

GOOD NEWS

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

LOVE TRUST SACRIFICE PROMISES SINS ATONE

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38; Isaiah 7:14; Deuteronomy 7:9; John 14:1-3

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To learn to trust God who always keeps his promises

MEMORY VERSE

"This is how God showed his love among us: he sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins" (1 John 4:9-10, NIV*).

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

During this stage of their growth, preadolescents are rapidly developing the ability to reason, and begin to understand the complex relationship between ideas and facts. They have the ability to understand that the birth of Jesus is more than a holiday or a miraculous event. This lesson will help them know that the birth of Jesus was part of God's plan from the beginning of mankind. For hundreds of years, God had promised to send a Savior, and that promise was fulfilled with the birth of Jesus Christ.

Perhaps your students are disappointed in their friends and family members who make promises and do not keep them, but in this biblical story, they will learn to trust that God is faithful. Even if others fail you, you can trust that God will keep his promises. He may not respond instantly or when you want it; however, he always has the right answer at the right time.

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

Read Deuteronomy 7:9; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38 and John 14:1-3. The prophets of the Old Testament announced the arrival of a promised Messiah. Actually, the whole Old Testament refers to his coming. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah and

other prophets gave specific details about the circumstances in which the new King would be born. And, all those prophecies were fulfilled with the birth of Jesus Christ.

Today's biblical story is about the announcement of that birth. When the angel Gabriel told Mary that she would be the mother of the Messiah, she was confused. "How can I be a mother being a virgin?" She asked herself. But the angel assured her, "Nothing is impossible for God" (Luke 1:37). It is likely that she recalled the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14, where the prophet affirmed that the mother of the Messiah would be a virgin.

Although this would possibly ruin her marriage plans, and cause serious problems in Jewish society, Mary trusted in God and submitted to his will.

When Joseph found out that Mary was pregnant, he did not know what to do. They were engaged, but Joseph knew that he was not the father of the child. By law, he could have demanded that they punish Mary for committing adultery. But because he loved her, he was considering leaving her in secret.

However, God sent an angel to tell Joseph to continue with the marriage plans, because he had chosen Mary to be the mother of the Messiah.

Thus the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled, demonstrating that God is faithful to his word and worthy of all our trust.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

How long did the people wait?

Ask two volunteers to help you hand out Student Activity Sheet #362-A.

Ask your students to look at the illustrations. Next, request that three or four read the text aloud, while you write some key words on the board (creation, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Passover, Ten Commandments, prophets, exile).

Tell them: "As we have read, through the history of the Hebrew people, God showed his faithfulness and promised to send a Messiah to save mankind from their sins. These promises came true with the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem.

TEACH THE LESSON

To be prepared for this session study Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38; Isaiah 7:14; Deuteronomy 7:9 and John 14:1-3.

Let the preadolescents sit in a circle, and ask them: "Have you ever waited for something with a lot of expectation? How did you feel when you saw that time had passed and what you hoped for did not arrive?"

Listen to their responses and tell them how the Israelites felt as they awaited the arrival of the Messiah.

Since this biblical story is well known, we suggest that, based on the biblical passage of study, you tell it with your own words. You could start it in the following way:

For hundreds of years, the prophets, who were messengers of God, spoke about the Messiah who would come to save the people from their sins. Isaiah wrote one of those prophecies.

Ask a volunteer to read Isaiah 7:14.

Continue telling the story of the announcement of Jesus' birth, and at the appropriate time, ask someone else to read the angel's message to Joseph in Matthew 1:20-21.

CONNECT THE LESSON

The wait was almost over when...

Have the students find Student Activity Sheet #362-B to review the lesson using the phrases that appear there. Ask them that, after reading the expressions that are inside the squares, mark with an X those that are false and with an O that are true. Then, think about what they should change in the false sentences to make it true. Use these answers to check what your students answered:

Mary and Joseph were already married. (X) False - They were engaged to get married.

The angel Gabriel told Mary that she would have a baby. (O) True.

- The angel Gabriel told Mary that the child would be called Joseph. (X) False - The baby was to be called Jesus.
- The power of the Holy Spirit helped Mary to be pregnant with the baby Jesus, even though she was a virgin. (O) True.

Joseph was glad when he learned that Mary was pregnant. (O) False - Joseph was saddened.

Joseph wanted to stop his marriage plans with Mary. (O) True.

An angel told Joseph to take Mary as his wife. (O) True.

The angel told Joseph that the baby's name would be Jesus. (O) True.

After this, Joseph and Mary got married. (O) True.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

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Before the session write the memory verse on large pieces of cardboard. Cut out each word. Then place the words in different places throughout the meeting area. Read the memory verse (1 John 4:9-10) aloud, and ask the students to help you find all the words it consists of. After all the words are found, repeat the memory verse together a couple of times. Then, place the pieces of cardboard in a visible place in the meeting area for continued use throughout the unit.

WRAP-UP

Pray

Explain to the preadolescents that we Christians have waited for the second coming of Jesus for hundreds of years, but he has not returned yet. However, God will be faithful to keep his promise, just as he did when he sent his Son the first time.

Finally, ask them: Are you ready for the second coming of Christ? Give thanks to God for those who are ready, and pray for those who are not ready.

Encourage

Challenge your students to tell some people during the week that God keeps his promises. Encourage them to take time to thank God for all the promises he has kept in their lives.

Invite

Invite the group to the next session to continue the theme of the birth of Jesus. Remind them to welcome visitors.