



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.

Play Stations

SUPPLIES: toy musical instruments, play dough, Christmas-themed cookie cutters, coloring utensils

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: [Coloring Sheet](#) (1 per kid)

Greet kids warmly as they arrive and briefly explain the play stations. Invite them to play at any of the play stations.

Welcome to church! While we're getting ready to start, you can play at any of these stations to help get ready for our lesson today. Do you have any ideas what we'll be learning about today?

Play Station: Joyful Sounds

Set-up: Set out toy musical instruments.

Play: Let the kids play with the instruments and make their own music as a way to celebrate Jesus' birth!

Play Station: Decorate to Celebrate

Set-up: Set out play dough and Christmas-themed cookie cutters (or play dough cutters) on a table.

Play: Let the kids play with play dough and cookie cutters. Invite the kids to share where they see these shapes in their homes (or other places) during Christmas time.

Play Station: Joseph and Jesus Coloring Sheet

Set-up: Print one copy per kid of the [Coloring Sheet](#). Set out the Coloring Sheets and coloring utensils.

Play: Let the kids color. The kids can also turn the sheet over and draw a picture of something that reminds them of Christmas time.



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.*

10:45 Service

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?**



Faith

LESSON 4 **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

Help kids see the wonder of God's story and how it connects to their own story.

Flashlight Praise Dance Party

SUPPLIES: flashlights

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: upbeat songs from [The Jesus Family Tree Early Childhood music flashdrive](#)

At Christmastime, we see a lot of lights on Christmas trees and houses. Let's have a flashlight dance party to celebrate that Jesus came to save us! We're going to turn on our flashlights and turn off the lights. Let's jam and praise God together!

Hold a flashlight or give the kids flashlights. Turn off the lights in your room and turn on the flashlights. Play upbeat songs from [The Jesus Family Tree Early Childhood music flashdrive](#) and let the kids go crazy dancing to the music. You can also move the beam of light all around the room and have them chase it and jump on it.

Leader Tip: Some kids may be scared of the dark, so make sure to tell them before you turn the lights off. You can also leave half the lights on to help kids who may be nervous.



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.

Responding in Worship: Prayer Stations

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: [Joseph and Jesus Story Pictures](#)

Use the pictures of a family tree, angel, baby Jesus, and cross from [Joseph and Jesus Story Pictures](#) for this activity. Place the pictures around the room to create stations. You will lead the children around the room to the four stations. At each station, kids will pause and pray using the pictures as prompts. You can use the written prayers below or your own words.



In today's part of God's big story, we learned that Jesus was sent to save us. Let's do a prayer walk around the room to thank God for sending His one and only Son to save us!

Have the kids line up and follow the leader to each station. Hold up the picture in each station as a prayer prompt. Allow kids time to respond before using the prompts below.

Station 1: Picture of a family tree—Thank God for Jesus' family tree and how we are a part of God's family.

Thank You, God, for Jesus' earthly family and how everyone in His family played a part in Your big story to send Jesus to us. Thank You for making us a part of Your family! Have the kids think of someone in Jesus' family and say, "Thank You, God, for _____."

Station 2: Picture of an angel—Thank God for sending an angel to Joseph with a special message.

Thank You, God, for sending an angel to Joseph in his dream, and thank You that he listened to You. Thank You for the part he played in Your big plan. Have the kids point to the sky and say, "thank you!"

Station 3: Picture of baby Jesus—Thank God for Jesus.

Thank You, God, that Jesus was born to save us. We celebrate His birth this Christmas, and every day! Have the kids cheer or sing "Happy Birthday" to Jesus.

Station 4: Picture of the cross—Thank God for the cross and that Jesus died for our sins.

Thank You, God, for the cross and that Jesus came to save us from our sins. We know we can do bad things sometimes, and we thank You that—because of Jesus—You forgive us. Have the kids say, "Thank You, God, for the cross and for salvation."

10:45 Service

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.