

LESSON 1
HOPE

LESSON AT A GLANCE

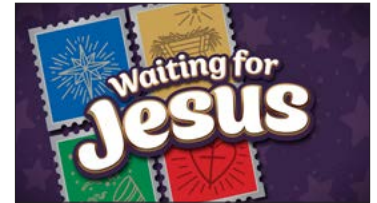
WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Is Our Hope**SCRIPTURE:** Isaiah 7; Matthew 1**GOD'S BIG STORY:** Isaiah reminds God's people of God's promise to send a Messiah, and Jesus—Immanuel—fulfills the promise!**WORD OF WONDER:** Faith is being sure of what we hope for. It is being sure of what we do not see.
—Hebrews 11:1

CURIOSITY

BELIEF

FAITH

- PICK ONE:
 - Object Lesson: Wishing Versus Hoping
 - STEM Activity: Some Things Are Certain
- Welcome Question: What are your favorite things to do as you wait for Christmas Day?
- SMALL GROUP
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship: Joy to the World (Glory to the King), Great Things (Do You Hear What I Hear)
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- In Awe of God's Wonder
- Responding in Worship: King of Kings
- Blessing Your Kids

[Waiting for Jesus Elem Spotify playlist](#)

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Is Our Hope

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 7; Matthew 1

WORD OF WONDER: Hebrews 11:1

All I hoped for on my eighth birthday was a pair of cowboy boots. I have a picture of the moment it happened. I ripped apart the wrapping paper, opened the box, and there they were! The picture shows me in swim trunks, my new cowboy boots, and an ear-to-ear smile. As I reflect, I see that my hope was deeper than the leather, thread, and soles of those boots. While my childhood was mostly great, there were times when I felt tame, and weak, and trapped. I hoped that when I pulled on those boots, I would feel like a cowboy—wild, tough, and free.

By necessity, hope is present when something better is not. The people who first heard the words of Isaiah or lived the story in Matthew's Gospel were people of hope. They hoped for a leader who could make them wild, and tough, and free in the face of suffering and feeling powerless.

Read Isaiah 7:10–14 and Matthew 1:18–24. As you read, what do you see that points to hope?

For hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus, God's people held onto hope. For over two thousand years after His birth, people have claimed the promise of our Wonder Truth: Jesus Is Our Hope!

How do you see Jesus providing the hope promised in Isaiah and Matthew?

What do you find yourself hoping for these days?

What might the children in your life be hoping for?

—**Matt Irvine**

Pastor and Editor

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

Isaiah was a prophet sent by God to warn His people in Judah of the judgment that would come if they didn't listen to God. Isaiah tells the people that God has a good future in store, with a coming servant who would show the way—a savior and messiah.

WHAT?

Israel and Judah were ruled by separate kings who were often disobedient and faithless. Isaiah's message of hope is for a restoration of God's rightful rule on earth. At the birth of a child named "Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14), the people would see that God is with them.

WHERE?

Isaiah was called to speak to Judah, the name of the southern kingdom after the division of Israel. Judah was also the tribe of King David and the tribe through whom the Messiah would come.

WHEN?

About 700 years before Jesus' birth, in the year Judah's King Uzziah died, God anointed Isaiah as a messenger. Later when Judah's neighbors threatened to invade, Isaiah prophesied of a hopeful future for Judah's King Ahaz.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY:

The Bible is the big story of God loving and redeeming His people through His Son, Jesus. Even when God's people disobeyed, He loved them, cared for them, and promised them a hopeful future. Jesus is the fulfillment of these promises: He is the hope that God promised!

LESSON 1 ELEMENTARY & PRETEEN

Large Group

Spark curiosity and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Is Our Hope

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 7; Matthew 1

WORD OF WONDER: Hebrews 11:1

As kids arrive...

Around 20 minutes before service begins, display series theme loop. Play high-energy music in the background.

