

Winter Family Event

Knowledge is power, they say. And there's no knowledge more powerful than getting to know the families in your church—it's the foundation from which you can encourage and motivate them to teach their kids to love and follow Jesus! Here is everything you need to plan a fun Winter Family Event. It's a simple idea: Give families the big picture of the lessons you'll be teaching this quarter while they have fun together, bond as a family and learn some easy, natural ways to build on what their kids learn in Sunday School. Whether or not you've hosted a family event before, it's simple to inspire and inform your parents at this low-prep family get-together.

The Winter Family Event will help families get excited about learning more about who Jesus is—all from accounts in the Gospels of Luke and John! To make the Winter Family Event work in your church, just follow the suggestions and tips we've provided.

Family Event Q & A

Who should attend? Parents and their elementary-aged children as well as leaders and teachers of your Sunday School. **Tip:** Invite younger and older siblings or provide child care for the youngest children.

How long should it be? 40–60 minutes. **Tip:** Keep it short. Busy parents will appreciate a fun but to-the-point event.

Where should it be? Anywhere! **Tip:** Spark interest by planning your event at someone's home. Or if the weather is comfortable, meet outdoors at your church or a nearby park.

When should we meet? Whenever Sunday School takes place—families already have it in their schedules! **Tip:** Plan for a time when other events won't conflict. Other options that might work for you include Sunday right after church, Saturday morning, a weeknight, etc. **Tip:** If you are in a large church, offer two duplicate events at different times so that families can choose the more convenient time.

What will we do at the Family Event? See Family Event Preview on the next page. **Tip:** Give each of the easy-to-follow instruction pages (pp. 3–8) for program activities to a different leader or teacher. Ask each leader to be responsible for gathering supplies and leading that activity.

What do we get to eat? A snack that families have fun making together. (Good question! Everyone loves food!) **Tip:** If the event is scheduled during a mealtime, substitute pizza or sandwiches for the snack. **Tip:** Avoid foods to which people are commonly allergic.

What will I need to prepare? Activity and snack materials (see Family Event Preview on the next page). **Tip:** Make

sure to bring to the event a sample of each parent resource provided with Gospel Light's curriculum: *Kid Talk Cards*, *Family Fridge Fun*, *Get Going! Worship CD* and *What the Bible Is All About for Kids*.

How do I get people to come? Email or print and distribute the invitation on the CD-ROM. **Tip:** If your church website or newsletter lists kids' ministry events, include the Winter Family Event there. **Tip:** Enlarge the invitation and post it as a notice where parents can see it. **Tip:** Send the invitation to teachers, leaders and helpers to let them know how they'll benefit from attending: getting to know kids and parents helps each leader to understand better ways to connect the kids in their class to Jesus.

WINTER "WONDER" LAND!

Call your family event by a special or even a silly name (like the one above!) to catch the interest of parents who are looking for a fun way to hang out and bond with their kids. (There's even a modifiable invitation on the CD-ROM.) You may wish to vary the event by offering only the Icebreaker (see p. 3) and Family Talk (see p. 5) and then ending the gathering with a pizza or ice cream party, holiday treat exchange or other fun winter activity.

Instead of scheduling the event during Sunday School or on a weeknight, consider scheduling it for 30 minutes right before or after Sunday School or on a Saturday morning.



Family Event Preview

Title	Time	Description of Activity	Supplies
Icebreaker	5–10 minutes	Families make name tags and then play a fun game to get acquainted.	Name tags, markers in four colors; optional— <i>Get Going! Worship CD</i> and player
Welcome	5 minutes	Gather together; introduce leaders, teachers and helpers.	None
Songs (Optional)	5 minutes	Sing one or two songs.	<i>Get Going! Worship CD</i> or <i>Get Going! Worship DVD</i> and player
Family Game	10 minutes	Families participate in a game together to talk about the reason Jesus came to Earth.	Bible, wrapped candies
Family Talk	10 minutes	Families participate in an active overview of this quarter's Bible stories using "What Do You Know?" Family Quiz Sheets; show ways for parents to teach faith at home.	Bibles, copy of "What Do You Know?" Family Quiz Sheet (on this CD-ROM) for each family, pens or pencils, masking tape, highlighter, samples of parent resources available from Gospel Light (<i>Kid Talk Cards</i> , <i>Family Fridge Fun</i> , <i>Get Going! Worship CD</i> , <i>What the Bible Is All About for Kids</i>)
Family Craft (Optional)	10 minutes	Families make a craft.	Card stock, scissors, tape, rulers, markers, crayons, stickers
Snack Time	10 minutes	Families make and eat a snack.	Graham crackers, prepared vanilla frosting, tubes of colored decorating gel, plastic knives, paper plates, napkins, beverages for adults and kids (coffee, water and/or juice)

