

Today's Suggested Schedule—December 2022, Week 2

Note: This version of the curriculum is designed especially for churches with fewer leaders and kids. You may want to use it if you have just one or two leaders and if you combine all your kids in both Large and Small Group time.

Today's Bible Story: Breath of Heaven (Zechariah/Elizabeth and Gabriel/Mary) • *Luke 1:5-66*

Today's Bottom Line: Anything is possible with God.

Monthly Memory Verse: *Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord.* Luke 2:11 (NirV)

Monthly Virtue: Christmas—Celebrating Jesus, God's greatest gift

Basic Truth: I can trust God no matter what.

PRELUDE: Setting the Tone for the Experience

See the **Getting Ready** pages at the end of this document for a detailed description of what you'll need for today.

In the **Prelude** folder of your curriculum, you'll find a variety of other resources to help you prepare.

SMALL GROUP (15 minutes)

SOCIAL: Providing Time for Fun Interaction

Early Arriver

Opening Activity

LARGE GROUP (35 minutes)

STORY: Communicating God's Truth in Engaging Ways

WORSHIP: Inviting People to Respond to God

Welcome/Opener

Worship ("Joy to the World (Glory to the King)" from *Joy to the World (Glory to the King)* single and "Angels We Have Heard on High" from *A Fancy Yancy Christmas*)

Bible Story

Bottom Line

Prayer

Closer

SMALL GROUP (25 minutes)

GROUPS: Creating a Safe Place to Connect

Bible Story Review: Laundry Day!

Application Activity: Impossible!

Memory Verse Activity: All Wrapped Up

Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss

HOME: Prompting Action Beyond the Experience

Parent Cue Card (Print or Email)

Devotionals for Kids

Parent Cue App

LARGE GROUP: Story (25 minutes) • Worship (10 minutes)

Engage kids' hearts through a dynamic and interactive Bible story, worship, and prayer experience in a Large Group setting.

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Today's Bottom Line: Anything is possible with God.

Monthly Memory Verse: *Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord.* Luke 2:11 (NIRV)

Monthly Virtue: Christmas—Celebrating Jesus, God's greatest gift

Basic Truth: I can trust God no matter what.

Video (Media Package): Theme Loop

Leader enters, carrying the wrapping supplies.

Video (Media Package): Countdown

Video (Media Package): Theme

OPENER

LEADER: "Hi, everyone! Can you believe it? There are just TWO WEEKS until Christmas! I can hardly stand it! Who here LOVES Christmas like I do? (*Pause for response.*)

"At Christmas, we celebrate something really important.

Video (Media Package): Theme Transition to Virtue

"Christmas is about **celebrating Jesus, God's greatest gift!**

Video (Media Package): Virtue Transition to Theme

"I love so many things about this time of year—the fun songs, the twinkly lights, and of course, the presents! The presents remind me that Jesus is the greatest gift of all. And that's why this month, we're getting all wrapped up in Christmas!

Hold up some of the Christmas wrapping paper.

"Today, I've got a fun challenge for you. Who thinks they're the best wrapper—as in wrapping presents? Well, we'll see if you're right! First, let's divide into teams!

Divide everyone up into groups, making sure to partner younger kids with older kids. If you have just a few kids, then teams of two will be great. But you could just as easily do teams of three, four, or five in order to minimize the supplies needed.

“Each team will have a box to wrap, some wrapping paper, tape, and a bow. You’ll have two minutes to wrap your present. Easy-peasy, right? Well . . . not so fast. I forgot to mention one thing. You’ll have to do this with one hand tied behind your back. That’s right. Each person can only use one hand to wrap this present together. But you get to work as a team. So if you make sure to communicate with each other, I bet it will go better than you think!

“When the music stops, you have to stop wrapping, no matter where you are in the process. Then I’ll go through and examine the presents. The team whose present is wrapped the best—without any part of the box showing and WITH a bow on top—will win!

Hand out the paper, tape, bows, and boxes.

“Okay everyone, put a hand behind your back. No cheating—I’ll be watching closely! On your mark, get set, GO!

AUDIO: Fun Christmas music

Set a timer on your phone for two minutes.

Walk around the room, making sure the kids are using only one hand. If it looks like several groups might finish, stop the clock and fade out the music. On the other hand, if no one is remotely close, you can add a bit more time.

“Time’s up! Let’s see who our best wrappers are! Everyone, bring your present up to me.

Take time to examine the presents, pointing out places where the box is exposed or paper is torn, and also commenting on the parts that are wrapped well. Try to make it humorous, not critical. Then select the box that you think was wrapped the best. You can give the winners big candy canes and everyone else small ones (optional).

Collect the leftover supplies and place them with the wrapped boxes in the large prop box.

“So great! Let’s keep the fun going as we worship God together. Everyone, up on your feet!”

WORSHIP

LEADER: “Christmas is when we celebrate Jesus, God’s greatest gift! Nothing can bring us greater joy than this truth which the angel spoke to the shepherds on the night Jesus was born.

SLIDE: Memory Verse

“Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord. (Luke 2:11, NIV)

“When Jesus was born, He brought joy to the world. Let’s celebrate that joy right now!

VIDEO: “Joy to the World (Glory to the King)” / track 1 from Joy to the World (Glory to the King) single

Video (Media Package): Theme Loop

“I love this next song. It reminds me that when Jesus came to Earth, it was such a big deal that angels sang about it. Let’s join in!

AUDIO: “Angels We Have Heard on High”

Video (Media Package): Theme Loop

“So much fun! You can all have a seat.”

BIBLE STORY

SETTING UP THE STORY

LEADER: “As we celebrate the birth of Jesus, it’s so cool to think about everything that led up to Him coming to live here on Earth.

If you’re using a Bible timeline on your wall, you can reference it here as you recap.

“In the beginning, out of love, God made an amazing world. When people turned away from God, the world was broken. But God had a plan to bless the whole world through Abraham’s family, the Israelites. Unfortunately, God’s people kept turning away from God—over and over again.

“Eventually, other nations invaded and captured the Israelites. The Israelites must have wondered if God still loved them and had a plan for them. God spoke through people called prophets who told everyone about the great Rescuer God would send. But then . . . for hundreds of years . . . the Rescuer didn’t come. During that time, people waited for God’s promise to come true. (*Hold up Bible.*)

“This is the point in God’s Story where the stories of the Jewish people in the Old Testament meet the stories of Jesus and the church that we find in the New Testament. We’re about to see how God’s amazing rescue plan played out. But remember, it had been a long wait. At this point, God’s people were being ruled by the Romans.

“Before I share this story with you, let’s take down the lights.”

LIGHTS: Dim (*or turn off the lights and turn on a lamp or lantern, so it’s mostly dark, but not pitch-black*)

Zechariah, Elizabeth, and Mary actors get in their places.

BIG NEWS FOR ZECHARIAH

LEADER: “Now, there was a priest named Zechariah. Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth faithfully served God, but they had no children. They believed they were way past the age that they ever COULD have children.

LIGHTS: Spotlight on Zechariah (*or you could use a high-powered spotlight flashlight instead*)

Zechariah is standing with his hands, palms up, in front of him, like he’s offering something.

“One day, Zechariah was chosen to enter the temple and burn incense before God while his group of priests was serving. As Zechariah stood before the altar, the angel Gabriel appeared before him!

Zechariah puts his hands up in front of his face like he’s blocking the light.

“The angel said . . .

Open the Bible to Luke 1:13-17 (NIRV) and read. (Use the

flashlight or book light to read these Scripture passages.)

“Do not be afraid, Zechariah. Your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will have a child. It will be a boy, and you must call him John. He will be a joy and delight to you. His birth will make many people very glad. He will be important in the sight of the Lord . . . He will prepare the way for the Lord.

“WHOA. Zechariah’s mind must have been reeling.

Zechariah holds his head (hands on either side).

“God was promising a child—and not just any child, but one who would be a powerful leader for God.

“Zechariah asked the angel how this could happen.

Zechariah holds up his hands, palms up, in a questioning pose.

“After all, he was quite an old man and his wife Elizabeth was old, too. Listen to what the angel said.

Open the Bible to Luke 1:19-20 (NIRV) and read.

“I am Gabriel. I serve God. I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. And now you will have to be silent. You will not be able to speak until after John is born. That’s because you did not believe my words. They will come true at the time God has chosen.