LG Leader walks around the room on mic and greets kids by name as they enter the room. Be extra intentional about introducing yourself to new parents and kids.

SLIDE: SERIES THEME LOOP

VIDEO: COUNTDOWN (2min OR 30sec) Start a countdown to begin game 10 minutes prior to service start)

Option 1: Elementary Object Lesson: Wishing Versus Hoping

SUPPLIES: coins (1 per 2 kids); several different balls and objects that can be dropped safely; tissue; steady stool, chair, or ladder (optional)

Display the **Wishing Versus Hoping Slide**. Hold up a coin, and show the kids you are about to flip it. **I hope this coin will land on heads! Do you think it will?** Allow kids to shout their answers. **Maybe it will. Maybe it won't!** Flip the coin. Show the kids what side it landed on. Prepare to flip the coin again. **This time I hope it will land on tails!** Flip it again and show the kids what side it landed on.



Invite kids to pair up. (If there's an odd number, ask a volunteer to participate.) Give each pair a coin. Encourage them to take turns flipping it. Each time, the flipper should say what side she "hopes" it will land on. Give the kids enough time for each kid to flip the coin several times.

Leader Tip: For Younger Kids. Flipping a coin can be challenging for younger kids. Consider giving each kid a small cup to put his coin in. He can cover the top of the cup with his hand and then shake the cup to flip the coin.

Make It Inclusive: For kids who may have trouble with sharing or taking turns, let them use a coin the whole time. Then check in with them about how often the coin landed the way they hoped it would!

How'd that go? Did your coin land on the side you hoped it would? Allow kids to share freely. Then collect their coins.

Hope in Jesus is not like flipping a coin and wishing or it to land on a certain side. Hope in Jesus is more like dropping an object from the sky. Hold up a ball or other object. **If I drop this object, what will happen to it?** Allow kids to answer. **OK. Let's try it!** Hold the object as high as possible and drop it. To make it more dramatic, stand on a chair, stool, or steady ladder and drop it. For safety, limit climbing to adults only.

It fell to the ground just like you knew it would! Let's try a few more objects. Hold another ball or object as high as possible and drop it. One at a time, hold an object (such as different types of balls) above your head and drop it in an open space. Finish by dropping a tissue. **Every object we dropped eventually fell to the ground.**

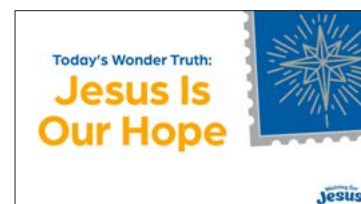
I'm curious: Why does that happen? Allow kids to answer. **Many will know it's because of gravity. Yes! Gravity is the unseen force that pulls objects toward the earth. Gravity is certain. Because of gravity, we know that what goes up must come down! Each time I dropped an object, you waited confidently and expected it to fall to the ground. We had to wait longer for some objects to fall than for others, but they still fell!**

Hope in Jesus is a lot like gravity. When Jesus is our hope, we can wait confidently and expect what He said will happen. Hope in Jesus is not chance or wishful thinking. It is certain!

I'm curious: What are some things God has promised us in His Word? Allow kids to share promises they remember. If needed, list some promises, such as God will always be with you (Deuteronomy 31:6); God will give you strength (2 Thessalonians 3:3); because of Jesus, God forgives your sins and welcomes you into His family forever (John 3:16; John 1:12)!

For people living 700 years before Jesus came as a baby, hope meant knowing God would send a messiah, or savior. We know now the Messiah they hoped for is Jesus! The people waited confidently and expected God's promise to happen. Jesus was their hope, and Jesus is our hope!

SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH



Today's Wonder Truth is JESUS IS OUR HOPE.

