



COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

The Kid / Week 3

SERIES OVERVIEW

SERIES SUMMARY

So much of the transformative power of the Christmas narrative lies in the reality that Jesus was born and raised in a place so small and inconsequential that it appears on no maps prior to the 1st century. This series encourages middle schoolers to consider how a Kid from nowhere (Jesus) changes everything: how you see your situation, how you see yourself and everyone else, and how you see your fear.

SERIES BOTTOM LINE

The Kid changes how you see your fear

WEEKLY BOTTOM LINES

WEEK 1: Christmas is about the Kid who changed everything

WEEK 2: The Kid shows us that Christmas is for everyone

WEEK 3: The Kid changes how you see your fear

WEEK 4: The Kid changes everything, especially you

SCRIPTURE

Gabriel appeared to her and said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you" (Luke 1:28 NLT)!

"Don't be afraid, Mary," the angel told her, "for you have found favor with God!" (Luke 1:30 NLT)

"You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!" (Luke 1:31-33 NLT).

"For nothing will be impossible with God" (Luke 1:37 ESV).

NOTES FOR THIS WEEK

THINK ABOUT THIS

Remember that fear is a relative experience. What brings up fear for one student may be completely harmless to another. So, as students talk about what things in their lives bring out fear this season specifically, be inclusive to all the things expressed and careful not to dismiss any of their answers. In addition, be aware that it may be hard for your middle schoolers to talk about fear in a more abstract or vulnerable way. Their thinking is concrete in this phase and their emotional quotient is still developing. So, they may only talk about fear in a very tangible, surface level way, as in "I'm afraid of spiders," or "I'm scared of the dark." That's okay! Let them start there and then build on that foundation by sharing from your own life (just make sure you keep it age and phase appropriate!). Give students examples of more abstract, deeply rooted fears you've felt at the holidays, like "I'm afraid I won't be able to afford any gifts," or "I'm afraid to spend Christmas without my parent who passed away." By going first to share, you're not just

giving them an example, but you're modeling what it is to be honest and vulnerable with both God and others.

INTERACTIVE 1: REMEMBER

OVERVIEW

For this Interactive, you'll have students write statements on sticky notes that help them remember what's true about God, Jesus, and themselves.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- A sticky note and pen for each student in your ministry
 - Volunteers to pass out the sticky notes and pens to students as they enter your environment
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TEACHING OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

- I mean, what's there not to love about Christmas? *[Give relevant examples.]*
- I love the joy of the holiday season. Or, I guess I should say, I love it while it lasts!
- *[Tell a story from your own life about a Christmas tradition, memory, or experience you once loved that changed a little as you got older.]*
- I think we all probably can understand the moment when the most wonderful time of the year becomes . . . well, less wonderful.

TENSION

- It's easy to pretend everything is merry and bright on the outside, but on the inside, we're not always feeling those Christmas feels.
- One primary feeling we're not usually singing about at the holidays? Fear!
- But while it doesn't show up in song lyrics, fear definitely shows up in our lives, sometimes at Christmas and certainly throughout the year.
- For a lot of us, whether we realize it or not, fear has a way of creeping in at Christmas and making our joy far less joyful.
- That can happen for all kinds of reasons! *[Give relevant examples.]*
- No matter what your fears may be about, the good news is the Christmas story gives us an answer for them.
- When the Kid arrived? Well, it was the first step in changing everything about the way we can respond to our fears.

TRUTH

- To help us today, let's look back to that first Christmas.
 - *Gabriel appeared to her and said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you" (Luke 1:28 NLT)!*
- This wasn't some random man on the street saying this to Mary; this was a message directly from God.
- If you were Mary, how would you respond in a moment like this?
- We read from Luke's story of what took place that Mary responded by being both "confused" and "disturbed."
- Sensing her fear, Gabriel responded with a line that would change her life forever.
 - *"Don't be afraid, Mary," the angel told her, "for you have found favor with God!" (Luke 1:30 NLT)*

- In one sentence, Gabriel not only encouraged Mary not to be afraid, but he also gave her a reason not to stay afraid.
- She found favor with God, and it was this favor—this knowing that God was with her and for her—that gave her confidence.
- Here’s how the angel Gabriel described it:
 - *“You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!” (Luke 1:31-33 NLT).*
- Gabriel assured her with this promise:
 - *“For nothing will be impossible with God” (Luke 1:37 ESV).*
- Mary had every reason to be afraid, but Gabriel’s words served as a reminder that God was with her in the midst of those fears.
- No fear can keep us from experiencing the good that God has for us.
- Despite Mary’s initial fear, God made it possible, and even in her fear, Mary knew that God was with her.
- At the heart of the Christmas story is the reality that Jesus came to Earth to be God with us.
- Jesus’ arrival in the world showed that to Mary, and it can show us the same today.
- The Kid changes how you see your fear.
- Because of this Kid, we have an opportunity to respond to our fears in the same way that Mary did: with confidence and faith in God who makes all things possible.
- Because the Kid changes how you see your fear.