“Ouch! Zechariah didn’t have anything to say to this . . . because he couldn’t speak. When he left the temple, the other priests tried to find out why Zechariah had been in there so long, but he could only tell them in gestures—like charades!

Zechariah acts like he’s doing charades.

LIGHTS: Spotlight off

While the spotlight is off, Zechariah moves to Elizabeth’s section. She has her back to the audience, and Zechariah is facing her and the audience.

LIGHTS: Spotlight on Zechariah and Elizabeth

“It must have been a double shock for Elizabeth when Zechariah got home. Not only was he unable to speak, but he had a pretty unbelievable story to share.

Zechariah is doing the charades again.

“Elizabeth must have been overjoyed, though, when God’s words came true and she became pregnant!

Elizabeth turns around, revealing her pregnancy (pillow).

BIG NEWS FOR MARY

LEADER: “Now, Elizabeth and Zechariah’s story wasn’t over, but we need to take a quick detour.

LIGHTS: Spotlight off

“Several days’ journey away, in the town of Nazareth, Elizabeth’s relative Mary was about to receive amazing news, too.

LIGHTS: Spotlight on Mary

Mary is on her knees in a praying pose.

“The angel Gabriel appeared to Mary, just like he had appeared to Zechariah before!

Mary holds up her hands in front of her face to block the light.

“The angel said to Mary . . .

Open the Bible to Luke 1:28 (NIRV) and read.

“The Lord has blessed you in a special way. He is with you.

“Mary was completely shocked! She didn’t understand what the angel was saying. But Gabriel went on.

Open the Bible to Luke 1:30-32 (NIRV) and read.

“Do not be afraid, Mary. God is very pleased with you. You will become pregnant and give birth to a son. You must call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God.

“Mary asked how this could happen.

Mary holds up her hands in a questioning manner.

“Gabriel responded.

Open the Bible to Luke 1:35-37 (NIRV) and read.

“The Holy Spirit will come to you. The power of the Most High God will cover you. So the holy one that is born will be called the Son of God. Your relative Elizabeth will have a child even though she is old. People thought she could not have children. But she has been pregnant for six months now. That’s because what God says will always come true.

“Mary chose to trust God.

Mary bows her head reverently.

“She said . . .

Open the Bible to Luke 1:38 (NIRV) and read.

“I serve the Lord . . . May it happen to me just as you said it would.

"Then the angel left Mary."

LIGHTS: *Spotlight off*

While the spotlight is off, Mary moves over to Elizabeth's spot.

VISITING ELIZABETH

LEADER: "Mary then took a trip to see her cousin Elizabeth. It would have taken days of hard travel, but at last she arrived in the hill country of Judea where Zechariah and Elizabeth lived.

LIGHTS: *Spotlight on Elizabeth and Mary*

"When Mary entered the home of Elizabeth and Zechariah, she called out a greeting to Elizabeth, and the baby inside Elizabeth jumped!

Elizabeth holds her stomach.

"Elizabeth said to Mary . . .

Open the Bible to Luke 1:42-45 (NIRV) and read.

"God has blessed you more than other women. And blessed is the child you will have! But why is God so kind to me? Why has the mother of my Lord come to me? As soon as I heard the sound of your voice, the baby inside me jumped for joy. You are a woman God has blessed. You have believed that the Lord would keep his promises to you!"

Mary and Elizabeth hug.

"Mary knew that God had blessed her in a special way. She stayed with Elizabeth for three months, and then she went home.

LIGHTS: *Spotlight off*

While the spotlight is off, Zechariah moves over to Elizabeth's spot. Mary moves out of the way. Elizabeth picks up the baby doll.

"Soon after that, it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby.

LIGHTS: *Spotlight on Elizabeth and Zechariah*

"Friends and relatives crowded around Elizabeth, Zechariah, and their newborn baby.

Zechariah pretends to hold back the crowds.

"The relatives planned to name the baby Zechariah, after his father. But Elizabeth spoke up and said that the child should be called John.

Elizabeth holds up one hand and shakes her head.

“Everyone turned to Zechariah to hear what he had to say. But of course, Zechariah still couldn’t talk. So he gestured for something to write with.

