



Matthew

EARLY CHILDHOOD LESSON TEACHER'S GUIDE



PASSAGE

Matthew 1:1-25



MEMORY VERSE

"For that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:20-21).



HYMN

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," Rafiki Hymnal



DOCTRINE

The genealogy of Jesus and the virgin birth



CATECHISM

(FOR MEMORIZATION)

Question: What does the sixth commandment teach you?

Answer: Not to take anyone's life unjustly and not to sin when I am angry.

LESSON 1: O COME, O COME IMMANUEL



OUTLINE FOR THE WEEK

Day One

God had a plan for Jesus through the generations.

Scripture: Matthew 1:1-17

Day Two

Many wise men and women of the Bible are part of Jesus' family tree.

Scripture: Matthew 1:1-17

Day Three

God made Mary and Joseph Jesus' earthly parents.

Scripture: Matthew 1:18-21

Day Four

The Jews waited for Jesus and he finally arrived.

Scripture: Matthew 1:22-25

Day Five

Jesus has many wonderful names.

Scripture: Review Matthew 1:1-25

DAY ONE

God had a plan for Jesus through the generations.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 1:1-17

Where did Jesus come from? Matthew says that this long list of people leading up to Jesus is called a genealogy. A *genealogy* is a *family history* or a *family tree*. It is a list of fathers, and grandfathers, and great grandfathers. Jesus' genealogy tells us where he came from and to who he is related. It also tells us that God was planning Jesus' birth from the beginning of time! He knew that Jesus would come much later, and he used many of the wise people from the Old Testament who served him to be a part of Jesus' genealogy.

QUESTIONS

1. Is a genealogy a family tree? (Yes)
2. Does a genealogy tell us where someone came from? (Yes)
3. Does Jesus have a genealogy? (Yes)

QUESTIONS FOR KINDERGARTEN

1. Did God plan Jesus' birth from the beginning of time? (Yes, God planned Jesus' birth from the beginning of time.)
2. What kinds of things does a genealogy tell us? (A genealogy can tell us where someone came from and to who that person is related.)
3. Who is a part of Jesus' genealogy? (Many wise people from the Old Testament are part of Jesus' genealogy.)

DAY TWO

Many wise men and women of the Bible are part of Jesus' family tree.

SCRIPTURE

Re-read Matthew 1:1-17.

Do you remember what a genealogy is? It is a family history. All of these names in Matthew are people that came before Jesus; they were his forefathers. Many of them are people you have heard of before like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, King David, King Solomon, Mary, and Joseph. These are all people that God used to do his important work throughout the Bible. He had special relationships with all of these people. They trusted God and did his will. They were wise and knew that God had a plan for their lives. And he did have a very important plan! His plan used all of the men and women of Jesus' genealogy to lead to Jesus who would save God's people!

QUESTIONS

1. Is Jesus' genealogy a family history? (Yes)
2. Are Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, King David, King Solomon, Mary, and Joseph all part of Jesus' genealogy? (Yes)
3. Did God use the people in Jesus' genealogy to do his important work? (Yes)

QUESTIONS FOR KINDERGARTEN

1. What kind of people are part of Jesus' genealogy? (They were wise people who trusted in God.)
2. Did God have an important plan for the lives of the people in this genealogy? (Yes! Their lives led to the life of Jesus Christ.)
3. What can we learn from the people of Jesus' genealogy? (We can learn that we should always trust God—he has a special plan for our lives that is part of his BIG plan!)

ACTIVITY

Have one child stand alone. Then have another child go hold the first child's hand, and then another, and so on until all the children are standing in a long line and holding hands. Each child is like a generation of Jesus' genealogy, all the way from Abraham to Mary and Joseph. Talk about how faithful God is, that just like the chain of their hands is not broken, God did not let the chain of Jesus' genealogy break.

DAY THREE

God made Mary and Joseph Jesus' earthly parents.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 1:18-21

Does God have a special plan for your life? Yes, God has a special plan for every person! Mary and Joseph were normal people who believed in God, but God had a very special plan for them. They were chosen to be the earthly parents of Jesus! The Holy Spirit caused Baby Jesus to start growing inside of Mary. Joseph was confused and did not understand how this happened. But God wanted him to know that everything was good, and that this was all part of God's special plan. So he sent Joseph a dream in the night to tell him that everything was good. Joseph and Mary knew that their baby was very important for the whole world. This was Baby Jesus and he would save God's people from their sins.

QUESTIONS

1. Who was Jesus' mother? (Mary)
2. Who was Jesus' earthly father? (Joseph)
3. Did God have a special plan for Mary and Joseph? (Yes)

QUESTIONS FOR KINDERGARTEN

1. How did Baby Jesus start growing inside Mary? (The Holy Spirit caused this to happen inside Mary.)
2. How did God let Joseph know that everything was good? (He told Joseph in a dream.)
3. What was very special about Mary and Joseph's baby? (Their baby was Jesus, and he would save God's people from their sins.)

DAY FOUR

The Jews waited for Jesus and he finally arrived!

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 1:22-25

Have you ever waited a very long time for something? Have you ever been so excited about something that you can hardly wait for it? The Jews, God's special people, waited a very, very long time for Jesus to come. He was called their Messiah. The Old Testament told them that their Messiah was coming to save them. Matthew says that what was spoken by people in the Old Testament was fulfilled by Jesus. That means the Jews did not have to wait anymore. Their Messiah was finally here!

QUESTIONS

1. Do we sometimes have to wait a long time for something we want? (Yes)
2. Did the Jews wait a long time for Jesus (Yes)
3. Did Jesus finally come? (Yes)

QUESTIONS FOR KINDERGARTEN

1. Was the Old Testament fulfilled by Jesus? (Yes, the Old Testament was fulfilled by Jesus.)
2. Why did the Jews want their Messiah, Jesus, to come? (Jesus was going to save the Jews.)
3. Should we be excited that Jesus has already come? (Yes! We do not have to wait for Jesus like the Jews did. We can be excited that Jesus has already come!)

DAY FIVE

Jesus has many wonderful names.

SCRIPTURE

Review Matthew 1:1-25.

What is your name? Do your friends have any different names for you, like a special nickname? Names are important. Our names tell other people who we are and different things about us. Jesus has several different names in the Bible, and they all tell us something different about him. Jesus is called Christ. This name means "Anointed One" or "Messiah," which means that Jesus is the chosen Savior, the One who came to save God's special people. Jesus is called Immanuel. This means "God with us." Jesus is the Son of God, who came to be with God's special people. The name Jesus means "Yahweh (God) is salvation." Jesus saves us from our sins. The names of Jesus are very special because they tell us lots of important things about our Savior!

