



OVERVIEW

Middler	Showcase 1	Showcase 2	Showcase 3	Showcase 4	Showcase 5
Title	Showing Christ's Love	Showing Christ's Holiness	Showing Christ's Compassion	Showing Christ's Humility	Showing Christ's Faithfulness
References	Matthew 1:18–25; Luke 2:1–11 (Jesus Is Born)	Matthew 4:1–11 (Jesus Is Tempted)	Mark 6:30–44 (Jesus Feeds over 5,000)	John 13:1–17 (Jesus Washes Feet)	Matthew 27:27–31, 39–46, 50; 28:1–8, 18–20 (Jesus Is Crucified, Then Rises to Life)
Focus	Christ's love in us	Christ's holiness in us	Christ's compassion in us	Christ's humility in us	Christ's faithfulness in us
Memory Verses	"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).	"It is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16).	"Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd" (Mark 6:34).	"I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13:15).	"Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).
Games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ani-motion Relay Don't Mess with That Llama! Flutter & Catch Luggin' Llamas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timber! Avoid Temptation Built Strong Beaver Balloon Bop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Match Me Compassion Fill-up Playful Dolphins Sharks & Dolphins Dolphin Splash 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elephant Trunk Soccer Crazy Critter Races Savanna Sling-it Soaker Wash 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Animal Scavenger Hunt Penguin Relay Keep That Egg Safe Creature Corners Keep It Up
Snacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Llama Wool Yummy South America Llama Crackers Andes Trail Mix 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beaver Lodge Cookies Beaver Cup Santos's Apple Tree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fishing with Dolphins Dolphin Compassion Sea Snack Mix Fish in the Seaweed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Animal Cracker Dip Elephant Memory Mini Elephant Ears 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Polar Ice Sandwiches Penguin Swim Cheese Icebergs Faithful Penguins
Crafts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jesus Is Born! Festive Clover the Llama Fluffy Llama God Sent His Son 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Backstroking Beaver Jesus in View Memory Box Eager Beaver Love God's Word Follow the Trail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Color Your Own Dolphin Beads & Bubbles Jellyfish Diving with Dolphins Floating Sea Turtle Dolphin Friend 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wildlife Color Scratch Masks Colorful Critter Necklace Elephant Smile WildLIVE! Memo Board Boldly Live for Jesus Follow the Leader Elephants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narwhal Friend Ice Skating Penguin Penguin on a Roll Good News Hearts Jesus Always Loves Us

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MIDDLER

TEACHER BOOK



Welcome

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Showing Christ's LOVE

Matthew 1:18–25; Luke 2:1–11 (Jesus Is Born)

MEMORY VERSE

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

EXTRA CREDIT VERSES

Matt. 1:21; John 15:12; 1 John 4:11

TOPIC

Christ's love in us

THEME

Jesus came to save us so we might know and share His love.

DESIRED STUDENT RESPONSE

Students will respond to the revelation of God's love by loving others.

TAKEAWAY

I can know and show God's love because He loves me.



- Greet students with enthusiasm. Get to know each student.
- Make sure you have a completed registration card (30208) for each student.
- Distribute nametags (33633) and WildLIVE! Passes (33634).
- Open the class time with prayer.

TIP ▶

Inflate the balloon before class, then let out the air. This stretches the balloon so it inflates more easily during the experiment.

TIP ▶

Before class, do a quick online search to get familiar with captivating creatures that live in South America. Examples include alpacas, capybaras, collared peccaries, glass frogs, guanacos, llamas, long-wattled umbrella-birds, matamatas, Patagonian maras, pink fairy armadillos, sloths, and spectacled bears.

IDEA ▶

For added variety during Welcome time, you could set up stations and run more than one welcome activity at the same time. Students either rotate between activities or choose their favorite.



Option 1: Fill It Up

Materials

- Empty water bottle; 4 Alka-Seltzer tablets; ½ cup water; 1 balloon.

Before class: Break up the Alka Seltzer tablets and drop them into the bottom of the bottle.

DISPLAY: Show the deflated balloon. **ASK:** Do you think I can inflate the balloon without using my mouth? **ACTIVITY:** Pour the water into the bottle, then quickly place the neck of the balloon over the top of the bottle. Watch the balloon expand. Explain that the tablets are in the bottom of the bottle and that adding water released carbon dioxide bubbles, which filled the balloon. *Optional:* Set up two bottles with materials. You and a helper conduct the same demonstration simultaneously.

Without Jesus' love, our lives are like this flat, empty balloon. But when we believe in Jesus and allow His love to fill us, we can show His love to other people.

Option 2: Animals of the Andes

Materials

- Animal photos and list of animal descriptions from the director resources CD (33602); tape.

