



# Unwrapping Christmas



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# Introduction

## OUR GOALS

To help church and unchurched kids:

- enter into a personal relationship with Jesus and develop confidence in using the Bible to know who God is and how to apply what the Bible says to form strong, healthy relationships.
- grow in all aspects of life—physical, intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual.

## SO WHY BOLT?

Discipling a young person is arguably the single most important ministry a church can undertake. We know that children are the church's future. But they are also our present—and the church must act today to reach them for Christ. Various studies indicate that more than 80 percent of Christian adults accepted Christ as their Savior before age 13. This is why kid's ministries like BOLT are so necessary. This program can help churches reach kids in congregations and communities with the gospel when they are most receptive.

BOLT is based on the idea that leaders need something they can use for short sprints of deep discipleship that is fast, fun and flexible. Sometimes running a yearlong program is not a possibility. Running shorter programs of 4 to 6 week modules allows you to make a difference and impact your community.

First, BOLT hopes to affect three aspects of a child—mind, heart/soul and body. How does it work? By studying God's Word and memorizing Scripture, children begin to experience a renewing of their mind. As kids apply God's Word to their lives and learn to listen to the Holy Spirit, their hearts are changed. This leads kids to godly action and behavior, which serve to protect and preserve them physically and spiritually. As kids experience Life Skills training, they gain confidence and find new ways to serve Him in every aspect of life.

## BOLT FOR ANY SIZE GROUP OF KIDS

The large-group format of the BOLT curriculum was created especially for the unique needs of each church. Larger churches or groups with a large number of children typically have a larger pool of volunteers from which to draw and need more options from which to choose. Smaller churches need the flexibility that BOLT offers to tailor their program to fit their available volunteers. BOLT makes it possible for every size church to match volunteers to the type of service and skills that best suit their spiritual gifts and natural abilities.

### **A Large Group BOLT meeting consists of:**

1. Singing and Bible Exploration in **Large Group time** (30-35 minutes). Large Group Leaders lead singing and Bible memory review, present a Bible story and introduce the memory verse for the week in a large-group setting.
2. Bible Exploration follow-up and relationship building take place in **Small Group time** (15-20 minutes). Small Group Leaders build relationships with and between kids while leading a Hands-On Activity that illustrates the main point of Bible Exploration, followed by discussion questions, a Mentoring Moment and Bible Memory.

3. **Life Skills Training time** (20-30 minutes each). Life Skills Leaders help club members work on skill-building activities and projects, such as Baking, Mad Science, Secret Codes, Wood Projects, Trail Hikes, or Standing Up to Bullies.

The Large Group BOLT curriculum:

- is designed for grades 1-6,
- works well for churches ministering to any size group of kids,
- equips churches to minister to multiple age levels in a large group while retaining important small-group relational time,
- equips churches to instruct kids across age levels with the same Bible lesson each week,
- provides easy-to-use Bible studies with life application,
- encourages volunteers to use their individual strengths and gifts,
- provides undated material that fits into 1 1/2 to 2 hours,
- encourages and affirms all kids through a noncompetitive life-skill development program.

## WAYS TO USE THE BOLT PROGRAM

- midweek club
- after school club
- children's church
- Sunday children's ministry
- summer church camp
- anytime that fits your church schedule

## WHAT DOES BOLT STAND FOR?

Each letter of BOLT stands for a very important biblical concept that we hope to instill in the lives of kids through this unique children's ministry. The letters are:

**Bible Centered**—God has given us His Word to equip us to live like Jesus. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

**Outreach Focused**—We are called to reach out into our community and share Jesus with everyone. (Matthew 28:19-20)

**Life Skills Learned**—We need to develop life skills as created beings, to do good, bless our community, build relationships and share the gospel through common interests with others. (Ephesians 2:10)

**Transformation Experienced**—When we trust in Jesus and allow Him to have control of our lives, He transforms (or changes) us to be more like Him. (Romans 12:2)

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## MEETING OPTIONS

You may:

- combine all grades for the Large Group time, Small Group time and Life Skills training.
- combine all grades for Large Group time, then divide into Small Groups/Life Skills training by gender, age or grades.
- do Large Group time by grades 1-2, 3-4 and 5-6; then divide into Small Group time by grades; follow with Life Skill training by grades.

The designated area for the weekly Large Group time should allow all children to see and hear the Large Group Leader easily and be inviting and attractive. A raised stage would be a plus but is not necessary. It is ideal to have separate rooms for the Large Group time, Small Group time and Life Skills training. If this is not possible, try to reserve one end of the room for Large Group time and the other for projects and games. For Small Group time, groups may meet in individual classrooms or sit around tables or on rugs in a large room.

