



TEACHER BOOK

YEAR 1 • BOOK 3

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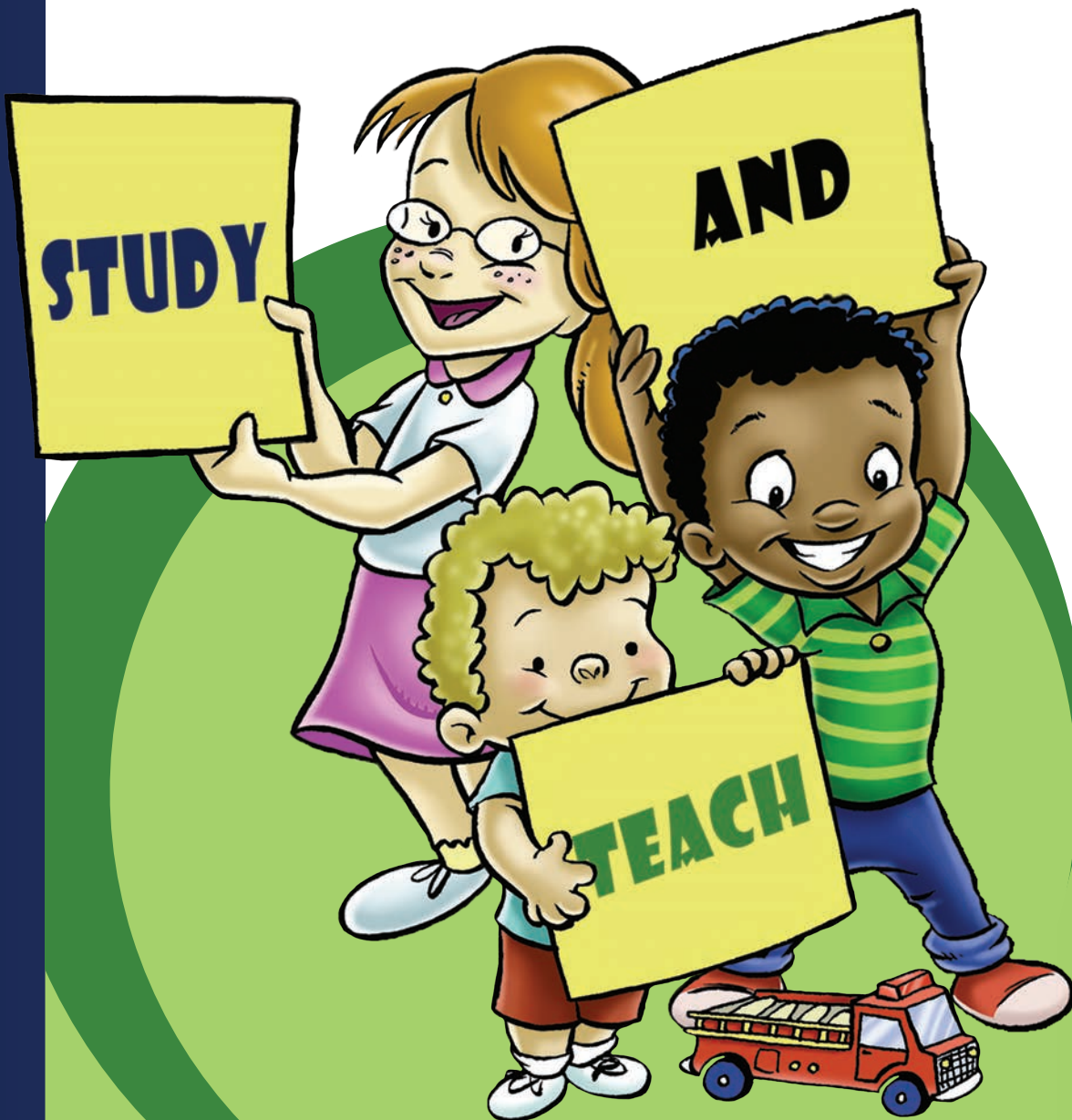
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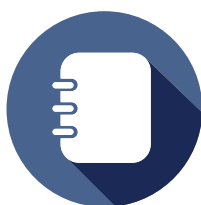
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ISBN 978-1-4951-6201-5

WELCOME TO
Generations of Grace



This curriculum has been designed to deepen your own study of God's word so that you might be able to properly understand and accurately teach each lesson. It's our prayer that this curriculum would be a blessing to your ministry and home as God uses it to edify your teachers, evangelize your children, and encourage your families.



Study the Lesson

This section is designed to edify and equip teachers and to guide you through the preparation of an age appropriate Bible lesson.

- **Central Truth** – Identifies the theme and focal point of lesson.
- **Supporting Truths** – Provides appropriate objectives for mastering the central truth.
- **Spotlight on the Gospel** – Explains how each lesson connects to the gospel.
- **Lesson Commentary** – Communicates the truth of each lesson to the teacher's heart and mind.



Teach the Lesson

Use the child involvement resources to engage children from the moment they walk into the classroom until pick-up time.

- **Outlines** – Guide both teachers and children through the lesson.
- **Lesson Questions** – Foster greater interaction between teacher and child.
- **Activities** – Creative opening ideas, visual aids, and crafts to introduce, illustrate, and apply lesson.

Additional Resources

Use these additional resources to help support your lessons and to knit together the church and the home, ensuring that what is taught on Sunday matches what is learned throughout the week.

- **Coloring Book**
- **Student Journal**
- **Craft Book**
- **Family Devotional**
- **Activity Book**

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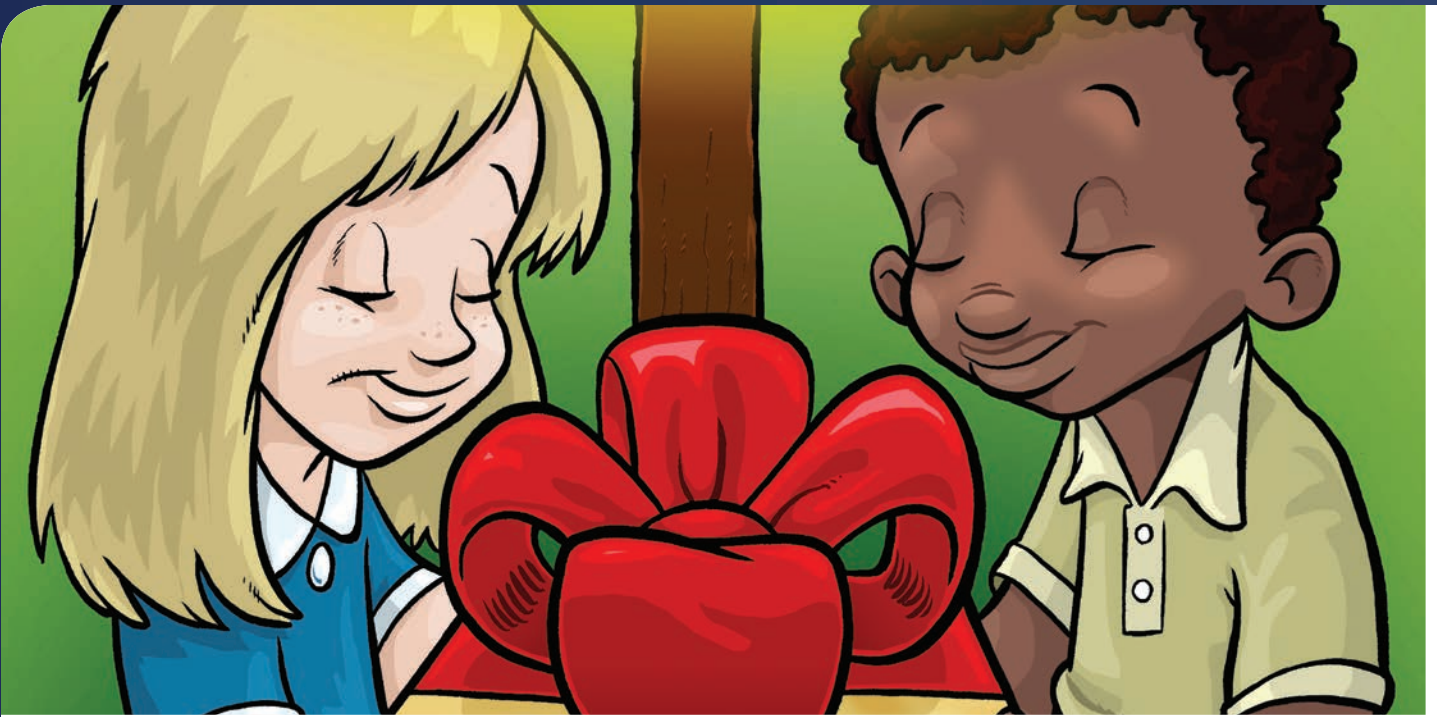
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CHRISTMAS LESSON 1

God promises to send the Messiah, Part One

GENESIS 3:15; 12:1-3; 49:10



From the beginning, God promised to send a Messiah.



"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel" (Gen 3:15).

Supporting Truths

1. God promised to send a Messiah.
2. The Messiah will save from Satan, sin, suffering, and death.
3. The Messiah saves those who believe.
4. The Messiah is King.
5. The Messiah comes to restore people to God according to His original plan.

Objectives

1. List three things the Messiah would do.
2. Explain why we need a Messiah.
3. Explain how Jesus becomes our own Messiah.
4. Consider how we ought to act toward a king.
5. Discuss God's purpose in creating man and in calling people by His own name.



Lesson Summary

From the very beginning, God promised to send a Messiah. He promised that the Messiah would: (1) destroy Satan's power (Gen 3:15), (2) bring blessing to all nations (Gen 12:3), and (3) reign over all forever (Gen 49:10). Through each of these promises we see the line of the Messiah being narrowed down. He would be a descendant of Eve (Gen 3), a descendant of Abraham (Gen 12), and a descendant of Judah (Gen 49).

Spotlight on the Gospel

The Christmas story begins in Genesis, at the very beginning of God's Word. In the garden of Eden God promised that a man would come to defeat Satan. This man has come. He is Jesus, the God-Man, born of a virgin that wondrous night in Jerusalem. The promise of victory over Satan and peace with God is found in Him. When we trust in Jesus our sins are forgiven and His righteous life is credited to us, securing peace with God.

THIS WEEK



**God promises to send the
Messiah, Part One**
Genesis 3:15; 12:1–3; 49:10

NEXT WEEK



**God promises to send
the Messiah, Part Two**
Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:2

IN TWO WEEKS



**God sends John the
Baptist**
*Luke 1:5–25, 57–67,
76–79*

Lesson Commentary

From the beginning, God promised to send a Messiah.

At Christmas, we celebrate the coming of Jesus to earth as a baby. We often think about the record of Jesus' birth contained in the New Testament, but the story of the Savior's birth actually begins in the Old Testament, in the very first book of the Bible—Genesis. So what does Genesis have to do with Christmas? The story that unfolds in Genesis and in the entire Old Testament points expectantly to the coming **Messiah**, who is God's specially chosen Savior and King. The **gospel**—the good news that God saves people from sin through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus—began in Genesis, where God explained why He would send the Messiah and included several specific promises about the coming Savior.

God promised the serpent that the Messiah would destroy Satan's power (Gen 3:15)

God's first promise was against Satan, because Satan's schemes had spoiled God's creation, particularly God's special creation, mankind. By tempting Eve to sin, Satan led Adam and Eve to disobey God and eat the forbidden fruit (Gen 2:17; 3:6). This sin produced three evil consequences.

First, sin ruined man's relationship with God and corrupted God's image in man. Instead of receiving the delight that sin promised, Adam and Eve became ashamed (3:7). They were so afraid that they hid from the One who had lovingly made them (3:8–10).

Second, Adam and Eve's sin was passed on to all those born from them (Rom 5:11, 19). Everyone born from Adam and Eve is sinful, and Satan tries to use this against God by inciting wickedness and provoking conflict between the wicked and the righteous (Gen 3:15a; John 8:44). This conflict began right away between wicked Cain and righteous Abel (Gen 4:8).

Third, because of sin, we all experience suffering and death (Jas 1:15). Marriage, bearing and raising children, and work all have pain involved because of sin (Gen

3:16–17). Also, because man is the head of creation, his sin caused even the ground and all animals to be cursed (3:14, 17). God's perfect creation, and God's perfect plan for mankind, appeared to be destroyed.

But in the middle of the curse, God pronounced a blessing: a descendant of Eve would come who would destroy the serpent's power (3:15). The second half of the verse is talking about one specific person, powerful enough to crush Satan (Rev 20:1–10). He would not only bring people back to a right relationship with God, but He would also set all creation free from the curse and make a new and perfect heaven and earth (Rom 8:21; Rev 21:1). Jesus is the second Adam, undoing the harm that the first Adam did (Rom 5:14–19).

The Messiah's victory would not be without pain. He would conquer Satan only by His own suffering and death (Isa 53:5), for Satan would wound Him on the heel (Gen 3:15). In attacking the Messiah, Satan was furthering God's plan, for sin can only be paid for by death (Heb 9:22). Just as Adam represented all mankind in his sin, so the Messiah represents all mankind in His death (Rom 5:18).

