

LESSON 1
HOPE

LESSON AT A GLANCE

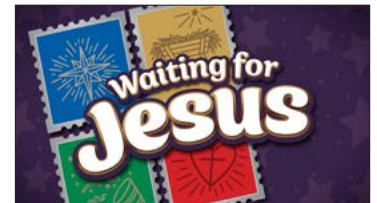
WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Is Our Hope**SCRIPTURE:** Isaiah 7; Matthew 1**GOD'S BIG STORY:** Isaiah reminds God's people of God's promise to send a Messiah, and Jesus—Immanuel—fulfills the promise!**WORD OF WONDER:** Faith is being sure of what we hope for and sure of what we do not see.
—from Hebrews 11:1

CURIOSITY

BELIEF

FAITH

- Play Stations:
 - Nativity Play
 - “I Spy” Christmas Bottle
 - Hope Coloring Sheet
- Word of Wonder: From Hebrews 11:1
- God’s Big Story/ Snack
- Circle Time: Circle Hop
- LARGE GROUP
- Responding in Worship: Waiting for Jesus Countdown Chain
- Game: Hopping and Hoping



God Speaks Preschool Spotify playlist



LESSON 1 FOR LEADERS

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: From 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 **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

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: From Hebrews 11:1

Play Stations

SUPPLIES: toy nativity set; unbreakable transparent bottle; uncooked rice (enough to fill the bottle); funnel (prep only); small trinkets such as a button, bead, small star, small toy Jesus figure, heart-shaped button; coloring utensils; food coloring (optional); colored craft rice (optional); hot glue gun (optional)

RESOURCES: [Hope Coloring Sheet \(1 per kid\)](#)

Greet the kids warmly and briefly explain the play stations to them. Invite them to play at any of the stations.

Welcome to church! While we're getting ready to start, you can play at any of these stations to help you get ready for our lesson today. Do you have any ideas about what we'll be learning today?

Play Station: Nativity Play

Set up: Set out a toy nativity set.

Play: Invite the kids to play with the toy nativity set. If they know the story of Jesus' birth, encourage them to act it out with the characters. If they don't know the story, help them act it out.

Play Station: "I Spy" Christmas Bottle

Set up: Make your own "I Spy" bottle ahead of time with uncooked rice in unbreakable transparent bottles. You can color the rice with food coloring ahead of time or purchase colored craft rice or filler. Use a funnel to add the rice to the bottle, leaving some room at the top. Toss in a few small trinkets, such as a button, bead, small star, small toy Jesus figure, or a heart-shaped bead. Secure the lid of the bottle. You can use hot glue to keep it shut. If you have a large group, make more than one bottle.

Play: Let the kids take turns playing with the bottle and looking for the items in the bottle. Encourage them to shake it up and continue looking for each item. Tell them the story today is about people who were looking and waiting for Jesus.

Make It Inclusive: This is a great sensory tool for kids who need physical and visual stimulation during the service.

Play Station: Hope Coloring Sheet

Set up: Print one copy per kid of the coloring sheet and set out the coloring utensils.

Play: Let the kids color. The kids can also turn the sheet over and draw a picture of something that makes them happy.

Word of Wonder

SUPPLIES: Bible, scissors (prep only)

RESOURCES: [Word of Wonder Sheet \(4/SG\)](#)

WORD OF WONDER

Faith is being sure of what we hope for and sure of what we do not see.

—from Hebrews 11:1

Ahead of time, print the Word of Wonder Sheet and cut out the cards (one card for each kid). **Our Word of Wonder for the Waiting for Jesus series is from Hebrews 11:1. Let's practice saying the Word of Wonder together.**

Encourage the kids to do the motions and say the verse with you.

- **FAITH**—Make prayer hands.
- **IS BEING SURE**—Make a fist with one hand and put it down on your other hand (open palm).
- **OF WHAT WE HOPE FOR**—Put your fist down onto your open palm once for each word (what, hope).
- **AND SURE**—Hands on your hips.
- **OF WHAT WE DO NOT**—Hold one finger up and shake it back and forth (“No, No”).
- **SEE.**—Put your hands by your eyes like binoculars.
- **FROM HEBREWS 11:1**—Hands open like a book.

