



Use Week of:

Christmas • Session 2

Angels Spoke to Mary and Joseph

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Matthew 1; Luke 1

STORY POINT: God chose a family for Jesus.

KEY PASSAGE:

Galatians 4:4-5

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us.

INTRODUCE THE STORY
(15–20 MINUTES)
PAGE 22



TEACH THE STORY
(10–15 MINUTES)
PAGE 24



EXPERIENCE THE STORY
(20–25 MINUTES)
PAGE 26



Additional resources are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject.

LEADER Bible Study

People had been waiting a long time for Jesus. God hinted at His coming in the garden of Eden when He promised a seed to conquer the serpent. (Gen. 3:15) The prophets told of His coming hundreds of years before His birth. God was working out His plan to bring His people back to Himself.

In the Bible, God sometimes used angels to communicate His message to people. Angels spoke to Abraham in Genesis 18. The Angel of the LORD spoke to Balaam in Numbers 22. Now Mary and Joseph, the earthly parents of Jesus, each received a special visit from an angel to announce the birth of God's promised Messiah.

The angel Gabriel's announcement to Mary surprised her. By His grace, God chose Mary to be the mother of Jesus. The angel's message revealed much about this promised child.

First, He would be great in both being and nature. He would be the Son of the Most High. Jesus is the Son of God, and the Lord God promised to give Him the throne of His father David. These words fulfilled the prophecy given to David in 2 Samuel 7:12-16. He would reign over the house of Jacob forever. His kingdom would have no end.

The good news that Jesus was coming into the world was good news because of why He was coming. An angel revealed Jesus' purpose to Joseph in Matthew 1:21, "He will save his people from their sins." The gospel is the good news of what God has done for us through Christ.

The announcement of Jesus' birth is not the beginning of the gospel; God had been planning for this moment since before the beginning of time. (See Eph. 1:3-10.) Help the preschoolers you teach understand that God's plan has always been to save sinners and bring them back to Himself. Jesus, whose name means "Yahweh saves," is the culmination of that plan.

The BIBLE Story

Angels Spoke to Mary and Joseph

Matthew 1; Luke 1

One day, God sent an angel named Gabriel to a town called Nazareth. The angel went to visit a young woman named Mary. Mary was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph.

The angel said to Mary, “Be happy! God is happy with you. He is with you.” Mary was afraid and did not understand. Why would God be happy with her? She hadn’t done anything special.

“Do not be afraid,” the angel said. He told Mary that she was going to have a very special baby. The baby’s name would be Jesus.

Mary asked the angel, “How can that happen?”

The angel said, “God will be the Father of the baby. The baby will be God’s Son.”

Then the angel said, “God can do anything!” He told Mary that her relative Elizabeth was pregnant, even though she was old and did not have any children.

“May everything happen just as you said,” Mary said. Then the angel left.

Mary hurried to Elizabeth’s house. When she arrived, the baby inside Elizabeth leaped for joy! The Holy Spirit filled Elizabeth and she said, “What an honor, Mary! You and your baby will be blessed!”



Mary was so happy. She **praised God with a song about how great God is**. Mary knew families in the future would say she was blessed because God was going to do great things through Jesus. God would keep His promise to Abraham to bless the whole world through his family by sending Jesus. Mary stayed with Elizabeth for three months. Then she went home.

Joseph found out Mary was going to have a baby, but Joseph knew it was not his baby; Mary and Joseph were not married yet! Soon after Joseph thought these things, **an angel appeared to him in a dream**.

“Joseph!” the angel said. “Do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. Mary is going to have a son. Name Him Jesus because He is going to save His people from their sins!”

When **Joseph** woke up, he did just what the angel said. He **married Mary, and when she had a son, Joseph named Him Jesus**.

Christ Connection: Many of God’s prophets talked about Jesus before He was born. Everything they said about Jesus came true. Before God created the world, He planned to send Jesus. Jesus came to do God’s plan, to rescue people from sin.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Use props:** Make paper bag or craft stick puppets for each person in the story: Mary, Joseph, Elizabeth, and the angel(s). Ask four or five adults to act out the story as the storyteller narrates it.
- **Move with the story:** Invite four or five adult helpers to dress up in Bible times clothes to play out the story. Encourage the adults to move around the room and use each corner as a different scene: Mary’s house, Elizabeth’s house, and Joseph’s house.

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: Angels Spoke to Mary and Joseph

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 1; Luke 1

STORY POINT: God chose a family for Jesus.

