

# Alley SG—December 12th, 2021

**Today's Bible Story:** Because of Christmas Day (Jesus Is Born/Shepherds Visit) • *Luke 2:1-20*

**Today's Key Question:** How are you celebrating Christmas this year?

**Today's Bottom Line:** Celebrate because God sent a Savior.

**Monthly Memory Verse:** For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16 (NIV)

## 1. Verses to Take with You

**What You Need:** "Celebration Cards" and "Celebration Action Cards" (2 sets per Group), Bibles, pens

### What You Do:

- Divide the group into two teams.
- Gather teams together at one end of the environment.
- Shuffle together a set of cards for each team and lay the cards face down in a 4x3 grid, one grid across from each team.
- Guide the teams to race to collect the four verse cards.
- Kids will take turns racing to the grid and selecting a card. If the card has a celebration graphic on it, they return to their team with the card.
- However, if the card doesn't have any art/graphics on it, they read the card, replace it face down on the grid and complete the action on the card.
- The first team to collect the six verse cards and put them in the correct order (John 3:16), wins.
- After a winner is declared, gather the group together.
- Ask:
  - What does John 3:16 tell us about God's plan?
  - Why would it be good to memorize John 3:16? How can this verse help you to remember to celebrate God's plan?
- To dig deeper, consider looking up the following verses and asking:
  - Ephesians 1:4: What does this verse say about God's plan?
  - Matthew 1:23: Matthew is quoting something the prophet Isaiah wrote over 700 years before Jesus was born. (Refer to Isaiah 7:14) Why is the fact Jesus was called "Immanuel" something to celebrate?
  - Isaiah 55:10-11: What does God tell us about the power of His Words? How does this verse help us to trust God and His plan no matter what?
  - Which verse resonates with you? Challenge kids to select one of these verses to memorize.

## 2. Take a Snapshot

**What You Need:** Ornaments (5 per pair of kids per group), gift bags (4 per group)

### What You Do:

- Pair kids up and guide kids to stand about 10 feet away from their teammates.
- For each pair, give one kid five ornaments and give the other kid a Christmas gift bag. Instruct kids to hold the gift bag behind their backs.

- Ask pairs to predict how many ornaments they can toss into their gift bags. Tell teams to share their plan with the rest of the group.
- Tell teams to begin tossing their ornaments into the gift bags.
- To make it a competition, if teams successfully predict the number they catch, they get a point for every ornament they caught.
- The team with the most points wins.
- Play several rounds, with teammates switching roles each round.
- Depending on the skill of your group, increase or decrease the distance required to toss the ornaments.
- Use the following review questions to award kid extra points for their teams!:
  - Who was Mary's husband? (*Joseph*)
  - Who issued a decree? (*Caesar Augustus*)
  - What was the decree issued by Caesar Augustus? (*people had to go to their hometown to be counted in a census*)
  - Where did Mary and Joseph have to go to be counted? (*Bethlehem*)
  - Where did Mary and Joseph have to stay when they were in Bethlehem? (*place where animals live*)
  - Where was Jesus placed after He was born? (*feeding trough/manger*)
  - In our Bible story, what were the shepherds doing? (*keeping watch over their flocks*)
  - How did the shepherds feel when the angel appeared? (*afraid*)
  - Where did the shepherds find Jesus? (*lying in a manger*)
  - Who did the shepherds find with Jesus? (*Mary and Joseph*)
  - Who first appeared to the shepherds? (*an angel of the Lord*)
  - Who joined the angel and sang praises to God? (*heavenly host—a bunch of angels*)
  - Who did the shepherds tell about Jesus? (*everyone they saw*)
  - What book of the Bible is our story from today? (*Luke*)
  - After the review game, ask kids to share their favorite part of the Christmas story and why they like it most. **[Make it Personal] (Share your favorite part and why, too.)**

### 3. Light it Up!

**What You Need:** “Light Bulb Cards” (20 per group + 20 per leader), Piece of Yarn (1 per group), clips (20 per group)

**What You Do:**

- Divide the group into teams of two or three.
- Give each team some “Light Bulb Cards,” dividing the colors up evenly as best as you can.
- Tell kids to grab two cards and hold one card in each hand.
- Tell teams to turn their back to you.

- Create a “String of Lights” by clipping a set of light bulb cards onto a piece of string or yarn.
- Hold up the “String of Lights” and when you say, “Lights on,” teams turn around and race to duplicate the pattern on your string of lights.
- The challenge is that kids cannot swap cards, so they may get very tangled up trying to hold their lights in order.

**What You Say:**

“Do you put up Christmas lights for Christmas? They can be a tangled mess and trying to get them on the tree doesn’t always go quite as expected. The night that Jesus was born, Angels appeared to people you wouldn’t have expected...Shepherds! We can celebrate Jesus and know that on the first Christmas, He came to be with our mess and clean up our mess (our sins). Jesus is the best gift EVER!”

**4. Discussion Questions**

**Ask:**

Was there something new you learned about the first Christmas?

How do you celebrate Christmas?

After the shepherds saw Jesus, they told everyone what they had seen. Is talking about Jesus a form of celebration? Why or why not?

Why is it important to celebrate Jesus’ birth?

**5. Make it Personal with Prayer**

**What You Say:**

“God, what a night that must have been! The birth of Jesus! Angels praising You! Shepherds telling everyone what they saw! People being amazed at what they heard! Thank You for the good news! Thank You for sending a Savior. Christmas is all about celebrating Jesus, Your greatest gift to us! This week as we celebrate Christmas with family and friends, remind us why we are celebrating—because a Savior has been born to us and His name is Jesus! Amen!