

Born to Save

Wise Men Worship Jesus

Matthew 1:18–2:23; Luke 2:1–14

Bible Point: Jesus was manifest in flesh to save us from our sins.

TD/KG/BG: Jesus came to save us from our sins.

Experience: Have you ever seen a new baby? How did you feel when you saw, heard, or held the baby?

Study: Matthew 2:2

Examine: Discuss the difference between *wants* and *needs*. As you list needs, be sure to include *salvation*. From an age-appropriate Bible, read about the birth of Jesus, discussing how this special baby was born to bring us salvation.

Apply: Family members choose superhero names and describe their pretend powers. Recognize Jesus as the only real superhero. Have everyone identify a super power Jesus possesses (e.g., walking on water, calming the storm, feeding the masses, raising the dead).

Life Application: I need Jesus as my Savior.

Toddler: I know Jesus came to save me.

Pray: Thank God for His plan, written from the beginning to come to Earth as God manifest in flesh to save us from sin. Give Jesus the praise due a real superhero.

Obedience to the Father

Jesus Visits the Temple

Luke 2:40–52

Bible Point: Jesus modeled obedience to both earthly and heavenly authority.
TD/KG/BG: Jesus obeyed His parents and God.

Experience: Have you ever felt like you were smarter than your parents or teachers? Have you ever had trouble obeying their instructions?

Study: Luke 2:51

Examine: Discuss the meaning of *respect* and *obedience*. From an age-appropriate Bible, read about Jesus' trip to the Temple when He was twelve. How did His actions show respect and obedience to the Temple leader, to His parents, and to God?

Apply: Everyone names a leader and one of the leader's rules (e.g., teachers: "no pushing," officers: "no speeding," grandmas: "wash hands before eating"). Identify benefits of obedience. Recognize God as our supreme leader and discuss benefits of obeying Him. We obey God when we honor leaders.

Life Application: I must obey my leaders and God.

Pray: Write a note of thanks and make a gratitude gift basket of snacks for a leader known to the family. Pray over the basket, asking God to bless the leader. Then deliver the basket.

Be Baptized

Jesus Gets Baptized

Matthew 3; Mark 1:1–11; John 1:1–34

Bible Point: Jesus was baptized to fulfill all righteousness.

TD/KG/BG: Jesus was baptized to obey God's Word.

Experience: Have you ever had trouble understanding instructions? What happened when someone showed you how to follow the instructions?

Study: Matthew 3:15

Examine: Discuss how Jesus is our perfect example. Then from an age-appropriate Bible, read about His baptism by John the Baptist. Discuss what Jesus was trying to demonstrate.

Apply: On a posterboard, write your family name. Let family members add their names along with drawings, stickers, or pictures to represent their personalities and interests. Discuss how guests can see the poster, but that doesn't make them family members. Members are only added to a family by birth, marriage, or adoption. Similarly, members are only added to God's family by baptism in the name of Jesus.

Life Application: I must be baptized.

Pray: Thank Jesus that we can become His family and bear His name.

It Is Written

Jesus Resists Temptation

Matthew 4:1–11; Mark 1:12–13; Luke 4:1–14

Bible Point: Jesus resisted the devil’s temptation through the power of the Word.

Experience: Have you been tempted to do something wrong? How did it feel?

Study: Luke 4:4

Examine: Discuss the meaning of the word *temptation*. Then read about Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness from an age-appropriate Bible. Discuss how Jesus used the Word of God to defeat temptation.

Apply: Let everyone retrieve items that could be used to build strength (e.g., dumbbell, water jug, jump rope). Demonstrate how to use them. Then place a Bible beside the items. Demonstrate how to use it.

Life Application: I will find strength in the Word of God.

TD: I love the Bible.

Pray: Look up, read, and pray about Bible verses on strength (Isaiah 12:2; 40:31; Psalm 28:7–8; 46:1; II Corinthians 12:9–10; Philippians 4:13). Post favorite verses around the house as reminders to find strength in God’s Word.

