

# Lesson 11: Following The Star, Finding The King

## **Key Takeaway**

When we hear the good news of Jesus, we can choose to respond with joy.

## **Scriptural Basis**

Matthew 1:18-24

Matthew 2:1-13

## **Bible Verse**

"The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!" (Luke 2:11, NLT).

## **Learning Objectives:**

- Children will recall how different people in the story responded to the news of Jesus' birth.
- Children will describe ways they can respond to Jesus with joy, like the wise men did.
- Children will understand that we respond to Jesus with joy because he is the promised savior.

## **Materials Needed for Small Group:**

- ☐ A Bible
- ☐ Name tags
- ☐ A snack per child

### **Activity: What's Your Response?**

- ☐ Two signs: "Positive Response" and "Negative Response"
- ☐ Optional – Two buckets or bins labeled with the two signs, "Positive Response" and "Negative Response"

### **Activity: Name of Jesus Craft**

- ☐ Large "JESUS" letters on paper
- ☐ Crayons
- ☐ Stickers
- ☐ Printout 1 – Heart cutouts

### **Activity: Roll to Respond**

- ☐ One die (or make a paper/cardstock cube with numbers 1–6)
- ☐ Optional: A simple chart or poster with the prompts visible to help early readers

## **Materials Needed for Large Group:**

- ☐ A Bible

### **Activity: Three Corners – Responding to the King**

- ☐ 3 Bibles, one for each of the three Response Corners
- ☐ Printout 1 – Printed reflection question for each corner
- ☐ Optional: Signs marking the 3 corners
- ☐ Optional: Simple props (e.g., a crown, star, angel picture) to make each corner more engaging

## **Materials Needed for Games:**

### **Game: Follow the Star Game**

- Star cutouts or taped arrows on the floor leading to a "Jesus" sign or nativity image

### **Game: Pass the Gift of Joy**

- ☐ Wrapped gift box or small object (can be empty inside)
- ☐ Music player or phone to play music

### **Game: Star Hide and Seek (Silent Joy)**

- ☐ Large paper star or several small star cutouts
- ☐ Tape to stick stars in hidden spots (optional)

# Small Group Session 1

15 Minutes

Distribute name tags and snacks. Choose one of the following activities to do together while children eat their snack.

## Share and Listen

### Option 1

Ask the children to share their highs and lows (the best and worst things that happened to them either today or from the past week).

### Option 2

Ask the children to take turns sharing how they are feeling today using the [“How Are You Feeling?” chart](#).

## Pray Together

Collect prayer requests from the students. The leader or a student can pray for the entire group, or a leader can pair up students and invite them to pray for one another.

## Opening Questions

- **“What is the best news you have ever heard?”**  
(Follow-up: How did you respond when you heard it?)
- **“How do you usually feel when you find something really special or exciting?”**  
(e.g., a surprise gift, a visit from someone, a snow day)
- **“Can you think of a time when you were so happy you had to tell someone about it?”**  
(Why did you want to share it?)
- **“Do people always respond the same way to good news?”**

## Activity: What is Your Response?

*Objective: Help kids identify godly vs. ungodly responses in common situations and understand how following Jesus changes how we respond.*

### Material Needed:

- ☐ Two signs: “Positive Response” and “Negative Response”
- ☐ Optional – Two buckets or bins labeled with the two signs, “Positive Response” and “Negative Response”

**“Every day we face situations where we have a choice in how we respond. Let’s practice thinking about how we can respond in a way that shows God’s love.”**

Read each situation aloud and ask the children questions after each scenario (e.g., "Your friend knocks over your blocks on purpose.")

- ***"What is one positive response you could have?"***
- ***"What is one negative response?"***

Have the kids vote with their feet by walking to either the "Positive" or "Negative" sign as you read different options aloud. Or let kids sort response cards into the "Positive" or "Negative" bin.

Discuss Each One Briefly:

***"Why might that response be hard?"***

***"What could help you choose the positive response next time?"***

***"How can Jesus help us respond with love?"***

Sample Situations:

- A classmate calls you a mean name.
- Your little brother breaks your favorite toy.
- You see a new kid sitting alone.
- A friend lies to you.
- Someone takes credit for something you did.
- A friend does not want to share the game with you.
- Someone cuts in front of you in line.
- Your teacher asks you a question and you do not know the answer.
- You lose a game and feel really frustrated.
- You see someone drop their lunch tray.
- A kid is being picked on and you are not sure what to do.
- Your sibling wants to play but you want to be alone.
- You forgot to do your homework.
- A classmate says something unkind about your family.
- Your parent asks you to clean up your toys, but you are watching a show.
- You see someone cheating during a game.
- You make a mistake and want to hide it.
- Your friend invites everyone to a party except you.
- Someone is sad or crying during recess.

# Large Group

*10-15 Minutes*

Welcome the students to Crossroads and tell them you are glad they came this week.