## VOLUNTEER STAFFING AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- **BOLT Coordinator** provides oversight for the entire ministry. The coordinator recruits and trains needed staff, is the contact person with Pioneer Clubs headquarters, keeps church staff informed and orders needed books and resources. He or she is also the go-to person for questions or problems during meetings.
- **Large Group Leaders** lead the all-group singing and teach the Large Group Bible Exploration lesson. A Large Group Leader should be comfortable in front of lots of kids. Your club may recruit more than one Large Group Leader to split singing, Bible memory review and Bible Exploration duties. The Bible Exploration Leader should be someone who can create and perform characters, recruit additional actors as needed and/or direct other performers. He or she may gather needed props for skits or may communicate supply needs to Supply Aides.
- **Small Group Leaders** focus on building relationships with kids while covering the Hands-On Activity, questions, Mentoring Moment and Scripture memory work. Small Groups work best with 8-10 kids per leader. Small Group Leaders play a key role in connecting with kids and helping them grow spiritually. Small Group Leader Planbooks give leaders hands-on activity instructions, appropriate questions, Mentoring Moments and Bible memory teaching techniques. Small Group Leaders will communicate supply needs to Supply Aide(s). Small Group Leaders also accompany kids to Life Skills training, where they help kids complete awards.
- **Life Skill Training Leader** leads kids in developing specific talents or interests using the Life Skill Training guides. He or she gathers supplies or communicates supply needs for the Life Skill training to the Supply Aides.
- **Supply Aide(s)** gather needed supplies and equipment, as directed, for Life Skill training time, Large Group time and Small Group time. This job may be done anytime prior to the Pioneer Clubs meeting. Great for involving those who may not be able to assist during BOLT meetings.

## BOLT ESSENTIAL CLUB RESOURCES

### ***Large Group Leader Planbook***

**Used by:** Large Group Leaders

- Lists supplies and help needed for Large Group time; Scripted Bible Explorations, Bible Memory and prayer content.

***Small Group Leader Planbooks***, for any grade level

**Used by:** Small Group Leaders

- Scripted Hands-On Activity, follow-up questions, Mentoring Moment and Bible Memory Activities.

***BOLT Bible Take Home Page***, for all grade levels (1-6)

**Used by:** Kids, adult(s) at home

- Used at home every week to reinforce Bible teaching and application, review memory verse and connect with an adult in a spiritual conversation.

***Life Skill Training Guide for Leaders***, for any grade level

**Used by:** Life Skills Training Leaders

- Supplies and instructions needed to teach the Life Skill training for 4-6 weeks.

***Life Skill Training Guide for Kids*** (*comes with Certificate of Achievement*), for any grade level

**Used by:** Kids

- Supplies and instructions needed to work on activities, reference guide for what is learned so any missed lessons can be made up at home with an adult. The 5" x 7" certificates are perfect for children to frame and display.

***Order resources at our store: [www.pioneerclubs.org](http://www.pioneerclubs.org) or call a Ministry Services Consultant at 800-694-CLUB (2582).***

## BOLT LARGE-GROUP MEETING STRUCTURE

### **Large Group Time**

The Opening Large Group time includes singing, welcome, announcements, review of Bible memory and opening prayer. You may decide to recruit one person to lead this time or choose to separate responsibilities (song leader, Bible teacher, Bible memory leader, etc.).

During Bible Exploration time, a Large Group Leader presents biblical material with enthusiasm and recruits extra actors as needed for skits.

Each Bible Exploration has three sections:

- **Introduction**—meets kids where they are and gets them thinking about the lesson theme.
- **Scripture**—gets kids into God's Word to discover how it applies to their everyday lives.
- **Application**—helps kids begin to see how what they've discovered in Scripture will make a difference in their lives.

**Bible Memory** time introduces a verse from the Bible Exploration as the weekly memory verse.

The **Closing Prayer** thanks God for His Word and asks Him to help us live by it.

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## **BOLT SMALL-GROUP MEETING STRUCTURE**

Each **Small Group** offers a relational time for kids and Small Group Leaders. The Small Group Leader is the facilitator who helps kids engage in a Hands-On Activity that further illustrates the Bible Exploration presented during Large Group time.

Small Group Leaders:

- greet children with enthusiasm and use appropriate touch,
- help kids get to know one another,
- encourage mutual support and respect through language that communicates love and respect,
- ask questions while listening carefully,
- help kids come to faith in Christ and grow spiritually,
- pray for and with their kids,
- connect with parents, helping families get or stay connected to the church.

Each Small Group time has five sections:

- **High Voltage: Hands-On Activity**—The Small Group Leader leads a Hands-On Activity that reinforces the Bible Exploration Lesson.
- **Effectively Grounded:** Scripture Passage
- **Spark-Test: Questions to Ask**—The Small Group Leader asks five questions that further comprehension and application.
- **Reflector: Mentoring Moment**—The Small Group Leader shares how the topic studied has impacted them personally and how God has been at work in their life.
- **Get Charged Up: Bible Memory Review**—Plans suggest helpful teaching techniques to assist kids in learning the verses for each unit. Bible Memory Cards reinforce learning and achievement.

## **SMALL GROUP SUPPLIES**

We suggest having a standard “supply kit” of basic supplies: pens, pencils, markers, glue, tape, scissors, plain paper, construction paper, roll of paper (such as plain white shelf paper), index cards and a foam ball or beanbag.

Prepare a tub or basket with these supplies for each Small Group. Supply Aide(s) can check levels and replenish supplies from week to week. Stocking your Small Group areas with Bibles ensures that everyone will have one to use during club. Bibles with concordances will be helpful for older kids.

