaceful Place.

Early Elementary Groups

Start by inviting the children into their classrooms to mark their attendance on the Attendance Chart (Class Pack). Tell the children what Faith Word they will learn that week. Let the children choose to do something from the Peaceful Place while you wait to start.

When you are ready to begin, invite all of the children to join you to read the story from the *Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook*. Then invite the children to do the early-elementary reproducible page. There is also always one Come Together activity that you can choose to include. You may choose to do this instead of or in addition to the reproducible page.

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Using This Kit in an Age-Graded Ministry

Next, your class will read an interactive retelling of the Bible story, watch the session's video from the *Celebrate Wonder DVD,* and wonder together. You will use the Wonder Story Mat (Class Pack), Faith Word Poster (Class Pack), and Wonder Box (see p. 3) during this time.

Then your class will respond to the story. There are activities to choose from: an any-ages activity, the Peaceful Place, and the early-elementary supplemental activity. Choose one activity for everyone to do together and then allow the children to play in the Peaceful Place.

Older Elementary Groups

Start by inviting the children into their classrooms to mark their attendance on the Attendance Chart (Class Pack). Tell the children what Faith Word they will learn that week. Let the children choose to do something from the Peaceful Place while you wait to start.

When you are ready to begin, invite the children to do the older-elementary reproducible page. Do the all-ages Come Together activity in addition to the reproducible page.

Next, your class will perform the interactive retelling of the Bible story, watch the session's video from the *Celebrate Wonder DVD,* and wonder together. You will use the Wonder Story Mat (Class Pack), Faith Word Poster (Class Pack), and Wonder Box (see p. 3) during this time.

Then your class will respond to the story. There are activities to choose from: an any-ages activity, the Peaceful Place, and the older-elementary supplemental activity. Choose one activity for everyone to do together and then allow the children to play in the Peaceful Place.

Everyone will end their time together this way:

Finally, you will gather the group back together to participate in a spiritual practice and a blessing. You will send home the Take-Home Reproducible that has a retelling of the week's Bible story, something for the family to do together that week, and a pen-and-paper activity that each child can do on his or her own that week.

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Using This Kit with Large and Small Groups

Start with the Large Group Time:

1. Everyone will watch the session's video from the DVD.
2. Wonder together using the unit's Wonder Story Mat and Faith Word Poster found in the Class Pack. Show the class what is in the Wonder Box and ask them what that might have to do with this week's story.
3. Send the kids to their small groups.

Small Group Time:

1. Invite the children into their classrooms to mark their attendance on the Attendance Chart (Class Pack).
2. Read the Bible story from the *Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook* or the Bible.
3. Do the reproducible that coordinates with the age group of your small group.
4. Do the any-ages activity, the interactive retelling of the Bible story, and then allow the children to play in the Peaceful Place.
5. Gather the group back together to participate in a spiritual practice and a blessing. You will send home the Take-Home Reproducible that has a retelling of the week's Bible story, something for the family to do together that week, and a pen-and-paper activity that each child can do on her or his own that week.

If your Small Group needs more:

We have also included supplemental activities—one for preschoolers, one for early-elementary kids, and one for older-elementary kids. If your group leans more heavily with one of these ages, you are welcome to include one of these activities in your session.

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Using This Kit with Large and Small Groups

The Leader Guide will have to be moved around to create an easy-to-follow plan for your volunteer teachers. The easiest way to do this is to:

1. Open the PDF of the Leader Guide.

1a. If you have Adobe Acrobat Pro, go to File>Save As>Microsoft Word>Word Document. This will turn the PDF into a Word file.

1b. If you don't have Adobe Acrobat Pro, open Microsoft Word. You will select the text from the PDF and then paste it into the Word file.

2. Arrange the activities from each session in the order that makes the most sense for your kids and volunteers.

3. Print your version of the plan and place it in each classroom.

4. Email your version of the plan to your volunteers.

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CELEBRATE WONDER® Using This Kit in Intergenerational Ministry

Everything you need to lead faith formation with all ages, including youth and adults, in one classroom is found in this Kit.

Each week start by reviewing the session. Read the "Prepare to Wonder" section and do the spiritual practice for adults. This background information helps you navigate any questions your class may have. The spiritual practice helps prepare your heart for the coming class time.

When your class gathers, start by inviting everyone into the classroom to mark their attendance on the Attendance Chart (Class Pack). Tell each participant what Faith Word they will learn about that week. Let everyone choose to do something from the Peaceful Place while you wait to start.

