

Bible Story 27: JESUS' BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD

SCRIPTURE: Birth: Matthew 1:18-25; 2:1-23; Luke 1:5-40,56-57; 2:1-32
Childhood: Luke 2:40-52

MEMORY VERSE: Luke 2:11,14A

BIBLE STORY:

The priest Zechariah and his wife, Elizabeth, were old and had no children. On a certain occasion, Zechariah was in the Temple in Jerusalem performing his duties as a priest. The angel Gabriel appeared and said: **"Zechariah, do not be afraid. God has heard your prayer. Your wife will have a child and give him the name John. He will be a great man before God."** Soon afterwards, they returned to their home in Judea and Elizabeth became pregnant.

Six months later, the angel Gabriel spoke to Mary, a young Jewish girl. She lived in Nazareth and engaged to Joseph, a carpenter. The angel said, **"Mary, do not be afraid. God is pleased with you and you will give birth to a son. Give Him the name Jesus, who will be called the Son of God."** Then Mary responded, **"I am God's servant. May it happen to me as you have said."** After a few days, Mary went to visit her cousins, Elizabeth and Zechariah in Judea. After three months, Mary returned to her home.

Elizabeth gave birth to a son, John. He was later known as John the Baptist.

An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, **"Joseph, descendent of David, do not be afraid to marry Mary. She is expecting a child conceived by the Holy Spirit. Give the child that will be born the name Jesus. He will save your people from their sins."** Joseph awoke, obeyed the angel and married Mary.

The Roman king of Judah, Caesar Augustus, commanded all the citizens to register in their home town. Therefore, Joseph took Mary and went to Bethlehem to register. It was a long trip. When they arrived, the city was full of people. Joseph could not find a place to spend the night. Where would they sleep? Finally, they found a humble place, a stable. During the night, baby Jesus was born and placed in a manger, a feeding trough.

In the nearby field, shepherds were watching their flocks of sheep. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and said, **"Do not be afraid. Today in the city of David a Savior was born, the promised Messiah, the Lord."**

Instantly a multitude of angels appeared, saying, **"Glory to God in heaven. Peace on earth to all people."** The shepherds quickly went to Bethlehem where they found Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus lying in a manger. They worshiped Jesus, the Savior. Later the shepherds returned to their sheep, singing praises to God for all that they had heard and seen.

Joseph and Mary took Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem when he was eight days old. Simeon saw baby Jesus, took him in his arms and praised God, blessing Jesus.

Wise men followed the star in the east, carrying gifts to give to the new born king of the Jews. Arriving in Jerusalem, they asked King Herod where the King of the Jews was born. Although the king was angry to hear the news, he cunningly deceived the wise men. He asked them to let him know where the child was, because he too wanted to worship Him. Then he said that it was foretold that the child would be born in Bethlehem. The wise men left and in Bethlehem saw the shiny star above a home. Entering, they saw the child Jesus with his mother Mary. They bowed and worshiped Jesus, giving Him precious gifts of gold, incense and myrrh. Being warned by God, they returned another way to their home.

Being warned in a dream, Joseph took Mary and the child Jesus and fled to Egypt to escape being killed by King Herod. When it was safe, they returned and lived in Nazareth.

When Jesus was 12 years old, He went with His parents to the Temple in Jerusalem to attend the Feast of the Passover. When the ceremony was over, His parents began their journey home. Along the way, they looked for Jesus, but they could not find Him. Where was Jesus? Joseph and Mary returned to Jerusalem and after three days they found Jesus seated with the teachers at the temple courts. Everyone admired Jesus who was asking and answering questions. Jesus returned with His parents to his home in Nazareth and was obedient to them.

Jesus grew mentally, physically and in favor with God and man.

LIFE LESSONS:

1. God loves us. God sent His son, Jesus, to be born in a manger in Bethlehem. Thank God for Jesus, God's son.
2. The wise men brought presents to Jesus. What present can we give Jesus? The best gift is giving our life to Jesus. How? (Believing that Jesus is the Son of God; living for Jesus...)
3. Jesus went to the Temple to hear the Word of God. No matter what age we are, we should go to church to hear and study the Word of God, the Bible.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Who was Zechariah? What did the angel tell him? What happened?
2. What did the angel tell Mary? What did she say?
3. What did the angel tell Joseph? What did Joseph do?
4. What did the angel tell the shepherds? What did the shepherds do?
5. The shepherds worshiped Jesus. How can we worship Jesus?
6. What happened when the wise men followed the bright star in the sky? Where did they find Jesus?
7. What gifts did the wise men give Jesus?
8. What are some gifts we can give Jesus today?
9. In the story, where did Mary, Joseph and Jesus go when he was twelve years old?
10. Why do we need to go to church?
11. What happened when Mary and Joseph started back home? Do you think they were worried when they could not find Jesus? What happened?
12. Do children need to let their parents know where they are? Why?

ACTIVITIES FOR THIS BIBLE STORY:

Choose activities that may be used in your specific situation. Consider the age and maturity of each person, locality where the story will be told (customs and traditions), and available resources, time and space.

TELLING THE STORY:

- **Option 1: NATIVITY SCENE:** Tell the Bible story with your own words and, at the appropriate moment, place figures at the nativity scene. When the story is finished, distribute the figures and let the participants retell the story, placing their figures at the nativity scene.
- **Option 2: DRAMA:** Select one of the characters in the story, such as Mary, Joseph, a shepherd, a wiseman, or an Inn keeper. In your own words as if you were that character, tell what happened at the birth of Jesus or when Jesus visited the Temple.
- **Option 3: DRAMA:** After telling the story, let the participants act out the story. May use costumes, such as robes, sheets, scarfs, etc.

MISSION ACTIVITY: “Gifts”

- As wise men gave gifts to Jesus, give gifts to someone.
- **Option 1:** Give gifts to a child in need, an orphan or missionary children. The presents may be such items as soap, tooth brush and paste, pencils, crayons, paper, books, games, a Bible, etc.
- **Option 2:** Give a gift to a military serviceman. The presents may be such items as books, homemade cookies, candy, a pocket New Testament, etc.
- **Option 3:** Give gifts to the elderly. The presents may be such items as homemade cookies, candy, DVDs of older movies, music CDs/DVDs, games, books, a Bible in large print, etc.
- **Option 4:** Give gifts to family members. Make the gifts, such as a picture in a frame, a card, a letter, etc.
- **Observation:** Whenever giving cookies, etc., be aware if the person is diabetic or has any food allergies.

GAME: “Going on a Trip”

- **Option 1:** Form a circle. One person begins by saying, “*Mary and Joseph took clothes on the trip.*” The next person on the left continues, saying, “*Mary and Joseph took clothes and food on the trip.*” Continue this way, repeating what the others took and adding an item to the list. Repeat until each person has had a turn. (If one person forgets an item, the others may use hand gestures to help him remember.)
- **Option 2:** Start a second round by saying, “*The wise men took...*” and continue the game.
- **Option 3:** Start a third round by saying, “*Jesus went to the Temple and took...*” and continue the game.

MUSIC: “Songs About Jesus’ Birth”

- **Option 1:** Sing music together. If available, use tapes, CDs or DVDs. Play different instruments as you sing.
- **Option 2:** Learn some songs about Jesus’ birth from different countries.
- **Option 3:** Write a song about the birth of Jesus.

STARS IN THE SKY:

- **Option 1:** Talk about the different stars in the sky. One evening observe the stars and specific constellations.
- **Option 2:** Go visit an observatory to learn about stars and look at them through a telescope. Often DVDs about stars are available to watch.

BIBLE READING - Matthew 1:18-25; 2:1-23; Luke 1:5-40,56-57; 2:1-32,40-52

1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th
Luke 1:5-25	Luke 1:26-40,56-57	Matthew 1:18-25	Luke 2:1-32	Matthew 2:1-12	Matthew 2:13-23	Luke 2:40-52