

BABY JESUS

Matthew 2:1 - 2:23; Luke 2:1-2:52

STRUCTURE

Key-persons: Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus

Key-location: Bethlehem

Key-repetitions:

- Angels (Lk 2:8-15, 21; Mat 2:13,19).
- Praise expressed by: the angels (Lk 2:14); the shepherds (Lk 2:20).
- Baby Jesus was called Savior (Lk 1:69; 2:11, 30, 34, 38).

Key-attitudes:

- Shepherds' fear of the angels.
- Amazement of all who heard about the baby.
- Shepherds' joy after seeing baby Jesus.

Initial-situation:

After the events recorded in the Old Testament, about four hundred years went by without God's sending a prophet. Then an angel informed Priest Zechariah about John's birth, and young Mary and Mary's fiancé Joseph about the expected Messiah's birth. Mary was a virgin when she became pregnant by the Holy Spirit. An angel informed Joseph that the baby had been conceived by the Holy Spirit. Joseph married Mary but didn't consummate the marriage with physical intimacy until after the birth of the baby.

Initial-problem:

The Roman Emperor ordered a census to be taken throughout the entire Roman Empire. So Joseph and his pregnant fiancé left the town of Nazareth and traveled to Bethlehem.

Final-situation:

The baby was named Jesus, the name the angel gave him before Mary became pregnant.

BIBLE STORY

About the time that the angel informed Joseph that Mary was pregnant by the Holy Spirit, the Roman emperor Caesar Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the entire Roman Empire.

Joseph and Mary left the Galilean town of Nazareth and traveled to Bethlehem in Judea. The town was known as David's town. Joseph had to go there since he was a descendant of King David. Joseph went to Bethlehem to register with Mary who was

engaged to marry him. *The Bible refers to Mary and Joseph as being engaged because they had not consummated the marriage with physical intimacy.* Mary was also pregnant. While in Bethlehem, the time came for Mary to give birth to the baby. She gave birth to her firstborn son. Mary wrapped the baby in strips of cloth and placed him in an animal's feeding trough, because there was no room for them in the motel (Lk 2:1-7).

Shepherds were camped out in nearby fields keeping watch over their flocks at night. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared! The glory of the Lord blazed around them. The shepherds became terrified! The angel told the shepherds, "Don't be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people worldwide. Today in David's town, a Savior was born to you. He is Christ the Lord. This will be a clue to you: you'll find the baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in an animal's feeding trough."

Immediately, a huge group of angels joined the first angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to all men and women who please him" (Lk 2:8-14).

The angels withdrew into heaven and the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see for ourselves this event that the Lord told us about."

The shepherds hurried and found Mary and Joseph. They saw the baby lying in the feeding trough. Then they told everyone what the angels had said about this child. All who heard the shepherds' report were amazed. But Mary kept all these things deep within her heart and kept thinking about them. The shepherds returned to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for everything they heard and saw. It was just like the angel told them (Lk 2:15-20).

The baby was eight days old when he was circumcised, and named Jesus, the name the angel gave him before he was conceived (Lk 2:21).

GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. What catches your attention in the story? | 5. How did the characters face their problems? |
| 2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand? | 6. How have you faced similar problems? |
| 3. Who are the main characters in the story? | 7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you? |
| 4. What problems did the characters face? | 8. What does the story tell about God? |

SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What famous person was an ancestor of Joseph?
2. What difficulties did Mary and Joseph face when they went to Bethlehem?
3. Why were shepherds unlikely people to receive a word from God?
4. What did the angels tell the shepherds about Mary's baby?
5. How did the shepherds respond to the angel's message?
6. How do you relate to the fact that Jesus was born the Savior?
7. How do you celebrate the birth of baby Jesus?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. **Comfort is not promised to those who do God’s will.** The government census required Joseph to make a long trip with his pregnant fiancé. They couldn’t find a place to stay in Bethlehem. Baby Jesus was born in a dark dirty stable (Lk 2:1-7).
2. **God’s grace extends to people who are considered undesirables.** First century shepherds were considered untrustworthy vagabonds. They were considered unreliable liars and their testimony was not allowed in any rabbinical court. The angels informed shepherds that a Savior had been born (Lk 2:10-12).
3. **The story of Jesus needs to be told.** Angels told shepherds about baby Jesus (Lk 2:10-12). The shepherds spread the word about baby Jesus (Lk 2:17).

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Chant:

Utilize a chant of Luke 2:10-11. Divide the participants of the chant into two groups. The first group reads the first part, and the second group reads a response. Stress as focal words the ones that are **bold and underlined**. The best way to emphasize a word is stretch the word out by length, not by volume. Continue switching back and forth as indicated in the chant. Begin and conclude with the part that will be vocalized by all chanters and listeners.

EVERYBODY	
“I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:10-11 NIV).	
GROUP 1	GROUP 2
I bring you <u>good news</u>	Good news?
Good news of <u>great joy</u>	Good news of great joy that will be for <u>all the people</u>
Today in the town of David	In Bethlehem
A <u>Savior</u> has been born to you	Who is this Savior?
He is <u>Christ the Lord</u>	Christ the Lord is the <u>Savior</u>
EVERYBODY	
“I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:10-11 NIV).	