OPTION 2: STEM Activity: Some Things Are Certain

SUPPLIES: coins (1 per kid), shatter-proof drinking glasses (1 per 2–3 kids), playing cards (1 per 2–3 kids)

RESOURCES: *STEM Activities Visual Steps Sheet (1 copy**REQUEST IF NEEDED)*

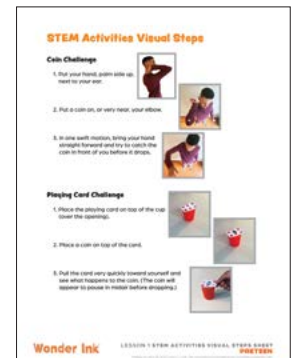
Ahead of time, print a copy of the STEM Activities Visual Steps Sheet. Use this for reference as you are demonstrating each activity.

Display the Some Things Are Certain Slide. Gather the kids, give each kid a coin, and demonstrate the following steps (it's OK if you don't catch the coin!). Then invite kids to try it themselves.



1. Put your hand, palm side up, next to your ear.
2. Put a coin on, or very near, your elbow.
3. In one swift motion, bring your hand straight forward and try to catch the coin in front of you before it drops.

Give kids enough time to try the challenge several times. With practice, some kids will likely be able to catch their coin. Others won't. But either way, there should be plenty of laughter! After about two minutes of coin-catching fun, gather the kids, and have them hold onto their coins.



Make It Inclusive: If the coordination required for this challenge is too hard for some kids, encourage them to cheer on a friend!

That was challenging—and pretty funny to watch! Are you up for one more challenge? Allow kids to respond. **For this challenge, we need to work together in small groups.** Help kids form pairs or groups of three. Give each group a shatter-proof drinking glass and a playing card. (Playing cards from any card game work!) Kids should still have their coins. Demonstrate the following steps. Then invite kids to try the challenge themselves.

1. Place the playing card on top of the cup (over the opening).
2. Place a coin on top of the card.
3. Pull the card very quickly toward yourself and see what happens to the coin. (The coin will appear to pause in midair before dropping.)

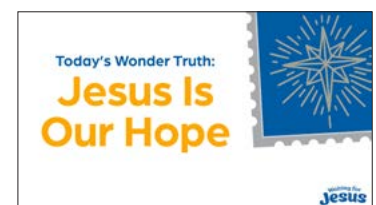
Give groups enough time for everyone to try! Then collect supplies, and gather the kids back together. **In both challenges, we could be certain how the coin would respond because some things are certain! According to Newton's first law of motion, an object at rest will stay at rest until it is acted upon by an outside force. The coin was at rest on your elbow, and when you pulled your elbow out from under it, the coin paused in midair—remaining at rest—until the force of gravity caused it to drop. This gave you just enough time to try to catch the coin. Likewise, when the coin was at rest on the card and you removed the card, the coin remained at rest for a split second before dropping into the cup. Some things are certain. We don't wish for the law of motion to work. We know for certain it will!**

Hope in Jesus is a little bit like that. When Jesus is our hope, we know for certain that what God says will happen. Hope in Jesus is not chance or wishful thinking. It is certain!

For people living 700 years before Jesus came as a baby, hope meant knowing God would send a messiah, or savior. We know now the Messiah they hoped for is Jesus! The people waited confidently and expected God's promise to happen. Jesus was their hope, and Jesus is our hope!

Display the Hope Wonder Truth Slide.

Today's Wonder Truth is **JESUS IS OUR HOPE.**



Welcome Question

SUPPLIES: paper, coloring utensils, poster board OR , whiteboard, dry-erase markers (if needed)

SLIDE: WELCOME QUESTION

At service start time, draw kids' attention to the Welcome Question.

Invite kids to write answers on the poster board or whiteboard.

We know Jesus is already born, and we get to celebrate Him! Over the next few weeks, we're going to explore what it was like for people in the Bible as they waited. They didn't always know specifically what they were waiting for, but still, they waited in hope! But first, it's time to be curious.



Small Group

Introduce small group time. While kids are in small group, consider sitting in the groups for a few minutes each. Engage and interact as is appropriate.

