

Age-Level Overview

| | Open the Bible | Activate Faith |
|------------------|--|---|
| Lower Elementary | <p>SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Story Bibles</p> <p>SUPPLIES: Device with internet access that everyone can see, astronomy resource books (optional): <i>The Christmas Sky</i> by Franklyn M. Branley, Thomas Y. Crowell, New York, 1990. <i>Astronomy in the Bible</i> by Joan Andre Moore, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1981. <i>365 Starry Nights: An Introduction to Astronomy for Every Night of the Year</i> by Chet Raymo, Prentice-Hall, New Jersey, 1982.</p> | <p>SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Story Bibles</p> <p>SUPPLIES: Projector, device with internet access, paper, coloring supplies (be sure to include plenty of dark blue and black crayons or markers for making a night sky)</p> |
| Upper Elementary | <p>SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers</p> <p>SUPPLIES: Baby supplies (bottle, diaper, clothes)</p> | <p>SPARK RESOURCES: None</p> <p>SUPPLIES: Devices with internet access, pens and pencils, animal worksheets (page 65)</p> |
| All Kids | <p>SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Story Bibles, Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers</p> <p>SUPPLIES: None</p> | <p>SPARK RESOURCES: None</p> <p>SUPPLIES: Device with internet access, 12 Days of Joy worksheets (page 67)</p> |



Looking for additional Spark content to further engage kids? Visit www.wearesparkhouse.org to learn more about these options for purchase.

- The Director CD-Rom contains Activity Pages, Coloring Pages, Family Pages, Large Group Openings, and two additional in-class activities for each lesson.
- A Sparkhouse Digital annual subscription gives you access to all content contained in the Director CD-Rom and the Spark Leader Guides, plus administrative tools and other extras.

Workshop Focus: God guides us to Jesus.

Keep these tips in mind as you welcome kids to the workshop and explore the story together.

- Each week, remember to welcome kids to the rotation. Keep in mind that for some kids it may be the first time they are visiting your workshop!
- If kids have heard the story several times during previous weeks, read it again! Kids learn through repetition, and every workshop will explore the Bible story in a slightly different way.
- Remember that the Shepherds are there to support you as they accompany kids each week.

Open the Bible (10 minutes)

Advent and Christmas Storytelling

Set Up: Download pictures of the night sky onto the leader's device and have them ready for kids to look at.

Activity Instructions

Have you ever gone stargazing? There are many things to see in the stars. There are constellations that form pictures. There are shooting stars and planets and asteroids. With special telescopes you can even see nebula, galaxies, and black holes.

For as long as people have been around we've looked at the stars. Many people tried to tell the future from the stars, and stars are often used to show direction. Have you heard of the North Star? It is a star that always stays in one spot in our sky so you can use it to find your way. Show some of the images of the night sky either from the books or on your device during this time.

One part of the Christmas story involves a star. Have you ever heard of the three wise men? They followed one star all the way to Jesus. Let's read about their story in our Spark Story Bible on page 218.

How did the star help the wise men in our story? (It led them to Jesus.) God sends us what we need to find Jesus!

Spark Resources

Spark Story Bibles

Supplies

Device with internet access that everyone can see

Astronomy resource books (optional)

The Christmas Sky by Franklyn M. Branley, Thomas Y.

Crowell, New York, 1990

Astronomy in the Bible by Joan Andre Moore, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1981

365 Starry Nights: An Introduction to Astronomy for Every Night of the Year by Chet Raymo, Prentice-Hall, New Jersey, 1982

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

A Sky Full of Stars

Set Up: Preview and load a few night sky-time lapse videos (mountains, northern lights, prairies, desert, meteor showers, etc.) onto a device that the whole group can see.

Activity Instructions

1. **In today's Bible story, the Wise Men followed a star to find Jesus. People have been using stars to show them the way for thousands of years. They would study the stars to help them figure out where they were—almost like a compass—and they could use the stars to get themselves places. How many of you look at the night sky on a regular basis? How many of you have ever seen the big dipper or a shooting star?**
2. **We're going to watch a few videos of the night sky. They're time lapse videos, which means somebody put their camera out for hours, and then sped up the video they took. I want you to pay attention to what you see in the sky in these videos.** Play the videos.
3. **What things in the sky stayed same in all the time lapse videos?** (*the Milky Way, most had shooting stars.*) **What things were different?** Listen to kids' responses.
4. **With the rest of our time, I want you all to draw a night sky that might look like the one the Wise Men looked at. I'll put up some night sky pictures for you to look at, but you can use your imagination, the Bible story we read, and the videos we watched for inspiration.**
5. If kids finish with a little extra time left, have them share their pictures with the rest of the class. Remind them that stars can lead people to a lot of things, and they led the Wise Men to Baby Jesus.

