

LESSON 4
LOVE

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Loved Us by Sending Jesus**SCRIPTURE:** Isaiah 11; John 1**GOD'S BIG STORY:** God loves His people and promised to send a Savior to rescue them. Jesus—God's Son—is the promised Savior. God sent Jesus because He loves us!**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**

- Welcome Question: Who is someone you love? How do you show them love?
- Curiosity Questions
- Word of Wonder Activity
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- In Awe of God's Wonder
- Discussion Questions for Elementary Kids and Preteens
- Small Group Prayer Time
- LARGE GROUP
- Elementary Responding in Worship: The Best Christmas Present Ever!
- Preteen Responding in Worship: To God, From Me

[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: God Loved Us by Sending Jesus

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 11; John 1

WORD OF WONDER: Hebrews 11:1

Pumpkin is a pale-orange cat who lives in our home as a beloved member of our family. Pumpkin was born a stray, and her first home was under our shed. Shortly after Pumpkin's birth, her mother left her to fend for herself. My son and daughter were very worried about the kitten and wanted to adopt her immediately. Pumpkin was shy and wouldn't let anyone near her. Most days my kids would go outside after school and drop food for Pumpkin, who would wait until they left to nibble it. My kids made toys for Pumpkin. She would play with the toys after the kids went back inside. All my kids wanted was what was best for this kitten, who couldn't decide if she could trust them or not. After a few months, Pumpkin allowed my kids to get close enough to pet her. Then one day, she walked into the middle of our whole family while we were outside and decided she was one of us.

In their consistent, patient, kind way, my kids showed me a rich picture of how God loves us. No matter what we've been through, or how lost or untrusting we might be, He gets into our world and demonstrates His love for us. This is how Jesus came into the world. Read Isaiah 11:1–2 and John 1:1–14. God loved us by sending Jesus.

How has trust been an important part of learning God's love?

How have you experienced the consistent, patient, kind love of God?

—**Matt Irvine**

Pastor and Editor

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

God called Isaiah to preach a message of renewal. He prophesied that a “branch” growing from the root of Jesse’s family tree would restore the nation. This is a reference to King David’s line, from the tribe of Judah. Jesus is the promised Savior!

WHAT?

All things were created through Jesus, who is the Word. When humans disobeyed God, He continued to love them. God promised to send a Savior to rescue them so they could be with Him again. Jesus—the Word—is the promised Savior who came at Christmas and will return again.

WHERE?

In Isaiah 11, the prophet addresses the tribe of Judah who was living in the southern kingdom of Judah. Isaiah envisions a future when the divided kingdoms are reunited, and people will come from every nation, under the leadership of the promised Savior.

WHEN?

God’s rescue plan was always to send Jesus. Jesus has always existed, even before the creation of time. Isaiah sees a set of promises from God that can only be fulfilled in and through Jesus, more than 700 years after Isaiah lived.

CONNECTING TO GOD’S BIG STORY:

God loves us and wants to be in relationship with us, but sin separates us from Him. Jesus—who has no sin—is the only One who can pay the price for our sin so our relationship with God can be restored. God loved us by sending Jesus!

LESSON 4 **ELEMENTARY & PRETEEN**

Small Group

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

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Loved Us by Sending Jesus

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 11; John 1

WORD OF WONDER: Hebrews 11:1

Pre-Service Connection (15–20 min)

RESOURCES: whiteboard, poster paper, or butcher paper, writing utensils, board games or games

Games & Activities Guide

Small group leaders should be seated in place in their small groups 20 minutes prior to service time. Have activities ready to keep children occupied and engaged WITH you. This time is important to build relationships, welcome new kids, and keep structure in the room - you should be an active participant with them! Learn the kids names, and make sure they all know yours too!

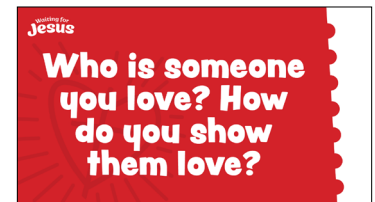
As kids arrive ...

Warmly welcome new friends, and introduce them to your group.

Use the Welcome Question and the following "I'm Curious" questions to engage kids. Say "I'm curious.." before each question and give kids an chance to think before answering each one. After each question, consider having kids share their ideas with a neighbor before you call on one or two of them to share with the group.

Consider having a whiteboard or poster for kids to write or draw answers to any of the questions:

- **Have you ever done something really nice for someone you loved? Share your story.**
- **How does God show His love for us? What are examples from the Bible or your own life?**



Small Group Begins

After the Opening Activity or game, Large Group Leader will begin small group time by reading the Welcome Question aloud and inviting everyone to open their Bibles and begin.