QUESTIONS

1. Do names tell us about people? (Yes)
2. Are names important? (Yes)
3. Does Jesus have many wonderful names? (Yes)

QUESTIONS FOR KINDERGARTEN

1. What are some of Jesus' names? (Immanuel, Christ [and Jesus, of course!])
2. What do Jesus' names mean? (Immanuel = God with Us, Christ = Anointed One/Messiah, Jesus = Yahweh is salvation)
3. What do Jesus' names tell us about him? (Jesus is God and he is with us. Jesus has been chosen by God. Jesus will save the people from their sins.)

ACTIVITY

Have the children draw pictures of themselves and write their names on their papers if they can. (If they are not able, the teachers can write their names for them.) Then have the children say all of their names. If they know the meaning, have them tell everyone that, too.

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Matthew

PRIMARY GRADES 1-3 SCHOOL LESSON TEACHER'S GUIDE



PASSAGE

Matthew 1:1-25



MEMORY VERSE

"For that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:20-21).



HYMN

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," Rafiki Hymnal



DOCTRINE

The genealogy of Jesus and the virgin birth



CATECHISM

(FOR MEMORIZATION)

Question: What is forbidden in the sixth commandment?

Answer: The sixth commandment forbids the taking away of our own life, or the life of our neighbor, unjustly, or whatsoever tends thereunto.

LESSON 1: O COME, O COME IMMANUEL



OUTLINE FOR THE WEEK

Day One

The Gospel of Matthew was written so all would know the truth about the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Lord and Savior of mankind.

Scripture: Matthew 1:1-25

Day Two

Matthew began his Gospel with the genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Scripture: Matthew 1:1-17

Day Three

The conception of the Lord Jesus was unlike all others.

Scripture: Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:26-38

Day Four

The Lord sent an angel to Joseph commanding him to take Mary as his wife and name her special baby son Jesus.

Scripture: Matthew 1:18-25

Day Five

Jesus came to save his people from their sins.

Scripture: Matthew 1:18-25

SUGGESTED OR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Do the following activity to help the students understand just how many generations were between Abraham and Jesus. You can do this on the chalk board or lay sticks out for the class to see. Lay forty sticks or toothpicks out or make forty marks on the blackboard. Explain that each stick or mark represents one person in Jesus' genealogy. Mark the places where Abraham, Judah, David, and the Babylonian captivity fell. Abraham lived about 2,100 B.C. and the Lord Jesus Christ was born about 5 B.C., so this genealogy covers 2,100 years.

The Nicene Creed

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.

Who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

DAY ONE

The Gospel of Matthew was written so all would know the truth about the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Lord and Savior of mankind.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 1:1-25

(Open your Bible to the passage that you are teaching, before you begin the lesson.) Today we are beginning a new book of the Bible. The name of the Book is Matthew. It is the first Book in the New Testament. The Bible has two sections, the Old Testament and the New Testament. (Note: Show the students how the Bible is divided.) Up until now we have been studying Books in the Old Testament. The Old Testament is the true story about how God worked in human history before the Lord Jesus Christ was born. In the Old Testament, the Lord told us how he created the world in six days. He told us that he created the world to be a very good place, without sin and death. He told us how sin came into the world. (Ask the students if they remember how sin came into the world. *Sin came into the world when Adam and Eve disobeyed God by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*)

Over and over, again the Old Testament promised that God would send a savior who would save his people from their sins. To carry out his plan to send a savior, God called out Abraham to be the father of a special nation. That special nation was Israel. Israel was called to glorify and honor the Lord. And it was from Israel that the Savior would be born. The Old Testament also taught us about the covenant God made with Israel at Mount Sinai. It also showed us, over and over again, how Israel sinned by disobeying the covenant. Israel needed a savior because they could not save themselves. The whole world needed a savior.

The New Testament is the true story of Jesus the Savior. In the Old Testament, God promised to send a savior who would save his people from their sins. The New Testament is the story of the Savior's coming. It is the story of how the Savior delivers his people from sin and death. It tells us how the Lord Jesus Christ has called people out of the world to belong to him. And it tells the true story of what Jesus did when he lived on the earth.

The Book of Matthew is often called the Gospel of Matthew. *Gospel* means *good news*. The Book of Matthew tells us the story of Jesus' birth. It tells us about his life and teachings, his death, resurrection, and return to heaven. There are three other Books of the Bible that tell about Jesus' life. They are also called Gospels. They are Mark, Luke, and John. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John

all tell us the good news about Jesus. The good news is that Jesus came to earth to save his people from their sins.

The Book of Matthew is called Matthew because a man named Matthew was the human writer. The real author was God. God is the author of the whole Bible. All the words in the Bible are the words of God. God used godly men to write his words on paper. Second Timothy 3:16 says that God breathed his words into the human writers of the Bible. God could have written the Bible all by himself, but because he is gracious he often lets his people have the blessing of being part of his work.

Matthew was one of Jesus' twelve disciples. Before Matthew was Jesus' disciple, he was a tax collector. The Jewish people hated tax collectors so they hated Matthew. But the Lord Jesus did not hate Matthew. He loved Matthew. One day Jesus walked up to Matthew and said, "Follow me" (Matthew 9:9). And do you know what happened? Matthew got up from where he was collecting taxes, left everything, and followed Jesus. The story of Jesus is a wonderful story. You will love learning about Jesus.

Definitions

Covenant – a formal, solemn, and binding agreement; a solemn promise made between two or more parties.

QUESTIONS

1. What does the word Gospel mean? (Gospel means good news.)
2. Is the Old Testament the true story about how God worked in human history before the Lord Jesus Christ was born? (Yes, the Old Testament is a true story about how God worked in human history.)
3. Is the New Testament the true story of how Jesus, the Savior and Lord, came to earth to save his chosen people from their sins? (Yes, the New Testament the true story of how Jesus came to earth to save his chosen people from their sins.)
4. Who was the human writer of the Gospel of Matthew? (Matthew was the human writer.)
5. Who is the real author of the Gospel of Matthew? Who is the author of the whole Bible? (God is the real author of the Gospel of Matthew and the whole Bible.)
6. What did you learn about Matthew in today's lesson? (He was a disciple of Jesus. He was a tax collector. The Jews hated him because he was a tax collector. Jesus loved Matthew. When Jesus said, "Follow me," Matthew got up from where he was collecting taxes, left everything, and followed Jesus.)

DAY TWO

Matthew began his Gospel with the genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 1:1-17

(Open the Bible to the passage you are teaching.) Matthew did not begin his Gospel by telling where and when Jesus was born. Matthew began by telling who Jesus is. Later Matthew would tell us where Jesus was born. Matthew began with Jesus' genealogy. A *genealogy is a list of people who were in someone's family in past times.* Read Matthew 1:1-17 to the class. *(Ask them to listen carefully. When they hear the names Abraham, David, or Ruth, ask them to raise their hands.)* Most of us do not know our genealogies. That is because no one kept a written record of our family members who lived long ago. But God made sure the genealogy of Jesus was written down. God wrote it down in the Bible. He wrote it down so everyone would know that Jesus is

the Savior.