Winter Family Event

Icebreaker 5–10 minutes

Materials: Name tags, markers in four colors; optional—*Get Going! Worship CD* and player

Procedure: (Optional: Play songs from CD.) As families arrive, all family members get a name tag. Encourage them to use a different color for each person's name. (Tip: Make sure all leaders, teachers and helpers make name tags.)

After most families have arrived, get their attention and say, **Thanks for coming to our Winter Family Event. Let's have some fun getting to know each other! To get started, let's play a quick game. Each of you is wearing a name tag. Look to see what color your name is written in. Point to different places in the room, designating a color for each. In this corner, all of the (blue) names will gather. You have 30 seconds to get to your color's corner! Ready? Go!**

(Optional: Play a song from CD as the "timing" song.) Everyone moves to the corner designated. As groups form, group members stand in a circle. Each person in the circle asks questions of the person on his or her right (name, age, favorite holiday and something surprising about that person) and then introduces that person to the circle, telling the surprising thing last.

It's fun to find out surprising things about other people. It increases our WONDER—that's the first of our Winter Wonders here at this event! Today we're going to talk about the greatest wonder EVER—when Jesus the Messiah came from heaven to Earth!



Winter Family Event

Closer and Closer! 10 minutes

Materials: Bible, wrapped candies

Procedure: This winter, we'll be investigating wonderful parts of human history. We'll learn, mainly from the book of John, of what happened when God sent His Son, Jesus, to live on Earth.

To play our game, find a partner. Each partner, move to stand at one end of the room or the other—but stand facing each other. Stand at the center of the playing area so that both groups can hear you.

Say hello to your partner in a normal voice. Can you hear each other very well? You probably couldn't even tell what the person said!

Now, let's all take a giant step toward the middle. This time, tell your partner your pet's name, if you have a pet. Could you hear your partner? Maybe a bit better—you're now closer.

Now take three baby steps toward the middle. Can you touch your partner's hands yet? Stretch!

Continue with other steps until all partners are together.

Now let's sit down right where we are and talk about what we just did. Let me ask you this:

• If you'd never met your partner before, how well would you be able to get to know the person from far away?

• What would have to happen for us to get to know our partners better? We would need to see the person and talk to the person. We need to be near someone—to see them, talk to them, listen to them—to get to know him or her!

Sometimes we can feel as if God is far away, can't we? That's why God sent His Son, Jesus, to live on Earth.

Open your Bible to John 1:14. John says, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." "Word" is another name for Jesus. This verse talks about the time when Jesus was born on Earth. The people who lived when Jesus was alive on Earth saw the things that Jesus did and heard the things that Jesus said. Some of these people wrote all about Jesus so that we could get to know God. God came near to us by sending Jesus—so that all people could get to know what God is like.

Turn to John 20:31. John also said, "But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

God wants us to know Him. And Jesus is the way we can get to know God! Toss out to partners wrapped candies as prizes for categories such as smallest partner, biggest step, first to touch hands, most enthusiastic, etc.



Winter Family Event

Family Talk 10 minutes

Materials: Bibles, one “What Do You Know?” Family Quiz Sheet (on this CD-ROM) for each family, pens or pencils, masking tape, highlighter, samples of parent resources available from Gospel Light (*Kid Talk Cards*, *Family Fridge Fun*, *Get Going! Worship CD*, *What the Bible Is All About for Kids*)

Preparation: Make a copy of the *Get Going! Worship CD* for each family.