Countdown

After about 1 minute of small group give a minute warning and begin the countdown

VIDEO: COUNTDOWN

"Hey everyone! Welcome to our Large Group Worship time! My name is _____ and I'm excited to take this time to worship God, review what we just read, and talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning about God! We are going to pray as we prepare our hearts to worship God!"

Declaring God's Wonder

SLIDE: DECLARATION

Read each line boldly and invite kids to repeat after you.

Thank You, God, that You are good! (Kids repeat.)

You made me on purpose, for a purpose. (Kids repeat.)

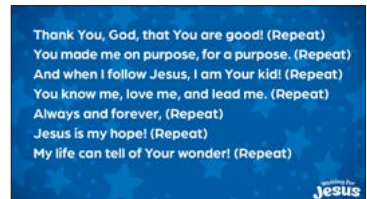
And when I follow Jesus, I am Your kid! (Kids repeat.)

You know me, love me, and lead me. (Kids repeat.)

Always and forever, (Kids repeat.)

Jesus is my hope! (Kids repeat.)

My life can tell of Your wonder! (Kids repeat.)



Prayer of Invitation

Lead kids in a prayer of invitation before entering into worship and God's big story. Use your own words. Here is an example: **God, we invite Your Holy Spirit to lead us today. Teach us what You want us to understand. Help us to hear Your voice and know Your amazing love for us. Make us more like Jesus, who is our hope. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Worship

Today we'll learn that Jesus was the hope of God's people long ago, and He is our hope today! No matter what we're going through, we can trust and worship Him!

WORSHIP VIDEOS: Joy to the World (Glory to the King), Great Things (Do You Hear What I Hear)

God's Big Story

SLIDE: TITLE

Today, we're learning about a promise that took a very long time to come true! God's people were waiting and waiting for someone who would rescue them and bring them hope. God told His prophet Isaiah that one day a baby would be born, and that baby would be Immanuel—God with us! Do you know who that baby was? (Pause for responses.)

Yes! Jesus! God always keeps His promises, and He sent Jesus to be our hope. Let's watch our Bible story video to see how this amazing promise came true. Get ready—this story shows how Jesus is our greatest hope!

VIDEO: GODS BIG STORY



LESSON 1 HOPE

EXPERIENCE IT! SCRIPT

SUPPLIES: large box or container, crown, megaphone (or paper towel tube), robe, hammer, headscarf (or a piece of fabric), glow stick necklace, decorated notebook (optional), items to decorate the box (optional), satin/shiny bathrobe or jacket (optional), stickers (optional)

RESOURCES: [Hope Experience It! Script](#) (1 extra copy)

Ahead of time, invite an outgoing teen or adult volunteer to play all five of these roles: King Ahaz, Isaiah, Joseph, Mary, and the angel. You, the leader, will be the narrator. Print off a copy of the Hope Experience It! Script for the actor.

Also, gather the following supplies and place them in a large box or container (add a little extra pizzazz by decorating the box!):

crown (for King Ahaz)

megaphone (for Isaiah)—An empty paper towel tube works if you don't have access to a megaphone robe (for Joseph).

headscarf (for Mary)—Any fashion scarf or piece of fabric will work.

glow stick necklace (for angel)—Set the glow stick necklace in the box but don't crack it open until right before the story.

As the narrator, you might choose to wear a satin/shiny bathrobe or jacket. You will also hold open the decorated notebook. (Beforehand, write the words "Once Upon a Story Storytelling Book" in large letters on the cover and add fun stickers if you'd like!)

Leader Tip: Playing five different roles takes a lot of energy! Choose someone enthusiastic who can have fun with each part. For example, if a male plays the role, he can talk in a high voice when portraying Mary. And if it's a female, she can talk in a low voice when portraying Joseph.

Gather the kids. **Welcome to the Once Upon a Story Storytellers Theater where you'll not only hear today's part of God's big story, but you'll become part of the story! Join me in welcoming our illustrious, world-class actor,** [insert actor's name]!