Matthew gives Jesus three titles. These titles describe who he is. (*Read Matthew 1:1 to the class again, and ask them to see if they can tell what those special titles are.*) The three titles are Christ, son of David, and son of Abraham. *Christ* means *anointed one*. When someone is anointed by God, he is chosen by God. He is given power to do something special for God. In the Old Testament, the Lord *anointed* or chose certain men to be kings and priests. In the New Testament, God anointed his Son Jesus to do something special. God anointed Jesus to be the Savior. Jesus would save his people from their sins.

Jesus was also called son of David. David was Israel's greatest king. God promised David that one of his descendants would be a greater king. He would rule forever (2 Samuel 7:12-15). Jesus is the promised King. Jesus is the greatest king. He will rule his kingdom forever. Matthew also called Jesus the son of Abraham. It was through the family of Abraham that the Savior would come. God promised Abraham that, in him, all the nations of the earth would be blessed. God kept his promise. God sent Jesus who was of the lineage of Abraham, to save God's people from their sins. It was through the Lord Jesus Christ that all the nations would be blessed.

There are five women mentioned in Jesus' genealogy, Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, the wife of Uriah, and Mary, the mother of Jesus. Rahab and Ruth were not Israelites. Rahab was a Canaanite, and Ruth was a Moabite. The Canaanites and Moabites worshiped idols. The Canaanites and Moabites did not know, love or obey the Lord. The Lord had not made a covenant with them. He had not promised to make the Canaanites and Moabites his "*treasured possession among all the people*" (Exodus 19:5) like he had promised Israel. But when Rahab and Ruth learned about Israel's God, they wanted to know, love, and obey God. Because God is merciful and gracious, he chose them to belong to him. And he even made them part of Jesus' family tree. *A family tree is a drawing or chart that shows how the different members of a family are related to each other.* He chose them to be great, great, great, great, . . . great grandmothers of Jesus the Savior.

There are many kings in Jesus' genealogy. Some of those kings had great power and wealth like Solomon. Some were godly like David, Hezekiah, and Josiah. And some were evil like Manasseh. But, whether they were godly or evil, they all needed a Savior. All the people in Jesus' genealogy were sinners, even Mary. But God still let them be part of Jesus' family. Isn't God good? He used sinful people to be part of his plan to bring the Savior into the world.

(Read Matthew 1:16 to the class.) Matthew does not say that Joseph was the father of Jesus. He says that Joseph was the husband of Mary, "*of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Christ.*" If Joseph was not the father of Jesus, who was? In our next lesson we will learn the answer to that question.

QUESTIONS

1. Did Matthew begin his Gospel by telling where and when Jesus was born, or did he begin his gospel by telling who Jesus is? (He began by telling who Jesus is.)
2. Jesus is the Christ. Does Christ mean anointed one? (Yes, Christ mean anointed one.)
3. When God anoints someone does he give them power to do something special for him? (Yes) What special thing did God anoint Jesus to do? (He anointed Jesus to be the Savior to save his people from their sins.)
4. God promised David that one of his descendants would be the greatest king in the world. What is that king's name? (His name is Jesus.) How long will he rule? (He will rule forever.)
5. Did God promise Abraham that all nations would be blessed through Abraham? (Yes, God Abraham that all the nations would be blessed) Through what man has God blessed the nations? (He blessed the nations through Abraham's descendant Jesus.)

6. There are forty men and five women listed in Jesus' genealogy. Some were godly and some were evil. How many of them needed a savior? (All of them needed a savior.)
7. Who was the mother of Jesus? (Mary was the mother of Jesus.)

DAY THREE

The conception of the Lord Jesus was unlike all others.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:26-38

(Read Matthew 1:18 to the class.) Matthew began his Gospel by telling who Jesus is. Matthew describes Jesus as the Christ. Jesus is the man sent from God to take away the sins of his people. Jesus is the son of David. He is the king who will rule forever. Jesus is the son of Abraham, through whom all the nations will be blessed. But Matthew has more to say about who Jesus is. Jesus is not just a man. He is God! He is fully God, and he is fully human. He has been God forever and ever. But one day, 2,000 years ago, Jesus left heaven, and became a baby inside Mary. Jesus is just like you and me, except he never sinned. He is just like you and me, except that he was conceived by God, the Holy Spirit.

Matthew tells us a little bit about how Jesus became a baby inside Mary. But the Gospel of Luke tells us more. Listen carefully as I read what Luke says. *(Read Luke 1:26-38 to the class.)* The day the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary was probably like any other day. Mary was not expecting anything special to happen. She probably got up, prayed, dressed, and helped her mother with the cleaning and cooking. Maybe she took a little time to visit with her friends. Maybe they talked about the plans for her coming marriage to Joseph. She did not know that it would be the most important day of her life. It was not only the most important day of Mary's life. It was the most important day for all of our lives. God, our heavenly Father, was ready to send his son Jesus into the world. Jesus would save his people from their sins. Jesus would save his people from the great anger of God.

We do not know where Mary was when Gabriel appeared to her. But we know she was alone. Suddenly, her day became very special. Gabriel appeared and said, *"Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!"* (Luke 1:28). Mary was greatly disturbed by Gabriel. Why had the angel come? What did he mean when he said *"favored one"*? Mary was very afraid. People are always afraid when an angel of God appears to them. But then, Gabriel gave Mary wonderful news. He told her that she would conceive in her womb and give birth to a son. (The womb is where a baby grows inside of his/her mother.) Her son would be named Jesus. Mary's son would be great. He would be called the Son of the Most High God. Her son Jesus would be given the throne of David. He would rule over Israel forever. His kingdom would never come to an end.

Mary believed the message that the angel Gabriel brought from God. She trusted God. She knew God always tells the truth. But she did not know how this could happen. She was not married. It takes a man and woman to have a baby. The angel Gabriel told Mary how this would happen. He said, *"The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God"* (Luke 1:35).

(Read Galatians 4:4 to the class.) It was finally time for the Savior to come. God was ready to keep his promise to Israel. Before the world was created, the Godhead—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—had planned for this moment. They made a covenant together to save the people of God from their sins. God the Son would become a man. He would leave the glories of heaven. He would begin life as a baby inside Mary. He would live a human life that *always* pleased his heavenly Father. He would be our substitute. *A substitute is one who takes the place of another.* He would die on the cross. He would take the punishment we deserved for our sins. He would

provide forgiveness, righteousness, and eternal life for God's people. And he would begin as a baby.

Definitions

Covenant – a formal, solemn, and binding agreement; a solemn promise made between two or more parties.

Conception (kən-s-p-ən) – beginning; the process that occurs within a woman's body when she becomes pregnant.