When you are ready to begin, invite everyone to join you to read the story from the *Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook*. Then guide everyone to choose one of the reproducible activities to complete. There is also always one activity that everyone can do together. You may choose to do this instead of or in addition to the reproducible activities.

Next, your whole class will participate in the interactive retelling of the Bible story, watch the session's video from the *Celebrate Wonder DVD,* and wonder together. You will use the Wonder Story Mat (Class Pack), Faith Word Poster (Class Pack), and Wonder Box (see p. 3) during this time.

Then your class will respond to the story. There are activities to choose from: an all-ages activity, an intergenerational activity found in the supplemental activities' section, and the Peaceful Place. Your group should do the intergenerational activity, then they can do any of the other activities that work well for your group.

Finally, you will gather the group back together to participate in a spiritual practice and a blessing. You will send home the Take-Home Reproducible that has a retelling of the week's Bible story, something for each family to do together that week, and a pen-and-paper activity that everyone can do on his or her own that week.

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Using This Kit with Your Family at Home

Everything you need to lead faith formation with your family at home is found in this Kit.

Each week start by reviewing the session. Read the "Prepare to Wonder" section and do the spiritual practice for adults. This background information helps you navigate any questions your kids may have. The spiritual practice helps prepare your heart for the time you will spend with your family.

When you are ready to begin, invite everyone to listen as the story is read from the *Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook*. Then guide everyone to choose one of the reproducible activities to complete.

Next, watch the session's video from the *Celebrate Wonder DVD* and wonder together. You will use the Wonder Story Mat (Class Pack), Faith Word Poster (Class Pack), and Wonder Box (see p. 3) during this time.

Then respond to the story. There are activities to choose from: an all-ages activity, any of the supplemental activities, and the Peaceful Place. Your family can do any or all of these.

Finally, you will participate in a spiritual practice and a blessing.

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Using This Kit in Synchronous Virtual Ministry

Everything you need to lead faith formation virtually is found in this Kit.

Each week start by reviewing the session. Read the "Prepare to Wonder" section and do the spiritual practice for adults. This background information helps you navigate any questions your kids may have. The spiritual practice helps prepare your heart for the time you will spend together.

You can:

- Email each family the reproducible pages for the week. Encourage them to print off the pages for each person in their home, or
- Mail each family the reproducible pages for the week.

Invite each family to join you through an online video conference platform, like Zoom. Make sure to email the link the morning of the online gathering to remind your families that you will be hosting a faith-formation event.

When you are ready to begin, invite everyone to listen as the story is read from the *Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook*. Then guide everyone to choose one of the reproducible activities to complete. You can use this time while everyone is working on their reproducible pages to catch up on joys and concerns.

Next, watch the session's video from the *Celebrate Wonder Downloadable DVD* and wonder together. You will use the Wonder Story Mat, Faith Word Poster, and Wonder Box (see p. 3) during this time.

Then respond to the story by doing the suggested art activity in the Peaceful Place and watching a YouTube video of the suggested book being read.

Finally, you lead the families in a spiritual practice and a blessing.

Zoom fatigue is real, AND our families want to stay connected in safe ways. Keep this gathering under thirty minutes, and be sure to use the time to catch up. Everyone is going through collective trauma, and they need you to be present more than they need you to teach them Bible stories.

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Using This Kit in Asynchronous Virtual Ministry

Set up a Google Classroom or a Bitmoji Classroom using the digital assets. Your families will go through the lesson as they are able each week, instead of committing to a virtual meeting time.

Check out what Erica Kozlowski at Central United Methodist is doing in her Bitmoji Sunday School Room:

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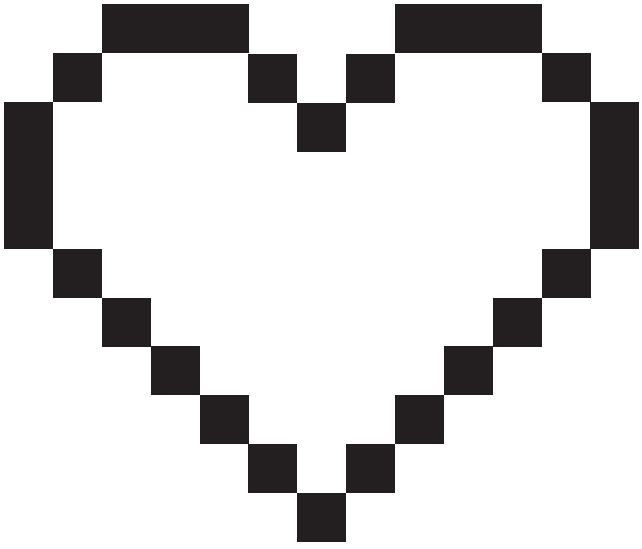

