

what child is this?

exploring the wonder of ADVENT with **KIDStory**®



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ADVENT | *what child is this?*

What is Advent?

Advent simply means “COMING” in Latin. The season of Advent is the four Sundays leading up to Christmas Day. It prepares our hearts for celebrating the coming of Jesus...the birth of the Christ. In our series “What Child Is This?” we will explore not only why Jesus’ coming mattered to the entire world, but open up conversations about why His coming matters to us as individuals...and even what it means that He will be coming again!

Over the years there are various traditions that families and churches have followed to make the season of Advent meaningful, including creating a wreath, opening a daily calendar, or the weekly lighting of candles. If your family wants to add in some physical tradition to our exploration of Advent, you can go online and find all sorts of different traditions that may be a great fit for your family.

For this devotional, you will see that lighting a candle is incorporated each week. The lighting of candles usually signifies that something important is about to happen. There is a reason to light each new candle, but candles from the previous weeks are lit as well, so as to build anticipation of what is about to happen. If you choose to use something different for your family, or skip this element, simply adjust as is appropriate! No matter how you go about it, memories will be made and Christmas will become more meaningful.

One thing is for sure, regardless of the tradition, the reading of different portions of the biblical account has always been an element of Advent and that’s where we want to help your entire family explore this celebration of Jesus’ coming!

LAST THING... This devotional is meant to be used to the max. Draw, write, cut things out, rip out pages – do whatever it takes to make this time very personal for you, those you live with, extended family, and friends. Our goal is to get everyone to interact with one another and ultimately to hear what God has to say to each of you. Every household looks different, so don’t let that stop you...you can discover all kinds of things about Christmas you may not have known. As God approached His people concerning the coming of His Son, it was said, **“Do not be afraid...”** Enter this Christmas season filled with faith in a God who is passionate about having a relationship with each and every person.

What is KIDStory@Home | *what child is this?*

We recognize your desire to be the spiritual leader in your home, but you may not know where to start. It seems best to rely on the local church leaders to take on this role but quite honestly, you have the greatest influence in your child's life – greater than any church or ministry. We believe what you will find here in KIDStory@Home will revolutionize the way you engage with your children: physically, emotionally and spiritually. We believe God will transform lives as you create a relational learning environment where you and your children can become eye-witnesses and active participants in God's Story and not just distant observers. KIDStory relies on the working of the Holy Spirit as you use Jesus' method of teaching: telling stories, having interactive experiences and meaningful discussions.

These strategies are fun to learn, easy to use and share with others. You will see how it is better to listen rather than lecture ... listen to the Holy Spirit and the responses of your children. Then you can encourage them to also listen and be obedient to God's voice. KIDStory is about God transforming a life, a family and ultimately a community through His Story and His Spirit.

The advantages of KIDStory@Home

KIDStory can create environments where families gather together as:

- Parents take on the spiritual leadership of their children and disciple them
- Families learn and discuss Bible Stories together. which can continue throughout the week
- Environments are being created where there can be open discussion and fun, engaging activities centered on the Bible Story rather than sitting passively
- Families are having their spiritual, social, physical and emotional tanks filled
- Families serve and pray for others in their communities
- Children are given responsibilities and learn to lead
- Children see your faith in action as they hear your highs and lows in following Jesus
- You can invite other children and families to join in, connecting with Jesus and His Story

My Story:

- We are creating a safe environment for everyone to share something personal
- Create an environment that is fun
- Parents and children are engaged, where they are deepening their relationship

God's Story:

- Shares any necessary background info
- Bible stories are kept at a length that allows them to be remembered and retold
- Seeks to involve everyone in the story
- Creates space for the family to choose how the story can be told and retold
- ***You will find extra activities on page 13 this book for each of the four stories***

Let's Connect:

- The video will contain some questions for your entire family to explore together
- Use these questions to help connect God's Story to My Story
- Throughout the week, revisit the questions and move from remembering facts to seeking out what God is doing in your hearts and minds
- ***You will find extra questions on page 16 this book for each of the four stories***

Huddle Up:

- Pray together as a family for each person, parents included
- Allow the content of the story to shape your prayers throughout the week as you reflect back on it

My Story allows everyone to share a personal story that helps connect them to the major theme in God's Story.

Using the video, you'll be able to watch the story told together as a family. If you choose to revisit the story throughout the week, you may choose other means of retelling it through activities, reading or acting.

This manual contains a number of addition questions you can ask over dinner or while driving in the car. Remember that the goal isn't to get any right answer; rather it's to respond to what the Holy Spirit is revealing to each of us in his unique way.

Move the students from remembering facts in the story to what God is doing in their hearts and lives. We want the Spirit to speak to each person for the implication that will be for them specifically.



WEEK 1 | hope

VIDEO SERIES

Join Steve as he explores the promises and prophecies found throughout the Old Testament, and specifically in Isaiah 9:6, to discover that **HOPE** had always been the first step in anticipating the coming of Jesus. But why did He need to come and what would He do when He got here? The many, many promises and prophecies helped paint that picture and sustain the **HOPE** of God's people for a very long time.

Steve will guide your entire family through the simple steps mentioned on page 3.

