

Jesus' Birth:

Announcement to Mary; Birth in Bethlehem; Escape to Egypt

Matthew 1:18-25



New Testament 1
Part 1: Early Life of Christ

SUNDAY MORNING

New Testament 1 [Class Attendance Sheet](#) provided in activity sheets (NOTE: The document is interactive, allowing the teacher to type in the Class, Teacher, and the children's names.)

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38; 2:1-39

MEMORY WORK:

“And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21).

SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS (SEE END OF LESSON FOR WORDS):

A [song book](#) and [audio recordings](#) of many of the curriculum songs are available on the curriculum Web site.

- [“Jesus Grows Up”](#)
- [“Mary Had a Baby”](#)
- [“Away in a Manger”](#)
- [“I Am Special”](#)
- [“My Savior has A First Name”](#)
- [“The Books of the New Testament”](#)

LESSON VISUALS AND TEACHING AIDS (NOTE ANY DISCLAIMERS):

- See [AP's Pinterest page](#) for ideas on bulletin boards, visuals, crafts, etc. [DISCLAIMER: Pins may sometimes need to be adjusted to be Scriptural.]
- [Jesus' Birth & Sermon](#) Bible fact cards (provided under “N.T. 1 Bible Facts” on curriculum Web site)
- Apologetics Press' [Bible Timeline](#)
- “Summary of the Bible” from [“Kids Prep”](#) CD by Jeff Miller
- “Matthew Chapter Summary” from [“Kids Prep”](#) CD by Jeff Miller
- Betty Lukens' felt pieces
- Birth of Jesus bulletin board set (Carson and Dellosa)
- Flipchart, pictures, or flannel graph to illustrate “Away in a Manger”
- [“Map of New Testament World”](#) (provided in map section of curriculum Web site)
- [“Map of Palestine”](#) (provided in map section of curriculum Web site)
- Strips of cotton fabric for swaddling clothes, a baby doll, a “manger” (box painted to look like wood or stone, or one constructed of wood)
- Select images from [freebibleimages.org](#) (Prophecies About the Birth of Jesus; Birth



of John the Baptist; Mary Visits Elizabeth; Escape to Egypt sets) [DISCLAIMER: some representations may be biblically inaccurate]

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

Younger Children: I may be small, but there are things I can do for God.

Older Children: God has given me talents, and abilities and He gives me opportunities to use them.

LESSON STARTS HERE

TEACHING ALERTS:



- Note that the wise men were not present at the birth of Christ. Shepherds came (Luke 2:15-16), but the wise men came later, apparently at some point before Jesus was two years old (Matthew 2:1-16).
- Note that, although many portray three men as being present at the gift giving, we do not actually know how many wise men were present. We know the gifts that were given and that there was more than one man, but nothing more.

INTRODUCTION: (YOUNGER CHILDREN)

In the very first book of the Bible, we learn about Adam and Eve disobeying God. Because they sinned, He would send a Savior for them and for everyone else who would ever live because everyone sins (Romans 3:23).

INTRODUCTION: (OLDER CHILDREN)

In the very first book of the Bible we learn about Adam and Eve disobeying God. Because they sinned, God could not treat them the same as He did before, because He cannot have anything to do with what is evil. The special relationship Adam and Eve had with God before their sin was broken (Isaiah 59:1-2), but God had a plan to make it right again. He promised that He would send a **Savior** for them and for everyone else who would ever live, because everyone sins (Romans 3:23). The first mention of the coming Savior is in Genesis 3:15. Through the **prophets** (God's special spokesmen) God continued to remind His people, for thousands of years, that a Savior would one day come.



Savior: One who saves or delivers others from danger or from evil. As the Savior, Jesus would save all people from their sins. Jesus said that He came “to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).

Prophet: One who spoke God's message to the people; he sometimes told what would happen in the future.

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. When God knew the time was right for His Son to come to Earth to be our Savior, He sent an angel to speak to the young woman He had chosen to be Jesus' mother. Her name was

Mary. Why did God choose Mary? Because she loved God very much and pleased Him by the way she lived. God wanted His Son to have a very special mother while He was growing up like other children on Earth, and Mary was that young woman.

2. The angel Gabriel told Mary (a) that she was blessed among women; (b) that she would have a baby boy who would be the Son of God; and (c) the child would be named “Jesus” (which means “Savior”). Mary was troubled by the angel’s words, and she did not understand how she could be a mother, because she was a **virgin**. But Gabriel said, “With God nothing is impossible.” She responded by calling herself “the Lord’s maidservant,” meaning that she would do anything that He wanted her to do.



Virgin: Older kids will understand the explanation of “a person who hasn’t had sex with anyone,” although you may prefer to tell them that Mary had never “slept with” a man before she became pregnant. With younger kids, you can tell them that she wasn’t married; God Himself made the Baby grow inside her.



RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS: See the article “[Genealogies and the Virgin Birth of Christ](#)” by Eric Lyons on the Apologetics Press Web site for discussion about why Jesus would be in the genealogy of Joseph, if Mary was a virgin when she conceived Him.

3. Mary was engaged to a good man named Joseph who was a carpenter. To the Jews in Bible times, being engaged was almost the same thing as being married; the couple was even called “husband and wife.” If the woman decided to have another boyfriend, it was considered the same thing as having a boyfriend after she was married (being unfaithful). The man could break their engagement (marriage agreement) with a divorce. When Joseph found out that Mary was going to have a baby, he thought she had been unfaithful to him. He considered breaking their engagement as quietly as possible so that she wouldn’t be embarrassed or made fun of by other people. But an angel spoke to Joseph one night telling him that (a) Mary was carrying a very special Baby from the Holy Spirit Who would grow up to be the Savior of all people, and (b) he should go ahead and marry her.
4. After their marriage, Mary and Joseph had to travel to Bethlehem from Nazareth to pay taxes because of an order (decree) from the Roman government. The city was so crowded with others who had come to pay taxes that Mary and Joseph had to stay in a place for animals called a “stable.” That night Jesus was born (in the city where the prophets foretold in Micah 5:2). Mary wrapped Him in **swaddling clothes** and laid Him in a **manger**.



Swaddling Clothes: Strips of cloth that were wrapped around a baby to keep his/her arms and legs straight. Salt was rubbed on the baby’s skin before his/her body was gently wrapped.

Manger: A feeding trough for animals. In Bible times, these troughs were often carved into walls.



HISTORICAL NOTE: Houses in Bethlehem were often built on slopes of a limestone ridge; it was/is very common for them to have cave-like stables hollowed out in the rock below the house itself. The stable where Jesus was born may have actually been a cave.

5. The night that Jesus was born, a great number of angels appeared in the sky to a group of shepherds who were watching over their flocks on the hills outside Bethlehem. The angels told the men that the Savior of the world had been born and that they could find Him lying in a manger in town. The shepherds left their animals and searched the crowded little town until they found the special Baby, and they worshipped Him.
6. Forty days after His birth, Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem (about 5 miles from Bethlehem) to offer sacrifices (for her ritualistic purification, Leviticus 12:6-8) and to “present Him to the Lord” as their firstborn (Exodus 13:2; Numbers 18:6). At the Temple, they met two elderly people named Simeon and Anna. This godly man and woman knew as soon as they saw Jesus that He was God’s Son, the Savior that they had been hoping to see all their lives.



NOTE: To fulfill O.T. prophecies, Mary and Joseph had to be from the tribe of Judah, descendants of David. There were many people who could have fulfilled those criteria. But Mary was the only virgin in all of Palestine chosen to be the mother of the Son of God (Isaiah 7:14). In spite of this extraordinary honor, nowhere in Scripture are we commanded to worship her. In fact, worshipping anyone or anything other than Jehovah is condemned (Matthew 4:10). Mary is mentioned several times in the Gospel accounts, only once in Acts, and not at all in the remaining books of the New Testament.

7. Mary and Joseph were chosen for a special job, because they loved the Lord very much. You and I are special to God in our own ways, just as Mary and Joseph were. Just as they were willing to do whatever God asked them to do, we must be ready and willing to do whatever we can to show our love for God (i.e., obeying parents and other authority figures, helping the sick or lonely, helping a new child at school, learning more and more about God’s Word, etc.). When we have opportunities to do good, we shouldn’t say, “I don’t want to,” or “I don’t know how,” or “Let someone else do it.”



RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS: See the article “[What Did You Expect?](#)” by Kyle Butt on the Apologetics Press Web site for discussion about Old Testament prophecy as it relates to the birth of Christ.

PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—BEFORE CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

- Click here for complete [Activity Book](#) and [Answer Key](#).

Ages 2-5:

- “[Jesus’ Birth Coloring Sheet](#)” (provided in activity sheets)
- Let children practice wrapping baby doll(s) with strips of cloth.
- Encourage children to act out the story.
- Learning Game: Put review questions on mangers and the answers on the baby Jesus cutouts. The teacher should pass out cutouts and help the children read them. The children “put” baby Jesus in the right manger. (“[Baby Jesus and Manger Cutouts](#)” provided in activity sheets; [N.T. 1 Review Questions](#) provided on curriculum Web site)
- Make a picture of a baby covered with a blanket: Before class, cut pictures of babies out of

magazines and gather small scraps of fabric for blankets. In class, have the children glue the baby onto a piece of construction paper. Then glue a scrap of fabric on top of the baby. Write “Jesus was a Special Baby” on the top of the paper.

- Let the children make angels using play dough and angel cookie cutters.
- Build a stable with Lincoln Logs. Have farm animals, a manger, a small baby, etc. that they can add.

1st-2nd Graders:

- [“Escape To Egypt”](#) maze (provided in activity sheets)
- Play “Jesus’ Birth” Tic-Tac-Toe ([Tic-Tac-Toe Questions](#) , [Instructions](#), and [Board](#) provided in activity sheets)
- [“Jesus’ Birth”](#) word search (provided in activity sheets)
- [“Jesus’ Birth”](#) crossword puzzle (provided in activity sheets)
- Learning Game: Put review questions on mangers and the answers on the baby Jesus cutouts. The teacher should pass out cutouts and help the children read them. The children “put” baby Jesus in the right manger. ([“Baby Jesus and Manger Cutouts”](#) provided in activity sheets; [N.T. 1 Review Questions](#) provided on curriculum Web site)
- After the lesson, discuss ways the children can “do good” and have each child choose one thing he/she will do that week. (Wednesday night’s teacher can ask each child what good thing he/she has done.)
- Have the children read *Three Presents for Baby Jesus*, Arch books, Joanne Bader (DISCLAIMER: Skip the note to parents)

3rd-4th Graders:

- Have the children read Matthew chapters 1-2.
- [“Escape To Egypt”](#) maze (provided in activity sheets)
- Play “Jesus’ Birth” Tic-Tac-Toe ([Tic-Tac-Toe Questions](#) , [Instructions](#), and [Board](#) provided in activity sheets)
- [“Jesus’ Birth”](#) word search (provided in activity sheets)
- [“Jesus’ Birth”](#) crossword puzzle (provided in activity sheets)
- Make a collage using some of the names of Jesus.
- After the lesson, discuss ways the children can “do good” and have each child choose one thing he/she will do that week. (Wednesday night’s teacher can ask each child what good thing he/she has done.)
- Have the children read the following:
 - *Discovery* articles (NOTE: [Advanced Bible Reader](#) quizzes exist for many issues of *Discovery* magazine): “Visiting Hours” ([December, 2005](#)); “Mary: The Mother of Jesus” ([December, 2001](#)); “The Herods—Who? What? and Where?” ([April, 2014](#))
 - *The Baby God Promised*, Arch books, Walter Wangerin (DISCLAIMERS: Note any embellishments to the story; angels are not said to have wings in the Bible; skip note to parents)
 - *When Jesus Was Born*, Arch books, Sara Hartman (DISCLAIMERS: Skip note to parents; change “the first Christmas morn” to “Jesus’ first morn”; change “Easter” to “Sunday”)
 - *The Secret Journey*, Arch books, Virginia Mueller (DISCLAIMERS: Note embellishments; change “Christmas” to “blessed” on page two)
 - *Baby Jesus Visits the Temple*, Arch books, Alice Earnheart Maas

FINGERPLAYS:

“JESUS GROWS UP”

Jesus was a little baby (*rock arms*)
Just like me (*point to self*).
First He was so very small (*squat down*)
Then He grew to be so tall (*stand on tiptoe*)
Very small, oh so tall (*squat, then stand on tiptoe*)
Just like me (*point to self*)

SONGS:

“AWAY IN A MANGER” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: James Ramsey Murry

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where He laid,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.
The cattle are lowing, the poor baby wakes,
But little, Lord Jesus no crying did make.
Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little, Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.

