



NORTHVIEW
STUDENTS
5th/6th grade

DATE(S)

December 4-5, 2021

SERIES AND LESSON TITLE

Hope – Week 1

TAKE-HOME POINT (THP)

Hope is with us.

SCRIPTURE FOCUS

Luke 1:26-38

Luke 1:46-55

John 1:14-15

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Give any Campus-Specific Announcements



OPENING GAME / GROUP TIME

LARGE-GROUP GAME/ACTIVITY

"Pick 5"

Let's kick off the Christmas season by working together in life groups (or simply smaller teams) to pick 5 things for each Christmas prompt that comes up on the screen (i.e. Pick 5 Christmas songs). After that, a random points scale will appear and you must score your 5 items accordingly. There will be three rounds and the highest score at the end wins!

OPENING SMALL GROUP

QUESTIONS

Take attendance and make sure to welcome anyone who is a first-time guest!

What was the highlight of your week?

What's your favorite Christmas tradition? If you can't think of one, what's one thing you wish you did every year at Christmas?

When you're finished (and there's time), pray for our time of worship.

ACTIVITIES

STUFF TO ASK TO UNIQUELY CONNECT THE LESSON TO KIDS' LIVES

STUFF TO DO SO THINGS AREN'T BORING



LARGE-GROUP SCRIPT

THE MESSAGE

Hope – Week 1
December 4-5, 2021

Merry Christmas, everyone! Today, we begin a Christmas series called Hope. December is here, our bellies are full from Thanksgiving, our Christmas decorations are up...right?! Who has theirs up? There's still time for those who haven't! Actually, I think it would be fun to do a few Christmas traditions polls today. This is an either/or answer to each question: you have to pick one (**Teacher's Note: Have students raise their hand for each one**). Here they are – Real tree or fake tree? Christmas music before Thanksgiving or after Thanksgiving? Candy canes or Christmas cookies? Open presents all at once or one at a time and take turns? There's the four questions...60 seconds...ready, set, go!

Alright, all of us have our teams when it comes to our traditions. You know what's funny – we all have these fun little traditions, and yet, for some of us, if someone was to come up to us and say, "Hey, we're going to change things up a little bit this year" and then pick the opposite of whatever you chose...we would be pretty upset. For those of you who are Team-Real-Christmas-Tree...if you found out you were getting a fake tree, you would be so mad! You would be like, "Christmas can't happen now! Yeah, it's still a Christmas tree, but it's not the same!" We want these traditions for Christmas because then it's REALLY Christmas, not some lame substitute. You want "the real thing."

This reminds me of a story I heard about Michael Jordan: the greatest basketball player of all time. From 1991-1993, he had won three NBA championships in a row. He was on top of the world! However, in July of 1993, his dad, James (his best friend and mentor) was unexpectedly and tragically killed. Dealing with the loss of his dad, he does the unthinkable and retires from basketball. He then goes and plays minor league baseball. Random, right? Well, as it turns out, Michael played baseball as a kid and that was his dad's favorite sport. He wanted to pay tribute to his dad and try and become a professional baseball player.

His basketball team, the Chicago Bulls, do pretty well their first year without him, but the second year – they really struggled. At one point, his teammate Scottie Pippen was sitting on the bench during a game and a camera was on him. Scottie smiled and lifted his foot up so you could see the bottom of his shoe. He pointed at the Air Jordan symbol on his shoe and then gave a "Come here" sign with his finger...as if to say, "Michael, we need you to come back to basketball and play on the Bulls again!" Eventually, Michael started to get the itch to come back and play basketball when the baseball season in 1995 started as a lockout over a dispute between the players and the owners of each team.

He comes out of retirement and starts wearing the number 45 (the number he wore in high school). If you know anything about Michael, you'll know that's weird because his number was 23. Since he had been out of the league and playing baseball, he wasn't exactly in top BASKETBALL-playing shape. Still Michael Jordan, but not the REAL Michael Jordan. They make it to the Eastern Conference finals against the Orlando Magic, and Michael has two bad plays at the end of the game and is the primary reason his team loses. Very uncharacteristic of him.

THE MESSAGE

Nick Anderson, one of the players on the Orlando Magic (and the guy who guarded Michael), said after the game "45 ain't 23" in a very overconfident tone...as if to say Michael was washed up. Not good. Michael came back the next game with the #23 and proceeded to destroy the Magic! The Bulls ended up losing that series, but in the offseason while he was filming Space Jam (watch that movie) he worked out constantly to get back to the REAL Michael Jordan. The next season, his team set the record for most wins in a regular season and won the championship again...as well as the next two after that!

Just like our Christmas traditions, the Bulls weren't the same without Michael. The Bulls wanted #23 Michael Jordan, not #45 Michael Jordan. If #23 is there, it will give us the best result.