Gather the kids together in a circle. Give each kid one card.

Our verse helps us remember that we can have faith—that means deep trust and belief in God, even when we can't see God. You all have a card has a picture on it. It may have a cross, a Bible, a heart, or praying hands. We're going to practice saying our verse together while we pass the cards around the circle.

When we finish saying the verse, I'll call out a picture. If you have that picture on your card, you will run to touch a wall and say the verse as loud as you can. Then come back to the circle and we'll play again. If you need help saying the verse, that's OK!

Make It Inclusive: For kids who unable to run to touch a wall, invite them to hold up the card and stay seated, if they have the picture.

Have the kids pass the cards around the circle as you say the verse and encourage the kids to say it with you. Each time you finish the verse, call out a picture from the cards (cross, Bible, heart, praying hands) and encourage the kids who are holding that picture to run to one wall and say the verse. Play several rounds.

What do you think these pictures have to do with the part of God's big story we heard? Allow the kids to answer.

The story from the **Bible** (hold up the Bible card) is about how God **loved** (hold up the heart card) us by sending the Savior, **Jesus** (hold up the cross card). We can have faith in Him and have a **relationship with Him** (hold up the praying hands card). We can be thankful that God sent Jesus, and we can trust in Him!

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

- **What is something you do not see that you know is real?** (If the kids need help, offer ideas such as: wind, air, scents, gravity, your heart, love, etc.)
- **What does this verse tell us about hope?** (If the kids need help, offer ideas such as: We can be sure of hope and we can have faith.)

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: Bible; Bible Story Picture (1/SG)

Bible Time Rhyme

Say the Bible time rhyme (with motions) each week before the Bible story to remind kids that what they're about to hear is part of God's big story.

I open my Bible, and what do I see? (Hold your hands together, then open your palms, as if opening a book.)

God's big story, waiting for me! (Point to yourself.)

Let's start by reading part of God's big story from the books of Isaiah and Matthew in the Bible. Isaiah is in the Old Testament, and Matthew is the first book of the New Testament.

[Read the God's Big Story Script below from Isaiah 7:10–14 and Matthew 1:18–24](#)

Today's story is about a big promise God made—and how He kept it! Everyone, hold your hands out wide like this. (Stretch arms out.) **That's how big God's promise was!**

A long time ago, God's people were waiting for someone special. They were hoping and praying for help. God sent a man named Isaiah to tell them some good news. Let's all cup our hands around our mouths and say, "Good news!" (Kids repeat.)

Isaiah told the people that one day, a baby would be born. Hold your arms like you're rocking a baby. This baby would be very special—He would be God with us! Let's whisper that together: "God with us."

Many, many years later, God sent an angel to talk to Joseph. Flap your arms like angel wings. The angel told Joseph that Mary was going to have a baby. This baby would be the Savior God had promised. His name would be Jesus!

Everyone shout, "Jesus is our hope!" (Kids repeat.) **Jesus came to show us that God is with us and that He loves us so much. We can always have hope because Jesus is with us—no matter what!**

What was the baby's name? (Let kids answer: Jesus!) **Who keeps His promises?** (Let kids answer: God!) **That's right! God always keeps His promises, and Jesus is our hope!**

Circle Time: Circle Hop

Gather the kids in a circle. **When we say the words “I hope ...” we mean we wish something would happen. We might hope the weather is nice. We might hope to get a certain gift. We hope to get to visit with someone. But the hope we find in Jesus is not just wishing! We can know for certain He loves us and forgives us. When you jump up, you can know for certain you will come back down! Invite all of the kids to jump up. That’s because of gravity: What goes up will always come down. It’s certain. We can be certain of our hope in Jesus. We’re going to play a game with hopping and hoping!**

Tell the kids they will go around the circle in order and each person will hop three times. Each kid can begin hopping when the person before him has started hopping. The hop will go around the circle until it gets back to the first person in the circle who hopped.

While the kids are hopping, call out “Freeze,” at various times and choose one kid who is hopping to answer a question from the discussion questions.