Follow Me

Jesus Calls the Twelve Disciples

Matthew 4:17–23; Mark 2:13–14; Luke 6:13–16; John 1:35–51

Bible Point: Jesus calls all His disciples to follow Him.

Experience: Have you ever gone fishing? What happened?

Study: Matthew 4:19

Examine: Discuss what it means to follow in someone’s footsteps. From an age-appropriate Bible, read the accounts where Jesus called His disciples to follow Him. Discuss how Jesus turned the disciples into “fishers of men.”

Apply: Play Jesus Says (like Simon Says). After a few rounds, give impossible commands like walk on the ceiling; say “I love you” in Chinese; or play a harp. Ask players why they stopped following your commands. Admit you purposely gave impossible instructions. Discuss how Jesus does not give us impossible instructions. He always equips and teaches us how to follow Him.

Life Application: I will follow Jesus.

Pray: Pray together, committing as a family to follow wherever Jesus leads.

The Lord's Prayer

Jesus Teaches How to Pray

Matthew 6:1–13

Bible Point: Jesus taught His disciples how to pray.

Experience: What is your favorite thing to talk about with a friend?

Study: Matthew 6:8

Examine: Read Matthew 6:1–8 and discuss how Jesus warned against praying to be seen and with “vain repetitions.” Then read verses 9–13, discussing the meaning behind each line of the Lord’s Prayer.

Apply: This week teach your children a new task (e.g., threading a needle, folding towels, making a bed, baking muffins, French braiding hair). Point out how a teacher who provides a good example helps a person learn better. Acknowledge Jesus as our supreme teacher and example. He taught us how to pray.

Life Application: I will pray like Jesus taught.

Pray: Recite the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) together, challenging children to put each line into their own words.

The Old Rugged Cross

Jesus Goes to Calvary (Easter)

Matthew 27–28:8; Mark 15–16:8; Luke 23–24:9; John 19–20:9

Bible Point: Jesus died for our sins.

Experience: Has anyone ever taken the punishment for something you did?
Have you ever taken someone else’s punishment?

Study: Luke 23:46

Examine: Discuss the events leading up to Jesus’ crucifixion. Then read about Calvary from an age-appropriate Bible. Discuss Galatians 1:4, asking, “Who is really guilty for Jesus’ death?”

Apply: Search outside for sticks or use pencils. Bind them with yarn or tape to form crosses. Shows your crosses and complete the sentence, “Jesus died on the cross so I . . . (could be saved, live free from sin, live forever, and so on).”

Life Application: I know Jesus died on the cross for my sins.

Pray: Lift the crosses and pray together, thanking Jesus for loving us without reservation and for enduring the cross. Then display the crosses where you see them daily.

The House on the Rock

Parable of the Two Builders

Matthew 7:24–29

Bible Point: Jesus taught us how to build our lives on a sure foundation.

Experience: Have you ever tried to build a sandcastle? If yes, how long did it stay standing? Why?

Study: Matthew 7:24

Examine: Discuss the differences between sand and rock. Which would be a better surface to build on? Then read Jesus' parable of the two builders from an age-appropriate Bible.

Apply: Play Jenga on a variety of surfaces (e.g., hard table, soft bed, on a bumpy layer of pasta, outside on grass or mulch). Discuss the difference made by each foundation. Jesus' teachings are a firm foundation upon which we can build our lives.

Life Application: I will build my life on the teaching of Jesus.

TD: I will do what Jesus said.

Pray: On a table, stack the blocks one-by-one while naming things Jesus taught to help us build strong lives. Pray together, asking Him to make your family a strong tower.

Good Soil

Parable of the Sower

Matthew 13:1–23; Mark 4:1–23; Luke 8:1–15

Bible Point: Jesus showed us the importance of having a heart that is open and receptive to God’s Word.

TD/KG/BG: Jesus taught us how to receive God’s Word.

Experience: Have you ever zoned out while your parents or teachers were talking and missed their instructions?

Study: Mark 4:8

Examine: Discuss the things it takes to make a plant grow, like soil, sunlight, and water. Then read Jesus’ parable about the sower and the seed from an age-appropriate Bible.

Apply: Visit a garden center to check the soil of different potted plants. Regardless of plants’ differences, they all need good soil to grow. People are different too, but each person needs the good soil of God’s Word to grow in Him. Display a plant where everyone can see it and care for it daily.

Life Application: I will receive God’s Word.

TD: I will obey God’s Word.

Pray: Pray together, thanking God for caring for your family daily. Ask Him to help your family grow in His Word.

Hosanna

Triumphal Entry

Matthew 21:1–11; Mark 11:1–11; Luke 19:28–40; John 12:12–16

Bible Point: Jesus is our King and is worthy of praise.

Experience: Have you attended a parade? Did you see the grand marshal, the ceremonial leader of the parade? What did you do when this person passed by?

Study: John 12:13

Examine: Discuss ways a person expresses praise and how the members of your family praise the Lord. Then read about Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem from an age-appropriate Bible.

Apply: For each family member, trace and cut out seven handprints. Each day, each family member selects a handprint to write on or draw something for which you praise God (e.g., sunlight, animals, family, church, breath, health). Post the handprints around the house and watch the praises grow throughout the week. Jesus is worthy of praise every day.

Life Application: I will praise Jesus.

Pray: Pray together, lifting hands and thanking God for the things He has provided.

In Remembrance of Me

Jesus' Last Supper

Matthew 26:17–30; Mark 14:12–26; Luke 22:7–20; I Corinthians 11:23–26

Bible Point: Jesus asked us to remember His sacrifice for us.

Experience: Do you have any special foods you look forward to during the holidays?

Study: Mark 14:22

Examine: Discuss the meaning behind “breaking bread” with someone. Then read Matthew 26:17–30 from an age-appropriate Bible and discuss the Last Supper.

Apply: Hold a candlelight dinner to remember the Last Supper. Read from Luke 22:14–20. Then break pieces from a loaf of bread and give to each person. Pour grape juice into a special cup and have everyone drink from it to follow the example of Jesus and His disciples.

Life Application: I will remember what Jesus did for me.

Pray: After dinner, pray and thank Jesus for giving Himself as a sacrifice for us.

Watch and Pray

Jesus Prays in the Garden

Matthew 26:30–46; Mark 14:26–42; Luke 22:39–46

Bible Point: Jesus calls us to watch and pray so we do not enter into temptation.

Experience: What happens when you are not watching where you walk?

Study: Matthew 26:41

Examine: Discuss how Jesus calls us to watch and pray so we do not enter into temptation. Then read about how Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, seeking God’s will to be done.

Apply: Show a spoon and an electric mixer. Which tool would you rather use to mix cake batter? Though both tools can mix, one is more powerful. Jesus is our power source and prayer is the cord that connects us to Him. Make cupcakes and discuss sweet reminders of the power of prayer.

Life Application: I will watch and pray.

Pray: Pray together, asking Jesus to help everyone avoid the temptation to neglect prayer and attempt to do things without the power of God.

He Is Alive

The Resurrection

Matthew 28:1–10; Mark 16:1–11; Luke 24:1–12; John 20:1–10

Bible Point: Jesus rose from the dead.

Experience: What is the most excited you have ever been? What made you so excited?

Study: Matthew 28:6

Examine: Discuss how sin created a gap between God and man. Then read about how Jesus died, was buried, but then rose again. Discuss how this gives us new life.

Apply: Make Resurrection rolls. Lightly grease a cookie sheet. Roll large marshmallows in melted butter and then a cinnamon-sugar mixture, explaining how Jesus' dead body was covered with anointing oils before being wrapped in linen and buried. Separate canned crescent rolls into triangles to represent the linen coverings. Wrap each marshmallow in a dough triangle, tightly pinching and sealing the edges. Bake rolls according to directions, making sure the marshmallows are melted. Announce how the body of Jesus rose again on the third day. He is alive. Give thanks and enjoy.

Life Application: I can have new life because Jesus rose from the dead.

TD: I know Jesus is alive.

Pray: Thank God for bridging the gap created by sin so we can experience new life in Him.