

God's Son

Big Idea *Jesus, God's special Son, came to live on earth.*

Bible Passage *An Angel Visits Joseph—Matthew 1:18-25*

Lesson Summary

Jesus' birth was extraordinary in every way. Matthew's account of the incarnation tells us the story from Joseph's point of view.

Jesus' mother, Mary, was engaged to Joseph. In Jewish culture at that time, an engaged couple had already taken public vows and was legally bound—almost as in marriage. Only a formal divorce could break these vows.

When Joseph learned of Mary's pregnancy, there was only one conclusion Joseph could humanly come to—Mary had been unfaithful to him. Unfaithfulness during this period of engagement was considered adultery. The penalty, according to Jewish law, was death.

Joseph did have the option of divorce—either through formal legal action, or simply by presenting Mary with a writ in front of two witnesses.

As Joseph weighed his options, God introduced a third way to deal with this situation. During the night, an angel spoke to Joseph in a dream. God offered Joseph words of comfort and direction. Joseph could take Mary into his home as his wife—Mary's pregnancy was not the result of unfaithfulness, but the product of the Holy Spirit. God's Son, Jesus, was coming to save people from sin.

Joseph obeyed God in everything the angel had told him. Mary became Joseph's wife by moving into Joseph's home, ending the betrothal period. The marriage was not consummated until after Jesus was born. Joseph named the child "Jesus," a rather common Jewish name at the time, meaning "Salvation of Jehovah." Matthew refers to Isaiah 7:14 when he indicates that Jesus would be called "Emmanuel" meaning "God with us."

Pray for Wisdom

Father, thank You for sending Your special Son Jesus to live here on earth. Continue showing me new areas of Your incredible plan to draw all people to Yourself through Your Son. May the busyness of this season not distract me from the joy I have in sharing the life of Christ with those You bring into my life.

Please prepare the hearts and minds of these little children so they will truly receive Your Word. In Jesus' precious name, amen.



DISCIPLE TARGETS

In this lesson, children will...

KNOW (knowledge)

- An angel told Joseph to name Mary's Baby "Jesus."

FEEL (character)

- Thankful that Jesus came to live on earth.

DO (conduct)

- Tell their friends that Jesus, God's Son, was born at Christmastime.

SUPPLIES ✓

General Supplies

- Bibles, Disciple Guide pages
- Pencils, markers, crayons
- Paper, scissors, tape, glue

Welcome & Worship Time

- CENTER TIME: CD player, Christmas music, play-dough, angel-shaped cookie cutters, play kitchen, small broom and mop, baby dolls, blankets, cribs

Bible Time

- Teaching Image (back cover)—God's Son
- SNACK—applesauce or pudding
- A SPECIAL BABY: none

Disciple Time

- Puppets (optional)

Welcome & Worship Time

Teacher—Welcome each child warmly. Encourage children to bring their offerings to the Lord.

If you have one, bring a Nativity scene and have it available for the children to view or manipulate. Remind them that Jesus was born at Christmastime.

Learn By Doing—Center Time

(For alternate ideas to introduce this lesson, refer to the *Additional “Learn by Doing” Activities* on page 4.)

Supplies: CD player, Christmas music; for the play-dough center—play-dough, angel-shaped cookie cutters; for the home center—play kitchen with food and dishes, small broom and mop; for the baby doll center—baby dolls, blankets, cribs

Set up three centers for the children to choose from. Have them flatten out the play-dough and cut out angel shapes at the play dough center. At the home center have them prepare a meal and clean the house to get ready for a new baby to come. Have them wrap up and gently hold baby dolls in the baby doll center. Tell them they will be hearing a story about an angel, a special Baby, and getting ready for the special Baby.

Sing With Joy

Move the children to worship with a favorite song. Select one below or use a preschool songbook or recording.

- *Joy To the World* (hymn)
- *Away In A Manger* (traditional)
- *Go Tell It On the Mountain* (traditional)
- *Jesus, Jesus* (praise chorus)

Rehearse the Verse

Have the children sit in a circle. Have one or more baby dolls wrapped in a blanket for children to hold. As the group says the Bible words together, pass the doll around the circle with each child having a chance to briefly rock the doll to the rhythm of the words.

Matthew 1:21—*“Mary had a Baby and named Him Jesus.”*

Seek God's Blessing

Talk with God about your time together with the children today, about the Bible story, and about any special needs.

As you pray, use meaningful and simple words from your heart. The children will learn to pray by listening to you.

Bible Time

Teacher—Bring your preschoolers to the Lord. Encourage them to apply Biblical truths in practical ways.

Tell the Truth

Open your Bible to the passage and place it on your lap. (The Bible story is printed on page 3.)

The story, *Jesus is Born*, is based on Matthew 1:18-25. It captures the interest and attention of older preschool children. If you are teaching younger preschoolers, you may want to use the shorter *Summary/Review*.

Before you tell the story, teach the children the sign language for the name Jesus. Point to the palm of one hand with the middle finger of the other hand and then repeat pointing to the palm of the other hand.

Talk and Snack

Consider serving snacks that a baby might eat such as applesauce or pudding. Put the food into individual cups, and provide plastic spoons for the children to use. Remind them that Jesus came to the world as a little Baby and might have eaten food like this when he was very little.

While you eat, talk about the Bible story. These questions will help you get started.

- What wonderful thing happened to Mary?
- Who became Mary's husband?
- What did the angel tell Joseph to name the Baby?
- Whom did Jesus come to be with?

Play and Move

Have the children play this game based on the game “Duck, Duck, Goose.” Have the children sit in a circle. Choose one child to be “it.” “It” should walk around the outside of the circle gently tapping each child on the head as he or she says the word “special.” After tapping several children, “it” should say the name of one child as he or she taps that child. That child will immediately stand up and shout the name of the child who is “it.” Repeat with a new child being “it.”

Disciple Guide pages

Retell the story of Jesus' birth as the kids draw a line along the path with a pencil. As an additional activity, add art supplies for your students to glue in place on each picture. You can use fabric scraps to be a blanket over Joseph, and foil to decorate the angel's wings. Use fake fur or felt on the donkey, yarn for his tail and halter, star stickers in the night sky above the inn, and straw in the manger with Baby Jesus.

Learn By Doing—A Special Baby

(For alternate ideas to reinforce the Bible story, refer to the *Additional “Learn by Doing” Activities* on page 4.)

Teach this finger play based on the Bible story to your children. Have them repeat the lines after you and follow your movements. Hold up one hand and touch the indicated fingers with the index finger of the other hand as you say the lines.

- Thumb—“This is God, who loves us so much.”
- Index Finger—“This is the angel, who told the special Name.”
- Middle Finger—“This is Mary, who would be the special mother.”
- Ring Finger—“This is Joseph, who gave Him the Name.”
- Little Finger—“And this is Jesus, the special Baby from God.”

Bible Story—God’s Son (based on Matthew 1:18-25)

Long ago, a young woman named Mary was happy and excited. Soon she would marry a man named Joseph!

Joseph was a good man. Joseph loved God very much. More than anything else, Joseph wanted to obey God.

Joseph and Mary didn’t know it yet, but the Lord had a special plan for them. God was going to send His only Son to live on earth. God’s Son would need a mommy and daddy to help Him grow. God’s Son would need a family to help Him learn about God. God’s Son would need parents who loved God very much.

God knew that Joseph and Mary loved Him. So He chose them to take care of His Son.

One day, God sent an angel to visit Mary. The angel told Mary, “You are going to have a special Baby. The Baby will be God’s Son.” Mary was excited. She told Joseph what had happened.

But Joseph was afraid. He didn’t know what to do. Joseph loved Mary very much. But most of all, Joseph wanted to do what was right. He was a good man.

One night, God sent an angel to visit Joseph. “Don’t be afraid, Joseph,” the angel said. “Mary is going to have a Baby—God’s special Son. God is sending His only Son to earth so that people can be friends with Him forever! Joseph, God wants Mary to be your wife. When the Baby is born, you will name Him ‘Jesus.’”

Then the angel left.

Joseph thought about these things. He remembered that God had promised long ago to send His Son. First, the Lord had sent an angel to tell Mary. Now, God had sent an angel

Pray for People

Thank God that Jesus came to live on earth. Ask Him to help your students tell their friends that Jesus was born at Christmastime.

to tell him. The time had finally come! God’s Son was finally coming! God wanted Joseph to take care of Mary and this special Baby.

Soon Joseph and Mary had a wedding. They waited and waited for the Baby to come. One night, after they had traveled all the way to Bethlehem, God’s Son, Baby Jesus, was born!

What an amazing night it was! A bright star lit up the sky for miles around. Angels on the hillsides sang praises to God! Shepherds came to worship the Baby! Joseph and Mary loved Baby Jesus very much.

They knew that Jesus was not just any Baby. Jesus was God’s special Son. But God didn’t send Jesus just for Mary and Joseph. God didn’t send Jesus just for the people who lived long ago. God sent Jesus for everyone.

God’s Son (Summary/Review)

An angel came to Joseph with an important message. “Mary is going to have a Baby—God’s special Son,” the angel said. “Joseph, God wants Mary to be your wife. When the Baby is born, you will name Him ‘Jesus.’”

God had promised long ago to send His Son. The time had finally come! God wanted Joseph to take care of Mary and this special Baby.

Soon, Mary and Joseph were married. One night, after they had traveled all the way to Bethlehem, Mary’s Baby was born! Joseph looked at his sweet wife and the beautiful Baby in the manger. “His name is ‘Jesus,’” Joseph told her.

Joseph and Mary knew that Jesus was not just any Baby. Jesus was God’s special Son.

Additional Learn By Doing Activities

Both *Learn by Doing* sections in this lesson include a suggested learning activity. However, you may want to substitute one or more of the activities below to capture the specific interests and needs of your children.

Select activities based on the ages of your children, their learning style preferences, and their developmental needs.

Coloring Page

Provide copies of the reproducible Bible story picture for this lesson on the inside back cover of the packet.

Birth Announcements

Supplies: blank birth announcements, markers or crayons, miscellaneous baby theme stickers

Make a birth announcement for Jesus for each of your children. Before class fill in the place and date of Jesus' birth on the announcement. If you think your children are able, write "Jesus" on a board and have your children copy it onto their announcement in the spot for the child's name. Have them decorate the card with stickers and markers. Read the announcement to them and remind them that Jesus, God's Son, was born at Christmastime.

Baby Book

Supplies: construction paper, white paper, markers, crayons, scissors, old Christmas cards, stickers

Before class, cut pictures from old Christmas cards that go with the Bible story. Create baby books for Jesus by making small booklets from several half-sheets of white paper and a construction paper cover. Let the children decorate the cover and then glue pictures on the inside reviewing the Bible story elements: Mary, Joseph, the angel, and Jesus' birth. If you have older children who can write, tell them

the letters in Jesus' name and have them write it on the cover of the book. Have them give the book to a friend to tell that Jesus was born at Christmas.

Away in a Manger

Help your children do the motions for the song *Away In A Manger*.

Away in a manger (fold arms as if holding a baby, rock back and forth)
No crib for a bed, (shake head "no")
The little Lord Jesus lay down His sweet head. (put hands together on one cheek and lean head over)

The stars in the sky (put hands over head and open and shut fingers)
Looked down where He lay, (put one hand over eyes and look down)
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay. (put hands together on one cheek and lean head over)

Glorious Angel

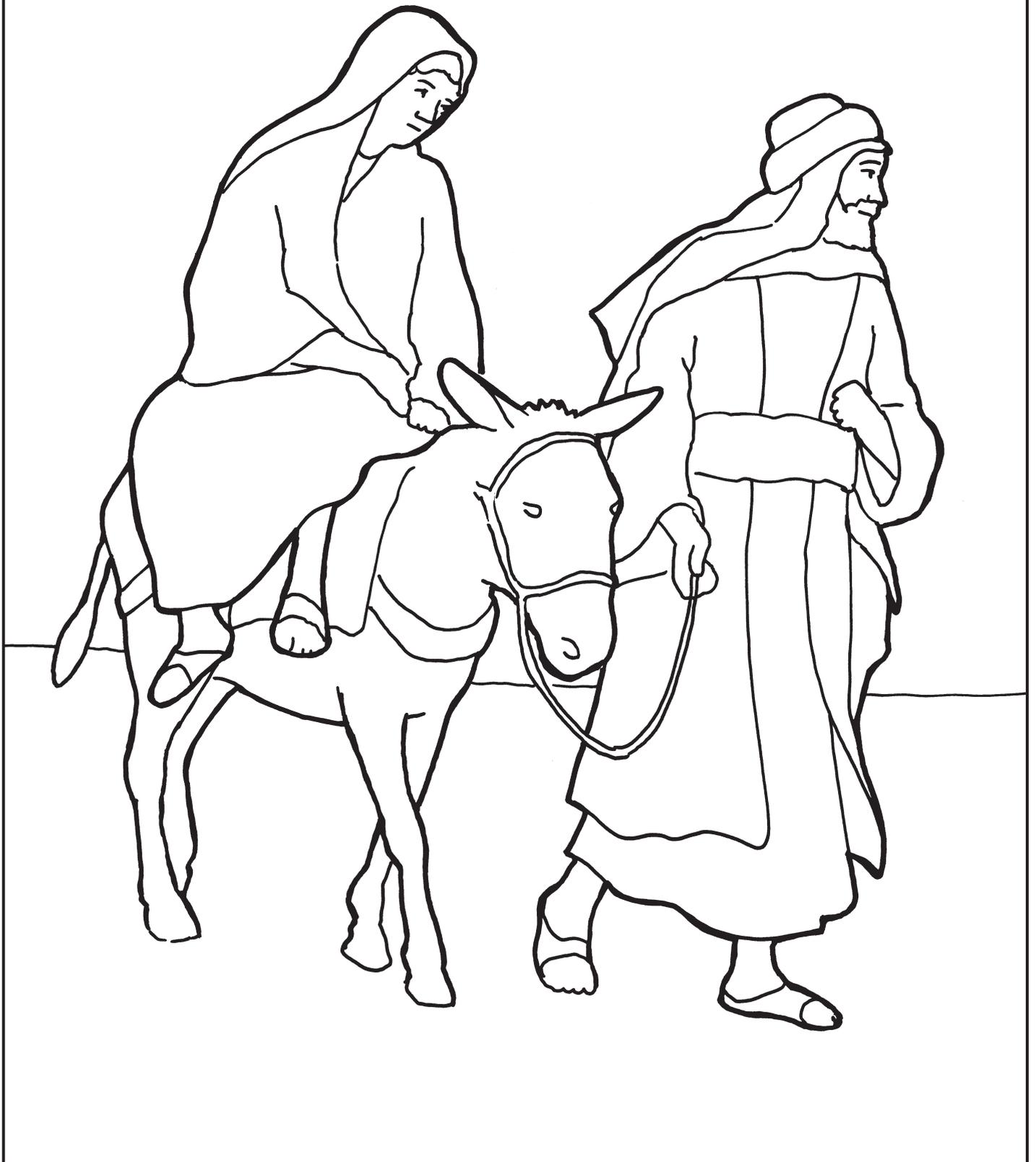
Supplies: simple angel figure, (see sample) heavy paper or card stock, small pieces of gold and silver foil paper, pieces of paper doilies, glue sticks

Give each child an angel figure cut from heavy paper or card stock. Allow him or her to glue pieces of the foil paper and doilies all over the angel. Talk with them about what the angel said to Joseph, and encourage them to use the angel as a reminder to tell others about Jesus.

Special Names

Supplies: blank certificates, markers, book of baby names with meanings, gold foil seals (optional)

Create a certificate for each child, adding the child's name. Then, write the meaning of the child's name. If possible, before class ask parents if there is some reason the child's name was chosen, such as being named after a family member or to reflect cultural heritage. If you are able to get that information, add it at the bottom of the certificate. Allow the children to decorate the certificate. Gather the children together and tell each child's name and its meaning to the group. Remind them that an angel told Joseph what to name the Baby. As an option, you may have the children add a gold foil sticker to one corner of the certificate.



An Angel Visits Joseph



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