Conceive – to become pregnant with a child; with a baby.

QUESTIONS

1. Is Jesus God? (Yes, Jesus is God.) Is Jesus a human being? (Yes, Jesus is a human being.)
2. How is Jesus different from other human beings? (He did not have a human father. His father is God, the heavenly Father. He never sinned. He always pleased his heavenly Father.)
3. Who appeared to Mary? (The angel Gabriel appeared to Mary.)
4. What did Gabriel tell her? (He told that she would have a special baby. He told her that she would conceive in her womb and give birth to a son. Her son would be named Jesus. Mary's son would be great. He would be called the Son of the Most High God. Her son Jesus would be given the throne of David. He would rule over Israel forever. His kingdom would never come to an end.)
5. Was Mary afraid when she saw the angel? (Yes, Mary was afraid when she saw the angel.)
6. Did she believe Gabriel's message? (Yes, Mary believed in Gabriel's message.)
7. Why did she believe Gabriel's message? (Mary knew God always told the truth.)
8. Where was Jesus before he became a baby inside Mary? (Jesus was in heaven.)
9. Why was Jesus willing to leave heaven and become a human being like us? (He was the only one who could save his people from their sins. He was the only one who could save us from the great anger of God against our sin.)

DAY FOUR

The Lord sent an angel to Joseph commanding him to take Mary as his wife and name her special baby son Jesus.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 1:18-25

(Read Matthew 1:18-25 to the class.) Mary and Joseph were engaged (betrothed) to be married. The wedding had not taken place yet. When Joseph and Mary became engaged, they had made solemn promises to one another. In Israel, the engagement was as binding as marriage. But they did not live together until after the wedding. Until the wedding they lived with their own families.

Before the wedding, Joseph found out that Mary was going to have a baby. This baby was not his baby. Joseph and Mary had never been together. Joseph thought Mary had been unfaithful to him. This made Joseph very sad because he loved Mary. Joseph thought the father of Mary's baby was another man. He did not know that the father of Mary's baby was God.

Joseph could have been angry with Mary. He could have brought her before the village elders and accused her of unfaithfulness. He could have shamed her before her friends and family. He could have even demanded that she be put to death. But Joseph was a kind and godly man. He

did not want Mary to be put to shame. So he planned to end their engagement quietly.

But as Joseph was thinking about how to end his engagement to Mary quietly, an angel of the Lord came to Joseph in a dream. The Bible does not tell us the name of the angel. But he was probably Gabriel. Remember, Gabriel had brought the good news to Mary. And now, he was bringing good news to Joseph. Mary had not been unfaithful to Joseph. She did not love another man. Her baby was a special baby. Her baby was the Son of God. He was the promised Savior who would take away the sins of his people.

The angel said, "*Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as you wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit*" (verse 20). Jesus' conception was miraculous. That means it was a miracle. God the Holy Spirit had formed this human baby in the womb of the virgin Mary. And God was giving Joseph the responsibility and privilege of raising the Son of God as his own son. Joseph was to name Mary's baby and protect him. The angel told Joseph to name Mary's baby Jesus. In the Bible, names have meaning. *Jesus* means *the LORD is salvation*. He was named Jesus because he is the Lord, and he would save his people from their sins.

Hundreds of years before Mary and Joseph were born, God made a promise to Ahaz, king of Judah. God promised that a virgin would conceive and bear a son and he would be called Immanuel. *Immanuel* means *God with us*. This name described who Jesus is. He is God who came to live as a man among us.

Joseph was a godly man. He knew, loved, and obeyed God. He wanted to display God as glorious. So when he woke from sleep, he showed that he loved God by obeying the angel's command. He took Mary as his wife, and when Mary's baby was born, Joseph named him Jesus.

Definitions

Conception (kən-s-p-ən) – beginning; the process that occurs within a woman's body when she becomes pregnant.

Virgin – a woman who has never had sexual relations with a man.

Miracle – an event that cannot be explained by any known law of nature; an extraordinary event manifesting divine intervention in human affairs.

QUESTIONS

1. When Joseph found out that Mary was going to have a baby did he plan to put her away quietly? (Yes, Joseph had made plans to put Mary away quietly.)
2. Was Joseph a kind and godly man? (Yes, he was a kind and godly man.)
3. Did Joseph think that Mary had been unfaithful to him? Did he think she loved another man? (Yes, Joseph thought that Mary was unfaithful.)
4. Who told Joseph that Mary's baby was the Son of God? (An angel sent from God, probably Gabriel.)
5. How did the angel appear to Joseph? (He appeared to Joseph in a dream.)
6. Who was the father of Mary's baby? (God was the father of Mary's baby.)
7. What name was Joseph to give to Mary's baby? (He was to name him Jesus.)
8. Does Jesus mean "The LORD is salvation"? (Yes, that is the meaning of Jesus.)
9. Does Immanuel mean "God with us"? (Yes, that is the meaning of Immanuel.)
10. The angel commanded Joseph to take Mary as his wife, and call her baby son Jesus. Did Joseph obey the angel? (Yes, Joseph obeyed.)
11. Do we show that we love God when we obey him? (Yes, when we obey God we show him that we love him.)

DAY FIVE

Jesus came to save his people from their sins.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 1:18-25.

The Book of Matthew is often called the *Gospel* of Matthew. *Gospel* means *good news*. So we will hear good news in Matthew's gospel. The good news is that God has sent his son Jesus into the world to be the Savior of the world. The true story of Jesus is good news because there is bad news. Good news is not good news unless there is bad news. And the news is very, very bad. If someone comes to you and tells you your sister is sick and about to die, that is very bad news, isn't it? But if someone else comes and says, your sister is getting better and will not die, that is very good news, isn't it?

What is the bad news that makes the good news so good? The bad news is that everyone is a sinner. We are all born sinners. The really bad news is that everyone who is a sinner deserves to die and go to hell forever. The bad news is that God is very angry with sinners. What is sin? Sin is disobedience to God; it is doing what God forbids us to do. Sin is doing what God hates. We learn about what God hates, and what he loves in the Bible. That is why we have Bible lessons everyday. There are many things that God forbids us to do, things like lying, stealing, and murdering. The things God forbids us to do are not good for us, and they are not good for others. Sin is also not doing things God commands us to do. He commands us to be kind to one another, tenderhearted, and forgiving. But sometimes we are not kind and do not forgive. God commands us to love him before everyone and everything else. But there are many things we love more than God. Can you name some of those things? (sports, toys, friends, family, food, etc.)

But the very worst thing about sin is that sin does not bring honor and glory to God. When God created human beings, he created us to be very special. We were created in his likeness and image. We were created by God to show others what God is like. No other creatures were created in the likeness and image of God (Genesis 1:26-27). Not even the angels in heaven were created in the image of God. Sadly, our first parents, Adam and Eve, disobeyed God and sin and death came into the world (Genesis 2:15-24). And then sin and death passed to all of Adam's and Eve's descendants. All human beings are descendants of Adam and Eve. When we sin we do not show others what God is like. Our sin warps and distorts the true likeness of God. This is what makes sin so terrible. And this is what makes God so angry.

The bad news is that no one is good and no one seeks God (Romans 3:9-20). We all are selfish. We all want to do things our way, and not God's way. In fact, we are God's enemies. There is nothing we can do *by ourselves* to be friends with God. We are all born sinners, and will be sinners until we die unless God does something.

And the good news is God has done something! The good news is that *"God so loved the world that he gave his only Son [Jesus], that whoever believes in him should not perish [go to hell forever] but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son [Jesus] into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him* (John 3:16-17). In the Gospel of Matthew we will hear all about this good news. We will learn how Jesus came, how he lived, and what he taught. And we will see what he was willing to do to rescue his people from the terrible power of sin and death. It is very good news!

Definitions

Warp - to bend or twist out of shape

Distort - to turn from the true meaning; misrepresent

Condemn - to pronounce guilty and send to hell

QUESTIONS

1. What does the word gospel mean? (The word gospel means good news.)
2. Is the true story of Jesus called good news because there is very bad news? (Yes, the good news is the story of Jesus.)
3. Is the bad news that all people are sinners and deserve death and hell? (Yes, the bad news is sinners will go to hell.)
4. Is sin disobedience to God? (Yes, when we sin we are disobeying God.)
5. Why do you think sin makes God so angry? (Answers will vary.)
6. What is the good news? (God has sent his Son Jesus to save his people from sin and death.)

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Matthew

PRIMARY GRADES 4-6 SCHOOL LESSON TEACHER'S GUIDE



PASSAGE

Matthew 1:1-25



MEMORY VERSE

"For that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:20-21).



HYMN

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," Rafiki Hymnal



DOCTRINE

The genealogy of Jesus and the virgin birth



CATECHISM

(FOR MEMORIZATION)

Question: What is forbidden in the sixth commandment?
Answer: The sixth commandment forbids the taking away of our own life, or the life of our neighbor, unjustly, or whatsoever tends thereunto.

LESSON 1: O COME, O COME IMMANUEL



OUTLINE FOR THE WEEK

Day One

The titles of Jesus show how God kept his promises.

Scripture: Matthew 1:1

Day Two

In Christ, the promises made to David are realized.

Scripture: Matthew 1:1-17

Day Three

God's promises are unbreakable.

Scripture: Matthew 1:1-17

Day Four

The virgin birth of Jesus

Scripture: Matthew 1:18-25

Day Five

Joseph believed the angel and was obedient.

Scripture: Matthew 1:18-25

SUGGESTED OR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

1. The numerical value in Hebrew of the name David is fourteen. Using the alphabet, have the students make a numerical code for their names. (A=1, B=2, C=3, etc.)

2. "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," *Rafiki Hymnal*

This hymn has many unusual words in it. Go through the verses with the students making sure that they understand the vocabulary. (Verse 1 says to ransom captive Israel. A ransom is a sum of money demanded to release a captive or a prisoner. Israel had been captive in Babylon and was captive to sin until the coming of Jesus. Verse 2 talks about Sinai's height and the law being given in clouds and majesty and awe. That is talking about God giving the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. Verse 3 talks about the Rod of Jesse. In the genealogy, David is Jesse's son and Jesus is from that family line. Satan's tyranny is his cruel power over sinners. Jesus came to save his people from the cruel power of Satan. Verse

4 talks about the Dayspring from on high. That is from Luke 1:78. Jesus is the dayspring or sunrise from on high. To disperse the gloomy clouds is to drive them away. Verse 5 again calls Jesus the Key of David. In our lesson we have seen the importance of the line of David. Jesus is the fulfillment of the promises made to David.)

THE NICENE CREED

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.

Who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

DAY ONE

The titles of Jesus show how God kept his promises.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 1:1

A genealogy is a family history, a line of descent from an ancestor. A genealogy traces the family line of a particular person. A genealogy may just look like a long (maybe even boring) list of names, but genealogies give connections. When you read a genealogy you see where someone came from. The first chapter of Matthew traces the genealogy of Jesus Christ. This chapter gives the human lineage, or line of descent, of the Savior of the world. The genealogy of Jesus Christ gives us the family line that God used to keep all the promises he made to his people.

"The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Matthew 1:1). In this first verse there are three names or titles given to Jesus. The first name is Jesus Christ—*Christos* in the Greek. That is the same word that means the "anointed one" or "Messiah" in Hebrew. The Book of Matthew was written for Jews who had come to understand that Jesus is the "anointed one" or "Messiah" that all the Old Testament had pointed toward.

The next title is *Son of David*. David was the second king in the kingdom of Israel. David was probably the greatest king Israel ever had and the Messiah was promised to be a king like David and from David's family line. Like David, the Messiah-Christ is a king—the King!—and will establish a kingdom over which he will rule.

And the last title is *Son of Abraham*. In Genesis 12, God called Abraham to leave his country and his family. God promised Abraham, *"I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed"* (Genesis

12:2-3). By calling Jesus the Son of Abraham, Matthew said that the Messiah was a true Hebrew. As a son of Abraham, Matthew will make the point that Jesus is the one of whom the law (beginning in Genesis) and the prophets testify.

QUESTIONS

1. What does the term "son of David" mean when applied to Jesus? (Like David, the Messiah—Christ is a king—the King!—and will establish a kingdom over which he will rule.)
2. What does the term "son of Abraham" mean? (As a son of Abraham, Matthew will make the point that Jesus is the one of whom the law [beginning in Genesis] and the prophets testify.)
3. What does the term "Christ" mean? (That is the same word that means the "anointed one" or "Messiah" in Hebrew.)
4. Has this passage (containing a "dull genealogy") changed your mind about this Scripture now that you have examined it more closely? (Answers may vary.)
5. How should we approach similar genealogies in Scripture? What are the things we should be looking for? (We should look for connections with other parts of God's Word. We should see how God continues keeping his promises.)

DAY TWO

In Christ, the promises made to David are realized.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 1:1-17

Matthew also calls Jesus the son of Mary—but in a somewhat unusual and unexpected manner. Thirty-six times Matthew has used the phrase "the father of" but in verse 16 he suddenly switches when Joseph is mentioned. Jesus is Mary's son, the Mary who is married to Joseph. Why the sudden change? The answer is given in verses 18-25. Joseph is not "the father of" Jesus in the ordinary, biological sense—"the virgin shall conceive and bear a son" (Matthew 1:23). This was the fulfillment of the promise that God made so many years ago by the prophet Isaiah. "Therefore the LORD himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14).

Matthew organized his account into three stanzas or groups of fourteen generations. What does that mean? What connection is being made there? One suggestion is that the numerical value in Hebrew of the name David is fourteen. What that means is that by giving a number to each letter of the Hebrew alphabet (Aleph = 1, Beth = 2, Gimel = 3 etc), the name David would be fourteen. This may seem to be a bit of a stretch, but it can be argued that Matthew was again showing that Jesus' descent from David is certain and important. It is important because we need to see that in Christ the promises made to David are going to find their final and complete realization.

QUESTIONS

1. What unusual change comes in the genealogy in verse 16? (Thirty-six times Matthew has used the phrase "the father of" but in verse 16 he suddenly switches when Joseph is mentioned. Jesus is Mary's son, the Mary who is married to Joseph.)
2. Why is the change from "the father of" important? (Joseph is not "the father of" Jesus in the ordinary, biological sense—"the virgin shall conceive and bear a son" [Matthew 1:23].)
3. What prophecy did this fulfill? (This was the fulfillment of the promise that God made so many years ago by the prophet Isaiah. "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign.")

Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" [Isaiah 7:14].)

4. What is the possible significance to the groups of fourteen generations in Matthew's genealogy? (One suggestion is that the numerical value in Hebrew of the name David is fourteen.)
5. What was so important about Jesus' connection to David? (Matthew was again showing that Jesus' descent from David is certain and important. It is important because we need to see that in Christ the promises made to David are going to find their final and complete realization.)

DAY THREE

God's promises are unbreakable.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 1:1-17

Matthew also does something else that is different. Matthew includes five women in Jesus' genealogy. The genealogy found in Luke (Luke 3:23-38) is made up entirely of men. More remarkable are the women Matthew chooses: not Sarah (Isaac's mother), Rebekah (Jacob's mother), or Leah (Judah's mother). Matthew chooses to include Tamar (1:3); Rahab and Ruth (1:5); *"the wife of Uriah"* (Bathsheba; 1:6); and Mary (1:16).

Let us look back for a moment and remember who these women were. Tamar was a Canaanite woman married to Judah's son. Rahab lived in Jericho when the people of Israel came in to conquer the land. She hid the spies who came to look over the city in exchange for sparing her life and the lives of her family. Ruth was from Moab, but went back to Israel with her mother-in-law, Naomi. All of these women were Gentiles. They all chose to leave their Gentile backgrounds in order to be connected with God's people. The next woman in the genealogy may have been a Gentile also. Bathsheba was married to Uriah the Hittite, so she may have been a Hittite also. King David had her husband killed and took Bathsheba as his wife. The Bible records the sinful life and choices of Tamar, Rahab, and Bathsheba. It is a great encouragement for us to remember that God enters into covenant with fallen sinners. And Mary is included in this category of fallen sinners. In the *Magnificat* recorded in Luke, she says, *"My eyes have seen your salvation"* (Luke 2:30). It helps us to know that God includes all kinds of people—men and women, Gentiles and Jews—in the family line of his Son.

Four times in the genealogy Matthew puts in the words, *"deportation to Babylon"* (Matthew 1:11, 12, 17 [twice]). Perhaps no greater threat to the promise of salvation can be found in Old Testament history than this terrible event. Because of their disobedience to God and rebellion against him, the people of Israel were conquered by the Babylonians and taken away from the land God promised. How could God keep his promises of a Messiah coming from the line of David if his people were prisoners in a far-off country? But even throughout the exile, the royal lineage is kept intact. God's promises are unbreakable.

QUESTIONS

1. What women does Matthew not include in Jesus' genealogy? (Matthew does not include the women you might expect; Sarah [Isaac's mother], Rebekah [Jacob's mother], or Leah [Judah's mother].)
2. What women does he include? (Matthew chooses to include Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, *"the wife of Uriah"* [Bathsheba], and Mary.)
3. What is unusual about these women? (All of these women [except Mary] were Gentiles. At

least three of them had plainly sinful backgrounds.)

4. How does knowing that God included these women in the genealogy of his Son help you? (Answers may vary but might include that God includes in his plan fallen sinners who turn to him.)
5. How does Matthew's genealogy have something to say about the role of women in Scripture? (Women as well as men are important to God and have a part to play in the history of salvation.)
6. What do we learn about God's promises from Matthew bringing up the "*deportation to Babylon*"? (Even throughout the exile, the royal lineage is kept intact. God's promises are unbreakable.)

DAY FOUR

The virgin birth of Jesus

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 1:18-25

In verses 20 and 23, Matthew uses the word "*behold*." That means that something unexpected and startling is about to be announced. Something new is going to happen. Both Matthew and the angel declare that this child is conceived in Mary's womb by a power "*from the Holy Spirit*" (Matthew 1:18, 20). This baby was not formed in the usual way. Although Mary is the mother, Joseph is never referred to as Jesus' father. This is a miracle.

The child's name is to be "*Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins*" (Matthew 1:21). In Hebrew, that same name is translated Joshua which means "*Yahweh is salvation*." Jesus bears the covenant name of God. For Jews, this was very difficult to understand. All their lives they had been taught that there is only one God and he is Yahweh. And the child growing in Mary's body bears that name! How can that be? What they do not understand is the incarnation—God took on a human body. What they do not understand is the trinity—the fact that God is three persons in one, undivided being. This child is both human and divine. Jesus is the son of David and the son of Abraham; but he is also *Immanu ēl*: "*God with us*" (Matthew 1:23). Jesus has a human mother but was conceived supernaturally through the power of the Holy Spirit, according to the eternal will of the Father.

Why does this child come into the world? "*He will save his people from their sins*" (Matthew 1:21), just as the Old Testament had prophesied in Isaiah 7:14.

QUESTIONS

1. Why does Matthew use the word "*behold*"? (That means that something unexpected and startling is about to be announced. Something new is going to happen.)
2. What was the new, startling thing that happened? (A miracle happened. This child is conceived in Mary's womb by a power "*from the Holy Spirit*" [Matthew 1:18, 20], not in the usual way from a father and mother.)
3. What does the term "Jesus" mean? (Jesus means "*he will save his people from their sins*" [Matthew 1:21].)
4. How can Jesus be called Immanuel ("*God with us*") and be a human being at the same time? (Jesus has a human mother but was conceived supernaturally through the power of the Holy Spirit, according to the eternal will of the Father. Jesus is both human and divine.)
5. Why was this child born into the world? ("*He will save his people from their sins*" [Matthew 1:21].)

6. Has Jesus saved you from your sins? (Answers may vary.)

DAY FIVE

Joseph believed the angel and was obedient.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 1:18-25

Joseph and Mary were betrothed. That means that they were promised to be married. Jewish weddings took place in two stages. The first stage was the betrothal or engagement where solemn promises were made that the couple would be married. These were serious and binding promises. The second stage which followed sometimes up to a year later was the formal coming together of the married couple where they lived together as husband and wife. Before this coming together, the woman would continue to live with her parents and a breaking of the promise on the man's part was considered a divorce.

Now here is Mary, a betrothed woman, expecting a baby. The second part of the wedding had not happened yet and Joseph must have thought that Mary had been unfaithful to him. *"And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly"* (Matthew 1:19).

Joseph was considering what to do when an angel of the Lord came to him in a dream and explained everything to him. The angel said, *"Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit"* (Matthew 1:20). Joseph did what the angel of the Lord commanded him to do. It must have taken a lot of courage for Joseph to obey what the angel of the Lord said. Not everyone would understand or believe the miracle of Jesus' birth. Yet Joseph believed the angel and was obedient. He took Mary as his wife and kept her as a virgin until the child was born.

QUESTIONS

1. What were the two parts of a Jewish wedding? (The first stage was the betrothal or engagement where solemn promises were made. The second stage which followed sometimes up to a year later was the formal coming together of the married couple where they lived together as husband and wife.)
2. Why was Joseph thinking about divorcing Mary quietly? (The second part of the wedding had not happened yet, and Joseph must have thought that Mary had been unfaithful to him.)
3. What did the angel tell Joseph? (*"Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit"* [Matthew 1:20].)
4. Why did the angel tell Joseph not to be afraid? (Joseph must have been afraid. It must have been awkward and difficult for Joseph.)
5. What are three things that you admire in Joseph? (Answers may vary.)

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Matthew

ADULT LESSON

PASSAGE
MATTHEW 1:1-25

MEMORY VERSE
“FOR THAT WHICH IS
CONCEIVED IN HER IS
FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT.
SHE WILL BEAR A SON,
AND YOU SHALL CALL
HIS NAME JESUS, FOR
HE WILL SAVE HIS
PEOPLE FROM THEIR
SINS” (MATTHEW 1:20-
21).

DOCTRINAL FOCUS
THE GENEALOGY OF
JESUS AND THE VIRGIN
BIRTH

CATECHISM
QUESTION: WHAT
IS FORBIDDEN
IN THE SIXTH
COMMANDMENT?
ANSWER: THE SIXTH
COMMANDMENT
FORBIDS THE TAKING
AWAY OF OUR OWN
LIFE, OR THE LIFE
OF OUR NEIGHBOR,
UNJUSTLY, OR
WHATSOEVER TENDS
THEREUNTO.

Lesson 1: O Come, O Come Immanuel

Day One

Read Matthew 1:1-25.

THE GENEALOGY (MATTHEW 1:1-17)

Genealogies are, perhaps, only of interest to those whose names are found within them, or else to history specialists. But the genealogy in this chapter (Matthew 1:2-17) ought to be of interest to all; it spells out the human lineage of the Savior of the world. Several features of this genealogy are noteworthy:

TITLES AND NAMES:

Three “names” are attributed to him:

Christos: the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew for “anointed one” or “Messiah.” Since Matthew writes with converted Jews in mind, making the point that Jesus is the Messiah of Jewish expectation is important.

Son of David: like David, the Messiah-Christ is a king—the King!—and will establish a kingdom over which he will rule.

Son of Abraham: thus establishing the Messiah as a true Hebrew. As a son of Abraham, Matthew will make the point that Jesus is the one of whom the law¹ (beginning in Genesis) and the prophets testify.²

Matthew also refers to Jesus as the son of Mary—but in a somewhat unusual and unexpected manner. Thirty-six times Matthew has used the phrase “the father of” but in verse 16 he suddenly switches when Joseph is mentioned. Jesus is Mary’s son, the Mary who is married to Joseph. Why the sudden change? The answer is given in verses 18-25. Joseph is not “the father of” Jesus in the ordinary, biological sense—“*a virgin shall conceive and bear a child*” (Matthew 1:23; cf. Isaiah 7:14).

THE STANZAS

Why does Matthew organize his account into three stanzas of fourteen generations (cf. 1:17)? One suggestion is that the numerical value in Hebrew of the name David is fourteen³, and it has been argued that Matthew is underlining the significance that Messiah is of David’s line. This may be a little obscure but Jesus’ descent from David is certain and important. It is important because we need to see that in Christ the promises made to David are going to find their final and complete realization.

WOMEN AND GENTILES

Five women appear in Matthew’s genealogy: Tamar (1:3); Rahab and Ruth (1:5); “the wife of Uriah” (Bathsheba; 1:6); and Mary (1:16). Luke’s genealogy (Luke 3:23-38) consists entirely of men. More remarkable are the women Matthew chooses: not Sarah (Isaac’s mother), Rebekah (Jacob’s

mother), or Leah (Judah's mother); but Gentiles (Rahab, Ruth and possibly Tamar and Bathsheba).⁴ At least three of the five were involved in sexual irregularities.⁵ It is a great encouragement for us to remember that God enters into covenant with fallen sinners. And Mary, we should note, is included in this category. In the *Magnificat* recorded in Luke, she says, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior" (Luke 1:46-47).

GOD REMEMBERS HIS PROMISE

Four times Matthew cites the words, "deportation to Babylon" (Matthew 1:11, 12, 17 [2]). Perhaps no greater threat to the promise of salvation can be found in Old Testament history than this tragic event. Yet, subsequent to the exile, the royal lineage is kept intact. God's promises are unbreakable.

THE VIRGIN BIRTH (MATTHEW 1:18-25)

The word "behold" (Matthew 1:20, 23) signifies that something unexpected and startling is about to be announced. Both Matthew and the angel declare that this child is conceived in Mary's womb by a power "from the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 1:18, 20). Never is Joseph referred to as Jesus' father. Though, clearly, an egg from Mary was employed, its fertilization is entirely divine. This is a miracle.

The child's name is to be "Jesus [*Iēsous*], for he will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). *Iēsous* is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew *yehōšua'* (Joshua), "Yahweh is salvation." Jesus bears the covenant name of God. For a Jewish audience, nothing could be of greater challenge to their monotheism. There is only one God and he is Yahweh. And the child in Mary's womb bears that name! It is, of course, the incarnation that makes visible and unavoidable God's tri-unity, the fact that he is three persons in one, undivided being.

To what end does this child come into the world? Answer: "He will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). Just as the Old Testament had prophesied in Isaiah 7:14. Despite King Ahaz' unbelief, he was given a sign that the combined powers of Rezin of Aram and Pekah of Israel (together

threatening the very existence of Judah) would be snuffed out (Isaiah 7:3-7). The sign was that of a birth of a child—Ahaz' son (Maher-shalal-Hash Baz). Before the child knew how to say "my father" or "my mother" the Assyrians will have carried the northern aggressors into captivity.

Isaiah's prophecy served a dual purpose. On the one hand it referred to the birth of Ahaz' son; on the other, its true fulfillment lay in the birth of Jesus.

Controversy exists over the translation of the term "virgin" in Isaiah 7:14. Technically, the word (Hebrew *'almā*) refers to a young woman of marriageable age (normally, therefore a virgin). The word does not have to mean "virgin" and in the case of Ahaz' wife, she evidently was not. But in the case of Mary, *virgin* is the appropriate translation.

HUMAN AND DIVINE

Jesus is the son of David and the son of Abraham; but he is also *Immanu ēl*: "God with us" (Matthew 1:23). Jesus has a human mother but was conceived supernaturally, through the power of the Holy Spirit, in accordance with the eternal will of the Father.

JOSEPH

Joseph did what the angel of the Lord commanded him to do (Matthew 1:24-25). All credit must be given to him in the circumstances. His initial thoughts were that Mary had been unfaithful (Matthew 1:18-19) during the period of betrothal.⁶ Now that he had been told by an angel the truth of the matter, he obeyed, refraining from sexual intercourse with her following their coming together until the child was born.

References

Motyer, J. A., *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, IVP, 1993.

Notes

1. See, Matthew 4:15-17; 8:11; 11:12-13 etc.
2. Abraham is the first “prophet” in Scripture (Genesis 20:7).
3. By assigning numbers to the Hebrew alphabet (Aleph = 1, Beth = 2, Gimel = 3 etc).
4. Rahab was a Canaanite; Tamar may also have been; Ruth was a Moabitess; and Bathsheba (like her husband) may have been a Hittite.
5. Tamar was involved in an illicit sexual liaison with her father-in-law; Rahab was a prostitute; Bathsheba was involved in an adulterous union with David.
6. Or “engagement”. Weddings took place in two stages: a betrothal or engagement where solemn promises were made followed (up to a year later) by a formal “coming together” where the marriage was consummated sexually. Before this coming together, the woman would continue to live with her parents and a breaking of the promise on the man’s part constituted divorce.

Day One

1. What do the terms “son of David” and “son of Abraham” mean when applied to Jesus?
2. What does the term “Christ” mean?
3. What does the term “Jesus” mean?

Day Two

1. Has this passage (containing a “dull genealogy”) changed your mind about this Scripture, now that you have examined it more closely?
2. Formulate how we should approach similar genealogies in Scripture. What are the things we should be looking for?

Day Three

1. How can Jesus be called Immanuel (“*God with us*”) and be a human being at the same time? Think of how the church has sought to express this in its creeds.
2. Is Jesus human sometimes and divine at other times, or is he simultaneously human and divine? List ways you know this to be true.

Day Four

1. Describe three things that you admire in Joseph.
2. How does Matthew’s genealogy have something to say about the role of women in Scripture?

Day Five

1. Spend a few moments thinking about the lessons you have learned from this chapter. What are they?
2. Compose a brief prayer in praise for the birth of Jesus.

Days Six and Seven—For the Staff Meeting

1. Sing “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,” *Rafiki Hymnal*
2. What lessons are often omitted in the customary “Christmas story?”
3. Memorize two verses from Matthew 1.
4. Can you formulate a way of maintaining the true humanity and full deity of Jesus? Hint: Nicene Creed.

The Nicene Creed

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.

Who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

MATTHEW LESSON 1: O COME, O COME IMMANUEL

PASSAGE:

Matthew 1:1-25

MEMORY VERSE:

"For that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:20-21).

DAY ONE: READ MATTHEW 1:1.

Principle/Lessons: Jesus was the promised Messiah (Christ) descended as God promised from David, Israel's greatest king, and from Abraham, from whose descendants God promised to bless all mankind.

Questions: Read Genesis 12:1-3 and 2 Samuel 7:12-13. How is Jesus the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham and David? How does it encourage you to know that God always keeps his promises?

DAY TWO: READ MATTHEW 1:1-17.

Principle/Lessons: Jesus is not called the son of Joseph, but the son of Mary because Jesus was conceived of a virgin through the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 7:14, Luke 1:35).

Questions: How can Jesus be both Immanuel (which means "God with us") and be a human being at the same time? Why is it important for our salvation that Jesus be both fully God and fully man?

DAY THREE: READ MATTHEW 1:1-17

Principle/Lessons: Matthew includes five women in Jesus' genealogy (Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba, and Mary). These women included Gentiles and sinners.

Questions: How does it help you to know that God includes all kinds of people – men and women, Gentiles and Jews, and all sinners like us – in the family of Jesus?

DAY FOUR: READ MATTHEW 1:18-25.

Principle/Lessons: The angel told Joseph that Mary's baby was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and would be named Jesus, which means "Jehovah saves." Jesus was born to save his people from their sins.

Questions: Have you trusted in Jesus to save you from your sins? If not, you may do so by believing that Jesus is the Son of God, that he died for your sins, and rose again to give you eternal life.

DAY FIVE: READ MATTHEW 1:18-25.

Principle/Lessons: Joseph showed his faith in God by taking Mary as his wife in obedience to the angels' word to him. Today we learn what God would have us do through his written Word, the Bible.

Questions: What is God's Word saying that you should obey today?

DEVOTIONAL POINTS:

God's promise to send the Christ (Messiah) was fulfilled through the lives of men and women, Jews and Gentiles, all of them sinners. Jesus came as God the Son, made human, so that he could die in the place of sinners like us. As fully man he could die as a substitute for sinful human beings. As fully infinite God, he could die as a substitute for an infinite number of human beings, and in rising from the dead give life to all his people. Since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, all need a Savior, Jesus.

CATECHISM:

Question: What is forbidden in the sixth commandment?

Answer: The sixth commandment forbids the taking away of our own life, or the life of our neighbor, unjustly, or whatsoever tends thereunto.

HYMN:

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

*"The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins,"
declares the LORD. Is. 59:20*

1. O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive
2. O come, O come, thou Lord of might, who to thy tribes, on
3. O come, thou Rod of Jes - se, free thine own from Sa - tan's
4. O come, thou Day-spring from on high, and cheer us by thy
5. O come, thou Key of Da - vid, come and o - pen wide our

Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here,
Si - nai's height, in an - cient times didst give the law
• tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell thy peo - ple save,
draw - ing nigh; dis - perse the gloom - y clouds of night,
heav'n - ly home; make safe the way that leads on high,

REFRAIN
un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
in cloud and maj - es - ty and awe.
• and give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave. Re - joice! Re - joice! Em -
and death's dark shad - ows put to flight.
and close the path to mis - er - y.

man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.

Latin antiphons, 12th cent.
Latin hymn, 1710
Tr. by John Mason Neale, 1851; alt. 1961

VENI EMMANUEL L.M.ref.
Plainsong, 13th cent.
Arr. by Thomas Helmore, 1856

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