In God’s big story today, we learned about Isaiah’s promise that God would send a new king to lead His people forever—Jesus! Jesus came to show us real love and be our Savior. We can have hope because of Jesus.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **Who gave people a message about Jesus long before He was born?** (*Isaiah*)
- **Who did an angel visit in a dream to tell the news of Jesus coming?** (*Joseph*)
- **What name did the angel say the baby would have?** (*Immanuel*)
- **What can we remember when we feel scared or sad?** (*Jesus is our hope; Jesus is always with us.*)
- **Share about a time when you had to wait a long time for something.**
- **How do you think Mary and Joseph, and all of God’s people, felt when they found out God’s promised Savior was coming?**
- **What is something you hope for from God?** (*If kids need help, offer ideas such as: to be a child of God, to live forever with God, to have a relationship with God*)
- **What is one way you can celebrate and remember Jesus this week?**

No matter what happens in our lives, we can have hope because Jesus is our hope! When you are scared or sad, you can talk to God and trust that God will take care of you! Let’s talk to God now in prayer.

Invite kids to share prayer requests and praises and to pray for each other. Some kids may not be comfortable praying out loud. That’s OK! Encourage them to pray silently and to thank God for sending Jesus to be our hope.

Head to Large Group!

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

Responding in Worship: Waiting for Jesus Countdown Chain

SUPPLIES: stapler, tape, or glue; scissors or paper cutter (prep only); kid-friendly scissors (optional); colored sheets of printer paper (red and green; optional); coloring utensils (optional)

RESOURCES: [Waiting for Jesus Countdown Chain Sheet \(5 sheets\(25 strips\)/kid\)](#)

Ahead of time, print the Waiting for Jesus Countdown Chain Sheet and cut apart the strips of paper (or let older kids cut their own). You will need enough strips of paper for each

kid to have a countdown to Christmas Day. The kids can decorate and color the strips, or you can print them on different colors of paper and mix up the colors of strips you give each kid.

In the Waiting for Jesus series, we'll learn about how God had a special plan to send Jesus to earth as the promised Messiah, the promised Savior. Let's think about how the people in the Bible must have felt when they were waiting for Jesus to arrive. We are going to make countdown chains to help us get excited to celebrate Christmas and the birth of Jesus as we wait to celebrate Christmas and Jesus!

Count the number of days from the time you're teaching until Christmas Day. Give each kid that many strips of paper, along with tape or glue. You can also use a stapler and allow an adult to staple each strip. The kids will loop the strips through one another, securing each one, to make a chain.

In our story today, we learned God had promised His people long ago that the Messiah would come bring light and hope to the world. God gave hope to the people when Jesus was born, and Jesus is still our hope today!

Take your chain home and remove one chain link each day from now until Christmas Day by breaking a chain link from the end. This will help you understand and think about how it feels to wait with anticipation and excitement for Jesus!



Game: Hopping and Hoping

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: upbeat music from the [Waiting for Jesus Early Childhood Spotify playlist](#)
Is it hard to wait a long time for something you want? Allow the kids to respond. **What have you had to wait for?** Allow the kids to respond. **God's people had to wait a long time for the promise of Jesus to come true, but God kept His promise and sent Jesus! Remember, hope means trusting, expecting, and knowing for certain that something will happen that is good. We can trust that Jesus loves us, and we can look forward to living with Him forever if we follow Him!**

Let's play a game to help us think about what it means to wait and hope. I'm going to turn around with my back to you and count in my head, while you hop up and down. When I get to 20, I'm going to turn back around, and you should freeze when you see me start to turn around. If I see anyone still moving, that person will shout out one good thing you hope for. We'll play several times.

Turn around and tell the kids to hop and think about something good they hope for, while you silently count to 20. If you see any kid moving when you turn back around, ask that person to shout out something he hopes for. Play several rounds.

Play music from the [Waiting for Jesus Early Childhood Spotify playlist](#) and encourage the kids to sing and dance. Pause the music periodically for a few seconds at a time, and if any kids move after the music pauses, have them jump.