For today's story, I'll be the narrator, and all of you will be God's people! Your role as God's people is very important because, well, you're God's people! When it's your turn to say a line, it will appear on the screen. Like this ...

Display God's People Slide 1. Then show the respective slide each time a slide is listed in the script. If there are prereaders in your group, plan on reading each slide out loud and having kids repeat after you. **You'll simply read the line on the screen, and you become part of the show!** [Insert actor's name], **are you ready?**



Leader Tip: As the narrator, you drive the story. The more fun you have, the more enjoyable and engaging the story will be! Let loose, and go for it!

Actor: **I'm ready!**

Narrator: **Then let's start the show!** Open the notebook. **Many years before Jesus was born, God's people in the land of Judah were scared and discouraged.**

Slide 2 (Kids): **We're scared and discouraged!**

Narrator: **You don't look very scared! Show me scared!** Kids respond by making "scared" faces. **That's better! Several years before, God promised King David that his children and grandchildren would rule forever as kings. And God promised that His chosen Messiah king would be David's descendent, or future family member, from the tribe of Judah. But as the king and the people looked around many years later—** Pauses. **Um, I said, as the king and people looked around—**

Actor: **Oh, yeah!** Puts on the crown and looks around.

Narrator: **—they didn't know if they would even survive much longer!**

Slide 3 (Kids): **Will we even survive much longer?**

Narrator: **The Assyrian army was moving toward them, and Judah's two neighboring countries had formed an alliance, or a team, and planned on killing Judah's leader, King Ahaz.**

Actor: **That doesn't sound so good.**

Narrator: **The people's hope was fading, and their hearts trembled.**

Slide 4 (Kids): **Our hope is fading, and our hearts are trembling!**

Narrator: **But God didn't want the people of Judah to be in despair. He wanted them to be confident and have a hopeful expectation that He would come through for them. So, God spoke through a prophet named Isaiah.**

Actor: Takes off the crown and gets the megaphone/paper towel tube. Shouts through it. **Yeah, it's me—Isaiah! I'm going to speak God's words to all of you because that's what prophets do!**

Narrator: **Still, King Ahaz was afraid.**

Actor: Puts down the megaphone and puts on the crown. **You can say that again!**

Narrator: **Oh, OK. Still, King Ahaz was afraid. God wanted Ahaz to trust Him and to ask for a sign that God would keep His promise. God spoke through Isaiah and gave His people a sign that His promise was trustworthy.**

Actor: Puts down crown and gets out the megaphone/paper towel tube. Shouts through it. **Listen up, people! This is the sign from God: a young, unmarried woman will give birth to a son and name Him Immanuel.**

Narrator: **Immanuel means "God is with us." This child who hadn't even been born yet would show God's people that He was with them and that He hadn't forgotten His promises. He would be Immanuel. And just as Isaiah predicted, the people of Judah were saved and not destroyed by their enemies.**

Slide 5 (Kids): **Hip, hip, hooray!**

Narrator: **Let's fast forward about 700 years. God's people were being threatened once again.**

Slide 6 (Kids): **Not again?!?**

Narrator: **... and wondering whether God would save them. The people were being ruled as part of the Roman Empire and were often mistreated. It seemed like there would never be another king like God had promised to David. Still, some hoped that a Messiah would be born who could restore all the things in the world that seemed broken. For many, hope was fading. Yet they had not forgotten the way that God had kept His word in the past, even when it seemed impossible.**

In a small village called Nazareth lived a carpenter named Joseph.

Actor: **Puts down the megaphone and picks up the hammer. Says the next line in a "rap" rhythm. My name is Joseph, and I build nice things. I'm even related to David, the king.**

Narrator: **Joseph was a good Jewish man and, yes, he was a descendant of King David.**

Actor: **True and true!**

Narrator: **Joseph was engaged to be married to a young woman named Mary, who was expecting a baby.**

Actor: **Puts down the hammer and wraps the scarf around head. Not just any baby—God's Son!**

Narrator: **Joseph didn't understand that the baby Mary was carrying was from God.**

Actor: **Takes off the scarf and picks up the hammer. I mean—it was a bit confusing.**

Narrator: **Then one night, an angel from God appeared to Joseph in a dream.**

Actor: **Puts down the hammer and puts on glow stick necklace. Yo, Jo! I'm an angel from God! Listen up, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife. She's tellin' you the truth! The baby is from the Holy Spirit!**

Narrator: **Then the angel said, "She will give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus because He will save His people from their sins."**

Actor: **Takes off the necklace and picks up the hammer. I was getting to that part!**

Narrator: **Oh, sorry.**

Actor: **Puts down the hammer and puts on the glow stick necklace. So, here's the dealio, Jo. You are to name God's Son Jesus because He's gonna save people from their sins.**

Narrator: **Joseph knew the words that God had spoken through Isaiah so many years before. That a young, unmarried woman would give birth to a son, and He would be called Immanuel.**

Actor: **Takes off necklace and picks up the hammer. Yeah, what he/she said.**

Narrator: **Now Joseph understood!**

Actor: It's all starting to make sense!

Narrator: **That's right! The baby living inside Mary was the hope for all of Judah! Jesus was the Messiah, the One who would save them all! So, when Joseph woke up, he took Mary home as his wife.**

The promise of Jesus was for more than just God's people who lived long ago. Jesus is our hope too! When we choose to follow Jesus, we can know confidently that we will live with God forever as His kids!

Even when life is hard, when we are scared or disappointed, we can remember that ...

Slide 7 (Kids): **God is with us!**

Narrator: **That God ...**

Slide 8 (Kids): **knows us!**

Narrator: **that God ...**

Slide 9 (Kids): **loves us!**

Narrator: **and that God ...**

Slide 10 (Kids): **leads us!**

Narrator: **And we can always remember that Jesus is our ...**

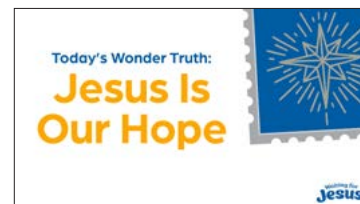
Slide 11 (Kids): **hope!**

Connecting the Wonder Truth

SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

Our Wonder Truth today is **JESUS IS OUR HOPE**. Where did you see our Wonder Truth in action in the story? Allow kids to answer freely.

The Bible is the big story of God loving His people. Even when God's people disobeyed Him, He still loved them, cared for them, and promised them a hopeful future. God's Son, Jesus, is the fulfillment of these promises—He is the hope God promised!



In Awe of God's Wonder

Spend a few moments allowing kids to think about the wonder of God's story.

What did you find yourself wondering during the story? Give kids time to share their questions. You don't need to answer them—simply allow the kids' curiosity to lead them to a place of awe!

If you could see God standing right here (point to a spot next to you), **what would you say to Him in response to what He did in this story? What would you do?** Give kids time to think and respond freely. Invite them to share their ideas first with a neighbor and then with the whole group.

Responding in Worship

SLIDE: RESPONDING IN WORSHIP

Talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning with next steps such as tithing, prayer, asking questions, and worship. Encourage kids to ask their SG leaders any questions they were wondering during the lesson.

***Introduce this next song and invite kids to respond and participate in worship. See the "Worship Posture Tutorial" on the RBKids Resource Page.



WORSHIP VIDEO: KING OF KINGS

Blessing Your Kids

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands were open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them. Use your own words. Here is an example:

Blessing: God knows you and loves you more than you can imagine!

May He fill you with hope today and always! And may the hope of Jesus shine in you so that others may see the love of God in you!

Small Group: Responding in Worship Activity

Instruct Small Group Leaders to open to the last page of their guide to finish their time with the Responding in Worship Activity.