## Optional Starters

Feel free to choose one, two, or even all of these ideas to start Large Group!

**“Who is Jesus” call and response**

**Prayer Prompt: “God, I want to praise you for...”**

(Tell God something amazing about him and praise him for who he is.)

**Opening Song: “Joy to the World” by Go Fish**

## Opening Prayer

Tell kids that closing their eyes and folding their hands together can help keep them focused and not distract those around them.

## Activity: Three Corners – Responding to the King

*Objective: To help kids experience and reflect on the different responses to the news of Jesus’ birth in Matthew 1–2 through Joseph, the Wise Men, and King Herod.*

### Material Needed:

- ☐ 3 Bibles, one for each of the three Response Corners
- ☐ Printout 1 – Printed reflection question for each corner
- ☐ Optional: Signs marking the 3 corners
- ☐ Optional: Simple props (e.g., a crown, star, angel picture) to make each corner more engaging

Setup: Choose three spaces in your room and label each as one of the corners listed above. Assign a leader to each corner.

Instructions:

Step 1: Introduction (Whole Group)

**“We are going to travel to three places in the Christmas story. In each one, someone hears about Jesus—the newborn King. But not everyone responds the same way. Let’s go see what happened!”**

Divide the group into three smaller groups and send them to different corners to begin.

- Corner 1: Joseph – Obeyed God’s Message
- Corner 2: Wise Men – Searched for the King
- Corner 3: Herod – Rejected the King

Step 2: Regroup & Wrap-Up

After all groups have rotated through the three corners:

Ask the Whole Group:

- ***“Who do you want to be like—Joseph, the Wise Men, or Herod?”***
- ***“How can we respond to Jesus as King in our own lives?”***

### **Close in Prayer**

Invite kids to quietly talk to God and tell Him they want to follow and worship Jesus like Joseph and the Wise Men did.

# Small Group Session 2

20-25 Minutes

*Share the Key Takeaway: When we hear the good news of Jesus, we can choose to respond with joy.*

## **Activity: Name of Jesus Craft**

*Objective: Help kids connect Jesus' name with his mission to save.*

### **Material Needed:**

- ☐ Large "JESUS" letters on paper
- ☐ Crayons
- ☐ Stickers
- ☐ Printout 1 – Heart cutouts

Instructions:

- Let kids decorate the letters with symbols of joy (hearts, crosses, stars, smiley faces).
- Inside or around the name "Jesus," have them write/draw things they are thankful for about Jesus or how they feel about Him saving us.

***"The name Jesus means 'God saves.' He came to rescue us from sin so we can be close to him forever. That is good news!"***

- ***"How does that make you feel?"***

## **Activity: Roll to Respond**

*Objective: Help children reflect on and express joyful responses to Jesus, reinforcing that we can choose to respond with joy because he is the promised Savior.*

### **Material Needed:**

- ☐ One die (or make a paper/cardstock cube with numbers 1–6)
- ☐ Optional: A simple chart or poster with the prompts visible to help early readers

Instructions:

Gather the group in a circle or at a table.

***"Each number on the die is a way we can respond to Jesus with joy—just like the wise men and Joseph did in our Bible story."***

- Show the number key (see sample below).
- Take turns rolling the die.
- When a child rolls, they read the matching joyful response and act on it (verbally or with a quick action).
- Continue for several rounds or until all kids have had at least 2 turns (reinforce the idea that there are no wrong answers)

Die Key (For Older Kids):

Number	Joyful Response Prompt
1	Say something kind about Jesus (e.g., "Jesus is loving!")
2	Thank Jesus for something in your life
3	Share one way you can show joy to Jesus this week
4	Pretend to give a gift to Jesus—what are you giving him?
5	Say one reason Jesus makes you happy
6	Make up a short cheer for Jesus ("Yay, Jesus is here!")

Die Key (For Younger Kids):

Number	Joyful Response Prompt
Even Number	Say one reason Jesus makes you happy (e.g., "Jesus loves me", "Jesus can help me" )

Odd Number	Thank Jesus for something in your life (e.g., “For my family,” “For my friends.”)
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### Going Deeper

- ***“Joseph trusted and obeyed God, even when it was hard or confusing. Has there ever been a time you felt God asking you to do something that was not easy? How did you respond?”***
- ***“The wise men were full of joy when they found Jesus. What are some things that bring you joy because of who Jesus is?”***
- ***“Jesus’ name means “God saves.” Why do you think we need to be saved? What do you think Jesus is saving us from?”***
- ***“Herod heard the same news about Jesus, but he did not respond with joy—he was angry. Why do some people not want to follow Jesus?”***
- ***“What is one way you can show joy in your life this week because you know Jesus? How could that impact the people around you?”***
- ***“Imagine someone who does not know anything about Jesus asks, “Why is His birth such a big deal?”—how would you explain it to them in your own words?”***
- ***“Jesus did not come to give us more rules. He came to bring forgiveness and show us how to live with him. How does it feel to know that Jesus came to take away your sin?”***
- ***“The wise men gave gifts to Jesus. What is something special you could “give” to Him—not just at Christmas, but today?”***

# **Ending Together**

*5-10 Minutes*

***“Tell one person in your life about Jesus. He is the savior who takes away our sins, and because of that, we can choose to respond with joy.***

***Use your Jesus name craft to help you share the good news about Jesus with a friend, family, member, or teacher.”***

## **Response and Reflection**

***“What is one way you can trust God this week?”***

Print out the memory verse.