God promised Abram that the Messiah would bring blessing to all nations (Gen 12:3)

The second promise narrows down the line of the Messiah: He would be a descendant of Eve, but specifically a descendant of Abraham. God promised

THINK ABOUT IT

All natural disasters and disease—everything that causes pain and suffering—are the result of Adam's sin.



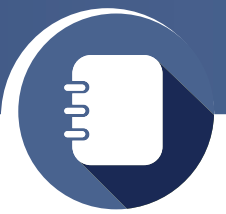
THINK ABOUT IT

When Satan struck the Messiah on the heel, Satan ensured his own defeat.



STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God promises to send the Messiah, Part One • Genesis 3:15; 12:1–3; 49:10



to bless Abraham by giving him many descendants (12:2a). This blessing was fulfilled physically when Abraham eventually had many physical descendants, but it is truly fulfilled in the Messiah, who saves Abraham's many spiritual descendants (Gal 3:6–9). These spiritual descendants are those who demonstrate faith, just as Abraham did (Gen 12:1; Rom 4:2–5).

Abraham believed that God would bring blessings, and God counted his faith as righteousness (Gen 15:6). Because of his faith, Abraham's sins were taken away by the Messiah (Rom 3:25). If we want to experience the blessing of being God's people, we must follow Abraham's example and believe in Jesus the Messiah (Acts 16:31).



THINK ABOUT IT

Even during the time of captivity, descendants of Judah played a prominent role through the life and ministry of Daniel.

God promised Judah that the Messiah would reign over all forever (Gen 49:10)

The third promise narrows down the line of the Messiah even further: He would be a descendant of Judah. This promise was spoken by Jacob as he

blessed Judah, one of his twelve sons. Judah was the fourth son, but Reuben, Simeon, and Levi had all disqualified themselves as the firstborn (Gen 49:3–7). Jacob gave Joseph the double portion due to the firstborn (Gen 48:5), but he gave Judah the leadership position of the firstborn (49:10). Judah was far from perfect, but he had demonstrated repentance and spiritual maturity when he offered himself as a substitute in order to save Benjamin (44:33).

So Jacob foretold that the scepter and staff would not depart from Judah (49:10a). The scepter and staff represented kingship. Although the line of kings would be interrupted through disobedience, the kingship

would never be permanently taken away from Judah. It would be restored when the rightful king should come (Ezek 21:27). Jesus is the rightful king from the line of Judah (Heb 7:14). He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Rev 5:5; Gen 49:9). He is the one who has the right to rule (Ezek 21:27), all people will bow the knee to Him (Phil 2:10–11), and He is the Prince of Peace (Isa 9:6; Ps 72).

Still there is a sense in which the three promises have yet to be totally fulfilled. Jesus has defeated Satan with His work on the cross, but Jesus has not yet wiped sin from the world. Jesus is bringing salvation to all the peoples of the earth, and every day the number of those who have received salvation continues to grow. Jesus has not yet brought peace to the earth, or established His throne on earth, and every knee has yet to bow to Him, and yet Jesus currently reigns as King, seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven (Heb 8:1; 10:12; 1 Pet 3:22).

We look forward to the promise of Jesus's second coming when He will complete His victory (Rev 19:11–21). But because of His death and resurrection, even now we can know His rule in our own hearts as we submit ourselves to Jesus the Messiah, the King (Luke 17:21). When He rules in our lives, we do have peace: we have peace with God (Rom 5:1), a promise to all who come to God through faith in Jesus Christ.

Lesson Outline

From the beginning, God promised to send a Messiah.

AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE



1. God promised the serpent that the Messiah would destroy Satan's power (3:15).
2. God promised Abram that the Messiah would bring blessing to all nations (12:3).
3. God promised Judah that the Messiah would reign over all forever (49:10).

AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE



1. **God promised the serpent that the Messiah would destroy Satan's power (3:15).**
 - Sin broke man's relationship with God (3:6–10; Gen 1:26a).
 - Sin causes war between the good and the evil (3:15a; John 8:44).
 - Sin leads to suffering and death (3:16–19; Jas 1:15).
 - A Man would end all this evil by crushing the serpent (3:15b; Rev 20:1–10).
2. **God promised Abram that the Messiah would bring blessing to all nations (12:3).**
 - A Man would crush the serpent by suffering and dying (3:15b, 21; Isa 53).
 - God promised to bless through faith (12:1; Rom 4:2–5).
 - God promised to give many descendants (12:2a; Gal 3:6–9).
 - God promised to give a great name (12:2b; Rev 3:12).
 - God promised to bless all people through Abram's line (12:2c–3; 1 Tim 4:10).
3. **God promised Judah that the Messiah would reign over all forever (49:10).**
 - Kings come from the tribe of Judah (49:10a; Rev 5:5).
 - The Messiah would come from Judah (49:10b; Heb 7:14).
 - The King of Judah would rule over all as Prince of Peace (49:10b; Ps 72).





Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. After Adam and Eve sinned, what did God promise in the Garden of Eden?**
God promised that one of Eve's descendants would destroy Satan.
- 2. What did God promise Abraham?**
God promised that one of his descendants would bless the earth.
- 3. What did God promise Judah?**
God promised that one of his descendants would rule the earth.
- 4. Who was God talking about in all these promises?**
Jesus fulfills these promises.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. What did God create man for?**
God created man to represent Him as the best of His creation. Man does this by knowing and loving God, by being a servant-leader for God, and by being holy like God through obedience.
- 2. What were the consequences of Adam and Eve's sin?**
They lost their right relationship with God. They experienced conflict with Satan and sin. They suffered and died.
- 3. What did God promise after they sinned?**
God promised that a man descended from Eve would crush the serpent's head, destroying Satan's power.
- 4. Why did God call Abraham?**
God called him to be the father of the nation from whom the Messiah would be born.
- 5. What did God promise Abraham?**
God promised that in Abraham (and in his descendants), all nations would experience blessing.
- 6. How did Abraham respond to God's promise?**
Abraham showed he believed God's promise by trusting God and doing what God said.
- 7. What did God promise Judah?**
God promised that one of his descendants would be the King over all people.
- 8. How does Jesus fulfill these three promises?**
First, Jesus defeated Satan by dying and rising again, and He will one day throw Satan into the lake of fire forever. Second, Jesus provides a blessing to all nations because He provides salvation from sin to all who believe. Third, Jesus is the King of kings and the Prince of peace; every knee will bow to Him.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



BLESSING THE EARTH

Abram was given a promise that one of his descendants would bless the families of the earth. That descendant is Jesus. Before class, draw a picture of the earth on a piece of butcher paper. Cut out pictures of families from different nations, and gather cross stickers. Before the lesson, gather the children in front of the map. Review questions and verses from previous weeks. When a child answers a question correctly, let him tape a picture of a family or stick a cross on the picture of the earth. Discuss the promise made to Abram and how faith in Christ allows us to take part in the promise.

GOLD CARDBOARD CROWNS

As each child enters the classroom, fit them with a crown. Before the lesson, ask the children if they know about kings. Explain that in today's lesson, we are going to learn more about the King of kings, Jesus Christ.



THREE PROMISES, THREE PROPS

Bring in a plastic snake, globe or map, and crown. Use these three props when you talk about each of the three promises in today's lesson.

PROMISE OF A CROWN

Just before beginning the lesson, take away the crowns that were given to each child when they entered the classroom (see "Gold Cardboard Crowns" activity in the "Introduce the Lesson" section). Promise the children that you will return their crowns to them at the end of the lesson. Ask the children if they know what a promise is. Explain that a promise is saying that you will do something and then doing exactly what you said you would do. Tell them that God has made many promises and that He always keeps them and does exactly as He said He would do. Don't forget to return the crowns after the lesson!



THREE PROMISES

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2

Materials: Red, green, and yellow cardstock, crayons, scissors, ruler, and glue.

Directions: Pre-cut promise pictures and corresponding verses. Create three doors from green cardstock—4in (h) x 3.25in (w). Make three small door handles from yellow cardstock—1.5 in (h) x .5 in (w). Glue the handles to the doors. When in the classroom, first pass out the three promise pictures and instruct the children to color them. Next, assist children with gluing the pictures and verses onto red cardstock. Finally, help the children glue the left edge of each door onto the red cardstock directly left of each picture.



Three Promises
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2

TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God promises to send the Messiah, Part One • Genesis 3:15; 12:1–3; 49:10



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

A TELESCOPE OF TIME

Place three small pictures of the Christ child in different places in the room. Bring a telescope to class. Explain that a telescope helps us to see things that are very far away. Make the pictures big enough so that they will be clear when you look at them through the telescope. Allow three children to look through the telescope at the pictures of Christ. Let each child tell what he sees when he looks through the telescope. In each case, he will see Christ. In today's lesson, we will learn about three promises that are given in Genesis and fulfilled at a later time in Christ.

CHRISTMAS CHAIN OF CHRIST'S NAMES, WEEK ONE

Begin a Christmas chain as a class project to be used over the next five weeks. Cut strips of colored construction paper to be linked as a chain. Type out different names and titles for Christ for the children to glue to the construction-paper strips. Try to use names that might be mentioned in this week's lesson. Suggestions for this week include Messiah, Savior, and King.



ILLUSTRATE

BORN A BABY, YET KING

Ask the children what image comes to mind when they think of the Christmas story. Explain that we often think of Jesus as a baby boy when we think of the story of Jesus' birth. Show a baby boy doll to the class and hold it in your arms. Then tell the class that though it's right to think of Jesus as coming to earth as a baby boy, it's also good to remember that Jesus came to earth as the promised king. Take out a crown and hold it in one hand while holding the baby boy in the other. Explain that Jesus is the Messiah that God promised would come from the tribe of Judah (Gen 49:10).

A MESSIAH TO CRUSH SIN'S CURSE

Because of sin, suffering and death have entered the world (Gen 3:16–19). Bring in examples of sin's curse to illustrate suffering and death: garden hoe, gloves (to prevent blisters), weeds, medicine, program from funeral, etc.). However, God promised to send a Messiah to put an end to all suffering and death (Gen 3:15). This Messiah is Jesus Christ.



APPLY

MESSIAH'S CROWN

Materials: Yellow cardstock, decorative supplies, scissors, glue, and tape.

Directions: Children should each be given 2 pages of yellow cardstock. Instruct them to fold their first page in half, along a horizontal line (short edge binding). Unfolding the page, they should continue by cutting triangular patterns into the top half of the page only. Next, have them make a 1 inch fold from the bottom up. Repeat the process with the second page. Fit the two pieces together along the bottom folds to form the crown and tape to hold in place. They may finish by decorating the crown.



AGES 9–11



INTRODUCE

THE TEMPTER PROPS OF PROMISE

Provide children the following props: a large seed, a globe, and a crown and/or scepter. Ask them to prepare a short skit to reenact the Christmas story. Allow them to perform their skit. Afterward, ask the children what additional props would have made it easier to act out the nativity. Use this activity to introduce the three promises God made in Genesis and to emphasize that there is more to the Christmas story than simply the birth of a baby.

FROM ADAM TO JUDAH

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2

Make copies of the family-tree diagram and hand one out to each child. Use the diagram to ask review questions about the main characters listed in the line of the Messiah, beginning with Adam. Use a colored pen to trace the line of Messiah from Adam to the tribe of Judah so that children can visualize the promise of Genesis 49:10.



ILLUSTRATE

BLESSING THE EARTH

God promised to bless all nations through Abram (Gen 12:3). Ask for a volunteer who thinks they can name 15 different countries of the world in less than 30 seconds. Next, ask for a volunteer who can name 5 more countries that weren't mentioned by the first volunteer in less than 15 seconds. Tell the class that there are currently 196 countries (double check the current statistics before class), and God promised to bless all of them through Abram.

PART OF THE FAMILY

Show the class a picture of your extended family. Ask the children how someone can become a member of your family (they can be born into it, be adopted into it, or marry into it). Tell the children that God promised to bless all people through Abram's line (Gen 12:2c–3; 1 Tim 4:10). Then ask them how we can become part of Abraham's family and receive God's blessing. We can't be physically born into it or marry into it. Explain that we can only become part of Abraham's family through faith in Jesus Christ (Gen 12:1; Rom 4:2–5).



APPLY

A LONG REIGN

God promised Judah that the Messiah would reign over all forever (Gen 49:10). The longest reigning king over Israel was Manasseh, King of Judah. Ask the children to guess the length of his reign by raising their hands when they believe you've given the correct length of his reign (call out years in increments of 5 starting at 30 and going all the way up to 65 years...30 years, 35 years, 40 years, etc.). Tell the children that Manasseh reigned 55 years as king, the longest of 42 kings to rule over Israel. The shortest reign was 7 days (Zimri, Northern Kingdom). Ask the children how long forever is. Then ask the children how 55 years compares to forever. Tell them that the longest reign of Israel's previous kings will be nothing like the reign of the Messiah. The reign of the Messiah will be unlike any other reign before it because it will never end. Jesus will be the final king to rule over the world, and His reign will be without end.



