

MARY AND JOSEPH'S GIFTS

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

BIRTH OF JESUS CHRISTMAS NATIVITY MARY JOSEPH CARPENTER ANGEL VISITS

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

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

MEMORY VERSE

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16, NIV*).

LESSON OBJECTIVE

Children will be able to say that the best gifts are not material things.

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

In Jewish tradition, Long ago, before Jesus was born, His chosen people, the Jews, celebrated marriage differently than we do today. Marriage ceremonies lasted a whole year. The fiancée lived with her friends or family until the time of the wedding. These wedding engagements were very serious. All the belongings of the bride were given to the future husband.

We read in Luke 1:26 - 38, that a young girl named Mary was visited by the angel Gabriel in the small town of Galilee. Mary was engaged to Joseph. Gabriel told Mary that she was going to have a baby boy and that he would be the Son of God! Can you imagine the conflict Mary faced Gabriel told her that she would give birth to a son? What would Joseph do? What would the town people say? How could this happen?

Despite what this would cost her, Mary accepted the message kindly and decided to obey the will of God. She was to name the baby, Jesus. Many named their sons Joshua, or Jeshua, in the hope that one would be the expected Messiah or a leader of the Israelite people. But on this occasion, God demanded that the child be called Jesus because he would be the Redeemer, the long-awaited Messiah announced by the prophets throughout the Old Testament.

After hearing this news, Mary responded in obedience to the Lord, “I am the servant of the Lord. May it happen just as you have told me” (v. 38). She gave herself completely to the plans of God, not caring what the consequences might be.

Matthew 1:18-25 refers to the moment when Joseph learned that his promised wife, Mary, was going to have a baby. Instead of dishonoring or stoning Mary, he decided to separate from her in secret because he loved her and did not want to expose her to a lifetime of ridicule.

In the hour of Joseph's desperation, an angel appeared to him in a dream and told him that Mary was telling the truth. She would have a boy who would be the Son of God, and he would save the people from their sins. Joseph believed and did everything as God had told him to do through the angel.

This fulfilled the prophecy of the prophet Isaiah, who had said, "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel" (7:14), which means "God with us." The message that the angel gave to Mary and Joseph was very similar. He told them that the child would be the Son of God and that they would call him Jesus. They accepted and surrendered to be the earthly parents of Jesus.

ADAPTATION

Many of today's cultures are overwhelmingly materialistic. Sadly, Christmas is one of the most materialistic times of the year. Questions like: "What gift do you want for Christmas?" or "What did you get for Christmas?" bombard children.

Maybe some of your children feel sad about not being able to buy gifts or not receiving as many as they would like. Children need a new perspective on this. We must help them know that the best gifts cannot be bought, but can only be given. The best gift their parents or anyone else can give them is love, not a toy. As a result, children will learn to give love to God, their parents, and others.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

Write the following question on the chalkboard: "How can we know that our parents love and care for us?"

(The children will give answers like: they buy us clothes and food, they play with us, they help us with our school homework, they read us stories, they take us to the doctor when we are sick, they give us a home and a place to sleep, etc.)

Show a box wrapped as a gift. Say, "This box reminds us that our parents give us many gifts."

"Some of us receive them for birthdays or at Christmas. Other gifts can be love, care, help, and comfort. Today's Bible story is about two very special parents. Listen and see what gifts they gave their baby.

TEACH THE LESSON

Mary and Joseph prepare to become a family!

Tell your children the story of Mary and Joseph, and how they prepared to receive their new son. Read directly from the Bible.

Remind them that God chose Mary and Joseph as the earthly parents of Jesus because they responded with maturity, integrity, and faithfulness. They would provide a good home for his Son. Emphasize the love and care with which Mary and Joseph gave baby Jesus.

Encourage your children to think about what they can do for their parents this Christmas. Tell them, "Like Mary and Joseph, most parents give love and care for their children. What can we do to show love to our parents and those who take care of us?"

If they cannot think of anything, give them some suggestions. Those could be: cleaning your room, taking out the trash, picking up your toys, etc. Instruct the children to give these "gifts of love" to their parents during Christmas and all year round.

CONNECT THE LESSON

Stand up, angel!

Align and print Student Activity Sheet #154-A and #154-B back to back. Distribute the activity plus scissors and glue. Help them cut out the figure of the angel and decorate it however they'd like to. Glue the side of the dress that is marked to the back edge of the other side of the dress (making a cylinder), so that the angel can stand up.

While working on the angel, review the Bible story with your children.

Christmas Cards

Prepare these materials in advance. You will need white cards or paper, envelopes, stamps, pictures, Christmas stickers, glue, scissors, colored paper, glitter, markers, and colors. Give your children paper or pre-cut cardstock the size of a greeting card. Encourage children to write a message on their cards to show how much they love the person they are making the card for. Then connect that message to how much God loves them.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

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Cut out several large circles and decorate them to look like Christmas ornaments. Write the memory verse on the ornaments, dividing it into short phrases. Hang the ornaments in the front of the classroom and read it aloud to your children. Then mix the ornaments up and allow time for your children to put them in the correct order. Say the verse out loud together. Repeat the exercise several times.

WRAP-UP

Pray

Have your children pray with you as you wrap up your time together. Use this as an opportunity to review with them the main points of your lesson: God loves us very, very much and sent his only Son to save us. Thank God for that love. In turn, pray that God will help us to love others and to show our love with kindness.

Encourage

Ask your children to review ways they can show God how much they love him and what they can do this week to show love to others, including family and neighbors. Reassure the children that they can do this and it will become a habit for them as God's children.

Invite

Invite your students to show love this week and be prepared to report back to the group next week on how they did that. Sing a song before saying goodbye and briefly review the lesson. Invite the children to come again next week. Encourage them to bring a friend so they can share with them the good news of Christmas. Also encourage them to share what they have learned with their family and friends. If at all possible, try to communicate with families so that parents who are believers can support your teaching by reinforcing it and giving children opportunities to apply their learning at home.