KEY PASSAGE: Galatians 4:4-5

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us.

Welcome time

- "Joy to the World" song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert download
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play a theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church's security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

Activity page

- "Finding the Parents" activity page, 1 per child
- crayons or markers

Invite preschoolers to look at the baby on the left and circle the parents on the right.

SAY • Good job choosing the parents! Did you know that Jesus had parents too? God is Jesus' Father, and Jesus' parents on earth were Mary and Joseph. In today's Bible story, we will hear how God told Mary and Joseph that they would be Jesus' parents.

Draw family pictures

Set out paper and encourage preschoolers to draw a picture of their families. Ask preschoolers about their family members as they work.

SAY • God chose you to be part of your family. Did you know that Jesus had a family? In today's Bible story, we will hear how **God chose a family for Jesus**. Jesus is God's Son, and God chose Mary to be Jesus' mother and Joseph to be Jesus' earthly father.

LOW PREP

- paper
- markers or crayons

Tip: Be sensitive to different family situations.

Sort Christmas bows

Gather an assortment of Christmas bows. Invite preschoolers to sort the bows into gift boxes. If the bows are adhesive, consider allowing preschoolers to place the bows on gift boxes.

SAY • We put Christmas bows on Christmas gifts. At Christmastime, we celebrate the greatest gift we have ever received—Jesus! Christmas is the time of the year the church remembers how Jesus came from heaven to earth as a baby. Listen to today's Bible story to hear whom God chose to be Jesus' parents on earth.

- Christmas gift bows
- gift boxes

Transition to teach the story

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, flip off the lights, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Invite preschoolers to make their happiest face as they move to Bible study.

- countdown video (optional)

TEACH the Story



SESSION TITLE: Angels Spoke to Mary and Joseph

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 1; Luke 1

STORY POINT: God chose a family for Jesus.

KEY PASSAGE: Galatians 4:4-5

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us.

Introduce the Bible story

- baby picture
- Bible
- bookmark
- Giant Timeline

Place a bookmark at Matthew 1; Luke 1 in your Bible.

Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

SAY • Is there any book more important than the Bible? No, the Bible is God's words. The stories in the Bible really happened. Today's Bible story comes from two books in the New Testament: Matthew and Luke. Jesus was in heaven with God, but He came to earth as a baby. [*Show the baby picture. Explain who it is.*] Why would Jesus come to earth as a baby? Listen to our Bible story to find out.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline.

Remind children that all the stories in the Bible are telling an even bigger story. The Bible tells us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

Watch or tell the Bible story

- Story Point Poster
- "Angels Spoke to Mary and Joseph" video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

SAY • God planned for Mary and Joseph to have an important part in His plan to rescue the world from sin. **God chose a family for Jesus.** God chose Mary

and Joseph to be Jesus' earthly parents. By sending Jesus, God would keep His promise to save people from their sins.

Practice the key passage

Cut out the key passage marker and place it at Galatians 4:4-5. Invite a volunteer to come up and open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage aloud. Practice the motions you created for the verse.

SAY • God knew we would sin and need a Savior. All along God planned to send His one and only Son into the world to be punished for sin. Because Jesus came into the world, we can be saved.

Sing the key passage song, "Adoption as Sons," and the theme song, "Joy to the World."

- Key Passage Marker
- Key Passage Poster
- "Adoption as Sons" song
- "Joy to the World" song

Learn the big picture question

SAY • Many of God's prophets talked about Jesus before He was born. Everything they said about Jesus came true. Our big picture question asks, *Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us.* Before God created the world, He planned to send Jesus. Jesus came to do God's plan, to rescue people from sin.

- Big Picture Question Poster



Missions moment

Show the "Scripture Songs" video.

SAY • Quinn helps Christians in Madagascar create songs in their language to memorize Scripture! Christians all over the world study the Bible and sing songs to Jesus. What are your favorite songs to sing to Jesus?

- "Scripture Songs" video

Pray and transition to experience the story

EXPERIENCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: Angels Spoke to Mary and Joseph

BIBLE PASSAGE: Luke 1; Matthew 1

STORY POINT: God chose a family for Jesus.

KEY PASSAGE: Galatians 4:4-5

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us.

