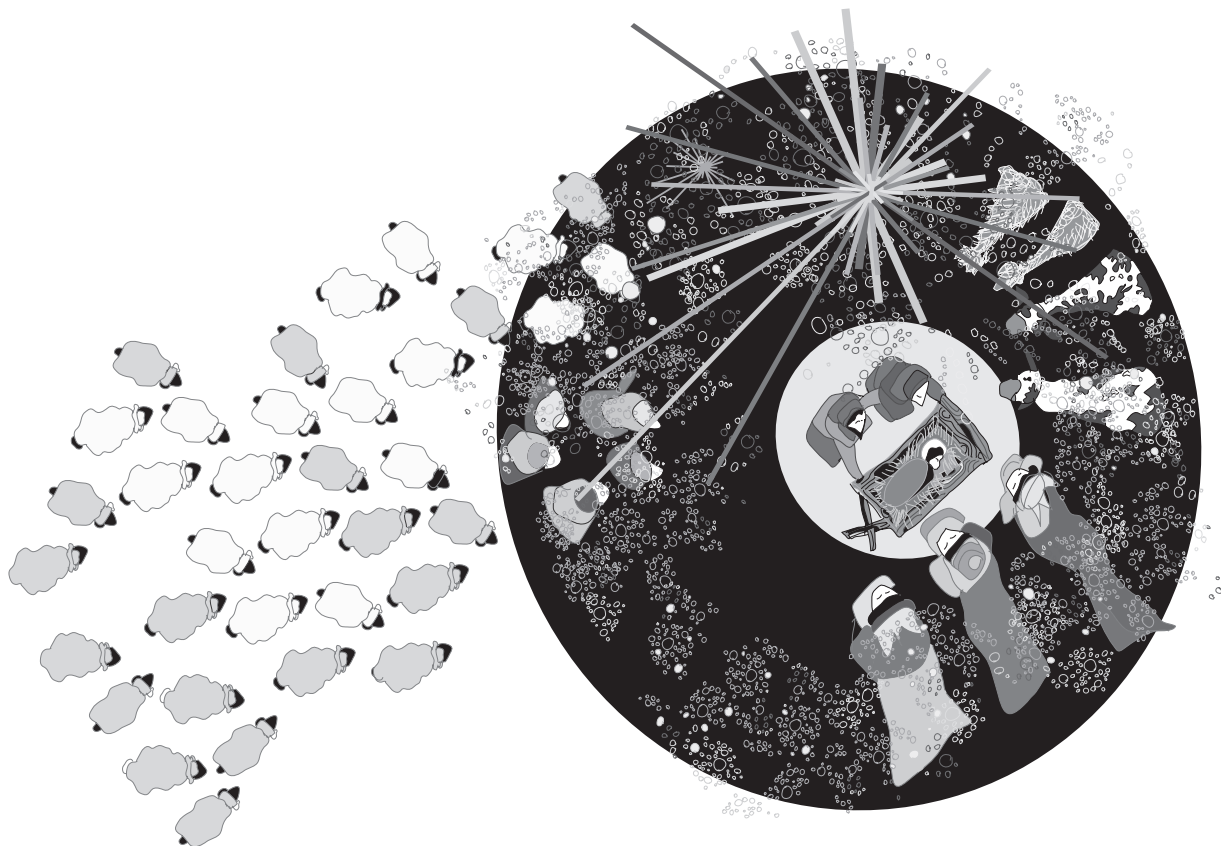


LESSON 2

The Birth of Jesus

LUKE 2:1-20



BIBLE TRUTH

IN THE FULLNESS OF TIME, GOD SENT FORTH HIS SON

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Luke 2:1–20 from the Scriptures or read story 80, “The Birth of Jesus,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

3. OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

Bring in the Magi

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ three adult volunteers
- ✓ costumes for three wise men—crowns (make out of cardboard and aluminum foil);
Christmas or other ornate tablecloths (for the wise men to drape over their shoulders)
- ✓ three Bibles

4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION

Select one of the object lessons to use to cover the teaching points.

