

Lesson 125

Jesus' Parents

Mary and Joseph humbly submitted to God's plan.

Studying God's Word

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Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.

Introduction

Slide #3

Refer to Lesson 124 Theme Poster. In our last lesson, we saw that after 400 years of silence, God sent an angel messenger to make some exciting announcements.

What was the name of the angel God sent to the priest Zechariah and the virgin Mary? Gabriel.

The angel Gabriel announced to Zechariah that he would have a son who would be the promised messenger before the Messiah.

What was Zechariah told to name his son? John (the Baptist).
What did Gabriel say Mary's baby should be named? Jesus.

Mary's son would be the coming Messiah! The arrival of John and Jesus would fulfill the prophecies given about them hundreds of years earlier through the prophets Isaiah and Malachi.

To start today, we're going to play a quick game called "Guess Who's Leading." One student will go out in the hall while the rest of us sit in a circle. I'll point to someone, who will be the leader. The leader will begin doing different actions, such as clapping, snapping, nodding, humming, winking, or tapping a foot, which everyone else will immediately copy. When the student in the hall comes back into the room, he'll have three tries to guess who's leading. The leader must try to switch motions about every 30 seconds without him knowing. The rest of the class must copy the motions as quickly as possible without staring at the leader. Ready? Let's try it! Choose a volunteer to go out in the hall. Point to a student to lead and have him/her begin doing motions. Call the student in from the hall and give him three tries to guess who's leading. You may play several rounds, choosing different students to be the guessers and leaders.

The key to this game was your immediate obedience to copy what the leader was doing so they wouldn't stand out as the leader to the guesser. As children, you hear about obedience a lot from your parents and teachers, but did you know obedience is just as important for adults?

The two adults God chose to be the parents of Jesus had to obey God or things could have been very different. We'll see today that both Mary and Joseph had obedient hearts toward God, even when they didn't understand

how everything would work out. Let's take a closer look at the parents of Jesus.

Mary Visits Elizabeth

In the last lesson, Gabriel visited Mary and announced the amazing news that she would be the mother of the promised Messiah. Then Gabriel told her that her cousin Elizabeth was six-months pregnant.

Why would the news that Elizabeth was expecting a baby be surprising to Mary? Elizabeth and Zechariah were old, so it was not naturally possible that they would have children. Elizabeth's pregnancy was a miracle!

Mary responded in obedience to the message from God. She said she was the Lord's servant and was willing for everything to be done as God had said. Then Mary left her town of Nazareth and traveled to a town in Judah to visit her cousin Elizabeth and her husband Zechariah.

Slide #4

Slide #5

Slide #6

Luke 1:41-45

Let's read Luke 1:41-45 to see what happened when Mary got there and greeted Elizabeth. Choose readers.

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, what did her baby do? Elizabeth's baby (John) leaped in her womb.

Slide #7

Show the Lesson Theme Poster. Elizabeth's baby, John, leaped with joy when he heard the voice of Mary, the mother of the Lord.

Have any of you felt a baby move or kick inside the belly of a lady who is pregnant? Allow answers.

It's exciting to feel a little baby moving around. And we know that babies can hear and respond to voices before they're born, too.

This interesting detail about John shows that unborn babies are fully human and deserve to be protected since they are made in the image of God, just like you and me. It is clear that even though John wasn't born yet, he was a person who responded to what was happening outside of the womb.

What did he do physically? He leaped.

What emotion does verse 44 say he felt? He felt joy.

And spiritually, who caused him to leap when Elizabeth heard the voice of Jesus' mother? The Holy Spirit.

Pass out the Class Notes.

John's reaction is important because it shows that Jesus is the Savior for whom John would prepare the way. God the Holy Spirit also allowed

Elizabeth to know that Mary was the mother of the Messiah, the Savior. Elizabeth praised Mary's faith for believing the angel's message.

Slide #8

Let's start the Class Notes. Who will read #1 and tell us if it's true or false? Who did Mary visit? Choose a reader. True. Have students complete #1. Who will read #2? Choose a reader. False. The baby, John, leaped inside the womb. Have students complete #2.

And #3, who will read that? Choose a reader. True. Have students complete #3.

