

The Greatest Love of All

Bible: The Greatest Love of All (God Loves the World) • *John 3:16*

Bottom Line: God did something about our greatest need.

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)*

Life App: Compassion—Caring enough to do something about someone else’s need

Basic Truth: I can trust God no matter what.

Social: Setting the Tone for the Experience (9:00, 10:15, 11:30)

9:00 & 11:30

Wants vs. Needs

- Slips of paper; three for each kid
- Pencils

10:15

Early Arriver

- “All I Want for Christmas Is My Two Front Teeth” by your choice of artists
- Music player

Bible: Communicating God’s Truth in Engaging Ways (9:15, 10:30, 11:45)

- Bible Presentation in Large Group

Groups: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (9:40, 10:55, 12:10)

9:00 & 11:30

Show Compassion

- No supplies needed

10:15

Light It Up

- “Light It Up” Activity Page; one for each kid
- Push pins; one for each kid
- Flashlights; one for each kid

Prayer (9:50, 11:05, 12:20)

- No supplies needed

Dismiss (10:00, 11:15, 12:30)

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Social: Providing Time for Fun Interaction (Small Groups, 15 minutes)

Before kids arrive, take a few moments to pray for them. Pray that kids would begin to understand the enormity of what God did to meet our needs and what that says about how much He loves us. Ask God to allow them to enjoy the fun and excitement of the season while also beginning to internalize what it means for their relationship with Him.

9:00 & 11:30

Wants vs. Needs

What You Need: Slips of paper, pencils

What You Do:

- Give each kid three slips of paper and a pencil.
- Instruct them to write down three things in their house—they can be anything from snacks to toys to furniture.
- Collect the slips of paper.
- Designate one side of your space to be the “WANTS” side and the other side to be the “NEEDS” side.
- Read the slips one by one.
- After you read one, kids will run to the side of the room that they think the item on the slip fits into.
- If there are kids on both sides for the same item, ask a volunteer from each side to explain why they chose the side they did.
- Continue play as time and interest allows.

What You Say:

“We all have stuff, but there’s a difference between things we WANT and things we really NEED. We need food. We don’t need video games. We need shoes. We don’t need 15 pairs of shoes.

[Transition] Let’s go to Large Group, where we’ll hear more about something we REALLY need.”

Lead your group to the Large Group area.

10:15

Early Arriver Idea

What You Need: “All I Want for Christmas Is My Two Front Teeth” on the presentation computer

What You Do:

- Play “All I Want for Christmas Is My Two Front Teeth” and tell kids to pay attention to the chorus—particularly the line after the title line.
- Ask kids to think of what they want for Christmas and why they want it—like how the kid in the song wants his two front teeth so he can wish people “Merry Christmas.”
- Then guide kids to take turns singing the chorus while inserting their own items and reasons why they want them.

Lead your group to the Large Group area.

The Greatest Love of All

Bible: Communicating God’s Truth in Engaging Ways (Large Group, 25 minutes)

GETTING READY

1. Opener/Closer

What You Need:

- Host
- Christmas suit or footie pajamas (for Host)
- Christmas fedora (for Host)
- Red or green file folder with the Undercover Christmas Folder Logo attached to the front
- Decorated Christmas tree (to keep on stage all month)
- Two small groups (or two Leaders with three kids each)
- Table
- Five wrapped boxes, open on one side
- Two handheld jingle bells
- 10 gift tags
- Two pens
- Toy horse with a bell attached to the tail
- Corn cob
- Button (from a shirt)
- Stuffed or inflatable bird with a “NEW” sign around its neck
- Pudding cup
- Newtons cookies (formerly known as Fig Newtons)
- Piece of pumpkin pie

2. Bible Truth

What You Need:

- Historyteller
- Bible
- Three wrapped boxes, open on one side
- Table
- Five golden rings (costume jewelry)
- Pair of socks
- Red heart helium balloon tied to a weight

3. Worship

What You Need:

- “Better than the Best Thing”
- “*Look at Me*”
- “*Sons & Daughters*”

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Life App: Compassion—Caring enough to do something about someone else’s need

Basic Truth: I can trust God no matter what.

