

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

Activity: Nativity Play

Activity: Waiting and Hoping

Worship

God's Big Story

Word of Wonder

Prayer and Blessing

Activity: Hoping for Jesus

Wonder@Home™

Designed for families to engage in the wonder of God together at home. This resource includes a video, worship playlists, activities, and more!

Activity: Nativity Play

SUPPLIES: toy nativity set

Greet the kids warmly and welcome them to church.

Hello! Welcome to church! Come see what we have today! Show the kids the nativity set and invite them to play with it. **We're going to learn in this series about when God sent Jesus to be born on earth. God sent Jesus to give us hope—that means knowing for sure that things will be OK and that God is with us. We're going to learn about that today! You can play with the nativity set and think about how God sent Jesus to be born.** If the kids know the nativity story, encourage them to act it out using the characters. If they don't, help them.

Activity: Waiting and Hoping

God's big story today takes place over a long period of time. It starts many, many years before Jesus was born. God gave a message through a messenger that a Savior would be born to save us all and give us hope. But it didn't happen right away. The people had to wait for a very long time. **Do you like to wait a very long time?** Allow the kids to respond. **Let's see what it's like to wait. I'm going to tell you to close your eyes. Then I'll wait while you sit as quietly as you can and keep your eyes shut. I'll point to one person and then tell you all to open your eyes.**

Spend some time having the kids all close their eyes and sit quietly while you count silently. Start by counting only to 15. While you're counting, point to one kid. Then tell the kids to open their eyes. The next time, count to 20, then 40, then 60.

Was it hard to wait quietly while you hoped I was pointing to you? Allow the kids to respond. **Did you know when I was going to stop counting each time?** Allow the kids to respond. **You didn't know how long you'd have to wait. We'll learn today about how God's people had to wait a long time for Jesus to be born. We don't have to wait because Jesus is here, and He is our hope!**

Our Wonder Truth today is **JESUS IS OUR HOPE.**

Encourage the kids to do the following motions while you repeat the Wonder Truth. Older toddlers can say the words with you as they do the motions.

JESUS—Pretend to rock a baby.

IS OUR—Point to yourself.

HOPE—Hold arms straight up over your head.

Worship

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: songs from the [Waiting for Jesus Early Childhood Spotify playlist](#)

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!

Play songs from the [Waiting for Jesus Early Childhood Spotify playlist](#) and encourage the kids to sing and dance as they praise God.

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: Bible

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Baby Jesus Picture, [Hope God's Big Story Video](#)

Print the Baby Jesus Picture to give the kids a visual depiction as you tell the story.

Our God's big story today is a great story from the Bible about a man named Isaiah, who was a messenger of God. Encourage the kids to say, "Isaiah." **Let's find out from the Bible what message he shared from God.**



Show the kids the God's Big Story Video, read the story from the Bible, or use the script provided below. **Many years before Jesus was born, God made a promise that the forever King, a Savior, would be born for His people. God sent the prophet Isaiah to talk to His people. A prophet is a person who speaks God's words to others. Can you all turn and tell someone something? You can tell them any message you want, such as your favorite food or color. Allow the kids to share a message with someone else in the room. God sent Isaiah to share a message with God's people.**

Isaiah shared this special message with God's people: A young woman who was not married will have a son and name Him "Jesus." Can you turn to someone else and tell that person your name? Allow the kids to tell someone else their name.

The people heard the promise. And they waited. And they waited. And they waited! The people had waited so long! But it was finally time for the forever King to come. Do you think the people were happy? They must have been excited after waiting for so long! Can you all clap like you're happy and excited? Pause to allow the kids to clap.

A man named Joseph was going to get married to a young woman named Mary. Mary was going to have a baby. Do you know who the baby was? Allow the kids to respond. It was baby Jesus! The one who was promised a long time ago! An angel from God came to Joseph and told him that the baby in Mary's belly was Jesus—the same one who God promised a long time ago. And He would save people from their sins (the wrong things they do). Hold up the Baby Jesus Picture. This picture reminds us that the baby who was in Mary's belly was from God, sent to be born so we can all have hope. Hope is the feeling in our heart that everything is OK and that God is with us.

The promise of Jesus was for God's people who lived long ago and for us. Jesus is our hope too! Even when life is hard, we can remember and trust that God is with us. Even when we feel scared or sad, we can remember that God is with us. Even when we have to wait, we can remember that Jesus is our hope!

Word of Wonder

SUPPLIES: Bible

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Word of Wonder Slide or [Video](#) (optional)

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, display the Word of Wonder Slide or [Video](#), if using. **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.

Prayer and Blessing

Let's pray and talk to God. When I say, “Jesus,” pretend to rock a baby.

God, we thank You for sending Jesus (pretend to rock a baby) for us. We know that Jesus (pretend to rock a baby) is our hope! Help us always remember that. We love You. In Jesus' (pretend to rock a baby) name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands are open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

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!

Game: Hoping for Jesus

SUPPLIES: scissors (prep only), paper plates or sheets of paper (1 per kid)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Baby Jesus Picture

If you haven't already, print the Baby Jesus Picture and cut out the baby Jesus. Set out paper plates (or sheets of paper) on the ground spread out (enough for each kid to have one). Hide the Baby Jesus picture under one of the plates or papers.

Today we learned about how God's people waited for so long for Jesus to come! How do you think it felt to wait a long time for the one God promised? Allow the kids to respond. **Do you like to wait a long time for something?** Allow the kids



to respond. **We're going to play a game where we'll wait and hope to find Jesus too, as we think about how God's people must have felt! We'll all walk around the plates or papers. When I say, "Stop," you can all pick up a plate or paper and see if the Baby Jesus picture is under it. If you find it, you can say, "Jesus is our hope!"**

Invite the kids to walk around the plates or papers. Periodically, tell them to "Stop" and pick up their plates or papers to see who has the Jesus picture. Whoever has the Jesus picture will say, "Jesus is our hope!" Then tell the kids to close their eyes or turn away while you hide it again. Play several rounds.