Zechariah gestures and pretends to write on something.

“Zechariah wrote, ‘His name is John.’ Right away, Zechariah could speak!”

ZECHARIAH: “John! His name is John! Praise God!”

WRAPPING UP THE STORY

LEADER: “Everyone was amazed when they heard what had happened with Zechariah, Elizabeth, and their new son, John. News spread through the whole region as people asked, ‘What is this child going to be?’ (Luke 1:66, NIV)

“Let’s give a big hand to our actors, everyone.

Actors wave and exit, and lights come back up, gradually if possible.

LIGHTS: Normal

“Imagine what it must have been like for Zechariah, Elizabeth, and Mary to get such huge news from an angel! I mean, Mary thought she wasn’t ready for a baby. And Elizabeth thought she was so old that it was impossible. But the truth is . . .

SLIDE: Bottom Line

[Bottom Line] “Anything is possible with God.

“Let’s thank God for doing amazing, impossible things!”

VIDEO: Bible Story

SLIDE: Theme Background

PRAY

LEADER: “Dear God, thank You for showing us through this story that You can do the impossible. There are so many things that can seem impossible in our daily lives, and we forget that we follow a God who can DO the impossible. Help us to **[Basic Truth]** trust You no matter what. Please give us courage and strength to keep going, because we know that anything is possible with You. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.”

CLOSER

LEADER: “At first, it must have seemed impossible to both Elizabeth and Mary that both of them could have a baby. But everything the angel said came true!

SLIDE: Bottom Line

[Bottom Line] “Anything is possible with God. Say that with me.”

LEADER and KIDS: **[Bottom Line]** “Anything is possible with God.”

LEADER: “Of course, the most amazing, most impossible news of all was that Mary would be the mother of Jesus, God’s Son!

SLIDE: God’s Big Story Timeline

SLIDE: Week 2 Timeline Image

If you’re making a timeline of printed images on your wall, take this moment to place today’s timeline image on the clothesline.

“Mary chose to trust God and believe what the angel had said. And Elizabeth and Zechariah’s son grew up to be John the Baptist who prepared the way for Jesus and told others that Jesus was the promised Savior.

Video (Media Package): Theme Loop

“I know that sometimes, things in our lives can seem almost impossible. I remember when . . .

Share a brief, kid-appropriate example of when something seemed impossible to you but God helped you through it.

“God was there for me, even when I was going through that difficult time. Think about how God has done something in YOUR life that helped you or your family through something you thought was impossible. Maybe you had to take a really hard test at school. Or maybe you got really sick and felt awful for days and days. But you made it through, and God was with you the whole time!

“If you ever have to face something that seems impossible to you, what can you do? You can ask God to help you keep going. You can choose to **[Basic Truth] trust God no matter what.**

“Let’s head over to Small Group and talk about how God can do the impossible!”

Dismiss kids to their small groups.

GETTING READY

Here's everything you need to know to get ready for this week.

STORY: Communicating God's Truth in Engaging Ways (25 minutes)

WORSHIP: Inviting People to Respond to God (10 minutes)

1. Opener/Closer

What You Need:

- Leader
- Boxes, one per team (all should be roughly the same size)
- Christmas wrapping paper, one roll or pre-cut square per team
- Tape
- Christmas bows, one per team
- Large prop box
- Leader's phone
- Large candy canes for the winning team and smaller candy canes for everyone else (optional)
- Week 2 Timeline Image printed on cardstock from the LG Assets PDF
- Clothesline and clothespins for the timeline in your room

Music and Sound Effects:

- Upbeat Christmas music to use as kids enter and exit the room
- Fun Christmas music to use during the game

Large Group Visuals:

- Theme Slide
- Virtue Slide
- Theme Background Slide
- Bottom Line Slide
- God's Big Story Timeline Slide
- Week 2 Timeline Image Slide
- Week 2 Timeline Image (printable)

Optional Videos (available for purchase through the 252 Media Package):

- Theme Loop
- Countdown
- Theme
- Theme Transition to Virtue
- Virtue Transition to Theme

What You Do:

- Download and print this week's tech sheet for everyone helping with Large Group.
- Download the slides or optional videos and have them ready to use. If you do not have screen capabilities, you have Orange's permission to enlarge and print the slides on paper.
- Download music from a resource such as iTunes® and have it ready to play.
- *Optional:* Download a countdown video from a royalty-free site. Load it into your presentation software and have it ready to play during the Opener. You could also keep time on a smartphone or watch. *Note: Some presentation software such as ProPresenter® have a countdown clock built into the program that you can overlay on a still image.*

- A 252 Media Package is available for purchase to go along with each curriculum tier. These graphic motion loops are included in the package. For more information, visit Store.ThinkOrange.com.
- Gather the wrapping supplies and put them in the large prop box.