Bible: Communicating God’s Truth in Engaging Ways (Large Group, 25 minutes)

Engage kids’ hearts through a dynamic and interactive Bible Truth, worship, and prayer experience in a Large Group setting.

CG: Theme Loop Slide

Host enters wearing his Christmas suit (or footie pajamas) and Christmas fedora. He’s carrying the “Undercover Christmas” file folder.

The two tables with gift boxes should already be set up on stage (one for the Opener, and one for the Story).

CG: Countdown Video

CG: Theme Video

Opener

HOST: “Hello, everyone! Can you believe it’s December already? I don’t know about you, but I just LOVE Christmastime. The decorations, the traditions, the gifts, the cookies! Christmas is my FAVORITE!

“I’ve got my cool, Christmassy detective hat (*point to fedora*) and my case files (*hold up the file folder*), because this year we’re taking Christmas undercover! That’s right—it’s an Undercover Christmas, and our super top-secret mission is compassion.

CG: Life App Video

“Compassion is caring enough to do something about someone else’s need.

CG: Theme TransBack Video

“Finding out what someone else needs isn’t always easy. Sometimes it means being extra careful to listen to people. Sometimes it might even mean that you have to ask questions. Like if your brother or sister is really upset and you don’t know why, you might have to (*gasp*) put the Switch™ down for a minute and ask them what’s wrong.

“Once you know what someone needs, you need to DO something about it. So if your mom is having a hard day, maybe you not only do your chores, but you also do some of the things that SHE normally does without being asked—just to help her out.

“That, my friends, is compassion. This Christmas we’re on an undercover mission to find people who need some compassion and then do things to show them we care. It’s going to take some good detective work. Now, to test your detective skills, I thought we could play a game called ‘Fa La La La HUH?’

CG: “Fa La La La HUH?” Slide

“Let me get two small groups up here to play.

Bring two small groups (including their Leaders) up on stage next to the table with the five boxes. (Note: If your stage space is limited, you can use two Leaders plus three kids from each of their groups.)

(To the two groups on stage) “All right, teams. Inside these gift boxes *(point to the gift boxes)* are random objects that are mentioned in a Christmas song. We’ll go one box at a time. I will lift the box and reveal the item under it. As a group, you’ll try to name that song before the other team does. If you know it, tell your Leader. Your Leader will write the song name on a gift tag *(hold up a gift tag)* and then ring his or her jingle bells to lock in your answer *(ring one of the jingle bells)*. The first group to get the correct answer wins!

“Let’s start with box number one.

Lift the box to reveal the first item (the horse with a bell on its tail). Give the groups a chance to come up with an answer, and call on whoever rings their jingle bells first.

“All right—[Leader’s name]’s group, hold up your answer. *(Pause.)* That’s right! It’s from ‘Jingle Bells.’

SFX: “Jingle Bells” cued up to “Bells on bobtail ring”

“One point for [Leader’s name’s] group!

Note: Throughout the game, keep score of how many correct answers each group gets. If a team gets the wrong answer, give the other group the option to steal the point.

“How about box number two?

Lift the box to reveal the second item (corn cob and button). Give the groups a chance to come up with an answer, and call on whoever rings their jingle bells first.

“Let’s see what you’ve got, [Leader’s name]. *(Pause.)* Yes! It’s ‘Frosty the Snowman.’ Everybody sing

along to the lyrics that include these two items. (*Pause.*)

SFX: "Frosty the Snowman" cued up to "With a corn cob . . ."

Recap the score.

"Let's see what's in box number three.

Lift the box to reveal the third item (stuffed or inflatable bird with a "NEW" sign around its neck). Give the groups a chance to come up with an answer, and call on whoever rings their jingle bells first.

"Okay, [Leader's name]. What song is that? (*Pause.*) Right! 'Winter Wonderland.' Take a listen to the lyrics.

SFX: "Winter Wonderland" cued up to "Gone away . . ."

Recap the score.

"Box number four!

Lift the box to reveal the fourth item (pudding cup and Newtons). Give the groups a chance to come up with an answer, and call on whoever rings their jingle bells first.