LOW PREP

- “Joy to the World” song (optional)
- “Adoption as Sons” song (optional)

Sing Christmas carols

Lead preschoolers in singing familiar Christmas carols that relate to the birth of Jesus. Suggestions include “Joy to the World,” “Away in a Manger,” “Silent Night,” “Hark the Herald Angels Sing,” “O Come All Ye Faithful,” and “Go, Tell It on the Mountain.” You may also play the key passage or theme song.

SAY • We sing songs at Christmas that remind us of what God did for us when He sent Jesus. In our Bible story, Mary praised God with a song about how great God is. **God chose a family for Jesus.** Before God created the world, He planned to send Jesus. Jesus came to do God’s plan, to rescue people from sin.

Taste baby food

Post an allergy alert. Bring a variety of baby foods. Open each one. Place some baby food on a plastic spoon for a preschooler to sample. Be careful that each spoon is only used one time. Make the tasting a game by removing labels and inviting preschoolers to guess each food.

SAY • What kind of food do you think Baby Jesus ate? Do you think Mary and Joseph mashed up His food so He could eat it? **God chose a family for Jesus.** Many of God’s prophets talked about this Baby long before

- Allergy Alert download
- baby food (single fruit or vegetable serving)
- plastic spoons
- foam plates (optional)

He was born. Everything they said about Jesus came true.

Stamp Christmas cards

Squirt various colors of washable paint onto individual foam plates. Set out cookie cutters. Give each preschooler a sheet of white construction paper. Guide a child to fold his sheet in half to form a card. Demonstrate how to press a cookie cutter in the paint and then stamp the paper. Invite preschoolers to stamp images on their Christmas cards.

SAY • We give Christmas cards at Christmastime to celebrate God sending His Son to earth. Many of God's prophets talked about Jesus before He was born. Everything they said about Jesus came true. **God chose a family for Jesus.** Jesus came to do God's plan, to rescue people from sin.

- white construction paper
- angel, candy cane, or sheep cookie cutters
- washable paint
- foam plates
- wipes for cleanup
- smocks

Examine evergreens

Post an allergy alert. Set out a variety of non-toxic Christmas greenery for preschoolers to examine.

Suggestions include pine (not ponderosa or yew), cedar, fir, magnolia, balsam, and juniper (with berries removed).

Encourage preschoolers to feel and smell the nature items.

Provide magnifying glasses for preschoolers to examine the greenery closely.

SAY • These plants are called *evergreens*. That is because they stay green all the time. Their leaves do not die. Evergreens remind us of Jesus. Jesus died on the cross, but God raised Him from the dead to live forever. When we put our trust in Jesus, we will have life forever with God. ***Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us.***

- Allergy Alert download
- evergreens (real or artificial)
- magnifying glasses

Tip: Make sure preschoolers do not put evergreens in their mouths.

• guests
• "Adoption as Sons"
song (optional)



Love babies

Invite a few parents to visit your class with their babies. Vary the ages of the babies. Include newborns as well as toddlers. (Most preschoolers consider children younger than themselves to be babies!) Encourage preschoolers to make friendly faces at the babies and play with them as the parents allow.

To make the connection with the missions moment, you may also consider singing the key passage song as a simple Scripture song to help preschoolers see how easy it could be to share the good news with others.

SAY • Can you imagine Jesus being a baby like one of these? Do you think Baby Jesus giggled and cried? Do you think Mary and Joseph smiled at Baby Jesus or played peekaboo with Him? **God chose a family for Jesus.** At just the right time, Jesus came to do God's plan to rescue people from sin.

Snack and review

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Wash hands and gather preschoolers for snack time. Pray, thanking God for the snack.

Serve O-shaped cereal for snack. Remind preschoolers that Jesus came to earth as a baby. ***Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us.*** Show the Bible story picture as you ask the following questions. Retell parts of the Bible story as needed.

1. What did the angel say was going to happen to Mary? (*She was going to have a very special baby named Jesus.*)
2. Whom did Mary go see after the angel told her the special news? (*her relative Elizabeth*)
3. What part did Mary and Joseph have in God's plan? (*to be Jesus' parents on earth*)
4. What did Jesus come into the world to do? (*to save people from their sins*)
5. ***Why was Jesus born? Jesus was born to rescue us.***

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert download
- paper cups and napkins
- snack food
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- O-shaped cereal (optional)

Transition

When preschoolers finish their snack, they may color the Bible story coloring page, play a simple game to practice the key passage or big picture question, or sing along to the key passage or theme song.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Key Passage Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- "Joy to the World" song (optional)
- "Adoption as Sons" song (optional)
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers