

IT WAS WORTH THE WAIT!

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

LOVE TRUST LIVE SACRIFICE FUTURE

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Genesis 12:1-3; 2 Samuel 7:12-13; Psalm 31:14-15a; Matthew 1:1; Luke 2:1-7.

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help the students trust God with their future.

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

For preadolescents, waiting patiently is a difficult thing to do. They struggle between "I want it now" (the typical attitude of preadolescents), and "I can wait" (patience that is obtained with maturity).

Your students are in a stage in which they face great changes. On the one hand, they want to be teenagers and enjoy the privileges of that age; and, on the other, they still enjoy the activities of childhood. However, the most important thing is that they learn to enjoy every moment of their lives, waiting patiently for the events that will come later.

Adults who love children and fear teens often overlook preadolescents. For that reason, your students need to know that they are important to God, that he works in their lives, and that this age is part of God's plan for them.

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

Read Genesis 12:1-3; 2 Samuel 7:12-13 and Matthew 1:1. God made a special promise to Abraham: that his descendants would be

a blessing to the whole earth. And, to David he promised he would establish his throne forever. These promises surely seemed uncertain. However, God does everything in the perfect time, and fulfilled both promises in Jesus Christ.

God sent Jesus at the opportune time, when world conditions were appropriate to proclaim the gospel. It is true that the Jews were under the rule of Rome, but that situation provided a universal language and a period of relative peace. These factors facilitated the spread of the gospel by land and sea. When was Jesus born? We do not know the exact date, but we know the purpose, the promise and the fulfillment of his coming.

Read Luke 2:1-7. God used the census ordered by Augustus Caesar for Mary and Joseph to travel to Bethlehem, fulfilling the prophecy of Micah 5:2. "Bethlehem" in Hebrew means "house of bread", and from that house came Jesus, the bread of life.

The census for which Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem had several purposes. The main one was the collection of taxes. Being a descendant of David, Joseph had to go to the city of David to register. The journey of more than 149 kilometers lasted perhaps four days. Mary did not need to register, but perhaps she preferred to accompany Joseph on that exhausting trip, instead of staying in town and listening to the gossip about her unusual pregnancy.

Therefore, Jesus was born in Bethlehem, not in an inn, but probably in a cave. In that region, there are many caves where the shepherds and their animals used to take refuge when they went to Bethlehem. The manger was perhaps carved in stone to prevent the animals from overturning it. If the stable was a cave, the circumstances of Jesus' birth were similar to those of his burial. Both events took place in borrowed caves, and in the fulfillment of the time established by God.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

What do you care about?

Write the word "CONCERN" in large letters on the board. Ask your students to help you create a list of concerns they have about their future (for example, studies, family problems, friends, illnesses, etc.).

Then, ask them: How do you feel when you think about the future? Are you worried about what your life will be like when you are 18 or 21?

Last week we talked about Mary and Joseph. Their lives changed radically after receiving the angel's visit and knowing that they would have a baby. Do you think they were worried about their future? Why?

Listen to their answers, and tell them that in today's story they will learn not to worry about the coming events.

TEACH THE LESSON

Prior to the session study Genesis 12:1-3; 2 Samuel 7:12-13; Psalm 31:14-15a; Matthew 1:1 and Luke 2:1-7. Be prepared to tell the story of Jesus' birth in your own words, using the following story as a guide:

Thousands of years before Jesus was born, God asked Abraham to leave his country to go to a new land. He had promised that Abraham's descendants would become a great nation and that through them he would bless all the families of the earth (read Genesis 12:1-3).

One of Abraham's descendants was David. God also made a promise to David. He told him that through his descendants, his kingdom would never end (read Samuel 7:12-13).

Look up Matthew 1:1 and 1:17. What do these verses tell us about the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham and David? Allow your students to respond (Jesus was a descendant of Abraham and David).

Tell the story, and conclude by saying: God fulfilled His promises to Abraham and David. The birth of Jesus was part of God's plan to send a Savior, and He worked in the lives of many people to fulfill that plan. It was not luck or coincidence. God planned everything very carefully.

Joseph and Mary were perhaps worried about their future. Their plans for courtship and wedding changed with the news of the birth of a very special baby. They could have let themselves be overcome by panic, despair and seek their own solution. However, God was working with that couple and others for Jesus to be born in Bethlehem.

CONNECT THE LESSON

Part of the plan

God worked in many people to fulfill the plan of salvation. To deepen this concept, ask your students to solve the riddles on Student Activity Sheet #363. Use this guide to verify that their answers are correct:

I had faith and followed God wherever he guided me. I was an ancestor of Jesus. (Abraham)

I was a shepherd and a king. I was an ancestor of Jesus. (David)

An angel told me that I would be the mother of Jesus. (Mary)

God used the decree that I gave to take a national census. My decree led Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem. (Augustus Cesar)

God gave me courage to overcome doubts and cultural traditions. I married a young woman who was pregnant. (Joseph)

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

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Use again the large pieces of cardboard with the words of the memory verse. Begin by reading the memory verse (1 John 4:9-10) aloud. Then ask the students to help you put all the words of the memory verse in the correct order. Allow one student at a time to place one word in the correct order. After all the words are put in the correct order, repeat the memory verse together a couple of times. Then, replace the pieces of cardboard in a visible place in the meeting area for continued use during the unit.

WRAP-UP

Pray

Remind them that they should not fear what comes in the future if they have the presence of God in their life. Guide them in a time of prayer, asking God to help them increase their patience and their faith.

Encourage

Review the list of concerns your students wrote at the beginning of this session. Read together Matthew 1:20 and Luke 1:30. Then, ask them: What is the phrase that is repeated in both passages? (Do not be afraid.) Encourage the group to trust God to help them overcome their concerns this week.

Invite

Tell the students something interesting about the next session to encourage them to attend. Remind them to invite friends.