"[Leader's name], let's see your guess. (*Pause.*) Correct! It's from 'We Wish You a Merry Christmas.'

SFX: "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" cued up to "Now bring . . ."

Recap the score.

"All right, let's see what's inside our last box!

Lift the box to reveal the fifth item (piece of pumpkin pie). Give the groups a chance to come up with an answer, and call on whoever rings their jingle bells first.

"What song do you have, [Leader's name]? (*Pause.*) Yep! That IS from 'Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree'!

SFX: "Rockin' Around the Christmas tree" cued up to "Later we'll . . ."

"That was a lot of fun! Thank you, both groups, for playing. Congratulations to [Leader's name]'s group on your victory.

Dismiss both groups to their seats.

“Now let’s welcome [Historyteller’s Name] to the stage.”

Host exits as Historyteller enters.

CG: Blank Bottom Line Slide

SETTING UP THE BIBLE TRUTH

HISTORYTELLER: “Hello, everyone! I’m so glad it’s the most wonderful time of the year. I LOVE Christmas, and I bet you do too. I love giving AND getting presents. It’s so much fun!

“Christmas is a time of gifts, for sure—but have you ever wondered why? I mean, we make wish lists for the things we want. We spend the whole month of December wondering what gifts we might get under the tree. But we don’t do that on September 25, or January 25, or March 25, or . . . you get the idea. There is definitely a reason for all of the gift giving on Christmas. We give gifts as a way to remember the gift God gave US when He gave us His Son, Jesus.

“A man named John was one of Jesus’ closest friends and disciples. He traveled with Jesus for nearly three years, and he wrote the Gospel of John in the Bible. (*Hold up Bible.*) John tells us about a religious leader whose life was based on following rules. When Jesus talked to this religious leader, He completely flipped this man’s world upside down! Jesus helped the man see what God’s love and compassion are all about.

“Listen to what it says in John 3:16.

Open the Bible to John 3:16 (NIRV) and read.

CG: Blank Memory Verse Slide

CG: Memory Verse Slide

“God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life.

“That’s a pretty big deal, right? God loves us all so much that He gave us the gift of His Son, Jesus.”

WHAT YOU WANT

HISTORYTELLER: “When we think about gifts, we usually think about what we WANT. Think about your Christmas list. You probably don’t NEED most of the things on your list. You WANT them. In fact, there’s a whole Christmas song about getting gifts for Christmas.

“Any guesses what it might be?”

Go to the table and lift the first gift box to reveal the five golden rings.

“Right. It’s ‘The 12 Days of Christmas’!

SFX: “The 12 Days of Christmas” cued up to “Five golden rings”

“That song is full of lots of things that I’m not sure I’d want as a gift . . . but five golden rings? Sure!

Put the rings on your fingers, and then take them off.

“What are some things YOU want? Raise your hand. I want to hear some of them.

Call on a few kids to shout out what they want. Repeat what they said so everyone can hear. (Just ignore any inappropriate answers.)

“Wow. That was pretty easy, right? None of us have any trouble coming up with cool stuff that we want to get.”

WHAT YOU NEED

HISTORYTELLER: “But gifts aren’t always about what we WANT. Sometimes people give us gifts that we NEED.

Go to the table and lift the second gift box to reveal the pair of socks.

“Anybody know a Christmas song about socks? (*Stop and think.*) Me neither. I mean, you’ve got the song about Christmas shoes. But no Christmas socks.

“Think about it, though. Let’s say all your socks have either gotten lost or have holes in them. There’s no way around it. You NEED new socks. (*Pick up the socks.*) So if someone gives you socks as a gift, then, hey, you’re good to go!

“What are some other things you need?”

Call on a few kids to shout out things they need. Repeat what they said so everyone can hear. (Just ignore any inappropriate answers.)

“Right. You need food and water to survive. You need a house or apartment to keep you safe from the weather. You need people! You need family and friends who care about you.”