CHRISTMAS LESSON 2

God promises to send the Messiah, Part Two

ISAIAH 7:14; MICAH 5:2



When the line of David seemed lost, God promised to send a Messiah.



“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel” (Isa 7:14).

Supporting Truths

1. God told us about the Messiah's birth 700 years before it happened.
2. The Messiah would be born to a virgin.
3. The Messiah would be Immanuel.
4. The Messiah was born as a baby boy.
5. The Messiah would be a king from the line of David, just as God promised.

Objectives

1. Identify two details prophesied about the Messiah's birth that came true.
2. Explain that Jesus's birth was a miracle.
3. Explain why the Messiah needed to be God.
4. Explain why the Messiah had to be a man.
5. Describe how both Isaiah and Micah connect the Messiah to the line of David.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God promises to send the Messiah, Part Two • Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:2



Lesson Summary

God revealed many specific details about the Messiah long before His birth. Speaking through the prophets Isaiah and Micah, God revealed that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem to a virgin and given the name Immanuel, which means “God with us” (Isa 7:14; Micah 5:2). The message of the prophets is that God is not far off, but because of Christ He can be near to us.

Spotlight on the Gospel

Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah would be called Immanuel, which means God with us (Isa 7:14). This prophecy was fulfilled with the birth of Jesus, when God Himself came down to be the Savior of His people (cf. Matt 1:23). The Messiah had to be God because only God can forgive sins (Luke 5:21), but the Messiah also had to be man in order to live a righteous life and die a perfect death on behalf of man. Salvation is by grace through faith in the Messiah, the God-man, Jesus Christ.

LAST WEEK



God promises to send the Messiah, Part One

*Genesis 3:15; 12:1–3;
49:10*

THIS WEEK



God promises to send the Messiah, Part Two

Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:2

NEXT WEEK



God sends John the Baptist

*Luke 1:5–25, 57–67,
76–79*

A SAVIOR IS BORN

Lesson Commentary

When the line of David seemed lost, God promised to send a Messiah.

All of the Old Testament points to the **Messiah**, the Savior and King chosen by God. Through the **prophets**, people God used to speak His words and reveal His plan, God revealed many specific details about the Messiah. These specifics about the Messiah are also recorded in the New Testament, showing that Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah. The book of Matthew records that Jesus was: (1) born in Bethlehem to a **virgin**, a woman who had never been married or pretended to be married, and (2) named **Immanuel**, a name for Jesus that means “God with us” (cf. Matt 1:18–2:6). These facts fulfilled what Isaiah and Micah said over 700 years before, during a time when the people of Judah had lost hope.

Isaiah prophesied the way the Messiah would be born (Isa 7:13–15; Matt 1:18–25)

God had promised that David’s house and throne would last forever (2 Sam 7:16), but when Isaiah prophesied to Ahaz, king of Judah, around 734 B.C., it seemed like the line of David was about to be destroyed. Pekah the king of Israel and Rezin the king of Aram were attacking Jerusalem, and the people of Judah were afraid. God was using Israel and Aram to punish Ahaz for leading Judah into terrible idolatry (2 Chron 28:1–5).

The people of Judah trembled with fear (Isa 7:2). Pekah killed 120,000 soldiers of Judah in one day (2 Chron 28:6), a one day death toll rarely equaled in all of history. Ahaz’s own son Maaseiah was killed, along with Elkanah, the second in command over Judah (2 Chron 28:7). Pekah also took 200,000 women and children captive along with huge amounts of spoil (2 Chron 28:8). In the midst of sin and suffering, was there any hope?

When hope seemed gone, God sent Isaiah to Ahaz to promise that Judah’s enemies would go away just

like two smoldering coals about to go out (Isa 7:3–4). God urged Ahaz to turn to Him in faith (Isa 14:9), and God even offered to give Ahaz a sign to confirm His promise (Isa 14:11). The sign would be miraculous and would prove the truthfulness of God’s word (Isa 7:11). But Ahaz wickedly rejected God’s offer by pretending to be too humble to ask for a sign (Isa 7:12).

So Isaiah stopped speaking to Ahaz and instead spoke to the entire house of David (Isa 7:13). Until now, when Isaiah said “you,” it was singular, speaking to Ahaz. But in Isaiah 7:13–14, “you” is plural: the sign was to the entire house of David, to show that the line of David would continue and the promised Messiah would come from the house of David. Ahaz would be dead over 700 years before the sign came true (Isaiah only begins speaking to Ahaz again in verse 16, when “you” is again singular. Isaiah points to his own son [Isa 7:3] as a sign to Ahaz of how soon the enemies would leave).

But the sign to the whole house of Judah was that a virgin would bear a child. Some think that “virgin” could refer to a young woman in Ahaz’s day who would have a child naturally. This fails to realize that the sign was not for Ahaz himself, and it also fails to realize that this verse is definitely about a virgin. First, the sign was to be miraculous, but a young woman having a child naturally is not miraculous. Second, the sign does not speak of the virgin *becoming* pregnant (Isa 7:14). This is a specific virgin who would miraculously *be* pregnant while still being a virgin. Third, the Hebrew word for “virgin” in this verse never refers to a married woman, and some passages (cf. Song 6:8) show it can only mean “virgin,” not just “young woman.” So Matthew accurately applied this verse to the miraculous virgin birth of Jesus (Matt 1:18–25).

The virgin birth shows that the Messiah is unique.

- 1) As one born from a woman, He is human and the promised “seed of the woman” (Gen 3:15; Gal 4:4).
- 2) As one born by the power of the Holy Spirit, He is

THINK ABOUT IT
Only God can perfectly describe events 700 years before they happen.



STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God promises to send the Messiah, Part Two • Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:2



THINK ABOUT IT
A real incarnation involved a real virgin birth.

on Jeconiah (Jer 22:28–30). 4) Finally, in His divine and human birth, we see the beginning of peace between God and man.

The name Immanuel, which means “God with us,” also shows that the Messiah would be both God and man. Because Jesus would be God, Isaiah could refer to Judah as a land belonging to Immanuel (Isa 8:8), and he could call Him Mighty God and Eternal Father (Isa 9:6). The Messiah had to be God because only God can forgive sins (Luke 5:21), only God deserves worship as the Savior (Isa 43:11), and only God can rule to restore His creation (Matt 8:27; 14:33).

But the Messiah also had to be man in order to live a righteous life and die a perfect death on behalf of man (1 Tim 2:5). This is Isaiah’s message: even when trouble seems to overwhelm and hope seems lost, there is a Messiah. He is not a God far off, but a God who is with us, enduring life as a man and dying in our place (Isa 53:5). He is the King God promised to David who would rule with righteousness and peace forever.

Micah prophesied the place where the Messiah would be born (Mic 5:2; Matt 2:1–6)

At the same time as Isaiah, Micah was also prophesying in Judah. He rebuked the rulers of Judah because they unjustly abused the people for their own benefit (Mic 3:1–3). So Micah looked forward to the coming Messiah who would take over the throne of David and rule justly forever.

Micah predicted that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, and his prediction came true (Matt 2:1–6). Micah specified “Bethlehem Ephrathah” in Judah

divine, the Son of God, and also holy, uncorrupted by Adam’s sin (Luke 1:35). 3) Because Joseph was not His biological father, He is free from the curse

because it was so small it might be confused with the Bethlehem in Galilee. It was not even listed among the cities of Judah when the land was first divided (Josh 15:21–63). So the Messiah would come in a humble way, just as Isaiah had said.

But Bethlehem was important as the birthplace of David (1 Sam 16:1). The kings after David were born in Jerusalem, but they had become more and more wicked. So instead of connecting the Messiah to Jerusalem, Micah emphasized the direct connection between the Messiah and David. The Messiah would be the righteous and eternal king promised to David, born in the same place David was born (2 Sam 7:13). God said He would rule “for Me.” He would not be like those who ruled for their own benefit.

Although the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, His origins are from long ago. On a human level, this is again connecting the Messiah to His ancient royal ancestry in the line of David. But on a divine level, this is indicating that the Messiah has existed from all eternity, as Jesus later confirmed (John 8:58).

God was able to reveal these details concerning Christ’s birth to Micah and Isaiah over 700 years beforehand because He is **omniscient**: He knows all things, including the future. Even today we have copies of the book of Isaiah from 250 years before Jesus was born, so no one could have added these details after Jesus’ birth. Thus we have a choice: we can, like Ahaz, reject the promise of the Messiah and die in our unbelief; or like Isaiah and Micah, we can look to the Messiah as our King, submitting to His rule over our lives and trusting Him to save us. When we realize that we are lost in our sin and all hope seems to be gone, we need only look to the prophets who point us to the comfort and salvation found in the Messiah.

THINK ABOUT IT
Jesus came to serve rather than to be served, and to give His life a ransom for many (Mark 10:45).



Lesson Outline

When the line of David seemed lost, God promised to send a Messiah.

AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE



1. The Messiah would be born to a virgin (Isa 7:14).
2. The Messiah would be named Immanuel—God is with us (Isa 7:14).
3. The Messiah would be born in the small town of Bethlehem (Mic 5:2).
4. The Messiah would be Israel's perfect King (Mic 5:2).

AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE



1. Isaiah prophesies the way the Messiah would be born (Isa 7:13–15; Matt 1:18–25).
 - The Messiah would prove God's faithfulness to the house of David (Isa 7:13–14).
 - The Messiah would be born to a virgin (Isa 7:14).
 - The Messiah would be Immanuel—God with us (Isa 7:14).
 - The Messiah would come humbly as a baby boy in an oppressed land (Isa 7:14–15).
2. Micah prophesies the place where the Messiah would be born (Mic 5:2; Matt 2:1–6).
 - The Messiah would be born in the small town of Bethlehem, the city of David (Mic 5:2a).
 - The Messiah would be ruler over Israel for God (Mic 5:2b).
 - The Messiah is eternal: He has always existed (Mic 5:2c).



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God promises to send the Messiah, Part Two • Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:2



Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. Why was King Ahaz afraid?**
Two kings wanted to destroy his kingdom of Judah.
- 2. What sign did God promise to prove that there was hope for Judah?**
God promised a virgin would have a baby.
- 3. What was the baby's name?**
His name is Immanuel, which means "God with us."
- 4. Where was the baby going to be born?**
In Bethlehem, the small village where King David had been born.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. Why was King Ahaz afraid?**
Two kings wanted to destroy his kingdom of Judah. He was afraid that the line of David would be completely destroyed.
- 2. Would God let the line of David be destroyed?**
No. God promised David that one of his descendants would rule forever, and God promised Ahaz that the two enemy kings would be destroyed.
- 3. What sign did God give the house of David to prove that it would not be destroyed?**
He promised that a virgin would have a baby named Immanuel, which means "God with us." Since the Messiah would be born from the line of David, the line of David could not be destroyed.
- 4. What kind of a person is the Messiah since He was born from a virgin and is called "God with us"?**
He is both God and man. Because He is God, He can forgive and save from sin. Because He is man, he lived a holy life and died a perfect death on behalf of mankind.
- 5. What was the problem that Micah preached against?**
The rulers of Judah were not being just. They were hurting their own people.
- 6. What did Micah prophesy to give hope to the people?**
The Messiah would come as the perfect ruler. He is the promised King from the line of David.
- 7. How do we know the Messiah would be from David's line?**
He would be born in Bethlehem, David's hometown.
- 8. What do these accurate prophecies show us about God, about the Bible, and about Jesus?**
They show us that God knows the future, that the Bible is true, and that Jesus is the promised Messiah.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



INTRODUCE

CITYSCAPE

On one wall, hang a large section of butcher paper with some building silhouettes representing a large city drawn on it. On the opposite wall, hang a smaller section of butcher paper with only one or two houses and a barn. Explain that God promised that the Messiah would come from the small village of Bethlehem, not the large city of Jerusalem.

VISIT FROM ISAIAH

Tell the children that your class will have a special visitor—Isaiah. Have a man dress in a historical costume and visit the class. He could tell about the problem Ahaz had, how scared Ahaz was, and what kind of promise God made to Ahaz. He could tell about a friend named Micah, who told about Jesus being born in Bethlehem. He could bring in pictures of Jerusalem and of Bethlehem. The children could talk to him and ask him questions.



ILLUSTRATE

WHAT IS A PROPHET?

Use this illustration to help children understand the job of a prophet. Point to your mouth and ask children what we use our mouths for. Some answers will include eating, drinking, and talking. Tell them that one of the ways we use our mouths is to speak. Explain that this was the job of a prophet. Both Isaiah and Micah were prophets, or men chosen by God to speak for Him. They were like a mouth, speaking God's Word to the people. Explain that this was an important job during Bible times before God's people had Bibles. Tell the children that now God speaks to us through the Bible (hold up a Bible).

LITTLE BETHLEHEM

Use the Cityscape (see first activity in "Introduce the Lesson" section) during the lesson to remind the children about the small size of the Messiah's birthplace, Bethlehem. During the lesson tape a picture of a baby boy to the picture of Bethlehem to show the place of the Messiah's birth.