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CELEBRATE WONDER® Classroom Management Tips

- Look over and plan your session before you get to your class.
- Greet the children at the door and involve them immediately in the session.
- Give a five-minute warning when it's time to move to a new activity.
- Give your children leadership roles. Preschoolers can be line leaders to help the children move to the story area. Older children can read the Bible story out loud. Be sure to ask for volunteers. If a child doesn't want to read aloud, let the child pass.
- Check for allergies before serving snacks.
- Always overplan. It's better to run out of time than to run short on a lesson.
- Review the session plan for resources you might need to gather that aren't in the church supplies.
- Gain the kids' attention.
- Ask the kids to look at you. Wait until everyone is looking. It's better for teachers to say, "Point your eyes toward me," and wait for compliance instead of saying, "Stop talking, turn around, and look at me."
- Start with small consequences. When a rule is broken, assign the smallest consequence possible and see if that gets the job done.
- Using appropriate curriculum is a classroom-management strategy.
- Assigning age-appropriate work eliminates the risk of kids not being able to do the activities.
- Rehearse transitions. Most disruptions occur between activities.
- Anticipate problems and be creative in preventing or handling them.
- Turn a problematic situation into a positive learning event.
- Find things to appreciate. Start class by looking for things to delight in.
- Create an inclusive environment.
- Be clear up front about expectations and intentions.
- Use inclusive language.
- Ask for clarification if you're unclear about a kid's question.
- Treat all of your kids with respect and consideration.
- Develop an awareness of barriers to learning (cultural, social, experiential).
- Provide sufficient time and space for kids to gather their thoughts and contribute to discussions.
- Use hand signals and other nonverbal communication.
- Sometimes the behavior of a single child can become so disruptive that you can't teach the session. Get help! If certain children are repeatedly disruptive, add more adults to your group, or ask parents and caregivers for helpful ways to care for and engage their child.

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CELEBRATE WONDER® Registration Page

Child's Name _____

Parent Name(s) _____

Address _____

_____

Phone _____

Child's Birthday _____ Age _____

Child's Brothers and Sisters:

Name _____ Age _____

Name _____ Age _____

Name _____ Age _____

Grandparents or other adults your child sees often and is close to:

_____

_____

Allergies or situations the teacher should know about:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Parent will be at:

_____

_____

_____

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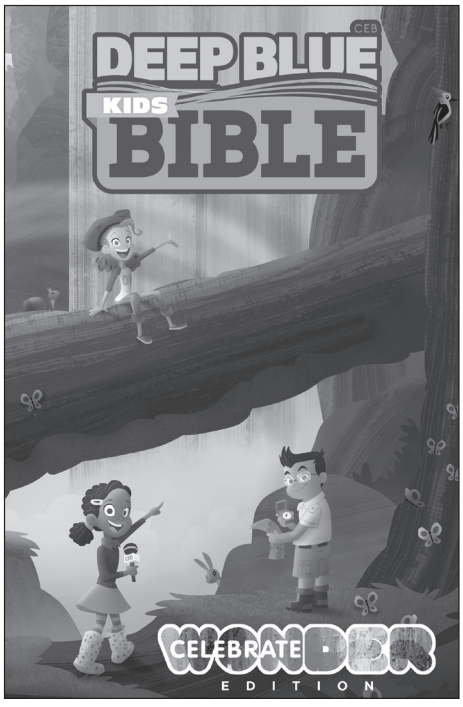

Inspire a deeper curiosity in children to explore the Bible

Deep Blue Kids Bible: Celebrate Wonder Edition is an engaging, interactive Bible that introduces children to three characters—Asia, Edgar, and Kat—who walk children through the Bible to discover what it means in their lives.

It includes four-color icons and illustrations throughout with a wealth of notes, historical facts, book introductions, devotionals, and other interactive elements to capture inquisitive young minds and encourage a thirst for God's timeless message.

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Celebrate Wonder All Ages

Celebrate Wonder All Ages is flexible Christian faith formation for children and their families. Working with children's ministry leaders from all over the US, we adapted our resources to make it easier for you to adapt our resources.

Are you relaunching in-person ministry with children and their families? This is for you.

Are you a one-room Sunday school? This is for you.

Are you doing ministry virtually? This is for you.

No matter what your ministry needs are, **Celebrate Wonder All Ages** makes it easy for you to share God's love with the children in your midst.

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