EVERYONE’S GREATEST NEED

HISTORYTELLER: “There are lots of things we need. All of those things you mentioned are important. But there’s only one thing that’s our greatest need. We need it more than anything else. It’s more important than anything else. And it’s the same thing for all of us. All of us have the same greatest need. We all need Jesus.

Go to the table and lift the third gift box to reveal the balloon. Let the song play for a few seconds before continuing.

SFX: “All I Need” by Orange Kids Music (00:24–0:39)

“It’s true—Jesus is all we need! Remember the verse we looked at earlier, John 3:16?”

Open the Bible to John 3:16 (NIRV) and read.

CG: Blank Memory Verse Slide

CG: Memory Verse Slide

“God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life.

(Point to the heart balloon.) “You see, God loved us so much that **[Bottom Line] He did something about our greatest need.** He gave us Jesus to take care of our sin problem.

“Raise your hand if you’ve ever done anything wrong. *(Raise your hand.)* Yeah. Me too. All of us have sinned. We have ALL made mistakes. And since God is perfect, our sin separates us from Him. That’s why God’s gift is so important. At Christmas, we celebrate that Jesus was born. But we also remember why He came in the first place. He came to die on the cross and to take the punishment that we deserve. He came to take care of our sin problem, once and for all, so that we could be forgiven and have a relationship with God that will last FOREVER. All we have to do is believe!

“That’s why Jesus is the greatest gift. That’s why we celebrate Christmas! We remember that **[Bottom Line] God did something about our greatest need.**”

WRAPPING UP THE BIBLE TRUTH

HISTORYTELLER: “God saw our need, and He loved us enough us to do something about it. He gave us His Son—the greatest gift we could ever receive.

CG: Bottom Line Slide

[Bottom Line] “**God did something about our greatest need.** And guess what. We can follow His example. We can show compassion to the people around us. We can take the time to be kind and show them we care. We can do something about their needs, just like God did for us.

“Let’s pray and ask God to help us do that.”

CG: Blank Bottom Line Slide

Pray

HISTORYTELLER: “Dear God, thank You for Christmas! Thank You for sending Jesus to do something about our greatest need. Help us to follow Your example and show compassion to the people You’ve put in our lives. Help us to see how we can help them, and give us the courage to do something to meet their needs. Thank You for loving us! We love You, and we ask these things in Jesus’ name, amen.”

“If you have an offering with you today, you can bring that on up now.”

“Now, it’s time for Worship. Up on your feet please!”

Worship

HOST: “There is no one greater than Jesus, our Savior. He is better than the Best Thing we could possibly think of. Let’s sing this together!”

CG: “*Better Than the Best Thing*”

“You know, there are people that do not know about Jesus and there are people who know about Jesus and don’t believe that He is God’s son. When you are a believer, it’s your honor to make choices and do things that Jesus would make. That way, when people look at you, they see the love of Jesus.”

CG: *Look at Me*

“John 15:13 says: “*No one has greater love than the one who gives their life for their friends*” (NIRV). That’s exactly what Jesus did for us—He gave His life for us. That’s why we can truly love one another—because we are all God’s sons and daughters. Let’s sing this out so the world will know!”

CG: “*Sons and Daughters*”

“That’s right! We’re God’s Sons and Daughters! I know it must make God so happy to hear us sing those words. You can all have a seat now.”

Historyteller exits as Host enters.

Closer

HOST: “When God sent Jesus to take care of our greatest need, He showed you, me, and everyone on the planet, compassion.”

“God’s compassion makes me want to show compassion, too. How about you? (*Pause for response.*) That’s great! Did you know that when we show love and compassion to people, we show them how much God loves them too?”

“Let’s take the time to be kind to the people around us and show them we care. Let’s make it our mission to show God’s love this Christmas.”

“It can be so simple. (*Hold your palm flat above your eyes.*) Just keep an eye out and see if you can figure out what people need. Think about how you might be able to help. Maybe it’s sharing your jacket with someone who’s cold, sharing your lunch with someone who’s hungry, or sharing a kind word to encourage a friend.”

“Remember your undercover mission: to show compassion and share God’s love. I know all of you have great ideas about how you can do that. Be sure to tell your friends about them in Small Group. You can head that way right now. I’ll see you later!”