## **ABOUT BOLT LIFE SKILL TRAINING**

BOLT Life Skill Training units give kids an opportunity to have fun with friends while building life skills in six general categories: Arts and Communication, Caring for Myself and Others, Hobbies and Projects, Outdoors and Nature, Learning Fun and Sports and Games. Each life skill offers a faith connection as well.

Kids can earn a BOLT Life Skill Certificate of Achievement for each Life Skill unit they complete. Kids work on the Life Skill certification for all 4-6 weeks of the unit they’re doing. Each week provides the number of activities that need to be completed to earn the certificate by the end of the unit. For example, the instructions for Week One may indicate “Choose Two.” Then the Life Skill Training Leader can select two activities from that list that they want to do with the kids.

Once they have selected the activities they will do, they can gather their supplies or communicate their supply needs to the Supply Aid.

## **OPTIONS FOR LIFE SKILL TRAINING**

Clubs may conduct three different life skill training groups based on grade/age levels, each with its own Life Skill Training Leader.

Very large churches may choose to operate in a “station rotation” model for each age level or all age levels. For example, while grades 1–3 are involved with the Life Skill Training, grades 4-6 may be engaged in Small Group time. Each age level rotates to the next activity when the allotted time is up.

## **SEND HOME THE BOLT BIBLE TAKE HOME PAGE**

- Be sure to send kids home each week with the BOLT Take Home Page. This is a terrific way to make a home-church connection.
- The BOLT Take Home Page is designed to work equally well with Christian and non-Christian adults, supporting both in their parenting role and giving them an opportunity to engage in as much of a spiritual conversation as desired.
- This resource also reinforces the Bible Story and the Bible Verse in a fun and playful way.

## UNWRAPPING CHRISTMAS LESSON ONE

### Bible Study Aims

Kids will:

- Discover that God had a plan to send His Son to be our Rescuer.
- Feel confident that Jesus is the one God sent to save us.
- Know that Jesus came to heal us from our sins and to be our Savior.

### Lightning Bolt Truth

God promised to send us a Savior who would save us from our sins.

### Scripture

Isaiah 40:1-5, Genesis 1-3.

### Prayer of Preparation

Jesus, thank You for coming into our world to save us. Help me communicate Your love for us. In Your name, Amen.

### Supplies

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ band-aids (one per kid)
- ☐ markers
- ☐ large picture or poster of the earth
- ☐ Memory Verse Sticker for each kid

### Plan Ahead

- Find a poster with a picture of the world on it.
- Gather supplies.

# Hope

(30-35 Minutes)

### OPENING

**Welcome!** Make announcements.

### SING

Sing songs or carols about Jesus coming as our Savior.

### PRAY

**Dear God, You are such an amazing planner. You knew we would need a Savior and you planned to send Your own Son to rescue us. Help us recognize Him for who He is. Amen.**

### INTRODUCTION

Begin the lesson by playing this fun game of "Would You Rather?" Ask the question and kids walk to one side of the room or the other to show which they would rather do.

**Would you rather...**

- **make presents for your family instead of buying them or make ornaments for your Christmas tree instead of buying them?**
- **have Frosty the Snowman for a friend or Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer for a friend?**
- **live in a giant gingerbread house or ride on the Polar Express?**
- **visit the North Pole or visit Bethlehem?**
- **spend a day watching Christmas videos or spend a day Christmas shopping at the mall?**

**Wow! That was fun! Christmas is a great time of year, isn't it? It is a time of expectation because we are waiting to celebrate when Jesus, God's Son, was born into our world to be the One who rescues our world from sin. But we are getting ahead of ourselves. Christmas actually began at the beginning of the world when the beautiful world God made fell apart because of one terrible lie that took away hope.**

### SCRIPTURE

**God had created an absolutely beautiful world and He put two perfect people named Adam and Eve in it. They had never done anything wrong and they got along without having any fights or disagreements. They loved living in the garden that God had created for them and every day God took a walk with them in the cool of the day.**

**God told them that they could eat from any tree in the garden except one. The tree they could not eat from was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God said if they ate from it they would die. God was serious about protecting them and asked them to obey this one rule. Let's read what they did.**



**Open your Bibles to Genesis 3:1-7.** Read the passage.

**What a disaster! They decided to believe the lie that God did not really love them and they choose to disobey God.**

**Let's see what happened next.** Read Genesis 3:8-21

- **Who came looking for Adam and Eve?** (God loved them so much He came looking for them.)
- **What things happened to the serpent?** (The serpent was cursed, had to slither on his belly, and hostility was put between it and people.)
- **What things happened to Eve because of her choice?** (She would have pain when she had babies; She would want to be in charge but her husband would be in charge.)
- **What things happened to Adam because of his choice?** (He would struggle to make a living; From now on, everyone would die.)
- **What did God do that was loving and kind?** (He made clothing out of animal skins for Adam and Eve.)