Before class: Print the four animal photos. Post them on different walls.

ACTIVITY: As you read each animal description from the list, students go and stand at the wall with the picture they think matches the description. Reveal the correct answer after everyone has made a choice.

These are just four of the many amazing animals that live in the Andes Mountains of South America. The llama can remind us of Jesus. (*Review the three llama descriptions.*) Jesus is patient and gentle, waiting for us to receive His love. It was fun guessing the animals, but we never have to guess about Jesus' love for us. We know He loves us because He came to earth to save us.

Option 3: Search the Trail

Materials

- Construction paper; marker; *optional:* trail hiking gear like walking sticks and backpacks.

Before class: Divide the following definition of love into four phrases as indicated: Choosing to help someone / because you care / expecting nothing in return / not even love or help.



Write the phrases on four separate pieces of paper. Hide the papers around the room.

SAY: Let's imagine we're hiking in the Andes Mountains of South America. As you walk along the trail, look for four pieces of paper. **ACTIVITY:** Students hunt for the hidden phrases. When all four are found, display the phrases. Ask students to help you put them in order to form a definition. Briefly explain how it defines godly love.

Hiking through the Andes can be a rocky, rough journey. When Jesus came to earth, His mother and earthly father had to take a rough journey before He was born. In this lesson, we're going to learn more about Jesus' birth and about how much He loved us.

Introduction

Materials

- A beach ball or soft playground ball; baby name book or online source of name meanings.

Let's learn something about everyone by tossing the ball. When you catch the ball, tell your name plus something that describes you; for example, "I'm Olivia and I like soccer." Then toss the ball to someone else.

ACTIVITY: Have students stand in a circle. Begin by giving your own name and a description, then toss the ball to a student. Continue until all students have had the ball.

SAY: Names are important. Sometimes the real meaning of your name might even describe you. **ASK:** Do any of you know the meaning of your name? Do you think that meaning describes you? (*Volunteers respond.*) **ACTIVITY:** Look up several names in a baby name book or online and read the meanings aloud.

Jesus' name describes Him perfectly! Here at VBS, we will learn more about Jesus, because He's the most important person who ever lived. While He was on earth, Jesus taught us how to live. But more important, He became our Savior when He died on the cross. Jesus showed amazing love by coming to earth to save us. As we explore the Bible, listen for the meaning of the name Jesus and how it describes what He did for us.

Explore the Bible!

Materials

- Bible; lesson 1 visual packet and CD (33607) or visual book PowerPoint download

TIP

Open in prayer and teach with an open Bible.

(33607EB); baby items or photos of items, such as blanket, rattle, or crib; 1–2 canes or walking sticks; a large flashlight.

Before class: Mark Isaiah 7:14 in your Bible.

DISPLAY: Show visual picture 1 or PowerPoint visual 1.

Jesus loved us so much that He willingly came from His home in Heaven to become human. When Jesus was born, the Roman Empire was in charge. Roman soldiers would later cause Jesus to suffer and die. Jesus knew these things but still chose to enter the sinful world because of His love for us!

Like us, Jesus had to enter the world as a baby. God is Jesus' Father, but He chose Joseph as Jesus' earthly father. And He chose Mary as Jesus' mother.

Mary and Joseph were engaged to be married. They were so happy! But then they learned that Mary was going to have a baby. Joseph didn't understand, because he knew he was not the baby's father. He was a good man, and he thought he should quietly break their engagement. But God had a plan. He sent an angel to Joseph to explain it.

DISPLAY: Show the left side of visual picture 2 or PowerPoint visual 2.

ACTIVITY: Choose a student volunteer to pantomime Joseph's actions as you narrate. **SAY:** Joseph considered what he had just learned about Mary. As he was thinking, he fell asleep. Then an angel appeared to him in his dream. Joseph was a little frightened, but he listened carefully. **READ:** Matthew 1:20, 21. **ASK:** What did the angel tell Joseph not to be afraid to do? (*To take Mary as his wife.*)

The angel assured Joseph he could go ahead with the marriage because Mary's baby was from God's Holy Spirit. Mary had done nothing wrong. Earlier, an angel had also appeared to Mary to tell her that her baby would be the Son of God and that she should not be afraid (Luke 1:30–35).

The angel told Joseph to name the baby Jesus, because *Jesus* means "Savior," or "the Lord saves." Jesus' name describes what Jesus came to do. The angel explained that Jesus would save people from their sins!

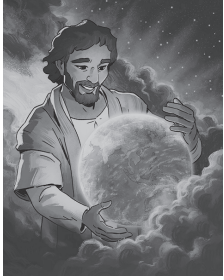
All people are sinners, which means we naturally do wrong things that displease God. The punishment for sin is separation from God, both now and forever; but Jesus came to save people from that punishment by dying on the cross. That's what it means when we say Jesus is our Savior.

The coming of a Savior had been written about many years ahead of time by the prophet Isaiah. A prophet was someone who told the word of God to people. Listen for the name that Isaiah used for the Savior.

READ: Isaiah 7:14. **SAY:** Let's repeat that name together. (*Immanuel.*) The Bible tells us what that name means.

READ: Invite a student volunteer to read Matthew 1:23. **ASK:** What does the name Immanuel mean? (*"God with us."*) **SAY:** God came down in human form to be with us! Jesus was fully God and fully man at the same time.

DISPLAY: Show the right side of visual picture 2 or PowerPoint visual 2.



Lesson 1 Visual 1



Lesson 1 Visual 2

TIP ►

Don't force any students to read the verse if they are unwilling to do so. If no students volunteer, read the verse yourself.



When Joseph woke from his dream, he did exactly as the angel of the Lord had told him. He took Mary as his wife. Later, after the baby was born, they named Him Jesus.

Before Jesus was born, Joseph and Mary had to take a trip. Caesar Augustus was the ruler of Rome. He ordered everyone in the Roman world to be counted for taxes. To be counted, the people had to go to their hometowns. The Jewish people didn't like this system, but they had to obey.

READ: Read Luke 2:4. **SAY:** Joseph was from King David's family, so he had to travel from Nazareth to the city of David, which was Bethlehem. **DISPLAY:** Show visual picture 3 or PowerPoint visual 3.

By this time, Mary was very close to having the baby. She probably wasn't required to go to Bethlehem. But she and Joseph loved each other and wanted to be together, so Mary traveled with Joseph.

ASK: When did you taken a trip with your family? How did you get there? Where did you stop along the way? (*Allow responses.*)

Nazareth and Bethlehem are only ninety miles apart, but the journey was difficult—especially for Mary. On foot, that journey would take at least four days. It probably took Joseph and Mary longer because of Mary's condition—at least a week, maybe ten days. They traveled over rough, hilly country, facing dangers like robbers and wild animals. There were no restaurants or rest stops along the way, so they would have had to pack food and water. It was not a fun trip!

While they were in Bethlehem, the time came for the baby to be born. Many people were in town for the taxation, and the only inn was full. The only room left for Mary and Joseph was in a stable with animals. Does this sound like a place where the Son of God, the most important person who ever lived, should be born?

SAY: Think about a baby born to royalty or to famous or important people.

ASK: Where would the baby be born? What would he sleep in? What would cover him? (*Allow discussion.*) **ACTIVITY:** Pass around the baby items and photos to prompt discussion.

READ: Ask a student volunteer to read Luke 2:6, 7.

When Jesus was born, no hospitals were nearby. He didn't have a nice comfortable crib with clean sheets. He was wrapped in strips of cloth (swaddling clothes) instead of blankets and laid in a feeding trough (manger) filled with hay. God showed great love to let His Son be born under these conditions!

DISPLAY: Show visual picture 4 or PowerPoint visual 4. **SAY:** On the night Jesus was born, some shepherds were in the fields guarding their flocks. Let's act out what happened. **ROLE-PLAY:** Choose several volunteers as shepherds. Give a cane or walking stick to one or two of the volunteers. Choose one student to be the angel, and point out the angel's words in a Bible. Give another student the flashlight to shine when the angel appears. Darken the room if possible. **READ:** Luke 2:8–10, allowing the angel to begin speaking in verse 10 and continue through verse 11. Prompt the volunteers as necessary.



Lesson 1 Visual 3



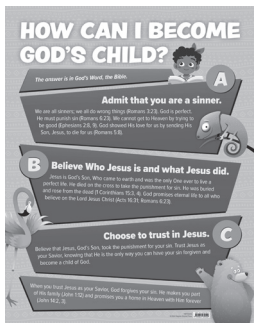
Lesson 1 Visual 4

ASK: Who did the angel say had been born? (*A Savior, Christ the Lord.*) **SAY:** Jesus is also called Christ. This title means “the anointed one,” which means “chosen by God.” Jesus was the One chosen to be our Savior.

Jesus cared so much about people that He came to earth to rescue us from sin. He wasn’t selfishly thinking about what He would get out of it. He was only thinking about how much He cared for us. That’s a good definition of love—choosing to help someone because you care, expecting nothing in return, not even love or help. Once we accept the love of Christ by trusting Him as Savior, He makes us able to show others the same kind of love.