Practice the memory verse for this unit (Luke 2:11). Take a look at the [Memory Verse Game Ideas](#).

Pray with the students and dismiss them.

## **Close in Prayer**

# Games

*25 Minutes*

## **Game: Follow the Star Game**

**Objective:** Reinforce the idea of seeking Jesus with joyful hearts.

**Materials:**

- ☐ Star cutouts or taped arrows on the floor leading to a "Jesus" sign or nativity image

**Instructions:**

- Create a path around the room like a star-led journey.
- Along the way, have "star stops" with questions like:
  - **What makes you excited about Jesus?**
  - **What do you think it means that Jesus saves us from sin?**
  - **What can you say or do to show joy?**
- At the end, have the group say together, "Jesus, thank You for saving me!" and celebrate by clapping or dancing.

**Lesson Connection:** Like the wise men followed the star with joy, we can follow Jesus joyfully too.

## **Game: Respond or Freeze (Herod, Wise Men, Joseph)**

**Materials Needed:** None

**How to Play:**

- The leader calls out different responses from the Christmas story (e.g., "Obey," "Search," "Reject").
- Kids must act accordingly:
  - **Obey (Joseph)** — Salute or nod yes.
  - **Search (Wise Men)** — Pretend to look through binoculars.
  - **Reject (Herod)** — Cross arms and turn back.
- If they do the wrong motion, they sit out for one round.
- Make it fast-paced and fun.

**Connection to Lesson:** Helps kids remember the different responses to Jesus' birth.

After the game, discuss: "**Which response do you want to choose when you hear about Jesus?**"

## Game: Pass the Gift of Joy

### Materials Needed:

- ☐ Wrapped gift box or small object (can be empty inside)
- ☐ Music player or phone to play music

### How to Play:

- Sit kids in a circle.
- Pass a gift box or wrapped object while music plays.
- When the music stops, whoever has the box says one way they can show joy to Jesus (worship, singing, serving, etc.).
- Keep playing several rounds.

**Connection to Lesson:** Teaches kids that we can all choose to respond with joy, just like the Wise Men.

## Game: Star Hide and Seek (Silent Joy)

### Materials Needed:

- ☐ Large paper star or several small star cutouts
- ☐ Tape to stick stars in hidden spots (optional)

### How to Play:

- Hide one large paper star or multiple smaller stars around the room.
- Kids search quietly (like the Wise Men traveling a long way without knowing exactly where they were going).
- When they find the star, they can say "Joy!" and gather together at the front.

**Connection to Lesson:** Reinforces the idea of seeking Jesus with hearts full of joy like the Wise Men.

Emphasize that sometimes seeking Jesus means being patient and trusting.

## Printout 11.1

# THREE CORNERS: RESPONDING TO THE KING

### Corner 1: Joseph—Obeyed God’s Message

**READ:** Matthew 1:18–24.

Joseph was scared and confused when he found out Mary was going to have a baby. But when the angel told him the truth—that this baby was God’s Son—Joseph listened and obeyed.

**ANSWER:**

- What do you think it was like for Joseph to trust God in such a hard situation?
- Have you ever had to obey even when it was hard or didn’t make sense?

**OPTIONAL ACTION:** Have kids pretend to be Joseph sleeping and then waking up and nodding “yes” to God’s plan.

### Corner 2: Wise Men—Searched for the King

**READ:** Matthew 2:1–11.

The Wise Men saw a special star in the sky and believed it meant the King had been born. They traveled a long way, brought gifts, and worshiped Jesus when they found him.

**ANSWER:**

- Why do you think the Wise Men were willing to travel so far?
- What would you bring as a gift to Jesus?

**OPTIONAL ACTION:** Let kids pretend to walk through a desert and then kneel to present a gift to Jesus.

### Corner 3: Herod—Rejected the King

**READ:** Matthew 2:1–3 and 2:13–16.

King Herod wasn’t excited about the new King. He was afraid someone would take his throne, so he tried to stop God’s plan.

**ANSWER:**

- Why do you think Herod was scared of Jesus?
- What happens when people want their own way instead of God’s way?

**OPTIONAL ACTION:** Let kids make a crown shape with their hands and then take it off as a way to say, “Jesus is King, not me.”

## Printout 11.2

# HEART CUTOUT

