



# THE BIRTH OF JESUS

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: LUKE 2:1-20, MATTHEW 2

*In the fullness of time God sent forth His Son*

## The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

### Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

**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 records the words of Micah 5:2: "But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old from ancient days." 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 a 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 did the people use the animals for food and clothing, they also used them as sacrifices. It is interesting to note that the perfect sacrifice, Jesus the Lamb of God, would be first publicly announced to shepherds!

After the heavenly concert from the angels, the shepherds traveled to see the baby Jesus. When they arrived to see Jesus, 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. Herod did not want another king. So 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 would not be stopped even by a powerful king. God warned the wise men to travel home by a different route, warning 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 ages 2 and under 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. For even those threats were a part of God's predetermined, invincible plan.

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### WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?

*Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.*

If a person is drowning in a pool, a lifeguard who rescues the person would be their savior. A lifeguard would be a savior with a lowercase "s." Jesus is Savior with an uppercase "S" because He is God and is the Savior of the world. All other saving from danger is a reflection of God's image in man.

Though Jesus was King, He did not come in 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?

### ON THE ROAD TO EMMANUS

**Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.**

**Bible Passage: Hosea 11:1,2**

#### **Connecting the passage to Christ:**

Sometimes when we read an Old Testament passage, we would not see its connection to Jesus if it were not for the Bible itself making the connection. Hosea 11:1,2 is such a passage. Matthew applies Hosea as a typological picture of Jesus. Just as Israel went down to Egypt, so did baby Jesus. And as Israel was led by God out of Egypt, so was Jesus. God called Jesus out of Egypt, and Jesus followed His Heavenly Father perfectly (see John 5:19).

#### **Questions for reflection:**

- When did God call Israel out of Egypt? (God used Moses to bring Israel out of the slavery of Egypt.)
- What slavery did Jesus conquer and leave behind? (Jesus was not a slave, but conquered sin by living a perfect life and taking our punishment for sin by His death on the cross. Jesus extends His righteousness to us so that we can be free from the bondage and slavery of sin.)

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### SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

#### BE A DOER OF THE WORD

*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.*

### ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

*Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?*

#### SET THE CLOCK

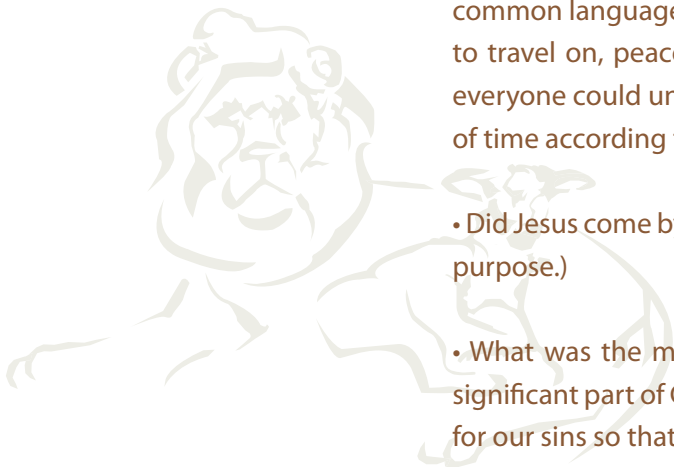
##### Supplies:

several alarm clocks

This exercise is designed to allow you to talk to the children about Jesus' birth being planned by God. Synchronize four or five clock alarms to go off at the same time about five minutes into your teaching time. Place the clocks around the room so as not to be too conspicuous. If the children ask you what the clocks are for, tell them that they are to help you keep track of the time. Engage the children in reviewing the Bible story or Bible memory verses while you wait for the alarms to go off. When the alarms sound, explain to the children that the alarms went off just as you had planned in the fullness of time.

Turn to Galatians 4:4 and explain to the children how God planned to send Jesus at a certain time. God was working out many details for the advance of the Gospel. Jesus was born during Roman rule and the era known as the Pax Romana or Roman peace. There were common roads throughout all the then-known-world and a common language, Greek. God arranged that there would be roads for the Gospel to travel on, peace in the land for its advance, and a common language so that everyone could understand the Gospel message. All this happened in the fullness of time according to God's wonderful plan.

- Did Jesus come by chance? (No, Jesus came according to God's plan and sovereign purpose.)
- What was the most significant part of God's plan in sending Jesus? (The most significant part of God's plan was that Jesus would die on the cross. Jesus would die for our sins so that we could be forgiven.)