Spark Resources

Spark Story Bibles

Supplies

Projector

Device with internet access

Paper

Coloring supplies (be sure to include plenty of dark blue and black crayons or markers for making a night sky)

Send (5 minutes)

Wrap Up

Remind the Shepherds to distribute the Family Page for this story if the kids haven't already received them, and come together for Wrap Up.

Let's thank God for the people whom God sends to help us find Jesus. On your star, write the name or draw the picture of a person who has taught you about Jesus. Use the list from Open the Bible to help remind the kids of some of their options.

We are going to hang these stars in our classroom to remind us that God guides us to Jesus during Sunday School.

Spark Resources

Family Pages



Supplies

Paper stars

Hole punch

Ribbon

Markers

Prayer Time

Prepare kids for the prayer by telling them that when you pause, they will say the name of the person they put on their star.

Dear God,

Thank you for sending us guides to help us find Jesus.

(One by one, kids say their guides' names.)

In your name we pray,

Amen

Don't forget to hang up the stars!

Workshop Focus: God came as a fragile baby.

Keep these tips in mind as you welcome kids to the workshop and explore the story together.

- Each week, remember to welcome kids to the rotation. Keep in mind that for some kids it may be the first time they are visiting your workshop!
- If kids have heard the story several times during previous weeks, read it again! Kids learn through repetition, and every workshop will explore the Bible story in a slightly different way.
- Remember that the Shepherds are there to support you as they accompany kids each week.

Open the Bible (10 minutes)

Advent and Christmas Storytelling

Set Up: Invite kids to gather around you for the opening.

Activity Instructions

Welcome to Digital Media and Technology! Today we are going to learn about the Christmas story and make cartoons to illustrate the story.

What do you remember about the Christmas story? Allow the kids to tell you about the Christmas story. Ask follow-up questions and clarify story parts when needed. **That is wonderful! Every year we read the Christmas story in the Bible, and every year we learn something new.**

Let's read Luke 2:1-20 on page 1130 and Matthew 2:1-12 on pages 1058-1059 of our Spark Bibles. Encourage the kids to take turns reading aloud and to use their Spark Bible Stickers.

Spark Resources

Spark Bibles
Spark Bible Stickers

Supplies

Baby supplies (bottle, diaper, clothes)

Today I want you to think about what it means that Jesus was a baby. What are some things we need to take care of a baby? Show kids' the baby-care items you brought. **Babies can't do anything on their own. They rely on others for everything—their food, their warmth, and even their safety. Babies are very fragile. We know that God is powerful and strong, so it was very special that he came to earth as a fragile baby, Jesus.**

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

Busy Babies

Set Up: Print enough worksheets for each kid to have their own. Make sure there are enough devices for groups of 2 or 3.

Activity Instructions

1. **Jesus came into this world as a baby, not a fully-grown adult. What do you all know about newborn babies? Could you just leave a newborn to fend for themselves?** (*No, definitely not.*) **Human babies are pretty vulnerable, aren't they? And they take a while to grow up.**
2. **But what about other types of babies? How long does it take a raccoon to grow up? Or an elephant? Chimpanzee? Kangaroo? Grizzly bear? I want you all to figure that out. In groups, I want you to look up information on other animals and find how they're similar or different to humans.** Suggest animals to look up such as kangaroos, bears, monkeys, wolves, or elephants.
3. Divide the kids into groups of 2 or 3. Pass out animal worksheets and devices. Allow kids time to spread out and fill out their worksheets. When they're done, gather as a full group and have kids present the information they just learned.
4. **Thanks to you, we just learned about how other animals take care of their babies. What are ways you think Mary and Joseph took care of their newborn baby?** Listen to kids' responses. **Why do you think that God gave us Jesus as a newborn instead of an adult?** Listen to kids' responses.
5. **Jesus was vulnerable and fragile when he came into this world. Just like Mary and Joseph loved and took care of Jesus when he was small and vulnerable, God loves and cares about people that are fragile and vulnerable, and those who feel small. What are ways we can show that we love and care about people who feel afraid or alone?** (*Be kind. Stand up to bullies. Compliment people. Offer a smile to someone who looks sad. Be a friend to someone without friends.*)

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

Devices with internet access

Pens and pencils

Animal worksheets (page 65)

Send (5 minutes)

Wrap Up

Remind the Shepherds to distribute the Family Page for this story if the kids haven't already received them, and come together for Wrap Up.

God did something strange and special. God sent a baby named Jesus. But Jesus was no ordinary baby. He was God's son. Babies need a lot of things, but the most important thing they need is love and attention. God loves us, and we love baby Jesus.

Spark Resources
Family Pages



Supplies
None

Prayer Time

Let's sing today's prayer together to the tune of Rock-a-Bye Baby.