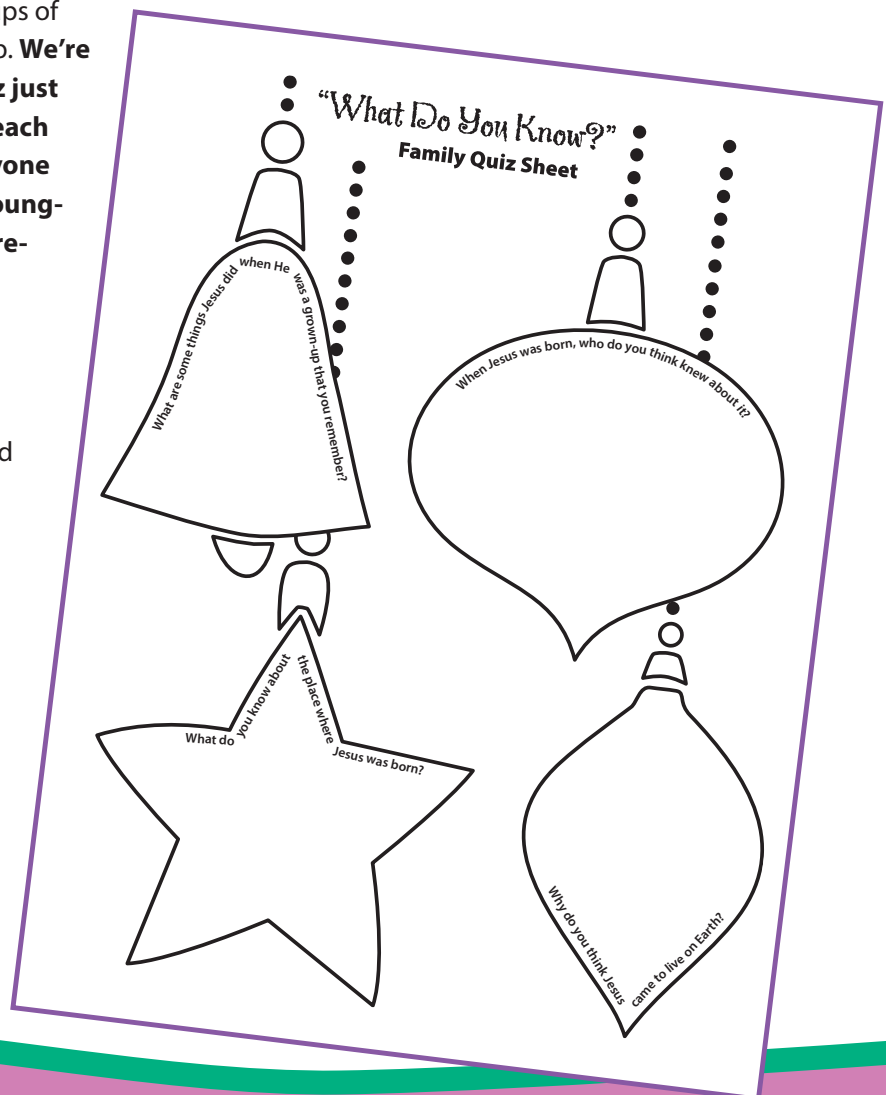
Procedure: This winter, we’ll walk through a **WONDER-land of learning about Jesus’ life. We’ll begin in the book of Luke and then explore the book of John.**

Give each family a quiz sheet, or form small groups of four to six people and give a sheet to each group. **We’re all going to take a “What Do You Know?” quiz just for fun—no grade, no wrong answers! Read each question on the quiz sheet aloud. Have everyone answer according to age, starting with the youngest and ending with the oldest. Choose a secretary who will write down all of the answers.**

Groups take five to seven minutes to answer the questions. When groups are finished, invite an adult from each group to tape his or her group’s quiz to a wall so that all quizzes are in a row. Read aloud and discuss the answers briefly, using a highlighter to note answers that more than one

