

BIRTH OF CHRIST**Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-56**

Lesson Memory Verse: Matthew 1:21 "And she shall bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins."

Lesson Aim: God carefully planned Jesus' birth so that we could have His Son as our personal gift from Him; therefore, each one of us should show Him our love by receiving His Son as our Savior.

Lesson Plan: Use the KEY – HE – SEE – WE – BE plan (explained in the Introductory Notes).

KEY (for Attention): Susan was going to be seven years old just a few days before Christmas. Mother told her that she could invite some of her best friends to the house on her birthday for a party. Susan was so pleased that she gave her mother a big kiss and thanked her.

On the day of her party, Mother had everything ready when Susan's friends arrived. First, they played games and then all of her friends got a little gift. Then Mother brought out a big beautiful cake with seven candles on it. After Susan blew out the candles Mother cut the cake. They had pizza, ice cream, cake and all the lemonade they could drink.

When they had finished eating, Susan opened her birthday presents. She liked all of them, but the gift she liked the best was a big stuffed brown bear. It was so soft and cuddly that she squeezed it with all her might and gave it a big kiss.

When Father came home, Susan showed him all of her gifts. After he saw her gifts he said, "I am glad that you received such nice gifts, but I could not help but think of Patty Baker. She had a terrible thing happen to her today. Her house caught on fire and she lost all of her dolls and toys in that fire. I am sure she is very sad."

When Susan heard what Father had said, she was very quiet. Then her eyes brightened. She picked up her big brown bear and put it in Father's arms. "Here," she said, "take my bear to Patty. Tell her I want her to have it. I know she will like it and it will make her feel a lot better."

That was very kind of Susan, wasn't it? When we give something nice to someone we show our love to them. When we give our best to someone, we show our greatest love to them.

HE (for Authority): God wanted to give us a gift, too, because He loved us. He wanted to give us the best gift that He had because He loved us very much, and so He gave us His Son. He carefully planned everything for thousands of years so that all would be ready when it was time for His Son to come to this earth. Then He told Mary that she had been chosen to be the mother of Jesus, His Son. Finally, He told Joseph by an angel that Mary would bring His Son into the world. Our memory verse is a part of the message that this angel gave to Joseph. The angel told Joseph that Mary would have a Son and he was to name Him JESUS. This name meant, "Savior." Can you tell me the reason why He was to have a name that meant "Savior"? (Yes, He would save His people from their sins.) Have you let Him save you from your sins? He can if you will ask Him to do it. No one else but Jesus can save you from your sins and keep you from going to the lake of fire after you die. That is why God's gift is the best in all of the world.

SEE (for Apperception) and WE (for Application): PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word. In our Bible lesson today we will learn about some of the careful plans God made so that each one of us could have His most wonderful gift, which was His Son, Jesus. Those who have Jesus are brought into the family of God and are given eternal life. No gift received at Christmas, or at any other time, is as great as this great gift of God.

I. Mary was told about God's Gift (Luke 1:26-56)**A. Mary Heard from Gabriel (Lk 1:26-38)**

Gabriel was sent from God to tell Mary that she was going to be the mother of Jesus, Who was God's Son. Mary wondered how this could happen to her, but Gabriel told her that nothing was impossible for God. When she heard this she believed what the angel had told her.

WE: Do we think Mary would have been chosen by God to be the mother of Jesus if she had not believed what the angel had told her? (No) That is right. God is not pleased when we do not believe Him (Heb 11:6). The Bible says, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom 14:23). Do we believe everything God tells us in the Bible? Be like Mary and believe God. He can do the things that seem impossible to us.

B. Mary Heard from Elisabeth (Lk 1:39-45)

Shortly after Gabriel's visit Mary went to visit her cousin, Elisabeth in Judah. Gabriel had told her that Elisabeth, who was quite old and never had a child, was now going to have a son (John the Baptist). This was an amazing thing for her to have a child when she was so old. So Mary went to see Elisabeth. When Mary entered the house and greeted Elisabeth, a wonderful thing happened to Elisabeth. She was filled with the Holy Spirit. When she was filled with the Holy Spirit, she knew that Mary was going to be the mother of the Lord and told her so. Now Mary had heard the same thing from Gabriel. This was the second time that she had been told that she was going to be the mother of God's Son.

WE: God made Mary's faith strong by telling her the same thing twice. God will make our faith strong, too, by telling us His promises many times. Every time we read the Bible and believe what He has written, it will make our faith stronger (Rom 10:17).

C. Mary Praised the Lord (Lk 1:46-56)

After Mary heard Elisabeth's encouraging words, she praised God for choosing her to be the mother of the Savior. It was a great blessing and she knew it. God had done great things for her and He would do great things for others, too. She praised Him for all of these things.

WE: Do we think about the great things God has done for us, for our family and friends, and for all believers in Christ? Can we name some great things He has done? Let us praise Him for doing these wonderful things. It is good to praise the Lord.

II. Joseph was told about God's Gift (Matthew 1:18-25)

A. Joseph Had a Problem (Mt 1:18-19)

Joseph was engaged to Mary, but before he married her he noticed that she was going to have a baby. This was a serious problem to Joseph. Who was the baby's father? Since he did not know, he decided to break his engagement with Mary and not marry her. This was the thing that he thought God would want him to do.

WE: When we have a problem, do we try to please God by the things that we do? Always try to please Him and we will never go wrong.

B. Joseph Got the Answer (Mt 1:20-23)

God gave Joseph the answer in an unusual dream. An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in his dream and he told him about Mary's baby. He was told that it was a special baby that God had given to her. She had not been untrue to him, but God had to do a miracle when He gave her this baby. This baby was given to Mary by the Holy Spirit. It would be a baby boy and He was to be called JESUS, which means Savior. He would save His people from their sins. Who was this baby Jesus? (Yes, He was God's Son.) So Joseph was given God's answer to his problem.

WE: God will give answers to our problems, too. If we will ask God for His answers, and keep our heart right, He has promised to give us those answers that we need (James 1:5-8).

C. Joseph Believed the Lord (Mt 1:24-25)

Joseph showed that he believed God when he obeyed Him. How did he obey God? (He took Mary as his wife.)

WE: When we obey God, we also show Him that we believe Him. This pleases Him very much. How much do we show that we believe God? Have you obeyed Him this week? How? Keep on obeying the Lord. This is very important to Him (1 Sam 15:22).

BE (for Action): Are you glad that Mary and Joseph believed God when He told them that He was sending Jesus to their home? Do you believe the memory verse which says that Jesus would "save His

people from their sins"? What did Jesus have to do to save us from our sins? (He had to die on the cross to pay for our sins and then He had to rise again from the grave to give us eternal life.) What must you do to have Jesus as your Savior? (Ask Him to save me from my sins and really want to live a good life by His help). How many of you, who have never asked Jesus to be your Savior, would like to ask Him right now? If you ask Him to become your Savior, you will have the greatest Christmas gift of all.