**God loved Adam and Eve, but they had to leave the garden. Sin had entered the world and it would never be the same. Sin is anything we think or do that breaks God's law. People would be mean to one another and one of Adam and Eve's own sons would break God's law and kill his own brother. Sin, sadness and death were now a permanent part of our world.**

**It might seem like there was no hope. But God had a plan. He planned to come and rescue us some day. He planned to come and get rid of the darkness and the sadness that sin brought into our world.**

**God let us know about His plan to bring us hope in Isaiah 9:6-7. Let's read it together.**

- **How was God going to bring hope to our world?** (By giving us a baby who would be everything we needed to take away the sin of the world.)

**God said even more to us about the baby who would come and who he would grow up to be.** Read Isaiah 53:1-6 aloud.

- **Who does this description sound like?** (Jesus. He was punished for our sins so that we could be free to have a relationship with God.)

**Jesus was the rescuer that God planned to send so that we could have hope again. Jesus came as a little baby and grew up in our world. Jesus was perfect and lived a life without ever sinning. But one day, some men took Him out and hung Him on a cross because they hated Him. God loved Jesus and this broke His heart. Yet God allowed it to happen so that His perfect life could be used as a sacrifice to take away our sins. His sacrifice brought hope back into our lives.**

### APPLICATION

**But God's plan to take care of sin can only help us if we choose to respond to what Jesus did for us. Jesus died on the cross so that He could pay for our sins. All we have to do is ask Jesus to forgive us for our sins and be our Savior.**

**If you would like to pray that prayer, quietly pray it after me. Dear Jesus / I know that I am a sinner. / Please forgive me for my sins / and be my Savior. / Thank you for letting me be part of God's family. / In Jesus' name, Amen.**

**If you decided to ask Jesus to be your Savior today, be sure to tell your leader so they can celebrate the hope you now have in Jesus.**

### BIBLE MEMORY

Memorize 1 John 1:9.

### CLOSING PRAYER

**Our world is truly broken by all the sins that we carry. Our only hope is Jesus. Pass out band-aids. Write your name on this band-aid and think of how there is sin in your life that you need Jesus to heal. Thank Jesus for coming to take away your sin, and then when you are ready, quietly go to the front of the room and stick your band-aid on the picture of the world. As you look at the picture of our world with the band-aids covering it, remember that Jesus is the only One who can bring hope to our broken world. Take some time to think about what Jesus did for us.**

**After allowing time, close in prayer: God, thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus. He alone can take away the brokenness of our world. Help us know You as our only Hope! Amen.**



## UNWRAPPING CHRISTMAS LESSON TWO

### Bible Study Aims

Kids will:

- Learn that God loved Abraham and that Abraham trusted God.
- Be thankful for God's amazing love for them and begin to trust Him.

### Lightning Bolt Truth

God loves me so much He was willing for His own Son to die in my place.

### Scripture

Genesis 21-22:19, Hebrews 11:19

### Prayer of Preparation

Jesus, sometimes I struggle to trust Your love for me. Make Your love real to me this Christmas in a newer and deeper way. Amen.

### Supplies

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ small piece of paper to write on for each kid
- ☐ marker for each kid
- ☐ Memory Verse Sticker for each kid

### Plan Ahead

- Gather supplies.
- Cut paper into 5 inch squares for kids to use during prayer time.

# Love

(30-35 Minutes)

### OPENING

**Welcome!** Make announcements.

### SING

Sing songs or carols about God who loves us and gave His Son for us.

### REVIEW

Review memory verse: 1 John 1:9.

### PRAY

**Jesus, thank You for the gifts You give us because You love us. Help us know Your love so deeply that we are willing to do whatever You ask of us. In Your name, Amen.**

### INTRODUCTION

- **What is the greatest gift you have ever received?** (Take responses from kids.)
- **What would it have been like for your parent to ask you to give it away to someone else?** (Take responses from kids.)

### SCRIPTURE

**God loves to give people children as one of His best and most wonderful gifts. For Abraham and Sarah, their son, Isaac, was a gift beyond belief. For years they had longed for a son and they waited a long time for God's promise to come true. When it finally came true, they were overwhelmed with love for Isaac. Then one day, God came to Abraham and asked the unthinkable. Let's look at this amazing story in Genesis 22:1-2.**

- **What does the first verse say that God is doing?** (He is giving Abraham a test.)
- **What is the terrible thing that God asks Abraham to do?** (He tells him to go to the land of Moriah and offer his son as a burnt offering on one of the mountains.)

**It is important for you to know that people at that time sacrificed their children to their gods and burned them on an altar. This is a horribly wicked thing to do. Later, in the Old Testament, God really condemned this practice and told the children of Israel they were never to do it.**

- **Why do you think God asked Abraham to do this?** (Perhaps He wanted to see if Abraham knew that God loved Him and he could trust Him to take care of Isaac no matter what.)

**Let's see what happens next.** Read Genesis 22:3-8.

- **What does Abraham do next?** (He gets up early the next morning to obey God and began the three day journey to the place where God had told him to go.)
- **Who carried the wood for the fire?** (Isaac.)



- **What did Abraham carry?** (The fire and the knife.)
- **What did Isaac notice was missing?** (The sacrificial lamb.)
- **How did Abraham respond to Isaac's question about the lamb?** (God Himself would provide the lamb for the burnt offering.)

