

Big Question:

Why did Jesus come?

The Promise (as one large group- leader led) 15 minutes

a. Wonder: I wonder

Invite responses from the students (allow some thinking time- the Big questions from previous terms are in the box if you want to use them as prompts or when students mention them).

- What were we thinking about last term?
- What big questions did we look at?
- What other things can we remember?

b. Discover: How does all this fit together?

- Use God's Big Story book to recap the Bible timeline as they share answers.

The story so far ...

- Is full of ups and downs... (thumbs up/down – happy/sad faces)
- BUT ... God rescued his people many times (what rescue stories can you remember from last term?) - move the rescue symbol across the timeline in line with the response.
- God NEVER give up on his people; His love never fails (love hearts)
- God has ALWAYS had a plan (add 'God has a plan' card at the start of the timeline)

c. Respond: Where does Jesus fit into all of this? What do we already know about Jesus?

- Introduce the big question: **Why did Jesus come?**
- So where does Jesus fit into this story?

- What do you already know about Jesus' story?
- Add some of the extra 'Jesus' items as students offer ideas or physical prompts.

The Promise Revealed (start as a leader-led large group) ~10 minutes

a. Wonder: I wonder.....

- Why do you think Jesus came? (allow students to share ideas –maybe share background points if needed):
- God's plan from the very beginning was to send someone to mend his broken world and rescue his people
- The first part of the Bible gives us lots of clues about what that person would be like and what they would do
- People had been expecting a rescuer (or Saviour) a long time before he came
- God gave clues to a man named Isaiah; God showed Isaiah what his rescue plan was all about (approx. 750 years before Jesus was born)

b. Discover: I wonder what we can find out from Isaiah about God's rescue plan.

What would God's rescuer be like and what would they do?

move to small groups around a volunteer (these will become the session groups most likely)

- Use the Isaiah boxes to find some clues about the rescuer God had promised: What would he be like? What would he do? *(items can be matched with promises - there are two different boxes both have Rescue)*

- you or students could record ideas/questions on the graffiti board (these will stay with the student group through the session to be added to.

What sort of rescuer do you think the people were expecting?

- discuss ideas briefly or highlight particular ideas on graffiti boards
- Which ideas make me think the most?

Let's go find out about this promised... ... *(Insert whichever one your group gravitated towards)*

Stations both start with

Storytelling the Nativity:

Use the Storycards and the nativity set props to tell the simplified story of Christmas, then ask these questions:

- What amazes you about this story?
- What do you think about all this? What questions do you have?
- What do you know about what happens after Jesus came as a baby?
- Use the other cards in the kit (Light, saviour...) to draw out that Jesus didn't stay a baby and went on to do more.
- What does it tell us about God or why Jesus came?
- What might we add to our graffiti board now that we have heard this story?

1) Jesus came to be the gift of LOVE

Big Question:

Why did Jesus come?

- Put out word hearts, images and verses on and around the large heart.
- Talk about them:
 - this is how God/Jesus shows love (**Bible verse**)
 - this may be how you show love (**Pictures**)
 - These are some words that people use to describe love (**words**)
- Students choose one that stands out to them and they may discuss it as a group or with a friend.
- **Response:**
 - Words or Pictures: on a paper strip make a response to the choice. Turn it into a heart to place on the tree (students may take it home if they wish).
 - Make an action (or short series of actions) that expresses love.
 - Create a scene with playdough
- Prayer response:
 - Take out the prayer template. Remind students of the prayer template from last term. Read the explanation side if needed.
 - Invite students to place a heart down on or around the Love heart box or prayer card as you read the prayer. They may respond by saying the prayer aloud, or silently, or not at all.

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- What does it tell us about God or why Jesus came?
- What might we add to our graffiti board now that we have heard this story?

2) Jesus came to give the gift of HOPE:

What is Hope: a feeling of expectation and desire for a particular thing to happen.

What is Christian hope: A confident expectation, knowing that God has always fulfilled his promises to his people.

Big Question:

Why did Jesus come?

- Lay down material and items, with the Hope Cross in the middle, to think about God's hope and how Jesus might fulfil it (this might be an unanswered question in some cases).
- Here are some sample prompting questions, use what you think is appropriate for your group

Juniors	Middle	Seniors
What do you think hope is?	What do you hope for?	What do you hope High School will be like?
This item is for food*, what do you hope for in relation to food?	What do you think this item represents? what hope do you have for that?	What do you think this item represents? what hope do you have for that?
How might hope feel?	Is it important to have hope?	Is it important to have hope?
How can having hope help?	How can you help someone have hope?	How can you help someone have hope?