Dismiss children to their Small Groups.

CG: *Theme Slide*

CG: *Small Group Slide*

Groups: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (10 minutes)**9:00 & 11:30****Show Compassion****What You Need:** No supplies needed**What You Do:**

- Read a scenario, and guide kids to act out ways they could help the people described.
 - Scenario 1: Your best friend's dog died. She's very upset, because her family has had the dog since before she was born.
 - Scenario 2: Your mom is upset because she burned the hamburgers for dinner and your dad got home two hours later than he had planned.
- Challenge kids to think of someone in their life who might need compassion. It could be a parent, a sibling, a friend, a teacher, a neighbor, an aunt, etc.
- Then pair kids up and encourage them to help each other think of a way they could show compassion to that person.

What You Say:

- "Everyone needs compassion sometimes—even all of us here in this small group. We all have needs, and God always meets our needs, but most of the time He uses other people to do that. He can use all of us. So let's open our eyes and see the needs of the people around us who need compassion. **[Bottom Line]** God did something about our greatest need when He sent us Jesus. And we can do something about the needs of the people around us. My challenge to you is to actually do the thing you thought of in this activity. When you come back next week, I'd love to hear all about it!"

10:15**Light It Up****What You Need:** "Light It Up" Activity Pages, push pins, flashlights**What You Do:**

- Give each kid an Activity Page.
- Quickly explain the three phrases on the page:
 - GOD LOVED the world.
 - GOD SENT His Son.
 - GOD GAVE eternal life to those who believe.
- Hand out pushpins and guide kids to use the pins to poke holes along the lines of the drawings.
- Give each kid a flashlight. If possible, turn off the lights in your space.
- Instruct kids to shine their flashlights through the holes in the pictures to make them light up.

What You Say:

"GOD LOVED the world. GOD SENT His Son. GOD GAVE eternal life to those who believe. **[Bottom Line]** God did something about our greatest need when He had compassion on us and sent Jesus to us. We can have compassion on others by telling them how God sent Jesus to us to fill our greatest need. You can use these papers to help tell friends and family members about the greatest gift anyone ever gave—Jesus!" *(Collect kids' flashlights to use again next week.)*

All Service Times**Pray and Dismiss (10 minutes)**

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Tell kids to think about the person they were thinking about in the “Show Compassion” activity.
- Explain that you will say a prayer.
- After each sentence, you’ll pause and give them time to silently repeat the prayer for their person.

What You Say:

“Dear God, thank You for putting this person in my life. *(Pause.)* Help me to show compassion to them the way You show compassion to me. *(Pause.)* Give me the strength I need to say and do what I need to. *(Pause.)* In Jesus’ name, amen.

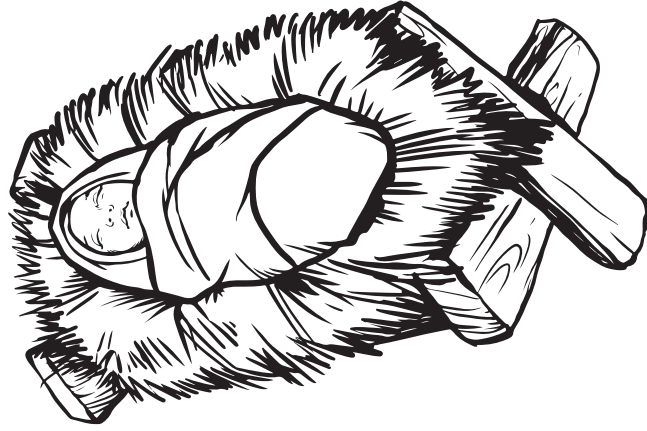
[Bottom Line] “**God did something about our greatest need.** Let’s remember to thank Him for that every day. Let’s also remember to show compassion to the people around us just like God shows us compassion.”

As adults arrive to pick up, allow kids to use the flashlights to show their parents their “Light It Up” Activity Pages and tell them what it means. Make sure you collect the flashlights before kids leave so you can use them again next week.

**God
loved.**



**God
sent.**



**God
gave.**

