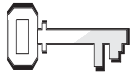


Long Journeys



References

Matthew 2:13–23;
The Desire of Ages,
pp. 64–67



Memory Verse

“My God will meet all
your needs according
to the riches of his
glory in Christ Jesus”
(Philippians 4:19, NIV).

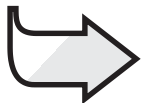


Objectives

The children will:
Know that God’s
grace gives them
reason to have hope.

Feel that they can
have hope for the future
because of God’s love.

Respond by looking for-
ward with hope and joy to God’s
blessings now and in the future.



The Message

God can guide our
lives just as He guided
the wise men and Jesus’ parents.

Monthly Theme

God’s grace gives us hope and joy.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Herod tries to trick the wise men into telling him where Baby Jesus is. God sends dreams to the wise men and to Joseph to warn them about Herod’s plans. God protects the little family while they live in Egypt, far away from Herod. He gives them hope that they will someday return to their home.

This is a lesson about grace.

Just as He protected and provided for the young child and His earthly parents, God still protects people today. He gives us hope of a heavenly home, of a future with Him forever.

Teacher Enrichment

At this time Egypt was a Roman province and beyond Herod’s jurisdiction. The traditional border between Egypt and Israel was the river of Egypt about 100 miles southwest of Bethlehem. (See *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 291.)

According to ancient Eastern custom, a 1-year-old would be a child who had not reached its first birthday. To be 2 years old would be between the first and second birthday. It is probable that Herod extended the age range to make sure that he achieved his objective of killing the child mentioned by the wise men. (See *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, pp. 291, 292.)

Nazareth was a small town about 64 miles (102 kilometers) north of Jerusalem. (See *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, pp. 292, 293.)

“Through the gifts of the Magi from a heathen country, the Lord supplied the means for the journey into Egypt and the sojourn in a land of strangers” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 65).

Room Decorations

See Lesson 10.

Program Overview

Lesson Section	Minutes	Activities	Materials Needed
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
1 Readiness Activities	up to 10	A. <i>Going on a Journey</i> B. <i>Protection</i>	suitcase shape (see p. 144), pencils rubber gloves, rain boots, umbrella, apron, sunglasses, box, sunscreen
Any Time Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	Fellowship Songbook Mission Offering Prayer	none <i>Sing for Joy</i> <i>Children's Mission</i> gift box none
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story Memory Verse Bible Study	none Bible, gold box, memory verse on slips of paper Bibles
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Future Promises</i>	Bible, card stock, markers/crayons
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	A. <i>Christmas Project</i> B. <i>Looking Into the Future</i>	information on community Christmas project cardboard tubes, tape

*Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.

TEACHING THE LESSON

Welcome

Welcome students at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Encourage them to share any experiences from last week's lesson study. Have them begin the readiness activity of your choice.

1

Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

You Need:

- suitcase shape for each child (see p. 144)
- pencils

A. Going on a Journey

Give each child a suitcase shape (see p. 144) and tell them that they are going on a journey to one of the following: mountains, beach, town, country. Say: **We are going on a sudden journey. You just have a few minutes to draw the things that you will need to pack in your suitcase.** Allow time, then look at the suitcases.

Debriefing

Ask: **Are all the suitcases the same? Why?** (We need different things for different places.) **Did all the suitcases have anything in common?** (Each probably had clothing.) **If you had to go on a sudden journey, what one thing would you be sure to take? What would you miss most while you were away from home?** Say: **In our story today Joseph and Mary had to leave their home very quickly. They did not know what the future held, but they were sure that God would be with them. And that leads me to our message for today:**



GOD CAN GUIDE OUR LIVES JUST AS HE GUIDED THE WISE MEN AND JESUS' PARENTS.

Say that with me.

You Need:

- rubber gloves
- rain boots
- umbrella
- apron
- sunglasses
- box
- sunscreen

B. Protection

In advance, gather a selection of items used for protecting the user. Place them in a box. Invite the children to reach into the box, choose an object without looking, and hold it up. Ask: **What would you use this for?** Encourage the children to act out how their object could be used.

Debriefing

Ask: **What do all these things have in common?** (All are used for protection.) **Can you think of other things that we use/need to protect us? What are some of the things that we need to protect babies from?** (fire, extreme heat/cold, hunger) Say: **In our story today we will learn more about how God protected Baby Jesus. Our message today is:**



GOD CAN GUIDE OUR LIVES JUST AS HE GUIDED THE WISE MEN AND JESUS' PARENTS.

Say that with me.

Prayer and Praise



Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Allow time for sharing experiences from last week's lesson study and review the memory verse. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.



Suggested Songs

- "There's a Song In the Air" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 82)
- "Joy to the World" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 81)
- "O Come, All Ye Faithful" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 70)
- "Go, Tell It on the Mountain" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 83)
- "O Little Town of Bethlehem" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 72)



Mission

Share a story from *Children's Mission*. Emphasize God's guidance and care.



