

Stories of Jesus

Dear storytellers,

We feel that it is time to begin sharing with the children concerning our Lord Jesus Christ. We have spent the last three years in the Old Testament, and now we have the feeling after prayer and fellowship to move to the New Testament. We are burdened that the leaven of Christianity be purged from our presentation and considerations in touching this matter. These stories have points of emphasis that may be new to you. Nonetheless, these stories are intended to build upon each other and to give the children a certain sense of awe, striking points of truth that will become seeds planted into them. As we move forward in this line, we encourage you to fellowship with others.

Please be careful when conveying the story of Jesus. It is too easy to bring in things that are not in the Bible but are from Christianity (e.g., that there were three magi, that they rode on camels). We want to present His birth as it is in the Word and convey the wonder of it to the children. We do not want to try to explain any of the things that are more difficult for them to understand (e.g., that a virgin gave birth). We state the facts, and we want the children to know the facts, but we do not want the storyteller to stop and attempt to explain these matters. We have inserted reminder notes in each story to help us all not to fall into the trap of trying to explain and/or bring in a wrong concept from our traditions.

Having said this, we would like to say that for some parents this story might lend itself quite well to talks that would help instill into their children the proper and high level of morality. Concerning the word *virgin*, for example, it is too easy merely to give the "physical definition" to your child. But what Mary conveys is much more than this. Mary was chaste. A person who is chaste is proper in their living, their dress, their appearance, their speaking, and their friendships. If you had known Mary you would have considered her a virtuous young woman. She was a godly young woman in that she knew God's Word, loved God's Word, and could recite it. She had God's Word hidden in her heart. As such a young woman, she was regarded highly by others. God chose such a young woman.

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Week One

Reference: Isaiah 7:14

Memory verse: Isaiah 7:14

Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin will conceive and will bear a son, and she will call his name Immanuel.

Story points:

1. Every new baby is a joy.
2. Mothers get pregnant, and nine months later a baby is born.
3. We can predict the due date of a baby.
4. One baby's birth was predicted over 700 years before He was born.
5. God wanted man to know that this baby would be born.
6. God announced it, just like we today announce the coming of a baby.

Emphasized points:

1. We all love new babies.
2. It is amazing that Isaiah spoke concerning this baby being born.
3. This baby was very special; this baby was very important.
4. God's Word is 100% reliable.

Embedded thoughts:

1. There is a wonder in the coming of a baby; babies make us so happy.
2. Every baby goes through the same process that takes 9 months in the womb, but each time it is a wonder.
3. Something so typical and yet so usual is a source of joy to every family.
4. What is recorded in God's Word is marvelous.

Visuals:

1. Calendar that shows all twelve months.
2. Time lines: one showing from Isaiah's time to Christ's birth; another showing how many babies could have been born in 45 generations.

Songs:

1. "Emmanuel" (Texas songbook #F109).
2. "Behold, the virgin shall be with child" (Children's Lessons #603).
3. "Emmanuel means God with us" (Bible Story Songs – Matthew #8).

Story sample:

I am not sure how it is in your family, but when I was a young, we always had a family get together when a cousin was having a baby. All the children were excited about getting another cousin. Sometimes we had the get together after the baby was born. That was even better because you could look at the baby, and all the older ones could hold it. Babies were always so cute! Such little fingers with fingernails! Such little toes! And those babies made all kinds of faces and small little noises as they slept.

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As a child, I did not think about how many months it took before the baby would be born. It just seemed that I heard someone was pregnant, and after a while the mommy's tummy got bigger and bigger, and then one day the baby was born. *(*** The storyteller could insert an example using a sister that has been among the children in the church life recently.)* It was not until I got older that I understood how people knew when the baby was going to be born. Can anyone here tell us how many months it takes? (Nine) That is right. If you hear in February *(use the calendar)* that a cousin is going to have a baby in about 9 months, there will be a birth in November. And no matter if the baby is born in California or in New York or even in another country like China, it takes just about 9 months. And these days the doctors have tests to help predict when the baby will be born. If they find out a mommy is pregnant in February, the doctors can predict whether the baby will be born the first or the last week in November. It is kind of interesting that now they even give the unborn baby a "due date." That means that the doctor is predicting, or foretelling, the date the baby will be born...like November 16. And it is so common these days to know the baby's due date. Often the doctor's tests are correct, and the baby is born close to its due date. So we are pretty good at predicting, or foretelling, when a baby will be born once we know that someone is pregnant. That is fairly common and very typical now. But this is just predicting *when* the baby will be born. No one can predict when a woman will get pregnant. We can only predict when the baby's due date is.

But did you know that there was a baby's birth that was foretold in the Bible? This baby's birth was predicted way more than 9 months before His birth. It was foretold 18 generations before His birth. WOW!!! *(Use time line.)* Let's say that this is when this baby is born. Now, go back in time 18 generations (mom, grandparents, great-grandparents, great-great-grandparents, great-great-great-grandparents, etc.). This means that from this long ago people knew that this baby was going to be born!! Is this for real, or am I pulling your leg and telling you a fib??? At this point *(on the time line)* Isaiah, who was a man of God, was living. Isaiah lived 700 years before this baby was born. That was hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years before this baby would be born.

[Note for serving ones: 45 generations are from Abraham to the Lord Jesus as counted in the Matthew genealogy (from Adam, it is 19 more generations—although the time is about the same, people lived much longer). There are 19 generations from Ahaz to the Lord Jesus (18 from Hezekiah, Ahaz's son). It was during Ahaz's reign the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 was given.]

Let's read Isaiah 7:14b:

Behold a virgin will conceive and will bear a son, and she will call his name Immanuel.

Here is Isaiah's time. *(Point to the time line at Isaiah's time.)* He knew that this baby *(point to Christ's birth on time line)* was going to be born. How could anyone know that a baby would be born so long before its birth? They could only know because God wanted them to know. God spoke to certain ones about this birth. God announced the birth of this baby! Isaiah knew that this baby would be born, because Jehovah told him about it.

Look at that verse in Isaiah again. *(Put the verse on the board.)* What information does it give us?

1. The baby's mom would be a virgin**.
2. The baby would be a boy.
3. The baby's name would be Immanuel.

...and we know that God announced that this baby would be born, so we will add that, too.

4. God made the announcement that this baby would come.

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***** NOTE to storytellers: Please do not try to explain what a virgin is during the story. If this question comes up it is best to ignore it and continue in the story. We have purposely stated facts but not offered any explanations. This question mostly likely will only come up with older children. If so, do not interrupt the story to answer it.***

You know, today the doctors can do a test while the baby is still in its mother's womb to determine if it is a girl or a boy. Even with these tests, sometimes doctors are wrong. Just within the last year I know of 2 families who were surprised when the baby came out a boy after the test said it would be a girl! So these tests cannot 100% predict, or foretell, whether it would be a boy or a girl. But this verse in the Bible says it would be a boy. And we know it will be a boy because God's Word is true. It is trustworthy 100% of the time. We can depend on it.

Now we need to ask a question. Look at #4. *(Point to and repeat #4 on list.)* Why did God start announcing this baby's birth so many generations before He was born? *(This is not a question for the children to answer.)* You know, most people start announcing that they are going to have a baby about 7 to 8 months before the baby comes. They tell all the relatives, all their friends, and everyone who works with them. I have even been in the grocery line when someone started talking about having their first baby. We all enjoy such good news! Oh, a baby is coming! How nice! It is like we all begin to celebrate and enjoy the baby's coming long before it is born. Well, I think that the coming of this baby made God **so** happy. He was happier than your mom and dad were to have you. He was so happy that He started to announce this baby's birth a long, long, long time before the baby was born.

Isn't that wonderful?! God had such good news—the baby is coming—that He had to start letting us know long before it came. He started announcing the good news early! And why was God so happy that this baby was coming? Look at #3. *(Point to and repeat it.)*

This baby was to be called Immanuel. That name means a lot. You know my name is really just some letters put together to sound nice, but this name has a special meaning. It means "God with us." This was not any usual baby that was coming. This baby was most important because He was God with us!

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Timeline
Week 1



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Week Two

References: Luke 1:26-38; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-24

Memory verse: Matthew 1:21

And she will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins.

(Note: The point in learning these two similar verses is to underline the thought that this promise is in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament.)

Story points:

1. Many of God's people knew that this baby was coming, but not exactly when He would come.
2. Gabriel came to tell Mary that the baby would come.
3. Mary responded and was willing for God's Word to be fulfilled.
4. Joseph had a dream concerning the coming of this baby; because of this dream, he knew what to do.

Emphasized points:

1. Before a special event we get an announcement.
2. The baby's coming was the most special event; therefore, many kinds of announcements were needed.
3. Mary's response was simple, pure, believing and willing.
4. Joseph's thoughtful consideration was wise; he got the best counsel on what to do.
5. Joseph obeyed God's word to him.
6. This baby was God with man.

Embedded thoughts:

1. This baby's coming was good news!
2. His coming was an AWESOME thing!
3. Do not make rash decisions; take time and get counsel in making decisions.

Visuals:

1. Map.
2. Time line from week one.

Songs:

1. "God's Word is hidden in my heart" (Texas songbook B138).
2. "Behold a virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son and..." Matthew 1:23

Story sample:

After that announcement in Isaiah's time concerning this baby, hundreds and hundreds of years went by. Since Jehovah had made the announcement, a lot of the people of God knew this baby was coming, but they just did not know exactly when. *(Use the time line from week 1.)* Would this baby be born at this time? Would it come at this time?

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When I was young my grandmother would come and visit us each year. When I was in the third grade, my grandmother, who was a widow, got married. We got a phone call saying that they were coming to visit us. But this was just a "general" announcement. I was pretty happy to have a new grandpa. But we did not know what month or what day they would come. We needed some specifics, didn't we? Soooo, after a time we got another call saying they were coming by train in this month, on this day, and even what time the train would arrive in our town. Oh, then I got excited! I was excited that I had a new grandpa who was coming. And he was coming soon. Well, this is kind of how Jehovah was about this promised baby. He gave some "general" announcements, but then about 2,000 years ago it really began to happen. Some "specifics" were needed. A very special announcement was needed.

It began when the angel Gabriel was sent from God on a special mission. Gabriel was sent to the city of Nazareth of Galilee. (*Use map.*) Gabriel was sent to visit a young woman, a virgin, named Mary who was engaged to a man named Joseph.

READ Luke 1:28, 31-32a:

And he came to her and said, Rejoice, you who have been graced! The Lord is with you. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High...

What a visit! There Mary was as a young woman, engaged to be married, and Gabriel the angel comes and speaks such a wondrous thing to her. To have an angel visit was more than exciting. But to hear that she would be the mother of this very special baby promised by Jehovah put her in awe. It was nearly overwhelming! How could a young woman like her be a part of bearing this promised One? The angel then went on to share that the power of the Most High would overshadow her and that the baby who would be born would be called the Son of God, because no word is impossible with God. WOW! What a most wonderful thing! To man this would be impossible, but to God, it was very possible. This baby that Mary would have would be the Son of God! What an announcement! How awesome!

READ Luke 1:38:

And Mary said, Behold, the slave of the Lord. May it happen to me according to your word. And the angel departed from her.

We can hardly imagine what it was like to have Gabriel, an angel, come to visit us. I have had many visitors come to my house, BUT I have never had such an IMPORTANT visitor as this! And then Gabriel tells her such an AWESOME thing! She will have a baby, and that baby will be the Son of God! This could have made her thrilled and excited and nearly unable to think! What an announcement! She was to give birth to the most special baby! This baby's coming was so tremendously important that an angel, Gabriel, had come to tell her! WOW! And yet look at her response. So simple, so pure, so believing, and so willing to be a part of this baby's coming. Mary did not try to reason it all out. She simply agreed with the angel's word to her.

So Mary knew that this promised baby was coming. Who else needed to know? Joseph. That is right. Joseph was engaged to Mary, and he needed to know about this, too. Joseph was a man who walked in all the commandments of God. Joseph did things according to the law of God. So when Mary was found to be with child he planned to handle it according to God's law. Joseph was considering. He was a thoughtful man, and he did not want to make any decision too

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quickly. So he pondered these things, looking at them in a number of ways. Then, an angel of the Lord came to him in a dream. The angel told him to take Mary as his wife as planned, and the angel told him that she would bear a son and that His name would be Jesus, for He would save His people from their sins. The angel assured Joseph that all these things were happening so that what had been spoken to Isaiah might be fulfilled. Who remembers what Jehovah told Isaiah? That is right— “Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son, and they shall call His name, Emmanuel.”

(The storyteller should tell a story about making a rash decision and acting too quickly and missing the opportunity to get counsel and make a thoughtful decision. The point must be to strengthen that we should not act too quickly, because we need counsel from older and wiser ones. We must make thoughtful decisions.)