**This amazing answer shows that Abraham was still really trusting God to be true to His character and His great love for Abraham. Later in the New Testament, we see it is true.**

Read Hebrew 11:19.

- **What did Abraham think that God might do if necessary?** (He thought He might even raise Isaac from the dead in order to keep His promise to Abraham.)

**Let's see what God does.** Read Genesis 22:9-18.

- **How did God stop Abraham?** (He sent an Angel of the Lord to call from heaven and stop him.)
- **What else did the angel say?** (He knew for sure that Abraham feared God and would not have withheld his precious son from God if that was necessary.)
- **What did Abraham see in the thicket?** (He saw that God had indeed provided a ram to sacrifice in Isaac's place.)
- **What did Abraham name that place?** (He named it The Lord Will Provide.)
- **What do you think Isaac learned that day?** (His dad was willing to obey God no matter what it cost; God loved Isaac so much that He provided a ram in his place; God had chosen him to be the son that God blessed; He could always trust the goodness of God no matter what.)
- **What did God promise Abraham as He blessed him in the last verses?** (He would indeed do what He had already said and make a great nation of His people who would be blessed because of Abraham's obedience.)

## **APPLICATION**

- **What surprised you about this story?** (God would ask Abraham to do that; Abraham was willing to obey; Isaac lived; God tested Abraham like this.)

**One day God would make an even greater sacrifice than the one He asked Abraham to make. One day God would have someone born from Abraham's family and His name would be Jesus. He would be God's own Son. He would have to climb a mountain, with a wooden cross on His back. He would have**

**to trust His Father and do what His Father asked. This time He would actually be sacrificed as the Lamb of God that God provided to take away our sins. This time God would have to pour out His love for His son in order to save us. This was what it took to restore our relationship with God and God loved us so much He was willing to do it.**

**After Jesus died on the cross, He did not stay dead. God raised Him from the dead so that He was alive again! He is our risen Savior!**

**You have learned that you are a sinner. You know that it has ruined your relationship with God. Our only hope is a Savior who can take away our sin and restore our relationship with God. Jesus is the only one who can do that for you. All you have to do is ask Him to take away your sins and build a new relationship with God.**

**If you want to ask Jesus to be your Savior, be sure to talk to a leader about that so they can help you and support you as you grow in your relationship with Jesus.**

**As we think one last time about Abraham's story, I would like you to think about a few questions:**

- **How has God provided for you because of His great love for you?** (He sent His Son, Jesus, to be our Savior.)
- **What kind of life of faith did Abraham live?** (One of trusting God and loving Him.)
- **What kind of life will you choose?**

## **BIBLE MEMORY**

Memorize Ephesians 5:2.

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

**Give each child a piece of paper. Have them write or draw one thing in their life that shows them that God loves them. Take a moment to quietly thank God for the way that He loves you. Ask God to show you more of His amazing love during this Christmas season.**



## UNWRAPPING CHRISTMAS LESSON THREE

### Bible Study Aims

Kids will:

- Understand that Jesus is the source of joy.
- Feel called to be people of joy and rejoice in who God is and what He is doing in their lives.
- Depend on God to help you when you struggle to celebrate.

### Lightning Bolt Truth

God wants me to be full of joy.

### Scripture

1 Peter 1:8; Luke 1; Isaiah 12

### Prayer of Preparation

Dear Jesus, help the children to realize that You are the one who brings us joy during this time of year. Amen.

### Supplies

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ markers
- ☐ scissors
- ☐ 8 x 11 cardstock for each kid
- ☐ Christmas Magazines to cut out pictures from
- ☐ glue sticks for each kid
- ☐ Memory Verse Sticker for each kid

### Plan Ahead

Gather supplies.

# Joy

(30-35 Minutes)

### OPENING

**Welcome!** Make announcements.

### SING

Sing songs or carols about joy and who God is.

### REVIEW

Review memory verses: 1 John 1: 9 and Ephesians 5:2.

### PRAY

**Jesus, You are the one who brings joy into our lives each and every day. Remind us of all the reasons we have to be joyful because of who You are. Amen.**

### INTRODUCTION

**It's easy to tell when Christmas is coming, because people start putting out all sorts of Christmas decorations. Some families start cooking and baking. Other families start shopping or planning a trip.**

- **What does your family do to get ready for Christmas?** (Take responses.)
- **What are some of your favorite holiday traditions?** (Take responses.)
- **Which of these traditions bring you the most joy?** (Take responses.)

Hand out an 8 x 11 piece of cardstock to each kid. Make a big pile of old christmas magazines on the floor. **Cut out pictures that highlight Christmas traditions you do or that you would like to do with your families. Write "Joy" at the top of your cardstock and glue your pictures to the cardstock.**

### SCRIPTURE

**The beginning of the first Christmas did not have any decorations, special foods, or special traditions. It was a quiet but joyful event that took place in a small village in Nazareth. It began with a young girl who was named Mary. Let's read about it in Luke 1:28-38.**

- **What did the angel say to greet Mary?** (Rejoice, favored one. The Lord is with you.)
- **What did the angel say would happen?** (Mary would have a son named Jesus. He would be great and God would give Him the throne of David and His kingdom would never end.)
- **What did Mary wonder?** (She wondered how this could happen since she wasn't married.)
- **How did the angel explain it?** (The Holy Spirit would come and the power of God would overshadow her and she would become the mother of the Son of God.)

