

Morning Overview

Lesson: *Advent: Faith – The King is Here!*

Lesson Objective:

Today marks the second Sunday in Advent and our theme for this morning is Faith. Since Genesis 3 all of humanity has longed and expected the Messiah to come and make things right again. Throughout the Old Testament we see the expectation for a King to come. Even when things were going right for the Hebrew people, it always ended in disappointment (King David and Solomon). But the promised One is here! The King has arrived not in might or in strength, but in gentleness and humility. This wasn't the kind of King most people know. This week we read about Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem and what made them travel to this small town. The King has finally come, and for those at that time, faith had become sight.

Teaching Summary:

- God always keeps His promises.
- Nothing is impossible with God.
- All of the Old Testament has been waiting for the King to come. The Hebrew people had been waiting for over 400 years to hear from God.
- Everyone has set their hope on this King to make the world right again – to make it work properly – that all the sad and terrible things He would make go away.
- The King has finally come! Everyone's hope had become sight, but this King did not come in might and strength, but in humility and gentleness as a baby.
- Mary, Jesus' mother, was engaged to a man named Joseph. Mary and Joseph were not married, and Mary had never been a mother before.
- Jesus was the King everyone had been waiting on and He would rule forever.
- Jesus was Mary's firstborn son. He was born in a stable wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.

Scripture: Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 2:1-7

Story: Gospel Story Book Bible, Pages 160-161; Jesus Story Book Bible, Pages 176-183;
The Beginner's Bible, Pages 272-277.

Scripture Memory for Advent: Isaiah 9:6

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Craft: Manger Scene

Supplies: Cardstock manger scene, stamp pad

Instructions:

Help children stamp their handprint onto cardstock scene to create a star.



Story

Historical setting

The Bible says once there was a man named Caesar Augustus. He was a very important man in the Roman government – he was in charge of his kingdom. Caesar Augustus made a law. He said, “I want to take a census.” That means he wanted to count the people. Caesar Augustus wanted to know how many people lived in his kingdom. Caesar Augustus said, “Everybody must go back to the city where they were born and register” (That means write their name down.)

Journey to Bethlehem

There was another man. His name was Joseph. Joseph lived in Nazareth. He was a very nice man. But Joseph had been born in Bethlehem, not Nazareth. And so when Caesar Augustus said, “Go back to the town where you were born,” off to Bethlehem Joseph went. He would write his name down there. Mary went with him to Bethlehem. She was going to be his wife.

But there was something very special about Mary. The Bible says she was going to have a little baby. Remember God had sent an angel named Gabriel to give Mary that good news! The angel had even said she would have a baby boy and she was to name him Jesus. Nazareth wasn't too far from Bethlehem but remember there were no trains or cars or anything like that. So, Mary and kind Joseph had to walk or ride on a donkey. It was a hard trip. When somebody's going to have a baby, they can't walk really fast or anything like that. So, I bet Mary rode on the donkey. Maybe Joseph rode on one too or maybe he just walked next to Mary. But it took a long time and I bet they were very, very tired and I bet they were very, very happy when they finally saw the little town of Bethlehem off in the distance. “It won't be long, now,” Mary probably thought. “Soon we'll be in Bethlehem.” (sound relieved)

Humble birth

The Bible says when Mary and Joseph got to Bethlehem they found an inn. An inn is like a hotel where people sleep when they're not close to their own house. I bet Mary couldn't wait to put her head down and rest. But you know what...it didn't work out that way. Remember I told you that Caesar Augustus said everybody had to go to the town where they were born to register? Well, lots of people had come to Bethlehem and the city was so crowded. There were people everywhere. When Mary and Joseph got to the inn, the man in charge said, “There's no more room. The inn is all full!” (Look sad) Poor Mary, poor Joseph. Where would they rest? Maybe the man in charge of the inn showed Mary and Joseph a stable nearby. We don't know. The Bible doesn't tell us that. But it does say that Mary and Joseph found a stable where they could spend the night. But you know what? People don't usually sleep in stables. (chuckle) Animals do! So, stables aren't usually very nice. They're not very clean that's for sure. You know how animals eat!! They always make big messes! Stables usually don't smell too good either. But it was a place to rest. And Mary was so tired. Remember (whisper)...she was going to have a baby! When Mary and Joseph were in that city called Bethlehem, staying in that little stable, the most exciting thing happened that has ever happened in the whole world. Mary had a baby. She had a baby boy. God had sent his very own Son. Mary took her little baby boy and wrapped him in pieces of cloth. (If you have a doll and an old white sheet, torn in pieces, you may want to demonstrate as you tell this part of the story by wrapping strips of cloth around the baby). Then she laid him down in the manger. A manger is where animals eat! You know how your dog or kitty have a bowl where they eat their food from, well a manger is where cows and donkeys and horses and animals like that can get their food. Joseph might have cleaned all the animals' food out of the manger and I bet he bent down and found some fresh straw and put it all in the bottom of that manger. He probably made it as soft as he could. Then Mary laid her sweet baby right in the manger. Mary's baby was warm and all cuddly. Mary named her baby Jesus. God had chosen that name. Mary did just what the angel, Gabriel, had told her to do.

The Baby

Baby Jesus looked like other babies. He was probably cute and all wiggly and he probably cried too. He sure didn't look like God, born right there in that dirty stable, sleeping in that manger. But you know what boys and girls, He was. That baby was God's very own Son. Jesus had wanted to come down to earth to live for a while. He wanted to live here just like we do. Now God had come near to people. They could see him. They could touch him. This little baby was Mary's baby, but he was also the Son of the great and mighty God.

Next week, we learn that more people were told about Jesus's birth and it made them very, very excited!

Questions for Review with Younger Children

- Who was going to Bethlehem?
- What happened in the stable?
- Who were Jesus' parents?
- What does Immanuel mean?
- Where was Jesus born?

Questions for Review with Older Children

- Why did Mary and Joseph go to Bethlehem?
- What was so different about baby Jesus?
- Why do you think Jesus left his beautiful heaven to be born in a stable?
- Joseph is called a son of David. Why is that important?