APPLY

BETHLEHEM SILHOUETTE

Materials: Dark blue and black construction paper, yellow paper, scissors, and glue.

Directions: Before class, cut the following shapes from black construction paper: a tower, a dome, and 3 small buildings (see picture for examples). Make enough so that each student has one of each piece. Also create little yellow strips that can serve as windows on the buildings (glue these on ahead of time for younger children). During class, give each student a sheet of dark blue construction paper. Have the students glue the buildings in a row. Instruct the students to decorate the night sky.



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God promises to send the Messiah, Part Two • Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:2



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

PALACES FOR PRINCES

Ask children where they were born. Some might know the name of the hospital and the state in which they were born. There may even be one or two children who were born at home. Explain to the children that in Jesus' time everyone was born at home. There were no hospitals. Ask the children what kind of house a king lives in. They will likely answer that a king lives in a castle or palace. Tell them that palaces are built in big and important cities. Tell the children that Jesus is King of the universe. Ask them what kind of house and what kind of city Jesus should have been born into. Tell them that in today's lesson, we will find out that Jesus was not to be born in a palace or in a big city. He was to be born in Bethlehem, a small village. In today's lesson, the children will find out why.

CHRISTMAS CHAIN OF CHRIST'S NAMES, WEEK TWO

Add to the class chain from last week, using the name "Immanuel" and its meaning, "God with us."



ILLUSTRATE

A MIRACULOUS BIRTH

Bring in a picture of your parents and you as a child. Let the children look at the picture. Point out that all babies, except for one, have a mother and a father. Then explain that Jesus's birth was not like every other birth—it was a miracle. He had a mother (Mary) but His father was not Joseph. Jesus' father is God. He was called Immanuel, which means "God with Us". He was given this name because He is both man (born from Mary) and God (came to earth from heaven). As God Jesus can forgive sins (Luke 5:21) and as man He lived a perfect life on earth and died as a perfect sacrifice on behalf of sinful man (1 Tim 2:5).

NAMED BY GOD

Ask the children who named them (most will say their parents). Then ask the children if they know why their parents chose that name for them. Tell the children that God, through the prophet Isaiah, named the Messiah, "Immanuel" (Isa 7:14). Explain that God did this to teach us about the Messiah. Immanuel means "God with Us" and tells us something important about the Messiah: He is both God and man.



APPLY

PROMISES FULFILLED ORNAMENTS

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2

Materials: Holiday decorative paper, red string, scissors, and glue.

Directions: Before class, cut out enough star sets (6 in each) for each student. During class, instruct students to trace around their stars, using each one on a different kind of decorative paper. Have them cut out what they have traced. Help them glue their stars in order of largest to smallest (from the bottom up). Add a small rectangle on the very top that says "Isaiah 7:14." Have them write out the verse onto the back. Punch a hole through the top and tie a red string through it.

Promises Fulfilled
Ornaments
See Year 1 Craft
Book, Book 2



AGES 9–11



WHERE IN THE WORLD IS BETHLEHEM?

Set a globe on a table in the center of the classroom, and place small star stickers next to it. As children come into class, encourage them to write their initials on a star sticker and then place the sticker where they believe Bethlehem is located on the globe. After every child has made a guess, reveal which child was the closest to Bethlehem's location. Look up information about and photographs of Bethlehem, and share this information with the children. Tell them that it was prophesied in the Old Testament that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem.

I WILL KEEP MY PROMISE

Ask the children whether they have ever made a promise to anyone. Then ask if they broke their promise or kept it. What happens when a promise is broken? How do you feel when someone breaks a promise to you? God is always faithful to keep His promises. Today we will talk about a promise that God made 700 years before He fulfilled it.



NAMES HAVE MEANING

Share with your class the meaning of popular baby names: **Liam** means strong-willed warrior and protector. **Noah** means rest and comfort. **Ethan** means strong, safe, and firm. **Sophia** means wisdom. **Sarah** means princess. **Stephanie** means crown. You might also look up the meaning of some of the names of children in your class before coming to class. Tell the class that one of the names given to **Jesus** is "**Immanuel**" (Isa 7:14) which means "God with us" (Matt 1:23). This name helps us to understand something important about Jesus: He is both God and Man. Explain why this truth is essential for God's salvation plan.

ISRAEL'S PERFECT KING

Israel has had many kings. Test the children's knowledge of Israel's kings by asking them to answer (by show of hands) which kingdom, northern (Israel), or Southern (Judah), the following kings reined over: Jeroboam (Israel), Ahab (Israel), Rehoboam (Judah), Uzziah (Judah), Hezekiah (Judah), Josiah (Judah), and David (trick question, United Kingdom). However, only the Messiah, Jesus, will be Israel's perfect King (Mic 5:2).



PROPHECY DISCUSSION

Understanding prophecy is not easy. It takes a lot of time and hard work to see how everything fits together in God's plan. But Matthew gives us a lot of help. Matthew tells us that the birth of the Messiah was prophesied in the Old Testament hundreds of years before it ever happened. We saw that Jesus' birth by Mary was a prophecy from Isaiah and that the place where Jesus was born was a prophecy from Micah. Whom do you know who can predict the future before it happens? We know that only God can tell the future. We can be sure that Jesus is the Messiah whom God promised because everything the Old Testament said about Him happened just as the prophets said (for example, in the passages that we studied in Isaiah and Micah). And remember, the prophets spoke for God. If anyone asks you during Christmas time why Jesus is special and why you celebrate His birth, you can tell them that God's prophets, Isaiah and Micah, predicted His birth, and it happened just as they said when Jesus was born.



CHRISTMAS LESSON 3

God sends John the Baptist

LUKE 1:5-25, 57-67, 76-79



God sent John the Baptist to prepare Israel for the coming of Jesus.



“And he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared” (Luke 1:17).

Supporting Truths

1. John was born to prepare Israel for their Messiah.
2. John was born as a gracious gift from God.
3. John was born to preach repentance and forgiveness for sin.
4. John's birth was a miracle, causing people to praise God and expect something great.
5. John's birth brought hope after 400 years of spiritual darkness.

Objectives

1. State that Malachi prophesied that a special messenger would come before the Messiah.
2. Show how Zechariah and Elizabeth knew that John was a gift of God's grace.
3. Explain what repentance and forgiveness are, and why they are needed.
4. Explain how John's birth foreshadowed the even more miraculous birth of Jesus.
5. List three good things predicted in the Old Testament that John was sent to announce.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God sends John the Baptist • Luke 1:5-25, 57-67, 76-79



Lesson Summary

Gabriel announced to Zechariah and Elizabeth that they would have a son who would prepare the way for the Lord. God Himself was about to come to His people in order to provide forgiveness for sins, and their son would be the messenger, sent both to teach people to repent of their sins and to identify the Messiah for all to see.

Spotlight on the Gospel

John prepared the people for the Messiah by preaching the necessity of repentance (Mt 3:2). Without repentance, there is no forgiveness. And without forgiveness, there is only judgment and death. If we want to enter God's Kingdom, we must believe that Jesus is the Messiah, repent of our sin, and put our trust in His sacrifice to wash away our sins.

LAST WEEK



God promises to send the Messiah, Part Two
Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:2

THIS WEEK



God sends John the Baptist
Luke 1:5-25, 57-67, 76-79

NEXT WEEK



God announces the Messiah's birth
*Matthew 1:18-25;
Luke 1:26-38*

A SAVIOR IS BORN

Lesson Commentary

God sent John the Baptist to prepare Israel for the coming of Jesus.

God revealed His Word to Israel over a period of about a thousand years (15th century B.C. to 5th century B.C.). But after the book of Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament, no prophetic word was recorded. There were over 400 years of silence as Israel turned to legalism and human tradition instead of to God (Mark 7:8). But there were always a few faithful believers who were sustained by the hope that one day the **Messiah**, God's chosen King and Savior, would come like a bright light shining through the darkness (Isa 9:2).



THINK ABOUT IT
Zechariah and Elizabeth were shining examples of a godly remnant of believing Jews in the midst of an apostate nation.

The angel Gabriel announced the birth of the Messiah's messenger (1:5–25)

Zechariah and Elizabeth were two of those who hoped for the Messiah's coming. Zechariah was a priest, Elizabeth was from a family of priests, and both

were righteous and blameless (Luke 1:5–6) like Noah (Gen 6:9). But Elizabeth was barren, just like Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel (Luke 1:7). For years Zechariah and Elizabeth had prayed for a son (Luke 1:13), but like Abraham and Sarah, they seemed too old to have children. Many in their day would have assumed God was punishing them for some sin, but God was instead testing and strengthening them as He had done to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Gen 18:13–14). God was preparing Zechariah and Elizabeth to raise up the Messiah's messenger.

God announced His plan while Zechariah was in the holy place in the temple (Luke 1:8–11). This place was decorated with engraved gold and richly carved cedar, lighted only by the golden candlestick, and separated from the Holy of Holies by a richly woven veil. Right in front of the veil was the altar where incense burned continually as a symbol of the people's prayers.

Offering incense was one of the greatest privileges. Most priests never had this opportunity, and those who did would do it only once in their lifetime. Inside the holy place Zechariah would have been alone in silence with only the light of a candle as he offered up incense to God. Right then a brilliant angel suddenly appeared to him—no wonder Zechariah was startled and overcome with fear (Luke 1:12). But the angel did not come to scare him. He came to Zechariah—a priest in the act of mediating for the people—to announce the birth of the messenger of the one great Mediator.

The angel said that Zechariah and Elizabeth's prayers had been heard: they would have a son named John (Luke 1:13). But this would be no ordinary boy. Even the name divinely chosen for him shows this, for John means "God is gracious." John would announce God's ultimate provision of grace. Also, not only would Zechariah and Elizabeth rejoice at his birth, but many others would rejoice as well (1:14). This included their neighbors (1:58), but also many more. Many would rejoice with Zechariah and Elizabeth because of the salvation their son was sent to proclaim.

The angel explained John's special mission: he was to go before God in the spirit and power of Elijah in order to make the people ready for their Lord (1:17). The angel quoted the prophecy that Elijah (or a prophet like Elijah) would prepare the way for God's own coming (Mal 3:1; 4:5–6).

John's mission was to prepare the people for the coming of the Lord by turning their hearts back toward God. All Israel longed for a Messiah to restore Israel's glory, but few realized that this cannot happen without **repentance** (Acts 3:19), turning back to God and replacing disobedience with righteousness (Luke 1:17). John was to help the people realize the weight of their sin and show them that their hearts were far from God (Isa 29:13).

THINK ABOUT IT
True repentance involves recognizing sin, having remorse over sin, rejecting sin, and then returning to God.



STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God sends John the Baptist • Luke 1:5–25, 57–67, 76–79



Zechariah struggled to believe such an incredible message (Luke 1:18). So in response to Zechariah's doubt, the angel announced his name and his mission of good news (Luke 1:19). Gabriel is a special messenger who had come from the very presence of God to announce the climax of God's plan of salvation. To show that Zechariah should have believed Gabriel, Zechariah became unable to speak until the son was born (Luke 1:20).

When Zechariah came out of the temple, the people knew that something extraordinary had happened (1:21–22). This extraordinary revelation hinted at the even more miraculous birth of the coming Messiah. After 400 years of spiritual darkness, God was about to visit His people, and John would be His messenger to prepare the way.

Zechariah and Elizabeth rejoiced at the birth of the Messiah's messenger (1:57–67; 76–79)

When Elizabeth became pregnant, she knew that God was kind to her (1:24–25), and when John was born, all the neighbors and relatives knew that the baby was a gift of God's mercy (1:57–58). Zechariah and Elizabeth proved their faith by obediently naming the boy John, even though this was against the custom of naming according to family names (1:59–63). As soon as Zechariah had demonstrated his faith, he was able to speak again, and the first thing he did was to praise God (1:64). When the people saw this, they feared God and expected the boy would become someone special (1:65–66). They were right, for John would announce the coming of God to earth.

Zechariah then prophesied, filled with the Holy Spirit. He praised God, because He realized how incredible it was that his son was about to announce the coming of the Lord. God had promised blessing and salvation through the line of David (1:69–71) and through His covenant with Abraham (1:72–75). But at the center of these blessings was the joy of serving God in holiness and righteousness without fear in His presence (1:74–75; Exod 19:5–6). How could Israel, so well-known for its rebellion and sin

against God, enjoy such a blessing? Unless there is a way for sins to be forgiven, the blessings promised to Abraham and David could not be enjoyed.

The only solution is for sins to be forgiven. So Old Testament believers looked forward to a new covenant, one that would provide a sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins (Isa 53:5; Jer 31:31–34; John 8:56). And Zechariah realized he was about to see this hope revealed before his own eyes. His own son would be a prophet, a person used by God to speak His words and reveal His plan, proclaiming salvation through forgiveness of sins (Luke 1:76–77; 3:3). Only God can forgive sins (Luke 5:20–21), so the Messiah is God Himself coming to save according to His mercy (1:78; Eph 2:8).

