

imagine THE STORY

Don't just read this story;
bring it to life with
your voice!

Leader Narrates:

SCENE ONE: GROWING IN WISDOM

When Jesus was twelve years old he and his family and people from their hometown traveled to the annual Passover festival in Jerusalem.

On their way home, Joseph and Mary assumed that Jesus was in their caravan, traveling with some of their relatives. Later, when they stopped to sleep for the night, they realized he was nowhere to be found.

In a panic, Joseph and Mary went back to Jerusalem to look for Jesus. After three days of searching, they finally found him. He was in the Temple courts with the religious teachers, listening and asking questions of them. The teachers were all amazed at his understanding and insights.

But Jesus' parents didn't know what to think.

"Son!" his mother said to him. "Why have you done this to us? We've been searching for you everywhere!"

"But why did you need to search?" Jesus asked. "You should have known that I would be in my Father's house."

Joseph and Mary didn't understand what he meant. But Mary kept all these things in her heart . . . and thought deeply about them.

As Jesus grew up he became wise and strong.

He was loved by God and all who knew him.

SCENE TWO: BAPTISM

When Jesus was about thirty years old, he traveled to the Jordan River to be baptized by his cousin, John. John was a rugged man who lived in the wilderness. He ate locusts and wild honey, and wore clothes made of camel hair. He was known as John the Baptizer, because he called people to immerse themselves in the Jordan River after they confessed their wrongdoings. For the Jewish people, baptism was an important ritual to become pure and it was a sign of commitment to living in God's ways with God's people.

As John stood by the river he boldly challenged the Jewish people, "Don't just say that you love God—prove it with your life. Turn from your ways to God's ways!"

Tell the story from beginning to end—don't stop!

You'll cause confusion by stopping to answer a question, teach, clarify, give application, or make an observation in the middle of the story.

When some religious leaders asked John if he was the long-awaited Messiah-king, he said, *"No! But he's coming soon. He is greater than I am. I'm not worthy to untie his sandals—or even to be his servant. I baptize people in water, but he will baptize people with God's Spirit!"*

When John saw Jesus coming to him to be baptized, he pointed at Jesus and said, *"I'm the one who needs to be baptized by you!"*

But Jesus insisted, so John baptized him in front of a large crowd.

When Jesus came up out of the water, God's Spirit came down from the sky; it looked like a dove floating down and resting on Jesus. Then the people heard God's voice say, *"This is my son who I love. He brings me great joy!"*
[pause]

SCENE THREE: TEMPTATION

After leaving the Jordan River, Jesus sensed God's Spirit leading him to go into the wilderness. During the forty days he spent there, Jesus did not eat anything and became very hungry.

Tired and starving, Jesus encountered the tempter, who tried to deceive Jesus saying, *"Since you're God's Son, why don't you turn this rock into a loaf of bread to eat?"*

Jesus answered him, *"No . . . God said to Moses, 'People need more than bread to live—they must find their life in the words of God.'"*

In a flash, the tempter took Jesus to the highest point of the Jewish Temple and said, *"If you are God's Son, jump off! Your laws and commands say, 'God will send his angels to catch you and you won't even hit the ground!'"*

Jesus replied, *"The scriptures also say, 'Do not even try to test God.'"*

Finally, the tempter took Jesus to the peak of a huge mountain and showed him all of the nations of the world in their brilliance. He said, *"You can have all of this—anything you want—if you'll kneel down and worship me."*

Jesus responded, *"It is commanded, 'Put God above everything else—worship God alone!'"*

At last, the tempter left Jesus, and Jesus felt comforted by God's angels.
[pause]

After his time in the wilderness, Jesus began his ministry, telling people, *"The kingdom of God is here! Turn from your ways and live in God's ways!"*