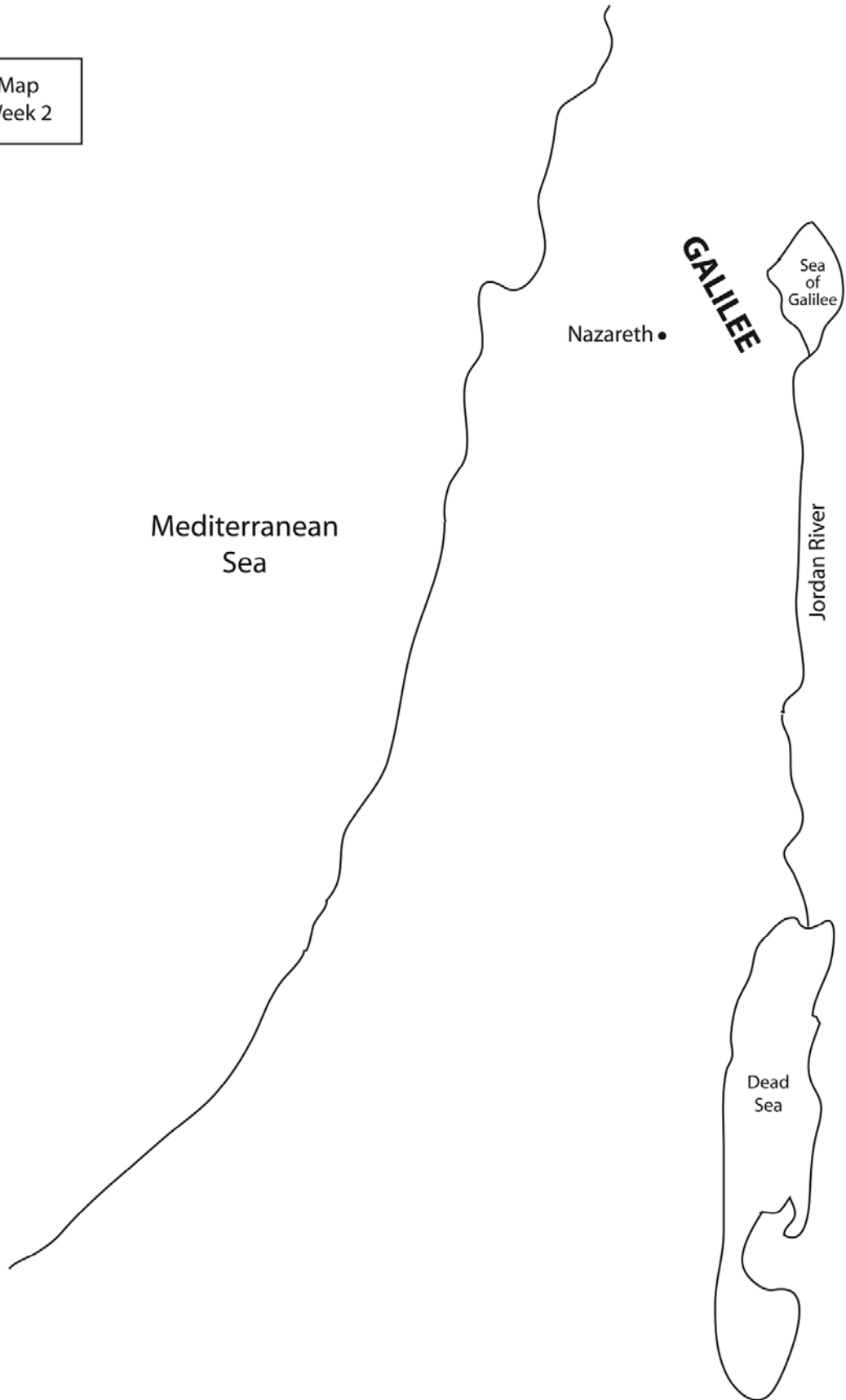
******NOTE to storytellers: You must not call Joseph “father.” Mary was the mother but Joseph was not the father. Only refer to him as Joseph or as the husband of Mary. There is no need to bring the thought of a father into the story at all.***

And when Joseph woke up from his dream, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him. The angel coming in his dream had a real effect on him. Joseph put aside all his pondering and trying to figure things out. He did not think twice about it. He simply did what the angel had told him to do in the dream. He went and took Mary as his wife. Everything was okay now, because both Mary and Joseph had gotten the specifics concerning the coming of the promised baby. They had both received the good news.

*****NOTE to storytellers: Please do not try to explain what a virgin is during the story. If this question comes up, it is best to ignore it and continue in the story. We have purposely stated facts but not offered any explanations. This question mostly likely will only come up with older children. If so, do not interrupt the story to answer it.***

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Map
Week 2



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Week Three

Reference: Luke 2:1-20

Memory verse: Psalm 119:11

In my heart I have treasured up Your word that I might not sin against You.

Story points:

1. The Romans governed the Jews in the Holy Land.
2. All Jews were required to be registered because a census was being taken.
3. Joseph and Mary had to journey to Bethlehem to be registered.
4. Mary was far along in the pregnancy.
5. Once in Bethlehem, there was no room for them at an inn.
6. The baby was born and swaddled and laid in a manger.
7. The angel announced to the shepherds that THE PROMISED baby had been born.
8. The shepherds found the baby just as the angel had said.
9. The shepherds left the city, telling others what they had heard from the angel and about the baby that they had seen in the manger.
10. The shepherds returned to their fields glorifying and praising God.
11. Mary heard all the things, but she kept them in her heart.

Emphasized points:

1. There was a JOYOUS announcement to the shepherds.
2. This baby's birth excited the angels.
3. The shepherds were awestruck; they reacted quickly to the good news.
4. Other people who heard the report from the shepherds talked, reasoning and explaining among themselves, but Mary kept these things in her heart.

Embedded thoughts:

1. Jesus was not born in winter because the shepherds were out in the fields at night.
2. His birth is an AWESOME thing; it should excite us and cause us to be joyous.
3. God's Word should be kept in our heart.
4. We should memorize His Word.

Visuals:

1. Map.
2. Time line from week one.

Songs:

1. "Under the shining stars" (Texas songbook F103).
2. "In all the world there's just one Book"
3. "It's God's Word"
4. "Hark the herald angels sing"

Story sample:

At this time (*use time line and map*) the whole area of the children of Israel had been

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conquered by the Roman army, and the Romans were ruling over them. The top Roman ruler was Caesar Augustus, and he commanded that everyone under his rule (that meant nearly the whole inhabited earth at that time) needed to be registered and taxed. The plan was that everyone should go to the city of their fathers. You could not just go to the city hall in the city where you lived and put your name on a list and be registered. You had to go back to the city that your family came from. Now Joseph was of the family of David, so he had to go back to David's city, the city of Bethlehem. *(Use the map.)* Since Mary was so far along in her pregnancy, it would have been easier to stay in Nazareth, but they had no choice. Joseph and Mary packed things for the journey and began to go to Bethlehem. Now, do you think that they were the only ones on the road? For sure not! Everyone had to return to the city of their fathers. A lot of Jews were traveling to go back to their different cities. *(Use the map.)* Now here is where Joseph and Mary were headed. They were coming from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Others are going to this same city. They were traveling from the north and the east and the west and the south. Many were headed to Bethlehem. And where would they stay when they arrived at these cities? Everyone who was traveling would need a place to stay while they got registered. When Joseph and Mary reached Bethlehem, the city was full of people. They went to an inn, like a motel, and there was no room at the inn.

I was in this situation once. I was traveling to a place that was having a huge event. But I did not know about the event so I had not called ahead and booked a room. I counted on being able to find a room at a motel. There were lots of motels in this small town so it should not have been hard to find a room. But because so many people had come to this town for this special event, the place was packed. Every place to stay had a NO VACANCY sign. I hunted on every street. There was just no place to stay. I thought that I might have to sleep in my car.

Well, that was what it was like for Joseph and Mary. What would they do? Mary was 9 months pregnant and about to deliver her baby, and they did not even have a room at an inn, much less a hospital like we do today. While they were in Bethlehem to be registered, the baby was born. Mary wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger. A manger is the box that holds the food for the animal to eat. Mary wrapped Him up snugly in a blanket so that the baby would be warm and secure. Since there was no crib they needed a safe and secure place to lay the baby.

******NOTE to storytellers: Don't bring in the thought of a "stable" or building, as the Word does not say this. It could have been inside, or it could have been outside that He was born. Also, no animals were mentioned specifically, so try not to consider that either.***

Now what would it mean if you had a new baby in your family and instead of putting the baby into a new fancy crib, you had to lay that little tiny baby in a dresser drawer? It would mean that you love that baby and want him to be safe and secure but that your family cannot afford anything else. Do you think that everyone who had a baby while being in Bethlehem put their baby in a manger? No, that is correct. But here this baby was the most important One in the whole universe, and Mary and Joseph surely loved Him, but they were poor. They did the best they could to give Him a safe and secure place to sleep. What a humble beginning this baby had!

Remember the announcement that God gave to Isaiah? *(See if a child can quote the verse.)* And now this baby has come! And we all know that today whenever a baby is born, the phone calls, emails, and text messages go out letting all the family and friends know that the baby is HERE! Hooray, the baby is here!

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So when this baby came, who do you think spread the news? There were shepherds in the area around Bethlehem spending the nights in the fields to keep a watchful eye over their flocks. Nighttime was when animals like wolves would come in to snatch some sheep. The shepherds were busy guarding the flocks of sheep one night, and an angel of the Lord came and stood by them. Now it was night, and there were no streetlights or even flashlights so it was really dark. The angel came, and the glory of the Lord SHONE around them. WOW! That scared them. It was a dark night, and they were moving around guarding the sheep by moon or starlight, and SUDDENLY there was a BRIGHT shining around them! Oh, they were afraid!

*****NOTE to storytellers: This shows that it was not winter when this happened, or the shepherds would not have been able to be out in the open with their flocks.***

READ Luke 2:10-12:

And the angel said to them, Do not be afraid; for behold, I announce to you good news of great joy, which will be for all the people, because today a Savior has been born to you in David's city, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.

And as this one angel was giving the shepherds this joyous announcement, a multitude of angels (that means so many more than you can count) rushed in praising God and giving Him glory! It was almost as if all those angels just could not stay quiet and unseen and let just one angel give this announcement. They were soooo excited, sooo thrilled by the birth of this baby that they had to rush in to join the one angel. Oh, how these countless angels celebrated this baby's birth! They were excited. They were so joyous! They sounded out praises to God and peace among men. They announced the good news as a heavenly army. WOW!! I think this is the best announcement yet.

And when the angels departed from the shepherds into heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went as quickly as they could to Bethlehem. And they found Mary and Joseph and the baby. And they told Mary and Joseph how the angels had come and announced the birth of this baby to them.

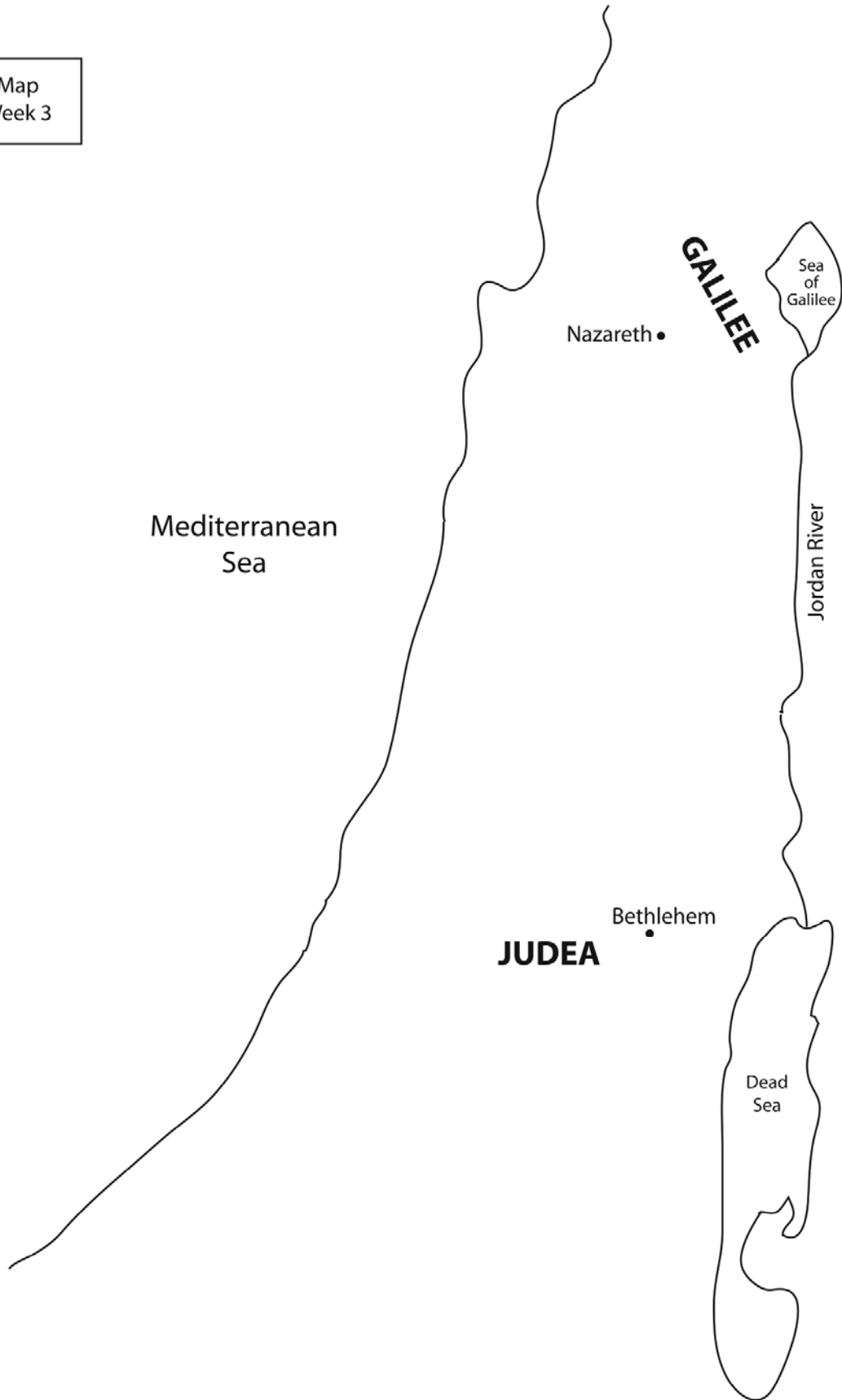
And many more heard what the shepherds said, and they marveled. Such a thing had never occurred before. There was a lot of discussion concerning what had taken place. There was lots of talk. This kind of talk occurs whenever something big or important takes place. Talk like this can often lead people to give their opinions about it as they try to figure out what it means. *(Give an example.)*

But Mary's response was different. She did not enter into all the talk and try to figure it out or explain it. Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. This is what Mary also did with God's Word as she grew up. She hid His Word in her heart. She could even speak God's Word to others because she had grown up loving His Word and memorizing it. So now she stored these marvelous happenings in her heart.

And the shepherds returned to their fields glorifying and praising God for all the things which they had heard and seen. During the announcement, it had been the angels who could not keep quiet. Now that the shepherds had seen and heard, they too were praising God. They walked down the roads of Bethlehem praising God.

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Map
Week 3



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Week 4

References: Matthew 2:1-11; Micah 5:2; Isaiah 9:6

Memory verse: Isaiah 40:8:

The grass withers and the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

Story points:

1. Jehovah set a star in the east to announce the birth of Jesus.
2. Magi traveled from the East to find the King of the Jews by following His star.
3. Once in the Holy Land they went first to Jerusalem, but they lost the star.
4. They asked King Herod how to find the King of the Jews.
5. Herod asked the high priest and scribes to find out where this One was born.
6. In God's Word they found He was to be born in Bethlehem.
7. Herod told the magi to go and find this child and then come and tell him where He was.
7. Only the magi went to Bethlehem to find the child.
8. The star returned, and the magi followed it until they were at the house where the child Jesus was.
9. The magi worshipped Him and gave Him gifts as they rejoiced and praised God.

Emphasized points:

1. Jehovah wanted others (not only Jews) to know about this baby's birth.
2. His star led them.
3. The magi made a wrong turn toward Jerusalem when they followed their logic.
4. The answers are in the Bible, God's Word.
5. The magi were so happy to find and worship the child.
6. All the others stayed in Jerusalem, even though they knew He was in Bethlehem.
7. The magi found a child in the house, not a baby in a manger.

Embedded thoughts:

1. God wants all people to know about this One.
2. He uses the creation to lead people to know Him.
3. The Jews in Jerusalem should have been happy and gone to find the child.
4. God Word has the answers concerning Christ; we must know and trust God's Word.
5. All men should rejoice and worship this One.

Visuals:

1. Map.

Songs:

1. "Under the shining stars" F103 (Texas songbook).

Story sample:

Now there had been one more announcement given. This announcement had not been given to any of the children of Israel, the Jews. At this time the Jews lived in this area, called the Holy Land. (*Use the map.*) This was the land God had given to His people. But far away from the

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Holy Land, God gave another kind of announcement. Way over in this part of the earth (*point to the east, where the sun rises*) God set a star, a very special star. It was His star. Now, God did not set the star over the Holy Land as an announcement to the Jews. No, He set this star way over in the east. And this star had quite an effect! You see, the people in the east did not know the true and living God, they did not have God's Word, and they did not have the Jewish religion. They were far, far away from the Holy Land. But when His star appeared, some magi (who were wise men) realized that the star announced the King of the Jews. And so based on His star, they started to travel, to seek out the King of the Jews.

No one knows what city or what country the magi were from in the east. Nor do we know how many magi followed the star or how they traveled. We know that more than one person was following the star because *magi* is plural. They may have journeyed using some kind of pack animals like donkeys, horses, etc., but the Bible does not tell us. Nor do we know how long it took them. On this map it does not look that far. It could have taken them months to travel from the east to the Holy Land. It could be close to traveling across the United States on foot or with pack animals. WOW! That is a lot of ground to cover. But there they were, the magi from the east were traveling from so far away to seek the One who had been born, because they had seen His star.

******NOTE: The storyteller should be very careful not to say 3 magi or 3 wise men. And also be careful not to say or draw camels as their mode of travel. The Bible does not say three, nor does it say camels.***

The magi followed the star until they got into the Holy Land. (*Use map*) Then they decided to head for the capital city, Jerusalem. This seems very logical, doesn't it? If you go to a new state in the U.S. or a new country like England, and you want to find the ruler, the king or the governor, you go to the capital city. Since they were seeking the King of the Jews, they went to where they thought the King should dwell—Jerusalem. But the star disappeared as they went that way.

In Jerusalem they went to the place where Herod the king lived. Herod, of course, was the king set over the Jews by the Roman government. Herod was not a Jew by birth. He was an evil man set over the people by the Romans to rule the children of Israel.

Read Matthew 2:1b-2:

In the days of Herod the king, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star at its rising and have come to worship Him.

Herod was very upset by this, and even all of Jerusalem was upset. This was terrible news for them! What king were they talking about? If there were a King of the Jews, then the Jews, who were ruled over by Herod, would finally be able to overthrow his kingdom! This King of the Jews would take his place. So Herod called together the Jewish high priest and the scribes and asked them where the Christ was to be born. Where do you think the Jewish high priest and scribes got their answer? They got the answer from God's Word! They quoted God's Word concerning the birth of the Christ child. In Micah 5:2 the Bible shows that He was to be born in Bethlehem of Judea, that He was to be the Ruler of Israel, and that He was from the days of eternity. (*This shows that He must be God!*) When we look into the Bible, we can see more

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verses that show us that He was to be a Ruler over the people. In the first book of the Bible, Genesis, it says that to Him would be all the obedience of the peoples. This is more proof that He must be King. Then, in the book of Ezekiel it also says that He would shepherd God's people as a flock. This means that He would lead all of God's people.

After the priests and scribes told Herod these things, Herod secretly called the magi to him and asked them when had they first seen this star. After they told Herod, Herod then sent them to Bethlehem and instructed them to find out more about this child and to come back and tell him where the child was located. Herod pretended to be friendly and interested, and he told the magi that he wanted to worship the Christ child also. But actually, Herod wanted to destroy Him.

It seems quite interesting that the Jewish rulers didn't go to Bethlehem. Why wouldn't they want to go? They had the knowledge concerning the birth of the Christ-child, but they did not have the interest, the heart, to go and see the Christ-child for themselves. Actually there are probably more reasons why they didn't go, but we won't consider why today. We will leave that part of the story for another day. Wouldn't you want to go to Bethlehem? I would! That was where the wonderful Christ child was born!

This is what the magi did. They left Herod; they left all the Jewish leaders and went their way toward Bethlehem. Right away they saw the star again. They rejoiced. Oh, they were so happy to have His star again! It led them to the place where the child was. You remember that the shepherds saw the baby soon after He had been born in a manger. Here the magi worshipped Him and gave Him very expensive gifts. They really had much joy and were full of praise when they saw the Christ-child. I believe that they knew how important He was!

READ Matthew 2:10-11:

And when they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And they came into the house and saw the child with Mary His mother. And falling down, they worshipped Him; and opening their treasures, they offered gifts to Him, gold and frankincense and myrrh.

Read Isaiah 9:6:

For a child is born to us, a Son is given to us; and the government is upon His shoulder; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

Stories of Jesus

Week Five

Reference: Matthew 2:1-23

Memory verse: Psalm 45:11b

Because He is your Lord, worship Him.

Story points:

1. When the magi located the baby, they fell down and worshipped Him.
2. They gave Him gifts.
3. Rather than return to Herod to tell him where the child was, they returned to their own country by another way.
4. Joseph was told in a dream to flee to Egypt, so they left for Egypt.
5. Herod was angry that he had not been told where the baby was, so he ordered all babies under two years of age to be destroyed.

Emphasized points:

1. The magi worshipped the baby when they finally found Him.
2. They were wise to respond to the dream and return to their own country.
3. Joseph was also wise to follow the instructions in his dream and to flee from Herod's anger.
4. Herod's anger resulted in an evil action, commanding all the babies to be destroyed.

Embedded thoughts:

1. We should all be seekers, looking for God.
2. It is good to worship God.
3. We must learn to be wise about people so that we aren't fooled by what they say.
4. Like Joseph, we should be obedient to God's word.

Visuals:

1. Map.

Songs:

1. "Emmanuel"
2. "God will do what He says He will do"
3. "Honor, honor, honor, honor"

Story sample:

Who remembers last week? Did the magi find the child? YES! What do you think they did? They traveled so far, and they finally arrived and found the child that the star led them to. They must have been so excited. The magi actually fell down and WORSHIPPED this child, the Son of God, the King of the Jews!

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READ Matthew 2:11:

And they came into the house and saw the child with Mary His mother. And falling down, they worshipped Him; and opening their treasures, they offered gifts to Him, gold and frankincense and myrrh.

These gifts were very expensive and very meaningful. Later we will see why.

After the magi worshipped the child and gave him these special gifts, what were they supposed to do? Who remembers? They were instructed by King Herod to go back to Herod and tell him where the child was. Remember what Herod told them? He told them that he wanted to know where the child was so that he could worship the child also. Do you believe Herod? Well, after the magi saw the child they were divinely instructed in a dream not to return to see Herod. So they traveled another way back to their own country.

After the magi departed from Bethlehem, Joseph was instructed by an angel in a dream to take the child and His mother and to FLEE into Egypt. What does *FLEE* mean? Who can come to the front of the room and give us an example of what it means to FLEE? WOW, that is right! It means to get away as fast as possible. Joseph obeyed, and they all FLED into Egypt. (*Use the map.*)

READ: Matthew 2:13:

Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph, saying, Arise, take the child and His mother and flee into Egypt, and stay there until I tell you; for Herod is going to seek the child to destroy Him.

The end of verse 13 tells us why Joseph needed a warning to FLEE. What does it say? It says that Herod wanted to **destroy** the child. Do you think that Herod wanted to worship the child? NO! Herod did not want to worship this child; rather he planned on killing Him. Herod did not want to take the chance of losing his rule over the Jews. He would not allow anyone in Israel to be called king other than him! Joseph took this warning and immediately took Mary and the child and fled by night to Egypt. This must have been quite a scary event for them. Joseph had just learned that King Herod wanted to destroy this child. This must have been very frightening for them. To flee at night with a young child and wife is not easy, nor is it safe.

Let me ask you a question. When your family takes a trip, does your dad need any spending money? Hotels, restaurants, etc., all cost money. Look at how far they had to go. (*Use the map.*) What kind of things might they need to buy on the way? What could they have used for money? If you remember earlier, the child received some gifts from the magi. These precious treasures offered by the magi might have provided for the family's journey from Judea to Egypt and later from Egypt to Nazareth. God is wonderful as He cares for all our needs!

Well, we have one more thing to say about Herod. Since the magi never went back to tell Herod where the child was, how do you think Herod felt? Sorry to say, Herod was so angry that he gave orders to destroy all the boys 2 years of age and under.

READ: Matthew 2:16:

Then Herod, seeing that he had been mocked by the magi, became greatly enraged, and sending out men, he did away with all the boys who were in Bethlehem and in all its

Stories of Jesus

borders from two years old and under, according to the time that he had accurately determined from the magi.

This level of destruction shows how serious it was to disobey the king, and it also shows how brave both the magi and Joseph were to obey the instructions they received from God in their dreams.

To finish today's story, I am going to read you the end of chapter 2 in Matthew. Listen carefully, since these verses are the next part of the story:

READ: Matthew 2:19-23:

2:19 And when Herod had died, (pause, then say "You see, this is the continuation of the story, because at this time Herod had died") behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,

2:20 Saying, Arise, take the child and His mother and go into the land of Israel, (see map) for those who seek the life of the child have died.