5. OBJECT LESSON 2 20 MIN

A Sovereign Birth

6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

7. ACTIVITY TIME 15 MIN

Drawing Christmas

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ pencil and paper
- ✓ crayons or colored pencils

8. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON 20 MIN

The City of David

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper and pencil
- ✓ prizes for the winning team or teams

TOTAL 90 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

Mary and Joseph return to Bethlehem—God ordained the census to bring Mary to Bethlehem, where the Savior was to be born. At first glance it may appear to happen by chance. But that is not the case. Matthew recalls the words of the prophet Micah: “And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel” (Matthew 2:6). Paul tells us that Jesus was born at just the exact moment according to a predetermined plan. In Galatians 4:4 we read, “When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law.”

The angels appear to the shepherds—The angels announced the birth of Jesus to the shepherds. There were a lot of shepherds in Israel. Not only were sheep used for food and clothing, but also for sacrifices. It is interesting to note that the perfect sacrifice, Jesus the Lamb of God, would be first publicly announced to shepherds.

After hearing the heavenly choir of angels, the shepherds traveled to see the baby Jesus. When they arrived, the shepherds told those gathered there about what they had seen and heard. Mary treasured these things in her heart. Though she knew from her encounter with the angel Gabriel that this was going to be a special birth, Mary didn’t know exactly how it would unfold. How wonderfully blessed she must have felt as the shepherds recounted their story.

God’s plan is unstoppable—It was not long after Jesus was born that King Herod sought to destroy him (Matthew 2:13). Herod determined to eliminate the threat to his kingship, and he tried to discover where Jesus was so that he could kill the baby king. God’s plan to bring a savior to his people could not be stopped even by the actions of a powerful king. God warned the wise men to travel home by a different route and told Joseph to take his family to Egypt until Herod was dead.

Herod was so determined to destroy Jesus that he had all the baby boys two years old and younger killed. After a time, Herod died, and then an angel directed Joseph to bring Jesus back to Israel. In Hosea 11:1, the prophet foretold this: “Out of Egypt I called my son.” God was not surprised by Herod’s threats. Even those threats were a part of God’s predetermined, unstoppable plan.

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Savior

The angel called Jesus a Savior (Luke 2:11). This is one of only a few verses in the Gospels where Jesus is called Savior. A second verse is John 4:42 and a possible third reference to Jesus directly as Savior is by Mary in her song of praise (Luke 1:47). Mary declared this after visiting her relative Elizabeth who called her the mother of her Lord (Luke 1:43). Elizabeth's words indicated that the baby in Mary's womb was God. Later, in Paul's epistles Jesus is regularly referred to as the Savior (see Titus 3:4–7).

Where Is the Gospel? _____

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Though Jesus was King, he did not come in a full display of his glory, might, and power. Instead he came in humility that he might become a servant of all, dying on the cross for our sins. This humility was evident from his birth, where he was born in a stable and placed in a manger. Jesus gave up his glory to come to earth because he loved us. Later, he would die for our sins so we could be saved from the penalty of sin. Isn't it amazing that God himself came as a baby?

It was this baby that the wise men announced as the answer to the Old Testament prophecies (Matthew 2:5–6). The shepherds heard directly from heaven through the angels that the baby "wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger," was the Savior (Luke 2:12).

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Luke 2:1–20 from the Scriptures or read story 80, “The Birth of Jesus,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

Bring in the Magi

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ three adult volunteers
- ✓ costumes for three wise men—crowns (make out of cardboard and aluminum foil); Christmas or other ornate tablecloths (for the wise men to drape over their shoulders)
- ✓ three Bibles

Have the three volunteers dressed as wise men wait outside the classroom until you give them the signal to enter.

Explain to the class that you want to read the story of the wise men from Matthew 2, but you are hoping to really make it come alive. Have the wise men ready to burst into your class as soon as you start reading Matthew 2:2. Start reading Matthew 2:1, and then when you get to their question in verse 2, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?” raise your voice and shout the line as though you are pretending to be one of the wise men. That is the cue for your actors to enter the room. Then have them take over telling the story, each with a Bible. They can simply read through it, adding dramatized detail like “I wish I could have seen Herod’s face when he realized we had tricked him.”