Zechariah rejoiced because the Messiah would be a light shining in the darkness (Matt 4:16), the sun of righteousness rising with healing in His wings (Mic 4:2), rescuing sinners from the kingdom of sin and darkness and bringing them into His kingdom of righteousness and light (Col 1:13; Luke 1:78–79). Ever since Adam rebelled against God, mankind had been at war with God (Rom 8:7), but the Messiah is the Prince of Peace who brings peace between God and man (Luke 1:79; Rom 5:1).

Zechariah had lived many years hoping for the Messiah to come, and now it was finally going to happen. We know that the Messiah (Jesus) did come, and we will be saved if we repent and trust that our sins have been forgiven through Jesus Christ. Only by the forgiveness of our sins can we enter into the blessings promised to Abraham and David long ago. That is the message John the Baptist was born to declare, and he fulfilled his mission when he pointed to Jesus and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

THINK ABOUT IT
Zechariah makes plain that Christianity is not a new religion, but rather the fulfillment of what was promised in the Old Testament concerning the Messiah.



Lesson Outline

God sent John the Baptist to prepare Israel for the coming of Jesus.

AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE



1. The angel Gabriel told Zachariah he would have a son named John (1:5–17).
2. Zacharias did not believe Gabriel, so Zachariah could not talk anymore (1:18–23).
3. When the baby was born, Zachariah named him John and could talk again (1:57–66).
4. John would prepare people for the Lord Jesus (1:77–79).

AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE



1. The angel Gabriel announced the birth of the Messiah's messenger (1:5–25).
 - Zachariah and Elizabeth were righteous but could not have children (1:5–7).
 - Zachariah was offering incense when Gabriel announced John's birth (1:8–14).
 - Gabriel announced who John would be: a great man like Elijah, filled with the Spirit (1:15, 17).
2. Zachariah and Elizabeth rejoiced at the birth of the Messiah's messenger (1:57–67; 76–79).
 - Gabriel announced what John would do: turn people's hearts to the Lord (1:16–17).
 - Zachariah became mute because he did not believe God's word (1:18–23).
 - Elizabeth praised God for His mercy in miraculously giving her a son (1:24–25, 57–58).
 - Zachariah and Elizabeth proved their belief by naming him John (1:59–63).
 - Everyone knew John was born for a special purpose (1:64–66).
 - Zachariah prophesied who John would be: a prophet of the Most High (1:76).
 - Zachariah prophesied what John would do: prepare for the Lord by teaching salvation through forgiveness of sins (1:77–79).





Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. Who were Zachariah and Elizabeth?**
Zachariah was a priest and Elizabeth was his wife. They were righteous people, but they were old and could not have a baby.
- 2. An angel visited Zachariah in the temple. What did he say?**
He said Elizabeth would have a baby named John.
- 3. What was John going to do?**
John was going to prepare people to believe in Jesus by teaching them about sin, repentance, and forgiveness.
- 4. Did Zachariah believe?**
At first he did not, so he could not talk. But when the boy was born, Zachariah named him John and could speak again.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. What kind of people were Zachariah and Elizabeth?**
Zachariah was a priest and Elizabeth a daughter of a priest. They were righteous and blameless by faith.
- 2. They remind us of Abraham and Sarah. Why?**
Zachariah and Elizabeth had no children, Elizabeth was barren, and they were both old, just like Abraham and Sarah.
- 3. What was Zachariah doing when the angel appeared?**
He was alone in the holy place offering incense to God.
- 4. What did Gabriel promise?**
He promised they would have a son named John.
- 5. What was so special about John?**
John would come as a messenger like Elijah to prepare for the coming of the Lord.
- 6. How would John prepare for the Lord?**
He would teach repentance: turning people back to the Lord and turning from disobedience to an attitude of righteousness.
- 7. What happened when Zachariah did not at first believe?**
He could not speak until the child was born and named John.
- 8. After John was born, why did Zachariah praise God so joyfully?**
Zachariah praised God because all the promises God made to Abraham and David could only come true if sins were forgiven. Zachariah realized that his son John was the messenger for the Messiah who would provide forgiveness from sin.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3-5



INTRODUCE

LET YOUR FINGERS DO THE TALKING

Tell the children that their lips have been buttoned shut, just as Zachariah's were, but that they can still communicate by using their hands. Have them say the following using just their hands: (1) Hello! (Wave), (2) Great job! (Thumbs up), (3) Stop! (Hand up, palm facing front), (4) Come here! (Beckon with index finger), (5) Quiet! (Finger in front of lips), and (6) Goodbye! (Wave). Reinforce the fact that Zachariah did not believe God's promise to him at first. We should believe and obey God's Word the first time we hear it.

MESSENGERS OF GOD

Tell the children that angels deliver messages for God. Allow children to come up front and give them a message to deliver to the class. Encourage the children to speak loudly and clearly. Tell the children that in today's lesson we will hear from one of God's messengers, the angel Gabriel.



ILLUSTRATE

JOHN'S JOB

John the Baptist was given a special job. The angel told Zachariah that John's job was to prepare the people for the Lord (Luke 2:17). Explain that to prepare means to make ready. Help the children understand what it means to "prepare" (make ready) by talking about how we prepare for dinner. We wash our hands (bring in bottle of soap and wash cloth), we set the table (bring in silverware, cups, and napkins), and we pray (fold hands). John was sent to help people prepare their hearts for God by repenting of their sins (Matt 3:2).

400 YEARS OF SILENCE

There were 400 years of silence before the angel spoke to Zachariah. To help the children understand this, ask them to remain perfectly quiet for 30 seconds. At the end of this time say in a loud voice: "Do not be afraid, Zachariah, for your petition has been heard..." (Luke 1:13).



APPLY

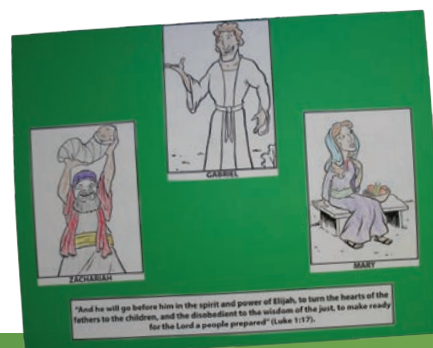
NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR GOD

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2.

Materials: Cardstock, scissors, glue, and crayons.

Directions: Before class, cut out the three pictures (Zachariah, Gabriel, and Mary) and Luke 1:17, enough for each child. During class, distribute the pictures to the children to color. Help them glue the three pictures and verse onto a sheet of cardstock. Zachariah should be on the left, Mary on the right, Gabriel in the middle at the top, and the verse centered at the bottom.

Nothing is Impossible for God
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God sends John the Baptist • Luke 1:5-25, 57-67, 76-79



AGES 6-8



INTRODUCE

ZACHARIAH CAN SPEAK NO MORE

Ask a person who knows sign language to be Zachariah, pretending that he cannot speak. He can try to explain about the angel and the baby John by using sign language. Sing a song as he signs the words of the song.

CHRISTMAS CHAIN OF CHRIST'S NAMES, WEEK THREE

Add to last week's chain the titles "Savior" and "Light of the World."



ILLUSTRATE

A MESSAGE FROM GOD

Use a bullhorn/megaphone to deliver the angel's message to Zachariah. Tell the children that bullhorns are often used to announce important messages to people. Ask the children if God used a bullhorn to announce His message to Zachariah. Explain that God used an angel to tell Zachariah and Elizabeth that they were going to be the parents of the Messiah's messenger, John the Baptist. Ask the children how God talks with us today. Explain that God talks with us today through His written word, the Bible.

A MINISTRY OF PREPARATION

The angel told Zachariah that John's job was to prepare the people for the Lord (Luke 2:17). Ask the children if they know what it means to prepare. Explain that to prepare means to make ready. Ask the children to help you show what this word means. Ask for volunteers to answer the following questions: (1) How do you prepare for school? (get up, eat breakfast, etc.); (2) How do you prepare for dinner? (wash hands, set table, etc. Tell the children that John was sent to help people prepare their hearts for God by repenting of their sins (Matt 3:2).



APPLY

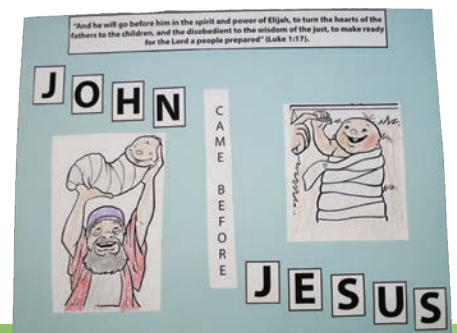
JOHN THE BAPTIST IS BORN

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2.

Materials: Cardstock, scissors, glue, and crayons.

Directions: Give each child a copy of the craft page and have them cut out the pictures, letters, and verse. They should then color the two pictures. Instruct them to glue the picture of the man holding up the baby on the left side, with John's names above it. On the right side they should glue the picture of the baby in a manger and put Jesus' name below it. In the middle should be inserted the phrase "came before," and at the top of the page they should glue the verse (verse is taken from previous craft- see page 82).

*John the Baptist is Born
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2*



AGES 9–11



PREPARATIONS, PREPARATIONS

Bring items needed to prepare for different activities. Ask children to act out the activity in front of the class. Ideas include: (1) Getting ready for a picnic, (2) first day of school, and (3) leaving for vacation. Have the children take turns acting out their preparation for the activity assigned to them. Allow the children to guess what the people will soon be doing. Use this activity to introduce the role of John the Baptist in preparing the way for the Messiah.

GREATEST MAN TO EVER LIVE

Lead the children in a discussion about the greatest man on earth. Begin by asking them who they think is the greatest man or woman who ever lived. Ask them who they think is the greatest athlete, musician, movie star, business person, artist, or actor. After the children have had an opportunity to give their answers, tell the children that Jesus said that John the Baptist was the greatest man ever born (Matt 11:11). And yet John the Baptist was only the man sent to prepare the way for someone even greater: Jesus Christ.



FEARFUL BEINGS

The Bible says that Zachariah was “troubled” and “gripped with fear” when he saw the angel in the temple (Luke 1:12). This is a common response because angels are powerful beings created by God to carry out His will and do His work. Review the following passages with the children and note the descriptions of the angels and the people’s responses to them: (Matt 28:1–4; Mark 16:2–5; Luke 24:1–5). You might do a sword drill for each Scripture reference. After reading these passages, tell the children that however fearful and powerful angels are they are only God’s messengers. How fearful would it be to stand before the God who created and controls angels! (cf. Matt 17:1–8)

CONSEQUENCES OF UNBELIEF

Zachariah became mute because he did not believe God’s Word delivered through the angel (Luke 1:18–20). Explain that belief is essential for salvation. There is no salvation unless we believe in Jesus Christ. Ask the children about the consequences for not believing in Jesus. Explain that the consequences are separation from God, eternal punishment, unending sorrow, and hopelessness.