“MY SAVIOR HAS A FIRST NAME” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Unknown*

(Tune: Oscar Mayer Bologna song)

My Savior has a first name;
It's J-E-S-U-S.
My Savior has a second name;
It's C-H-R-I-S...T!
Oh, I love Him more and more each day,
And if you ask me why I'll say,
'Cause Jesus makes a specialty,
Of L-O-V-I-N-G me!

“MARY HAD A BABY” (*sing holding baby dolls*) ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Unknown*

(Tune: “Did You Ever See a Lassie?”)

Mary had a baby, a baby, a baby,
Mary had a baby, a long time ago.
They called His name Jesus,

They called His name Jesus.
Mary had a baby a long time ago.
Joseph helped Mary, helped Mary, helped Mary,
Joseph helped Mary, a long time ago.

“I AM SPECIAL” ([Click to Hear](#))

(Tune: “Frere Jacques”)

I am special, I am special.
Can’t you see? Can’t you see?
Someone very special,
Someone very special,
God made me!
God made me!

“THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT”

Author: Jeff Miller

(Tune: See “[Kids Prep](#)” CD)

Mathew, Mark, Luke, and John—these are the Gospels.
Acts of the apostles, Paul’s letters to the disciples:

Romans, First and Second Corinthians, Galatians, and Ephesians,
Philippians, Colossians, First and Second Thessalonians;
First and Second Timothy,
Titus and Philemon.

Also, Hebrews, James, First and Second Peter,
First, and Second and Third John,
Jude, and Revelation.

*Author Unknown: Please contact us through the feedback button for this lesson if you are aware of any copyright information for this song.

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Jesus' Birth:

Announcement to Mary; Birth in Bethlehem; Escape to Egypt

Matthew 1:18-25



New Testament 1
Part 1: Early Life of Christ

WEDNESDAY EVENING

New Testament 1 [Class Attendance Sheet](#) provided in activity sheets (NOTE: The document is interactive, allowing the teacher to type in the Class, Teacher, and the children's names.)

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Matthew 2

MEMORY WORK:

“And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21).

SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS (SEE END OF SUNDAY'S LESSON FOR WORDS):

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- Treasure chest or gift boxes decorated with “jewels” from craft store. Samples of, or pictures of, frankincense and myrrh. Pictures of gold or play gold coins.
- Other visuals used for Sunday morning lesson.



PERSONAL APPLICATION:

I can't give gifts to Jesus like the wise men did, but I can show my love for Him by obeying His Word (and, by application, obeying my parents). I can also give to God through contribution on Sunday's and through helping others. **OR** God will take care of me and protect me, as He took care of Baby Jesus.

INTRODUCTION:

Review Sunday's lesson (see [N.T. 1 Review Questions](#) for example questions).

[N.T. 1 Bible Facts Flashcards](#) (provided under "N.T. 1 Bible Facts" on curriculum Web site)

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Several months passed (probably a year or more), and more special visitors came to see Jesus. "Wise men" or "**magi**" from far away (the Far East or "eastern lands;" possibly Persia) came to the house where Jesus, Mary, and Joseph were living. The wise men had made the long journey to Jerusalem, following a bright star, to find and then worship "He who has been born King of the Jews." They looked for Him everywhere but could not find Him.



NOTE:

Magi: possibly astrologers; The same Greek word is also translated as "sorcerers" or "magicians" in the New Testament (Acts 13:6-11; 8:9-13). See also Daniel 4:9; 5:11.

2. Herod found out about the wise men's search and was worried. Was there someone waiting to take his place as ruler of the Jews? He sent for teachers of the Law who would know where the prophets said the Savior would be born. The Old Testament prophet Micah (5:2) said that the Savior would be born in Bethlehem. So Herod sent for the wise men and told them to go to Bethlehem to find the Child and then return to him with His exact location, under the pretense that he wanted to also go and worship Jesus.

Historical Note: This **Herod** (one of four in the N.T.) was **Herod the Great**, who controlled Judea from 37 B.C. until 4 B.C. under the auspices of the Roman government. He was ruthless, deceptive, and bloodthirsty. To try to placate the Jews, he rebuilt the Temple in Jerusalem.

3. The wise men continued to follow the bright star until they found Jesus. They worshipped Him and gave Him expensive gifts: gold, **frankincense**, and **myrrh**.

Frankincense: a dry perfume or incense made from the sap of the Boswellia tree; burned with sacrifices during worship services; also used as a medicine.

Myrrh: an incense made from the gum or resin of a tree found in Arabia; used as perfume, for anointing, to prepare bodies for burial, and to deaden pain.





TEACHING ALERTS:

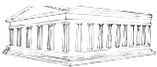
- Note that the wise men were not present at the birth of Christ. Shepherds came (Luke 2:15-16), but the wise men came later, apparently at some point before Jesus was two years old (Matthew 2:1-16).
- Note that, although many portray three men as being present at the gift giving, we do not actually know how many wise men were present. We know the gifts that were given and that there was more than one man, but nothing more.

4. The wise men were warned by God in a dream not to go back and give Herod any information about Jesus. So, they returned to their homeland. Herod was very angry when he found out that the wise men had gone home without reporting back to him. He was so afraid a baby had been born that would some day grow up to take his place (become “King of the Jews”) that he ordered his soldiers to kill every Jewish boy two years old and younger. But God protected Baby Jesus by warning Joseph in a dream to take Him and Mary far away, into Egypt. They stayed in Egypt until Herod died. Then they returned to their hometown, Nazareth of Galilee.
5. I can’t give gifts to Jesus like the wise men did, but I can give Him my time, talents, obedience, willingness to serve others, contribution, etc. I can also help others (Matthew 25:31-46). The wise men probably traveled for several months, following that special star, just to show their love for Jesus. They were not lazy. They didn’t give up when they got tired or when they had problems on their journey. There are things I can do for God, too, and I should never give up.

With Older Children discuss the different things Jesus is called before and after His birth and how they apply to us.



RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS: See the article “[Responding to the Skeptic’s Attack Against Nazareth](#)” and the video “[Finding Nazareth](#)” by Kyle Butt on the Apologetics Press Web site for a response to the allegation that Nazareth was a made up town. See “[When Did Jesus Go to Egypt?](#)” by Eric Lyons on the Apologetics Press Web site for a response to an alleged biblical discrepancy involving Matthew’s and Luke’s narrative of the events surrounding Christ’s birth.



Christmas: Historically the Catholic church and many Protestant churches have celebrated “Christmas” annually on December 25th as Jesus’ birthday. However, no one knows for sure what day, month, or even year Jesus was born. It was not celebrated by the early Church, but rather, was implemented after some three centuries.

The Bible emphasizes the importance of having permission or authority for those things that we do in life, especially in worship (e.g., Colossians 3:17). The Bible does not instruct Christians to celebrate the birth of Christ as a religious holiday, and puts no more special emphasis on that day than many other days in the life of Christ. In order to not go “beyond what is written” (1 Corinthians 4:6), the Lord’s Church does not celebrate the birth of Christ as a religious holiday. Instead, the Church commemorates the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ on every Sunday—taking the Lord’s supper—as the Bible commands.

6. *Immanuel* = God with us (Matthew 1:23); Jesus was God in the flesh; He was/is God but came to Earth to live among men to help us better understand God and how He wants us to live. His life on Earth was also reassuring to those who believed in Him. God cared about them individually, just as He cares about us. God is with us all the time (Hebrews 13:5).
7. *Christ* (Hebrew: *Messiah*) = the Anointed One; the One chosen by God to deliver/save all people from their sins. Before Jesus, other men were anointed/chosen (like Saul, David, Samuel, John the Baptizer, other prophets, etc.) as messengers to tell people what God expected them to do. Jesus was the final messenger. He was not just another good man; He was God’s Son (As Peter identified Jesus, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God”—Matthew 16:16).
8. *Jesus* = Savior; “Jesus” is the Greek form of the Hebrew name, “Joshua.” The salvation that Jesus brought was not merely a salvation from physical suffering or bad people, but a spiritual salvation from sins (Matthew 1:21).

PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—BEFORE CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

See Sunday morning’s lesson

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