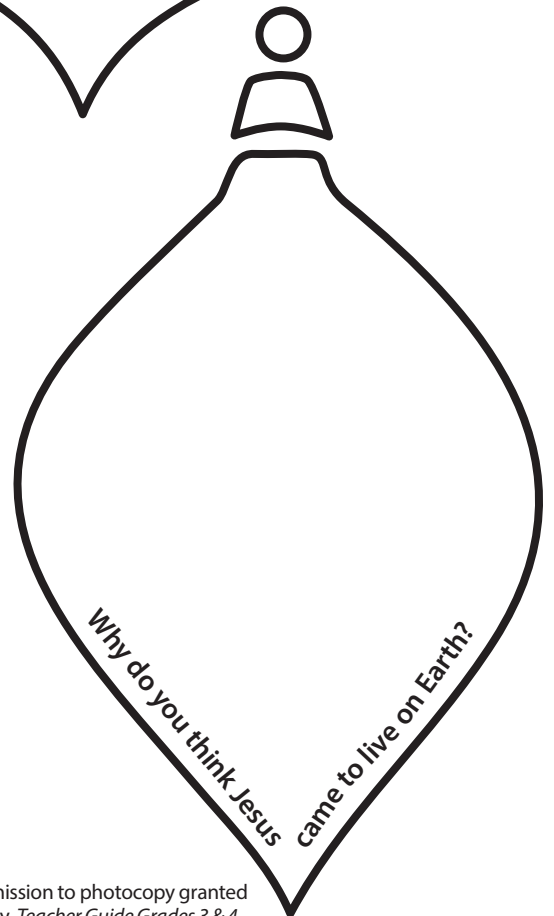
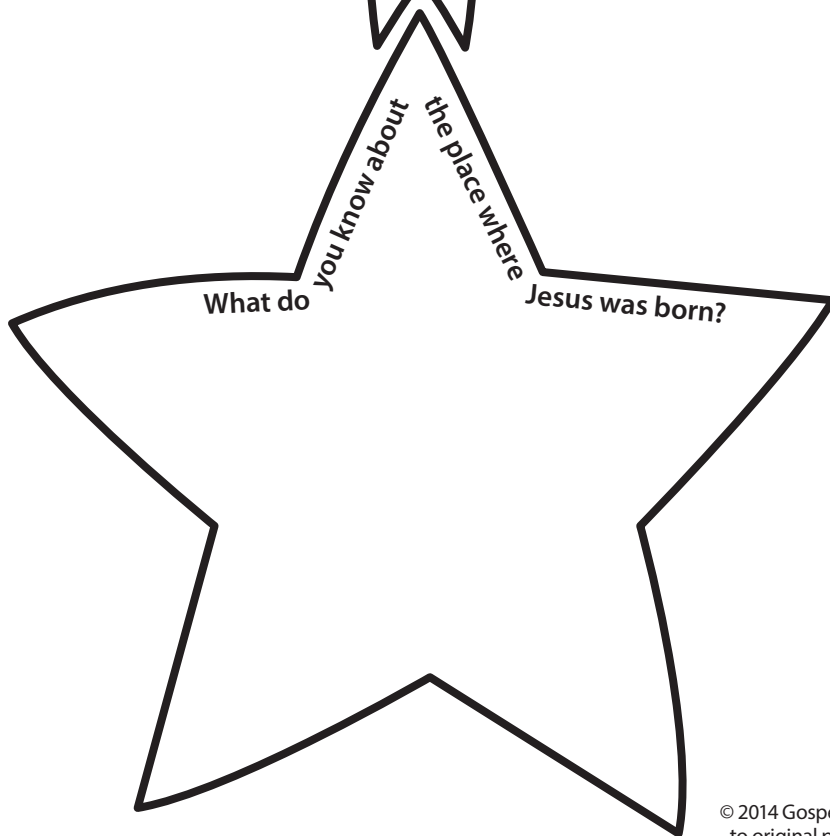
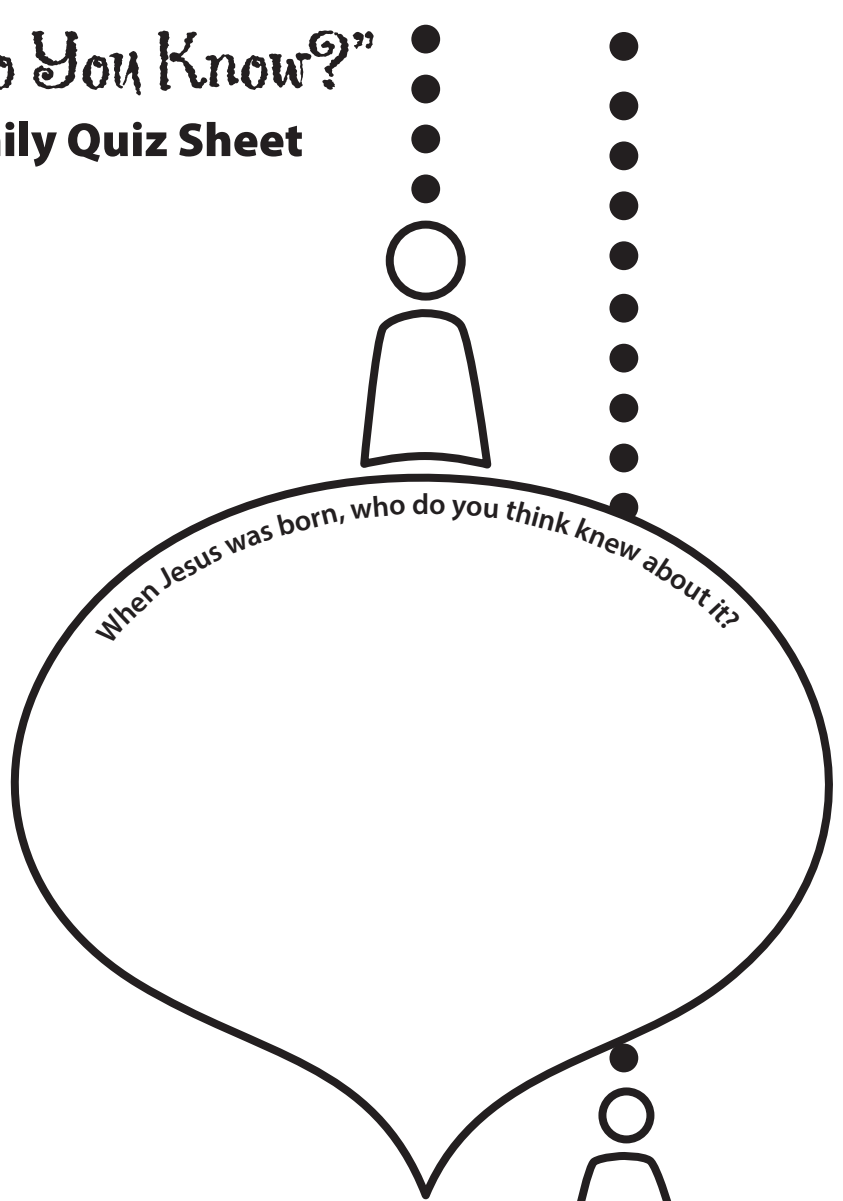
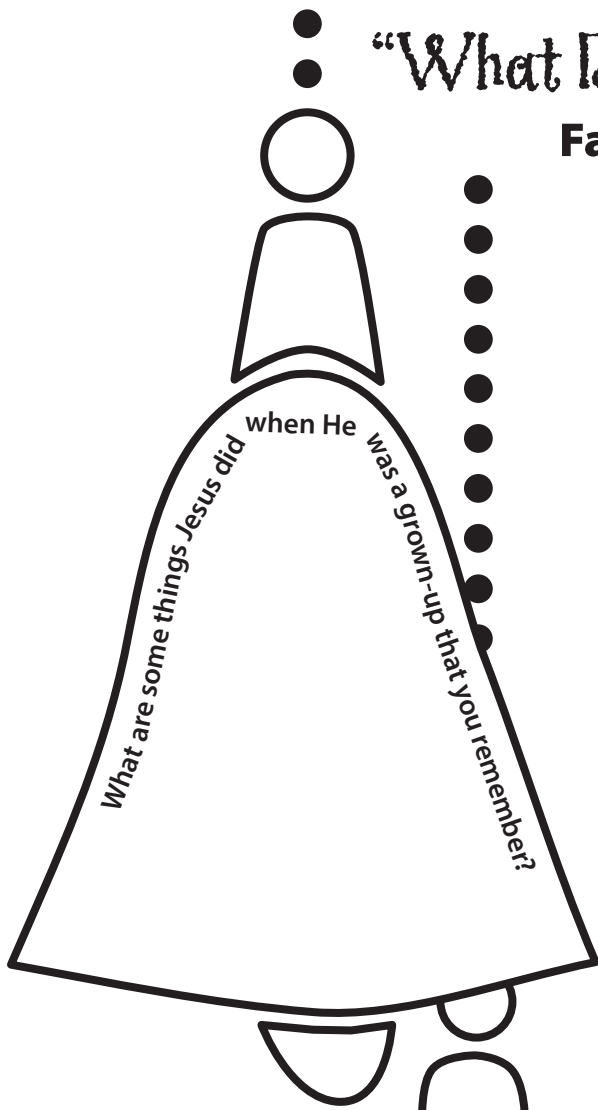
person had. **You all know some important things about Jesus! Good work! You all get an A! The great thing is we can always learn even more. And we will—every Sunday right here at church.**