- **Who else would have a baby?** (Her cousin, Elizabeth, who everyone said would never have a baby was having one too.)
- **How did Mary respond?** (I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said to me come true.)

**This was an amazing life-changing announcement. Mary must have been close to Elizabeth because the next thing that happens is that she takes a trip to see her. Let's read about it in Luke 1:39-45.**

- **What happened to Elizabeth as soon as she heard Mary's voice?** (Her baby leaped inside her and she was filled with the Holy Spirit.)
- **What did Elizabeth cry out?** (Blessed are you among women and your child will be blessed.)
- **Why did the baby leap?** (The baby leapt for sheer joy.)
- **Why was Mary blessed?** (Because she believed what God said would really happen.)

### **APPLICATION**

**God loves when we take Him at His Word. He loves for us to just believe what He said because we trust Him and put our faith in Him that what He said will happen. Mary responded with absolute trust and experienced great joy.**

**Let's read about her response in Luke 1:46-55.**

- **Who was the focus of her response?** (Mary focused on who God was and what He has done. She celebrated His mercy and faithfulness and rejoiced in Him.)
- **What do you find yourself saying about God when something happens to you?** (Take responses.)
- **Do you choose to give God glory when He does something or do you stay quiet?** (Take responses.)

**God calls us to be people of joy who celebrate the great things He is doing in our lives. If Jesus is our Savior, the Holy Spirit is faithful to help us respond to God with joy. We can ask Him to help us when we are discouraged.**

**If Jesus isn't your Savior and you want Him to be, take a moment to talk to a leader and find out how you can start a relationship with Him.**

**Mary didn't know if everything would work out perfectly or how her husband-to-be would feel about everything but she chose to be someone who trusted God and celebrated what He was doing at that very moment.**

- **Is there something in your life that God is doing that you are finding difficult to celebrate?** (Take responses.)
- **Can you ask God to help you find ways to rejoice in what He is doing even if it looks messy and you are not sure it is a good thing?** (Take responses.)

**Let's practice finding joy right now. Let's list things you can honestly rejoice in today.** Write suggestions that kids give you down on a whiteboard. Try to get a good list that you can use during prayer time.

### **BIBLE MEMORY**

Memorize 1 Peter 1:8

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

**During this time, look at the whiteboard and see one or two things you can honestly celebrate no matter what is going on in your life. Then take turns praying out loud to God what you will choose to celebrate during this Christmas.**



## UNWRAPPING CHRISTMAS LESSON FOUR

### Bible Study Aims

Kids will:

- Understand that peace comes from being at peace with God's plan for our lives.
- Feel willing to surrender to God's plan for their life.
- Pray for peace in our world.

### Lightning Bolt Truth

God gives me peace.

### Scripture

Matthew 1:20-25

### Prayer of Preparation

Dear Jesus, You want our lives to be peaceful as we trust what You are doing and how You are leading us. Amen.

### Supplies

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ a glass of water about 1/2 to 2/3 full
- ☐ an index card
- ☐ chairs
- ☐ Memory Verse Sticker for each kid

### Plan Ahead

- Gather supplies.
- Be sure to practice the experiment ahead of time so that you can successfully perform it.

# Peace

(30-35 Minutes)

### OPENING

**Welcome!** Make announcements.

### SING

Sing songs or carols about peace, the Prince of Peace, and who God is.

### REVIEW

Review memory verses: 1 John 1: 9; Ephesians 5:2 and 1 Peter 1:8.

### PRAY

**Jesus, You are the Prince of Prince. You came to give us peace with God. Amen.**

### INTRODUCTION

Place the index card over the top of the glass, making sure that the whole rim is covered by it and press down. Hold on to the top of the card firmly on the open side of the glass, while you move your other hand down the glass, towards the bottom of it. Carefully flip the glass upside down, making sure you keep holding the card firmly in place. You may get a TINY bit of drip at this point, but don't panic! Now slowly move your hand out from underneath the card and the card should stick, holding the water firmly in the glass.

Talk about the fact that what is holding the card in place is the air pressure pushing upwards that is stronger than the gravity pressing downwards. **We can't see the air pressure but we know it must be working or the water would spill out. We can't see God but we know that He is there holding us up and supporting us no matter what happens.**

- **What is trust?** (Trust is a firm belief in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of someone or something.)
- **Who do you trust and why?** (Take responses.)
- **Have you ever trusted God?** (Take responses.)
- **When might you need to trust God?** (Take responses.)

