

LIFE OF JESUS

by Laura Sweet

**Fours and Fives
Year 1
Quarter 2**

Fours and Fives
Year 1
Quarter 2

INTRODUCTION -

LIFE OF JESUS

During this quarter we will get an overview of the life of Jesus, including His special birth, His ministry on earth, His death on the cross, and His resurrection and ascension. The first few lessons are planned to correspond with the Christmas season, but include some alternative projects if you are teaching it during a different time of year.

As with the first quarter, the teaching takes place within three different sections of the class: the Focus Activity, the Story Area, and the Project/Activity. For a description of how each of these sections works, see the longer Introduction to the first quarter. What follows is information specific to the needs of this particular quarter.

Story Area

If you do not already have pictures or flannelgraph on file depicting the life of Christ, you may wish to purchase some for this quarter. Most teachers who have been teaching for awhile have these kinds of supplies on hand. Illustrations are optional, however.

You will find the Bible story written out in each lesson. These are meant to be used as a guide as you retell the story from the Bible. Feel free to add details, etc., as you adapt the story to your class.

Project Activity

We assume you have some common supplies in your classroom: scissors, glue sticks, crayons, markers, construction paper and tape. In addition, the following supplies will be used in one or more of the lessons this quarter:

- Christmas decorations for classroom (or advent calendar or nativity scene)
- paper dessert plates (optional)
- regular paper plates
- large pieces of paper*
- old Christmas cards
- glitter pens (optional)

- string
- old magazines (missions magazines, women's, nature - all kinds)
- craft sticks or popsicle sticks
- stickers
- watercolor paints and paint brushes
- 1 sheet of poster board

* Sometimes the Focus Activity will call for you to make a list. If you have a chalk board or a white board in your room, you could use this instead of a large piece of paper.

Suggested Songs

The following songs will work well with some of the lessons from this quarter: *Away in A Manger*; *Silent Night*; *Oh, How I Love Jesus!*; *Isn't He Wonderful?*; *His Name is Wonderful*; *Because He Lives*; *He is Lord*; *Jesus, Name Above All Names*; *He Lives!* (the chorus). If you learned *To God Be The Glory* last quarter, you may use that song this quarter as well. No doubt you have other songs or choruses about the life of Jesus that your class enjoys, which you may add to the list above.

BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

Luke 1:5-25, 57-80

Lesson Aim

To show that John's birth was a sign to the world that Jesus was coming.

Memory Verse

Matthew 5:3a - "Blessed are the poor in spirit."

Lesson Background

Our emphasis this quarter on the life of Christ will be that Jesus is the Son of God. We want our students to know that Jesus did not start life as a little baby, born in a stable. Instead, we will tell them that Jesus is God, and He came from heaven to be our Savior. In this week's lesson, we will talk about getting ready for Baby Jesus. John's birth and Zechariah's subsequent prophecies were a sign that the Messiah was coming. We will get ready, too, by preparing ourselves for the Christmas celebration of Christ's birth.

These lessons were designed to be used during the Christmas season. If you are teaching these lessons during a different time of year, you could do one of two things: Most of the projects and activities include alternatives that you could use to adapt to a different time of year. Or you can simply skip this quarter until the Christmas season and teach another quarter first! One of the good things about this curriculum is that it is not tied to specific dates, but can be used at any time of the year. The quarters do not have to be sequential, and each stands on its own.

Lesson Procedure

For this lesson you will need the following: decorations for the classroom (or advent calendar or nativity scene), flannelgraph or pictures to illustrate the story (optional), photocopies of the student worksheet, candle “flames” cut from yellow or orange construction paper, and paper dessert plates (optional).

1. Focus Activity

Let’s get the classroom ready for Christmas! You can do this by having the students help you decorate the room. Or you can set up a nativity scene in one corner of the room, or put up an advent calendar on the wall. As your students help you with what you are doing, talk about the things they may be doing to get ready for Christmas at home.

“Sometimes it’s hard to wait for Christmas, isn’t it? It only comes once a year. But did you know that God’s people had to wait many, many years for the very first Christmas, when baby Jesus was born? They had to wait so long that some people stopped expecting it to happen. But then God sent someone special to show them that the birth of His Son was coming soon! We’re going to talk about that this morning in our story area.”

(Optional Activity: If you are teaching this at a different time of year, you could show pictures of a birthday party and discuss the things that need to be done to get ready for a loved one’s birthday.)

Once children are seated in the story area, you can introduce this week’s memory verse. This would also be a good time to begin teaching your students a simple Christmas song, such as *Away In A Manger* or *Joy To The World*.

2. Bible Story (from Luke 1)

God’s people were waiting for the promised Savior! They had been waiting a long time. God had promised to send a Savior many, many years before. Many people died before the promise came true - people like Abraham, Moses and David.

But now the time for the Savior’s birth was almost here! God would send one last prophet to get His people ready for the things the Savior would say and do. That prophet would have to be someone special because he had a big job to do.

One day a priest named Zechariah was serving God in the temple. He was a man of God, and his wife, Elizabeth, was a good woman, too. But they had no children, and now they were growing old. For many years Zechariah had been praying that he and Elizabeth would have a child. They were waiting, too, weren’t they?

But while Zechariah was in God’s Temple, something marvelous happened! An angel of the Lord appeared to him with a special message from God. He frightened Zechariah, but the angel said, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will give you a son, and you are to give him the name John.”

The angel had more good news for Zechariah. His baby boy would grow up to be God's prophet. He would help God's people get ready for the Savior. He would be the one who would show the Savior to the world.

Zechariah couldn't believe what the angel was saying. A special baby, now that he and Elizabeth were so old? "How can I be sure of this?" he asked the angel.

The angel answered, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their proper time."

The angel was right - Zechariah could not speak! When he came out of the Temple he could only make signs with his hands to show the people he had seen something glorious in the Temple. But when he opened his mouth, no words came out.

God blessed Zechariah and Elizabeth just as He said. Elizabeth found out she was going to have a baby. And when the baby was born, all of their friends and neighbors were very happy for Elizabeth and Zechariah! Since he was their first son, everyone thought they would name him Zechariah, after his father. But Elizabeth said, "No! He is to be called John."

"That can't be right," the people thought. They asked Zechariah what he wanted to name the baby.

"His name is John," Zechariah wrote on a tablet. Suddenly, God gave Zechariah his speech back! Zechariah was filled with God's Holy Spirit and he began to praise the Lord. He told the people that John would grow up to be a great prophet of God and that he would get the people ready for the Savior. The time for the Savior's birth was near! The waiting was almost over.

Who is this Savior everyone was waiting for? That's right - Jesus! Next week we'll learn about how Jesus came from heaven and was born as a little baby. Let's pray together now that God will get our hearts ready to celebrate His birth. [*Lead in prayer.*]

Worksheet/Project

John would tell people about Jesus, the Light of the World, and we're going to make paper "candles" to remember that message. Have a photocopy of the worksheet for each student, which they can color if they wish. Have them cut the square out, and then roll it up to be a skinny candle (if you have mostly younger students, you may wish to do the cutting for them). Have them tape the candle together and tape the construction paper "flame" at the top. If you wish, you can tape the candle onto a paper dessert plate for a nice "candle holder" effect; you can even attach a construction-paper handle to the plate.

Worksheet

Birth of John the Baptist

Cut out the rectangle below and roll it into a “candle.” Then tape a “flame” cut from orange or yellow construction paper to the top of the candle and tape the bottom of the candle to a paper dessert plate.

JESUS
IS
THE LIGHT OF
THE WORLD



THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Luke 2:1-20

Lesson Aim

To show that Jesus came from heaven to be our Savior.

Memory Verse

Matthew 5:3 - "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Lesson Background

We will be talking about the Trinity in this lesson as we discuss the birth of Jesus. This is a foundational truth of the Christian faith and therefore needs to be taught to all ages. Thankfully, young children are more likely to simply accept this teaching, while adults often struggle with the concept. Think of the discussion as an introduction to the subject for your students, and don't worry if they don't seem to be "getting" it. Remember, we are laying the groundwork for further teaching and instruction as they grow and mature. We will be discussing the Trinity again in the fourth quarter of this material when we teach the attributes of God.

For many churches, Christmas is a fun but busy time. If your church has special programs involving your students, you may find your class time eaten away by rehearsals or extra practice. Try to stay flexible if this is the case - your circle time or focus activity time may have to be sacrificed, but do try to get in the whole Bible story, as this is the "meat" of the lesson. A quiet song or two may be needed to settle your students down so that they can listen to Christmas story. It shouldn't be too difficult; old or young, we all love to hear about the Son of God who came from heaven and was born as a little baby to be our Savior!

Lesson Procedure

For this lesson you will need the following: white, red and green construction paper, cut in strips; scotch tape (perhaps several dispensers); flannelgraph or pictures to illustrate the story (optional).

1. Focus Activity

Have your students help you as you make a “sample” paper chain. You will want to have strips of three different colors cut ahead of time - and plenty of them! (If you have a couple of students who are good with scissors, they could cut some more during this time.) Establish a regular pattern for the students to follow, such as red, white, green, red, white, green, etc. Loop each strip into the previous loop, and then tape until you have a chain of some length. If your students want to make their own chains, assure them they will get that chance after the lesson.

“I’m going to use this chain at the end of my lesson to remind you of some things we’re going to talk about today. Then we’re all going to make chains to take home during our project time. Right now let’s head for the story area so I can share today’s story with you.”

(Optional Activity: If you are teaching this lesson during a different season of the year, you can still make a paper chain. However, you may wish to use more seasonal colors - red, yellow, and orange for fall, or yellow, green, and blue for spring or summer.)

In the story area, go over your memory verse and practice the song you have chosen for the Christmas season. Remind your students that Christmas isn’t about presents or Santa Claus, but about the birth of Jesus.

Here is an action rhyme you may teach your students for this week and next:

“No Christmas tree, no mistletoe,	<i>Shake head “no”</i>
No special box wrapped with a bow.	<i>Outline a “box” with hands</i>
What did that first Christmas bring?	<i>Show index finger for #1</i>
A baby boy - our Savior and King!”	<i>Rock “pretend” baby in arms</i>

2. Bible Story (from Matthew 1:18-25 and Luke 2:1-20)

The Bible teaches us that there is only one God. But our God is three persons. There is God the Father, who rules from heaven. There is God the Son, who is Jesus. And there is God the Holy Spirit. All three are one God. One God - three persons.

Men and women, boys and girls need a Savior if they are to live with God. God the Father said He would send God the Son - Jesus - to earth to be our Savior. Jesus, God’s Son, said He was willing to come. The Holy Spirit said He would make a body for Jesus. All three were agreed - God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

When the time was ready an angel came to Mary and said she was going to be the mother of the Savior - Jesus. So the Holy Spirit prepared a body for Jesus inside of Mary’s tummy. An angel also appeared in a dream to Joseph saying that he should take Mary as his wife. The angel said that Mary had a baby in her made by the Holy Spirit, and when He was born His name would be called Jesus. So Mary became Joseph’s wife.

When it was almost time for the baby to be born, Mary and Joseph had to go on a long trip. They had to pay their taxes in Bethlehem. When they got there they were very tired. They tried to find a room at the inn, but the inn was full. The only place left was the stable where the animals were kept. This is where Mary and Joseph had to stay, and this is where Mary had her baby. She wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger. They called his name *Jesus*.

A little way from Bethlehem some shepherds were watching their sheep. They didn't know that something special was happening that night. They didn't know that the Savior God had promised had been born! But while they were watching the sheep, an angel appeared to them. The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord!"

The angel then told the shepherds that they would find the baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. Then suddenly the sky was filled with many, many angels, and the angels cried, "Glory to God in the highest!" And as suddenly as they came, the angels disappeared. The shepherds left their sheep and looked for the Savior wrapped in swaddling clothes. They looked until they found Him, and then they told many people about what they had seen and heard.

God had come to earth that night - God in the form of a little baby! Jesus came from heaven to be our Savior. He did that because he loves His people very much. That's why Christmas is such a special time. Let's thank Jesus right now for coming to earth to be our Savior. [*Lead in prayer.*]

Project

Show the sample chain that you and the students made during the Focus Activity. Ask them how many chains you have (just one). Now ask how many colors are in the chain (three). "My one chain is made up of three colors, isn't it? We're going to make Christmas chains today to help us remember that God is one God, but He is three persons - God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. All three work together to bring about God's will."

Help your students to make their own paper chains. They can either take these home, or you can connect them together to make a long chain to decorate your room. As you work, review the Bible story, and also the idea that God is one God, but three persons.

THE VISIT OF THE WISE MEN

Matthew 2:1-12

Lesson Aim

To show that Jesus was God's greatest gift to the world.

Memory Verse

Matthew 5:4 - "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."

Lesson Background

We're going to be talking about gifts this week - gifts we give and gifts we receive. We'll discuss the gifts the wise men brought for baby Jesus, and we'll talk about Jesus Himself as God's great gift to the world. Like most gifts, this very first Christmas gift tells us much about the Giver. It shows that He remembers His promises, for He had promised to send a Savior, even as far back as the garden of Eden (Genesis 3:15)! It shows His love and mercy, for only Jesus' death could bring forgiveness of sins and make us right with God. And, like the very best gifts, it shows the generosity of the Giver. "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all - how will He not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" (Romans 8:32).

Your students will no doubt be very focused on gifts right now, especially if this is the week before Christmas. Instead of trying to fight their excitement, try to use it to encourage them to thank God for sending Jesus, the best gift of all! And, while they may not have gold, frankincense and myrrh to offer their King, they can offer another gift that the wise men shared - worship from a grateful heart and praise for the goodness of God!

Lesson Procedure

For this lesson you will need the following: a large piece of paper and a marker; flannelgraph or pictures to illustrate the story (optional); construction paper; old Christmas cards (or Bible stickers for alternative project); glitter pens (optional); crayons, glue sticks, and scissors.

1. Focus Activity

We're going to make a "wish list" as a class, but for others. Lots of people have been asking your students what they want for Christmas. But we're going to ask them what they would like to give to others.

Have a large piece of paper ready and ask the students what they would like to give someone else - a mom, a dad, a grandma, a friend, etc. (Be prepared for some wild answers!) It would be good to draw some simple pictures to illustrate their ideas so they can "read" the list when you are finished (you may wish to share some of these with their families later).

"These are great ideas for gifts! We're going to be talking about gifts today - and about the greatest Christmas gift of all. Let's go to the story area to find out more."

In the story area, go over the memory verse and any Christmas song you may be learning. You may also wish to review last week's action rhyme if you are using it in class.

2. Bible Story (from Matthew 2:1-12)

Can anyone tell me where baby Jesus was born? (You'll get various answers to this: "a stable," "a manger" - but look for a child to say "Bethlehem!") That's right - Jesus was born in Bethlehem. After he was born, Mary and Joseph didn't return to their home town. They stayed in Bethlehem and moved into a house. The people around them didn't know that Jesus was a special baby. They didn't know He was the Savior.

But there were other people who knew a special baby had been born! Wise men from the East had seen a star in the sky and they knew the Savior had been born. They traveled many, many days to see this special child. When they finally arrived in Jerusalem, everyone noticed these strange travelers. The wise men began to ask the people of Jerusalem, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east, and have come to worship him."

King Herod heard about the travelers and what they were saying. He didn't like this talk about a "king of the Jews." *He* was the only king, and he liked it that way! He called the chief priests and the teachers together and asked them where the Savior was supposed to be born. "In Bethlehem," the teachers told him.

Herod began to make an evil plan. He called the wise men and told them to look for the new king in Bethlehem. "As soon as you find him," he said, "come and tell me, so that I may go and worship him, too." But Herod was not planning to worship Jesus. He was planning to kill Him! He wanted to be the only king of the Jews.

The wise men traveled to Bethlehem, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them and stopped over Mary and Joseph's house. The wise men were so happy! They saw little Jesus with his mother and they bowed down and worshiped him.

The wise men had some special gifts for Jesus. They gave Him gold and incense and perfume. These were very valuable gifts, worth lots and lots of money. This was how the wise men honored Jesus.

But the wise men did not go back to tell King Herod about Jesus. God warned them in a dream, so they returned to their home country a different way. The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream as well.

“Get up!” the angel said. “Take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.”

Joseph got up and awakened Mary and Jesus. They left that very night for Egypt, and it was a good thing that they did! When Herod found out that the wise men had outsmarted him, he ordered that all the baby boys in the Bethlehem area were to be killed! But Jesus was safe with his parents in Egypt, and when Herod died, the family returned to their home in Nazareth.

Herod had said he wanted to worship Jesus, but he didn't, did he? No, he wanted to kill Him! But the wise men came and worshiped and brought gifts to Jesus. We remember them at Christmas time when we give gifts to each other. But we need to remember that the best Christmas gift was the one God gave us that first Christmas. He gave us His Son - Jesus! The Bible says, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). Let's thank God for this best gift of all! Let's thank Him for sending Jesus! [*Lead in prayer.*]

Project

As we continue our “gift” theme, let's make Christmas cards to give to our parents or loved ones for Christmas. Have students cut out Christmas designs from old Christmas cards and then glue them to the cover of a folded construction-paper card. They may also decorate the front with glitter pens, markers, or seasonal stickers. Help them write an appropriate greeting inside (like “Have a blessed Christmas,” or “Jesus is the greatest gift”), and help them sign their names. They may give the card this Sunday or save it to give on Christmas day.

(Alternative project - If you are teaching this lesson in another season, you might want to make Bible bookmarks as a gift for the students to give. Students can stick Bible stickers on a slim piece of construction paper or poster paper. This can be covered with contact paper to make it more sturdy, if you wish. A hole may be punched at the top of the marker for a piece of ribbon or yarn. Make sure you have the student sign and date the bookmark.)

VISIT TO THE TEMPLE, AGE 12

Luke 2:41-52

Lesson Aim

To encourage our students to be obedient to their parents, as Jesus was as a child.

Memory Verse

Matthew 5:5 - "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth."

Lesson Background

This week begins the first of three lessons on the obedience of Christ. Our emphasis in this lesson will be on the importance of being obedient to our parents, as Jesus was as a child. The next two will discuss Christ's obedience to His Father as He is baptized and as He faces the temptation in the wilderness.

We are given only one brief look at the childhood of Christ, but even so we can learn many things from this story about our Savior. First, we see that, even as a child, Jesus was remarkable in His wisdom and in His understanding of Scripture. We also see that He had some understanding of His special call, which even His parents didn't comprehend; if they had understood it, they would have *begun* their search for Him in the Temple. Finally, we see His humility, as He submits to His parents and obeys them. No wonder Luke writes that "Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" (Luke 2:52) That's exactly what we pray for and long to see in the lives of each of our students.

Lesson Procedure

For this lesson you will need the following: flannelgraph or pictures to illustrate the story (optional); white construction paper; colored construction paper; scissors, glue, and crayons.

1. Focus Activity

Let's begin our time together with a game of "Simon Says" (you can call it "Teacher Says" if you like). Give the children simple commands to perform, but they are only to obey the commands prefaced by "Simon Says," such as "Simon says hop on one foot." If they obey a command given without the "Simon Says," they must sit down. You may have to play a few rounds of this before the students really catch on, but once they learn it they will be hard to stump.

"You've done a good job listening and obeying in this game. But obeying isn't usually a game, is it? Today we're going to talk about how Jesus obeyed His parents when He was a boy. Let's go to our story area to learn more."

In the story area, go over your memory verse together. You may wish to learn a song about obedience, such as the chorus *Trust and Obey* or *I Will Obey (The First Time I'm Told)*. Also, the following discussion may be helpful before the Bible story.

"Are you the boss in your family? Do your Mom and Dad and brothers and sisters have to obey you? No! Who is the boss in your family? Your parents are in charge, aren't they? When they tell you not to do something, then you shouldn't do it. And when they tell you to do something, then you must obey and do it. The Bible says 'Children, obey your parents, for this is right' (Ephesians 6:1). God gave us our moms and dads to take care of us. They know what's best for us, and so God says we must obey them. Did you know Jesus obeyed His parents when He was a little boy? That's what our Bible story is about today."

2. Bible Story (from Luke 2:41-52)

Many, many families were traveling to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover feast. Old men, young men, women and children - everyone who could travel tried to get to Jerusalem for this special day. Many traveled together as families - parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, all coming together. The roads were crowded with people!

Jesus was traveling with His family to Jerusalem as well. He was twelve years old. God's Temple was in Jerusalem, and Jesus loved to be in God's Temple. He loved to hear the teachers read and talk about God's Word.

Jesus and His family stayed in Jerusalem until the end of the feast. Then it was time for the family to travel back home. Mary and Joseph got ready to go and started back on the road toward home. But they didn't know that Jesus wasn't with them! He was still in the Temple, speaking to the teachers about God's Word. And there were so many people traveling together that Mary and Joseph didn't know Jesus was missing; they thought He was traveling with other people in their group. Finally, when the end of the day came and everyone had stopped for the night, Jesus' parents began to look for Him. They asked their friends and relatives, but no one had seen Jesus. He was nowhere to be found! Mary and Joseph knew they had to go back to Jerusalem to look for Jesus.

They were very worried. It took them another day to travel back to Jerusalem, and then they began to search for Jesus. Finally they found Him! Where do you think Jesus was? That's right - He was still in the Temple! He was sitting with the teachers, listening to them speak and asking them questions. The teachers were surprised with all that Jesus understood.

His parents were amazed to see Him there! Why hadn't He returned home with His family? Didn't He know they would be worried about Him? Mary and Joseph should have known that the first place to look for Jesus was the Temple! It was where He could talk with others about God, His heavenly Father.

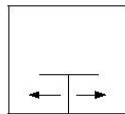
Do you think Jesus wanted to go home with His parents? No, I don't think so either. But the Bible says He went with His parents and was obedient to them. He obeyed them and did what they wanted Him to do. Obeying isn't always easy, is it? Sometimes it is hard. But obeying the people in charge of us pleases the Lord. And He is the real Boss, isn't He? He's the one whom everyone in the whole world should obey. Let's pray right now and ask Him to help us obey Him, and the people who are in charge of us, just as Jesus did when He was a boy. [*Lead in prayer.*]

Project

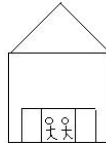
"Who are the people who live in your home who must be obeyed?" Most of your students will say Mom or Dad, or both. Some may say Grandma, or someone else, depending on their home situation. Let's make "house" pictures to remind us that we need to obey those in our family who have authority over us.

For each child you will need a white or light-colored piece of construction paper. You will also need colored construction paper - a square shape and a triangle shape for each child.

Make a T-shaped cut on each square piece and bend back to make double doors.



Glue the shapes onto the white construction paper in the form of a house, and have the children draw pictures of the people they must obey inside the house. As they open the doors, these people will show.



Write the words, "At my house I obey" at the top of the page, and the names of the people the children obey at the bottom of the page. An example would read, "At my house I obey ... Mom and Dad." Your students may wish to add some details, such as windows, chimneys, etc.

Send the project home with your students and tell them it is a reminder to obey their parents, just as Jesus obeyed.

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

Matthew 3

Lesson Aim

To show that Jesus obeyed His Father and always pleased Him.

Memory Verse

Matthew 5:6 - “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they will be filled.”

Lesson Background

In this second lesson on the obedience of Christ, we will be building on a number of concepts that we have already taught this quarter. For that reason, it is important to do the review in the Focus Activity to refresh our students’ memories. The Focus Activity will list in particular the points that you will want to reemphasize. Also, if you have recently had a baptism at your church, which some of your students may have seen, you might want to discuss that and remind them of what a “baptism” actually is.

Christ’s baptism was not only an outward display of His obedience to His heavenly Father, it was also a proclamation to Israel, from the Father Himself, that Christ was His Son who always pleased Him! No one else could be our Savior, for no one else could fulfill the requirements of the Law in our place. As we will explain to our students, only Christ could completely obey God because only He is holy. He is the only Savior that sinners need. It is our prayer that each of our students will know Him as his or her own Savior, and will follow Him in baptism and in obedience.

Lesson Procedure

For this lesson you will need the following: illustrations, flannelgraph or projects from the past four lessons (see Focus Activity); white paper plates (cheaper ones work best); string; crayons, scissors; pictures or flannelgraph to illustrate the story (optional).

1. Focus Activity

We need to review our past four lessons before today's Bible story to help our students remember some of the things we've already discussed. You may do this in several ways; the easiest would just be to have any pictures or projects from the last several weeks out for the children to see, and then discuss with them the things they remember. If you used flannelgraph, you could have some of the flannelgraph out for the different stories and have the students match other pieces to the correct story. Whichever way you choose to review, try to remind the students of the following points:

- * John was Jesus' cousin. He was born to be a prophet, to point people to Jesus, and to tell them Jesus is the Savior.
- * Jesus came from Heaven to be our Savior. He is God, along with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit.
- * Jesus was always obedient. He was obedient to His parents when he was a child, and He always obeyed God.

After your review, take the students to the story area and go over the memory verse (we will have this verse for two weeks because it is longer). Go over any songs you may be learning about obedience.

2. Bible Story (from Matthew 3)

Where did Jesus live before He was born in Bethlehem? That's right, heaven. Jesus has always lived because He is God, isn't He? That means Jesus isn't a sinner, like you and me. While Jesus was growing up, He always did what was right. He never disobeyed His parents. He always treated His brothers and sisters with love. He never lied or took things that belonged to other people. Jesus is holy, and He always obeys God.

Jesus had a cousin named John, whom we call John the Baptist. John had a very important job. He was sent by God to make the people ready for the Savior. Before Jesus ever started preaching, John was preaching and teaching the people. He told the people they must be sorry for their sins and stop doing them. He also baptized many people in the river. These baptisms were a sign that the people were ready and waiting for the Savior.

One day Jesus came to John because He wanted to be baptized. No one knew yet that Jesus was the one sent by God to be the Savior, but John knew! John knew Jesus was special. At first, John didn't want to baptize Jesus. Jesus never sinned, so He didn't need to be sorry and stop doing wrong things. But Jesus told John to baptize Him because He wanted to do everything that was right and everything that would please God His Father.

John took Jesus into the water and baptized Him. Then something wonderful happened! As soon as Jesus came out of the water, God the Holy Spirit came down from heaven in the form of

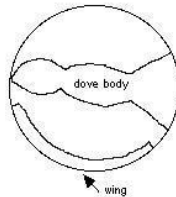
a dove. He rested upon Jesus. God the Father spoke from heaven. He said, “This is my son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

What a beautiful thing that must have been to see and hear! God was telling everyone that Jesus is His Son and He loves Jesus. He was pleased with Jesus because Jesus always obeyed Him. Jesus had to be holy so He could take away the sins of His people. Only a holy man can be our Savior. Jesus always obeyed God, so He is that holy man. He is the only Savior sinners need. Let’s praise Him now together for His obedience to God the Father. [*Lead in prayer.*]

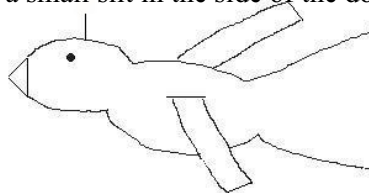
Project

When Jesus came out of the baptismal waters, the Holy Spirit came down from heaven in the form of a dove. Today we’re going to make some paper doves to help us remember the story.

Each child will need a white paper plate; in this case, the less expensive the plate, the easier it will be to cut. Before class, draw a shape on each plate similar to the shape below.



Have the students cut out the shape. When they are finished, they can color the beak and eyes on the dove. Then you’ll want to make a small slit in the side of the dove, in which you’ll insert the wing.



Attach yarn or string to the top of the bird so he can “fly.” If you like, you can hang the doves from the ceiling of your Sunday School room for a pretty effect.

Activity

This week’s Bible story is shorter than usual. If you like, you could play the “Simon Says” game you played last week with your students. Remind them to listen well and to obey the commands prefaced by “Simon Says.”

TEMPTATION IN THE WILDERNESS

Matthew 4:1-11

Lesson Aim

To learn what a temptation is; to know that Jesus always obeyed God, even when He was tempted by Satan to do otherwise.

Memory Verse

Matthew 5:6 - "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they will be filled."

Lesson Background

Oscar Wilde once said, "I can resist everything except temptation" (*Lady Windermere's Fan*). How true that is! Adam and Eve could not resist temptation and plunged the human race into sin. As the Second Adam, Jesus also experienced temptation, but he was able to resist Satan through prayer and through the Word of God. Hebrews tells us, "Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted" (Hebrews 2:18). With Christ's help, we do not need to be powerless and weak when faced with the things that tempt us.

This week we want to teach the children what we mean by the word *temptation*. It may not be a word they are familiar with, but no doubt they are familiar with the results! There are times when it is easy to be obedient to God, or Mom or Dad, because it is convenient and pleasant to do so. But there are other times when it is difficult, when our physical desires or our willful nature struggle against the right thing to do. Jesus always did the right thing, even when it was difficult. He is our model for the right way to deal with temptation.

Lesson Procedure

For this lesson you will need the following: magazine pictures of common childhood temptations; red and green construction paper; craft sticks or popsicle sticks; pictures or flannelgraph to illustrate the story (optional).

1. Focus Activity

Before class, cut out some pictures from an old magazine of some common things that might tempt preschoolers. Some ideas might include various food items, like cookies, candy, pizza, ice cream; fabulous new toys; a TV set; a bicycle, etc. Have these pictures displayed on a table as your students enter the classroom.

Begin your discussion by asking students which of the items they really like; be prepared for enthusiasm! Now ask your students if there is ever a *wrong* time to enjoy these things. “We may love ice cream, but Mom or Dad may tell us that we can’t have some when it’s too close to dinnertime. Or they may tell us that we’ve had too many sweets that day. Then it would be wrong to eat the ice cream, wouldn’t it?”

“Sometimes there may be bad programs on TV that we know our parents don’t want us to watch. Or maybe it’s time for bed, and we want to keep playing with a new toy. Then it would be wrong to keep playing, wouldn’t it?”

“It’s not always easy to be good, is it? Sometimes we have temptations, and it’s hard to say no to them. Anytime we really want something that’s wrong to have, that’s a temptation. Anytime we really want to do something that’s wrong, that’s a temptation. For example, your little brother makes you mad, and you might be tempted to hit him. That would be wrong. But you still want to do it.”

As you discuss temptation, be certain to assure your students that the things in the picture are not wrong in themselves; they are only wrong in certain situations. You might discuss some of the temptations with which you struggle, and some of your students might wish to discuss their own. As we teach the Bible story and do the project/activity, this concept of *temptation* will become clearer to them.

Have your students gather in the story area and go over the memory verse and any songs about obedience you may be learning.

2. Bible Story (from Matthew 4:1-11)

After Jesus was baptized, he was led by God’s Spirit into the wilderness. A wilderness is a place where people do not live. Jesus went into a desert wilderness, where there was little food or water. For forty days and forty nights He did not eat any food. That’s a long time, isn’t it? Even though Jesus is God, He was still hungry and weak.

And that’s when Satan came to tempt Him! Satan is God’s great enemy. Satan knew that if he could get Jesus to sin, Jesus could not be our Savior. So he had three temptations for Jesus to test Him in that wilderness.

Satan came to Jesus and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” That was a big temptation! Jesus was hungry, and He did have the power to make the stones into bread. But Jesus knew it was not yet time for him to eat, and that His heavenly Father would provide food for Him. He said to Satan, “It is written: Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.” Jesus used God’s Word to say no to Satan. He knew that doing God’s will was more important than eating.

But Satan did not give up! He had another temptation for Jesus. This time he took Jesus to Jerusalem, and had Jesus stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” Satan said, “throw yourself down! God will not let you get hurt; He will send His angels to rescue you.”

This was another powerful temptation. Jesus could show the world that He was the Son of God by throwing Himself off the temple and having the angels rescue Him. But that was not how God wanted to reveal His Son. Again, Jesus chose to do things God’s way. Again, He used God’s Word: “It is also written,” He said to Satan, “Do not put the Lord your God to the test.”

For the last temptation, Satan took Jesus to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world. “All this I will give you,” Satan said to Jesus, “if you will bow down and worship me.”

This was the worst temptation of all! Satan promised Jesus the whole world. But Jesus could never worship Satan! “Away from me, Satan!” Jesus said. “For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”

Satan was defeated! He left Jesus, and angels came to take care of our Savior. Even though Satan tried to get Jesus to sin, Jesus always obeyed His heavenly Father. He always did things God’s way, and he said “no” to temptation.

What about us? Do we always say “no” to temptation? No, sometimes we sin, don’t we? Sometimes I sin. But we need to do what Jesus did. We need to know God’s Word and use it to defeat Satan. That’s why we come to church and Sunday School, to learn about the Bible. Let’s ask the Lord now to help us learn about Him and learn to say no to temptation. [*Lead in prayer.*]

Project/Activity

We’re going to make some “Yes/No” signs, and use them to practice saying “No” to temptation. For each student, have a red construction paper circle and a green construction paper circle for them to cut out. On the red circle, have the students write “No.” On the green circle, have them write “Yes” (or you or an assistant can write the word).

Using a craft stick, have the students make a sign with the red “No” circle on one side, and the green “Yes” sign on the other (these will resemble Stop and Go signs).

Now it’s time for the activity. Have the children stand in a circle or semicircle, with you at the front. Instruct them to hold up the green “Yes” sign when you talk about a good activity. But when you talk about a bad activity, they should turn their signs around, and show the “No” signs. They will also probably need to verbalize the Yes or No.

Here are some examples of “Yes” activities:

- * playing with your brother or sister
- * helping to clear the table
- * going to Sunday School
- * holding the door for someone
- * picking up your bedroom
- * reading a book by yourself
- * singing in church with others

Here are some examples of “No” activities:

- * fighting with your brother or sister
- * making a mess in the living room
- * talking too loudly in church
- * not going to bed when it’s time
- * not sharing toys with others

You may add others to these lists. The idea is not to trick your students (like we might try to do in a “Simon Says” game), but to help them identify what a temptation is and what our response should be. Have them take their “Yes/No” signs home and encourage them to play the game with their parents.

THE MAN WITH LEPROSY

Mark 1:40-45

Lesson Aim

To show students that Jesus, as God's Son, has the power to heal the sick.

Memory Verse

Matthew 5:7 - "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy."

Lesson Background

While we will be using the Mark passage for the lesson, it is good to look at the accounts in Matthew and Luke, as each writer gives us different information. Matthew 8:1-4 gives us the basic story, while Luke adds the detail that the man "was covered with leprosy" (Luke 5:12). Finally, Mark tells us that Jesus was "filled with compassion" as He touched this man and healed him. This early miracle of Christ's brought Him so much fame that it began to be difficult for Him to travel or enter into towns. The crowds sought Him out, even in the midst of "lonely places."

This week we will need to explain what leprosy is to our fours and fives. It was a term that covered a number of skin conditions, but the result was always isolation from the rest of society lest anyone else catch the disease. From Dr. Luke's account, this man apparently had an advanced case of leprosy. Yet Christ's compassion for this man led Him not only to heal him, but to touch the "untouchable," thus restoring both his health and his humanity before the crowd. No wonder the healed man couldn't keep the news to himself! Let your voice show the hopelessness of this man and then his great joy at being healed as you tell this story. Your students will understand the emotions of the leprous man through you.

Lesson Procedure

For this lesson you will need the following: one or more baby dolls; construction paper of assorted colors; crayons, markers, stickers, glitter pens, etc.; pictures or flannelgraph to illustrate the story (optional).

1. Focus Activity

We're going to use a "sick" baby doll to get into a discussion about health. You may wish to get a play doctor's kit, if you have one in your church nursery or at home, or you could have blankets, band aids, a "pretend" bottle of medicine (empty, of course), etc.

Tell students as they come in that your "baby" isn't feeling well - she has a fever, or a sore throat, or a tummy ache - or all three! Your students will enjoy playing along, suggesting different things you can do to help the baby feel better. They can take turns holding the baby, giving her medicine, and passing her around.

"What kinds of things do your parents do when you are sick? How do they make you feel better? Have you ever had to go to the doctor, or to the hospital when you were sick?" Have students share their own experiences with illness as you doctor the baby together.

"It's time to put the doll away now so we can hear our Bible story. Today's story is about a man who was very sick - but no doctor could help him! Let's go to our story area together to hear more."

In the story area, go over your memory verse as a class. If you have any students who are sick, or anyone in the congregation that your students know, pray for them at this time as well. Remind your students that we pray to the Lord for the sick because He has power to heal.

2. Bible Story (from Mark 1:40-45)

Jesus was now out among the people, teaching them about His heavenly Father. Many people came out to hear His words. One day He preached a special message to a great crowd of people. "Blessed are the poor in spirit," He told them, "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted." Do you remember those words? Those are from our memory verses, aren't they? Jesus preached those words to teach us about the kingdom of heaven.

The people came to hear Jesus preach, and they came to be healed by Him. Jesus is the Son of God, and He has the power to heal. Some people who were too sick to come on their own were brought by their friends to Jesus, and Jesus made many sick people better.

But one man was sick with a very serious disease. He had a skin disease called *leprosy*. Leprosy was a terrible thing to have and people were very afraid of catching it. Once you caught leprosy, there were special laws that said you had to stay away from other people. You couldn't live with your family anymore, and you couldn't visit your friends. No one was supposed to touch a leper, because then they could catch leprosy, too. Wherever a leper went, he had to cry out "Unclean! Unclean!" That way people would know he had leprosy, and they would stay away from him.

This man who had leprosy had no hope of a cure. No doctor could help him; they didn't know how to stop the leprosy. This disease had spread all over the man's body so that he was covered with leprosy. What a sad thing this must have been for the man and his family!

But one day the man heard about Jesus, the prophet who taught and healed the people! Suddenly, the man had hope once more. Maybe Jesus would heal him of his leprosy! The man decided to go to Jesus and ask for His help.

When the man found Jesus, he fell on his knees before Him to beg for the Lord's help. "If you are willing," the man pleaded, "you can make me clean."

Jesus looked at the man. He knew how sick the man was. Jesus felt sorry for the man. Then He did something that no one had done for a long, long time. He reached out His hand and touched the man! "I am willing," said Jesus. "Be clean!"

Immediately the leprosy left the sick man! He looked down at his hands and feet - his skin was all better! What joy the man felt! Jesus had cured him completely.

Jesus warned the man not to tell anyone, but to go to the Temple and offer sacrifices for his cleansing. Jesus knew that when people found out about this miracle, the crowds who followed Him would be too large. But the man couldn't keep the good news to himself. He told everyone about Jesus and how he had been healed. Jesus became even more famous than before. Now it was hard for Him to go into the towns because the crowds were so large. Instead, He stayed out in the countryside and people came to Him from everywhere.

Jesus healed many people while He was on earth. The man with leprosy was just one of them. He could do this because He is the Son of God. He has the power to heal; that's why we pray to Him when we are sick or when others are sick. We know He can help us get better.

Does that mean Jesus always heals us right away when we pray to Him? No, sometimes He has something to teach us when we're sick. We pray "Your will be done" because we know that God's way is best. But the Bible tells us we can come to Him for healing (James 5:14-15). He can give doctors wisdom to know how to care for us, and He can make us better. What a great Savior He is! Let's thank Him for His mighty power! [*Lead in prayer.*]

Project

Help your students make get-well cards for someone who is sick. These can be for a classmate or for someone else in your church. [NOTE: If you are blessed not to have anyone sick in your congregation, you can save these cards to use at an appropriate time.]

Help students fold the construction paper in half, and let them decorate the front cover as they desire. They may use crayons, markers, stickers, glitter pens, or whatever supplies you may have on hand. On the inside write, "We're praying for you. Get well soon!" Have students who are able to sign their own names do so.

THE TRANSFIGURATION

Matthew 17:1-13

Lesson Aim

To show students that Jesus, as God's Son, displayed His glory while on earth. To encourage our students to listen to Jesus, as God the Father commanded Peter, James and John.

Memory Verse

Matthew 5:8 - "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God."

Lesson Background

"We have seen His glory," John writes, "the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). John saw Jesus display His glory on many occasions, in both the miracles He performed and in His resurrection. But as an eyewitness to the transfiguration, John had a special opportunity to see Christ's glory, and perhaps this is what he was testifying to in this passage. Peter writes of the event in II Peter 1:16-18 and states, "we were eyewitness of His majesty." What they saw that day will be revealed to all the earth when Christ returns: "At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory" (Mark 13:26). What a great day that will be!

We will talk about the events of the transfiguration with our students with a special emphasis on God the Father's words in Matthew 17:5: "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!" Our "listening ears" project will remind students that, when they pay attention in church and Sunday School to what is being taught, they are actually listening for the words of the Savior.

Lesson Procedure

For this lesson you will need the following: illustrations, flannelgraph, or projects from the past seven lessons (see Focus Activity); flesh-colored (or white, or light brown) construction paper; string or yarn; tape; pictures or flannelgraph to illustrate the story (optional).

1. Focus Activity

We're going to review the lessons we've covered thus far in the quarter. As in Lesson 5, you can bring in any pictures or projects from the past seven weeks to jog your students' memories. If you have pictures from all of the lessons, you could arrange them out of order and have students put them in the right order. Or you could hold up a picture or project and ask students to retell the Bible story they heard that Sunday.

After the review, take your students to the story area and go over the memory verse and any songs you may be learning this quarter.

2. Bible Story (from Matthew 17:1-13)

What did Jesus look like while He was here on earth? Most of the time He looked like you and me. He was a man; He had a body made of bones and skin, like we have. He had hair - probably dark brown, like most of the people from that land. They didn't have cameras back when Jesus was alive, so we don't know exactly what He looked like. But the Bible says Jesus had no special beauty when you were just looking at Him. He just looked like a normal man.

But one day, for just a little while, Jesus looked very, very different! Jesus took three of His disciples - Peter, James and John - up a high mountain where the four of them could pray. While they were there, something wonderful happened. As His three friends watched, Jesus' body began to change! His face began to grow brighter until it was as bright as the sun! His clothes became whiter and whiter until they were gleaming like the light. Jesus was being *transfigured*; He was showing Peter, James and John a glimpse of His glory as the Son of God.

Suddenly, His three friends realized that they weren't the only ones on the mountain. Jesus was talking to two other men. Imagine how surprised they were when they realized that the two other men were Moses and Elijah! Now, Moses and Elijah were godly men whom Peter, James and John had read about. But they had lived hundreds and hundreds of years before the disciples. And now here they were, speaking with Jesus!

Peter was dazzled and frightened by the sight of Moses and Elijah. "Lord, it is good for us to be here," he said to Jesus. "If you wish, I will put up three shelters - one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

While he was still speaking, a bright cloud came down around them, and Peter, James and John heard a voice from the cloud. "This is my Son, whom I love," the voice said. "With Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him!"

It was God the Father speaking! He didn't want Peter, James and John to be dazzled by Moses and Elijah. He wanted them to pay attention to His son, Jesus! When the disciples heard God's voice, they fell face down to the ground. They were very, very frightened.

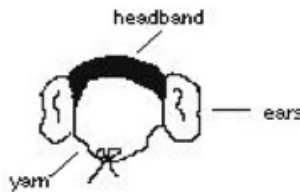
But Jesus came and touched them. “Get up,” He said to them. “Don’t be afraid.” The disciples looked up; Moses and Elijah were gone. There was no one there but Jesus.

As they came down the mountain, Jesus told them not to speak about what they had seen until He was raised from the dead. He had given Peter, James and John a chance to see His glory as the Son of God.

God the Father told Peter, James and John to listen to His Son. Moses and Elijah had been great men, but they were nothing next to Jesus the Savior. We need to remember how important it is to listen to Jesus, too. When we come to Sunday School and hear His words read from the Bible, we need to listen. When we’re in church and the pastor tells us what Jesus says, we need to pay attention and listen. There is nothing more important than listening to Jesus! Let’s ask Him right now to help us to listen and learn from Him. [*Close in prayer.*]

Project

We’re going to make “listening ears” to remind us to listen to the Savior.



For each child, have a strip of flesh-colored construction paper (or white, or light brown, depending on what you have, and your class), large enough to fit around the head. Punch a hole in each end of the strip, and tie a piece of yarn so you can tie the strip under the chin of the child.

For each child have a pair of large ears already drawn out on construction paper that they can cut out. Once the ears are cut out, tape them to the construction paper band and tie the band under the child’s chin. Have a mirror available so the child can see how he looks with his big “listening ears” (you may think they resemble Dumbo the Elephant, but keep that to yourself!).

Have them to tell their parents that the listening ears are to remind them to listen to the words of Jesus in church and Sunday School.

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

Matthew 21:1-11, 15-16

Lesson Aim

To encourage our students to praise the Savior.

Memory Verse

Matthew 5:9 - "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the sons of God."

Lesson Background

Wouldn't you have liked to have been there, in the crowd, as Jesus entered triumphantly into Jerusalem? We have even more reason to praise Him than the fickle crowd, for we know He has come, not to defeat Rome, but to defeat sin and death. The children joined in enthusiastically that day, and your students will be glad to do so this week as well.

This lesson allows for extra "praise time" after the Bible story. If you usually sing with other classes, your students will probably have several favorite songs. You may wish to borrow any visual aids that you use at music time to help your students focus on their singing. If you have extra time, and if you think your students would enjoy it, you could cut "palm leaves" out of green construction paper for the students to wave during the praise time.

Lesson Procedure

For this lesson you will need the following: photocopies of the worksheet; crayons or markers (or old magazines and scissors); pictures or flannelgraph to illustrate the story (optional); any visual aids you may use during song time; green construction paper for palm leaves (optional).

1. Focus Activity

Have worksheets (“I praise Jesus because ...”) out as students come into the classroom. Help them to decide what they would like to picture in the square. They may draw their own pictures or cut them out of a magazine. Some may wish you to write down “in words” what they praise Jesus for. If some have a difficult time thinking of anything, you might suggest their family, their church, or their friends.

After they’ve finished these worksheets, take them to the story area. If you normally sing a lot of songs during this time, you may wish to sing just one or two so you’ll have extra “praise time” at the end of class. Go over this week’s memory verse with your class.

2. Bible Story (from Matthew 21:1-13)

It was time for Jesus and His disciples to go to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover. Jesus was becoming very famous. People had heard about the miracles he had performed - the people He had healed and those He had raised from the dead. They were excited about Jesus coming to Jerusalem.

But not everyone was happy with Jesus. Some of the religious leaders were jealous of Him. They wanted the people to listen to *their* teaching. They didn’t believe that Jesus was really the Son of God.

As Jesus came closer to Jerusalem, He sent two of His disciples ahead and told them to look for a donkey with her young colt beside her.

“Untie them and bring them to me,” He told them. “If anyone says anything to you, tell them that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.”

The disciples went and found the donkey and her colt and brought them to Jesus. They put their cloaks on the young colt and Jesus rode it into town.

As they entered Jerusalem, a large crowd began to gather on the road. Some of them took off their own cloaks and spread them out along the road. Others cut branches from palm trees and laid them along the way.

Some of the people ran ahead of Jesus and some walked behind Him. Many began to shout “Hosanna! Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”

It was like a parade! Soon the whole city of Jerusalem knew something was happening. “Who is this who is coming to town?” they asked.

“This is Jesus,” they were told, “the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”

Later that day, as Jesus was teaching in the Temple and healing blind and crippled people, the children began to play out the exciting things they had seen. “Hosanna!” the children shouted as they played. “Hosanna to the Son of David!”

Some of the men who didn’t like Jesus heard what the children were saying. They became angry. They came to Jesus and said, “Do you hear what these children are saying?” They wanted Jesus to make the children stop.

But Jesus would not make them stop! He told those men, “From the mouths of children and infants God has ordained praise.” Jesus was glad that the children were praising Him. Their words were pleasing to God!

Why do we praise Jesus? We praise Him because He came to die for sinners! We praise Him because He is our God, and He is good and faithful to us.

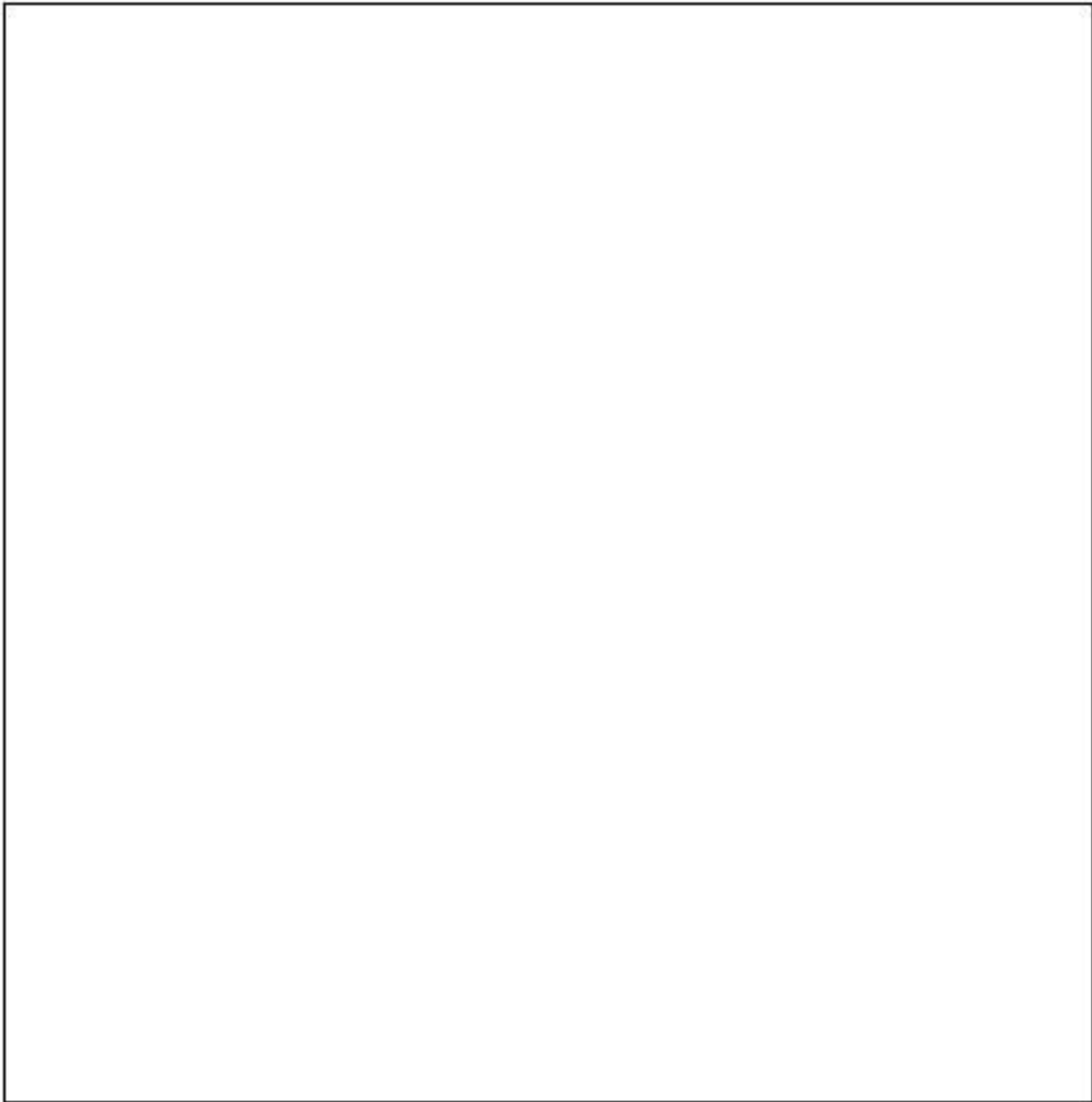
How do we praise Jesus? We can praise Him in lots of different ways. We praise Him when we pray to Him and thank Him for all He has done for us. We praise Him when we sing in church and Sunday School. We praise Him when we talk about how great He is and all He has done for us. We can praise Jesus anytime, anywhere.

One of the reasons we come to church and Sunday School is so we can praise the Lord and worship Him. I’m glad He loves to hear the praises of children, aren’t you? Let’s praise Him together right now, as we pray. [*Lead in prayer.*]

Activity

Explain to your students that you are going to have special time of singing and praising Jesus. If you have time, you could make “palm branches” out of green construction paper first for the students to wave as they sing (they will like that!). As you choose favorite songs, remind your students to sing “to Jesus,” because that’s what praise is all about.

I Praise Jesus



Because . . .

THE LAST SUPPER

Matthew 26:17-30; John 14:1-6

Lesson Aim

To show students that we are all sinners and that we need a Savior - Jesus Christ.

Memory Verse

Matthew 5:9 - "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the sons of God."

Lesson Background

"Greater love has no one than this," Jesus told His disciples on the last night He was with them, "than that he lay down his life for his friends." As His time on earth drew to a close, these last minutes with His friends were used by Jesus to show His love for them in many ways - as He washed the feet of the disciples, as He gave them the ordinance of communion, as He told them about heaven, and as He prayed for them in the garden. The disciples did not understand everything that night; they wanted Jesus to stay with them, but Jesus knew that what they needed was a Savior. That required Him to die for their sins - the sins of His friends, whom He loved. Those friends include all of us who have come to the Savior.

We will reinforce the teaching of what it means to be a sinner this week; that it includes each of your students, and yourself, and every person who has ever been born - except Jesus. Because we are sinners, we need a Savior, and that could only be Jesus. This lesson will then lead naturally to next week's lesson on Christ's arrest and crucifixion.

Lesson Procedure

For this lesson you will need the following: old missions magazines with pictures of people from different cultures; watercolors and paint brushes; white or light-colored construction paper; pictures or flannelgraph to illustrate the story (optional).

1. Focus Activity

Have scissors and copies of old mission magazines (or news magazines, or any magazine with pictures of people from different lands and cultures) out for the children when they come in. Tell them that we are cutting out pictures of people this week from all over the world to use in our project for next week. Encourage them to cut out pictures of people who look like them and people who do not look like them. Talk about the different places that people live, how they look and dress and wear their hair, etc.

“Some of these people live on the other side of the world from us - far, far away. But no matter where they are from, everyone who has ever lived, except Jesus, was a sinner. And we all need a Savior. Do you remember what a sinner is?” Remind your students that a sinner is someone who has wrong desires in his heart and thus has broken one or more of God’s rules. That includes all of us. Sometimes we do things we know are wrong, things that displease the Lord. Because we are sinners, we need a Savior who can make us right with God.

After this discussion, put the pictures away to be used next week and go to your story area. Work on this week’s verse and any songs you are learning as a class. If you like, you can introduce the following action rhyme:

One way to heaven,	(Show index finger for number one)
No other way to go;	(Shake head “no”)
One way to heaven,	(Show index finger)
The Bible tells us so.	(Palms together, like open book)
One way to heaven,	(Show index finger)
And Jesus is the way;	(Point to heaven)
So give your life to Jesus,	(Point to heart)
And trust Him, and obey.	(Nod head “yes.”)

If you raise your voice slightly every time you say “one,” they’ll pick up on that immediately. This is an action rhyme your students can learn fairly quickly, and you can use it for the next several lessons.

2. Bible Story (from Matthew 26:17-30 and John 14:1-6)

We have been talking this morning about what it means to be a sinner. Moms and Dads, boys and girls - we are all sinners, and we all need a Savior. Only Jesus can make us right with God. He is the Savior whom sinners need. But in order to be our Savior, Jesus knew He had to die for our sins. He needed to take our punishment so that we could live with Him in heaven forever.

One special night Jesus was with His friends. He knew the time was coming for Him to die on the cross. He had much to tell His friends, the disciples, on this last night He was with them.

As they gathered together in the upper room of a house in Jerusalem, Jesus gave them the Lord's Supper as a way of remembering Him. We celebrate the Lord's Supper here at our church; you have probably watched us do it. Jesus took bread, and broke it, and gave it to His disciples. "Take and eat," He told them. "This is my body."

Then He passed a cup of wine around and told the disciples to drink from it. "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

Was the bread really Jesus' body? Was the wine really His blood? No; these are pictures that Jesus gave us so that, as a church, we would come together and talk about His death for the sins of His people. We remember Jesus when we have the Lord's Supper, and we thank Him for all He has done.

Then Jesus began to talk to His friends about His death. He told them He would soon be leaving them. This made the disciples sad. They didn't want Him to go away. Jesus told them they shouldn't be worried because He was going to heaven to be with His Father. He told them about the many wonderful rooms in His father's house. "I am going there to make heaven ready for you," Jesus said. "And if I'm going to make heaven ready, I will certainly come back again to bring you to heaven with me - that you may also be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going."

Thomas, one of Jesus' disciples, said to Him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

Jesus answered, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Jesus was telling His friends that He was the only one who could save them from their sins. Trusting in Jesus is the only way to heaven. We can't get to heaven by trying to be good because we can never be good enough. We can't get to heaven just by going to church. The only way to heaven is God's way, and that way is through His Son, Jesus Christ.

I hope and pray that each of you will be a Christian some day. I hope each of you will put your trust in Jesus. He is the Savior that sinners need. Let's pray that God will help you understand His Word and that someday you'll come in repentance to Christ. [*Lead in prayer.*]

Project

With paint brushes and watercolors have students paint a simple picture of the cross on Mt. Calvary. Students can paint a green hill with a brown cross at the top. They can add sky and clouds if they wish. You may wish to have a sample project to show them.

Once the pictures are finished, you may wish to write "Sinners Need A Savior" at the top of each picture to remind students of our need for Jesus.

THE CRUCIFIXION

Matthew 27

Lesson Aim

For students to realize that Jesus died on the cross for the sins of His people.

Memory Verse

Matthew 5:10 - “Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Lesson Background

What do preschoolers need to know about the crucifixion? They need to know that Jesus died on the cross to save sinners so that they could be in heaven with Him some day. They need to know that He did so because of the great love He has for his own. They also need to know that He did not remain in the grave, but that He was raised from the dead by His heavenly Father, who was pleased with His sacrifice.

As you teach this lesson, let your voice and face reflect the solemnity of the material. Even your youngest students, who may not really understand about death and resurrection, will at least understand the emotion that the story brings. We do not dwell on the sufferings of Christ on the cross; that is a lesson for older children. Our emphasis is on the love that Jesus has for His own that brought Him to the cross. “Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love” (John 13:1b).

Lesson Procedure

For this lesson you will need the following: pictures of people from all over the world; posterboard, glue sticks; pictures or flannelgraph to illustrate the story (optional).

1. Focus Activity

You can focus students on this week's lesson in one of two different ways, or you can have both activities going at the same time. You will need a number of pictures of people for the poster collage - people of different races, ethnicity, ages, etc. If you did not cut out very many last week, you can continue to do that this week. As you work, talk about the fact that everyone (except Jesus) is a sinner and needs a Savior.

If you are confident that you have enough pictures for the poster, you could pull out old projects and pictures or flannelgraph from past lessons to help students review the events we have talked about during this quarter. Or you may wish to have these out anyway if you have a few students who do not care to cut things out of magazines.

When students come to the story area, introduce the memory verse. You may also wish to use the "One Way To Heaven" action rhyme used in last week's lesson before the Bible story.

2. Bible Story (from Matthew 27)

We have learned many things about Jesus in Sunday School, haven't we? All that Jesus said and did showed that He was someone very special. Jesus had many friends, like His disciples, but He also had His enemies - people who did not like Him at all. Remember how some people were angry when the children praised Jesus? There were some people - rich and powerful people - who hated Jesus. They wanted to see Jesus put to death!

One day these men saw their chance to get rid of Jesus. They brought soldiers and came to arrest Him. Jesus has great power, of course, and He didn't have to go with them. But Jesus had come to earth to die for the sins of His people. He knew it was time to return to His heavenly Father.

All of us are sinners, aren't we? We have all done bad things. We should be punished for the bad things we do. Jesus never sinned, but He loves us so much that He was willing to be punished in our place so that those who believe in Him would not have to die for their sins. He died because He wanted His people to live with Him in heaven someday.

So Jesus went with the men and the soldiers, and the men told lies to the governor so the governor would put Jesus to death. The governor knew the men were lying, but he didn't want to make them angry, so he said that Jesus must die. Soldiers took Jesus and nailed His hands and feet to a cross. Jesus let them do this because He knew He was dying for the sins of His people. What great love He has for us!

While Jesus was hanging on the cross the sky grew very dark. Finally, when the time came for Jesus to die, He cried out with a loud voice, "It is finished!" Jesus was finished paying for the sins of His people. He gave up His spirit and died. At that very moment, the earth shook and rocks split. When the soldiers saw the earthquake, they became very frightened. "Surely He was the Son of God!" said one of the soldiers.

Did Jesus stay dead? No, God raised Him from the dead, didn't He? Now Jesus lives with His Father in heaven. Next week we will tell the story of how God raised Jesus from the dead. Let's thank Jesus now for His great love that brought Him to earth to die for sinners. [*Lead in prayer.*]

Project

On a large piece of posterboard, write the words "We All Need Jesus" (some of your beginning readers will be able to read this). Then have your students take the pictures of people they have been cutting out and glue them, collage style, around the words. Make sure to have young and old, male and female, and different ethnic groups represented. Display the poster in your room when it is finished.

THE RESURRECTION

Matthew 28

Lesson Aim

For students to rejoice that Jesus was raised from the dead and lives forevermore.

Memory Verse

Matthew 5:10 - “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Lesson Background

What does it mean to be dead? What does it mean to be alive? Preschoolers are just beginning to understand the concept of death; some of your students will have a better grasp of the idea than others, depending on their experiences. We’ll never forget the night our son understood what it meant, when all his pretty goldfish died - one after the other. All five died within a twenty-four hour period, and how he cried! His tears were not just for his fish; they were an expression of his new understanding of what death really meant. Our Focus Activity is geared to allow students to talk about things that make them happy and things that make them sad. This may give you some insight into the experiences that these children have had with death - the death of a pet, or perhaps a grandparent or loved one.

Of course, the good news of the resurrection is that death no longer is the end of the story! Our Savior has conquered death, and His resurrection gives hope to all believers for life everlasting. Again, as with last week’s lesson, let your voice and your face reflect the emotions of the story, and even your youngest students will understand that Jesus rose from the dead, and that is the happiest story ever told!

Lesson Procedure

For this lesson you will need the following: a large piece of paper or posterboard and markers; yellow construction paper; scissors, glue sticks; pictures or flannelgraph to illustrate the story (optional).

1. Focus Activity

Divide the large piece of paper in half (the long way), and draw a line down the middle. Put a “sad face” on one half and a “happy face” on the other. As your students come in, have each one of them tell you something that makes them happy, and something that makes them sad. Write them down in the appropriate column. You may wish to draw a simple picture with each one to help your students “read” the list when you are finished.

“Do you remember our story from last week? What made Jesus’ friends sad? It was when Jesus died on the cross, wasn’t it? This week we’re going to talk about something that made His friends happy. It should make us happy, too, because it is the best news in the whole world! Let’s go to our story area to learn more.”

In the story area, you should go over the memory verse and any songs you are learning. You may wish to review last week’s lesson about Jesus’ death on the cross before speaking about the resurrection.

2. Bible Story (from Matthew 28)

After Jesus died, His friends were very sad. They took His body off the cross and put it into a tomb. A tomb is like a cave. A large stone was rolled in front of the tomb, and soldiers stood near to guard it. The soldiers were there to make sure that no one would take Jesus’ body away.

Friday night and Saturday passed quietly. The third day after Jesus died was Sunday. Early Sunday morning there was a terrible earthquake as an angel from heaven came down to the tomb. His clothing was as white as snow and he looked as bright as lightning! The angel rolled the stone away and sat on it. The soldiers who were guarding the tomb saw the angel, and they were so afraid they shook!

Early that same morning some women who were friends of Jesus came to the tomb. They had spices with them and had come to prepare Jesus’ body for burial. When they arrived at the tomb, they saw that the stone had been rolled away. Then the angel said, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus. He is not here, but is risen, just as He said. Come and see the place where He lay. Then go quickly and tell His disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going before you into Galilee. There you will see Him.’”

How happy the women were to hear what the angel said! They looked into the tomb, but all they could see were Jesus’ graveclothes. Jesus’ body was no longer there! Jesus wasn’t dead anymore! He was alive! They ran from the tomb so they could tell the good news to His disciples. Suddenly, Jesus Himself met them. “Greetings,” He said. The women fell down at Jesus’ feet and worshiped Him. They must have been frightened, for Jesus said, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my friends to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”

What wonderful news the women brought to the disciples! “Jesus is risen!” they told them. Jesus arose from the dead, just as He said He would do. Now Jesus lives forevermore. We shall see Him someday if we give our lives to Him. Let’s thank the Lord for raising Jesus and for the hope it gives all of His children. [*Lead in prayer.*]

Activity

Have the children stand in place and act out the emotions in this story. First, have the children pretend to be sad, the way the disciples and the women felt after Jesus died. Then have them pretend to be the frightened soldiers guarding the tomb. Next, they can imitate the women who came, and be surprised, and then happy at the angel’s message.

Project

“We’re going to make ‘rising suns’ today to remind us that Jesus, the Son of God, arose from the dead.” Each student should have a large circle to cut out of a piece of yellow construction paper (you may wish to trace around a large coffee can for this circle). After cutting out the circle, the children can use the leftover yellow paper to cut out “sun rays” to glue around the circle. When finished, you may write “Jesus is Risen!” in the middle of each sun.

THE ASCENSION

Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 1:1-11

Lesson Aim

To teach students that Jesus ascended to His Father, but that He is coming back someday. Until that day, we must tell the whole world about Him.

Memory Verse

Review Matthew 5:3-10 as a class.

Lesson Background

This week's lesson combines the Great Commission and the ascension of Jesus. The truth of Christ's ascension is one that sometimes gets left out of traditional resurrection lessons. Yet children must naturally wonder what happened to Jesus after He rose from the dead. Where is He now? We need to tell them that our Savior is seated on the right hand of His Father in heaven, and that someday He is coming again! Until He returns, He has given us the job of telling the whole world about Him. That includes people on the other side of the world - in Africa and Asia. But it also includes our families, our neighbors, and our friends.

You may wish to do some review activities with your students this week. Try to have your students say their memory verses as a complete passage (with your help). You may also want to review songs you have sung this quarter, action rhymes, favorite stories, etc. The project will help your students to think back on some of the lessons and remember the ones that meant the most to them.

Lesson Procedure

For this lesson you will need the following: pictures of different kinds of “homes” (see Focus Activity); photocopies of worksheet; pictures or flannelgraph to illustrate the story (optional).

1. Focus Activity

Have pictures of different kinds of “homes” out for your students to look at as they come into the classroom. These can be from magazines or real estate flyers or from picture books you have in your home. Houses, apartments, trailers, tents, nests, dog houses, barns - try to include a number of different places that people and animals call home. Have students point to the picture that looks the most like their own home.

“Even animals have a place to call home, don’t they? Birds have nests, foxes have dens, horses live in barns. While Jesus was preaching and teaching the people, He didn’t really have a home here on earth. But where was Jesus’ real home? That’s right; it was heaven, where He lived before He was a baby. Our Bible story today is about the day Jesus went back home to be with His Father in heaven. Let’s go to our story area to learn more.”

In the story area, review this quarter’s memory verses and perhaps some favorite songs you have sung about Jesus this quarter. You may also wish to review the last couple of lessons, about Jesus’ death and resurrection, before beginning today’s story.

2. Bible Story (from Matthew 28:16-20 and Acts 1:1-11)

After Jesus arose from the dead, He showed Himself to His friends many times. He walked along a road with two of His friends. He showed Himself to Peter, and to His own brother, James (I Corinthians 15:7). He met with all of the disciples as they gathered together, and He also ate breakfast with some of them on the beach. But soon it was time for Jesus to go back to heaven, to sit on the right hand of His heavenly Father.

Before He left them, however, Jesus had many things to tell His disciples. He told them the Holy Spirit would come to them soon. And He told them He had a job for them to do. They had to tell the whole world about the things He had done!

“You must go and tell the whole world about me,” He said. “And when they believe in me, you must baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. You must teach them to obey everything I have said. And I am certainly with you, even to the end of the age.” Even though Jesus was going back to His Father, His Spirit would still be with the disciples. They would never be alone again!

One day Jesus walked with His disciples to Bethany, then to the Mount of Olives. He told His friends to wait in Jerusalem for the coming of the Holy Spirit. When He finished speaking to them, something strange and wonderful happened. His feet left the ground; He began to go up, up into the sky! The disciples watched as Jesus went up into heaven. They watched until a cloud hid Him from their sight and they couldn’t see Him any longer. Still they kept looking into the sky.

Suddenly two angels dressed in white stood beside them. “Why do you stand here looking into the sky?” they asked the disciples. “This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven.”

Isn't that wonderful news? Jesus went back to heaven, but He's coming again someday! Someday He will return to earth and gather His children around Him. Until that day, we need to tell the good news about Jesus everywhere! Let's ask Him for His help to do that, and tell Him we're waiting for His return. [*Lead in prayer.*]

Project

This project will help the students to think about past lessons and to think about the Great Commission in a personal way. Have a photocopy of the worksheet for each student. In the top half, have the students draw pictures of their favorite story from the life of Jesus. [NOTE: some of your younger students may need some help with this. If their favorite story was about the transfiguration, for example, you may need to draw a mountain and three stick figures, and they can color what you draw.]

On the other half of the worksheet, have your students draw a picture of one of their friends. Write the name of their friend in the space provided. Then encourage your students to try to tell their favorite story about Jesus to this friend.

This is a picture of my favorite story about Jesus.

I can tell this story to my friend _____