But your family can also continue these WONDER-filled discoveries at home, together. Here’s how you can do that. Briefly show and describe the faith-at-home resources you are providing for parents. (If you are not able to provide all of these, show a sample and encourage parents to purchase items from gospellight.com.)



“What Do You Know?”

Family Quiz Sheet





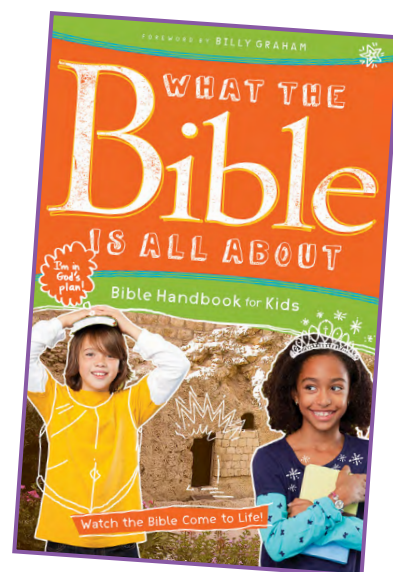
• **Kid Talk Cards.** Kids can stick these cards in their Bibles and bring them home. Point out that each card pictures the object of the week. **These familiar objects—one for every lesson—will help all of us remember what we can do to follow Jesus.**

• **Family Fridge Fun.** Look for these papers every week, and stick them up on your fridge. There are fun, easy-to-do activities on them and even Bible verses to read and talk about together. Encourage families to plan the best time each week to get going in their faith by using *Family Fridge Fun*.

• **Get Going! Worship CD.** Give each family a copy of the music CD. **Your whole family will love listening to and singing along with the music on this CD.** These great songs will help all family members keep God's Word in their hearts and minds!



• **What the Bible Is All About for Kids.** It's great to have one of these books on hand to help kids get acquainted with the books of the Bible. *What the Bible Is All About for Kids* is clear and easy to use for kids—and grown-ups find it really helpful, too!



• **HomeLight.** Each week, a few days after our programs at church, you can receive a short email that features the lesson's Bible verse and gives a quick, easy way for your family to think and talk some more about how God's Word can make a difference in your lives. Encourage parents to sign up for HomeLight, either by using your church password or by going to myHomeLight.com. (If you have not registered for this free, weekly email, please visit myHomeLight.com.)

Wrap up by saying, **I hope that you and your family can join us each Sunday to learn more about these WONDER-full events that happened when Jesus came to Earth. But Jesus is alive! And He is still doing WONDERFUL things. Be on the lookout for them!** Invite parents to talk with you or call, text or email you with questions. End in prayer, thanking God for each family and asking for His help in getting to know Him and in following Jesus wholeheartedly.

Winter Family Event

Family Folding Book

Materials: Card stock, scissors, tape, rulers, markers, crayons, stickers

Procedure: Instruct families in the following:

- Cut two sheets of card stock in half lengthwise. Tape the pieces together to make one long strip, and then accordion-fold strip into sections 3½-inches (9 cm) wide to make an accordion book.

- Decorate your family's book in any way you like. Create a design, add family members' names, add stickers, etc.

Talk with your family about what WONDERS you'd like to write or draw in your book. At home, you can use your book to help you remember WONDERFUL things you learned about Jesus. You can write answers to prayer or reasons to praise God. God's gift of Jesus is a WONDERful gift!



Winter Family Event

Well-Written Book Snacks

Materials: Graham crackers, prepared vanilla frosting, tubes of colored decorating gel, plastic knives, paper plates, napkins, beverages for adults and kids (coffee, water and/or juice)

Preparation: Set out ingredients, and place plastic knives in frosting.

Procedure: Each person takes two graham cracker halves, covers each one with frosting and then uses decorating gel as desired to write a message on the snack before eating it! **The book of John tells us that the things that were written about Jesus were written so that we'd believe in Him. While you eat your snacks, tell things you have learned about Jesus that make you believe in Him!** Provide napkins and serve beverages.





You're invited to the **Family Winter Wonder Land**

**Games, Crafts, Snacks
and Lots of Fun!**

Date:

Time:

Contact: