

Joseph and Mary Escape to Egypt



Overview

Materials You'll Need

- basket pattern
- brown construction paper
- scissors
- glue



Scriptures

Mt 2:13-15, 19-23

Bible Truth Objective(s)

God protects His believers from harm

Behavioral Objective(s)

To remember to pray to God when we need His protection and guidance; to identify ways God has protected us



Memory Verse

"God is our protection and strength."
(Ps 46:1)



Bible Knowledge

Jesus' Family Flees to Egypt

As soon as baby Jesus was born, He became a major threat to Herod. Herod was the governor of Galilee, thus effectively making him the king of the Jews at that time. Herod wanted to kill Jesus, because he didn't want Jesus to take his kingship in the future. In fact, Herod was known for the fierce protection of his throne. He even killed his own family members when he thought they posed a threat to him.

Warned of this treachery in a dream, Joseph took his family to Egypt until Herod's death. This was the second dream or vision Joseph received from God. Joseph's first dream revealed that Mary's child would be the Messiah (Mt 1:20-21). His second dream told him how to protect the child's life. Although Joseph was not Jesus' natural father, he was Jesus' legal father and was given this important responsibility to guard Jesus' safety. Joseph remained obedient and faithful; he listened to God's warning right away and took his family to Egypt until God gave further instructions to him.

God asked Joseph to take his family to Egypt, because there were colonies of Jews in several major Egyptian cities. God knew that they would be safe there. Back in Israel, Herod gave orders to kill all the boys under two years old in Bethlehem. Herod's hands were stained with blood, yet the baby Jesus remained unharmed. God's plan was not hindered after all.

Nazareth

Herod the Great died in 4 B.C. of an incurable disease. After Herod's death, God told Joseph to settle his family in Nazareth, which was located in the hilly area of southern Galilee. The town itself was rather small but this is where Jesus grew up. The town of Nazareth did not have a good reputation. This is evident when Nathanael commented, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46). This could likely be due to its small size, lack of culture and possible moral laxity. In fact, the residents of this town did not look highly upon its own inhabitants. When Jesus began His ministry, He was rejected by the townspeople.



Understanding Your Students

Children at this age may know that God watches over them. However, not all of them will understand what it really means to have God's protection in his or her every day life. You can first give some examples of how God keeps you safe, and ask them to share their own experiences. Although it is good to share testimonies of God's protection, the experiences don't have to be earth-shattering. They can be simple things like how we get to work or school safely each day.

For children to better understand God's all-encompassing protection, you may also talk about how God is like a shepherd watching over His sheep without letting them get hurt or harmed in the wild. We are the beloved sheep under His protection. Ask the children to brainstorm with you how a shepherd

protects His sheep. You can write down their ideas on the board. Ask the children if they think it's an easy or hard job to be a good shepherd. Have them show thumbs up or down to vote. Write down their votes on the board, and continue to ask both groups to explain why they think it is easy or hard to be a good shepherd. At the end of the discussion, be sure to address that it is NOT easy to be a good shepherd. Sometimes sheep wander away and never come back. Sometimes furious animals attack the fold, and several sheep may get killed. Shepherds also have to stay up late to watch their sheep out in the fields. It is hard work to be a good shepherd. However, like a good shepherd, our God is our protection and strength. No matter how hard or how much work there is, God is always by our side. By relying on His guidance and protection, we are safe and unharmed.



Vocabulary

Jealous

feeling unhappy because others seem better than you or have better things than you

Egypt

a country that is close to Israel

Nazareth

the small town in Galilee where Jesus grew up



Before You Teach

Joseph and Mary faced great danger when Herod commanded all the boys under the age of two to be killed. Their God-given Son, the Messiah, was going to be captured and killed. If we were Joseph and Mary, what kind of emotional turmoil might we experience? Surprisingly, they reacted to the situation calmly and peacefully, knowing that God was their refuge and strength. They knew they did not have to fear anything. They believed that God must have a way for them to save the baby. Joseph was a God-fearing man who maintained a close relationship with God. As soon as he received the dream from God, he knew what to do to protect his family. More importantly, he knew that they would be all right in the end, because God was guiding their path and watching over them.

Take a moment and reflect upon Psalm 23.

Think about God's tender care and His thorough protection in our own life. As we count His blessings one by one, we will be able to help our children understand God's attentive protection and His uncompromised love for us:

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil, my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever." (Psalm 23)



Bible Story

Herod Wants to Kill Jesus

In the last lesson, we learned that Mary and Joseph took baby Jesus to the temple. Two people were very happy to see Him at the temple because they knew Jesus would grow up one day and be the King of the Jews. That means He would lead the people and save them. Their names were Simeon and Anna. We are happy today too because we know that Jesus saves all those who believe in Him. He is our King because He leads us. But not everyone was happy that Jesus was born. In today's story, we are going to learn about a very jealous king, named Herod. When he heard that baby Jesus had been born in Bethlehem of Judea, he was very unhappy and angry. Herod didn't want Jesus to be king in the future. He wanted to be king himself for as long as he lived. So Herod gave a very mean order to kill all the boys under two years old in Bethlehem. Herod thought to himself, "Jesus will never be king because He will be killed. I will be the king forever."

Wow, boys and girls, would you be scared if bad people were after you, wanting to find you and kill you? (Pause for a minute and look around the room to see the students' reactions and facial expressions.) How mean King Herod was to give such an order! At that time, Jesus' parents, Mary and Joseph, were living in a house in Bethlehem, thinking that it was a good place for Jesus to grow up in. Little did they know that they would be in great danger if they continued to stay in Bethlehem.

Joseph Has A Dream

One day when Joseph was sleeping, he had a dream. In his dream, an angel came and stood beside him. The angel brought Joseph a message from God. He said, "Get up, Joseph! It's not safe here for you anymore. The bad king, Herod, wants to hurt Jesus and kill Him. You must take Jesus and His mother to escape to Egypt and stay there until I tell you to what to do next."

The Family Leaves For Egypt

When Joseph woke up, he jumped up and woke Mary. He told her what the angel had said to him. Do you remember the first time an angel appeared to Joseph? The angel told him about the birth of

Jesus. Did Joseph listen to the angel and take Mary as his wife? Yes. And Jesus really was born, just like the angel had said He would. So when the angel told him to leave right away, he did just that. Joseph knew he should trust the angel and do what he says. In the night, Mary and Joseph started gathering their things into a big bundle. They placed the bundle on their donkey's back. In the dark of the night, they began their trip to Egypt.

How do you think Jesus' family traveled? Do you think they were loud and noisy or soft and quiet? They had to be very quiet, so no one would notice them. The last thing they wanted to happen was to have the mean king find out where they were going. Even though they were afraid that they might be caught and that Jesus might be hurt, they probably felt peace in their hearts. Do you know why? Mary and Joseph knew that God was watching over them, guiding them, and protecting them.

So, after many miles of traveling, they finally arrived in Egypt. They knew they would be safe for now, so they stayed there. Actually, they stayed there until king Herod died.

Joseph Has Another Dream

Then one night while Joseph was still in Egypt, Joseph had another dream. Again, he saw an angel with a message from God. The angel said, "Get up, Joseph. It is safe now to take Jesus and Mary back to the land of Israel."

What do you think Joseph did this time? Of course, he obeyed and did what the angel told him to do. He woke Jesus and Mary up, and together they traveled back to the land of Israel. But the land of Israel was big. Where would they stay? Should they go back to Bethlehem? As they were traveling, though, Joseph had still another dream. This is the third dream Joseph had about where he should go. This time God told Joseph that since Herod's son was in charge now, Joseph should not take his family back to Bethlehem. Herod's son was just as bad as Herod was. Instead, God told Joseph to go to the town of Nazareth. And so Joseph and his family went to Nazareth and stayed there. It was in Nazareth that Jesus grew up safely.

God Protects Joseph, Mary and Jesus

Boys and girls, Joseph must have had a very

close relationship with God. Whenever he and his family were in danger, God would tell him in a dream what to do. And Joseph didn't just think these were regular dreams. Instead, he took every message from God seriously and obeyed His words. He was able to keep his family safe because of God's guidance and protection. Even though it was hard to travel to so many different places, and to places where they had not been to before, Joseph was not afraid because he trusted in God. But what if Joseph didn't trust God? What if he had not left Bethlehem? King Herod might have found Jesus and killed Him. We learned from this story that Joseph really relied on God's protection and did what God wanted him to do.

How about you? We know that God watches over us all the time, but how does He protect us in our every day life? Does anyone want to share? (Pause for students to answer.) Let me give you a hint. God gave Jesus two loving parents to take care of Him. Who does God give you in your family to take care of you and keep you safe? (Ask the students how their families take care of them. How do the adults in their families show their love to them?) We thank God for giving us Lord Jesus and so many blessings in our life. Don't forget that God is our protection and strength, just like the memo-ry verse says. There is nothing for us to be afraid of anymore, because we can rely on God for all His wonderful help!



Check For Understanding

1. **What did the angel tell Joseph to do in the first dream?** (The angel asked Joseph to take Mary and Jesus and leave for Egypt right away.)
2. **Why did Jesus' family have to leave and travel to Egypt?** (Because king Herod wanted to kill Jesus.)
3. **Why did Herod want to kill Jesus?** (He wanted to kill Jesus because he did not want Jesus to become the king when He grew up.)
4. **After Herod died, what did the angel tell Joseph in the second dream?** (The angel said it was safe for the family to go back to Israel.)
5. **Along the way to Israel, why did the angel**

tell Joseph not to go back to Bethlehem?

(Because Herod's son was in power, and it was still not safe for Jesus to live there.)

6. **Where did Joseph take his family to eventually? Where did Jesus grow up?** (In a small town called Nazareth.)
7. **How many dreams did Joseph have altogether which told him where to go?** (Three.)
8. **How do we know that God was protecting Joseph and his family during this whole time?** (God sent an angel to give Joseph the messages so he would know where to go. Even though they had to travel a lot, God kept them safe.)
9. **"God is our protection and strength" (Ps 46:1). Can you turn to your neighbor now and tell him or her how God protects you every day?** (Students' answers may vary.)



Life Application Story

The Flying Experience

It was spring break! Mr. and Mrs. Lopez had promised their children, Ricky and Juan, to take

them to visit their cousins, uncles and aunts, and grandparents in New Mexico. The boys just couldn't wait to go. Ricky, being the big brother, was in charge of helping his little brother Juan pack the suitcases. A few days before the trip, Mr. Lopez even sat down with his family to talk about their travel plans, where they would be going, new places they

would see, and their visits at their grandparents' house. Ricky and Juan simply couldn't wait to board the plane and be there the next minute!

Finally, after much planning and preparation, the Lopez family was ready for their trip to New Mexico. They prayed together to ask for God's protection throughout the trip before leaving to the airport. They checked and made sure all the doors were locked, and nothing was left behind. With so much excitement, they left for the airport.

Ricky and Juan had been on airplanes before when they were little, but they didn't remember much. They were excited, especially Juan—he watched airplanes take off while waiting at the gate to board their flight, and just couldn't believe how high they were in the sky within minutes. Soon it was the Lopez's turn to get on. The family got to their seats and sat down. Within a few minutes, the plane took off and they were on their way to New Mexico. While they were flying, the boys played games, listened to music, and ate some snacks their mom had prepared for them. Eventually they fell asleep during the last part of their flight. As the boys slept soundly, the flight captain made an announcement over the intercom, "Ladies and gentlemen, we will be landing shortly. Please return to your seats and have your safety belt securely fastened. Just so you know, we may be experiencing some turbulence due to a storm that just came in to New Mexico."

Mr. and Mrs. Lopez had to wake up Ricky and Juan to buckle their seat belts. And sure enough, not long after they woke up, they began to feel the plane moving up and down as if the whole plane was trembling. Juan started to get worried. He asked his dad what was going on. Mr. Lopez comforted him, and explained to him that the weather was not good outside. He assured Juan that they would be all right. He told Juan to pray in silence and ask God to help them.

Then, all of a sudden, they felt an unexpected shift of the plane, as if they were struck by something. Now, both boys looked afraid and held on to their parents' hands tightly.

"Are we going to be okay, Dad?" Ricky asked in a small voice.

"Don't worry, Ricky. God is watching over us. We will be fine," Mr. Lopez replied.

As the plane shook even harder, Juan began to cry. Mrs. Lopez held him tightly in her arms, and

told him to keep praying for God's protection. The whole family sat quietly together and prayed hard. Mr. and Mrs. Lopez didn't know what was going to happen next, but they remained calm.

Then Mrs. Lopez began to sing, "My God is so great, so strong and so mighty, there's nothing my God cannot do." She repeated this three times until Juan stopped crying and the whole family joined in singing this song.

"You know what?" Mr. Lopez said. "This little song reminds me of the Bible verse, 'God is our protection and strength,' from Psalm 46:1."

What an encouragement that was to the Lopez family! Mrs. Lopez said, "You're right, Honey! God is our protection and strength. Let's not worry, but keep praying for His protection and hope that this plane will land safely."

Gradually, the plane shook less, and did not move up and down anymore. After a short while, the captain made another announcement, "Ladies and gentlemen, please stay seated and keep your safety belts fastened. We are getting ready to land the plane right now." Everyone was so happy to hear the announcement. Some people even clapped their hands to celebrate the landing! Within minutes, the plane landed safely on the ground. The Lopez family prayed once more and thanked God for His mercy and protection. They knew that God was looking after them so that they were able to arrive in New Mexico unharmed!

Questions to Think About

1. **Where was the Lopez family going?** (They were going to New Mexico to visit their family.)
2. **What happened to the plane before the plane was about to land?** (The plane was shaking violently due to the bad weather.)
3. **What did Mr. and Mrs. Lopez tell the boys to do when they were afraid?** (They told Ricky and Juan not to worry, but keep praying for God's protection and guidance.)
4. **What happened eventually? What did the Lopez family do when they knew they were safe?** (The plane stabilized, and they were able to land safely. The Lopez family prayed and thanked God for His love and protection.)
5. **What was the Bible verse that Mr. Lopez remembered on the plane?** (It was Psalm 46:1—God is our protection and strength.)
6. **How would you feel and what would you do if**

you were Ricky or Juan sitting on that shaking airplane? (Students' responses may vary.)

7. **How many of you have been on a plane before? (Allow students to raise hands for a quick survey.) What can we do before the plane takes off**



Activity 1

Joseph's Dreams

How many dreams did Joseph have altogether? (3)
Write the number next to the dream he had first (Egypt), second (Israel) and third (Nazareth).



Activity 2

Who Is Staying Safe With Their Family?

Look at each picture. How does your mom or dad keep you safe? In each set of pictures, circle the picture that shows how mom or dad is protecting us. Talk about why the other picture is dangerous and something we should never do.

1. We should never stand on a chair and try to take things off tall shelves. We could get hurt. We can always ask mom or dad to help us get something we need. Who is staying safe with their family?
2. We should never play with the vacuum cleaner or try to plug things into the socket by ourselves. We could get hurt or electrocuted. We should always save this kind of work for mom or dad. Who is staying safe with their family?
3. We should never cross the street by ourselves. We could get hit by a car. We should always hold hands with a grown up. Who is staying safe with their family?



Activity 3

Action Rhyme

Share this action rhyme with the students to help them thank God for protecting Jesus and His family as well as their own family.

and after it lands safely? How else does God protect us in our daily lives? (We can always pray to ask God for His guidance and to thank Him for protecting the plane; allow students to answer.)

God kept me safe when I was small,

(Hold hands near floor.)

So I could grow to be this tall.

(Hold hands at top of head.)

From small to tall,

(Stoop, then reach high.)

I'm growing up like Jesus.

(Raise arms; stretch hands high.)

Activity 4:1

Joseph's Dreams

How many dreams did Joseph have altogether? Write the number next to the dream he had first, second and third.



Activity 4:2

Who Is Staying Safe With Their Family?

Look at each picture. How does your mom or dad keep you safe? In each set of pictures, circle the picture that shows how mom or dad is protecting us. Talk about why the other picture is dangerous and something we should never do.

