



WEEK 2

ELEMENTARY LESSON OUTLINE



MAIN EVENT

BIG IDEA

We can celebrate Jesus' birth.

THE BIBLE

Jesus is Born: Luke 2:1-7;
(Isaiah 9:6-7)

THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

LARGE GROUP TIME

- **MUSIC** | Celebrate and Worship
- **ACTIVITY** | Match the Babies
- **ACTIVITY** | Baby Me
- **QUESTION** | Why Celebrate Birthdays?
- **THE BIG IDEA** | We can celebrate Jesus' birth.
- **VIDEO** | Main Event, Episode 2
- **SCRIPTURE** | Luke 2:1-7
- **VIDEO** | "Time Stands Still"
- **OBJECT LESSON** | Hourglass
- **SCRIPTURE** | Isaiah 9:6-7
- **PRAYER**
- **REFLECTION** | What Jesus' Birth Means to Me
- **ACTIVITY** | Let's Celebrate!
- **MEMORY VERSE** | Memory Ornaments

SMALL GROUP TIME

- **DISCUSSION**
 - Why did Mary and Joseph go to Bethlehem?
 - Why was Jesus placed in a manger?
 - What about Jesus' birth should we celebrate?
 - Re-read Isaiah 9:6-7. What other names can we call Jesus?
 - What is your favorite part of birthdays?
 - What are some ways you and your family celebrate?
 - Why do you think Jesus came to us as a baby?
- **ACTIVITY** | Birthday Card
- **MEMORY VERSE** | Luke 1:46-47 (NIV)



WEEK 2

HACKS FOR PRETEENS



BY ASHLEY SIDER

HOW TO HACK THIS SERIES FOR PRETEENS

In children's ministry, you've got a wide range of ages you need to engage every week, but preteens tend to get overlooked, so here are a few adjustments you can make to this week in order to keep your preteens more engaged.

ACTIVITY | Baby Me

Some of your older kids might be mortified to see their baby pictures shown in public. In addition to parental consent, you might want to ask each preteen separately if they are okay with you showing their picture to the group. It's okay if they opt not to!

QUESTION | Why Celebrate Birthdays?

Have students share about their own favorite birthdays or things they have done for others to celebrate.

OBJECT LESSON | Hourglass

After sitting silently for a minute, do the activity again, but this time, have preteens use the one minute timeframe to wrap a gift and see how quickly they can accomplish the task. Use tricky objects (i.e. a ball, a stuffed animal, etc.) to make the task a bit more challenging.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

ASHLEY SIDER



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Ashley works at Messiah College as the Assistant Director of Alumni and Parent Relations and serves her church by teaching Elementary Sunday School. Before her current role, she worked in Youth Ministry for several years, first as a volunteer, then assistant, and then director. She's also done some guest teaching in other churches and loves it!

When she was in middle/high school, her faith was deeply impacted by a short-term missions trip, which led her to go to college to learn more about cross-cultural ministry and the importance of learning about global differences. One of her favorite things to do is to create trainings for other groups going on

missions trips to help prepare them for their journey. She is an energetic, hardworking, easily excitable gal who was made to help inspire others. (Read: INTJ, Enneagram 3, and StrengthFinders Future/Strategic/Learner through and through.) Though she spends most of her free time reading, writing, and taking photos, she loves an unscheduled weekend at home, spending time outside and hanging with her husband and daughter in Pennsylvania.

If you'd like to chat further about the enneagram, using social media for your ministry, or picking a paint color for your front door, reach out! She would love to connect with you!

ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Elle Campbell, Brooklyn Lindsey, Amber Stephens, Linda Moon, Lauren Wierzba.

TEACHING VIDEOS: Elle Campbell, Brooklyn Lindsey, Linda Moon, Jared Callahan.

PRETEEN HACKS: Ashley Sider.

SPECIAL NEEDS HACKS: Sue Spiesz.

MEMORY VERSE SIGN LANGUAGE: Sunny Brown.

GRAPHIC DESIGN: Josh Gosney, Jules Gray, Elle Campbell.

LAYOUT DESIGN: Jules Gray, Elle Campbell.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT: Kenny Campbell, Tash McGill, Stephen Switzer, Ali Anne, Eddie Irvin, Ari Raines, Kellee Gentry, Tim Synan, Josh McLemore, Amber Gaddis.