### SCRIPTURE

**Joseph was not at peace. He would toss and turn at night and was not be able to sleep. He was worried all day. He was engaged to be married to Mary but he found out she was having a baby and he knew it wasn't his baby. He wasn't sure it was a good idea to marry her anymore. He felt hurt and disappointed because he was having a hard time believing what Mary said was true. She said that God had put the baby inside her and that the baby would be God's Son.**

**He did not think this could possibly be God's plan. If it was God's plan, it didn't seem like a very good one to him. Worry filled him because he didn't believe God got it right. He decided that he needed to secretly stop their marriage before it even started.**

**God saw that Joseph was full of fear. God knew just what to do. Let's find out what He did in Matthew 1:20-25.**

- **What did God do?** (He sent an angel to talk to Joseph in a dream.)
- **What did the angel tell Joseph to do?** (He told Joseph not to be afraid; To take Mary as his wife because she was telling the truth. God was the Father of the baby. Joseph was to name Him Jesus because He was going to save His people from their sins.)
- **How did Joseph respond to God's plan now?** (He got up from sleeping and immediately did what God said. He married Mary right away.)
- **What changed in this story?** (Once Joseph heard the plan from God, he knew that God was truthful, reliable, and had the ability to do what He said He would do. Joseph gave up his own plan and trusted that God's plan was better.)
- **Do you think that Joseph was still worried or afraid?** (No, he became certain what to do and was filled with peace.)

### **APPLICATION**

**Perhaps you do not know the kind of peace that Joseph had. Maybe you don't know what it would be like to completely trust God.**

**Just like Joseph, you will have to decide if you want to go with God's plan and give up your own plan for your life. His plan is always better. Rather than continue to sin and live a life of worry and try to figure it out on your own, you can decide to give your life to Jesus. You can let Him save you from your sins, and begin to follow Jesus to learn what He wants for your life.**

**It doesn't mean your life will be easy or less complicated. It does mean that your life will have the peace that comes in surrendering to God and you will find that God's love, hope and joy will fill you up.**

**If you are ready to decide that you want to give your life and your plans to God and surrender to a life of following Jesus, pray this prayer after me:**

**Dear Jesus / I am ready to give my life to You. / I want to follow You. / Be my Savior and take away my sins. / Fill me with Your love and peace. / In Your name, Amen.**

**Not only does Jesus want us to be full of peace, He wants us to be people who bring peace into our world.**

- **What kind of things could you do to bring peace into your family?** (Take responses.)
- **What kind of things could you do to bring peace into our world?** (Take responses.)

### **BIBLE MEMORY**

Memorize 2 Thessalonians 3:16.

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

**Our world is full of sadness and chaos that comes from sin. Let's pray that God would bring His peace in our world.**

Here are some areas to pray for peace:

- Pray for peace in war-torn countries.
- Pray for peace between different races.
- Pray for people to long for peace with God.
- Pray for people to share the peace God brings to us.
- Pray for us to embrace God's peace and plan for us.
- Pray for us to be at peace with one another.





## UNWRAPPING CHRISTMAS LESSON FIVE

### Bible Study Aims

Kids will:

- Understand that Jesus is the light of the world.
- Feel willing to be light in the darkness.
- Think about ways they can bring the light of Jesus into their world.

### Lightning Bolt Truth

Jesus is the light of the world.

### Scripture

Isaiah 9:2, 60:1-2; John 8:12; Luke 2:8-14

### Prayer of Preparation

Dear Jesus, You are the light of the world.  
Thank You for coming into our darkness and  
rescuing us. Amen.

### Supplies

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ table
- ☐ chairs
- ☐ Memory Verse Sticker for each kid

### Plan Ahead

- Gather supplies.
- Print copies of the Christmas Reader's Theater so that kids can read it.

# Light

(30-35 Minutes)

### OPENING

**Welcome!** Make announcements.

### SING

Sing songs or carols about Jesus being the light of the world.

### REVIEW

Review memory verses: 1 John 1: 9; Ephesians 5:2; 1 Peter 1:8 and 2 Thessalonians 3:16.

### PRAY

**Jesus, You loved us so much that You came into our darkness and lit up our world. Help us to be people that shine your light and bring others out of the darkness. Amen.**

### INTRODUCTION

Divide kids into two groups and give each kid a copy of this script so that they can read it.

### CHRISTMAS READER'S THEATER

(paraphrased and adapted from Isaiah 9:2 and 60:1-2; John 8:12; and Luke 2:8-14)

GROUP 1: **The darkness hides everything.**

GROUP 2: **The world is too dark for people to see what they're doing.**

ALL: **But look—God's glory appears.**

GROUP 1: **We were walking in darkness but we've seen a great light.**

GROUP 2: **We have lived in a land shadowed by death, but look—a light has dawned.**

ALL: **Rise up and shine! Light has come to us, and the glory of God shines for the world.**

GROUP 1: **Shepherds lived out in the fields, watching over their sheep all night.**

GROUP 2: **An angel of the Lord appeared to them.**

ALL: **And God's glory shone around them.**

GROUP 1: **They were very afraid.**

GROUP 2: **But the angel said:**

ALL: **Do not be afraid. I bring good and joyful news for everyone. Your Savior, chosen by God, has just been born in Bethlehem, the city of David.**

GROUP 1: **The shepherds listened, amazed.**

GROUP 2: **And then they saw and heard too many angels to count, all saying:**

ALL: **Glory to God! Peace to the people of Earth!**

GROUP 1: **The shepherds decided to go to Bethlehem.**

GROUP 2: **And they found the baby lying in a manger, as the angel had said.**

GROUP 1: **The shepherds told everyone how they found the baby just as the angel had said.**

