#### Lesson 1:-

#### Jesus’ Birth/Visit from the Wise Men

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE:

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

MEMORY WORK:

Bible Skills 1-6

John 3:16

The 12 Apostles

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

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

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| **LESSON STARTS HERE** |

INTRODUCTION:

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).

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:** With younger kids, you can tell them that she wasn’t married; God Himself made the Baby grow inside her.

1. 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.
2. 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. It may be that the stable where Jesus was born was actually a cave.

1. 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 worshiped Him.
2. 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, worshiping 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.

1. 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 ADDITIONAL VISUALS (note disclaimers):

##### Betty Lukens’ felt pieces

* A Beka Flash-a-Card Series (DISCLAIMER: use the cards, not the lesson book)
* Free Bible Images – Saved on flash drive. Can be presented on classroom tv. Script included in lesson file.
* BSGFAA -These are black and white laminated posters that look like a comic strip. They are filed by lesson in the box for large visual aids.
  + - Sunday: (Lesson 22, #5), (Lesson 24)
    - Wednesday (Lesson 25, #3-6)
* See AP’s pinterest page for ideas. [www.pinterest.com/apcurriculum](http://www.pinterest.com/apcurriculum)
* Tales of Glory Nativity Scene
* Many Bible Story books are available for this lesson
* Props for acting out story- Bible costumes, baby doll, a manger (could be large box), strips of cotton fabric for swaddling clothes, stuffed animals

SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS:

**“AWAY IN A MANGER”**

Author: James Ramsey Murry

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed

The little Lord Jesus lay down his sweet head

The stars in the sky looked down where He lay

The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay

The cattle are lowing, the poor baby wakes

But little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.

I love thee, Lord Jesus. Look down from the sky.

And stay by my cradle ‘till morning is nigh.

*Any other “Christmas” song that is scripturally sound..*

SUNDAY

LEARNING CENTERS AND ACTIVITIES:

* Nativity Sticker Scene – Stickers should be available in the lesson file. Many times stickers for this lesson are available at Hobby Lobby. Let students make the scene in the picture box of the story sheets. Laminate and save to put in the student’s NT binder.
* 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.
* 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 manager, a small baby, etc. that they can add.
* Let students act out the story with the nativity scene figures.

### WEDNESDAY NIGHT

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.

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Review Sunday’s lesson. (See [Review Questions](http://www.apcurriculum.com/dcirfol/4-24-32RQ.pdf) for example questions.) Using a nativity scene, let the class retell the story of Jesus Birth.
2. 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.

1. 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.

1. The wise men continued to follow the bright star until they found Jesus. They worshiped 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.

**NOTE:**

**Misconceptions**:

* Many people have the misimpression that the wise men came to Jesus on the night that He was born. However, Matthew 2 makes it clear that it was some time after Jesus was born that the men came to visit Him.
* Many also have the misimpression that there were three wise men. In truth, we do not know how many there were. We know the gifts that were given and that there was more than one man, but nothing more.

1. 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.
2. 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.

LEARNING CENTERS AND ACTIVITIES:

Crafts/ Coloring sheets should focus on the second part of the lesson – the visit of the wise men.

* Wise Men Sticker Scene – Use the Wise Men Stickers from the Nativity Sticker Set. Put the stickers in the picture of box of the story sheets. Save the pages, laminate, and place in the student’s NT binder.

RECOMMENDED ADDITIONAL VISUALS (note disclaimers):

##### Betty Lukens’ felt pieces

* A Beka Flash-a-Card Series (DISCLAIMER: use the cards, not the lesson book)
* Free Bible Images – Saved on flash drive. Can be presented on classroom tv. Script included in lesson file.
* See AP’s pinterest page for ideas. [www.pinterest.com/apcurriculum](http://www.pinterest.com/apcurriculum)
* Treasure chest or gift boxes decorated
* Pictures or samples of gold, frankincense and myrrh

### Review Questions

### What was Jesus’ mother’s name?

### Mary

### What was Mary’s husband’s name?

### Joseph

### What was Joseph’s job?

### Carpenter

### What angel told Mary she would have a Son?

### (Gabriel)

### What name did the angel say the Son would be given?

### (Jesus)

### What does the name “Jesus” mean?

### (Savior)

### In what city was Jesus born?

### (Bethlehem)

### Were Joseph and Mary from that city?

### (No)

### What was Joseph and Mary’s hometown?

### (Nazareth)

### When Jesus was born, in what was he wrapped?

### (Swaddling clothes)

### What are swaddling clothes?

### (Strips of cloth that were wrapped around a baby to keep his/her arms and legs straight)

### Why were Joseph and Mary going to Bethlehem?

### (To pay taxes)

### Who did the angels tell about Jesus/

### Shepherds

### Who followed a star to see Jesus?

### Wise Men

### Additional Notes / Activities Performed & Curriculum Feed Back

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