

SABBATH SCHOOL

Preteen Sabbath Instruction Program — Teacher's Outline

Level 5 • Unit 5 • Week 1

THE STORY OF CHRIST'S BIRTH

OBJECTIVE:

To make known the true story from the Bible about the birth of Jesus Christ and the reason why He was born and came to the earth. Also, to show how Christmas has nothing to do with the birth of Christ and why we should not keep it.

ATTENTION GETTER:

Have the following items available: dictionary, encyclopedias and other reference materials.

Have each of the students choose an item or items from the following list of Christmas customs:

- Mistletoe
- Holly
- Christmas tree
- Santa, St. Nicholas
- Yule log
- Candles
- Christmas lights

Have the students look up the the words together or in pairs and discuss where each custom began.

Ask: Did most of these customs begin before Jesus Christ was born?

Ask: How many of these things came from Babylon and Egypt?

BIBLE LESSON:

Say: Gabriel the archangel was very excited, for God had chosen him for three very special missions. The three missions of Gabriel involved God sending him to three different people. Do you know who these people were? [Zacharias, Mary and Joseph.]

[Note: The Bible does not clearly say that Gabriel was the angel who communicated to Joseph, but it seems like a good possibility.]

Explain: God sent Gabriel to these three individuals to prepare for the birth of Jesus Christ. God had planned this event from the very beginning (Revelation 13:8).

Say: Do any of you know why Jesus had to come to earth as a human being? Some reasons were:

- To pay the death penalty for our sins.
- To preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God.
- To overcome Satan and qualify to replace him as the ruler of this world.
- To prepare disciples to do His work after His death.

So now the time had come for Gabriel's first mission which was to prepare the messenger that would come before Christ. For God had stated that He would send a messenger to prepare the people for Christ's coming. This messenger would have the Holy Spirit from birth (Luke 1:15). God was very careful to pick the right parents—Zacharias and Elizabeth.

Say: Do you know who this messenger was? [John the Baptist.]

God knew that even though Zacharias and his wife were getting old, they had served God faithfully for many years. Zacharias was a priest and regularly took his turn at serving in the temple. In fact it was during one of Zacharias' appointed times to serve there that Gabriel's first mission began. He appeared to Zacharias as he was getting the sweet smelling incense to burn. At first Zacharias was frightened at the appearance of Gabriel, but Gabriel reassured him by saying, "Don't be afraid, Zacharias. I am sent by God. He knows you have faithfully served Him and He has very good news for you. He is going to give you and Elizabeth a son."

Say: Zacharias didn't believe the angel when he told them that God could actually grant them a son, after going so many years without having one so do you know what God did temporarily to Zacharias because he didn't believe? [Made him unable to speak.]

Meanwhile time moved on. Six months had passed since Gabriel came to Zacharias and he knew that it was time for his second mission. This time he would be sent to a little village named Nazareth.

Ask: Who was the second person that Gabriel appeared to? It was Mary.

Say: In the city of Nazareth which was about 60 miles north of Jerusalem where Gabriel had appeared to Zacharias, lived Mary who was Elizabeth's cousin. She, like Elizabeth, was a God-fearing woman. She was very happy because she was about to be married to a man who was also very godly. His name was Joseph.

One evening Mary was lying down getting ready to go to sleep, when suddenly Gabriel appeared before her.

Ask: What did Gabriel say to Mary?

Say: He said, "Don't be frightened, Mary." Gabriel continued, "For God has decided to bless you in a very special way. You will become pregnant and have a Son and you are to name Him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give Him the throne of His ancestor David. And He will reign over Israel forever and His Kingdom will never end" (Luke 1:30-33).

Ask: What was Mary's reaction to the angel's message?

Say: She said, "I am the Lord's servant, and I am willing to accept whatever He wants" (Luke 1:38).

Gabriel had completed his second mission, but the job was not yet finished. The Bible does not tell us the name of the angel who performed this third mission. But it's possible that it was Gabriel who appeared to the man who was engaged to Mary.

Ask: What was the name of this man?

Say: That man was named Joseph. He was very troubled to learn that Mary was with child. He even considered breaking the engagement, though he would do it quietly (Matthew 1:19-20).

Say: An angel appeared to Joseph and told him to not be afraid to take Mary to be his wife. Filled with relief and great joy, Joseph now went ahead with his plans to become Mary's husband.

Explain: God had said through the prophet Micah (Micah 5:2) many years before that Christ was to be born in Bethlehem. To accomplish this, God moved the Roman emperor to proclaim a census, which would mean all the people living in the Roman Empire (which was much of what was considered the civilized world) would have to go to their hometowns. Since Joseph was of the house of David, Bethlehem was his hometown. He and Mary made the long journey there. God moved several people around at that time to make sure that His purpose would stand and that Jesus would be born where He said that He would.

Soon Jesus Christ was born in a manger and was visited by shepherds who had heard the announcement of his birth from the angels. Later, when Jesus was older, He was visited by wise men from the East after He and His family had moved into a house.

LESSON APPLICATION:

Have the students look up the following scriptures to match each with the correct prophecy.

Jesus would be born in Bethlehem	Jeremiah 31:15
Herod would kill all the babies in and around Bethlehem	Micah 5:2
Jesus would be called out of Egypt	Isaiah 7:14
A virgin would conceive	Hosea 11:1

Then play the following guessing game. This is played somewhat like "Hangman," but uses a chalkboard drawing of a house and roof, (a square for a house and a triangle for the roof). Have blank dashes for the letters in "Out of Egypt I have called My Son." Then have the students guess letters. Each incorrect guess results in a line of the house being erased.

If there is time available, discuss some of the good things we enjoy throughout the year (examples: Holy Day celebrations and spontaneous giving of surprise gifts at anytime of year).

Music:

Sing the following song, "So Christ Could Be Born" to the tune of "Simple Gifts."

"So Christ Could Be Born"

God planned for a census, so Christ could be born
In precisely the place He was purposed to be born.
He came to this earth as a human you see,
He came as our king and to die on the tree.

The Christ was born in a manger with hay,
The shepherds where told and they came right away.
When Jesus was older the wise men came as well,
Bearing gifts for the great King Emmanuel.

MEMORY VERSE:

Luke 1:31-33 "And behold you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

family activity

THE POINT:

To make known the true story from the Bible about the birth of Jesus Christ and the reason why He was born and came to the earth. Also, to show how Christmas has nothing to do with the birth of Christ and why we should not keep it.

FAMILY TOGETHER TIME:

Use a Bible atlas or use the maps in the back of your Bible. Help your child draw a map of Palestine and then find the following places together:

- Nazareth
- Bethlehem
- Jerusalem
- Egypt
- Cana
- Jordan River

Discuss the journey Joseph and Mary made from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Was it dangerous? Did they have to go through Samaria? Were the Samaritans friendly to the Jews?

Discuss the temple in Jerusalem in which Zacharias served. Who built it? (Herod.) What temples had been there before it? (The one built by the Jews in Ezra's time and the one built by Solomon.)

Discuss why Mary and Joseph and the young Jesus had to go to Egypt. Why did Herod want Jesus to be killed? (He was afraid he might be replaced as king.)

Look up Herod in a Bible dictionary together. What were some of the other bad things Herod did? Was he put on his throne by the Romans? (Yes.)

MEMORY VERSE:

Luke 1:31-33 "And behold you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."