GROUP 2: **People listened with amazement to what the shepherds said.**

ALL: **For this baby was Jesus, “the light of the world.”**

**People who follow Him never need to walk in darkness, because they will have His light in their life.**

### SCRIPTURE

**The start of this script is taken from what the prophet Isaiah said in Isaiah 9:2. Let’s read that passage.**

- **How do you think sinning—doing the wrong thing—is like being in the dark?** (You can’t see what you are doing or what harm you are really causing; You can’t understand what is really happening to yourself and others.)
- **What happens if you try to do something in total darkness?** (You can’t see to do it well; You bump into things; You may break things.)
- **Why does turning on a light help?** (You can see what you’re doing; You can see things that could get in your way and trip you; You can read directions, etc.)
- **How do you think Jesus is like a light for us?** (Shows us what we are doing wrong; Helps us do right; Provides a way for us to be forgiven; etc.)

**Let’s read about when Jesus first came into the world.** Read Luke 2:1-7.

- **Why was Jesus put into a feeding trough?** (There was no room for Him in the inn and they were in a stable.)

**Perhaps it surprises you that God came to earth and was born to a poor family who could not even put Him in a crib the first night. But that was part of God’s plan. He wanted Jesus to be just like us and understand what it was like to be here on earth.**

**But God also wanted to celebrate His Son coming.** Read Luke 2:8-20.

- **What was the great light that shone down on the shepherds to tell them the great news?** (It was the glory of the Lord shining down and lighting up the darkness.)
- **What did the angel announce?** (There was good news of great joy that would be for everyone; The Savior who was the long awaited one, was born.)
- **What did the angels do in their great joy?** (They sang and praised God.)
- **What did the shepherds do?** (They immediately went to see the baby and they were amazed; They glorified and praised God for all they had seen and heard.)

### APPLICATION

**God was so excited to celebrate His Son, the light coming into the darkness. He sent angels to celebrate with a light show and let shepherds know as they sat in darkness. He came to ordinary people with extraordinary news.**

- **Who do you know that needs the light of Jesus?** (Take responses.)
- **What could you do to share the amazing news that Jesus came to be our Savior?** (Take responses.)

### BIBLE MEMORY

Review these verses: 1 John 1: 9; Ephesians 5:2; 1 Peter 1:8 and 2 Thessalonians 3:16.

### CLOSING PRAYER

Turn off the light and light a candle in the middle of your group. Ask kids to think about how Jesus’ love lights up our world. Have them pray around the circle that God would help them be a light for those who do not know Jesus yet.

# BOLT Bible Exploration Units

Who Is God? 4 Weeks	Who Is Jesus? 4 Weeks	What Is the Bible? 4 Weeks	What Is the Church? 4 Weeks
1: Trusted Creator 2: Promise Keeper 3: Salvation Provider 4: Heavenly Father	1: Jesus Is God 2: Loving Savior 3: The One Worth Following 4: A Friend to Spend Time With	1: A Message from God 2: A Tool to Use 3: A Truth to Discover 4: A Guide for Life	1: People Who Build Others Up 2: People Who Worship 3: People Who Share Jesus 4: People Who Serve
Putting God First 6 Weeks	Doing My Best 6 Weeks	Connecting with Family 5 Weeks	Learning from Nature 4 Weeks
1: Treasure in Heaven 2: Knowing God 3: His Plan to Save Us 4: How to Please God 5: Loving Our Neighbors 6: Walking with God	1: Learning to Pray 2: Overcoming Temptation 3: Showing Kindness 4: Doing God's Work 5: Honoring God in What I Do 6: Showing I Care	1: Family Fun 2: Appreciating Family 3: Loving Brothers and Sisters 4: Honoring Grandparents 5: Caring about My Family	1: Nature's Creator 2: Bearing Fruit 3: Creation Obeys God 4: Growing in Faith

# BOLT Life Skill Training Units

Arts and Communication	Caring for Myself and Others	Hobbies and Projects	Outdoors and Nature	Learning Fun	Sports and Games
Art 101 Designs Print Art Secret Codes	Caring for Young Children Communicating with the Deaf First Aid Standing Up to Bullies	Baking Candle Making Puzzles Stitchery Wood Projects	Cooking Outdoors Nature Crafts Outdoor Fun Trail Hikes	Caring for the Environment Mad Science Money Matters Music Maker Wild & Wacky Science	Games 101 Getting Strong Soccer Tumbling

# BOLT Resources

Large Group Planbook	Small Group Planbook	BOLT Bible Take Home Page	Life Skill Training Guide for Leaders	Life Skill Training Guide for Kids and BOLT Certificate of Completion
Scripted Bible Explorations, practical life applications, Bible memory verses and prayers.	Scripted hands-on activities, in-depth questions, mentoring moments and Bible memory activities.	Reinforce Bible teaching, application, memory verse and connect in a spiritual conversation at home.	Supply lists and instructions to teach the Life Skill training for 4-6 weeks to match your large group.	Supply lists, instructions and activity pages for life skill training; a reference guide to make up missed lessons. Custom BOLT certificates for each life skill to celebrate kids who have completed the training.