**Dear baby Jesus
Asleep on the hay
Thank you for coming
To us in this way.**

**As a baby you need us,
And we need you, too.
So, love us Lord Jesus,
And we'll love you, too.
Amen (spoken)**

Workshop Focus: Jesus brings joy to the world.

Keep these tips in mind as you welcome kids to the workshop and explore the story together.

- Each week, remember to welcome kids to the rotation. Keep in mind that for some kids it may be the first time they are visiting your workshop!
- If kids have heard the story several times during previous weeks, read it again! Kids learn through repetition, and every workshop will explore the Bible story in a slightly different way.
- Remember that the Shepherds are there to support you as they accompany kids each week.

Open the Bible (10 minutes)

Advent and Christmas Storytelling

Activity Instructions

Welcome to Digital Media and Technology! We are going to have a joyful day today because we are going to learn all about the Christmas story. The Christmas story tells of a time of great joy when Jesus was born.

Do you know what the word *joy* means? Accept all answers. **Joy is sort of like being happy, but it is a BIG happy. It is like being so happy that all you can do is smile and laugh! Have you ever been that happy?** Ask the kids to share some times when they have experienced joy.

Joy is an important word during the Christmas season. It describes how happy we are that God sent Jesus. Let's read Jesus Is Born on page 212 of the Spark Story Bible. We can listen for joy in the story. Encourage older children to follow along in Luke 2:1-20 on page 1130 in the Spark Bible. Don't forget the Spark Bible Stickers too!

Spark Resources

Spark Story Bibles
Spark Bibles
Spark Bible Stickers

Supplies

None

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

12 Days of Joy

Set Up: Print off a worksheet for each child. Look up two versions of the song The 12 Days of Christmas—an instrumental version and a version with lyrics—and have these ready to play for the group.

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

Device with internet access

12 Days of Joy worksheets

(page 67)

Activity Instructions

1. **When Jesus was born, he brought a lot into this world. Who do you think he made joyful?** (*His parents, the wise men, the shepherds, the people of Israel.*)
Does Jesus make us joyful? (Yes.)
2. **To honor Jesus's birth, we celebrate Christmas, and part of some Christmas traditions is singing carols. What is your favorite Christmas Carol?** Listen to kids' answers.
3. **Today, we're going to rewrite a Christmas carol to talk about the joys that Jesus gives us. Can anyone guess what song we're going to rewrite? The "12 Days of Christmas!" Has anyone heard that song?** Whether kids say yes or no, play the song on your device so they can remember what it sounds like.
4. Pass out the worksheets and divide your class into groups of 3-5, pairing younger kids with older kids.
5. **Together, I want you to come up with twelve things that make you happy and that you can thank Jesus for. Then put it into the song! Be prepared to sing part of your finished song for the group!**
6. When kids are done writing their versions, have them perform them. If possible, take video of them singing to share on your church website or social media.
7. **Jesus brought a lot of joy into the world when he was born. And he still brings us joy today—look at all the things we can thank him for! This week, I want you to look for ways you can be like Jesus and bring joy into other people's lives.**

Send (5 minutes)

Wrap Up

Remind the Shepherds to distribute the Family Page for this story if the kids haven't already received them, and come together for Wrap Up.

Jesus' birth brought joy to the world. It was a time of great happiness and we celebrate Jesus' birth every Christmas. How can we share our joy with others this Christmas? Listen to kids' ideas.

Spark Resources
Family Pages



Supplies
Song Sheets for "Joy to the World" (page 63)

Prayer Time

For our prayer today, we are going to sing the first and last verses of "Joy to the World" together! Hand out song sheets if desired.

Verse 1

**Joy to the world! the Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven, and heaven, and nature sing.**

Verse 4

**He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders, of His love.**

Joy to the World

Joy to the World

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -
 2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their
 3 No more let sin and sor - row grow nor thorns in -
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the

ceive her king; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him
 songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
 fest the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings
 na - tions prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous -

room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture
 plains re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing
 flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is
 ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his

and heav'n and na - ture sing, and

sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
 found, far as, far as the curse is found.
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

heav'n and na - ture sing,

Animal Name:

Where do they live?

What do they eat?

How many babies do they have at a time?

How big are the newborns?

What are they like when they're newborn?

How does the mom take care of the newborn(s)?

How long do the babies stay with their parents?

Animal Name:

Where do they live?

What do they eat?

How many babies do they have at a time?

How big are the newborns?

What are they like when they're newborn?

How does the mom take care of the newborn(s)?

How long do the babies stay with their parents?

12 Days of Joy

Twelve _____

Eleven _____

Ten _____

Nine _____

Eight _____

Seven _____

Six _____

Five _____

Four _____

Three _____

Two _____, and

A _____