

Morning Overview

Lesson: *Advent: Peace – The King Brings Peace!*

Lesson Objective:

Today marks the fourth Sunday in Advent and our theme for this morning is peace. 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 people expected. This week we read about the wise men's arrival to see the newborn King. They knew that this King was different, and His kingdom would bring peace. The King has come, and his arrival means peace for all who turn to Him!

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 them go away.
- With Jesus' birth, great joy has come. Jesus is the joy for all people if only they will turn and trust Him.
- 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 came from heaven.
- Jesus was Mary's firstborn son. He was born in a stable, wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger.
- Jesus was the ruler and shepherd to come. The ruler and shepherd protect their people or flock. The ruler and shepherd want peace and will do whatever it takes to bring that about. King Jesus brings peace with His kingdom.

Scripture: Matthew 2:1-12 (use Luke 2:1-20 if desired, to recount the whole Nativity Story)

Story: Gospel Story Book Bible, Pages 160-161; Jesus Story Book Bible, 176-199;
The Beginner's Bible, Pages 267-283, 288-294

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: Starry Skies

Supplies: Cardstock sheet, star stickers, crayons/markers

Instructions:

Have children decorate the starry skies with stickers and crayons/markers



Story

For the 3-year-olds: You may want to start with, “One night some wise men were looking in the dark sky. They were looking at some pretty stars...” And end with finding Baby Jesus. I don’t think telling about the dream is necessary. Re-telling the Nativity Story up to this point may help children remember what has happened thus far.

Opening

Today we’re going to talk about presents, 3 of them, 3 very special presents. But the presents in my story are a little different than regular presents. They are presents for a king! It tells about it right here in my Bible. ...

The Wise Men

It happened in the East. Some men lived there. They were very wise. We don’t know how many men there were in this story. But we call them the wise men. We don’t know what they looked like or what kind of clothes they wore. The Bible doesn’t tell us any of those things. But the Bible does tell us that God had a surprise for them. He wanted to show them something they would never forget, and He did it in a very special way.

Every night the wise men would watch the stars. Do you like to watch stars at night? They can seem so pretty. Sometimes if you’re far away from the city lights you can see lots and lots of stars all over the black sky. Well, the wise men didn’t just look at the stars fast and say, “Oh there are lots of pretty stars in the sky tonight” like that (pretend you’re looking across the sky quickly). Oh no. These wise men studied the stars. That means they would look and look and look at the sky like this (stare into the sky). And they didn’t have telescopes or anything like that to help them see far away like we have today. They watched and studied the sky every night. These wise men knew stars.

The Journey

But one night the sky looked very different. The wise men saw a star they hadn’t seen before. It was so big and bright. They kept watching it. They could even see the star move. Stars don’t move you know. But this one did. A long time ago people used to think if there was a bright new star in the sky, maybe a child was born who would grow up to be a great king. These wise men believed that so they thought they had better find out what that star was all about! They decided to follow the star. They followed it and followed it. The wise men traveled a long way. Since they were coming from the east they had to cross the desert. The wise men probably rode on camels. Camels don’t need lots to drink and they can travel in the desert. The wise men probably slept during the day when the sun was shining because they couldn’t see the star. But at night, the wise men would get on their camels and follow that bright shining star. Well, finally the star stopped. It stopped right over the city called Jerusalem. So the wise men stopped too! They asked the people who lived in the city, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?” We were in the east and we saw his star. We’ve come to worship him.” Those men were very wise! They wanted to find the new king and they wanted to worship him. The wise men knew how special a king is. “He must be in Jerusalem”, the wise men thought.

King Herod

But nobody seemed to know anything about a new king. The people started talking about the wise men who were visiting Jerusalem and about this star they were following. Finally, the king who lived in Jerusalem heard about the visitors. His name was King Herod and King Herod was very wicked and very bad. The Bible says he became very disturbed. That means upset. King Herod didn’t want any other king to be born. Not in his country that’s for sure! He was the king and he wanted to be the only king. (Stick your chest out and speak proudly.) “There can be no other king but me!” King Herod thought. When the people in Jerusalem found out King Herod was disturbed, they were disturbed too. King Herod was so mean that the people were afraid what he might do! The king called the Jewish leaders and teachers to come to the great palace where he lived. “Where does the Scripture say the Savior is to be

born?" (The Scripture means the same as God's Word). Mean King Herod didn't read it...that's for sure! So he had to ask the Jewish teachers what the Scripture said. The Jewish teachers didn't have all the Scripture like we have now, but they had the Old Testament. (hold up your Bible). They had the part that says, "A Savior is coming." "Where is the Savior going to be born?" King Herod asked. "In Bethlehem," the men said. It says, "The Savior will be born in Bethlehem."