Thank the wise men for coming to help you tell the story. Then ask the children what stands out to them in the story. Help them see how remarkable the story is: that the wise men would have been familiar enough with Old Testament prophecies to have grasped the significance of the star and followed it all the way to Bethlehem, carrying with them gifts worthy to bestow on a king, and that Jesus was a king worthy of worship.

TEACHING/DISCUSSION

Select one of the object lessons to use to cover the teaching points.

OBJECT LESON 2 20 MIN

A Sovereign Birth

Read Matthew 2 as a class, having several children read a paragraph each. Ask the class how they see God’s sovereign control over the events depicted in this chapter of the Bible. Here are a few examples:

1. Jesus was born in Bethlehem in accordance with the prophets (Matthew 2:4–6).
2. A star rose to mark his birth (Matthew 2:2, 9).
3. The wise men gave treasures fit for a king, which would later be used to sustain the family in Egypt (Matthew 2:11, 14–15).
4. They fled to Egypt in accordance with the prophets (Matthew 2:14–15).
5. Later when Herod’s son was reigning in his father’s place, Joseph went to Nazareth that Jesus might be called a Nazarene in fulfillment of the Scriptures (Matthew 2:22–23).

Read Ephesians 1:1–12 and ask the students: What does this passage of Scripture tell us about God’s plan for us? (We were a part of God’s plan before the creation of the world and when the time had come God caused us to be born just as he set the time when Jesus would come. Our physical birth and our salvation come according to God’s master plan.)

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME 15 MIN

Drawing Christmas

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ pencil and paper
- ✓ crayons or colored pencils

Have the children choose a scene to draw from today’s lesson. For example, they could draw a picture of the wise men interacting with Herod or worshipping baby Jesus; or Joseph, Mary, and Jesus fleeing to Egypt.

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's Scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 20 MIN

The City of David

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper and pencil
- ✓ prizes for the winning team or teams

This activity is designed to help the children remember the significance of the city of David, Bethlehem.

Divide the class into teams of four to have a Bible trivia contest. Each question is worth up to five points, depending on how many clues it takes for a team to give the correct answer. Ask one question at a time. Have the teams write down an answer and then raise their hands if they think they have it correct. If no team knows the answer, give the next clue. Once a team answers correctly, move on to the next question. If more than one team gets the right answer, they all get the designated points as follows:

- No extra clues—five points
- Correct guess after one clue—four points
- Correct guess after two clues—three points
- Correct guess after three clues—one point

■ **Question 1: What is Bethlehem's other name? (city of David)**

- Clue 1: It is named after a king.*
- Clue 2: It is named after Jesse's son.*
- Clue 3: Fill in the blank: city of _____.*

■ **Question 2: Why did Joseph and Mary go to Bethlehem? (Joseph was a descendant of David and had to be registered or counted for the census.)**

- Clue 1: Caesar Augustus had something to do with it.*
- Clue 2: Joseph was related to King David.*
- Clue 3: A decree was given that everyone return to the hometown of their grandparents.*

- Question 3: What was the sign the angel told the shepherds to look for to help them recognize Jesus? (He would be a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.)

Clue 1: There was no room at the inn.

Clue 2: Cattle eat from this.

Clue 3: Where did Mary place Jesus and what was he wearing?

- Question 4: In announcing his birth to the shepherds what two names did the angels give Jesus? (Savior, Christ the Lord)

Clue 1: One of Jesus' names means "one who saves."

Clue 2: One of the names means Messiah.

Clue 3: Savior, _____ the _____.

- Question 5: What did Joseph do to escape Herod's evil plan to kill the newborn boys? (He fled with Mary and Jesus to Egypt.)

Clue 1: He took his family somewhere.

Clue 2: It's where Moses was born.

Clue 3: Joseph fled to _____ with Mary and Jesus.