- My Story – Sharing stories about your personal experiences that connect to today's story.
- God's Story – Exploring what the Bible tells us about a **HOPE** for what's to come.
 - Participating together in an activity or game that helps everyone retell the story, so it sticks and empowers us to share it with others. You can use the Newspaper Template on the next page and let everyone create their own cover story about what they just heard! For extra activities, visit page 13.
- Let's Connect – Sharing what we heard in the story through our head, hearts and hands. For extra questions to help you keep the conversation going, visit page 16.
- Huddle Up – Closing in prayer together as a family, offering thanks and blessings.

CANDLE LIGHTING: Light the first candle for this week. Remember that God gave this dark world **HOPE** as a beacon of light, as they waiting for Jesus to come.

FUN FACT | Did you know that Jesus fulfilled more than 60 major prophecies from the Old Testament and that the New Testament points to more than 270 ripple effects of minor prophecies? The odds of one man doing this are beyond compare! If Jesus had fulfilled just 8 of these prophecies the odds of Him pulling it off would have been something like 1:100,000,000,000,000,000! That means you are 6.9 TRILLION times more likely to be struck by lightning than for one person to fulfill just 8 of the prophecies...and the Gospels record more than 60 being fulfilled!

The Daily News

EXTRA! EXTRA! EXTRA!

THE DAILY NEWS
EXTRA! EXTRA! EXTRA!
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WEEK 2 | faith

VIDEO SERIES

Join Steve as he explores the story of Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth, who are about to get some very unexpected news! How will their responses demonstrate where their **FAITH** lies? After waiting for so long, can they trust what God said will be true...can they hold onto **FAITH** in the promise that the coming Jesus is getting closer than ever before?

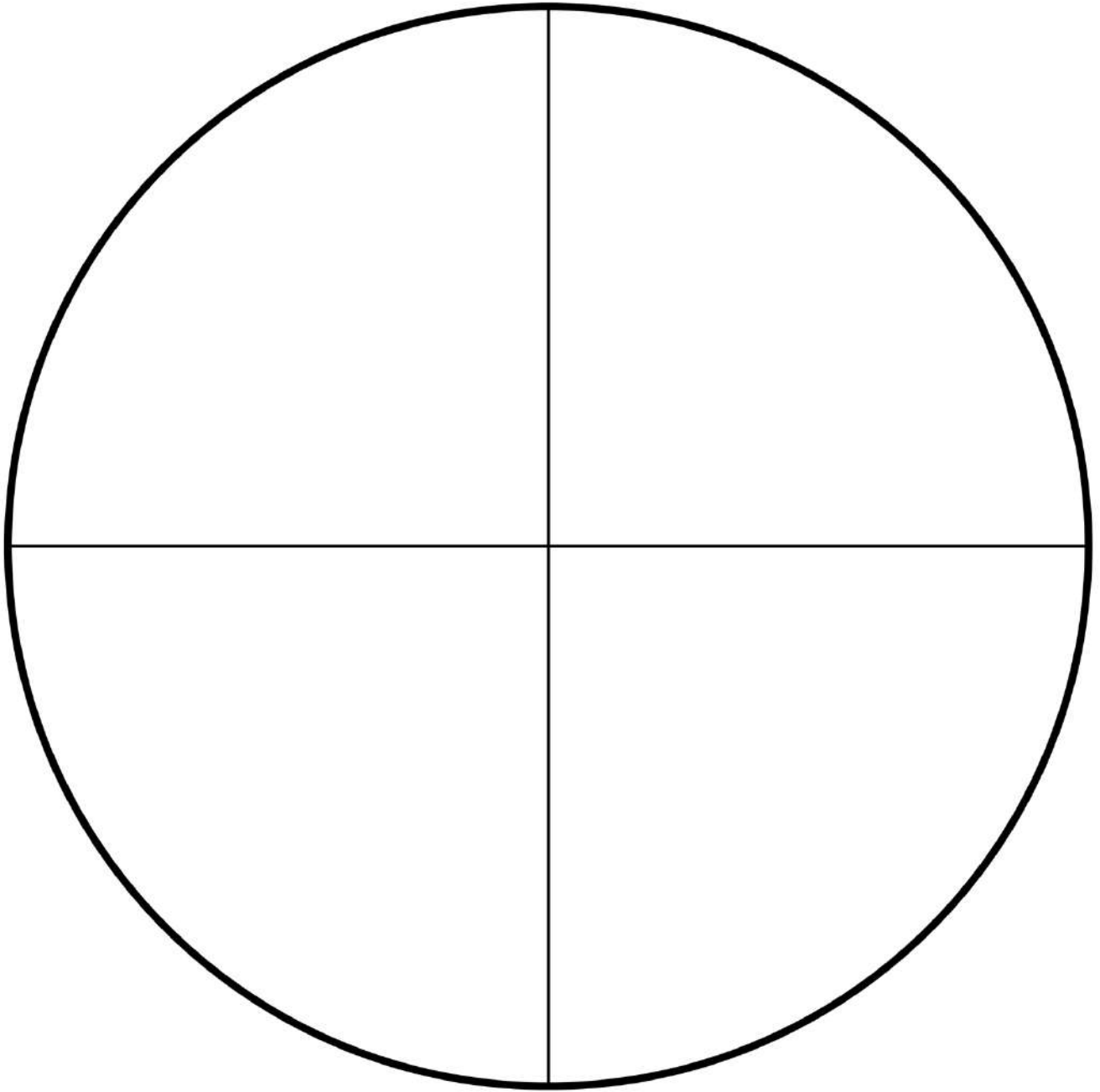
Steve will guide your entire family through the simple steps mentioned on page 3.