Instructions to The Wise Men

King Herod called the wise men. "When did you first see that star?" the king asked the wise men. King Herod was smart and tricky too. He wanted to know how old the other king was. He wanted to know so he could find that other king. But not to worship him like the wise men wanted to. Oh, no, King Herod wanted to hurt the young king. Then no one would be king but him! King Herod told the wise men probably in a nice way, (say sweetly) "Go to Bethlehem and look for the little child. When you have found him come back and tell me. Then I will worship him too." But you know what? King Herod didn't want to worship that new king, he wanted to hurt him. The king was trying to trick the wise men.

Finding the King

Well, the wise men started on their journey again. Off they went to find the little king. And sure enough, there it was again - the star. They could see the star. Oh how happy they were to see it again. It was moving just like it had done before when they first saw it, when they were traveling from the East. The wise men followed it again... until it stopped. This time the star stopped over a house. Guess who was inside the house? Mary and Joseph and little baby Jesus were in that house. They had left the stable. (Remember Jesus was born in a little stable. The shepherds had found him there.) By the time the wise men had arrived in Bethlehem, Mary and Joseph had left the stable and were staying in a little house.

I wonder if the wise men were surprised that this baby king was living in a house! Maybe they thought He should be sleeping in a big beautiful palace with fine baby clothes and lots of servants standing around Him. But no, not this baby, no palace, no fine clothes, no servants. But the wise men still knew He was a king. How do I know that? Listen to what the Bible says (read from Matthew 2:11 from your Bible), "And they came into the house and saw the Child with Mary his mother; and they fell down and worshipped Him." I told you those wise men were wise! They knelt right down in front of that helpless little baby, who didn't look very much like a king, and they worshipped Him. And then they did something else that was special. The Bible says the wise men gave the Baby King Jesus presents. Three presents. But the presents weren't presents you'd usually give a baby. Not rattles, or teddy bears, or anything like that. Oh no! The wise men gave gifts to this baby that were gifts for a king. They gave him some gold (you know how expensive gold is!), something called frankincense (people used to burn that when they worshipped God in the tabernacle, before they had a church. The smoke would rise to heaven. Frankincense was very special.) And the last gift was myrrh. It was a perfume and it smelled so good! Gold, frankincense, and myrrh - gifts for a king, gifts for King Jesus.

Warned in A Dream

Now the wise men had finally found their king. But remember, mean King Herod had said, "Go to Bethlehem and search for the little child and when you find him come back and tell me so that I can come and worship him too." Remember I told you King Herod was trying to trick the wise men because he didn't want to worship the baby. King Herod wanted to hurt him! But the wise men didn't know that. They believed King Herod. They thought, "Let's go to sleep tonight and tomorrow we'll hurry back and tell the king, we found him, we found him. He's right in Bethlehem in a little house! Come with us and we'll show you!" Oh no! But you know what? God knew everything that was going on. He knew those wise men had found their king. He was watching when they gave Baby Jesus presents. And He knew all about King Herod and his mean, hard heart. God wasn't going to let anything bad happen to Baby Jesus, not then.

So, listen to what God did. When the wise men were sleeping God gave them a dream. Do you ever dream? Sometimes we dream about good things and sometimes we dream about bad things. Well this wasn't a dream like we have. The Bible says it was a message from God. It was a warning. God told the wise men in a dream, "Don't go back to Herod. Don't tell him about Baby Jesus."

Conclusion

So, the wise men who were very, very wise headed home. But this time they went a different way so nobody could find them. And King Herod never found Baby Jesus. King Herod never found the King. But the wise men had, and I bet they were never the same!

We learn that Jesus is the Ruler to come. This would make other kings jealous! But Jesus rules His Kingdom unlike many other kings though. Jesus rules His kingdom with peace. Remember our memory verse for Advent; Jesus is the "Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6).

Questions for Review with Younger Children

- Who saw a bright shiny star in the sky?
- Who did the star help them find?
- What did the wise men give baby Jesus?

Questions for Review with Older Children

- What did the wise men study?
- Who was the wicked king who wanted to find baby Jesus?
- Why did he want to find Jesus?
- How did God stop the wise men from returning to King Herod?