



# the Parent LINK

Children's Ministry Edition



December 2011

istrouma **kidz**



## Try New Christmas Faith-Boosters

The most wonderful time of the year is a wonderful time to share Jesus—and why he came to earth—with your children. Instead of getting caught up in the holiday rush, focus on what Christmas truly means. Use the Advent season (the weeks of preparation before Christmas) to engage in old and new traditions, make simple crafts, have discussions, and worship Jesus, our newborn King.

Faith-boosters needn't be elaborate or time-consuming. Instead, use materials you already have to reinforce the good news that the angels shared on the first Christmas Eve: Jesus, our Savior, is born!

After you've shared this message with your children, look for simple ways to spread Christmas joy as a family. From caroling and delivering cookies to sending cards and inviting neighbors to programs or concerts, the possibilities are endless for letting your light shine as you celebrate Jesus, the Light of the world.

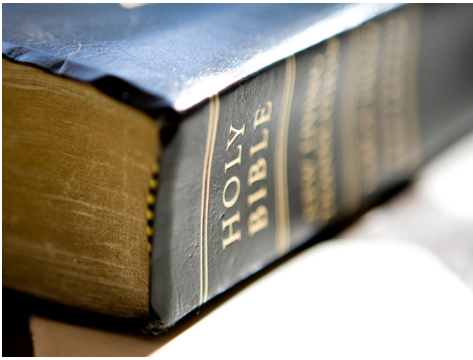
## POWERSOURCE

### ASK GOD:

1. To bless your Christmas preparations and to ready your hearts for his arrival.
2. To help your family stay focused on Jesus during the holidays.
3. To replace stress and busyness with calm and peace, so you can treasure family time.

### INSIGHTS

- In a poll conducted in the U.K., 24% of children ages 7 to 11 said Christmas was about giving, rather than receiving, presents. *(Daily Mail)*
- When asked about the true meaning of Christmas, 70% of children said it's about celebrating the birth of Christ, 39% said it's about being thankful, 37% said it's about spending time with family, and 13% said it's about receiving gifts. *(KidzEyes.com)*



So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son. (John 1:14)

At Christmas, we celebrate the good news that God became flesh, in the form of Jesus, to die for our sins.

## TEACHABLE MOMENTS

**1. Wrap Race**—You'll need some empty boxes and gift-wrapping supplies. Form teams and have them race to wrap an imaginary gift for the whole world (such as peace) in the shortest time possible. Afterward, discuss what gifts you'd like to give and why.

**2. Chapter Chain**—Encourage family members to spend more time exploring God's word. From Thanksgiving until Christmas, give out a red or green construction paper link for every chapter of the Bible someone reads (or listens to). On Christmas Eve, hang the chain as a special birthday gift to Jesus.



**3. O Christmas Tree**—Tie a red ribbon around the head of a concrete nail, and tie the ends of the ribbon into a knot to form a loop. Hang the ornament on your Christmas tree. Talk about how baby Jesus wasn't only born for us but was born to die for us—on a tree.

**While engaging in Christmas festivities, start a conversation by asking these questions:**

1. What are your favorite Christmas traditions, and why? How do our traditions help us remember the real meaning of Christmas?
2. What are some ways we can add service and outreach to our Christmas celebrations?
3. How would you explain Christmas to someone who didn't know anything about Jesus?

## FAMILY EXPERIENCE

Add a meaningful new twist to your Christmas celebrations by trying these ideas:

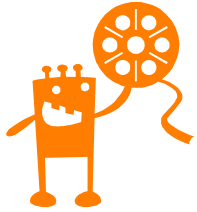
- **Unwrap the Story**—Start a new tradition as you unpack your family's crèche, or nativity scene. Let each person pull out one or two wrapped figures without peeking to see what's inside. Take turns unwrapping figures. When someone adds a figure to the



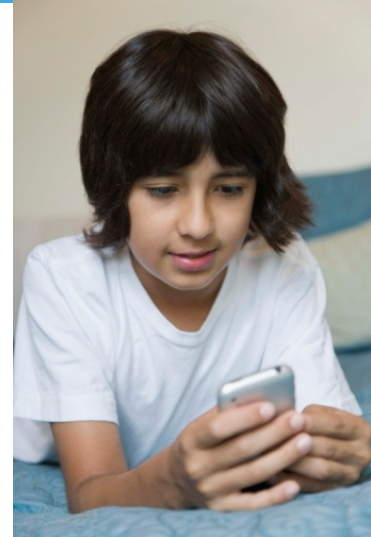
scene, have him or her say a prayer of thanks for the role that figure played in Jesus' birth. For example, the person holding the stable might say, "Thank you that there was at least a stable nearby where Jesus could be born." The person with a shepherd might say, "Thank you that the shepherds went and told lots of people about Jesus' birth."

After the scene is complete, discuss the role we all can play in preparing for Jesus' birth and in telling people why Jesus came to earth.

- **Parable Ornaments**—Make a different ornament each week that reflects a parable from the Bible. For week one, pour salt into clear ball ornaments (Matthew 5:13). For week two, pour mustard seeds into clear ball ornaments (Matthew 17:20). For week three, tie Goldfish crackers in netting (Matthew 13:47). For week four, pour sunflower seeds into clear ball ornaments (Matthew 13:37). Print the verses and tie them to the ornaments. Then hang the ornaments on a small Christmas tree as a powerful reminder of Jesus' life and teachings.



## MEDIA MADNESS



### MOVIES

**Movie:** *The Adventures of Tintin*

**Genre:** Animated adventure

**Rating:** PG (for adventure-action violence, some drunkenness and brief smoking)

**Cast:** Jamie Bell, Daniel Craig

**Synopsis:** In this motion-capture film based on comic books, a boy and a captain go on a treasure hunt to find a sunken ship.

**Our Take:** With Steven Spielberg and Peter Jackson at the helm, *Tintin* is being hailed as a “must-see” family movie this Christmas.

### MUSIC

**Artist:** Aaron Shust

**Album:** *This Is What We Believe*

**Artist Info:** Shust, a church worship leader, won several Dove Awards for his 2005 folk-driven album *Anything Worth Saying*.

**Summary:** The singer-songwriter’s fourth album contains several heartfelt worship anthems, including “My Hope Is in You.” The moving video is available on YouTube.

**Our Take:** Shust’s powerful tunes and lyrics will help listeners of all ages celebrate God’s power and love.

### CULTURE & TRENDS

• Last year, 36% of kids ages 10 or 11 owned a cell phone. That number has more than doubled since 2005. Boys are more likely than girls to perform “data-intensive” activities with their phones, such as browsing the Web and downloading games. (*Mediamark, NY Times*)

• Before heading to the ER with their sick children, more parents are now logging in. One in eight parents now checks the Internet for medical information before plunking down an emergency-room copay. (*Reuters*)

### QUICK STATS

• Only 4% of adults ages 25 to 34 in the U.K. believe that the most important part of Christmas is the religious meaning. (*Church of England Newspaper*)

• According to a new study, pre-schoolers who have trouble resisting temptation and delaying gratification are more likely than their more-patient peers to become adults who lack self-control. (*HealthDay*)



### GAMES

Title	Content	Rating & Platform
<i>Skylander: Spyro's Adventure</i>	This action-adventure game is pricey because it comes with collectible action figures and a sock puppet. Contains cartoon violence.	E10+; Xbox 360, Playstation 3, Nintendo 3DS, Wii,
<i>Centipede Infestation</i>	In this reboot of the classic arcade game, players must kill as many creepy, crawly critters as they can in numerous rounds of play.	E10+; Nintendo 3DS, Wii
<i>FactMonster.com</i>	This free website from Information Please provides a wide range of resources for students, including a “Homework Center” reference desk.	Geared toward elementary and middle-school students



This page is designed to help educate parents and isn't meant to endorse any movie, music, or product. Our prayer is that you'll make informed decisions about what your children watch, listen to, and wear.

# December 2011

**Check-in** → Parents, in order to allow our teachers time to prepare for our kids, please wait until *9:00 am* to drop off your children in their classrooms on Sunday mornings.

## Check out these upcoming events for children and families!

**December 2** • Parents' Night Out 6:00-9:30 Deadline to register 4pm November 29th.

**December 4** • Istrouma Choir with Avalon 6pm • \$10 General Admission you can purchase online or at the church office

**December 24** • Christmas Eve Service 5:30 pm in the Worship Center. No childcare provided

**December 25** • One Service at 10:45 am, childcare for preschool only

**January 1** • One Worship Service at 10:45 am, childcare for preschool only.

**January 6-7** • Pre-teen Invasion for 4th & 5th graders

## Look what our Preschool is learning this month!

**Key Question:** How do we know God loves us?

**Memory Verse:** "God has given a son to us." Isaiah 9:6

**Basic Truth:** Jesus Wants to be My Friend Forever

**Week 1** God sends an angel to tell Mary that she will give birth to His Son, Jesus • Micah 5:2, Luke 1:26-33, 38, 46

**Week 2** Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem where Jesus is born in a stable • Luke 2:1-7  
Genesis 1:26-27

**Week 3** An angel tells the shepherd men that Jesus has been born. They run to see Jesus and then tell everyone about Him • Luke 2:8-18

For helpful articles on family and parenting, check out [www.Biblicalparenting.com](http://www.Biblicalparenting.com).

For movie and video reviews, look at [www.pluggedin.com](http://www.pluggedin.com).

There is an iPhone app available for [Parent Cue](#) This is a great parent tool to reinforce the lessons your child is hearing on Sunday Mornings.

## Pre-teen Invasion January 6th & 7th

Hey 4th & 5th graders! We are heading north (to Alexandria) for a Pre-teen Invasion, hosted by Louisiana College. We will leave Friday night, January 6th at 5:30 pm from the Bain foyer.

We'll spend the night at Tall Timbers Camp (in Woodworth, LA) and then drive into Alexandria for the event on Saturday, January 7th. Cost is \$50/child and includes the night at Tall Timbers, breakfast, the activities at the Pre-teen Invasion and lunch. The event ends around 3:30 pm and we will head home and be back at Istrouma at 6:30 pm. We will travel in vans with some parents driving. If you want to participate, you must fill out the registration form and pay 1/2 the fee by December 4th. The remainder of the fee must be paid by Wednesday, January 4th. Your friends are welcome to come also.

You can print the medical release form by going to [www.istrouma.org/stuff](http://www.istrouma.org/stuff)

## K-5th Grade Weekly Lessons!

**Virtue Generosity:** Making someone's day by giving something away.

**Memory Verse:** "Be rich in good deeds...be generous and willing to share." 1 Timothy 6:18, NIV

### Lessons

**December 4:** The Parable of the Rich Man • Luke 12:13-21

**December 11:** Jesus and the Rich Young Ruler • Luke 18:18-25

**December 18:** Jesus is Born • John 3:16-17; Luke 2:1-18



Once a month from 6-9:30  
\$10 per child/\$30 maximum



Check out our Facebook page "Istrouma KIDZ" for what is happening in our ministry!