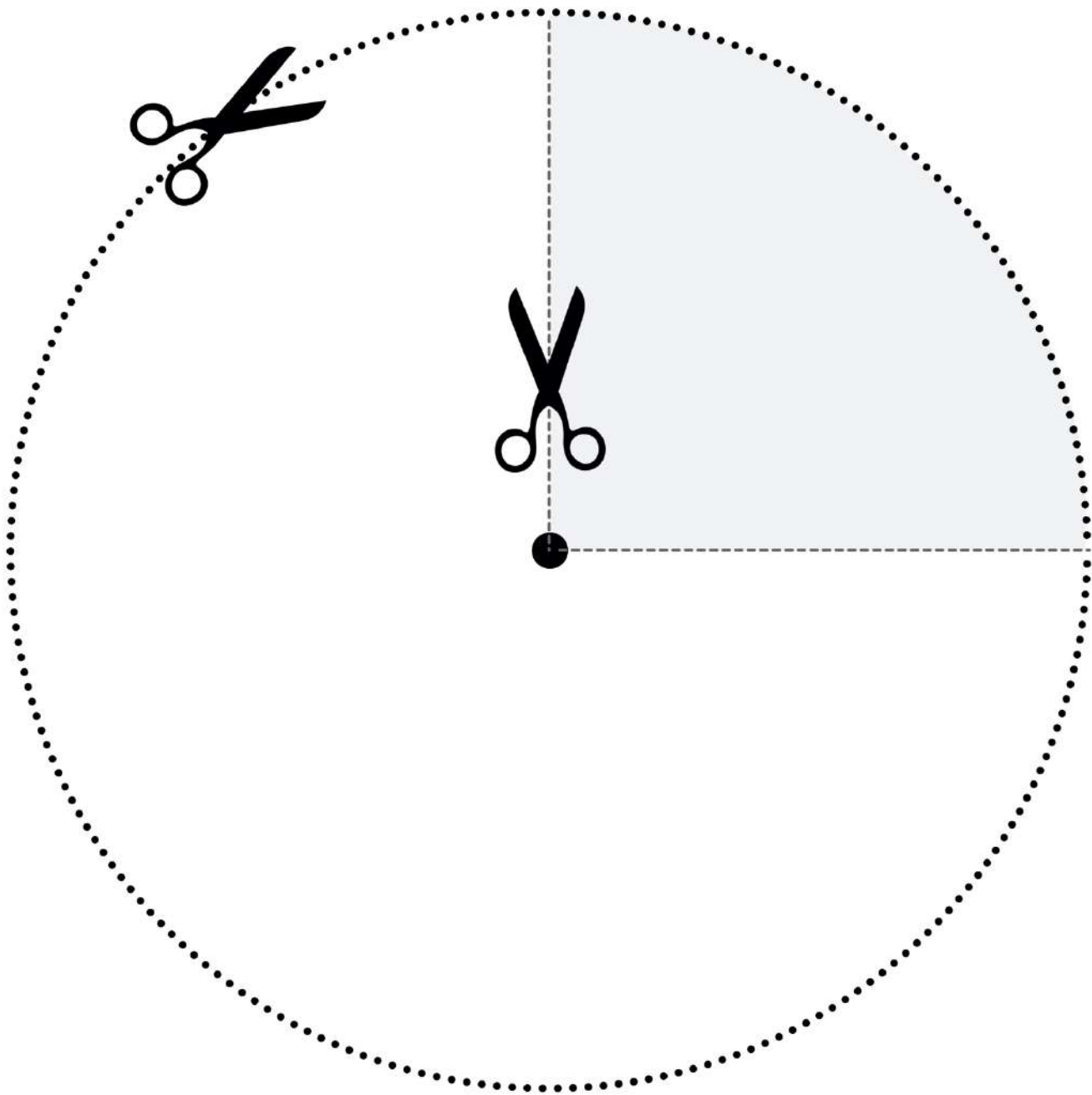
- My Story – Sharing stories about your personal experiences that connect to today's story.
- God's Story – Exploring what the Bible tells us about keeping **FAITH** in what's to come.
 - Participating together in an activity or game that helps everyone retell the story, so it sticks and empowers us to share it with others. You can use the Story Wheel Template on the next two pages and let everyone create 4 pictures that help tell the story they just heard on the first wheel! Cut out the second dotted line wheel, so you can reveal one panel of your story at a time. For extra activities, visit page 13.
- Let's Connect – Sharing what we heard in the story through our head, hearts and hands. For extra questions to help you keep the conversation going, visit page 16.
- Huddle Up – Closing in prayer together as a family, offering thanks and blessings.

CANDLE LIGHTING: Relight the first candle (*HOPE*) and then light the second for this week.

Remember that trusting God's promises is what **FAITH** is all about. It may not look the way we expected, but God is always **FAITHFUL** to His children and He always keeps His promises.

FUN FACT | Did you know that priests like Zechariah used to wear bells and a rope around one ankle, so the people outside could hear them moving? It was forbidden for anyone else to go into the temple, so if the bells stopped for too long, they pulled the rope and got the priest out, in case something happened!