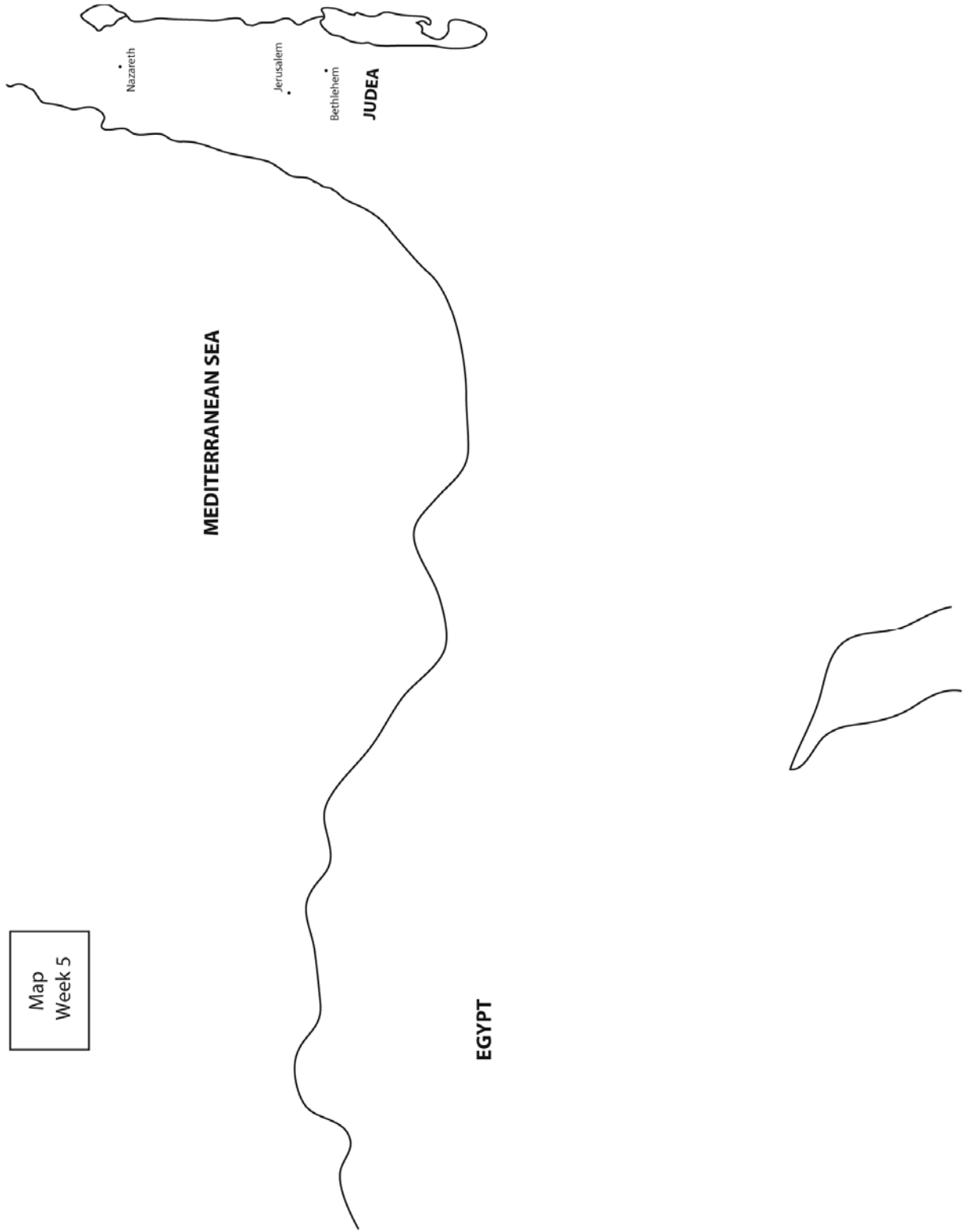
2:21 And he arose and took the child and His mother and entered into the land of Israel.

2:22 But because he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there; and having been divinely instructed in a dream, he departed into the regions of Galilee. (see map)

2:23 And he came and settled in a city called Nazareth, (see map) so that what was spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, He shall be called a Nazarene.

Finally, we see that the family is now safe but still needs to be very careful. We also see that God is still speaking to Joseph in his dreams and instructing Joseph where they should go. We also see the prophecies of the Bible being fulfilled concerning this child. After all, this child is the center of these stories.

Stories of Jesus



Map
Week 5

Stories of Jesus

Week Six

Review

Note to serving ones: This week is a review of the past five weeks of the Stories of Jesus. The following are the most important points of each week to emphasize with the children:

Week One:

1. The birth of Jesus was announced by Isaiah 700 years before He was born.
2. God's Word is true.

Week Two:

1. Mary responded to the Gabriel's word of announcement and was willing for God's Word to be fulfilled.
2. Joseph also believed the dream concerning the child.
3. We need to know God's Word and obey it.

Week Three:

1. The baby's birth happened as it had been announced.
2. The birth was announced to the shepherds by angels.
3. The shepherds found the child and rejoiced.
4. We should memorize God's word.

Week Four:

1. The star announced the birth to the magi.
2. The magi came to worship the child.
3. We should all rejoice and worship God's Son.

Week Five:

1. The magi came to worship and then returned to their country.
2. The magi did not report to Herod because of a dream, spoiling his plot against the child.
3. Joseph was warned in a dream to escape to Egypt.
4. Herod ordered the death of all boys 2 years old and under.
5. God wants all people to worship Him; we must be obedient to Him.
6. We should not be foolish about believing everyone.

Stories of Jesus

Week Seven His Youth

Reference: Luke 2:41-52

Memory verse: Numbers 24:13c

What Jehovah speaks, that I will speak.

Story points:

1. There were appointed feasts for the people of God to keep.
2. At twelve years old Jesus went with His parents to the Feast of the Passover.
3. They kept the feast for seven days.
4. Everyone began their journey home.
5. Jesus was not found in the company.
6. His parents returned to Jerusalem to seek Him out.
7. After three days they found Him in the temple among the Jewish teachers.
8. He was in the things of His Father.
9. He went down with His parents to Nazareth and was subject to them.
10. Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature and in grace.

Emphasized points:

1. At twelve, Jesus became answerable to God's law.
2. His maturity meant responsibility.
3. At twelve, Jesus could understand the teachers of God's Word.
4. He could sit and discuss God's Word.
5. He had learned to focus and concentrate.
6. He had learned how to sit with a group of adults.
7. Even though He was so capable, He put Himself under the authority and control of His parents.
8. By doing this He was blessed.

Embedded thoughts:

1. Jesus is awesome!
2. The times of worshipping God are our "obligation" to Him as His people; it is not a light matter to worship our God.
3. Even as children, we can learn to concentrate and not let our minds wander.
4. We must learn to pay attention and even to give our full attention.
5. Multi-tasking is not that positive.
6. As children, we should be interested in God's Word.
7. As children, we must decide to remain under our parent's control and authority.

Visuals:

1. Map.
2. Draw a circle on the board, then divide.

Songs:

1. "God's Word – is hidden in my heart"
2. "The Bible is the Word of God"
3. "Children, obey your parents"

Stories of Jesus

Story sample:

After Jesus and his family returned from Egypt and settled in Nazareth, nothing specific is mentioned about Jesus until He is twelve.

Among the children of Israel, Jehovah God had ordained seven times each year that they should come together in Jerusalem and feast together. In three of the seven feasts, Jehovah commanded that all the males should not come empty-handed but with some offering with which to worship God according to the blessing that Jehovah had given them. One of these three times was the Feast of the Passover. The Feast of the Passover lasted seven days, and during this week the children of Israel remembered how their God had delivered them out from under the slavery of pharaoh and brought them out of the land of Egypt.

Now, every year Joseph and Mary and many of their relatives and friends from Nazareth traveled to Jerusalem together to keep the Feast of the Passover. (*Use the map.*) Remember that at this feast all the males were to appear before Jehovah with an offering. So, does that mean that Jesus and the other boys in the family got to go every year? No, that is not what it means. To be counted as a male meant that a boy was at least twelve years old. Once a boy reached twelve years of age, he had a legal obligation. At twelve he became answerable to God's law. At twelve it was expected that a boy had reached a certain maturity and that he bore a certain responsibility.

In the United States we have a voting age. It is the age when everyone born in the U.S. becomes responsible to have a say or a vote in how this country is run. To vote is a real responsibility. Of course, turning twelve among the Jews meant much more than being old enough to vote. At twelve a boy was counted as a male among God's people, and going up to the feast of the Passover was to honor God and keep His Word. While they were together in Jerusalem for that feast, they worshipped Jehovah and told the story of how God delivered them out of Egypt. It was a serious and solemn matter.

When Jesus turned twelve, He traveled with his parents from Nazareth to Jerusalem in a large company of relatives and friends. After keeping the Feast of the Passover for seven days, they all journeyed back home. After a day's journey out of the city, Joseph and Mary had not located Jesus. As the large company of people headed back to Nazareth, Joseph and Mary had expected to find Jesus with one of their relatives or among their friends. After a day of traveling and seeking Jesus among the company, they could not find Him. What had happened? Where was He? So they returned to Jerusalem to search for Him. They spent three days looking everywhere in Jerusalem. Oh, they were concerned! Where was Jesus? Why had He not traveled back with them? As parents, they were so concerned for Him. Had He been harmed? Mary, His mother, was distressed at not being able to find Him.

And what had Jesus been doing all this time? He had been in the temple sitting in the midst of the Jewish teachers. These were teachers of God's Word.

If I say that _____ (*pick someone who is twelve or close to twelve*) is sitting in a math class listening to the math teacher, we all clearly understand that there is a teacher who is teaching _____ (*same child*) math. But if I say that _____ (*same child*) is sitting in the midst of math teachers, what does that mean? Right, it means that _____ (*same child*) knows math well enough to discuss it with those that teach math. Can _____ (*same child*) do that? No, he/she can't. He/she does not know math well enough yet to do that.

But here was a twelve year old, and He was sitting in the midst of Jewish teachers in the temple. He was listening to them and then asking them very good questions. He was joining in

Stories of Jesus

on their discussion of God's Word at the same level they were at. WOW!! Talk about amazing! That was amazing! Luke 2:47 says, "And all those who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and at His answers."

Another amazing thing about this time in the temple was how long Jesus was able to sit and concentrate. Did you ever think about that? How many times are you able to sit without wiggling around while people are discussing the Bible? I know that sometimes some of you sit with your parents in the other meetings—maybe the prayer meeting or at a conference meeting. How long can you sit there without getting bored and wanting to move around? How long can you sit still? Here was a twelve-year-old boy sitting still for hours at a time. And while He was sitting there for hours, he was really listening. He was attentive to what the Jewish teachers were saying.

It is easy to let our mind wander, isn't it? Sometimes a teacher is giving a lesson at school, and you are sitting there, and somehow your mind is wandering off to some other topic. Or maybe you have seen children who are doing their homework and texting friends on their cell phones. Some people call this "multi-tasking" but maybe it is that they have not wanted to train their mind to concentrate on one thing. To sit and concentrate on one thing is not so easy. It is too easy to let your mind wander and to text friends or flip through a favorite book, etc., instead of applying yourself to concentrate.

When I was a young, sometimes an adult would say, "I need your undivided attention." (*Draw a circle on the board.*) If in my mind I have a circle full of attention, and during math I give the teacher my undivided attention, it means I am paying ALL my attention to the math. But while I am listening, if I have a thought about lunch or about playing my favorite video game, and I give that thought some attention....OOPS! (*Divide the circle in half.*) Now my attention is divided. And as more thoughts or things come, and I pay attention to them (*divide the circle more*), then very little of my attention goes to math.

But here Jesus was able to sit and concentrate for long periods of time. He had learned how to sit and how to concentrate by the time He was twelve.

When Mary and Joseph finally found Him in the temple, they were astounded!

READ Luke 2:48-49:

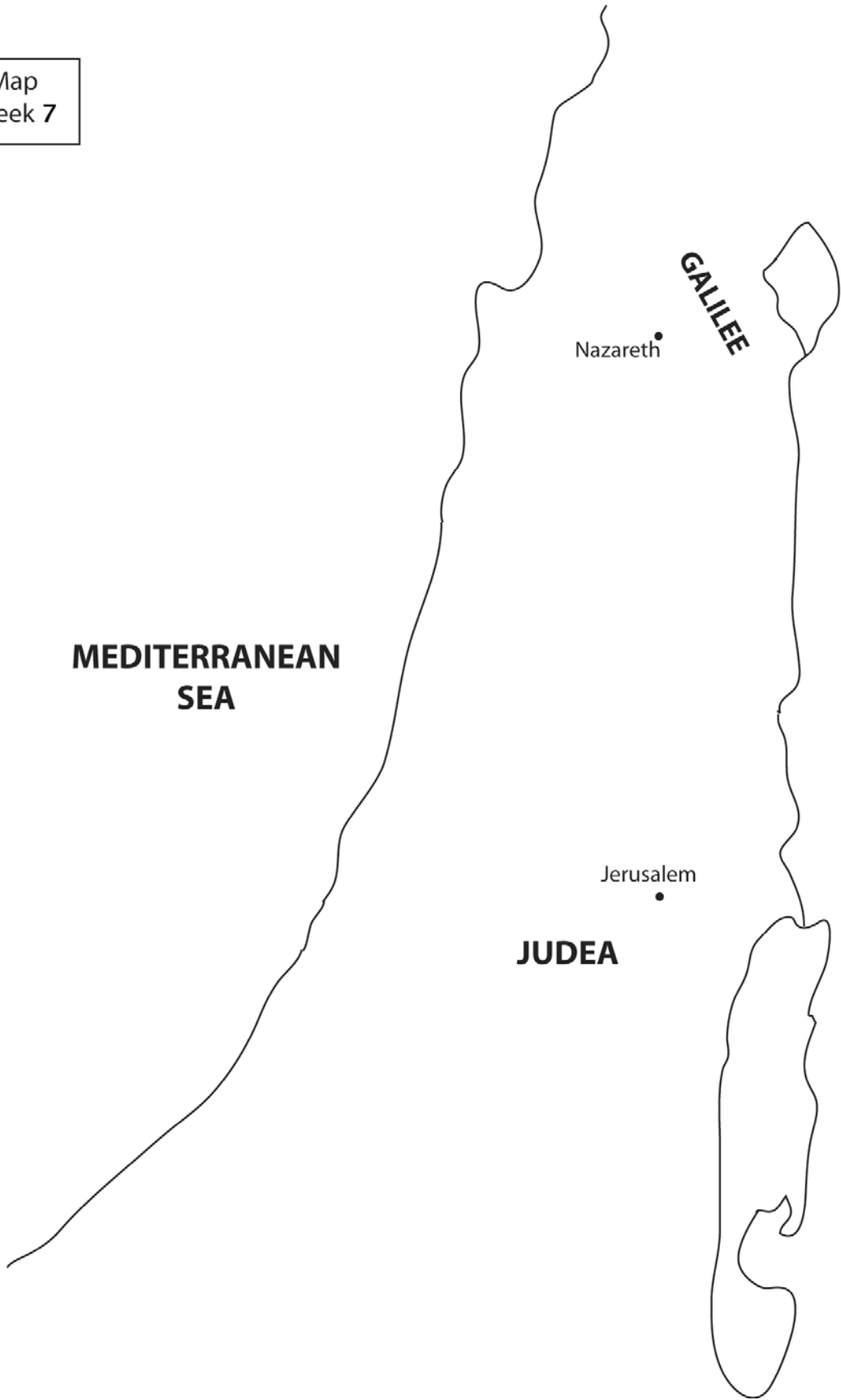
And when they saw Him, they were astounded; and His mother said to Him, Child, why have You treated us like this? Behold, Your father and I, being greatly distressed, have been seeking You. And He said to them, Why is it that you were seeking Me? Did you not know that I must be in the things of My Father?

But Mary and Joseph did not understand that as One who was now counted as a legal male before Jehovah, Jesus had to be in the things of His Father God. As the Son of God, He now must be in the things of His Father God.

He was the Son of God, and at twelve years of age He could sit as an equal among many Jewish teachers of God's Word. Yet He went back with Mary and Joseph to Nazareth, and He was subject to them. He still kept Himself under their authority and under their control. So often, as children, we think, "Oh, when I grow up, I will do whatever I want to. I won't have to listen to what my parents say then!" But here is a boy of twelve deciding that He would remain under the authority and control of His parents. And because He decided this, He advanced in wisdom and stature and in the grace before God and men. He was a blessed boy growing up to full manhood.

Stories of Jesus

Map
Week 7



Stories of Jesus

Week Eight Bearing Responsibility

Reference: Luke 2:40; Matthew 13:55

Memory verse: Psalm 4:3a

But know that Jehovah sets apart the faithful man for Himself.

Story points:

1. Our time of growing up is mostly ordinary living.
2. Jesus had an ordinary childhood.
3. He had a family life with brothers and sisters.
4. He learned the skills of carpentry from Joseph.
5. A lot of time and energy was spent caring for the daily necessities.
6. Children needed an education.
7. Jesus was the oldest child so He bore more responsibility.
8. Jesus was gracious.

Emphasized points:

1. Our growing-up years are mostly filled with regular day-in and day-out matters.
2. This kind of living is needed for our growing up unto maturity.
3. Life is not all fun and games.
4. Responsibility is a big part of the growing-up years.
5. Learning specific skills as in a trade is good.
6. Jesus was gracious in His interactions with others.

Embedded thoughts:

1. As we grow up, we should have chores we do in our family life.
2. Our concept should not be that playing is the most important thing each day.
3. By having a part in a regular family life, we are learning things that we need to learn to grow up in maturity.
4. We should learn not to be bossy but to be gracious.

Visuals:

1. Pictures of carpentry tools.
2. Children's dictionary.

Songs:

1. "R-E-S-P-O-N-S-I-B-I-L-I-T-Y"
2. "Learn how to be faithful today"

Story sample:

It is very interesting that from the time Joseph brought Mary and Jesus back from Egypt until Jesus was an adult, not much is recorded in the Bible about Jesus. It seems that just the exciting stuff got recorded—His birth, the angels announcing it to the shepherds, the magi following His star to find Him, and then the fleeing into Egypt. From that point until Jesus is an

Stories of Jesus

adult, we only have the one time at the feast on record. Not too much about His growing up is mentioned.

The family settled down in Nazareth, probably to regular patterns of everyday life. In my family when I was a child, our family life was a typical family—nothing special, just everyday life. You know, my dad got up very early in the morning, spent a few minutes in the Bible, had breakfast, and went off to work. If we did not get up before the sunrise, we missed seeing him until the evening. Then my mom started getting us all up, going from one to the other, telling us to get up, make our bed, and get dressed for school. And of course, she would come back through to make sure we were moving. She would even look at how we made the bed and check what clothes we were putting on.

Then there was breakfast, packing lunches, and being scooted out the door in time to walk to school. Then after school the oldest one would wait for the youngest and walk them home from school. We had a snack, did homework, then we could go out to play with friends. Of course, the youngest ones always had to tag along with the older ones. Then it was time for dinner. After dinner the oldest ones washed and dried the dishes. Other chores were done. Then we got ready for the next day. And this happened every school day for years at my house. *(The serving one could put their own daily schedule growing up here.)*

And since everyday life is regular, ordinary and routine, the Bible does not mention too much about Jesus as He grew up. He lived a normal human life.

We know that family life in the village of Nazareth was probably the same as ours in many ways. You had dad and mom and children getting up, working, doing chores, learning skills and caring for the family in so many ways.

Joseph worked as a carpenter. What kind of work does a carpenter do? *(The serving one might show some carpenter tools.)* And as a carpenter, he spent long days working to supply the needs for his family. Mary was busy with a family. By this time Joseph and Mary had some children. Now, there were at least four boys—James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas, and there were a few girls in the family. Of course, that makes Jesus the firstborn among all the children, doesn't it? Every year, as he grew older, as the oldest boy, it meant that he had more to do to help take care of the younger ones. Their chores were different from ours, though. Instead of turning on the tap to get water, someone had to go to the spring and get water and bring it back to the house. Instead of going to the store to buy groceries to cook dinner, someone had to plant and care for a small patch of land, a garden, to grow veggies. Milk and eggs came from the cows and goats that they probably kept, and the chickens they had were traded or bought from someone else. Then, someone had to make clothes and blankets. Wow!! You can see that the children at that time spent a lot of time helping with chores so that they could eat dinner. They spent a lot of time learning things for the family's needs. Then young children needed to learn how to read and write and do math, etc. There was not so much free time to play around as there is today. And then the families would spend time to read God's Word and spend time to worship God with others. What a busy life!

There were a lot of mouths to feed, and everyone did their part, especially the oldest boy. And as children got older, they learned a trade. *(Use a children's dictionary to give meaning of trade, and introduce other trades, such as plumbers or electricians today.)* No one grew to be

Stories of Jesus

an adult without learning some specific skills so that they could earn a living. So we know that Jesus did all the things the oldest son in a family needed to do, and he also learned some carpentry skills from Joseph. (*Ask a few children what their chore is at home or what they do to help the family—like make their beds, take out the trash, and wash the dishes.*)

Then we know a few other things about Jesus as a child. He was the oldest child in the family, so it meant more R-E-S-P-O-N-S-I-B-I-L-I-T-Y. (*Spell it.*) Who are the oldest child in a family here? (*Name a few of them.*) Now, I have a question for all the firstborn ones, the oldest in the family. Are you a bossy firstborn? Oh, that is a hard question! Maybe we'd better not let your younger brothers and sisters answer that!

I was not the firstborn in my family, but I had a younger sister, and I was the mean, bossy older sister. Oh, I cringe at it now. Can you believe that the Bible tells us what kind of older brother Jesus was? Well, it does. A verse in Luke says that he grew and was strong, being filled with wisdom, and that the grace of God was upon Him. This means that He was gracious. (*Use the dictionary.*) The dictionary says that *gracious* means "kind," "courteous," "pleasant," "polite," and "generous."

So when Jesus was in charge of the younger ones in the family, He was not mean and bossy. He was kind and helping. Instead of making them cry, Jesus was pleasant. That says a lot about a child, doesn't it? Someone very close to you may see you day after day as you grow up, and instead of saying that you did this and that, they say that you were gracious, kind, helpful, and pleasant. Wow! In just a few words the Bible tells us a lot.

Of course, we all have a few exciting and extra special things that happen as we grow up, but mostly our life is one of living in a family, doing chores, cleaning up, taking care of our brothers and sisters, learning all we can in school, doing homework, etc. These are the things that we need as we grow up into maturity. And this is what Jesus needed too as He was growing up.

Stories of Jesus

Week Nine Jesus' Baptism

References: Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22

Memory verse: Matthew 3:17

And behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I have found My delight."

Story points:

1. Jesus was thirty years old.
2. He went to the Jordan River to be baptized by John.
3. John was the first person in the Bible to baptize people.
4. This was a change from the Old Testament way to the New Testament way.
5. Jesus was baptized.
6. When Jesus was baptized, God spoke.
7. God was delighted with His Son.

Emphasized points:

1. At this time, there were now many stories about Jesus.
2. He traveled to the Jordan to have John baptize Him.
3. This was a change in the way that God did things.
4. Jesus followed God's way.
5. God was happy with Him.

Embedded thoughts:

1. Jesus lived a normal human life as a young person.
2. When the time came, He was baptized according to God's New Testament way—He obeyed God.
3. God was pleased with Him.

Visuals:

1. Map.

Songs:

1. "I'd like to be found faithful" (Texas songbook G148)
2. "S-T-E-A-D-F-A-S-T"
3. "Stop, listen, and obey"
4. "Singing, praying, praising, thanking"

Story sample:

The last story ended when Jesus was how old? (*He was twelve.*) What happened in that story? Today's story zooms forward eighteen years. It is very interesting the Bible does not give any record of what happened during these eighteen years! We have information about His birth and of traveling to Egypt and then to Nazareth. When He was twelve years old, He traveled with His parents from Nazareth to Jerusalem to go to the temple. Then eighteen years go by with no record! The Bible does not tell us anything! Yet, I believe that this silence tells us very much!

Stories of Jesus

What do you think it tells us? It seems that this tells us the important fact that the Lord lived a very normal, routine, and proper human life with his parents. Just like you. It is very interesting to know that the Lord lived a proper human life on the earth about two thousand years ago, doing what most people do every day. Including doing chores happily! Just like you!

For today's story we need to know that Jesus was thirty years old, and many of the things that He did from this time on are recorded in the Bible. From the time that He was twelve years old until He was thirty years old, nothing is told to us. But now, for the next three and a half years, many, many, things that He did, things that He said, and places where He traveled, are told to us in the Bible. The first thing that is told to us is that Jesus got baptized.

How many of you have been to a baptism? Maybe an older brother or sister, one of your parents, an aunt or uncle, or a friend of the family got baptized, and you got to go see. Wasn't it exciting? Everyone wants to be close enough to see, so they just crowd closer and closer. I think that I've even seen some of you sitting on your dad's shoulders at a baptism, so that you can sit high enough to see. There is usually singing, praying, and praising at a baptism. It's a very meaningful time, and everyone is always happy. Some people are so happy that they even cry. We know it makes us happy, and the reason that we are so happy is that we know it also makes God happy! God is happy because He knows that this person has obeyed God's word to believe in the Lord and be baptized.

At the beginning of the story we see that the Lord Jesus traveled from Galilee to the Jordan River. (*Look at the map.*) It is important to know that at this time probably thousands of the people living in that area are also coming to be baptized. There is a man who the Bible calls John the Baptist preaching to the people in the wilderness of Judea. (*Look at the map.*) He is preaching that the people need to repent and be baptized. John is called "the Baptist" because he was the first man to ever baptize people.

This was a first. No one had ever done this before. It was probably thousands of people who came to John the Baptist at the Jordan River to be baptized. In the Old Testament the people of God knew God, and they followed God by keeping God's laws. Some of these commandments that God gave in the Old Testament were ritual commandments (means that you have to do certain things all the time) and were mainly concerning what to eat and what not to eat. Also, keeping all the Sabbath regulations were required by God in the Old Testament. This included not being able to do certain things on a certain day. There were so many laws written that it was called the LAW OF LETTERS.

But now, the people of God were to repent and be baptized. (To repent is to change their mind about themselves and their way of doing things.) No longer did God want them to keep all these regulations. This was a change from God's Old Testament to God's New Testament. Everyone had failed to keep God's law, and they all needed to have a new beginning. Baptism gives you a new beginning with God.

Did you know that even Jesus was baptized? Yes, even the Son of God was baptized! Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee to the Jordan River. (*Use the map.*) And do you know why He came to the Jordan? Because John the Baptist was baptizing people. God had sent John to do something new. He was to speak a new word from God.

Stories of Jesus

READ Mark 1:4:

John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for forgiveness of sins.

And do you know whom this word was for? It was for all of God's people. Everyone needed to repent and be baptized. This was God's way for His people. So it needed to be fulfilled by all men—even Jesus. John knew who Jesus was, and he tried to tell Jesus that He didn't need to be baptized. But Jesus wanted to be right with God, so He came to John the Baptist to be baptized. John baptized Jesus in the Jordan River.

When Jesus was baptized, something most special happened. God spoke from heaven!

READ Matthew 3:17:

And behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I have found My delight.

WOW! God spoke! He was so absolute that everyone knew that it was time to listen to His beloved Son who was now on the earth.

Stories of Jesus

Week 10 Tested

Reference: Matthew 4:1-11

Memory verse: Matthew 4:4b

Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God.

Story points:

1. Jesus was led to the wilderness.
2. He did not eat for forty days.
3. God's enemy tested Him three times.
4. First, the enemy told Jesus to turn stones to bread.
5. Second, he told Jesus to cast Himself down from the temple.
6. Third, he tried to get Jesus to worship him.
7. Jesus passed every test, refusing to be tempted.

Emphasized points:

1. Jesus was alone and hungry.
2. God's enemy tested him by using God's Word, trying to get Him to prove He was the Son of God by doing miracles.
3. Every time Jesus used God's Word to respond to the temptation.
4. Jesus passed every test.

Embedded thoughts:

1. Temptation often comes when we are in a low spot or when we are weak.
2. We need to know God's Word well.
3. Jesus was able to pass the test as a man, like us.

Songs:

1. "God's word have I hidden in my heart"
2. "The Bible is the Word of God"
3. "Books of the Bible"
4. "B-I-B-L-E"

Story points:

Now that the Lord Jesus had obeyed God and had been baptized by John the Baptist, it was time for Him to begin His work. Before He could begin His work, He was tested. Has anyone here ever taken a test? Many people don't like tests, and some tests are harder than others. This was not a written test, like you get in school, but it was a test that we know something about; it was being tempted. Do you know what *tempted* means? It means that someone tries to talk you into doing something that is bad or not smart by promising you a reward. For example, if someone says, "I will give you any toy you want if you climb to the very top of a very big tree." Do you think that it is smart to do that? No! You are being tempted to do something that is dangerous, and you know that you should not do it. That would be unwise, because it is not safe.

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Well, the Lord Jesus had the hardest test. His test started by being led into the wilderness and not eating any food for forty days. The wilderness is a place where nobody lives and is often considered a wasteland, which means very little grows there. So this is really a hard place to be. The Lord was incredibly hungry. I don't believe anyone here ever went without food for forty days. If today was April 6, that would mean you would not get any food until May 16! Almost six weeks! What a test! After the Lord went so long without food, God's enemy, who in this story is called the tempter, came to Jesus, and he tempted Jesus to turn stones into bread. The Lord then spoke this very famous Bible verse in Matthew 4:4:

READ Matthew 4:4:

But He answered and said, It is written, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God."

The tempter, God's enemy, wanted the newly baptized King, Jesus, to do a miracle as the Son of God, but Jesus knew that it was a temptation. Jesus, as the Son of God, could do any miracle, but now it was time to be the first **man** to ever defeat God's enemy. So, Jesus told the enemy that MAN does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God. So we see that our Lord passed the first test.

Now comes the next test.

Then the tempter took Jesus into the holy city and set Him on the wing of the temple. A wing of the temple is a part of the building that sticks out and is higher than the rest of the building.

READ Matthew 4:6-7:

And said to Him, If You are the Son of God, cast Yourself down; for it is written, "To His angels He shall give charge concerning You, and on their hands they shall bear You up, lest You strike Your foot against a stone." Jesus said to him, Again, it is written, "You shall not test the Lord your God."

The tempter wanted Jesus to do miracles, but the Lord needed to pass the test as a man—not by using miracles as the Son of God.

Now it is time for the third test.

The tempter took Jesus to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. Then the tempter said to Him, "All these will I give You if You will fall down and worship me."

Then Jesus said to him, Go away, For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve."

Then the tempter left Him.

Well, as we can see this is quite a story. Now, the Lord Jesus as the Son of Man had passed these tests and defeated God's enemy. He was ready to begin God's work on the earth. In the next weeks we will see many places that He went to, things that He said, things that He did, and how He wanted even the little children to come unto Him.

Stories of Jesus

Week 11

Review

Note to serving ones: This week is a review of the past four weeks of the Stories of Jesus. The following are the most important points of each week to emphasize with the children:

Week Seven:

1. At twelve years of age, Jesus was in the temple, speaking the word of God.
2. Being separated, Joseph and Mary worried about Him.
3. Jesus obeyed His parents and returned home.
4. We need to know God's Word and obey our parents.

Week Eight:

1. Jesus had an ordinary childhood, learning Joseph's trade as a carpenter.
2. He carried out His responsibilities in His family living.
3. We need to be responsible to do our chores.

Week Nine:

1. Jesus was baptized by John at the Jordan River.
2. Jesus was baptized according to God's New Testament way—He was obedient.
3. God was pleased with His Son and spoke well of Him.

Week Ten:

1. Jesus was tested by God's enemy.
2. As a man, He passed every test.
3. It is important to know God's Word well.

It would be good to divide up the children into four groups and have each group do one week of the review, with serving ones "coaching" them.

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Week Twelve Unselfish Friends

Reference: Luke 5:17-26; Matthew 9:1-7

Memory verse: Proverbs 17:17a
A friend loves at all times.

Story points:

1. Jesus was teaching in Capernaum.
2. Pharisees and teachers gathered to hear Him.
3. People enjoyed hearing Him teach.
4. Friends of a paralyzed man wanted to bring him to Jesus to be healed.
5. They carried him to the house where Jesus was teaching.
6. The place was too crowded; they could not get through.
7. They went up on the roof and made a hole in it, and lowered him down to Jesus.
8. Jesus looked up and saw their faith; He healed the man.
9. The Pharisees and Jewish teachers of the law objected to this; they were not willing to admit that Jesus had the authority to forgive sins and to heal.

Emphasized points:

1. People wanted to hear Jesus teach.
2. The friends were determined to help their friend; they were willing to spend time and energy to get him to Jesus—they were great friends.
3. These friends did not give up.
4. Jesus' reaction was one of seeing their faith that He could heal the man.
5. Jesus healed even before anyone asked Him.
6. Others objected to this healing instead of thanking God.
7. These ones would not acknowledge the authority that Jesus had.

Embedded thoughts:

1. We should be such unselfish friends in helping others.
2. It is worthwhile to bring our friends to Jesus.
3. We must acknowledge Jesus as the One who has the authority.
4. We should recognize authority and be under it.
5. We should be those with the response to thank God.

Visuals:

1. Map.
2. Drawing of the crowd and a flat-roofed house.

Songs:

1. "No man ever spoke like Jesus" (Mark 7:46)
2. "A friend loveth at all times"
3. "No one likes to be left out"

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Story sample:

At this time Jesus was living in Capernaum, and He was in a house teaching for a number of days. *(Use the map.)* With Him in the house were some Pharisees *(religious teachers full of pride)* and some other teachers of the Jewish law who had traveled from every village of Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem to hear Him. *(Use the map.)* Ever since Jesus had been baptized, He had spent His time teaching. He wanted God's people to know God's Word. Even an average person like you and me could really enjoy His teaching and speaking of God's Word. No one else made the Word so clear and easy to hear. No other person ever spoke like this man, Jesus. He spoke God's Word with authority. His speaking is what caused the teachers of the law and the Pharisees to crowd into this house to listen to Him.

Now, in Capernaum there was a small group of friends who also wanted to see this Jesus. One person among this group was paralyzed. He could not use his legs to walk. His legs just would not work, so he always had to be lying down. Whether it was time to sleep, or time to work, or time to eat—the man was always lying down. What a sad state to be in! But even though this man could not move his legs to join in and do so many everyday activities, yet he had a small group of friends who really cared for him. *(Give an example: it is easy to be a friend if one can join in with you to do things. It takes an unselfish care to have friend who is not so able.)*

These men had heard that Jesus was healing people, and they were excited to think that their friend could be healed and able to walk like them. So one day they decided that they would take their friend to see Jesus. They surrounded the cot on which the man was lying, and they picked it up and walked through the lanes (streets) of Capernaum to the house where Jesus was teaching. As they walked, they must have been so excited that they were taking their friend to be healed. But when they got to the house, they saw a big problem—there were way too many people crowded around the house. There was no way they could get their friend into the house. They must have suddenly been very disappointed! They could not bulldoze their way through to the door of the house, nor could they shout and cause the people to make a path so that they could get through. Surely they were discouraged! But they did not give up. *(Give an example of being discouraged but not giving up.)*

In this situation it would have been easy for this group of men to give up, to throw in the towel. But they really wanted their friend to be healed. They wanted him to walk! They had to come up with a way to bring him to Jesus. These determined ones came up with a plan. They would carry their friend up to the roof of the house, and then they would remove the tiles from part of the roof to make an opening to let the mat down where Jesus was. What a plan!

(Use the drawing.) Okay, let's really look at this plan and see if it would be easy to carry out. Here you have a house with probably a flat roof, not a pitched roof like most of our homes have today. Then you have a big crowd so that you can't get through the door of the house. The first problem is, how are you going to get up on the roof? There are many ways they could have done it. They could have stood on each other's shoulders (like a human ladder), or gotten a ladder, etc. Now, once a man who can walk and climb gets onto the roof, how are you going to get the man on the mat up? That is the second problem. *(Again there are many ways, using men and ropes.)* This really shows how much effort and time they were willing to put into it so

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that their friend would be with Jesus. Have you ever put that much time or energy into helping a friend? *(Give an example of someone being such a friend to you.)*

Too often we are not such good friends as these men were. Of course I might spend 15 minutes or so helping you because you are my friend, but usually I will not take the whole day to help you do something. *(Give an example of being unselfish in helping others.)*

Of course, it may have been easy to get the paralyzed man up to the roof. Maybe there were outside stairs up to the roof, and they just walked up the steps carrying the man on the bed. We're not sure, because the Bible doesn't say how they did it.

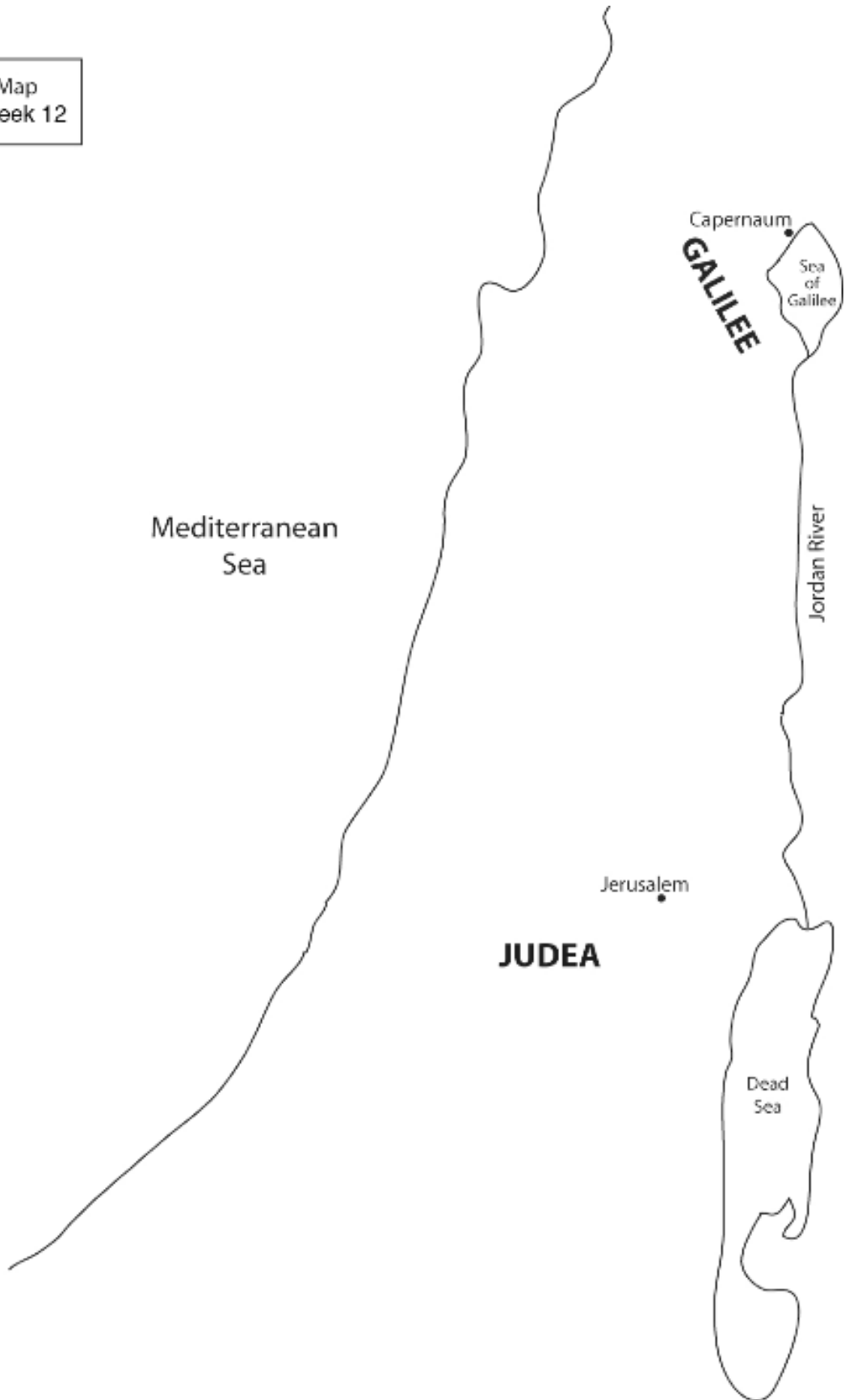
Now the third problem was getting through the roof and lowering the cot to where Jesus was. The men had to remove the tiles on one section of the roof. Then they had to create a hole in the roof big enough to lower the cot through. I am not sure if they used ropes to lower the cot through the hole or whether they held on to the cot with their hands and knelt down, letting the cot go lower and lower until the men were lying on the roof with their arms stretching down into the house below them, all the while holding on to the cot. Anyway, however they did it, it took a lot of strength. The Bible does not tell us how they did it, but the Bible does say that they did it! They were determined to help out their friend, so they did it.

Now let's go to the inside of the house. As the men were on the roof, digging a hole and lowering the man on the cot down, Jesus was teaching the crowd of Pharisees and Jewish teachers. If I had been there, I would have been amazed. No one had ever been in a house where men were tearing up the roof so that someone could get in. As Jesus was teaching, you probably would have heard the noise on the roof, felt the dust and roof material coming down on you, and then behold a cot that is being lowered into the room. What a sight! This is what they all were seeing. They were wondering what was going on here. But Jesus looked up and saw their faith. He recognized those friends' faith. And because Jesus saw their faith, He said, "Man, your sins are forgiven." Because of the faith of the man's friends, Jesus did not ask any questions, nor did He wait until the man on the cot asked to be healed.

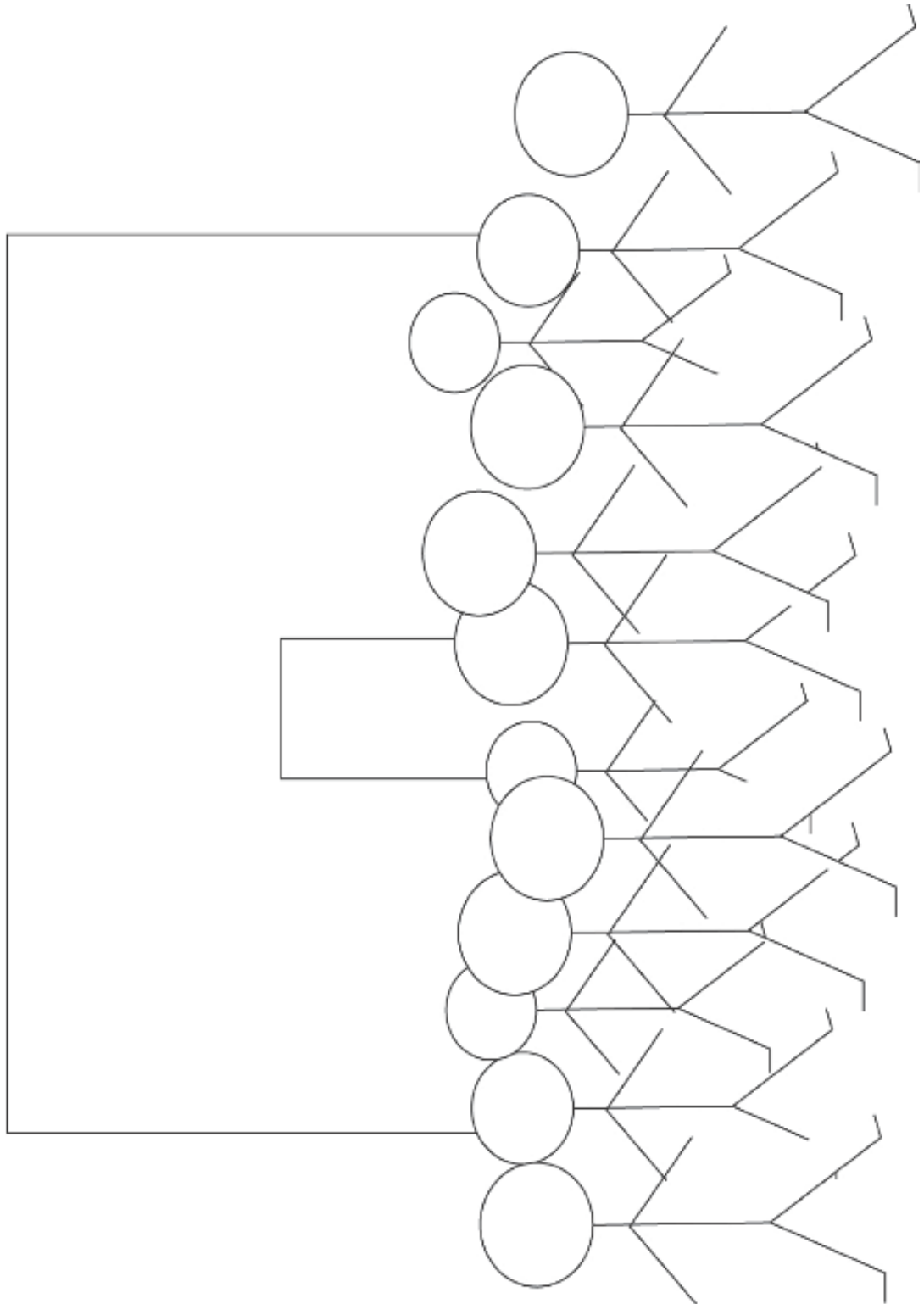
Now, we would expect everyone in the room to be happy to see this man healed. The room should have been filled with thanksgiving and praises to God for healing this man! BUT instead, the Pharisees and Jewish teachers of the law had evil and unbelieving hearts. Instead of thanking God and acknowledging Jesus' kindness, power, and authority to forgive and heal this man, they thought Jesus was being disrespectful to God. They thought that Jesus did not have the right to tell the man that his sins are forgiven—only God can do that. How dare Jesus forgive sins and heal! They were not willing to admit that God had given Jesus the authority to forgive sins and to heal, but they were wrong. Then Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "Rise, take up your cot and go to your house." So the man who had been carried by his friends on a bed rose up immediately and picked up the cot that he had been lying on for so long a time. Then he went away to his house, glorifying God (praising and giving thanks to Him). And everyone said, "We have seen extraordinary (extra ordinary) things today."

Stories of Jesus

Map
Week 12



Stories of Jesus



Week 12

Stories of Jesus

Week Thirteen The Centurion

Reference: Luke 7: 1-10; Matthew 8:5-13

Memory verse: Romans 13:1

Let every person be subject to the authorities over him, for there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are ordained by God.

Story points:

1. A centurion, a man under authority and with authority, lived in Capernaum.
2. He loved the Jews and built a synagogue for them.
3. He respected people and God.
4. One of his slaves was sick unto death.
5. He called for Jesus to heal him.
6. He recognized that Jesus had authority from God.
7. Jesus healed the slave by speaking a word.
8. The slave was found in good health.

Emphasized points:

1. The centurion knew both how to be a boss and how to be under authority.
2. Children should not be the boss; they should follow the instructions of parents and teachers.
3. Even most adults are under someone's authority.
4. The centurion treated his slaves with proper respect and care.
5. We should not treat some nicely because of social status or wealth.
6. The centurion knew that Jesus was the real authority; whatever Jesus said was what happened.
7. Children are blessed when they come under the authority of their parents.

Embedded thoughts:

1. One with authority is actually one who knows how to be under authority.
2. Do not be bossy; do not be harsh.
3. Follow others' instructions instead of doing what you want to do; you are not the one in authority.
4. It is a blessing to realize that Jesus is the real Authority.
5. Take the way of being under authority and be blessed.

Visuals:

1. Picture of soldiers in rank and file, OR a military parade.

Songs:

1. "Parents and teachers, leaders and the coach"
2. "Children * obey your parents"
3. "Romans 13:1"

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Story sample:

A centurion, an officer in the Roman army, lived in Capernaum. This man had been in the army for some time. He had been trained and had risen up through the army to become an officer with about 100 soldiers under his authority. Because he was over these soldiers, all orders and commands came from him. He controlled when they rose for duty each day, what tasks they carried out, where they went, etc. He directed everything that these men did by his commands. This was the Roman army, and you did what the officer said. If he said go that way, you went that way. After a command was given, no one stood around considering if they liked it or not. No, you just carried out the command. You did what you were told. Of course, as a centurion, he also had an officer above him. So he was under the authority of a Roman army officer, and he also had soldiers under his authority.

Have you ever seen soldiers carrying out their orders or seen the army as it marches? It is so orderly. (*Show the picture of an army marching or doing some drills; point out all the lines and the order.*) There is a beauty in this.

One time a 5th grader told me a story about when the recess bell had rung at school, and everyone was heading over to stand behind the line. (This school had all the students do this when the bell rang.) Then all the 1st grade teachers came and told the 1st graders to line up. Then the 2nd grade teachers came and told the 2nd graders to line up. Then the 3rd grade teachers came and did the same thing. But there was a 3rd grader who continued talking to her 4th grade friend. It seemed as if she did not think that the instructions to line up included her. She kept talking instead of lining up as instructed. She did not want to come under the authority of the teacher. She wanted to be the boss and keep talking. (*The storyteller could tell own example.*) Does that paint a pretty picture? NO! It is not the kind of scene we like to see!

I am afraid today that too many of us like to be boss. When we are told to do something by our folks and teachers, we may be just like that 3rd grader. But we are not the boss. We are children, and we are under the authority of our parents and teachers. Even when we grow up, we are still under the authority of so many others. Most of your parents are still under a boss at work. And we all are under the authority of the police.

Now concerning this centurion, he had lived a long time in Capernaum. And even though he was not a Jew (he was a Roman), he loved the Jews of Capernaum. He was a man with authority in the Roman army, an army that occupied the city and ruled over the Jews, but he loved them. He even built the Jews a synagogue. This centurion must have had some thoughts toward God, because he built a place for the Jews to worship God. Not only did he treat the Jews well and respect their God; he even treated his slaves with compassion. You might think that since he gave orders to soldiers that he was bossy or harsh. No, he was not bossy or harsh. As a centurion, he was under the Roman army's authority to carry out certain duties. He did this by giving orders to the soldiers under him. In his household this centurion had slaves or servants to take care of many matters. Having slaves or servants to take care of matters in the house was quite common in those days. The centurion's slaves also had to follow his orders, but he cared for them. He did not mistreat them.

This is quite a different attitude than some people have. If you come from a rich family—you have a big house with a swimming pool and lots of expensive things to play with—I might treat

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you better than others. BUT if you live in a small apartment, and you usually don't have a lot of new things to play with, then I might not treat you like the rich one. My treatment might be based on what you have. But this centurion was not like that. He cared for his slaves.

There was a time when one of his slaves was terribly sick and about to die. The centurion acted the same way that he would have if it had been a family member who was going to die. He had heard of Jesus, and at once he called some of the elders of the Jews to go and ask Jesus to come to his house and completely heal his slave. Jesus agreed and started immediately toward his house. Jesus was willing to go to see an officer in the Roman army. When they were not far from his house, the centurion sent some friends, saying,

READ: Luke 7: 6b-7

"Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not fit for You to enter under my roof; therefore, I did not count even myself worthy to come to You. But speak a word, and let my servant be healed."

From these words we can tell that the centurion knew that Jesus as a man was under God's real authority in the universe. Jesus was under His Father God, who rules the entire universe. Even though the Romans ruled over the Jews, the centurion knew that this man Jesus had more authority. The centurion knew that all the Lord Jesus needed to do was to speak a word and that it would be done; he knew that his servant would be healed. The centurion was a man whose word had authority over his soldiers and his slaves, but he realized the Jesus' word had God's authority to heal.

When Jesus heard what the friends said, He marveled at the great faith of the centurion. Those who had been sent to Jesus returned to the centurion's house, and they found the slave, the one who had been so terribly sick. They found out that the slave was in good health. Jesus had healed him.

What a blessing this centurion received by recognizing Jesus as the One who had authority and by putting himself under His authority. The centurion was unlike the Pharisees, who would not acknowledge Jesus' authority when he healed the paralyzed man. Rather, the centurion accepted Jesus' authority and was blessed by coming under it.

This is God's way. A wonderful verse(s) in the Bible says: (Ephesians 6:1-3)

"Children obey your parents in the Lord for this is right." (Use this for children up to 6 years old.)

"Children obey your parents in the Lord for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother,' which is the first commandment with a promise." (Use this for children 7-9 years old.)

"Children obey your parents in the Lord for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother,' which is the first commandment with a promise, 'That it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth.'" (Use this for children 10-12 years old.)

When we come under the authority of our parents we are blessed. *(Now is a good time to do a memory activity with the Bible verse(s) and/or sing one of the songs listed above.)*

Stories of Jesus

Week Fourteen The Ten Lepers

Reference: Luke 17:11-19

Memory verse: 1 Thessalonians 5:18

In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

SPECIAL NOTE: Do not describe what the disease of leprosy was like. Do not bring in any pictures of this disease. This is not the point of the story.

Story points:

1. Jesus traveled and taught in the cities.
2. One area was Samaria; He was rejected there.
3. After being rejected, He returned to Samaria on His way to Jerusalem.
4. In a village 10 lepers met Him.
5. They cried out to Him to be healed.
6. He healed them and told them to show themselves to the priests.
7. Only one returned to thank Him.

Emphasized points:

1. Jesus went again to an area where He had been rejected.
2. Leprosy had changed the way these 10 lived; it made their life so hard.
3. Jesus restored their lives back to normalcy; they all should have been so thankful to Him.
4. Only one was thankful.
5. It is serious to be unthankful.
6. Saying "Thank you" is to show that you are grateful.
7. We all should be grateful.

Embedded thoughts:

1. Being rejected should not stop us from doing good to others.
2. We should be thankful and show gratitude for so many regular things each day.

Visuals:

1. Map
2. List

Songs:

1. "Give thanks always" (Texas G163)
2. "Ten lepers came to Jesus" (Texas G164)
3. "Just one of the lepers" (Texas G166)

Story sample:

The Lord Jesus often traveled through Israel to visit cities and villages and teach the people God's Word. Once He was in the area of Samaria, and He entered into a village. His intention was to spend some time there, but the Samaritans would not make a place ready for Him to

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stay in. They rejected Him, so He went on His way (Luke 9:52). Now, if you went to a small town, and no one would give you a place to stay for the night, would you ever go back to that area or to that people? No way! You would be angry with them and say, "Good riddance." You would never want to go back there again.

But Jesus was not like this. After He was rejected by the Samaritans, He traveled through that area again. This time He was going to Jerusalem, and He decided to go through Samaria to get there. (*Use the map.*) As He walked into a certain village, he was met by 10 leprosy men. Leprosy is a terrible disease. (**Do not describe the disease.**) And it is contagious. Contagious means that you can catch it from someone else. Colds and flu are contagious. If you have a cold, and you are sitting next to me, coughing and sneezing without covering your mouth, you spread the germs, and most likely I will catch the cold from you. Well, leprosy was such an awful disease, and it was so contagious that it affected everything. If you had leprosy, you could not live with your family. A leper could not be around healthy people.

Lepers had their own place in the village or city. Only lepers lived there. If a leper needed to walk down one of the streets of the city, he had to call out a warning and say, "Unclean, unclean!" as he walked so that no one would get close to him. When a leper outgrew or tore his clothes, the clothes had to be burned. Oh, it was a dreadful disease. Of course, a leper had relatives who loved him, but he could never be close to them. The ones with leprosy always had to keep a distance from healthy people so that they did not pass on the disease to others.

Now let's make a list of things we do and places we go each week. (*Have the children make a list.*)

<u>This we do</u>	<u>Could a leper do this?</u>
1. Go to school	NO
2. Go to a park	NO
3. Go to the library	NO
4. Play jump rope with friends	NO
5. Go to the dentist	NO
6. Go visit my aunt	NO
7. Read my brother a book	NO
8. Go to children's meeting	NO

There is nothing unusual about any of these things. They are the regular things that we do all the time. We could make a very long list like this, couldn't we? Now let's go back over this list and see if a leper could do any of this. Could a leper go to school? Why not? (etc.) I think that a leper must have been pretty miserable. Look how much he cannot do because he has this disease.

These 10 lepers saw Jesus and they stood off at a distance. Even from that distance they knew who Jesus was. Seeing Him, they cried out with one voice, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." You see, Jesus was very well known. Nearly everywhere people had heard about Him and knew that He could heal. When He heard their cry, He said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." All 10 lepers were cleansed from the disease. Wow, they simply believed what Jesus

Stories of Jesus

said and obeyed His word! All 10 did as He said, and as they were on their way, they were cleansed from this terrible disease.

When one of them saw that he was healed, he immediately returned to Jesus, glorifying God with a loud voice. Oh, everyone could hear him giving glory to God that he had been healed. When he got to Jesus, he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, thanking Him. He was full of gratitude and humility. How could he ever thank Jesus enough for healing him? As a cleansed one, he could return to his family. He could be among all the other healthy people in the village. By being healed, his life had been restored to him. All those things (*refer to the list*) that he had not been able to do, he could now do. His life would be normal again. He was full of thanks and loudly gave God the glory. And this one was a Samaritan, a foreigner.

READ: Luke 17:17-19

And Jesus said, "Were not the ten cleansed? But the nine, where are they? Were none found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner? And He said to him, Rise up and go; your faith has healed you."

Doesn't that seem incredible? Ten lepers were cleansed from such an awful disease, but only one returned to say "thank you." We surely would have expected all 10 to come back and tell Jesus "thank you."

Saying "thank you" seems like such a small thing, but how many times do we all forget to say "thank you"? We ask for a glass of juice or a snack, and we expect it. We forget to say "thank you." It is as if our attitude is that we deserve it, that we only have to ask for something. So we see no reason to say "thank you." I asked, and I should be given it. I deserve what I asked for. But the Bible says that people who do not care for God are unthankful. If you are unthankful, it means you are ungrateful. We should all put a chart on the fridge and put a sticker up every time we thank our mom or dad or brother or sister for doing something when we asked. Then we would see whether or not we are like the one leper or like the nine who did not say "thank you."

I hope all of us would become like the one and learn to say "thank you."

Stories of Jesus

Week Fifteen The Man by the Pool

Reference: John 5: 1-9

Memory verse: Ephesians 4:32a

And be kind to one another, tenderhearted . . .

Story points:

1. There was a feast of the Jews in Jerusalem.
2. Jesus went up to Jerusalem.
3. Instead of joining the crowds feasting, He went to the pool of Bethesda.
4. People at the pool waited for mercy; when the water was stirred, the first to step in was made well.
5. A man had been laying there for 38 years.
6. There was no one to put him into the water.
7. Jesus came to this one and healed him.

Emphasized points:

1. God likes to show mercy.
2. God cares for those on the sidelines.
3. Mercy is to treat others nicely when they do not deserve it.

Embedded thoughts:

1. Be one who shows mercy.
2. Don't make excuses.

Songs:"

1. "Be tenderhearted, kind to one another"

Story sample:

There was a feast of the Jews, and many Jews were going up to Jerusalem to be in the feast. The time was going to be so enjoyable. Everyone was so happy as they walked through the city. A feast! There is nothing like the joy of a good time together! The city was filled with the atmosphere of joy. There was the hustle and bustle of joyful people. Jesus also came up to Jerusalem for the feast. But instead of joining in with the crowds who were celebrating the feast, He turned aside to a place where there was no one joyfully keeping the feast. He went to a pool of Bethesda near the Sheep Gate. And the only people who were at this pool were ones who could not join in on the enjoyment of the feast. The whole city was having a feast. Most were preparing for the big gathering. They were having a good time. A feast is a time to eat and enjoy, but here at the pool of Bethesda there were only sick and weak ones who were not able to join in the feast. At this pool there was a roof supported by 5 columns that was a sheltered porch with a pool. The people here waited for mercy; they waited for help to be healed.

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We all have seen situations like this, maybe at the park or at school. There may be a game of kickball or softball or basketball going on, and so many are having a great time. It is so fun. You are there kicking the ball and running to first base. Your team is winning. It is so fun, and all of those playing are so happy. But then you look off to the side, and you see some others just sitting there and watching. They are on the sidelines. Maybe no one picked them to be on a team because they always miss the ball, or maybe they don't have any friends to play with. It seems they just don't fit in. Maybe they are your younger sister who has to tag along with you...anyway, we all know of times where many are having a good time, but others are left out. Do you think that the ones on the sidelines are happy? No way! They wish they could join in. It is pretty sad to be left out. So why, if we all know that it is so sad to be left out, why is there ever a sideline when we are having a good time? Why do we not just include everyone? We all have our reasons. Oh, she is too little to play. Oh, he can't throw the ball right. Oh, no one likes him, etc. There are lots and lots of excuses. Mostly it all boils down to not wanting to show others mercy. Mercy is to treat others nicely when they do not deserve it.

This pool was called the pool of Bethesda, which means "house of mercy." God likes to show mercy. Well, all the people by the pool of Bethesda were sad. They surely wanted to be able to feast and have a good time, but they had no way. They could not join in without someone's help. This is where Jesus went. He went to the people who were on the sidelines.

What do you think these ones were doing? Waiting. They were waiting for the moving of the water. From time to time an angel of God came down to the pool and stirred up the water; the first one to step into the pool after the stirring up of the water was healed of whatever disease he had. Now there was a certain man who had been lying there for 38 years. Knowing this, Jesus asked him, "Do you want to get well?" Here Jesus asked a very simple, honest question, "Do you want to get well?" The man replied, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I am coming, another steps down before me." This answer is somewhat long and complicated. A simple yes is all that was needed, but this unhappy man who had been sick for so long gave an excuse why he was still sick.

This reminds me of the way I often answer someone. *(Give a typical example of a child giving long drawn out reasons for failures and excuses instead of a simple answer.)*

Did that man who had been lying there by the pool want to be healed? Of course he did! But he could never be first to the pool. Why had he never been first to the pool? Because there was no one to help him. He just could not do it on his own. He needed help. But each time the water in the pool was stirred, there was no one to help him reach the pool. I am sure that he had been disappointed and discouraged many times while lying there for 38 years. Think about it—38 years is a long time. That is 3 or 4 times as old as some of you! I would be soooo discouraged if I had been waiting there for 38 years, waiting there without anyone to help. This was the story of the man whom Jesus came to. On a day when the whole city was celebrating a festival with so much joy and feasting, He came to one who needed help. Jesus went to the "sidelines." The Lord Jesus showed mercy. The man at the pool had probably given up being healed, but Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your mat and walk." And immediately the man became well. He picked up his mat and walked.

Stories of Jesus

Week Sixteen

Review

As much as possible, try to include the children in preparing for and presenting the review. The following are the most important points of each week to emphasize with the children:

Week Twelve:

1. A paralyzed man had some friends who really cared for him.
2. They did all they could to get him to Jesus.
3. Jesus saw their faith, and healed the man because He is the one with the authority to heal.
4. We need to be unselfish friends.
5. We need to be thankful.

Week Thirteen:

1. The centurion was a man of authority.
2. He had respect for those in authority over him.
3. He had respect for his servants who were under his authority.
4. When one of his servants became ill, he sent for Jesus, asking for healing; he recognized Jesus as the One in authority.
5. Jesus healed the servant because of the faith of the centurion.
6. It is a blessing to us if we respect authority.

Week Fourteen:

1. Jesus went to Samaria, a land that had rejected Him once before.
2. Ten lepers approached him, asking to be healed, for they recognized who Jesus was.
3. Jesus healed all ten.
4. Only one returned to thank Him.
5. We need to be thankful to others.

Week Fifteen

1. There was a feast in Jerusalem; many were coming to celebrate.
2. Rather than go to the celebration, Jesus went instead to a pool where there were many weak and needy ones.
3. The pool was for healing, but only the first to enter after the water had stirred was healed.
4. Jesus went to a man who had been there waiting for 38 years.
5. Jesus in His mercy healed the man.
6. We need to show mercy to others.