



LESSON 4 FOR LEADERS

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Sent Jesus to Save Us

SCRIPTURE: [Matthew 1](#)

WORD OF WONDER: [Isaiah 7:14](#)

Growing up, I was always jealous of my sisters' names. They have fairly common names. Their names are not hard to pronounce, and every time we went on vacation, they found a personalized memento. As a six-year-old, this was heartbreaking!

One summer, my dad found me crying by myself after another trip to a souvenir store. I begged to know why he had chosen such an odd name! He told me that he and my mom had picked my name out of a list of other options because it meant something to them. Apparently, Callie means "beautiful!" Who knew?

Names have always held special meanings for their owners. But the most important naming is found in [Matthew 1:21](#): "She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins" (NIV). How wonderful that Jesus' name has a special meaning not just for Him, but for us as well! Every aspect of Jesus proclaims that He has come to save us—right down to His name.

This Christmas season, remember Jesus' name and that He came to save us from our sins. But also remember that He has promised to come again! And one day, every knee will bow, and every tongue will say, "Jesus is Lord."

—Callie Bogle

Children's Ministry Associate

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

The gospel of Matthew does not name its own author, but early Christians ascribed it to one of the 12 disciples of Jesus named Matthew. He was a former tax collector.

WHAT?

[Matthew 1](#) provides the genealogy of Jesus, the list of His ancestors back to Abraham. It also tells the story of how Jesus' adoptive father, Joseph, found out about Jesus' miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit.

WHERE?

The story takes place in Nazareth, which was the hometown of Joseph and Mary. Mary would have given birth there instead of Bethlehem had a Roman census not forced them to travel to Bethlehem, which fulfilled the prophecy of Jesus' birth in [Micah 5:2](#).

WHEN?

The story takes place shortly before 6–4 BC. We know this because King Herod, who tried to have Jesus killed, died in 4 BC.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

Long after God's promise to Abraham, He sent His Son, born as a baby to a young girl and her fiancé. Jesus, a descendant of Abraham, was the fulfilment of all God said He would do—finally, God sent Jesus to save the world.



Curiosity

LESSON 4 **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

Spark curiosity, encourage exploration, and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

Nativity Play

SUPPLIES: toy nativity set

God sent Jesus to earth to save us. In God's big story today, we'll learn about Jesus' parents on earth, Mary and Joseph. Let's play with this nativity set and get curious about our story today!

Set out the toy nativity set and let the kids play with it. You can also hide the pieces around the room and encourage the kids to find them.

We'll learn today about how God sent Jesus to earth as a baby, a baby who was born in a stable with animals but then grew up to save the whole world! We'll learn that God sent Jesus to save us. Our Wonder Truth today is **GOD SENT JESUS TO SAVE US**.

Encourage the kids to do the following motions while you repeat the Wonder Truth. Older toddlers can say the words with you as they do the motions.

GOD SENT—*Point up, then down to the floor.*

JESUS—*Touch your right palm with your left pointer finger, then your left palm with your right pointer finger (this is American Sign Language for Jesus).*

TO SAVE US.—*Hug yourself.*



Belief

LESSON 4 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Guide kids into knowing God more deeply, exploring His big story, and marveling at His wonder.

Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words: **God, thank You so much for this day. Thank You for the gift of Jesus. Holy Spirit, come and fill our hearts. Help us learn more about You. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

God's Big Story

Pull out the Bible.

Ask: What is this called? *The Bible*

Ask: Why is the Bible important? *Because it is God's word. Everything in it is true. It really happened.*

TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Big Picture Bible p176

Angels Spoke to Mary and Joseph

Word of Wonder

WORD OF WONDER

He will be called Immanuel.

—Isaiah 7:14 (NIRV)

Our Word of Wonder comes from **Isaiah 7:14**. Our Word of Wonder says, "He will be called Immanuel." This verse is talking about Jesus—He will be called Immanuel. Immanuel means "God with us." Say the verse again slowly and have the kids repeat it back to you. Then add in the motions.

Encourage the kids to do the motions and say the verse with you.

- **HE WILL BE**—*Point up.*
- **CALLED**—*Cup hands around mouth.*
- **IMMANUEL**.—*Make prayer hands (with palms pressed together).*
- **ISAIAH 7:14**—*Hold your hands in front of you with palms together, as if opening a book.*

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

Why do you think God sent Jesus to earth?

How does it make you feel to have God with us?



Identity

LESSON 4 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Create space for God to remind kids they are known, loved, led, and their lives can tell of God's wonder.

Angel Says

You will play a game similar to Simon Says but using the phrase “Angel says.”

Do you remember who came to Joseph in a dream? Allow the kids to answer. Yes, an angel came to Joseph! The angel gave Joseph some instructions. He was told that he should marry Mary and name the baby Jesus. We're going to play game where we will follow directions, like Joseph. I'm going to give you a command, and if I say, “Angel says,” you should do it. If I don't say, “Angel says” before my command, don't do it!

Let's practice! Angel says ... hop up and down. Good job! You hopped when I said, “Angel says.” Let's try again. Pause. Are you ready? OK! Now ... turn around in a circle. Oh no, I didn't say, “Angel says.” Now are you ready to play?

Call out various silly things for the kids to do, saying “Angel says” before you give some of the commands.

You can use the following commands (or make up your own), varying when you say “Angel says” before giving the commands:

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| Sit down. | Run in place. |
| Spin in a circle. | Do a dance. |
| Touch your nose. | Touch your toes. |
| Clap your hands. | Put your hands on your hips. |
| Stomp your feet. | Lie down on the floor. |
| Jump up and down. | Wave your arms in the air. |

Prayer and Blessing

After the kids finish the activity, pray with them, thanking God for sending Jesus to save us.

Dear God, thank You for loving us so much that You sent Jesus to save us. Help us remember this Christmas that Jesus is the great gift You have given us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands were open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

Blessing: May the light of Jesus shine through you this Christmas. May you always remember that Jesus came to save you! Because Jesus saves, may you celebrate Him this Christmas.

10:45 Service