WEEK 2

HACKS FOR KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS



BY SUE SPIESZ

HOW TO HACK THIS SERIES FOR KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

In children's ministry, you've got a wide range of ages you need to engage every week, but kids with special needs tend to get overlooked, so here are a few adjustments you can make to this week in order to keep your kids with special needs more engaged.

ACTIVITY | Match the Babies

Consider making this a paired activity, so kids with special needs can work with a peer buddy to complete the exercise.

OBJECT LESSON | Hourglass

If sitting silently for this amount of time might be challenging for any of your kids, try providing something they can occupy the time with and keep their attention on while they wait.

ACTIVITY | Birthday Card

Write out phrases the kids can copy on to their card. This can be useful for the younger kids in your group, as well.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

SUE SPIESZ



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My name is Susan, and I LOVE writing Special Needs Hacks for Grow Curriculum, and Student Ministries!!!!

For my profession, I teach Special Education to struggling preschoolers, and also teach school-aged students who are hospitalized, or home-bound.

One of my favorite jobs is teaching at the local college in the Exceptional Education Department!! So much fun!! I was so honored to be part of the launching of the special needs ministry at our church over 15 years ago, and now we help other churches in the area begin their own special needs ministries.

It's been an awesome experience! I have 4 amazing children who are crazy fun and outgoing! They range from 11 years old to 27!!

In my spare time I enjoy cycling and riding my jet ski on the great Niagara River! I've been caught zip lining in my backyard, and unicycling down my street. Life is fun around here!

Please feel free to reach out to me to chat about special needs curriculum and ministry. I'd love to hear from you!

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WEEK 2

ELEMENTARY LESSON GUIDE



MAIN EVENT

BIG IDEA

We can celebrate Jesus' birth.

THE BIBLE

Jesus is Born: Luke 2:1-7;
(Isaiah 9:6-7)

LARGE GROUP TIME

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

MUSIC | Celebrate and Worship

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Show or play some songs for worship time. Consider including "O Come All Ye Faithful" by Moriah Peters ([video](#)).

ACTIVITY | Match the Babies

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Pass out a worksheet to each kid and have them try to correctly match the animals to the the names of their babies. You can download the worksheet and answers [here](#).
 - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Consider making this a paired activity, so kids with special needs can work with a peer buddy to complete the exercise.
- **Which of these names were you the most surprised about?**
- Today we are going to learn about a special baby who also has a unique name!

ACTIVITY | Baby Me

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Coordinate with parents in advance and obtain a baby picture of each of your kids. Print or project each baby picture and have everyone try to guess whose baby picture it is. Include yourself and other leaders, too!
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Some of your older kids might be mortified to see their baby pictures shown in public. In addition to parental consent, you might want to ask each preteen separately if they are okay with you showing their picture to the group. It's okay if they opt not to!

- Isn't it cool to think that even though we are all different ages right now, we were all once little babies?

QUESTION | Why Celebrate Birthdays?

- **Why do you think we celebrate birthdays?**
- **Do you ever count down the days to a birthday or special event/holiday in your family?**
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Have students share about their own favorite birthdays or things they have done for others to celebrate.*

THE BIG IDEA | We can celebrate Jesus' birth.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Have kids go out of the space and line up by the door. Tell them that we're celebrating a special birthday today, but you need an invitation to attend. Hand out invitations (available in your printables folder) while they're waiting in line, and have them show it to you before re-entering the room. You could even do the previous activities in another room and have your main meeting space decorated ahead of time, so it feels like they're really coming to a birthday party!*
- Today's Big Idea: **We can celebrate Jesus' birth!**

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

VIDEO | Main Event, Episode 2

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play this week's [teaching video](#).*

SCRIPTURE | Luke 2:1-7

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Luke 2:1-7 aloud with or to your kids.*
- Before Jesus was born, Mary and Joseph had a long journey ahead of them to Joseph's hometown of Bethlehem. They were traveling such a long way because King Caesar Augustus declared that all people needed to be counted, and to make this easier, they needed to go back to their hometown.
- Before any great celebration, there must be preparation! So, Mary and Joseph prepared for Jesus' birth by arriving safely to Bethlehem. Can you imagine how tired they must have been after such a long journey while also waiting for a baby to be born? I would've been thinking, "Are we there yet?" Wouldn't you?
- To make matters worse, once they finally arrived, there was not enough room for all the people. Mary and Joseph ended up having to place baby Jesus in a manger – which is not a place for babies at all!
- Even though the conditions surrounding the birth of Jesus was not the best, God sent Jesus to us anyway! God knew we needed a savior and that's reason enough to celebrate!

VIDEO | "Time Stands Still"

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Watch [this video clip](#) from the movie, "Big Fish" with your group.*

- **Can you all try moving in slow motion right now to get to the other side of the room?**
- Didn't that feel like it would take forever? Waiting can be hard, right? When we are looking forward to a big event, being patient can be even more difficult.
- Imagine seeing Jesus for the first time. It must have felt like time stopped for Mary and Joseph. All of the waiting and anticipation leading up to that moment probably washed away when Jesus was finally right there. And guess what? We can celebrate Jesus' birth, too! Because Jesus was born, we can live out an awesome life filled with cool experiences, dreams, and purpose!

OBJECT LESSON | Hourglass

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Use a mini hourglass (preferably a 60-second hourglass) to demonstrate the value of using time.
 - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** If sitting silently for this amount of time might be challenging for any of your kids, try providing something they can occupy the time with and keep their attention on while they wait.
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Do the activity again, but this time, have preteens use the one minute timeframe to wrap a gift and see how quickly they can accomplish the task. Use tricky objects (i.e. a ball, a stuffed animal, etc.) to make the task a bit more challenging.
- Okay, when I flip the hourglass, we are going to sit silently until all the sand falls. Ready?
- Time sometimes feels like it goes too slowly. Like sitting quietly, waiting for all the sand to fall in an hourglass. But if I gave you the same amount of time to watch TV or play a video game, you would think that time went by much too quickly, right?
- I know a lot of you can't wait for Christmas, but let's use this time to prepare our hearts to receive Jesus.

SCRIPTURE | Isaiah 9:6-7

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Look up the passage and read it.
- The prophet Isaiah is speaking to a people who have been waiting for years and years for a savior. What they wanted was for someone to make them a powerful kingdom. And even though this Bible passage talks about how the child that to be born will be a mighty ruler, you and I know that we are not actually talking about a kingdom.
- Jesus came to this earth as a baby so that one day He can die on the cross for the sins of the world. From a humble manger to dying on the cross then rising again and going to heaven. . . that is not something an ordinary person can do! No wonder Isaiah calls Jesus, "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace!"

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

PRAYER

- Dear God, we want to celebrate You in this season. Please show us the many different ways we can prepare our hearts for that celebration. Thank You for using Mary and Joseph to teach us the importance of Your birth, and why we should celebrate that.

REFLECTION | What Jesus' Birth Means to Me

- Sometimes, we can be so focused on the fun time we have celebrating during Christmastime that we forget that Jesus is the main event!
- **What does the birth of Jesus mean to you?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *This would be a good opportunity to share the salvation message with kids, especially for those who are visiting for the first time, or for kids who have yet to receive Jesus.*

ACTIVITY | Let's Celebrate!

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Have a birthday celebration, complete with [noisemakers](#), [party hats](#), [confetti poppers](#), and a birthday cake. Sing "Happy birthday, dear Jesus." Let kids blow out the candles and take turns making a wish they can share aloud if they want.*

MEMORY VERSE | Memory Ornaments

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Write each word of the memory verse on a Christmas ornament (preferably inexpensive, shatterproof ones like [these](#)), and pass them out to the kids. Let the kids come up in order and hang the ornament on a mini Christmas tree, or hang it on a clothesline with clothespins. Have kids say each word together. Once all the ornaments are up, say the verse together!*

SMALL GROUP TIME**DISCUSSION**

- **Why did Mary and Joseph go to Bethlehem?**
- **Why was Jesus placed in a manger?**
- **What about Jesus' birth should we celebrate?**
- **Re-read Isaiah 9:6-7. What other names can we call Jesus?**
- **What is your favorite part of birthdays?**
- **What are some ways you and your family celebrate?**
- **Why do you think Jesus came to us as a baby?**

ACTIVITY | Birthday Card

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give each kid a piece of paper and art supplies. Have them fold the paper in half and make a birthday card to Jesus. Make sure they decorate the cover and write a heartfelt message inside.*
 - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** *Write out phrases the kids can copy on to their card. This can be useful for the younger kids in your group, as well.*
- Even though it's Jesus' birthday, we are the ones who got the gift! Let's remember to thank Jesus for being born for us!

MEMORY VERSE | Luke 1:46-47 (NIV)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Introduce kids to this month's memory verse, teaching them the signs (a combination of SEE and ASL) we've provided.*