



WEEK 1

ELEMENTARY LESSON OUTLINE

FOLLOW THE
Star

BIG IDEA

God gives direction
to guide us.

THE BIBLE

Mary is visited by the Angel:

Luke 1:26-38 (Joshua 1:9; Psalm 119:105)

THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

LARGE GROUP TIME

- **ACTIVITY** | Create a Constellation
- **ACTIVITY** | Star-Catchers
- **STORY** | Message Received
- **THE BIG IDEA** | God gives direction to guide us.
- **BIBLE STORY** | Luke 1:26-38
- **OBJECT LESSON** | Compass Rose
- **ACTIVITY** | Falling Hands
- **SCRIPTURE** | Joshua 1:9
- **ACTIVITY** | Be Strong and Courageous
- **RESPONSE** | Wonder Wall
- **VIDEO** | The North Star
- **PRAYER** | Touch the Stars
- **MEMORY VERSES** | Philippians 2:14; John 3:16

SMALL GROUP TIME

- **DISCUSSION**
 - How did Mary respond to Gabriel's surprising message?
 - How should we respond when God asks us to take a step of obedience?
 - Why do you think it can be hard for us to trust God?
 - What are some things we can do when we need direction or guidance?
 - What is one step that you can take this week to let God guide you?
- **SCRIPTURE** | Psalm 119:105
- **ACTIVITY** | Telephone Message
- **MEMORY VERSES** | Philippians 2:14; John 3:16



WEEK 1

ELEMENTARY LESSON GUIDE

FOLLOW THE
Star

BIG IDEA

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THE BIBLE

Mary is visited by the Angel:

Luke 1:26-38 (Joshua 1:9; Psalm 119:105)

LARGE GROUP TIME

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

ACTIVITY | Create a Constellation

- Welcome! We're starting a new series called Follow the Star! From the twinkling lights, to the sparkling stars, to the glittering snow, there is light all around us this time of year. The very first Christmas didn't have Christmas trees or ornaments, but it did have something special: light and stars. Let's make our own star constellation pictures.
- Constellations are patterns of stars in the sky. Let's look at a picture with constellations; then we'll make our own!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Show the image from your Week 1 folder. Give kids dark construction paper, white crayons, and star stickers. Have them make their own constellations in whatever shapes or patterns they want.*
- **FOR PRETEENS:** *Use a computer or a smart phone to look up as many different constellations as you can find and show them to the preteens. See how many they can replicate by drawing in one minute.*
- Some stars are used to help guide us. Sailors and explorers, for example, have used the North Star, which is part of the Big Dipper constellation, to figure out which way is north.
- In the same way the stars helped guide people, God is guiding and helping us. Today, we're going to learn about a girl who found out that God's plan for her was very different from what she expected!

ACTIVITY | Star-Catchers

- Let's play a game where you need to pay close attention.
- We'll talk later about someone in the Bible who paid special attention to a message she received.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *This game is like the popular game "Smugglers." Divide kids into two teams: "Star-Catchers" and "Astronomers," and put each team at opposite ends of your large group area. Give one kid from the Star-Catcher team a small ball or star-shaped toy that can fit inside their hand. That team can hand off the star to each other, but it has to be concealed in one kid's hand at all times (other than when they are passing). The Astronomers will try to find the star and will tag the Star-Catchers. When Star-Catchers are tagged, they must stop and show both of their open hands and then must sit down until the end of the round. If an Astronomer tags the person who has the star, then the round is over. Switch teams, and play again.*
- **What made finding the star difficult?** It can be easy to get distracted when there is a lot of action happening around you.
- **How did you discover who had the star?** If you paid attention to the Star-Catchers' hands, you could begin to figure out which kid was being passed the star.
- We also have to pay attention to what God is showing us.
- We're going to talk about Mary today and special message she received from God.

STORY | Message Received

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Share a time you received a message from a loved one and how it made you feel. You could talk about receiving a care package while at summer camp, a surprise text message out of the blue, a phone call on your birthday, etc.*
- **What is your favorite way to receive a message from someone you care about?**
- Today, we'll learn the story of Mary and a very surprising message she received. Even though this message was very unexpected, Mary knew to trust God because God had a plan for her life.

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

THE BIG IDEA | God gives direction to guide us.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Each week, do a big reveal (and make it fun) when you announce the Big Idea, like:*
- *Ask the kids to give you a drum-roll by stomping their feet or patting their laps.*
- *Shout the Big Idea, then point to the kids and have them shout it back. (Change it up by using funny voices, different volumes, or inflections.)*
- *Have a character (either recurring or rotating) come out every week to reveal the Big Idea.*
- *Write it on a piece of paper and hide it somewhere in the room. Have the kids go on a "hunt" for it. When it's found, ask someone to come up and read it.*
- This week's Big Idea: **God gives direction to guide us.**

BIBLE STORY | Luke 1:26-38

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Look up the story in your Bible and encourage kids to do the same. Read it!*
- **FOR KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:** *Provide figurines for them to manipulate. You can use small figurines of Mary and the angel Gabriel. You could also show a picture of Mary and the angel. Without visuals, it is often difficult for a child with special needs to focus.*

- What an amazing story! Mary had unbelievable faith!
- **How do you think Mary felt when she first met the angel Gabriel?**
- Even though Mary could have been frightened, she chose to listen to this message from God.
- The news from Gabriel was definitely unexpected; Mary was not yet married, so she did not understand how she could be having a baby, much less one who would be Savior of the world!
- **Did you noticed how Mary responded to the angel's news?**
- Mary trusted God's plan and said she was willing to do whatever God wanted her to do.
- There might be a day when you receive news you don't understand, or maybe you have already received news like that.
- We don't have to be afraid. We can trust God like Mary did because we know God has a plan for our lives even if we don't understand what's happening.
- God guided Mary and gave her direction for her life. God guides and gives us direction too. If you are ever in a situation and you don't know what to do, you can pray to God to ask for direction and help.

OBJECT LESSON | Compass Rose

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Unfold a road map and show kids all the different lines that are roads. Act like the map is confusing because you don't know which way to hold it. Then point to the compass rose on the map, which gives you the guidance you need.*
- **How many of you have ever been in the car with adults who needed to get directions to where they were going? What did they do?**
- Most people can use their phones to get directions or the GPS in their car to tell them the right way. The app they are using can tell them where to drive.
- This wasn't always the case, though. People used to have to use a map like this one to know where to go.
- There are a lot of different lines on this map. These lines are different roads, and it can be very confusing to figure out what the map even means.
- The compass rose shows the way to hold the map so we can find north, south, east, or west.
- Sometimes life can feel confusing and we might not know which way to go or what to do. Thankfully, God has given us direction and help. Sometimes, God might give us direction by sending us a friend with a message like in the story of Mary. Sometimes, God shows us what to do through the Bible.
- We can trust God to give direction to guide us.

ACTIVITY | Falling Hands

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Put kids in pairs, or do this activity multiple times so that all kids can participate. Have kids lay face-down on the ground and close their eyes. Have their partners take hold of their hands, and hold them up over the kids' heads. Remind kids to keep their eyes closed! After 20-30 seconds, with the kids' eyes still closed, slowly lower their hands to the ground. If you do this slowly enough, the kids will feel as though their hands are actually falling into the ground as you lower their arms. ***Note: not all kids will feel comfortable with this. You could also do this activity with just one or two kids who volunteer for it.***
- **FOR KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:** *This activity may be difficult for them to participate in. If they aren't comfortable participating, they can help hold a timer for 30 seconds.*

- **How did it feel when it seemed like your hands were falling into the ground? Was it scary to have your eyes closed and not know what was happening?**
- Sometimes things happen in our lives that seem scary or out-of-control, but even in the tough times, we can rely on God to guide us.

NOW WHAT? What does God want us to do about it?

SCRIPTURE | Joshua 1:9

- There are a lot of examples in the Bible of people following God's plan even when they weren't completely sure what was going on.
- Let's read about what God told Joshua when Joshua was about to lead God's people into a new land far away from everything that was familiar to them.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Look up the verse in your Bible, and encourage the kids to do the same. Read it!
- **What command did God give the people?**
- **Why didn't God want them to be afraid?**
- God wants us to know the same thing: we don't have to be afraid because **God will give direction to guide us.** God sent Jesus. God is with us wherever we go.

