

date: 12/10/17**Bible Passage: Luke 1:1–56**  
(Mary)

## God Gave The Promise, Part 1

### REMEMBER VERSE

**Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has  
come to his people and redeemed them.**

Luke 1:68

### Inspire

*Shares personal stories from fellow ministry leaders about how God has worked in their lives*

Leaving behind the preschool I had opened on a church campus would be difficult, but I knew God was directing me to do something new. Within 24 hours of leaving the preschool, an executive pastor of my new church told me that the position for which they had hired me was being cut due to finances. However, he assured me he would find funding for this position. Hopefully, I would be able to start after a two-month delay.

I decided to show up as a volunteer in my new position on Monday morning. I knew God had called me to this place and He would provide—I was counting on it. It was a bit unusual in the eyes of those around me. Regardless, I knew it was true. So for two months I volunteered. True to who God is, He provided for every one of my needs. While I was walking through this season, people told me that I had great faith. I just believed what I knew God told me. But then I guess that is faith—believing and resting in what God tells you. Two months later, I officially started in my paid position on staff.

One theme that is consistent throughout Scripture is that God is looking for people with faith. Faith in Him and who He is. God always does what He says. He always keeps His promises.

*Cristi Thomas*  
Tru Team

## Equip

*Offers perspective and context to the lesson's Bible passage*

God had a plan to defeat sin and restore mankind to Himself from the very beginning. The Promise is first mentioned in Genesis as God informs the serpent of his demise. Throughout Scripture and all of human history, God has reminded His people of the Promised One through the prophets. He protected the family line through which the Messiah would come, in spite of the many attempts by the enemy of God to wipe out the Jewish people. Then, at just the right time, The Promise was presented to the world.

One might think the Jewish people would be eagerly awaiting the arrival of the promised Messiah and King. The Jewish people at this time found themselves living under Roman law in the regions that had been conquered. The Jewish high priests or political Sanhedrin were ruling Judea with the support and leadership of the appointed Roman governor. While concentrating on political gain and the mastery of Jewish law, few remained faithful waiting for The Promise of God.

A man by the name of Zechariah and his family were among the faithful. Zechariah and his wife, Elizabeth, were both from the line of Aaron—the line of the priesthood. During Zechariah's time serving as priest in the temple, the angel Gabriel came to give him a message from God. The angel told Zechariah his wife, Elizabeth, was going to become pregnant and give birth to a son. They were to name him John. He would be a joy to his parents, cause others to rejoice, and be great in the sight of the Lord (Luke 1:14–17). John would be filled with the Holy Spirit from birth. God was preparing the way for The Promise.

Shortly after appearing to Zechariah, God sent Gabriel to give a message to Elizabeth's cousin, a young virgin woman named Mary. God's message to her was so unbelievable, and yet Mary believed and rejoiced in the incredible part she would play in His plan (Luke 1:30–33). The Promise had been introduced.

## Support

*Provides reflection and assessment through encouragement, prayer, and time in God's Word*

Check your Christmas CDs for the Christmas hymn “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” or download the classic from iTunes or [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com). As you let the music and the lyrics wash over you, reflect on the thousands of generations who waited expectantly for The Promise. Embrace your place in the community of the faithful who can now celebrate Immanuel. Let your heart be filled with the joyful anticipation that marks the birth of Christ. He is The Promise given. He is our Savior, Redeemer, and King. His reign will never end.

Lord, You are the Promised One, the Messiah. You are called Immanuel—God with us. You have come not just for a few, but all. Almighty God, thank You for coming to save us Yourself, in the flesh. Will You reveal the power in the truth of who You are as I read this? I ask that Your Spirit would speak to my heart as I seek after You. May the advent of Christmas have greater significance today than it did yesterday in my life. I ask this in Your powerful and glorious name. Amen.

## Small Group

SECTION

### EXPLORE:: 10 min.

#### Small Group Leaders

*Children engage in fun, creative activities designed to pique their curiosity about the day's portion of The Big God Story.*

### Hunting for Christmas

Children will have the opportunity to search for and then begin talking about items that will appear in today's part of The Big God Story.

#### SUPPLIES (per small group)

- [Hunting for Christmas template \(see Resources\)](#)
- Crayons
- Baby doll
- Angel (can use angel ornament, cookie cutter, drawing, etc.)
- Toy microphone
- Star (can use a star ornament, cookie cutter, or paper star cutout)
- Toy sheep (or picture of sheep)

#### SET UP

Print or copy the Hunting for Christmas template, enough for each child to have one. Hide the scavenger hunt items in easy-to-spot places around the room (baby doll, angel, toy microphone, star, and toy sheep). Set out the templates and crayons.

#### RELATE

Welcome children as they arrive. **Today we'll hear about a very special part of The Big God Story. I've hidden five items around the room.** Hand out a Hunting for Christmas template and crayon to each child. **On your paper are pictures of five items. Your job is to look around the room for each one. When you find an item from the list, you can draw a big "X" over the picture of that object on your page.** Demonstrate drawing an "X" over one of the images. **When you find an item from the list, leave it where it is so other children can find it too.** Give children a few minutes to search for all the items. You might encourage them to work with a partner and search for the items together.

When they've had a few minutes to search, bring the children back together. **Were you able to find all the items? Good! Who can tell me how you use each of these items?** Allow children to take turns discussing each item. **What do you think these items might have to do with the part of The Big God Story we'll hear today?**

### DISCOVER:: 25 min.

#### Host/Worship Leader/Storyteller

*Children participate in discovering God's Word through Bible verse memorization, interactive storytelling techniques, and worship as response.*

## Ponder Point

# God Gave The Promise

## Chloe's Rules

**Host/Worship Leader**

### SUPPLIES

- [Chloe's Rules videos](#) or
- Worship music (suggestions: "I Can Sing" and "I Am Listening to You," TruWorship *Sincerely Yours*)

### RELATE

Welcome children as they're entering the large group meeting area. *Tech: Cue Chloe's Rules video.* The theme song will play as the Worship Leader/Host enters and makes his way up front, welcoming and greeting children along the way. This should be a high-energy entrance. *Tech: Cue preschool program theme song.* Choose and play two upbeat worship songs of your choice from a worship album that complements the theme and focus of the lesson.

## Mail Time

**Host/Worship Leader**

### SUPPLIES

- [Mail Time intro clip and image](#) (see Resources)
- [Remember Verse image](#) (see Resources)
- [Remember Verse cards](#) (see Resources)
- [Mail Time envelope](#)
- Bibles (your personal and large children's)
- Mailbox

### PREPARE AHEAD

Print or copy the Mail Time envelope art and attach to a large envelope. Print or copy one Remember Verse card and put it inside the envelope.

### RELATE

*Tech: Cue the Mail Time intro clip and image.* Choose one volunteer to hide the mail and another to find the mail. Have the "Seeker" close her eyes while the "Hider" finds a good place to hide the Remember Verse. Once the mail has been hidden, the Seeker will begin to look for the mail while the children give clues to its whereabouts by calling out "hot" and "cold."

Once the Seeker finds the mail, the Host invites her to pull out the enclosed Remember Verse. Next, the Host should find the Remember Verse in his Bible and read the words aloud. Talk about the meaning of the verse while interacting with the children.

Lead the children in reciting the Remember Verse several times together using a variety of engaging methods. Hand motions, different voices, various speeds, and character integration are all great ways to help commit the Scripture to memory. For longer verses, approach the verse one section at a time, increasing what the children repeat back each week.

**REMEMBER VERSE**

**Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come to his people and redeemed them.**

**Luke 1:68**

**REMEMBER VERSE DEFINITIONS**

**redeemed:** bought back. Jesus paid the price of our sin so we can have eternal life.

**REMEMBER VERSE MOTIONS**

**Praise:** Hold hands up in the air and wiggle all fingers.

**be to the Lord:** Use right hand to make an *L* with index finger and thumb at left shoulder. Cross over front of body and end on right hip.

**the God of Israel:** Extend right hand in front of body with palm facing to side. Bring hand to rest fingertips just below chin.

**because he has come to his people:** Hold out both arms at sides of body and pull inward to hug chest.

**and redeemed them:** Place palms together in prayer motion.

## Wardrobe of Wonder

Storyteller/Host/Worship Leader

**SUPPLIES**

- [Wardrobe of Wonder intro clip and image \(see Resources\)](#)
- [What'sIt: Big Wrapped Present \(see optional image in Resources\)](#)
- Wardrobe of Wonder
- Small stools or chairs (2)

**ASK**

**What is this we've found in the wardrobe today?** Children answer. **Why do you think we have a big wrapped present in the wardrobe? When do you usually get presents?** Wait for answers. **How do you feel when you know a present is for you? Just before I open a gift, I get so excited because I know whatever is inside is something special from someone special. I really want to know why this gift is in our Wardrobe of Wonder today, don't you? Well, we know what time it is. Friends, what time is it?**

## The Big God Story

**Luke 1:1–56**

**God Gave The Promise**

**Storytelling Technique: Readers' Theater**

**SUPPLIES**

- [The Big God Story intro clip and image \(see Resources\)](#)
- [The Big God Story images: #1 Angel and Mary, #2 Mary and Elizabeth, #3 Mary Praising God, #4 The Big God Story Title Image \(see Resources\)](#)
- [What'sIt: Big Wrapped Present](#)
- Bible

- Readers (2 adult volunteers)
- Optional: rocking chair, fireplace (with stockings hung), big storybook or binder (2, with scripts inside)

### PREPARE AHEAD

The Big God Story is presented today in a “readers’ theater” style. Make two copies of the script and consider placing them in large, solid-colored books or binders. Invite three volunteers (youth, parents, etc.) to read parts in The Big God Story. Give each volunteer a script ahead of time and let him know which part he will be reading. Encourage volunteers to go over their script prior to the lesson.