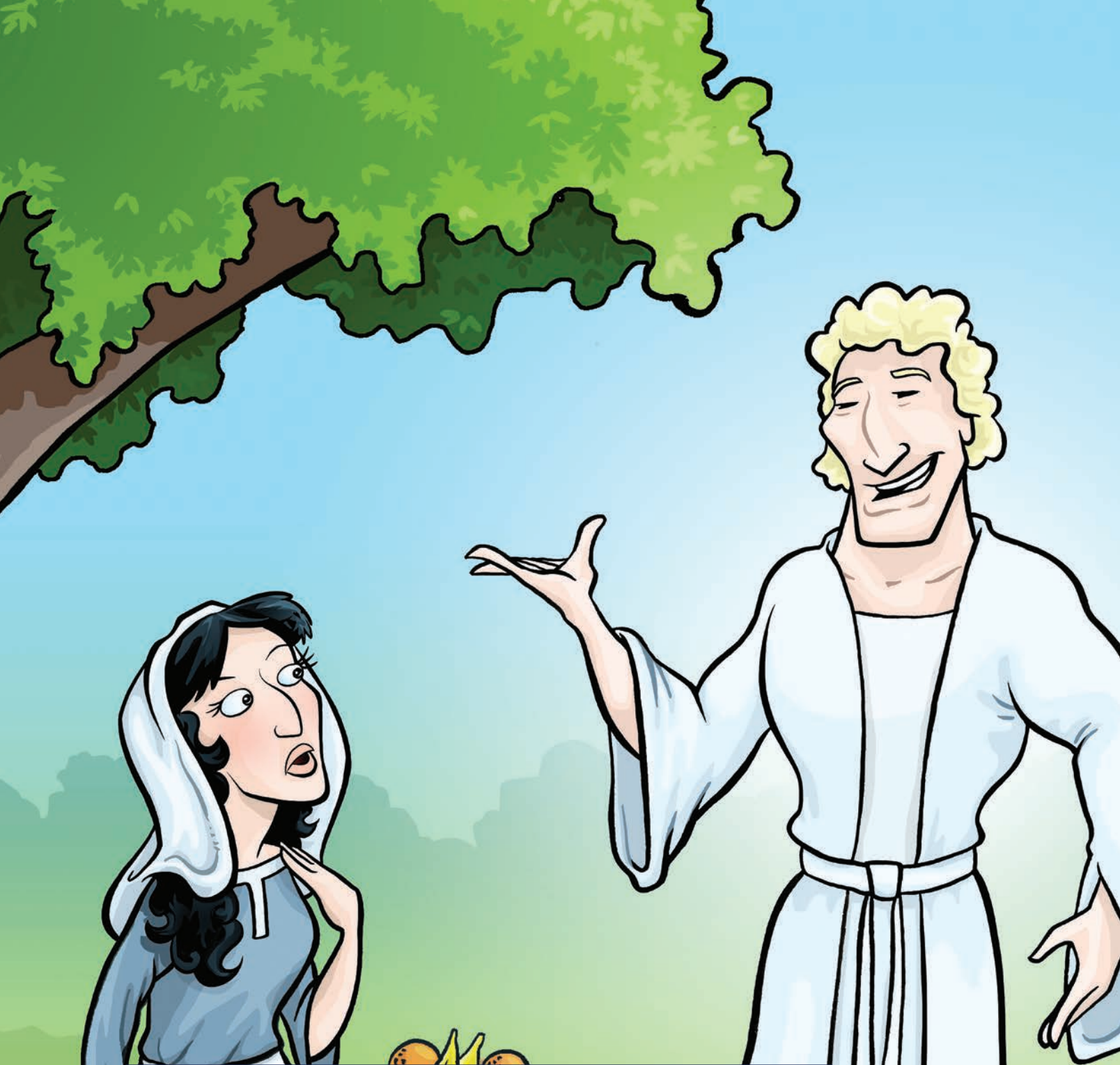


JOHN’S MESSAGE

John the Baptist was sent to “make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Luke 1:17). The Gospel of Matthew tells us how John was to prepare the people for the Lord: He told the people that they must repent for God’s kingdom was at hand” (3:2).

Lead the class in a discussion of what it means to repent through the four “R’s” of repentance:

1. We must **recognize** our sin. We must own up to it and confess it to God. We must not try to hide it or minimize it.
2. We must have **remorse** over our sin. We must be saddened over our sin. This sadness must be over how our sin offends God.
3. We must **reject** our sin. True repentance involves turning away from sinful behavior and replacing it with attitudes and actions that please God.
4. We must **return** to God. After rejecting our sin, we must turn over the control of our lives to God. We must look to Him for mercy and live our lives according to His Word.



CHRISTMAS LESSON 4

God announces the Messiah's birth

MATTHEW 1:18-25; LUKE 1:26-38



God announced the miraculous birth of Jesus the Messiah.



“She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins” (Matt 1:21).

Supporting Truths

1. The birth of Jesus was a miracle.
2. The virgin birth proves that Jesus is the promised Savior.
3. The virgin birth proves that Jesus is the promised King.
4. The virgin birth shows that Jesus is both God and sinless man.
5. The virgin birth shows that God’s favor is by His choice, not based on worldly status.

Objectives

1. State that the Holy Spirit caused Mary to become the mother of Jesus.
2. Identify that Jesus was born to save His people from their sin.
3. Show that Jesus was descended from David to be the promised King.
4. Explain how the virgin birth shows that Jesus is both God and sinless man, and consider why this is important.
5. Notice that neither the people nor the places in this story were impressive.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God announces the Messiah's birth • Matthew 1:18–25; Luke 1:26–38



Lesson Summary

About six months after Gabriel announced the birth of John the Baptist, he appeared again in the small village of Nazareth in Galilee. There he told a young virgin named Mary that she would become the mother of the Messiah. An angel also appeared to Joseph, telling him that Mary's baby was from God. This angel reminded Joseph that Isaiah had already said this would happen: a Child would be born to a virgin, and the Child would be Immanuel, God with us.

Spotlight on the Gospel

Jesus' miraculous birth proves that He is: (1) the promised Savior, (2) the promised king, and (3) both God and sinless man. However, unless we trust in Him, we will not experience any of the blessings He came to bring. To enjoy the blessings of salvation, we, like Mary, must believe that Jesus is the promised Messiah (Luke 1:45) and commit ourselves to Him as Savior and Lord.

LAST WEEK



**God sends John
the Baptist**
*Luke 1:5–25, 57–67,
76–7*

THIS WEEK



**God announces the
Messiah's birth**
*Matthew 1:18–25;
Luke 1:26–38*

NEXT WEEK



**The Wise Men
worship Jesus**
Matthew 2:1–18

A SAVIOR IS BORN

Lesson Commentary

God announced the miraculous birth of Jesus the Messiah.

Six months had passed since God sent Gabriel to Zachariah to announce the birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1:36). Now Gabriel appeared again to announce the birth of the Messiah Himself. John's birth had been miraculous, but it was just an introduction to the far more miraculous birth of the Messiah.

The Messiah's birth was a **miracle** because it was a supernatural event, something that broke the laws of nature. It also fulfilled many prophecies about the birth of the Messiah and confirmed that Jesus is the Messiah, the one born to rule as King forever and to save His people from their sins.

The angel Gabriel announced Jesus' miraculous birth to Mary (Luke 1:26–38)

Gabriel had appeared to Zachariah in the holy place in the temple, but his next appearance was in the small, out-of-the-way village of Nazareth (1:26). Not only was Nazareth small and unimportant, but it was in Galilee, the northern part of Israel, separated from Judea by Samaria and close to the Gentile nations to the north. It was even called "Galilee of the Gentiles" because of how many Gentiles lived in this region (Matt 4:15; Isa 9:1).

Not only did Gabriel go to an unlikely place, but he appeared to an unlikely person, a girl named Mary (Luke 1:27). She is given no introduction except that she was a virgin betrothed to Joseph. Betrothal was like being legally married, even though a year might pass before they celebrated the wedding feast and lived together as husband and wife. Typically, girls would be betrothed by their parents at about 12 or 13 years old, so Mary was just a girl.

Scripture tells us that God chose Mary not because of something unique in her but because of His own grace. **Grace** is God's blessing, pleasure, or delight that He shows based on His choice, not based on what a person deserves. So when Gabriel called Mary "favored one" (1:28), he was literally calling her "one

who has been shown grace," or "one God has chosen to delight in."

Mary found favor with God just as Noah had (Gen 6:8). By His own grace, God chose Mary, like Noah, to carry out a special role as part of His salvation plan.

Gabriel also said, "the Lord is with you," just as an angel had said to Gideon (Judg 6:12). Just as Gideon did not understand, so Mary was deeply troubled and did not know why she should have such a special greeting (1:29). But just as God was with Gideon to empower Gideon to perform a special task, so God was with Mary to empower her to miraculously become the mother of the Messiah.

When Mary was troubled, Gabriel explained that God had chosen to show his kindness to young Mary by choosing her to be the mother of the Messiah (1:30–31). His name would be Jesus, which in Hebrew is Yeshua or Joshua and means "Yahweh saves." As one born from a virgin, He would be the Son of the Most High, and therefore also the one prophesied to rule on the throne of David forever (Luke 1:32; Ps 2:7–9; 2 Sam 7:12). This reminds us that **Messiah** does not just mean Savior; it also means King. Christ already rules in the hearts of all who submit to Him as Lord (Luke 17:21; Col 1:13), but Gabriel also speaks of a time when Jesus will rule as the King of Israel (Luke 1:33; Zech 14:16–21).

But there was a problem: Mary was a **virgin**, someone who was not married and had never acted as if she was married. Mary asked how it was possible for a virgin to have a child (Luke 1:34). Gabriel answered that the Holy Spirit would cause her to become pregnant, which showed two important things about her child (1:35). First, the virgin birth shows that Jesus was free from the corruption of Adam's first sin that polluted the entire human race (Heb 4:15). If Jesus were not sinless, He could not have satisfied the law or provided a spotless sacrifice (1 Pet 1:19).

THINK ABOUT IT
God often chooses the foolish, weak, and lowly in order to shame human pride and display His own power to save (1 Cor 1:27–29).



STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God announces the Messiah's birth • Matthew 1:18–25; Luke 1:26–38



Second, the virgin birth shows that Jesus is the Son of God. As the Son of God, Jesus is fully God (Heb 1:2–3). If Jesus were not God, He would not have the authority to forgive sins (Luke 5:21–24), to grant life in and of Himself (John 11:25; 1 Tim 6:13), to save in His own name (Acts 4:12; Isa 43:11), to mediate with authority before God (Job 33:23), or even to reveal God to us (John 1:18).



THINK ABOUT IT

The virgin birth is essential to biblical faith.

Without it there is no Son of God, no sinless man, and no salvation.

Gabriel's explanation of the virgin birth would still have been very difficult to believe, so he provided Elizabeth as a sign for Mary (Luke 1:36). If God could miraculously give her a child, why couldn't God provide a child in an even more miraculous way? About

2,000 years earlier God had promised Sarah a son, and when she doubted, God asked her, "Is anything too difficult for the Lord?" (Gen 18:14). Now Gabriel promised another even more miraculous birth, and when Mary wondered how, Gabriel affirmed, "Nothing will be impossible with God" (Luke 1:37). Unlike Sarah, who doubted many times before finally believing, Mary believed right away, and because she believed, she submitted to God's plan (1:38). She would become the mother of the Messiah.

The angel announced Jesus' miraculous birth to Joseph (Matt 1:18–25)

Mary's faith was incredible, because she knew people would think she was pregnant due to sin. In fact, even the man she was going to marry thought this. This man, Joseph, was from the line of David (1:16–19), again confirming that Jesus was the promised Son of David who would reign forever (21:9). But Joseph did not yet know about Jesus. So when he found out Mary was pregnant, he planned to divorce Mary, since betrothal was so strong that it required a divorce to cancel it (1:18–19). Legally he could have publicly shamed her and had her stoned to death, but because he was a righteous man, he was kind and planned to divorce her secretly.

But God made sure to protect Mary and the baby inside her. An angel, probably Gabriel, told Joseph what he had already told Mary: Mary's baby was from the Holy Spirit (1:20). Gabriel had told Mary that Jesus would be the eternal King. But since the Messiah is also Savior, Gabriel told Joseph that Jesus would be the one who would save His people from their sin (1:21). The Jews of that time thought they needed salvation from the political oppression of Rome, and people today want to be saved from all sorts of temporary hardships. But what we really need to be saved from is our own sinfulness (Rom 4:7). Jesus was born in order to become the sinless sacrifice whose death would pay for sins (1 John 2:2) and save all who put their faith in Him (Rom 3:24–26).

To help Joseph believe, the angel reminded Joseph of Isaiah's prophecy about the virgin birth (Luke 1:22–23). This prophecy had been given as a sign to the entire house of David (Isa 7:13), proving that God had not given up His promise that the house of David would last forever (2 Sam 7:13).

It also proves that the Old and the New Testaments are one story. They are consistent. When Joseph showed he believed Gabriel by marrying Mary and naming the baby Jesus (Luke 1:24–25), he put his faith in the same Messiah that Isaiah had depended upon over 700 years earlier.

Who is this Messiah? As one born from a virgin, He was both God and man; He was Immanuel, which means "God with us." The virgin birth set Jesus apart from every other human. No one else was born only from a woman (Gal 4:4). No one else could be called the seed of a woman (Gen 3:15). This is yet another proof that Jesus is the Messiah who was promised with such accuracy. And it is proof that we do have a Savior. He is both sinless man and God become flesh. He came to die for our sins, rule in our hearts, and reign forever.

THINK ABOUT IT

Christmas is ultimately about God dealing with man's greatest problem as He fulfills the long awaited promise through the divine person of Jesus Christ.



Lesson Outline

God announced the miraculous birth of Jesus the Messiah.

AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE



1. The angel Gabriel told Mary she would be the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:26–38).
2. The angel told Joseph that Mary's child was from God (Matt 1:18–25).
3. Jesus was born to a virgin to show that He came to save people from sin (Matt 1:21; Luke 1:34–35).

AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE



1. **The angel Gabriel announced Jesus' miraculous birth to Mary (Luke 1:26–38).**
 - Gabriel went to a small village to an unknown girl (1:26–27).
 - Gabriel announced that God had chosen to delight in Mary (1:28–29).
 - Gabriel announced the birth of Jesus, the Son of the Most High, to rule on the throne of David over Israel forever (1:30–33).
 - Mary was a virgin, but the Holy Spirit would cause her to become pregnant (1:34–35).
 - Mary believed that nothing is impossible with God, so she submitted (1:36–38).
2. **The angel announced Jesus' miraculous birth to Joseph (Matt 1:18–25).**
 - Joseph was a righteous man from the line of David (1:16–19).
 - Joseph planned to cancel the wedding when he learned Mary was pregnant (1:18–19).
 - The angel said that Mary's baby was from the Holy Spirit (1:20).
 - The angel said to name Him Jesus, because He would save people from sin (1:21).
 - This fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy of a virgin having a son called Immanuel (1:22–23).
 - Joseph obeyed and named the baby Jesus (1:24–25).