ACTIVITY | Be Strong and Courageous

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** This game is based on the popular trust activity, "Wind in the Willows." Have kids stand in a circle. Depending on the number of kids in your group, you can have one or multiple circles of kids. Choose kids to stand in the middle of each circle of kids with their eyes closed and arms crossed over their chests. The kids making the circle around them should stand in close with their hands up in front of them. The kids in the center will fall back or to the side. The kids around them will catch them and gently push them back to center. The object of the game is to move the kid in the center safely around the circle. Allow multiple kids to be in the center.
- **FOR KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:** This activity could be tricky for a child with cognitive delays. Allow them to participate in this activity with an adult buddy in another area of the room.
- **If you were in the center, was it hard to trust the kids around you? Why or why not?**
- To be in the center of the circle, you had to be brave and trust the friends around you. Even though you might have been scared, you knew the group would not let you fall.
- In the same way, we can be brave and trust God. **God is always with us and is there to guide us.**

RESPONSE | Wonder Wall

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Find a space in your room to serve as your wonder wall. Set out index cards or paper stars; pens, markers, or crayons; and whatever you will use to secure the cards to the wall (such as masking tape). Allow a few minutes for the kids to think of questions that they have about life or about the Bible story and give them time to write their questions on their cards or stars. Have them tape their cards or stars on the wall.
- Saint Ignatius of Loyola, a priest who studied the Bible from the early 1500's, believed one of the ways God can speak to us is through imagination.

- We're going to create space for you to express your wonder and imagination. After the Bible story each week, you will have the opportunity to write down a question or a "wonder" you have on an index card or paper star. You can write things such as "I wonder what the angel Gabriel looks like" or "I wonder what Mary was doing when Gabriel appeared" and put it on the wonder wall.

VIDEO | The North Star

- We've been talking about how God gives direction to guide us. Let's watch this video to learn about a star that God created that can give us direction.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Show [this](#) video.
- **FOR PRETEENS:** Show them a video like [this](#) about stargazing, and encourage them to go home try to find constellations. Have them draw the constellations they find and show the group next week.
- Tonight, look out at the sky and see if you can find the North Star. Just like people can always count on this star to point them north, we can always count on God to guide us.
- Whenever you see this star, let it serve as a reminder that **God can be trusted and gives direction to guide us.**

PRAYER | Touch the Stars

- We're going to pray and thank God for guiding us.
- Think about one or two things you might be scared or nervous about right now, then ask God to guide you in that situation. Imagine yourself touching the stars God made, and God giving you wisdom and help as you do it.
- **FOR PRETEENS:** Play, sing, or show the [lyric video](#) to "Touch the Sky" by Hillsong Young & Free before you pray together.

MEMORY VERSES | Philippians 2:14; John 3:16

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give every kid memory verse magnets or stickers. Then work on the memory verse together. For ideas on how to do this well, check out the Memory Verse Guide in your Programming folder and give them to your small group leaders, if you'd like.

SMALL GROUP TIME

DISCUSSION

- **How did Mary respond to Gabriel's surprising message?** (She said God's will be done.)
- **How should we respond when God asks us to take a step of obedience?**
- **Why do you think it can be hard for us to trust God?**
- **What are some things we can do when we need direction or guidance?**
- **What is one step that you can take this week to let God guide you?**

SCRIPTURE | Psalm 119:105

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Look up the verse in your Bible and encourage kids to do the same. Read it!
- **What does a lamp do when you turn it on?**
- **What do you think it means that the Bible is like a lamp for our feet?**

ACTIVITY | Telephone Message

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Have the kids sit in a circle. Whisper a message to the kid to your right (choose a message that relates to the Bible story, e.g. "Gabriel gave a message to Mary"). That kid will then whisper what they believe they heard to the kid next to them. Continue around the circle until the message has reached the final kid in the sequence – the one to the leader's left – who will say what they believe they heard. The message will likely be mixed up somewhere along the way!*
- Messages can get mixed up when they go through a bunch of people!
- We don't want God's direction and plans to get jumbled up though.
- The Bible is true and can be used to guide us (2 Timothy 3:16) because God wants to guide us and give us direction.

MEMORY VERSES | Philippians 2:14; John 3:16

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