### SET UP

Optional: Set the stage to look like a living room, complete with a rocking chair and mock fireplace with stockings hung from the mantle. You can utilize this staging for the next three weeks of Christmas lessons.

### RELATE

*Tech: Cue The Big God Story intro clip and image.*

Reader #1: **Hello, friends! It’s good to see you today. There are so many things we get to share together each time we meet. Before we learn from The Big God Story in the Bible, there’s something we need to do first. There’s someone we need to invite into our time and ask to teach us. Who would that be? Children answer. God! That’s right. Let’s pray and talk to God together.** Lead the children in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds.

**A long time ago, in the garden He created, God said He would someday send a Savior for everyone. The Savior would forgive people of the things they did wrong. Because of the Savior, we can know God and be with Him forever. Do you know who the Savior is? Pause for responses. Jesus! That’s right! Jesus is The Promise.**

Reader #2: **The Promise was not a secret. God wanted everyone to know about The Promise—who He was, when He would come. Who is The Promise? Pause for responses. Yes, Jesus! So, God told some special men who were called prophets. A prophet is a person who gets a special message from God. It’s a message God wants to make sure people will hear. The prophets believed what God said, and told people about The Promise. They even wrote the message God told them in the Bible.**

**Many, many years went by. People were waiting. Until one day (Tech: Cue image #1, Angel and Mary), God sent the angel Gabriel to a young woman named Mary. He had a very important message for her from God. “Greetings! The Lord has given you special favor. He is with you,” he said. Mary was surprised and a little afraid to have an angel appear to her. But the angel said, “Do not be afraid, Mary. God is very pleased with you. You are going to have a baby. You must name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God.” “How can this happen?” Mary asked the angel. The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come to you. And the power of the Most High God will cover you.” This was it! It was time! The Promise of God was coming! Jesus was going to be born!**

*Tech: Cue image #2, Mary and Elizabeth.*

Reader #1: **Mary believed. She told the angel, “I serve the Lord; let everything happen just as God said it would.” Then the angel left her. As soon as she could, Mary left her home and went to visit her cousin Elizabeth, and her husband, Zechariah. When Mary reached their home, she went inside and greeted her cousin. God filled Elizabeth with the Holy Spirit, and she spoke a blessing over Mary because Mary believed that God was going to do everything He told her.**

*Tech: Cue image #3, Mary Praising God.*

**Reader #2: After Elizabeth blessed her, Mary's heart was filled with joy. She remembered all the things God told His people He would do, and all the things He had done. As she remembered, she celebrated God by singing a song of praise for Him. God was sending The Promise to the world through her.**

*Tech: Cue image #4, The Big God Story Title Image.*

**Reader #1: God promised so very long ago to send the Savior. God never forgets. God always does what He says. He kept His word and gave us Jesus.**

**Reader #2: Pick up the What's!t. God gave us the greatest present ever! The present He gave each of us isn't inside this box. In fact, it isn't even something you can wrap. It isn't even a what, or a thing; it's a *who*. Who do you think is our present from God? Pause for responses. Jesus! That's right! He gave us Jesus. Jesus is our Savior. Jesus is The Promise.**

**Reader #1 and 2 Together: God gave The Promise.**

## Wonder Questions

Small Group Enhancements, coloring pages, and discussion questions help your group go deeper into today's portion of The Big God Story.

### SUPPLIES (per small group)

- [Wonder Questions coloring pages \(see Resources\)](#)
- [TruWonder Small Group Enhancements timeline and images \(see Resources\)](#)
- Crayons

### RELATE

**Today we learned from The Big God Story that God sent an angel to Mary. The angel told Mary that she would help bring Jesus, our Savior, into the world. Jesus is the very best gift of all.**

**I wonder ... What would I do if an angel visited me with a message from God?**

**I wonder ... Who can I tell about Jesus, God's best gift?**

**I wonder ... How can I thank God for sending The Promise, just like He said He would?**

## **BLESS:::** 5 min.

### **Small Group Leaders**

*Children receive a blessing from their leaders and sometimes one another. A blessing may be a prayer of commission, a portion of Scripture, or words to encourage and guide.*

### **SUPPLIES** (per small group)

- [Remember Verse cards](#) (see [Resources](#))

### **RELATE**

Gather your little ones and send them out with a blessing.

**In the Bible, Elizabeth used her words to tell Mary things that were true. Her blessing helped Mary to keep believing God. Today we're all going to have a chance to bless each other. You're going to take turns saying the blessing to a partner. After you've blessed your partner, your partner will say the blessing to you.** Model this for the children by pairing up with another leader or child and speaking the blessing:

**May you remember Jesus is The Promise and share Him with others.**

After the children have blessed one another, close with prayer. Send home Remember Verse cards and the HomeFront Weekly with your kids.