2. Worship

What You Need:

- Leader(s)

Music and Sound Effects:

- “Joy to the World (Glory to the King)” from *Joy to the World (Glory to the King)* single
- “Angels We Have Heard on High” from *A Fancy Yancy Christmas*

Large Group Visuals:

- Memory Verse Slide

What You Do:

- Download all songs and have them ready to use.
- Dance Moves Music Videos and Live Lyrics Videos are available for many Orange Kids Music songs. For more information, visit Store.ThinkOrange.com.
- A 252 Media Package is available for purchase to go along with each curriculum tier. The *Live Loud* faith skills video and the Dance Moves Music Video for the monthly worship song are included in the package. For more information, visit Store.ThinkOrange.com.

3. Bible Story

What You Need:

- Leader
- Three adult or student volunteers to play Zechariah, Elizabeth, and Mary (see “What You Do”)
- Someone to operate the spotlight or flashlight and shine it on the actors as noted in the script
- Bible
- Overhead spotlight(s), or a high-powered spotlight flashlight
- Masking or gaffer’s tape
- Flashlight or book light for the Bible
- Pillow for Elizabeth’s “pregnancy”
- Baby doll

Large Group Visuals:

- Theme Background Slide
- Bottom Line Slide

What You Do:

- Download the slides and have them ready to use. If you do not have screen capabilities, you have Orange’s permission to enlarge and print the slides on paper.
- Recruit three people who can play Zechariah, Elizabeth, and Mary. They won’t have any spoken lines, except for Zechariah at the very end. Make sure they have a copy of the script ahead of time so they know which motions to do during the story. They can be dressed in street clothes, but it would be even better if they could be dressed in all black.
- Mark three locations in the room with tape. If you have the ability to use (or borrow) three spotlights, focus a spotlight in three different spots in the room. If you can’t use spotlights, use a

high-powered flashlight instead; you'll need to recruit someone to aim the flashlight at the actors at the designated times.

- Take time to rehearse the story in advance with the three actors as well as the person running lights.

Video Enhancements for Your Environment

Available for additional purchase at [Store.ThinkOrange.com](https://www.ThinkOrange.com).

FEATURE PRESENTATION: Everything you need to pull off a dynamic video storytelling experience, including video Bible presentations to complement 252 Kids and 252 Preteen curriculum.

Our Large Group scripts are interchangeable with these videos so you can plug and play the way you need to each week.

For 252 Kids (kindergarten through 3rd grade):

- In *StoryLab*, two inquisitive young Hosts invite kids to engage with the month's Virtue, setting up a simple and direct telling of the Bible story by a professional Storyteller.

For 252 Preteen (4th and 5th grade):

- In *The So & So Show*, two Hosts and a Communicator walk you through a contemporary and comedic presentation of the Bible story. This YouTube-style show sets up the story and also connects it to the weekly Key Question for preteens.

GET REEL: Videos and graphics to enhance your 252 Kids and 252 Preteen curriculum environments. Four videos each month will help kids learn basic faith skills. Use them in your FX, Large Group, or as a promotional piece to show in your adult services:

Discovery—Listen to God's words (HEAR)
Dear God—Dialogue with God (PRAY)
One Thing—Articulate your faith (TALK)
Live Loud—Worship with your life (LIVE)

Additional environment enhancements including:

- Graphic motion loops
- Themed audio transitions
- Virtue and monthly widget promo videos (M.C. Haggis)
- Countdown videos (30 seconds, 60 seconds, and 5 minutes)
- Music videos for original songs that highlight each Virtue
- Retro Reel video to play on your fifth Sunday