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God announces the Messiah's birth • Matthew 1:18–25; Luke 1:26–38



Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. What did Gabriel tell Mary?**
She would become the mother of the Messiah, the King.
- 2. Why did this promise seem impossible?**
Mary was a virgin. She was not married and had never acted like she was married.
- 3. So how could Mary have a baby?**
The Holy Spirit would cause her to become pregnant.
- 4. What did Gabriel tell Joseph?**
He should take Mary as his wife, because her baby was from God, the Savior that Isaiah had talked about long ago.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. After appearing to Zachariah in the temple, where did Gabriel appear next?**
He appeared in the small village of Nazareth to a young virgin named Mary.
- 2. What did Gabriel tell Mary?**
He said she had been shown favor because she would become the mother of the Messiah.
- 3. What did Gabriel say about the Messiah?**
He would be great, the Son of the Most High, and the eternal King who would rule over Israel from the throne of David.
- 4. Was this promise more difficult than God's promises to Sarah and to Elizabeth?**
Yes. Sarah and Elizabeth were barren and old. But Mary was a virgin. She was not even married and had never acted like she was married.
- 5. So how could Mary have a baby?**
The Holy Spirit would cause her to become pregnant. Because of this, Jesus would be sinless man and the Son of God.
- 6. Who was Joseph?**
He was a descendant of David, a righteous man, and the one whom Mary was going to marry.
- 7. What was Joseph about to do when he found out Mary was pregnant?**
He was about to cancel the wedding because he thought Mary had done something sinful.
- 8. How did Gabriel change Joseph's mind?**
He explained that the baby was from God, he reminded Joseph that this is what Isaiah had prophesied, and he said that Jesus was the promised Savior.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



HOW DO WE RECEIVE MESSAGES?

Ask the children if any of them have ever received a letter, phone call, or an email. Talk about the different ways we receive messages today. Tell the children that in today's story, Jesus' parents received messages from some of God's special messengers—angels.

ANGEL ON THE WALL

Draw an angel on a large piece of butcher paper, and tape it to a wall in the classroom. Explain that an angel had a very special message for Joseph while he was sleeping. During the Bible lesson, we will find out what that message was.



THRONE OF DAVID

Bring in a picture of a throne or construct a pretend throne (elevate a chair and create a high back with cardboard tubes painted gold). Explain that when the Bible talks about a throne it is talking about a king, one who sits on a throne. Tell the children that Gabriel told Mary that God would give her son, Jesus, "the throne of His father David" (Luke 1:32). Explain that this meant that Jesus would rule as King forever. God was going to give Jesus David's throne, or kingdom.

JOSEPH OBEYED

The angel told Joseph to take Mary as his wife (Matt 1:20). Did Joseph obey the angel? Yes! (1:24). The angel also told Joseph to name the baby that was in Mary, "Jesus" (Matt 1:21). Did Joseph obey the angel? Yes! (1:25). Explain that because Joseph obeyed the angel he showed that he believed what the angel said. The same is true for us. When our moms and dads tell us something we show that we believe them by obeying what they say.



GET YOUR HEART READY FOR CHRIST

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2.

Materials: Cardstock, scissors, glue, crayons, and burlap wire.

Directions: Prior to class, cut out the pieces of the heart puzzle and a manger for each child. Glue the manger together. In class, have children begin by coloring the heart pieces. Help them organize and glue the heart pieces on the top half of a sheet of cardstock folded vertically (short edge binding). Note: some should hang over the top. Have them color the baby Jesus picture. Help them to put the picture and the hay (burlap) in the manger. Secure the manger with glue to the bottom half of the cardstock. Also, glue the verse on the bottom half, near the edge.



*Get Your Heart Ready for Christ
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2*

TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God announces the Messiah's birth • Matthew 1:18–25; Luke 1:26–38



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

ANCESTORS AND DESCENDANTS

Teach the meaning of ancestors and descendants to your children. Bring in pictures of your grandparents, parents, and children. Show these pictures to the children, and tell them who each person is. Tell them that you are your father's son or daughter and that you are your grandparents' grandson or granddaughter. Help them to say the word "ancestor." Tell them that ancestors are the grandmothers and grandfathers all the way back to Noah. Do the reverse for "descendant." Tell the children that they are descendants of their grandparents. They are descendants of their grandma's grandma and so on. In the end, use the pictures to test the children to see if they know who is an ancestor and who is a descendant. In today's lesson, we are going to learn that Joseph and Jesus were descendants of King David.

CHRISTMAS CHAIN OF CHRIST'S NAMES, WEEK FOUR

Add to last week's chain the names "Jesus" and "Son of God."



ILLUSTRATE

MIRACULOUS BIRTH

Tell the children that the birth of Jesus was a miracle. Explain that Jesus' birth was a miracle because it didn't happen according to the natural pattern that God established. Normally, every child has a mother and a father, but Jesus had an earthly mother and no earthly father. This is why Jesus' birth was a miracle. Ask the children if they can remember any other miraculous births that we've learned about in the book of Genesis? One is the birth of Isaac in Genesis 21:1 (his mother, Sarah, was too old to have children and barren) and another is the birth of Jacob and Esau in Genesis 25:21–26 (their mother, Rebekah, was barren).

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Tell the children that the angel told Joseph to name the Child that Mary was carrying, "Jesus" (Matt 1:21). This name means "Joshua" or "Yahweh saves". Ask the children if they remember any other names given to Jesus in the previous three Christmas lessons. Answers include: "Messiah", "Savior", "Christ", "King", "Immanuel", and "Sunrise". Ask the children if they can remember what any of these names tell us about Jesus.



APPLY

GOOD NEWS MEGAPHONE

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2.

Materials: Red and green cardstock, scissors, glue, tape and crayons.

Directions: Have each child form a cone with a piece of red cardstock and tape it together. Cut-off any excess. Cut a handle from green cardstock and glue it to the bottom of the cone. Cut out the picture and the letters on the activity sheet. Arrange and glue the letters "G-O-O-D" on one side and the letters "N-E-W-S" on the other side. Color the picture and affix a small L-shape cardstock strip to its back to serve as a prop. Put a piece of tape on the bottom of the L-strip and position the picture inside the cone.



*Good News Megaphone
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2*

AGES 9–11

**THE NEED FOR A SAVIOR**

Ask the children what life would be like without sin. Remind the children that God created Adam and Eve in a perfect garden. After sin entered the world, man's punishment was death. God loved us and promised to send His only Son to die on the cross for our sins. God sent Jesus as a gift for us. That gift is our salvation.

GENEALOGY JUMBLE

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2.

Copy the Genealogy Jumble work sheet (located in craft book) on card stock for each group and cut up the rectangles. Place the names in an envelope. During class, divide the children into groups of 5–7 children. Give each group an envelope with the genealogy names inside. Direct the children to open their Bibles to Matthew 1:1–18. Instruct the children to work together to line up the names in the correct order, from Abraham to Joseph. The first group to finish wins. Use this activity to teach children to identify Joseph as being from the line of David.

**BABY ACROSTIC**

Write the acrostic "BABY" vertically on the board. Above the acrostic write, "Mary, you will..." As you teach the section on Luke 1:26–33, fill in the summary of what the angel told Mary about the baby she would soon bear. Use this acrostic to help Children remember the important things the angel revealed to Mary about her son, Jesus. Mary, you will...

Bear a son

And call his name Jesus; He will...

Be great and be called the Son of the Most High.

Your son will rule the messianic kingdom.

BLESSINGS OF OBEDIENCE

Mary was likely a young girl (probably around the age of 13) when she learned she would be the mother of Jesus. This came as a shock as Mary had never been married. However, the Bible records her amazing response: "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38). Mary believed and submitted herself to God's will. Because of her submission she was greatly blessed (Luke 1:21). We too receive God's blessing when we obey His will.

**MESSIAH MEMORY**

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2.

Photocopy the work sheet (located in craft book) onto card stock and cut out each square. Mix up the squares, and place them face down on the center of the table in six columns and four rows. The first child may turn over two cards to see if they match. The name (for example, "Jesus") should match its significance or meaning ("The Lord saves"). If the cards do not match, the child must turn them face down in their original locations. Play continues clockwise to the next player. When a child successfully matches two cards, he picks up the cards and places them in his own pile. That child may continue playing as long as he continues to find matches. At the end of the game (when all the cards have been successfully matched), the child with the most cards in his pile wins. To play again, simply mix up the cards and reset them on the table. Use this activity to help the children remember the importance of the names given to Jesus in this lesson and to introduce them to the additional names for Christ given throughout the New Testament.



CHRISTMAS LESSON 5

The Wise Men worship Jesus

MATTHEW 2:1-18



The Magi understood that Jesus is the Messiah.



“And going into the house they saw the Child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh” (Matt 2:11).

Supporting Truths

1. Jesus is the Messiah.
2. Because Jesus is the Messiah, He is to be worshiped.
3. As the Messiah, Jesus is God, man, ruler, and suffering sacrifice.
4. Jesus is the Messiah of all people, weak or powerful, Jew or Gentile.
5. Because Jesus is the Messiah, He was protected by God until the right time.

Objectives

1. List three ways this story proves that Jesus is the Messiah.
2. Compare the three different responses to the birth of Jesus.
3. Explain how Micah’s prophecy and the three gifts teach us about the King.
4. Point out that the Magi were foreigners and rich, educated, powerful people.
5. Notice that neither the people nor the places in this story were impressive.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

The Wise Men worship Jesus • Matthew 2:1–18



Lesson Summary

When Jesus was born, Magi from the east saw a star announcing His birth and came to worship Him and give Him gifts. But Herod did not share their excitement. Because he loved to be king, he hated the Messiah and in his anger slaughtered all the infants in and around Bethlehem. However, God protected the Messiah by warning Joseph to flee to Egypt with the Child and His mother Mary.

Spotlight on the Gospel

The right response to Jesus is to bow before Him in worship and great joy, just like the Magi. The wrong response is to be like Herod, who wanted to be in charge so much that he hated Jesus, or to be like the religious leaders, who didn't seem to care at all about Jesus. If we want to be saved from our sins, we cannot resist or ignore Jesus.

TWO WEEKS AGO



God sends John the Baptist

*Luke 1:5–25, 57–67,
76–7*

LAST WEEK



God announces the Messiah's birth

*Matthew 1:18–25;
Luke 1:26–38*

THIS WEEK



The Wise Men worship Jesus

Matthew 2:1–18

A SAVIOR IS BORN

Lesson Commentary

The Magi understood that Jesus is the Messiah.

Matthew wrote especially to Jews to show Jesus was the Messiah that they had been expecting. He especially emphasized the kingly role of the Messiah. So he began with a genealogy to show that Jesus was in the royal line of David as prophesied (Matt 1:1–17; 2 Sam 7:8–16). Then Matthew showed that Jesus' miraculous virgin birth fulfilled Isaiah's 700 year old prophecy (1:18–25). Now, in chapter 2, Matthew continues to prove that Jesus is the King through the worship and gifts of the Magi, the fulfillment of seemingly contradictory prophecies, and Herod's failed attempt to murder baby Jesus.

The Magi saw a star and came to Jerusalem (2:1–8)

The Magi who came to honor Jesus were from the east. They are often called **wise men** because they were highly educated in all kinds of knowledge, especially in astrology (studying the stars to predict the future). Because of their learning, they were the chief advisors to the kings of Babylon and later of Persia (cf. Jer 39:3). Daniel became the leader of the Magi (Dan 2:48), and since Nebuchadnezzar and Darius both honored Daniel's God (Dan 4:37; 6:25–27), it is likely that the Magi also learned about the true God and anointed Prince whom Daniel foretold (Dan 9:25) from him and from the other Jews who stayed in Babylon.

The Magi continued to exercise religious and political power even after Alexander the Great defeated the Persian Empire around 330 BC. When the Parthian Empire arose around 247 BC as a sort of new Persia, the Magi were close advisors to the kings and strongly influenced who would be king. So their arrival emphasized that the new Child was to be a special king, someone worth making a long journey to honor.

The Magi came because they saw a star, specifically, "His star" (Matt 2:2). Balaam had prophesied that a star and a scepter would rise from Jacob (Num 24:17). Since the star was able to move directly over a specific house (Matt 2:9), it may have been the shining glory of God rather than an actual star, like the pillar of fire leading the Israelites through the wilderness (Ex 13:21), or like Jesus Himself as the bright morning star in His glory (Rev 22:16). To pagans, unusual movement of stars (meteors or planets) were often seen as signs of great things about to happen. The sign of the star confirms that Jesus was born to be King, both of the Jews and of the whole world.

The Magi came to Herod at Jerusalem, the place they would have expected the King of the Jews to be born. But Herod was troubled because he was afraid that someone might replace him as king. He even killed his own sons when he thought they were plotting against him. Herod's troubled reaction shows that he took serious the claim that this Child was born to be King.

Herod knew that the "King of the Jews" was the **Messiah**, so he found out where the Messiah was to be born (2:4). There was no dispute: according to Micah's prophecy, He would be born

in Bethlehem (2:5–6; Mic 5:2). Bethlehem was the hometown of David (1 Sam 16:1) and was known as the city of David (Luke 2:4), so the Messiah's birth in this town emphasized His right to rule as the Son of David. Micah's prophecy adds that the Messiah would be a Ruler, and the religious leaders added that He would shepherd the people Israel (Matt 2:6). Although a shepherd is one who gently cares for His sheep (Isa 40:11), the same word for shepherd is also used to describe Jesus ruling with a rod of iron (Rev 19:15). The religious leaders knew that the Messiah was to be the supreme King.

THINK ABOUT IT
It was long predicted that the Messiah would be a real man who was born among men, sent to save and rule men.



STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

The Wise Men worship Jesus • Matthew 2:1–18



Unfortunately, neither Herod nor the religious leaders submitted to Jesus as King. Herod tried to trick the Magi in order to kill Jesus (Matt 2:7–8, 16). The religious leaders didn't care enough to do anything. They eventually became His enemies because those who do not submit to Jesus as King eventually turn against Him (12:30).



THINK ABOUT IT

The magi worshiped the Child, not the Child's mother, because only Jesus is worthy of adoration.

The Magi worshiped Jesus (2:9–12)

Only the Magi, foreigners, worshiped the King of the Jews (2:11). They were so eager to worship Jesus that they “rejoiced exceedingly with great joy” when

they came to Jesus' house (Matt 2:9–10). They proved their devotion with gifts fit for a king. Gold was a sign of royalty (Ps 21:3). **Frankincense** was very expensive incense made from tree sap. When burned in the temple, the sweet smelling smoke symbolized prayers rising up to God (Ex 30:7, 34). So frankincense was a sign of the Child's deity. **Myrrh** was a valuable perfume also made from tree sap; it was used for many things, including pain relief (Mark 15:23) and burials (John 19:39). Myrrh was a sign that Jesus was a man who would suffer and die. As these powerful Magi bowed and offered gifts, they showed that Jesus was King over all.

Joseph and his family fled to Egypt to escape Herod's massacre (2:13–18)

After an angel warned the Magi to leave without going back to Herod, he also warned Joseph to flee with his family to Egypt (Matt 2:13). Joseph obeyed, leaving for Egypt while it was still night. (2:14–15). Since he was very poor (Luke 2:24), he may have used the gifts of the Magi to help pay for the journey and the stay in Egypt. They stayed in Egypt until Herod died, which probably wasn't more than a few months, since Jesus was born at the very end of Herod's reign.

Another prophecy was fulfilled when Herod brutally murdered all the infants in and around Bethlehem (Matt 2:16–18; Jer 31:15). Again, this prophecy was fulfilled as a type, since Jeremiah was speaking of the grief in Israel caused by Babylon's conquest. Rachel weeping at Ramah represented grief over all Israel when the Babylonians gathered the Jews at Ramah to be exiled (Jer 40:1). Herod's massacre fulfilled this as another instance of mothers weeping for their children. However, it also pictured the beginning of Israel's rejection of their Messiah, for which they would suffer greatly (Luke 19:41–44).

Matthew wrote to call the Israelites back to their Messiah, just as Jeremiah's prophecy about weeping also offered hope of return to the Lord (Jer 31:16). God's promise is still secure: the Deliverer will save all Israel by removing Israel's sins (Rom 11:26–27). Although God's promise cannot be broken (Rom 11:29), the Jews of Jesus' time did not get to enjoy the promise, for the promise can only be received by faith (Rom 4:16). In the story of the Magi, those who were close to Jesus rejected their King, while those who were far away came and worshiped. It is easy for us to be close to the knowledge of Jesus at church and in Sunday school and still refuse to bow before Him as King. But that is what we must do, because the story of the Magi reminds us that truly wise men recognize Jesus is the King of kings (Rev 19:16).

THINK ABOUT IT

Before the Messiah could even speak He was worshipped by some and rejected by others.



Lesson Outline

The Magi understood that Jesus is the Messiah.

AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE



1. The Magi saw a star and came to find Jesus (2:1–8).
2. The Magi gave Jesus three presents to worship Him as King (2:9–12).
3. Joseph took Jesus and Mary to Egypt to get away from wicked King Herod (2:13–18).

AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE



1. The Magi saw a star and came to Jerusalem (2:1–8).
 - Magi from the east saw a star that indicated the birth of the King of the Jews (2:1–2).
 - King Herod was troubled and asked where the Messiah was to be born (2:3–4).
 - The priests quoted Micah, saying the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (2:5–6).
 - King Herod tried to trick the Magi into leading him to the Messiah (2:7–8).
2. The Magi worshiped Jesus (2:9–12).
 - The Magi followed the star to a house in Bethlehem with very great joy (2:9–10).
 - The Magi worshiped Jesus (2:11).
 - The Magi gave Him gold, frankincense, and myrrh (2:11).
3. Joseph and his family fled to Egypt to escape Herod's massacre (2:13–18).
 - An angel warned Joseph about Herod's plan to kill Jesus (2:13).
 - They fled to Egypt until Herod's death, fulfilling Hosea's prophecy (2:14–15).
 - Herod killed all the infant boys near Bethlehem, fulfilling Jeremiah's prophecy (2:16–18).





Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. Who came to worship Jesus?**
Magi, wise men from the east, came to worship Jesus because they saw His star.
- 2. Where was Jesus born?**
He was born in Bethlehem, the City of David, fulfilling Micah's prophecy.
- 3. What did the Magi give Jesus?**
They gave Him gold, frankincense, and myrrh.
- 4. Did Herod worship Jesus?**
No, he tried to kill Jesus, but an angel warned Joseph to flee to Egypt.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. Who came to worship Jesus?**
Magi, wise men from the east, came to worship Jesus.
- 2. Why did they come to find Him?**
They saw His star and knew that it meant that the King of the Jews had been born.
- 3. How did the people in Jerusalem respond to the Magi?**
Herod and all the people were troubled. Herod feared the Messiah would take away His kingdom.
- 4. How did the religious leaders know where the Messiah would be born?**
Micah had prophesied that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, the City of David.
- 5. What did the Magi do when they came to the house where Jesus lived?**
They were very happy, they bowed down to worship Jesus, and they gave Him gold, frankincense, and myrrh.
- 6. What did the three gifts show about Jesus?**
He is a King worthy of gold, God worthy of frankincense, and a man in need of myrrh for His suffering and death.
- 7. How did Jesus fulfill Hosea's prophecy about coming out of Egypt?**
Joseph took Jesus to Egypt to flee from Herod, then after Herod died they came back from Egypt, just like the people of Israel had come out of Egypt long ago.
- 8. How was Jeremiah's prophecy fulfilled by Herod's slaughter of the children?**
Mothers wept for their dead children, and there would also be grief over all of Israel for rejecting their Messiah.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



NATIVITY SCENE

It is always fun for the children to play with nativity figures. Bring in several sets, and let them act out what they will be hearing in the Bible lesson.

FOLLOW THE STAR

Stick some glow-in-the-dark stars securely to the floor so that they do not move. Lay several strands of Christmas lights along the outside of the stars, like a path. Turn the lights off in the classroom. Line up the children, with the first child using a flashlight to guide the others along the trail of stars. Have the children pretend to be wise men following the path of stars. Alternate the leader so that they all have the opportunity to use the flashlight and guide the line of happy wise-men.



FOLLOWING THE STAR

Cut out a large star from a piece of poster board. Decorate it with bright colors, glitter, or shiny wrapping paper. Securely attach the star to the top of a yardstick. During the lesson when teaching children about the wise men who followed the star, lift up the star high above your head and tell the children to follow its movement with their eyes as you move it across the room.

WISE MEN IN ROBES

Select a number of children to play different parts in today's Bible lesson. Use sheets and robes for the costumes. Give each wise man a gift to leave with the baby Jesus when he visits. Narrate the lesson, and help the children act out the story. You may wish to tell a part of the story several times so that many children can participate.



FOLLOWING THE STAR TO THE SAVIOR

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2.

Materials: Paper, scissors, glue, and crayons.

Directions: Before class, cut out the pictures, maze, and verse from the craft sheet. During class, have the children color the pictures. Help them glue the magi on the left side of a sheet of paper, Jesus and Mary on the right side, the maze in the middle, and the verse centered at the bottom. Explain why the magi want to follow the star in order to see Jesus as you help the children navigate through the maze. (Be sure to orient the maze correctly for the beginning and end of the maze to be on the sides).



Following the Star to the Savior
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2

TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

The Wise Men worship Jesus • Matthew 2:1–18



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

SMELLING CENTER

In small plastic containers, place scented items or cotton balls soaked with scented liquids. Let children take turns smelling and identifying the smells. Let them vote on which smells they like best. Some suggestions include: perfume or cologne, vanilla, peppermint, spices, chocolate, a sliced orange, bubble bath, soap, and leather. In today's Bible lesson, some wise men travel from far away to bring the King of the Jews gifts of sweet-smelling oils and incense. Jesus was the King of the Jews.

CHRISTMAS CHAIN OF CHRIST'S NAMES, WEEK FIVE

Add to the chain from previous weeks the title "King of the Jews."



ILLUSTRATE

GIFT ROLLS

Cover a cardboard tube (or toilet-paper roll) with wrapping paper. Next, gather one end of the paper and tie it together with a ribbon. Fill the tube with candy, and then gather the other end of the wrapping paper and tie it with a ribbon. During the lesson, explain that some rich wise men traveled a long distance to bring gifts to the promised King of Israel. They brought their gifts to Jesus. Give each child a gift roll to bring home.

VISIT FROM WISE MEN

Dress up as a wise man (bathrobe, gift, etc.) and tell the children about your journey and why you came so far to worship Jesus. Allow the children to ask questions about your trip, dress, and job as a wise man.



APPLY

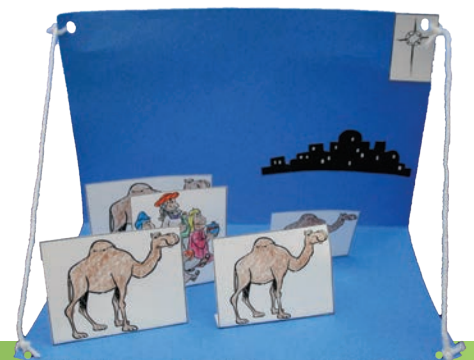
JOURNEY TO THE SAVIOR

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2.

Materials: Blue construction paper, scissors, glue, crayons, white string, and hole punch.

Directions: Cut out the magi, camels, star, and Bethlehem silhouette from the craft sheet. Color the magi and camels. Fold the bottom portion of the magi and camels along the dark line. Place glue on the bottom of these pieces and place the pictures on the lower half of a folded sheet of blue construction paper. On the upper half, glue the city and the star. Finally, punch holes in all four corners of the paper and tie string through them.

*Journey to the Savior
See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2*



AGES 9–11



THE MOVEMENT OF STARS

Tell the children that some modern theorists believe that the special star at the time of Jesus' birth was a natural event, such as a supernova or conjunction of planets. However, tell them that a better theory that aligns with the biblical story is that the star was a supernatural reality similar to the Shekinah glory that guided the Israelites in the days of Moses (refer to Exodus 13:20–22). Emphasize that our Creator could easily make a new star and sovereignly control it to move as a guiding light for the wise men. Furthermore, He could cause the star to remain in that position without moving (cf. Josh 10:1–15). It is very possible that the special star seen by the magi moved in the same direction and speed of the earth's rotation so that it appeared to stand still over Jesus' birthplace.

GIFTS THAT TEACH, PART ONE

Bring in gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Allow the children to look at these items. Explain that in today's lesson we will learn how each gift represented something special about Jesus.



A LONG JOURNEY

Obtain a map that shows the Parthia Empire and Jerusalem/Bethlehem during the 1st century BC. Use this map to show the children the distance the Magi may have traveled to worship Jesus. If the Magi were from Parthia, then they would have traveled around 725 miles following the star from Parthia to Bethlehem to worship Jesus. For comparison, this is about the same distance it is from New York City to Atlanta, Georgia (750 miles) or San Francisco, California to Seattle, Washington (800 miles).

GIFTS THAT TEACH, PART TWO

Use the gold, frankincense, and myrrh during your lesson to show the children which gifts the wise men gave to Jesus. Explain the significance of each gift: (1) The gold was a sign of royalty, signifying that Jesus is king; (2) The frankincense was very expensive incense and signified Jesus' deity; (3) The myrrh was a valuable perfume used for burials and signified that Jesus was a man who would suffer and die.



SCENES FROM THE JOURNEY

Divide the class into 4 groups. Each group will reenact one of the 4 scenes from today's lesson: (1) Journey from the East (Matt 2:1), (2) Jerusalem (2:2–8), (3) Bethlehem (2:9–12), and (4) Egypt (2:13–15). Bring in props for the children to use during their scene. Reenact the scenes in order of the story to help children review and remember the lesson. Award a prize to the group that does the best job reenacting their portion of the story.