WEEK 3 | joy

VIDEO SERIES

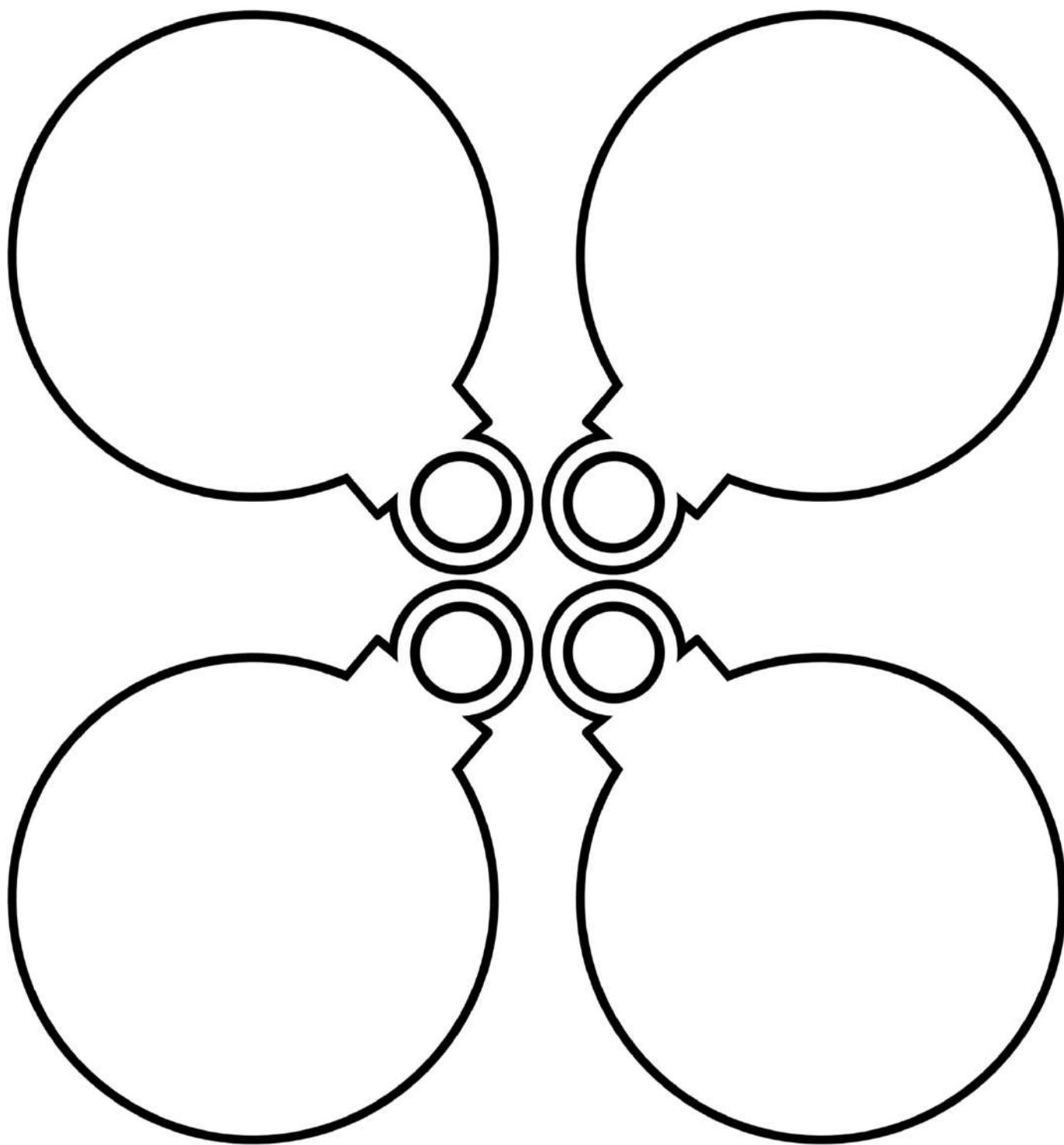
Join Steve as he explores the story of a young woman named Mary that is visited by an angel with news that will bring **JOY** to the entire world. In fact, this young woman is a relative of Zechariah and Elizabeth. When she runs off to tell Elizabeth about the news, someone unexpected responds with great **JOY** too at the coming of Jesus!

Steve will guide your entire family through the simple steps mentioned on page 3.

- My Story – Sharing stories about your personal experiences that connect to today's story.
- God's Story – Exploring what the Bible tells us about the wonderful **JOY** in what's to come.
 - Participating together in an activity or game that helps everyone retell the story, so it sticks and empowers us to share it with others. You can use the Ornament Template on the next page or create your own, decorating them with something special from this year that is worth treasuring in your heart and remembering each year. For extra activities, visit page 13.
- Let's Connect – Sharing what we heard in the story through our head, hearts and hands. For extra questions to help you keep the conversation going, visit page 16.
- Huddle Up – Closing in prayer together as a family, offering thanks and blessings.

CANDLE LIGHTING: Relight the first two candles (*HOPE & FAITH*) and then light the third for this week. Remember Jesus is the light of the world and His coming allows us to experience the true **JOY** of a renewed relationship with God and with everyone around us!

FUN FACT | Did you know that Elizabeth's baby would become John the Baptist and would meet Jesus again when they were both adults? When they met, John recognized Jesus and told everyone, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" Then he baptized Jesus in the Jordan river.





WEEK 4 | peace

VIDEO SERIES

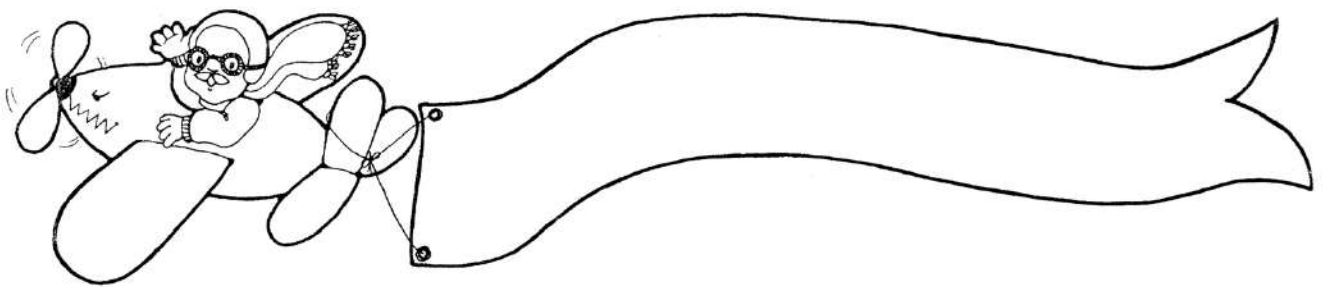
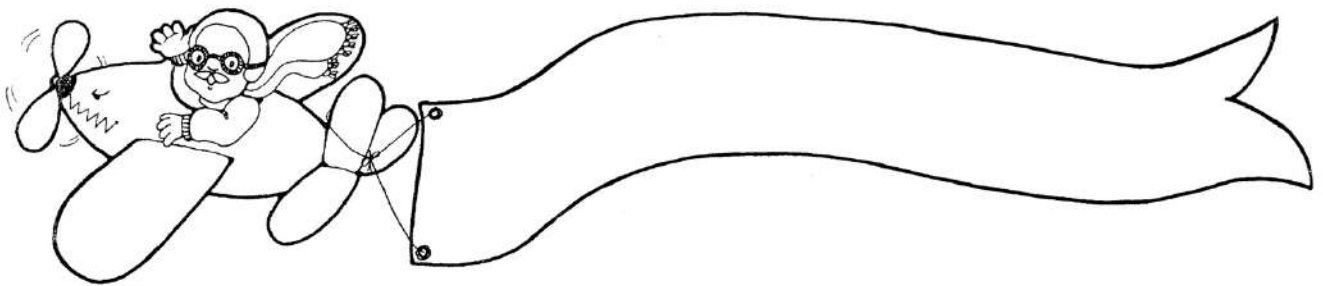
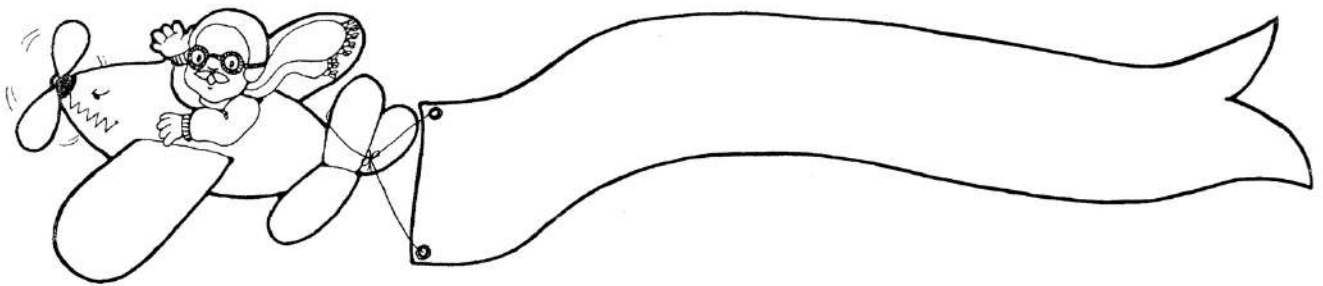
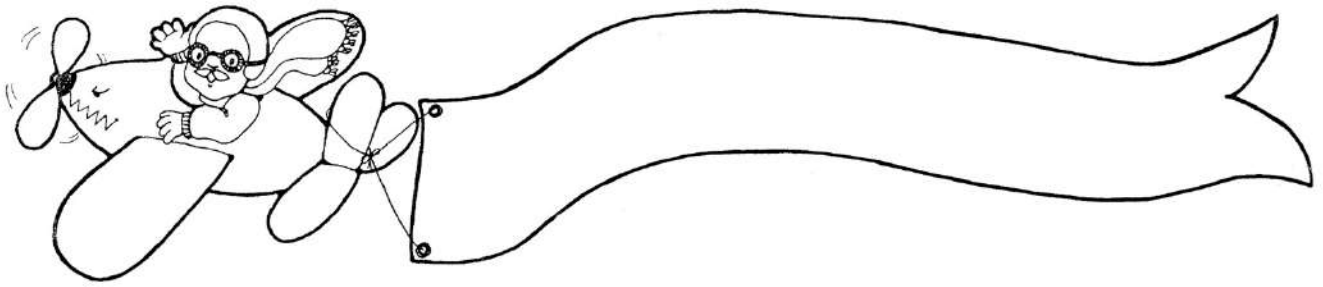
Join Steve as he explores the story of shepherds in the fields, tending their sheep, when the moment arrives and the One that is *coming* has finally *come*! The messenger that visits them seems terrifying, but he has come in **PEACE**...in fact, he has come to announce **PEACE**! It is Jesus' birth that has created a new era and opportunity for **PEACE** on earth.

Steve will guide your entire family through the simple steps mentioned on page 3.

- My Story – Sharing stories about your personal experiences that connect to today's story.
- God's Story – Exploring what the Bible tells us about **PEACE** arriving in a surprisingly small package. This is the true gift of Christmas, a gift for the entire world.
 - Participating together in an activity or game that helps everyone retell the story, so it sticks and empowers us to share it with others. You can use the Skywriters Template on the next page to share your own Good News from the sky, just like the angels. If you had the chance to share Good News, what would you want everyone to know about Jesus this Christmas? For extra activities, visit page 13.
- Let's Connect – Sharing what we heard in the story through our head, hearts and hands. For extra questions to help you keep the conversation going, visit page 16.
- Huddle Up – Closing in prayer together as a family, offering thanks and blessings.

CANDLE LIGHTING: Relight the first three candles (*HOPE, FAITH & JOY*) and then light the final candle for this week. Remember that our **PEACE** with God was gifted to us through Jesus and our **PEACE** in God is because of the gift of His Holy Spirit when Jesus comes into our hearts!

FUN FACT | Did you know that in 330 AD a huge church was built on top of the place in Bethlehem where some people believe the newborn baby Jesus slept in His manger? It is called The Church of the Nativity and you can still visit it.



Additional Activities | *what child is this?*

It is important to retell the Bible story after it's been told. Students engage in the story through retelling activities and it helps them in learning it well enough that they can retell it to someone else. Teaching others creates the greatest degree of retention.

The retell activities should be fun and engage the student in the story. Listed below are various ways to retell a Bible story using varied engagement strategies. One way not listed, if the children have Bibles, is to have them open them and re-read the story, perhaps even using different translations. This can also be done by someone reading the story and the leader asking sequential questions which everyone then answers by looking in the Bible.

ART

- **Drawing:** Students can draw what they saw or what they liked best as the story was being told. Have each student share their pictures with the rest of the group.
- **Group Poster:** Students work together on making a poster that can tell the Bible Story. Allow the students to retell the story by using what they drew on the poster.
- **Story Parts:** Students select a certain scene of the story to draw. Have the students put the story in order by the drawings that have been made and retell it as a group.
- **Comic Strip:** Students fold a piece of paper into 4-8 sections. For each scene or action in the Bible story, students draw a picture or object in each box in the order that it happens in the story.
- **Billboard:** Design a roadside billboard of the Bible story or how you see yourself connecting with it.
- **Pictionary:** Different parts of the story are randomly given out and each student needs to draw what they have been given until someone guesses what it is.
- **Tee Shirt Design:** Have each student design the front of a tee shirt that could tell the major parts of the story.
- **Logo Design:** If there could be just one picture, with no words, that would best tell the Bible story, what would that be? Have the students draw it. You can use this simple picture as a way of reviewing the different Bible stories in weeks to come.
- **Book Cover Design:** Students design and draw their own book cover with words and pictures that best capture the different parts of the Bible story.

DRAMA / PERFORMANCE

- **Act it Out:** Assign different characters of the story to each of the students. Let them practice before actually acting out the story. See if there are one or two students who want to be the person telling the story while the other children act it out.
- **Retell:** through a character's eyes.
- **Create a Song:** Create a song that will retell the Bible Story. You might use a song that the students are very familiar with and then change the words so it retells the Bible story.
- **Partners:** Have the students get into smaller groups of 2-3. Each student will take a turn retelling the story. If someone gets stuck and can't remember the next part, the others in the group can help them.
- **Pantomime:** Divide the group into several smaller groups. Have one act out the first part of the story without using words. The other groups have to say what is happening. Rotate groups and continue until the story is complete
- **Objects:** Give each group 1-3 different objects. The group needs to use the different objects in the retelling of the story. They can add other objects, but must use the 3 objects given to them.
- **Human Slide Show:** Find a big cloth to use as a curtain. Two students will hold it up and then drop it when you tell them. Pick several students to be the characters in the story. For each story segment, while the curtain is up, have the students get into a position as though there were a picture or painting of that part of the story. They are to remain perfectly still and then have the cloth dropped so the rest of the group can see it. Each scene changes as the story is retold.
- **Dance:** Retell the story through a dance with or without music and words.
- **Top Ten:** Have the kids, either as a group or individually, write out the top 10 events of the story.
- **Journals:** The children are given the opportunity to just quietly sit and journal what was in the story and what it meant to them.

Additional Activities | *what child is this?*

GAMES

- **Musical Chairs:** Make a circle of chairs (facing out) for each person in your group (minus one). When the music starts, the students start walking in a clockwise direction around the chairs. When you stop the music, everyone quickly finds a chair. The final person standing shares a portion of the story. No students are eliminated. No chairs are removed. Continue doing this until the entire story is retold.
 - **Ball Game:** Identical to Musical Chairs, but played by passing a ball or balloon. Can be played with music or simply the words, “GO” and “STOP”. (using a balloon...try adding a marble or small round pebble in the balloon before you inflate it to increase the fun)
 - **Rope Game:** Identical to Musical Chairs, but the string moves, not the students. Using a long piece of string/rope, tie the ends together to form a loop. Students stand in a circle with everyone holding the rope. They will move the rope in one direction until you say “STOP”. The student closest to the knot, shares the next part of the story.
 - **Movers & Shakers:** Spice up the games by adding a feature to HOW they tell their portion of the story!!! Some examples could be:
 - In a low voice
 - In a high voice while jogging in place
 - In a whisper while tiptoeing
 - In a robot voice while doing the robot
- **Line Up:** Have the students line up in height order. Starting with the tallest, share the story sections until complete.
- **Hide and Seek:** Write phrases of the Bible Story on cards or strips of paper. Place them around the room. Send the students to find them all and then place themselves in the proper order. Have someone read and retell the story.
- **Story Chase:** Write each part of the story on small cards. Randomly tape one card on the back of each student. Have them assemble the story on their own without removing the card. They should line up so that each student can see the phrase in front of them. Have the student retell the story by reading the card on the person in front of them.

Additional Questions | *what child is this?*

Head (Facts)

***My goal is to understand the content of the story.
What does the story say? What happened in the story?
I want to **KNOW** God through His Word.***

1. What were you imagining as the story was being told? How did it make you feel?
2. Could you imagine being there? What did you hear/see/smell as the story was told?
3. What stood out to you in the story?
4. What was God/Jesus teaching them in this story?
5. Where in previous stories have we seen God do this?
6. Did you hear anything that reminded you of previous stories?
7. Was there anything that was difficult or hard to understand?
8. How did the story describe God's/Jesus's relationship with people?
9. How does God/Jesus respond to the people in the story? What does this show us?
10. How did God/Jesus respond when ... ?
11. How did people respond ... ?
12. What was God/Jesus teaching or showing them in this event?
13. What is something you learned today about ...
 - a. God?
 - b. Jesus?
 - c. This story?
 - d. What it means to follow Jesus?
 - e. Yourself?
14. What choices did the people make? What else could they have done? What happened because of the choices they made?
15. How are the characters alike or different in the story?

(CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE)

Additional Questions | *what child is this?*

Heart (Feelings)

***My goal is to connect emotionally and spiritually with the story,
Allowing the story to penetrate my heart. How does it relate to my life?***

I want to LOVE God through His Word.

1. What do you think was the most important part of today's story?
2. What feelings did you have as you heard the story? How would you have felt if ... ?
3. What did you imagine as you were listening to the story?
4. What did you wonder about when the story was being told?
5. What feelings do you think motivated ... ?
6. What do you think was going on in ...'s heart and mind in this story?
7. What surprised you or amazed you about today's story?
8. Which character in today's story do you most relate to?
9. What do you feel is really important to God/Jesus? To the character?
10. In what ways are we also like ...? In what ways are we different?
11. After hearing the story, how might it change how you view yourself?
12. Why do you think God put this story in the Bible?
13. What is something you never realized before today?
14. What is the most interesting thing you heard today?
15. How did this story challenge you or encourage you?

(CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE)

Additional Questions | *what child is this?*

Hands (Actions)

My goal is to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to respond and apply what I've learned from the story.

What does God want me, specifically, to do with what I've learned?

I want to **SERVE** God by obeying what I've learned from His Word.

1. What did you hear today that makes you think you ought to make a change in your life?
2. From what you learned today, what is God/Jesus/the Holy Spirit asking you to do?
3. What do you think God/Jesus/the Holy Spirit is saying to you?
4. What should you do differently because of today's story? What difference will this make in how you love and serve Him?
5. What did we learn about being a follower of Jesus from this story? How can you put this insight into practice this week?
6. How should we respond to God/Jesus today?
7. After hearing the story, how will you live differently?
8. Do you want to know God like this? Is there something happening right now in your life where God/Jesus/the Holy Spirit could help you?
9. Who can you share this story with this week?
10. How do you think God wants you to have a part in His story?

Prayers and Blessings | *what child is this?*

May the Lord bless you and take good care of you.

May the Lord smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.

Numbers 6:24-26 NIRV

A critical moment with your family is what we call: *Huddle Up*. This is when you can gather everyone with more intentionality, with greater intimacy, to come into the Lord's presence. Some light a candle, others dim the lights and just have a night light on. If you are doing this at bedtime, maybe have the children lie down and get them settled in to go to sleep.

This is a time to **pray with and for one another**, to give thanks for everyone's *Highs* of the day and to ask for God's intervention in your *Lows*. What were some other things that came up in your discussion of the Bible Story that can be brought before the Lord where family members can be praying for one another? This is an opportunity for everyone to join together and be in God's presence. Our walk with Jesus isn't just about going to church or even coming together every day for KIDStory@Home, but how He is always there, every moment of every day no matter where we are or who we are with.

End your time together by **giving a blessing** to everyone. Something supernatural happens when people are blessed. We are asking for an impartation from God to be on our children. We see this tradition throughout the Bible: Abraham with Isaac, Isaac with Jacob, Moses with Joshua, Jesus with the children and many others. It is also a time to create hope and a vision for our children. It is a time to give a physical touch that is appropriate and meaningful. It could be the holding of hands or placing your hand on your child's shoulder or head. Some families end with a special song or Bible verse. These build traditions in our family gatherings.

Let's be like Jesus and create an environment where children felt welcomed, where Jesus touched and blessed them. We can do the same for the children He has given us.

I will bring honor to your name in every generation.

Therefore, the nations will praise You forever and ever.

Psalms 45:17 (NLT)



KIDStory®

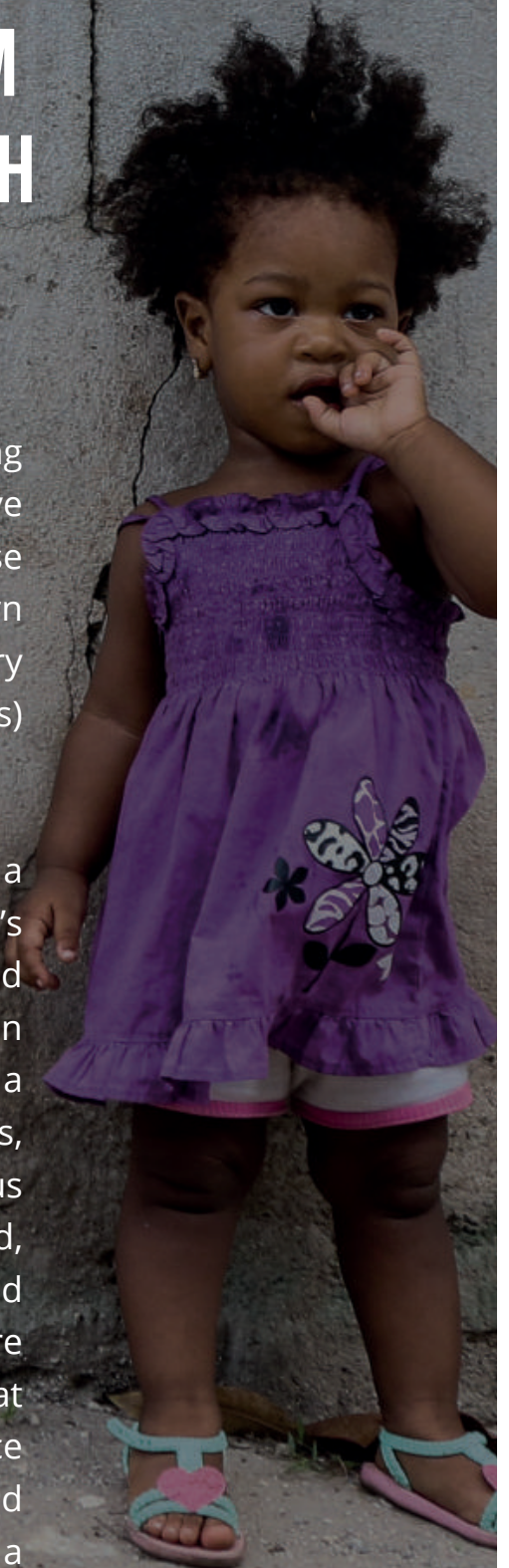
A PROGRAM OF KIDS AROUND THE WORLD

CONNECTING KIDS TO **JESUS** AND **HIS STORY**

OF THE **2 BILLION CHILDREN** IN THE WORLD UNDER THE AGE OF 14, **OVER 75%** OF THEM PREFER TO LEARN THROUGH **THE SPOKEN WORD**

KIDStory relies on Jesus' method of teaching through telling stories combined with interactive experiences and meaningful discussions. These skills are culturally universal and fun to learn and share with others. This makes KIDStory accessible and easily reproducible (for partners) both locally and globally.

We believe transformation takes place in a relational learning environment where God's Word is spoken, His Spirit guides, and a child encounters the love of Jesus by becoming an active participant in God's story and not just a distant observer. We call these environments, KIDStory Clubs. It's a place, like what Jesus created, where children feel welcomed, loved, and blessed by the leaders and ultimately the Lord Himself. It's where children have fun and are free to share what they are learning and experiencing; a place where God's presence is very real and evident. Children are not just learning from a book, but through relationships.



REACHING A UNIVERSAL AUDIENCE

The methods used to tell and retell God's story are Bible centered, fun and engaging. The questions posed by leaders are not just for retention, but for transformation of the heart and mind, leading to real life application. This gives leaders the chance to disciple each child by following up on the things that the Holy Spirit is teaching and revealing.

Whether you are in kids or youth ministry, the leader of a small group, preparing for an overseas mission trip, running a local VBS, or simply a mom, dad or grandparent; you will find this approach to learning equally refreshing and valuable as you are equipped with proven tools for effectively sharing God's Word.

CENTERED ON CORE ESSENTIALS

Children are transformed by learning who God is, who they are, and how to have a real and personal relationship with Jesus. We believe this happens through the 5 core essentials of KIDStory:



Fun



**Bible
Centered**



Reproducible



Relational



Spirit Led



KIDSTORY WORKSHOPS

There is a critical need to raise up and equip leaders to disciple children in ways that work best for them. Basic KIDStory workshops are offered globally and throughout the United States. Throughout the training, participants learn to share the Gospel with children through dynamic storytelling – directly from the Bible. At these workshops every participant can expect to learn:

- ✓ Teaching skills that bring the stories of the Bible to life
- ✓ Fun, interactive ways to hear, learn and retell God's Word to include: games, music, art & drama
- ✓ Proven ways to facilitate discussions that provide a place where the Holy Spirit can penetrate children's hearts rather than giving pat, predictable answers
- ✓ How to create learning environments where children become active participants in God's redemptive story instead of just distant observers





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