APPLICATION

- Sometimes the most difficult thing to do when fears arise is to simply remember what is true.
- So, if fear pops up in your life this Christmas season, here’s what I want you to do: remember what’s true about God, Jesus, and yourself.
- Start simply by remembering that, like Mary, you can walk forward because you aren’t walking alone. Remember that the Kid changes how you see your fear.
- *[INTERACTIVE: Remember: This is where you’ll have students write statements on sticky notes that help them remember what’s true about God, Jesus, and themselves.]*

LANDING

- Christmas is meant to be a time of joy.
- Maybe the way you make sure that’s true for you is simply by remembering what Jesus did for us.
- This week, I hope you’ll remember the Kid changes how you see your fear.
- And when you go to Small Group, I hope you’ll talk about how do to that this holiday season.
- What’s one thing you can remember is true about God when you’re afraid?

TEACHING SLIDES

All bolded words and phrases in the Teaching Script are also provided as teaching slides for Premium Tier subscribers.



TEACHING SCRIPT

The Kid / Week 3

BOTTOM LINE

THE KID CHANGES HOW YOU SEE YOUR FEAR

INTRODUCTION

2 ½ MINUTES

Merry Christmas season, everybody! I'm so glad to be here to celebrate the most wonderful time of the year with you all. I mean, what's there not to love about Christmas?

Family and presents,
A break from school and a time to rest,
A season of celebration with parades, decorations, and lights,
Christmas movies on repeat, and Christmas music on the playlist,
And we can't forget about the Christmas trees!

I don't know about you, but I love the joy of the holiday season. Or, I guess I should say, I love it while it lasts!

TELL A PERSONAL STORY

Tell a story from your own life that illustrates the following thoughts or ideas . . .

- Share about a Christmas tradition, memory, or experience you once loved that changed a little as you got older.
- Maybe it was making cookies with your grandma, or wrapping presents with your parent, or watching the same cartoon every Christmas Eve.
- Focus on how it started as a fun, joyful part of the season, but for whatever reason, it eventually became less and less fun and joyful for you as you got older or things changed.
- A sample story is included below.

As a kid, my favorite part of Christmas was decorating the tree. In our family, it was always a real Christmas tree. So, if you're one of those fake Christmas tree people, you can hold your judgment; real Christmas trees are just better. Now, whether you're a fake tree or a real tree person, after you get your tree, you begin the process of stringing the lights and decorating it with all the ornaments. My sister and I would always argue about who got to hang these crystal bells on the tree and who would top it with the star. I always wanted the star because of how tall it seemed to me. It was always so way up there, and I was so way down here.

This happened every year until I turned 14. Normally, we'd go get the tree together as a family, but that year, my parents brought one home without us. And for the first time at Christmas, I felt a new emotion: disappointment. I was used to these massive trees that barely fit in our living room, but the tree they brought home that year was barely taller than me. Now, it didn't matter that I'd just grown seven inches during seventh grade, so nothing from my perspective was as big as it used to be. All I cared about was that the wonder I felt at Christmas because of the tree was nowhere to be found. I think what I said to my parents was, "That's not a Christmas tree. It's barely a shrub."

Maybe you can relate! In fact, I think we all probably can understand the moment when the most wonderful time of the year becomes . . . well, less wonderful.

TENSION

2 MINUTES

It's easy to pretend everything is merry and bright on the outside, but on the inside, we're not always feeling those Christmas feels. I think that's because the holiday season has a way of bringing out several emotions for several reasons. Instead of calling it the "most wonderful time of the year," they might as well change the song to the most stressful, the most frustrating, the most worry-filled, the most . . . you fill in the blank!

One primary feeling we're not usually singing about at the holidays? **Fear!** But while it doesn't show up in song lyrics, fear definitely shows up in our lives, sometimes at Christmas and certainly throughout the year. One scroll through social media, one glance at the news, one dinner with your family fighting shows you just that! For a lot of us, whether we realize it or not, fear has a way of creeping in at Christmas and making our joy far less joyful.

And that can happen for all kinds of reasons!

There's fear that comes from the pressure of passing tests at the end of the semester, or seeing family members we don't always get along with, or meeting your parent or guardian's expectations for a good holiday.

It could be fear of being left out or forgotten by your friends on holiday break, or fear that comes with knowing your family can't afford a lot this season, or fear of returning to school in the new year.

Maybe it's a fear that comes from worrying about what others will think of us, or knowing a loved one is sick or missing this Christmas, or feeling alone or without friends and family this holiday.

No matter what your fears may be about, the good news is the Christmas story gives us an answer for them. At that very first Christmas thousands of years ago, Jesus showed up in a situation that was filled with fear. And when the Kid arrived? Well, it was the first step in changing everything about the way we can respond to our fears.

TRUTH

3 ½ MINUTES

To help us today, let's look back to that first Christmas. There, we find a young girl named Mary, who's expecting to marry Joseph.

And then something unexpected happened:

Gabriel appeared to her and said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you" (Luke 1:28 NLT)!

It's important to mention that the "her" here was Mary and that Gabriel wasn't just some guy. He was an angel of the Lord. So this wasn't some random man on the street saying this to Mary; this was a message

directly from God. And angels were intimidating. People fell on their faces after seeing angels. Often the angels' first words to people were, "Do not be afraid!"

If you were Mary, how would you respond in a moment like this? An angel of the Lord suddenly appeared out of nowhere, likely giving you the biggest jump-scare of your entire life! Not just that, he declared that you're favored, and God is with you! If I was Mary, I would be feeling both terribly afraid and terribly excited all at the same time.

And that isn't far from what happened. We read from Luke's story of what took place that Mary responded by being both "confused" and "disturbed."¹ Honestly, it makes sense! So when an angel of the Lord appeared to tell her that she was favored and God was with her, I'm sure it was terrifying!

Sensing her fear, Gabriel responded with a line that would change her life forever. In fact, it can change our lives, too. Take a look:

"Don't be afraid, Mary," the angel told her, "for you have found favor with God!" (Luke 1:30 NLT)

In one sentence, Gabriel not only encouraged Mary not to be afraid, but he also gave her a reason not to stay afraid. The reason? She found favor with God. It was this favor—this knowing that God was with her and for her—that gave her confidence in what could have been the scariest, most fear-filled months of her life.

Here's how the angel Gabriel described it:

"You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!" (Luke 1:31-33 NLT).

See what I mean about fear? I'm sure it was a lot to be engaged to be married, about to be pregnant, and not just pregnant with any kid but the Son of God Himself! Mary had to be thinking something like, *What in the world is this angel talking about? If this is true, what will people think? What will Joseph think? How am I going to do this?*

Of course, God knew Mary would respond this way. That's why Gabriel assured her with this promise:

"For nothing will be impossible with God" (Luke 1:37 ESV).

Mary had every reason to be afraid. Her fears were more than legit. But Gabriel's words served as a reminder that God was with her in the midst of those fears. And with God, nothing was impossible. And with God, nothing is impossible for us either. No fear can keep us from experiencing the good that God has for us.

We know the rest of the story, don't we? Mary did, in fact, get pregnant. She went on to deliver her Baby, the Kid who came to be the Savior of the world. Despite Mary's initial fear, God made it possible. And even in her fear, Mary knew that God was with her. That's what Christmas shows us all!

At the heart of the Christmas story is the reality that Jesus came to Earth to be God with us. Because of that, we no longer have to face any of our fears—big or small—alone. Jesus' arrival in the world showed that to Mary, and it can show us the same today.

The Kid changes how you see your fear.

¹ Luke 1:29 NLT

Because of this Kid, we have an opportunity to respond to our fears in the same way that Mary did: with confidence and faith in God who makes all things possible. Sure, fear will still happen. We're still going to have reasons to worry, stress, and be afraid. But, because of Jesus, we don't have to let those fears take over. Everything changes when we realize God sent the Kid here to be with us in every fear we face.

Because **the Kid changes how you see your fear**.

APPLICATION

1 ½ MINUTES

Sometimes the most difficult thing to do when fears arise is to simply remember what is true. Our brains sort of freeze when we face fear, and that can make it easy to forget the truth that we can anchor to no matter what.

So, if fear pops up in your life this Christmas season, here's what I want you to do: **remember**.

Remember what's true about God—that nothing is impossible with God.
Remember what's true about Jesus—that the Kid came to be with you as you experience fear.
And remember what's true about you—that you're loved and cared for by God who is with you and can help you with fears.

Start simply by remembering that, like Mary, you can walk forward because you aren't walking alone. Remember that **the Kid changes how you see your fear**.

INTERACTIVE: Remember

This is where you'll have students write statements on sticky notes that help them remember what's true about God, Jesus, and themselves.

I want you to take out the sticky note that you got as you walked in today. At the top write in all caps, **REMEMBER**. And then under it, write out statements like these:

- I am loved by God.
- Jesus showed up for me.
- I can trust what God is doing.
- Jesus is with me in my fear.

Take this sticky note with you as a reminder about what's true about God, Jesus, and yourself as you face any fears that come your way this Christmas season.

LANDING

1 ½ MINUTES

Christmas is meant to be a time of joy. But maybe the way you make sure that's true for you is simply by remembering what Jesus did for us.

He chose to show up in our world.
He chose to be with us.
He chose to save us.
And that changed everything!

So, this week, I hope you'll remember **the Kid changes how you see your fear**. And when you go to Small Group, I hope you'll talk about how do to that this holiday season. We created these groups to be a

safe space to share about your fears and encourage one another to remember and walk forward in faith. Maybe your first step in facing a fear this Christmas is opening up to your Small Group!

As you head that way, I want you to think about this question: **What's one thing you can remember is true about God when you're afraid?**



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS
