



Mustard Seed Children's Lesson Summary for December 20, 2009
Released on Wednesday, December 13, 2009

"Jesus' Birth" (Christmas)

Lesson Text: Matthew 1:18-25

Background Scripture: Matthew 1:18-25

Memory Verse: "She shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

Matthew 1:18–25

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.

20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

THE OBJECT IN VIEW:

Teach that God sent Jesus into the world for the purpose of being our Saviour.

TRUTHS TO STRESS:

1. Jesus' name tells why God sent Him.
2. Jesus' name ("the Lord saves") reminds us of who He is.
3. Because of who Jesus is, we will want to always use His name carefully.

PLANNING LESSON AIDS:

For Telling the Lesson, bring to class pictures to represent Joseph and Mary, an angel, and a manger scene. Also take the following signs: "Immanuel," "God with us," "Jesus," and "The Lord Saves."

For Helping to Remember, cut sheets of light blue construction paper lengthwise into three strips. Each student will need one strip. Print "JESUS" in large hollow block capital letters, at least ¼-inch wide across each strip.

Students will also need crayons and gummed stars. Plan to have on hand an extra supply of red and green crayons.

For the lesson activity, make a copy of the Word Search for each student.

TEACHER'S NOTES:

Time: 6 or 5 B.C.

Place: Nazareth

Last week's lesson highlighted who Jesus was. The focus this week shifts to why He came. In last week's Bible lesson, Mary learned that her baby would be the Son of the Most High. In this week's lesson Joseph learns that Mary's baby came through the Holy Spirit, but he is told something else too. He is told *why* the marvel of the incarnation was happening.

Prior to this lesson, we do not know how Mary's fiancé learned of her pregnancy. It is likely Mary herself told him of Gabriel's appearance to her. She would certainly let him know what the angel said.

However he heard and whatever he thought of her story, Joseph was upset and confused. In that culture, the engagement period was considered as binding as marriage. Joseph was a righteous man (Matthew 1:19). If Mary had been unfaithful, he should divorce her. On the other hand, he loved her, and he did not want to publicly disgrace her. Perhaps, he thought, he could just give her a bill of divorcement and quietly end the relationship. We are not told how long "he thought on these things" (v. 20).

Joseph carried the problem to bed with him one night, and God used a dream to give him the right solution. An angel appeared to him, saying, "Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife" (Matthew 1:20). Her child would be a son, the angel said, even adding that He was to be named Jesus. Why was that important?

You may want to remind the children at this point that last week they heard a *who* lesson. Who was Jesus? He was God's Son. He was Immanuel. He was God with us. This week's lesson is a *why* lesson. Why did God want Him called Jesus and not something else? Why not some other name like John or Peter or David?

The angel in Joseph's dream went on to explain why: "for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

The meaning behind certain Bible names is most interesting. Both the name "Jesus" and its Old Testament counterpart, "Joshua," mean "God is salvation," or "the Lord saves." Thus, even before Jesus was born, God made known the purpose of His coming. Yes, He would someday be an earthly king, as Gabriel told Mary (Luke 1:32-33), but His greater purpose in coming would be to deal with humanity's sin problem. God let it be known that salvation would not be the product of man's efforts. God would bring it Himself. For that reason the Saviour, God the Son, must be named "Jesus," "the Lord saves."

BEGINNING THE LESSON:

Welcome to Sunday school! Have you noticed that for a while we have been talking about the news different people brought to other people in Bible times?

One lesson was about Isaiah. Remember him? God sent Isaiah to the palace one day with some news for King Ahaz. It was surprising news too. You probably remember what the surprising news was. A woman would someday have a special baby boy. He would be a baby so special that He would not need a human father.

Later on, God's angel took almost the same news to the woman who would be the baby's mother. What was the woman's name? And again, what was the angel's surprising news? Almost the same news Isaiah told the king. She would be the mother of the extra special baby God had said was coming.

There was one part of the angel's news that Mary could not understand, though. Who remembers what that part was? (Wait for the answer, giving hints if necessary.) Mary just

could not understand how she could ever be the mother of this special baby since she had no one to be the baby's father. That was when the angel told her that God Himself would be the promised baby's Father.

Well, this week's lesson is all about somebody else who heard news from God and what he did about it.

TELLING THE LESSON:

Joseph and Mary would soon have a wedding. (Show Joseph and Mary.) Then she would be his wife, and they could be together. As Joseph thought about that, he must have been a very happy man.

But then he heard some news that did *not* make him happy. He heard about the baby Mary was going to have. Now, we do not know how he found out. Maybe Mary told him herself. Anyway, he was upset because now he thought there could be no wedding after all. He loved Mary, but he wanted to please God too. He thought and thought of what might be the best thing to do.

Well, you know how it is when you keep thinking and thinking about something important. Sometimes you even dream about it. God brought a dream to Joseph.