Slide #9

Slide #10

Luke 1:46–49

After Elizabeth's blessing, Mary sang a song of praise to God. Let's read the first part of Mary's song in Luke 1:46–49. Choose readers.

What is the first thing Mary said in verse 46? My soul magnifies the Lord.

Magnify: praise

What does magnify mean here? Allow guesses.

Slide #11

Magnify is another word for praise, so Mary was praising the Lord! Mary's song gives us a glimpse into what kind of person she was. It shows us that Mary was humble. She didn't focus on feeling proud of herself for being chosen as the mother of the Savior. Instead, she praised God. She knew her child was part of the promise God had made so many years ago in the Old Testament. She gave God praise for his many attributes, for being greater than her and for keeping his promises.

Refer to the Attributes of God Poster. Which attributes remind us of God's greatness and power and keeping his promises? Omnipotent and faithful. How do you think Mary knew about God's promises and his prophecies about the Savior? She knew the Old Testament Scriptures!

Mary knew the Old Testament Scriptures well. In fact, this song of praise reminds us of the psalms! We read the first few verses, but the whole song speaks of the books of the law, the prophets, and the psalms.

Because of Mary's special position as the mother of Jesus, some people say that she was sinless—perfect like Jesus was. You may want to explain to your students that in Roman Catholic Dogma, this is the teaching of the Immaculate Conception, which says Mary was born without the stain of original sin.

But what does Mary call God in verse 47? Her Savior.

Mary knew that she was a sinner in need of the Savior, just like the rest of us. She was rejoicing because she knew the Savior was coming!

Another false teaching about Mary is that we should pray to her. You may have heard of Roman Catholics saying Hail Marys or a memorized prayer to

her using a set of beads called a rosary.

Why is it wrong for us to pray to Mary? Allow discussion. She is just a sinful human in need of the Savior, like us. God commands us to worship and pray only to him. 1 Timothy 2:5–6 tells us there is one mediator between God and man, and that is Jesus. We can go straight to Jesus—we don't need Mary to be a mediator between God and us. Jesus said he is the only way to eternal life, not Mary.

In Mary's song, we get a glimpse of her character. She was favored by God and given an amazing opportunity to be a part of his plan. Instead of saying, "Look at me, I've been chosen for a special part," Mary humbly accepted the responsibility and obeyed God. We should follow her example of humility (being humble) and obedience to God.

Slide #12

Let's complete some more Class Notes. Who will read #4 about Mary's song? Choose a reader. True. Have students complete #4.

Who will read #5 about Mary's attitude? Choose a reader. False. Mary humbly praised God. Have students complete #5.

And #6, who will read that? Choose a reader. True. Have students complete #6.

An Angel Visits Joseph

Let's take a look at Jesus' earthly father, Joseph. We aren't given much information about Joseph in the Bible, but we do know what he did for a living. Remind the students that when we talk about Joseph as Jesus' "earthly father," we are not denying the virgin birth but just affirming that Joseph acted as Jesus' father on earth.

Who knows what Joseph's trade was? What did he do for work? He was a carpenter.

Scripture tells us Joseph was a carpenter, and the Gospel of Matthew tells us how he reacted to the news of Mary's pregnancy. Let's turn there to see what else we can learn about Joseph.

Slide #13

Slide #14

Slide #15

Matthew 1:18–23

Listen and follow along as I read. We'll start with Matthew 1:18–19. Read the verses.

Joseph and Mary were betrothed, which meant they were engaged to be married, but they were waiting for the time of the official wedding ceremony when they would be together as husband and wife.

When Joseph found out that Mary was with child (pregnant), he thought Mary had been unfaithful to him and had broken the vows of their engagement.

What did Joseph plan to do? He was planning to divorce her quietly without shaming her.

Instead of getting Mary in trouble, Joseph decided to divorce her quietly.

What does Joseph's plan in verse 19 show us about him? What kind of man was Joseph? He was just, or righteous. He showed compassion and care for Mary, even though he thought she was unfaithful. He was going to obey the law in a private manner.

Did Joseph really divorce her? Let's find out what happened next. Read verses 20–21.

When Joseph was considering divorcing Mary, who did God send to speak to him? An angel appeared to him in a dream.

What did the angel tell Joseph to do? Take Mary as his wife.

What did the angel explain about Mary's baby? He was from whom? The Holy Spirit.

What would Jesus do for his people? Save them from their sins.

In verse 20, what did the angel call Joseph? He called him son of David.

Joseph was a descendant of King David, and God had promised to send his eternal King through the line of David.

Remember, God gave his prophets messages about Jesus hundreds of years before all this happened. Listen for the prophecy that was happening at this time. Read verses 22–23.

What Old Testament verse is written here in verse 23? You should all know this one! Isaiah 7:14.

As Matthew wrote this Gospel, he used the prophecy from Isaiah 7:14 to show that the Messiah, Jesus, would be born to a virgin (Mary) and that he would be God (Immanuel). Let's say the memory verse together. Recite Isaiah 7:14 together or read it from the Memory Verse Poster.

When Joseph woke up, he obeyed the Lord and did what the angel had commanded.

Slide #16

Show the Lesson Theme Poster. Joseph acted in faith and obedience when he woke from the dream. He took Mary as his wife, and he called Mary's son Jesus, just as the angel had instructed.

The Bible doesn't tell us much about Joseph. Even when we read this passage, we don't always think much about what Joseph did during these events. We realize that an angel told him that he was to act as the father of Jesus, and that he obeyed, but then we just move on.

Let's take a minute to think about what would have happened if Joseph had not been obedient. What would or wouldn't have happened if Joseph had divorced Mary? Allow discussion. See if students can connect the prophecies that wouldn't have been fulfilled.

If Joseph had not obeyed the Lord, many Old Testament prophecies wouldn't have happened! For example, if Joseph had divorced Mary, he wouldn't have taken her to Bethlehem. If Mary hadn't gone to Bethlehem, Jesus would not have been born there, and Micah's prophecy (Micah 5:2) would not have been fulfilled. The wise men would have ended up in a different city searching for the newborn King, so they probably wouldn't have told King Herod about it, and Jesus would not have been taken to Egypt to escape Herod (disrupting another prophecy in Hosea 11:1). Also, King Herod wouldn't have killed all the boys under age two in the area of Bethlehem, which was prophesied by Jeremiah (Jeremiah 31:15).

That's a lot of things that would have gotten messed up if Joseph hadn't obeyed! But God had chosen to use Joseph as a part of the fulfillment of Jesus' birth. God sent an angel to change Joseph's decision about Mary. Refer to the Attributes of God Poster. Remember, God is sovereign. What does that mean? In control of everything.

God had a plan from the beginning, and we can see him sovereignly guiding people and events to make it happen just as he said.

Slide #17

Slide #18

Let's finish the Class Notes. Who will read #7 about Joseph's plan? Choose a reader. True. Have students complete #7.

Whom did God send to Joseph for #8? Choose a reader. False. The angel appeared in a dream. Have students complete #8.

And #9, who will read about the angel's command to Joseph? Choose a reader. False. He was told to take her as his wife. Have students complete #9.

And the last one, who will read #10? Choose a reader. True. Have students complete #10.

Application

Slide #19

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. Today we looked at Jesus' parents and the things they experienced leading up to the birth of Jesus. Mary showed a humble and worshipful attitude in her song of praise to God. She also had a good understanding of the Scriptures and promises of God. When she visited Elizabeth, John leaped for joy at the sound of her greeting! Although Mary was given a special responsibility as the mother of Jesus, she still knew that she needed the Savior, too.

Joseph was also given a special role to be Jesus' earthly father. God sent an angel to Joseph to let him know what to do, and Joseph was quick to obey. In all these things, we see our sovereign God controlling events to fulfill his promises.

What kinds of words can we use to describe Mary and Joseph? Allow discussion. Humble, faithful, obedient, etc.

Can you think of ways we can follow the examples of Mary and Joseph? We should try to be humble, faithful, and obedient, as they were. We should

praise God for who he is, as Mary did. We should study the Bible to know more about God and his promises.

Lesson Review

We encourage you to play a lesson review game.

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