TIP ▶

A definition of *love*: “Choosing to help someone because you care, expecting nothing in return, not even love or help.”



Salvation Poster
(33636)

Materials

- Bible; salvation poster (33636).

You were born into an earthly family. God wants you to be born into His family too. All people sin, and we all must die someday. But the good news is that God still loves us and wants us to be His children. We join His family by trusting that Jesus died on the cross for our sins and then rose from the dead. Once we’re in God’s family, we can go to Heaven and live with God even after our bodies die.

ACTIVITY: Use the salvation poster to reinforce the gospel message and to answer any questions students might have. Ask students to bow their heads and close their eyes. Invite students who are interested in trusting Jesus and joining God’s family to look up at you. Assign a worker to talk with interested students.

If you are already part of God’s family, thank Jesus for loving you and saving you. Remember that He wants you to share His love with others. Do you have friends who don’t know about Jesus and His love? Do you need to show someone that you care about him or her? Decide now that you will show the love of Christ to someone soon.



Llama to the Rescue

Materials

- Plastic or stuffed toy sheep; blindfold.

Sometimes shepherds use llamas to rescue their sheep from predators. Let’s play a game about getting rescued.

ACTIVITY: Choose one student, the “wolf,” to sit in a chair at the front, facing



away from the rest of the class. Blindfold the student and place the toy sheep under the chair. Silently choose another student as the “llama,” who sneaks up to rescue the sheep, quietly returns, and hides the sheep behind his back. All students put their hands behind their backs to hide the llama’s identity. The wolf removes the blindfold and has two guesses about who rescued the sheep. If the wolf guesses correctly, he gets another turn. If not, the llama becomes the next wolf. Play as time allows.

A llama rescues sheep by gathering them into a safe place. Our rescuer is Jesus because He rescues us from sin. We can’t save ourselves; we must trust Jesus to save us.

Scripture Memory

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

God loved all people in the world so much that He sent His Son to earth. Jesus was God’s only Son—there was no other one like Him. Anyone who believes in Jesus won’t perish, or die. Even though your body dies, your soul will not. Instead, those who believe in Jesus will have life that lasts forever.

Option 1: Teamwork

Materials

- Verse poster of John 3:16 (33651) or the PowerPoint of the verse from the director resources CD (33602).

DISPLAY: Show the verse poster or the PowerPoint of the verse. **ACTIVITY:** Read the verse a few times with the students. Cover or remove the poster. Divide the class into two teams. Assign each team one half of the verse. Teams stand and face each other. Direct the teams to recite their assigned parts in turn, with everyone saying the reference together at the end. Practice several times. Then have teams swap their parts and repeat the process. Finally, have all the students repeat the whole passage together.

Option 2: Words for the World

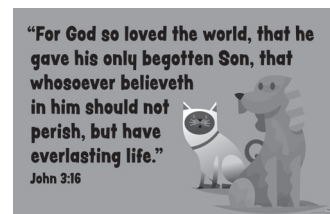
Materials

- Sticky notes; black marker; world map; tape.

Before class: Write each word of the verse on a sticky note with black marker. Post the notes on the map in order.

DISPLAY: Show the map. **ACTIVITY:** Practice saying the verse with the class. Ask a student volunteer to remove two or three words. Have the class say the

◀ TIP
Hold your Bible open as you teach the verse, emphasizing that the verse is from the Bible.



Verse Poster
(33651-1)

verse with the missing words. Repeat the process until all the sticky notes are removed and the class says the whole verse from memory.



Option 1: Llama Pack

Materials

- Canvas bag; llama photo from director resources CD (33602); items students might use to show God's love (e.g., greeting card, pencil, water bottle, phone, Bible); Andean flute music from an online source.

Before class: Fill the bag with the items you collected. Search online for Andean flute music and prepare to play it.

DISPLAY: Show the llama photo. **SAY:** Llamas often carry loads in pack saddles through the mountains. Our pack saddle is full of things we can use to share Jesus' love with others. **ACTIVITY:** Students sit in a circle and pass the bag as the music plays. Each time you stop the music, the person holding the bag pulls out one item and tells how it could be used to share Jesus' love. Continue until the bag is unpacked.

Option 2: Act It Out

Materials

- Note cards; pen.

Before class: On note cards, write several situations that present opportunities for showing God's love (e.g., Owen often says mean things about Jordan. When Jordan sees Owen fall and get hurt on the playground, he finds it hard to feel sorry for him. How can Jordan show Jesus' love?).

Sharing Jesus' love with others is not always easy! We're going to act out ways of showing God's love in difficult situations.

ACTIVITY: Read a situation. Invite volunteers to act out a brief, appropriate ending to the scene. Continue with the other situations as time allows.