Joseph had a dream one night, and in his dream he saw an angel. (Show angel.) The angel knew his name.

"Joseph," the angel said, "do not be afraid to take Mary to be your wife. Her baby is from God. Her baby will be a boy, and you must name Him Jesus."

Why, that is just what Isaiah told King Ahaz! No, not quite. Isaiah used a different name for Jesus. Isaiah called Him "Immanuel," and we learned that Immanuel is not just a pretty name. (Display and leave standing "Immanuel" and the other signs as they are mentioned.) The name "Immanuel" means "God with us." (Display "God with Us.")

Then the angel went on to tell Joseph *why* the baby must be named Jesus. "Call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." You see, the name "Jesus" means something too. (Display "Jesus.") "Jesus" means "the Lord saves." (Display "The Lord Saves.")

Now I think you may know why the angel would say His name had to be Jesus. (Point to "Jesus.") It was because of what Jesus was going to do.

Jesus was coming into the world to grow up and save people from their sins. (Point to "The Lord Saves.") By dying on the cross, He would make a way for people to have their sins taken away.

How could somebody's dying on a cross do something as important as that? It is because of who Jesus is. He is Immanuel, remember. (Point to "Immanuel.") He is God with us. (Point to "God with Us.")

Joseph woke up from his dream. He thought about his strange dream, and he decided he would do just what God's angel told him. So Joseph and Mary had their wedding. (Show Joseph and Mary.) After a while, when Joseph had to travel to Bethlehem, Mary went with him, and it was while they were in Bethlehem that Jesus was born.

When they arrived in Bethlehem, there was no room in the place where all the other travelers were staying. So Mary's special baby - Jesus, Immanuel, "God with us" (Point to each sign.) - was born in a stable where the donkeys and other animals ate their hay. There was no crib in a stable either; so Mary wrapped Him up and let Him sleep in the manger (the animals' feeding box). That is where He was when the shepherds came looking for Him. (Show manger scene.)

And now, boys and girls, you have heard some news that most other people in the world still have not heard. You know where Jesus came from: God sent Him. You know what His name means: "the Lord saves." (Point to "The Lord Saves.") You know why He had to be called Jesus: because He came to save us from our sins. And you know who Jesus is: Immanuel, "God with us." (Point to "God with Us.")

TELLING HOW TO LIVE:

This lesson has a lot of very good news to hear. You have heard it. But have you believed it? It is true. What God says is always true. He cannot lie. God also says that if you will believe what He says about Jesus, He will give you the gift of eternal life - life that lasts forever with Him.

Christmas is a good time to think of why Jesus came into the world and what He did for you while He was here. We say thank you for Christmas gifts, and Christmas is a good time to once again say thank you to Jesus for taking the punishment that should have come to all of us.

HELPING TO REMEMBER:

Pass out the paper strips with "JESUS" that you have prepared. The children should color in the letters with green and then trim them with leaves and red holly berries. Provide each with a sprinkling of gummed stars to further beautify Jesus' name.

Provide each student with a copy of the Word Search for this lesson. As they search and find each word, they will be reminded of keywords and topics from the lesson.

EXPLAINING THE MEMORY VERSE:

"She shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

This is what an angel from God told Joseph. Mary would have a baby boy, and Joseph must call Him Jesus. That was because the name "Jesus" means "the Lord saves," and when Baby Jesus grew up, He would save people from their sins by dying for them.

CONCLUSION:

Mary and Joseph both showed themselves to be people of faith as they accepted the roles that God gave them in the birth of the Saviour. A baby boy was born to Mary, and Joseph named him JESUS. We have learned that the name "Jesus" focused on His special mission - He was to be the Saviour of the world. We also learned that He would be called "Immanuel" and this would tell of His special relationship with man - He would be God with us!

The special names of our Saviour should be our focus as we celebrate this Christmas season. But for most people, Christmas is just a time of presents and family get-togethers. Little attention is ever given to the real reason for all the celebration. Let's make Christmas a special time as we focus on Christ as the Saviour of the world, and as the Lord God who came to live among His people!

PRAYER:

Dear God, help us to rejoice and to magnify You as we remember the birth of Jesus. Thank You for sending Your Son to live with us and to be the Saviour of the world. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

ANTICIPATING THE NEXT LESSON:

Next week's lesson is "**Worshiping the King**" and will show how a special star led the wise men to Bethlehem after the birth of Jesus. Study Matthew 2:1-23.

LESSON SUMMARIZED BY:

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WORD SEARCH

"Jesus' Birth" (Matthew 1:18-25)

Find each of these keywords from the lesson:

BIRTH

SAVIOUR

BETHLEHEM

JOSEPH

SHEPHERDS

HOLY GHOST

MANGER

DREAM

CHRISTMAS

ANGEL

MARY

STABLE

NAME

PROPHET

IMMANUEL

JESUS

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