Now, after that long set-up, let's take these examples and compare them to a similar one in the Bible. Did you know that between the end of the Old Testament (Malachi) and the beginning of the New Testament (Matthew) is approximately 400 years? Sure, God still existed. He was still real. They still believed in them. The Israelite people had been hearing from God and His prophets for centuries, but now...He was silent. Did He still care about them? Did He still want to have a relationship with them? What about this Messiah that was to come? And then...

We read in Luke chapter 1 of the New Testament of this incredible encounter where an angel visits a teenage girl named Mary. Let's check out what happens in Luke chapter 1, verses 26-38:

"...God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a woman pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The woman's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end." "How will this be," Mary asked the angel. The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who has said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail." "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her."

So...a lot to unpack here, so let's make it quick. An angel visits Mary and says she is pregnant, but this baby isn't just any baby – it is the Son of God. It is God Himself. This is huge! Sure, they knew God was real and they sensed God's presence and saw God do incredible things. But God was invisible to most and to the few that got even a glimpse of him, it was so overpowering. The angel says God has come as a human being – a baby! The real thing has showed up! God has remembered them and that gives them hope!

Have you been in a hopeless situation before? People tried to help encourage you, but it didn't work. You tried to stay optimistic, but it was too hard. You tried to not think about it, but then you worried about it constantly. Then, something changed. You finally had some hope.

(Teacher's Note: Share an example where you experienced hope during a tough situation)

THE MESSAGE

Mary is overwhelmed by this (as you can imagine!), but she immediately starts praising God. Luke then records a prayer that Mary says after this event, and this prayer is one of the most famous prayers in the entire Bible. It has been read and recited all over the world for centuries. The Latin name for it is The Magnificat (if you've ever heard that term before, that's what it's referring to!). Here is what she said – we can read it in Luke chapter 1, verses 46-55

And Mary said, "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for He has been mindful of the humble state of His servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me – holy is His name. His mercy extends to those who fear Him, from generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. He has helped His servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and His descendants forever, just as He promised our ancestors."

For each week of this Hope series, we are going to examine this prayer and break down parts of it each week. It is one of the most important parts of the Bible. I simply want to highlight one part of it as we wrap up today...the God of the universe has shown up in the flesh. These people (and you and I) don't have to wonder if God cares about us, if God loves us, if God wants to be in a relationship with us. It has all changed now. He BECAME one of us. Another New Testament writer, John, says it like this in John chapter 1 verses 14-15: "The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."

God has come to us! I saved our THP, our Take Home Point, for the end today, because I think it is the perfect period to put on the end of this message today. It is this very simple phrase...

Hope is with us.

The hope we celebrate at Christmas time is that God is now with us. He isn't a distant God somewhere across the universe or outside of it. He isn't staying on His throne in heaven. HE IS NOW HERE! Hope is here!

So where do you need hope today? Are you facing something that seems hopeless? Jesus is the hope you need. Maybe you're not in a situation like that – do you know someone who is? How can you bring the hope of Jesus to that person? This is what we are called to do as followers of Jesus – to bring the hope of Christmas and live it out in our everyday life. Use our THP as both a challenge and an encouragement: Hope is with us. Let's pray!

CLOSING SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

CLOSING SMALL GROUP

QUESTIONS

What was the THP today and why was that important during the message?

Today, we talked hope. Where do you see a need for hope in the world around us?

Where do you see a need for hope in your own life (think your family and friends)?

Let's have someone read this out loud from John 1:14-15.

"The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."

What do you think John is trying to say when he wrote "the Word became flesh"?
****Leaders can give this hint: "the Word" here is talking about Jesus!**

When is it easy to have hope in Jesus?
When is it hard?

How will the THP help you to live differently this week? Try to think of a specific example.

How can this group pray for you this week?

FINAL THOUGHTS

Our Ugly Sweater Christmas Party is next week! Be thinking about who you want to invite to come with you and what you want to wear because there will be prizes for the best-dressed!

After your group is finished with your discussion questions, close your group in prayer!

Encourage those students in your group who made first-time decisions or who made re-commitments to follow Jesus today! Tell them that this group is a support system for them and they don't have to do this life alone. If there is a student who makes a first-time commitment to Christ, have them text NVSNEXT to 85379 or fill out a response card so you can capture their information and our staff can follow up with them. Once your group discussion is over, close your group in prayer!



PREP NEEDS

SMALL-GROUP SUPPLIES

- Some Bibles for students to share during group discussion
- Pen/paper for SOAP study (optional)

LARGE-GROUP SUPPLIES

- Stupid Video of the Week
- Game slides
- Message script
- Message slides

AUDIO/VISUAL NEEDS

- Pro Presenter or Playlister