Word of Wonder Activity

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 (NIRV)

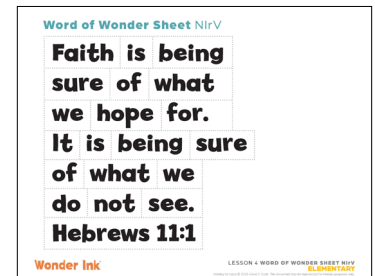
SUPPLIES: Bible, small present boxes with separate lids (1 per small group), Christmas-themed wrapping paper (prep only), tape (prep only), scissors (prep only)

RESOURCES: Word of Wonder Sheet NIRV (1 per small group)

Ahead of time, wrap a small, lidded present box for each small group in Christmas-themed wrapping paper. Wrap it so the lid can easily be slid on and off for the activity. Print the Word of Wonder Sheet NIV or NIRV for each small group, and cut out the slips. Place a set of slips in each wrapped box.

God loved us by sending Jesus! And through Jesus, we can have the sure hope that we will live with God forever! Let's say our Word of Wonder together. Open your Bible to Hebrews 11:1. Practice the verse with the kids by reading it several times together.

Let's play a game called Pass the Present to help us practice our Word of Wonder. Inside this present (hold up the wrapped box) are slips with our Word of Wonder on them. When I say, "Go," we will pass the present around the circle. When I say, "Stop," whoever is holding the present will open it, take out a slip, and close it. When I say, "Go," again, you will continue passing the present. Once all the slips have been taken from the present, you'll work together to put the slips in verse order as quickly as possible! Play the game several times as time allows.



Leader Tip: Make this activity more festive by playing a Christmas song or carol as kids pass the present. When you stop the music, kids can stop passing the present.

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid), sticky notes (2 per kid, optional)

Isaiah shared God's message during a time when God's people were waiting for hope and leadership. He described a future ruler who would come from David's family and be filled with the Spirit of the Lord. This ruler would bring wisdom, justice, and peace so great that even nature would be transformed. In John, we see how this promise connects to Jesus, who is described as the Word who was with God and is God. As you read, think about what it means that the powerful Creator chose to come and live among people.

PASSAGE: Isaiah 11:1–2, 6–7 and John 1:1–4, 14

Leader Tip: Have a handful of Bibles with labeled sticky notes ready to go for kids who struggle to turn the pages or who may be unfamiliar with the order of the books and Old and New Testaments.

Elementary Questions

- **Jesus has always been with God, and Jesus is God! What are some things that Jesus created?** (Possible answers: stars, planets, oceans, forests, insects, animals.)
- **Who was the prophet who told God's people that a Savior would be born from the family tree of Jesse?** (Isaiah)
- **God sent Jesus because He loves us! What is God's love like?** (Possible answers: God's love puts others first. It is more than a feeling; it is selfless, and it never goes away.)
- **Jesus, who is God, became human and was born as a baby to live among us. How does this show God's love for us?**
- **What are some ways God shows His love to you?**
- **What are some ways you can show God's love to other people?**

We know God loves us because He sent us Jesus. God showed that He keeps His promises by doing exactly what He told the prophet Isaiah He was going to do. Let's thank God through prayer for His love and promises.

Leader Tip: Jesus is God and has always existed. Yet He is also God's Son. This idea, based on the doctrine of the Trinity, might be new (and confusing!) to kids. Explain that God is three persons but still one God: Father, Son (Jesus), and the Holy Spirit. While Jesus was born on earth as a baby, He has always existed because He is God.

Preteen Questions

- **How long has Jesus existed?** (Possible answers: Jesus has always existed. He made everything and existed before creation!)
- **Whose family tree did the prophet Isaiah say the Savior would come from? How many years after Isaiah did the people continue to wait for the Savior?** (Jesse's family tree; about 700 years)
- **How would you define true, godly love?** (Possible answers: God's love is more than a feeling. God's love is shown through selfless actions that put others before ourselves. Love is who God is!)
- **Jesus, who is God, became human and was born as a baby to live among us. How does this show God's love for us?**
- **What are other ways God shows His love to you?**
- **What are some ways you can show God's love to other people?**

Even though we sinned, God never stopped loving us. He kept His promise to send us a Savior so we can be forgiven of our sins. Let's spend time talking to God in prayer and thanking Him for the gift of Jesus and all the promises He keeps.

Small Group Prayer Time

Invite kids to share their prayer requests and praises from the week and give them time to pray for one another. If kids need help getting started, together list all the ways God shows us that He loves us. Feel free to lead your group in prayer while your kids pray silently.

Head to Large Group!

Return and finish the rest of this guide before parents arrive.

Elementary Responding in Worship: The Best Christmas Present Ever!

SUPPLIES: extra-large box, scissors (prep only), Christmas-themed wrapping paper, tape, bow or ribbon, note cards or half sheets of paper (several per kid), writing utensils, coloring utensils

RESOURCES: [Waiting for Jesus Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

Ahead of time, wrap an extra-large box with Christmas-themed wrapping paper and a bow or ribbon. The larger the present, the better, so consider using a very large moving or furniture box. Cut a slit in the top, large enough to slip in note cards or half sheets of paper.

Place the extra-large wrapped present at the front of the room, and gather the kids. Display The Best Christmas Present Ever! Slide. **Today in God's big story we learned that Jesus has always existed and that all of creation was made through Him! God loves us and wants to be in relationship with us, so He sent Jesus to be born as a baby and to live among His people. God showed His love for us by sending Jesus. Jesus is the best Christmas present ever!**

Let's take some time to say, "Thank You" to God for the gift of Jesus! Set out note cards or half sheets of paper and writing and coloring utensils. Invite kids to write or draw messages to God on the cards or half sheets. They can think about ways God shows them love and thank Him for each one. For example, God might show love through a rainbow or beautiful sunset, through giving them peace in a hard situation, and through the way He provides them with food, family, etc. And of course, God shows His love by giving us Jesus and making the way for us to be His kids forever!

Give kids time to write or draw one or more messages. After a few minutes, invite kids to hold their messages for God up in the air. **Each of our drawings and messages represents God's gift of love to us! But here's something amazing: When we say "thank You" to God for His love and gifts, we are giving Him a gift that He loves too! Our praise and gratitude are our gifts to the greatest gift giver of all—God!** Point to the extra-large wrapped present. Invite kids to take turns going up to the present and putting their thank-you notes and drawings into it as their Christmas gift to God. As they put their slips in, encourage them to say: "Thank You, God, for the gift of Jesus!" Play music from the [Waiting for Jesus Elementary Spotify playlist](#) during this time.

Leader Tip: Make your own thank-you note to God. Then be the first person to slip your note into the large present and to say, "Thank You, God, for the gift of Jesus!" Kids will naturally follow your lead!

Preteen Responding in Worship: To God, From Me

SUPPLIES: cardstock, scissors (prep only), kid-safe scissors, coloring utensils, writing utensils, curly ribbon (red and green), hole punch, gift bows (optional)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: To God, From Me Slide; Gift Tag Sheet (1 per 2 kids); [Waiting for Jesus Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

Ahead of time, print the Gift Tag Sheet on cardstock, one copy for every two kids. Cut the sheets in half so that you can give half a sheet (containing one gift tag) to each kid.

Display the To God, From Me Slide, and gather the kids. **Today in God's big story we learned that Jesus has always existed and that all of creation was made through Him! God loves us and wants to be in relationship with us, so He sent Jesus to be born as a baby and to live among His people. God showed His love for us by sending Jesus. Jesus is God's greatest gift to us!**

This Christmas let's thank God for Jesus by giving Him a gift that is special to us. Think about something important to you that you could give back to God as a symbol of your gratitude to Him. For example, you might give a favorite sport or activity, a favorite device or toy, or even a friendship back to God. Invite kids to think of special things they could give back to God. Explain that this gift would be symbolic and that by giving it back to God, they are thanking Him for it and asking God to work through it in their lives. Invite kids to share their ideas with the group if they would like.

Hand a Gift Tag Sheet to each kid, and set out supplies. **Let's create gift tags to God from us for something we would like to give Him for Christmas. You can write your name next to the "From" on your tag. Then you can decorate your tag and draw a picture on it of what you are giving to God. If your picture doesn't fit on the front of the tag, you can draw it on the back.** Invite kids to work on their gift tags. When finished decorating, writing, and drawing, they can cut out their tags, punch a hole in the top, and tie curly ribbon through the hole. Play music from the [Waiting for Jesus Elementary Spotify playlist](#) as kids work.

I invite you to take your gift tags home today. If you would like to give a physical gift to God on Christmas, consider wrapping an object that represents your gift. For example, if you would like to give God your favorite sport as a symbol of gratitude and to ask Him to work through it in your life, you could wrap an actual soccer ball or volleyball and attach your gift tag to the present. Or if your gift to God isn't something you can wrap in a package, you can simply place your decorated gift tag under the Christmas tree or somewhere else to help you remember to give it to God on Christmas.

As time allows, invite kids to share their finished gift tags and what they plan on giving God as a Christmas gift.