Offering

Say: **God gave the gift of His Son so that everyone might have the opportunity of living with Him in heaven. When we give our offerings, we give others the opportunity to hear about God's wonderful gift.**

You Need:
• gift box



Prayer

Say: **God gave us the very best that He had—the gift of His Son.** Ask for prayer requests. During prayer ask the children to raise their hand if they would like to give their best (themselves) to God.

2

Bible Lesson

Experiencing the Story

As you tell the story, have the children participate by doing the following:

When you say:	They do:
Mary/Baby Jesus	Fold arms as if rocking a baby.
Joseph	Thumbs up.
Wise men	Point to forehead.
Herod	Thumbs down.

Practice until the children are sure of the actions. You may want to have an adult lead the group.

Read or tell the story.

*For some time after **Jesus** was born, **Mary** and **Joseph** stayed in Bethlehem. The census was finished, and they had moved from the stable to a better place. And **Mary** often thought of the nighttime visit of the shepherds.*

*Weeks later another group of visitors came to see **Jesus**. It happened like this . . .*

On the night **Jesus** was born, some men in a country far away and to the east of Judea saw a mysterious light in the sky. As it faded away a new star appeared, one they had never seen before. These were **wise men**, called Magi, because they studied carefully to understand many things. So that light and a bright new star interested them. They immediately began to study and soon discovered an old prophecy about a “star . . . out of Jacob” and a “scepter” that would “rise out of Israel” (Numbers 24:17). They wondered if this new star could be the fulfillment of the prophecy of the promised Messiah the Jews had talked about for years.

In their country it was the custom to give gifts to princes, kings, and other important people. So the **wise men** carried gold, myrrh, and frankincense with them, expensive gifts to give to the promised Savior.

They traveled by night in order to keep the star in view. When they stopped during the day, they probably continued to study the prophecies about **Jesus**, and became more and more convinced that this child was the Promised One.

After many days the **wise men** approached Jerusalem, where the star seemed to rest over the temple. There they told the priests and rulers why they had come. “Where is the king of the Jews?” they asked. But no one seemed to know.

When King **Herod** heard about these men, he questioned the Jewish priests and rulers, who told him that the prophet Micah had said that the child would be born in Bethlehem. So **Herod** sent the **wise men** to Bethlehem. “When you have found the child,” he said, “come back and tell me where He is, so I might worship Him too.” But **Herod** was lying. He didn’t want a Jewish king—he planned to kill **Jesus**.

So the **wise men** traveled to Bethlehem where they found **Mary**, **Joseph**, and **Baby Jesus**. Even though these men were not Jewish, they recognized that **Jesus** was the one God had promised. So they knelt and worshiped Him, and presented their gifts.

In a dream God warned the **wise men**, “Do not go back to **Herod**. Go home by a different way.” When **Herod** finally realized that the **wise men** were not coming back to Jerusalem, he became so angry that he ordered the death of all babies in

Bethlehem who were 2 years old and younger.

But God was still in charge! He warned **Joseph** in a dream and told him to take **Mary** and **Jesus** to Egypt. They were to stay there until God sent word that it was safe to return home. The little family left at once, in the dark of the night. And Egypt became their home until **Herod** died. Then God sent an angel to tell **Joseph** that it was safe to return to their homeland.

At first **Joseph** thought about going back to Bethlehem. But again God sent a message and directed him to another place. As God had said, **Mary** and **Joseph** took the child **Jesus** to the little town of Nazareth, **Joseph's** former home. There **Jesus** grew up. As He had protected the infant **Jesus**, God continued to watch over **Jesus** and His family. For almost 30 years **Jesus** lived peacefully in Nazareth.

God loves you and your family, too. And He guides and watches over you every day.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask:

What would you have thought if you had seen the wise men arriving in Jerusalem? (amazed, curious) **What would you have told them about Jesus?**

Describe King Herod.

How do you think Mary and Joseph felt when they had to leave Bethlehem? (They were probably uncertain about the future and fearful of Herod. But their faith in God was strong—they did what He said.) **Why didn't they move back to Bethlehem?** (God told them not to.)

Say: **God promised to look after Baby Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. God always keeps His promises. He promises to be with us throughout our lifetime too.**

Let's say our message together:



**GOD CAN GUIDE OUR LIVES
JUST AS HE GUIDED THE WISE
MEN AND JESUS' PARENTS.**

Memory Verse

The memory verse is: **"My God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus"** (Philippians 4:19).

Write the words of the memory verse on slips of paper, one word on each. Mix them up and put them in the gold box. Help the children find the memory verse in the Bible, then take the paper slips from the box and put them in the right order. Repeat until they can do it without looking at the Bible. Large class: use several boxes.

You Need:

- Bible
- gold box
- words of memory verse on slips of paper

Bible Study

Form three groups and give each group one of the following texts. Ask them to read the text, then find where it is referred to in Matthew 2:13–23. Pair readers with nonreaders. (Adults assist as necessary.) Allow time to report.

Hosea 11:1	Out of Egypt I called my son. (Matthew 2:15)
Jeremiah 31:15	Killing of the babies. (Matthew 2:18)
Isaiah 53:3 and John 1:46	He will be called a Nazarene, or be despised. (Matthew 2:23)

You Need:

- Bibles

Debriefing

Ask: **Why do you think God told people about Jesus hundreds of years before He was born? What does that tell you about God?** (You can trust Him. He does what He says He will do.)

Say: **God has promised that He is preparing a home for us in heaven. Do you think He is? Why?** (We can trust God because fulfilled prophecy proves that He keeps His word.)
Do you believe that God loves you and will be with you as you grow up?

What difference will that make in your life?

Let's say our message together:



**GOD CAN GUIDE OUR LIVES
JUST AS HE GUIDED THE WISE
MEN AND JESUS' PARENTS.**

3

Applying the Lesson

You Need:

- Bible
- card stock
- markers/
crayons

Future Promises

Say: **Let's look in the Bible to see what God has promised for our future.**

Help the children find and read aloud John 14:1–4 and Revelation 21:2–4. Discuss the verses.

Say: **God promises that He is making beautiful homes for us. In His city there will be no more crying, sadness, or pain. Let's draw a picture of where we would like to live in heaven.** Allow time.

Debriefing

Ask: **Who would like to live in**

heaven? (We all would.) **How can we be sure that we can live there one day?** (God sent His Son to this earth to die for our sins and to show us how to live the right way.)

Say: **Sometimes we get frightened. God has promised that He will be with us always—here on earth and in heaven. Do you believe that? Why?**

Let's say our message together:



**GOD CAN GUIDE OUR LIVES
JUST AS HE GUIDED THE WISE
MEN AND JESUS' PARENTS.**

4

Sharing the Lesson

A. Christmas Project

Finish the project you started earlier this month. Talk about how people responded. Be sure to thank everyone who helped.

Debriefing

Ask: **What do you think about our project now that we are finished? How do you feel?** (happy, satisfied, good to have helped others)

What was the best part? What was the hardest part?

What would you do differently next time?

Let's say our message together:



GOD CAN GUIDE OUR LIVES JUST AS HE GUIDED THE WISE MEN AND JESUS' PARENTS.

B. Looking Into the Future

Have each child tape two tubes together for a pair of "binoculars."

Say: **These are special "binoculars." When I look through them, I can imagine many things that I would like to do in the future.**

Divide into pairs and share what you would like to do in the future. When you have finished say today's message to your partner.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **Would anyone like to share some of their dreams for the future with the group?**

What should we do when we make our plans? (Ask God to be with us.)

If God is with us, what kind of future can we be sure of? (happy and fulfilled)

Say: **Take these "binoculars" home and show them to someone this week. Tell them how God protected Baby Jesus, and that God wants to protect them too. They can look forward to the future because God loves them and will guide them just as He guided Jesus' parents. Let's say our message together:**



GOD CAN GUIDE OUR LIVES JUST AS HE GUIDED THE WISE MEN AND JESUS' PARENTS.

Closing

Sing "Jesus Keeps His Promises" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 41). Say: **Soon it will be a new year. We can trust God to keep His promises to take care of us and bless us throughout the year and all the years to come.**

Let's thank God for being with us in the past year and for being with us in the year ahead.

You Need:

- information about a community Christmas project

You Need:

- cardboard tubes (empty toilet paper rolls), two for each child
- tape

Long Journeys

References

Matthew 2:13–23;
The Desire of Ages,
pp. 64–67

Memory Verse

“My God will meet
all your needs
according to the
riches of his glory
in Christ Jesus”
(Philippians 4:19,
NIV).

The Message

God can guide our
lives just as He
guided the wise
men and Jesus’
parents.

*Have you ever gone on a long journey?
Did it take a long time to pack and prepare?
Mary and Joseph went on a long journey.
And they had to leave in a hurry.*

*For some time after Jesus was born,
Mary and Joseph lived in Bethlehem. They
moved from the stable to a better place. And
Mary often thought of the nighttime visit of
the shepherds. Weeks later another group of
visitors came to see Jesus. It happened like
this . . .*

On the night Jesus was born, some
wise men in a country far away and to
the east of Judea were studying the sky.
They saw a strange light that faded away.
As it faded away, a new star appeared.
These wise men, called Magi, had studied
the stars for a long time. But this star was
one they had never seen before.

The sight of that light and a bright
new star made these men curious. They
immediately began to study old writings.
Soon they discovered an old prophecy
about a “star . . . out of Jacob” and a
“scepter” that would “rise out of Israel”
(Numbers 24:17). They wondered if this
new star could be the fulfillment of that
prophecy. Could it be a sign of the
promised Messiah the Jews had talked
about for years? They decided that it was.

In their country it was the custom
to give gifts to princes, kings, and other
important people. So the wise men car-
ried gold, myrrh, and frankincense with
them. They would give these expensive
gifts to the promised Savior.

They traveled by night so they could
keep the star in view. When they stopped
during the day, they probably contin-
ued to study the prophecies. And they
became more and more convinced that
this child was the Promised One.

After many days, the wise men

approached Jerusalem. There the star
seemed to rest over the temple. They
went to the priests and rulers. “Where is
the king of the Jews?” they asked. But no
one seemed to know.

King Herod heard about these men
from the East. So he questioned the
Jewish priests and rulers. From them
he learned that the prophet Micah had
said that the child would be born in
Bethlehem.

Herod talked with the wise men and
sent them to Bethlehem. “When you have
found the child,” he said, “come back
and tell me where He is. I want to wor-
ship Him too.” But Herod was lying. He
planned to kill Jesus!

So the wise men traveled to
Bethlehem. There they found Mary,
Joseph, and Baby Jesus. These wise men
were not Jewish. But they recognized that
Jesus was the one God had promised. So
they knelt and worshiped Him, and
presented their gifts.

Before the wise men left Bethlehem,
God warned them in a dream not to go
back to Herod but to go home a different
way.

Days later Herod finally realized that
the wise men were not coming back to
Jerusalem. That made him very angry.
He had to find that baby! So he ordered
the death of all babies in Bethlehem who
were 2 years old and younger.

But God was still in charge! He
warned Joseph in a dream: “Get up! Take
the child and his mother and escape to
Egypt. Herod will start looking for the
child to kill him. Stay in Egypt until I tell
you to return” (Matthew 2:13, ICB). The
little family left at once, in the dark of the
night. They may have used the gifts of
the wise men to supply their needs. Egypt
became their home until Herod died.
Then God sent an angel to tell Joseph
that it was safe to return to their home-
land.

At first Joseph thought about going back to Bethlehem. But again God warned him and told him to go to another place. They settled in the little town of Nazareth, Joseph's former home. There Jesus grew up.

God loves you and your family too. He will guide you and care for you just as He guided Jesus' parents.

Daily Activities

Sabbath

- Go for a walk or a ride with your family. Think about what protects you as you go. Talk about safety rules. Share your lesson story with your family. What protection did Jesus have when He was a child?
- Find an umbrella, an adhesive bandage, and other everyday things that protect us. Pretend to use them. Ask your family to guess what you learned about God today. (He protects us.)
- Sing songs about God's care; then thank Him for it.

Sunday

- Use some Christmas paper. Cut out shapes of the three presents the wise men gave to Baby Jesus. Stick them onto a piece of paper. Write your memory verse underneath, including the reference. Use this to teach the verse to your family.
- Bethlehem was known as the City of David because King David came from there. Where does your country's leader live? Pray for the leaders of your country today.

Monday

- During family worship, read Matthew 2:13 together. Look on a map to see how far it is from Bethlehem to Egypt and from Egypt to Nazareth. Find a place that you know that is about as far away from your house.
- Mary and Joseph had to leave quietly during the night. Walk around the house quietly for five minutes. Is it easy to be quiet?
- Ask God to protect people who are traveling.

Tuesday

- During family worship, ask your family to draw or list things that are scary. Beside each one, draw things that protect them. Read Joshua 1:9 together. How does that verse help?

- Review your memory verse together. How did God meet all your needs today?
- Thank God for His promises and ask Him to take away your fears.

Wednesday

- During worship, ask family members to tell about a time God protected them. Were angels with them?
- God sent an angel messenger to Joseph and the wise men. What ways do we send messages? Send a message to someone today. Tell them that God loves them.
- A new year is a new beginning. Make some New Year's resolutions or promises. Sing "He's Able" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 40). Thank God that He is able to take care of you and your family. Ask Him to help you keep your promises.

Thursday

- With your family, read and discuss Psalm 32:7; Psalm 34:7; and John 17:11. Copy the texts and carry them with you. Read them when you are troubled or afraid.
- Ask your family about transportation in Bible times. Which would you like to try? Draw how you think Mary and Joseph traveled to Egypt, or how the wise men traveled to Bethlehem. How do you get from your home to church?
- Thank God for keeping you safe as you travel.

Friday

- During family worship, read Matthew 2:1–23. With the help of your family, tell the story as if you were one of the wise men. As if you were Herod. As if you were Mary.
- Ask your family: How has God helped our family in the past year? Together, make a list.
- Sing praise songs together; then thank God for all He does to care for you and your family.