- Pack away items, leave material and Hope Cross.
- Use the Hope Blocks to think
 - Hope Block
 - Black and White - What might trouble us in life
 - Coloured- what hope can people bring?
 - Bible verse- What hope can Jesus bring?

Response:

- Colour in and decorate the Hope decoration.
- Make an action (or short series of actions) that shows what you hope for, or hope in.
- Create a scene with playdough
- Prayer response:
 - Take out the prayer template. Remind students of the prayer template from last term. Read the explanation side if needed.
 - Invite students to place a heart down on or around the Love heart box or prayer card as you read the prayer. They may respond by saying the prayer aloud, or silently, or not at all.

God has a plan	Sadness	Happiness	Into the darkness a bright light will shine
God has a plan	Sickness	Hospitals	Even death will die when Jesus rescues the world
God has a plan	Money/Greed	Sending money/ Charity	Jesus came poor but still saved the whole world
God has a plan	Pollution/Climate change	Green spaces	The mountains and the trees will dance and sing for joy
God has a plan	War	Peace	He won't have big armies or swords but will save many people.
God has a plan	Refugees	Aid organisations	The hero who will rescue his people from their enemies

Conclusion: Forever & Gift As a large group again

Big Question:

Why did Jesus come?

- tell me what did you learn in your groups about why Jesus came?
- Briefly re-visit student thoughts from graffiti boards

Have out the front a Hope Cross and Love Box to be added to.

We found in Isaiah that God would send someone to rescue us. And last term we read from John 3:16-17 that Jesus was that person, the rescuer God promised in Isaiah. Jesus was sent by God to be that big rescue that we have been learning about all year.

Christians believe Jesus is the best gift (*Show the baby Jesus with the gift tag*) that could ever be given, and it is the reason we give gifts at Christmas time.

So the first Christmas wasn't about the gifts the wise men bought at all, it was about Jesus! Just like the angels said '**Your Saviour has been born; this will bring great joy for all people.**' That means you and me!

It's great news because God doesn't want anyone to miss out. God wants to rescue you from missing out on the gift of love, the gift of hope, and other gifts that God has to give too! I have three more gifts here. I am wondering if some people want to help me open them...

Three students reveal the hidden gifts - faith, forgiveness and forever

Thank you, wow! Faith, Forgiveness and Forever!

These are great gifts that Jesus came to give us.

Jesus came so we could have **faith** that God knows us and loves us. (*If you know me, you know God.*)

Jesus came so we could have **forgiveness** for when we forget to love God and to love others. (*Love one another.*)

Jesus came so we could have **forever** friendship with God. (*Eternal life.*)

Hmm... so why what do you think now? Why DID Jesus come?

This Christmas remember that Jesus came as a gift to rescue you and me. No matter who you are and what you have done, Jesus **loves** you and there is **hope** for you with God. That's a better present than anything you can find under any tree.

BONUS ROUND 1

If the other station isn't ready to move to the conclusion yet here are some ideas to use to keep your group occupied.

Hidden Letters

Show the students the images of the letters we have hidden in your kit that they have to hunt for, When a letter is found ask the student who found it for something that

- gives them hope, such as Jesus love, Kindness, the school holidays...

shows love, such as Jesus, parents, puppies, friends...

BONUS ROUND 2

Telephone- (younger students)

Have the students sit in a circle and very quietly whisper one of the following messages in one child's ear. Instruct them to quietly pass that message along until it comes back to the last student. Invite the final recipient to say it out loud to see if the message has changed.

LOVE:

1. God loves to show love to all the people.
2. You love me and I love you, but who will love the kangaroo?
3. L.O.V.E. that spells love for Jesus and me.

HOPE:

1. God gave hope to all the people
2. I have hope that hopping is a hopping good idea.
3. H.O.P.E that spells hope that comes from Jesus.

Text Messages (older kids that can spell)

Have Students line up in a single file line all facing the same direction. Students know they will be spelling out words. Give the last person in line one of the following words (one at a time), and have them spell that word on the back of the person standing in front of them using their finger. It is then passed down the line. And the person at the front either writes it down or spells it out and you see if it is correct.

Love	Hope	Tree
Heart	Wish	Star
Hugs	Dream	Mary
Jesus	Desire	Baby
Kind	Joy	Present