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### 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. Explain to them that you are going 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 guess 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 has someone raise their hand, move to 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:

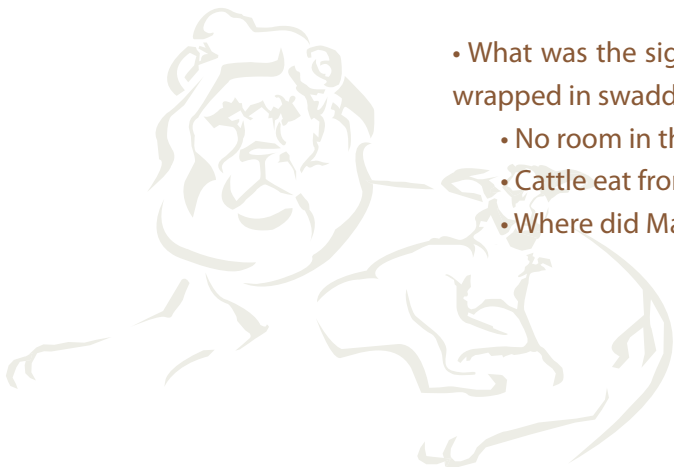
No extra clues – five points

Correct guess after one clue – four points

Correct guess after two clues – three points

Correct guess after three clues – one point

- What is Bethlehem's other name? (City of David)
  - It is named after a king
  - It is named after Jesse's son
  - Fill in the blank: City of \_\_\_\_\_
- Why did Joseph and Mary Go to Bethlehem? (Joseph was a descendant of David and had to be registered or counted for the census.)
  - Caesar Augustus
  - Joseph was related to King David
  - A decree was given that everyone go back to their home town
- What was the sign to help the shepherds recognize Jesus? (You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.)
  - No room in the inn
  - Cattle eat from this
  - Where did Mary place Jesus and what was he wearing?



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- What were the two names the angels gave Jesus in talking to the shepherds? (Savior, Christ the Lord)
  - One means one who saves
  - One means Messiah
  - Savior, \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_
- What did Joseph do to escape Herod's evil plan to kill the newborn boys? (He fled with Mary and Jesus to Egypt.)
  - Where Moses was born
  - He took his family somewhere
  - Joseph fled to \_\_\_\_\_ with Mary and Jesus.

### CHRISTMAS CAROLS IN JUNE

Bring in the words to a few Christmas carols which tell the story of Jesus and then have the children sing them. Have the children pick out the words in the songs which match the biblical account. Some suggestions: Angels We Have Heard on High (Gloria), The First Noel, Silent Night.

## PRAYER

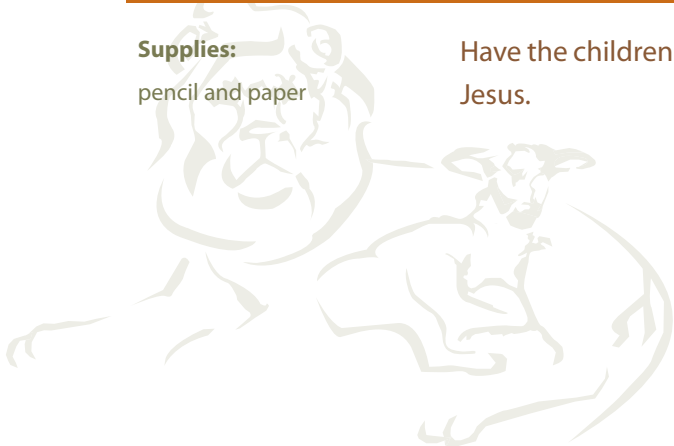
Pick several children to pray based on the day's scripture passages.

## IN CLASS PROJECT

### AN ACTIVITY

**Supplies:**  
pencil and paper

Have the children draw a manger scene with the shepherds and kings worshipping Jesus.



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### FOR THE OLDER GRADES

#### ACTIVITY

**Supplies:**

pencil and paper

Read Matthew 2 as a class. Have several children read a paragraph each. Then answer the following question as a class. How do you see God's sovereign control over the events depicted in this chapter of the Bible? Here are a few of the ways:

1. Jesus was born in Bethlehem in accordance with the prophets.
2. A star rose to mark His birth.
3. The wise men gave treasures fit for a king which would later be used to sustain the family in Egypt.
4. They fled to Egypt in accordance with the prophets.
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.

Read Ephesians 1:1-12 and ask the students: How does this passage of scripture inform us as to how we are included in God's unfolding plan? (We are 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.)

### A LITTLE BIT MORE

The angel called Jesus a Savior. This is one of only two places that Jesus is called Savior in the Gospels. The other place is John 4:42. Later, in Paul's epistles Jesus is regularly referred to as the Savior (see Titus 3:4-7).

