Long Journeys

Monthly Theme
God’s grace gives us hope and joy.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance
Herod tries to trick the wise men into telling him where Baby Jesus is. God sends dreams to the wise men and to Joseph to warn them about Herod’s plans. God protects the little family while they live in Egypt, far away from Herod. He gives them hope that they will someday return to their home.

This is a lesson about grace.
Just as He protected and provided for the young child and His earthly parents, God still protects people today. He gives us hope of a heavenly home, of a future with Him forever.

Teacher Enrichment
At this time Egypt was a Roman province and beyond Herod’s jurisdiction. The traditional border between Egypt and Israel was the river of Egypt about 100 miles southwest of Bethlehem. (See The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 5, p. 291.)

According to ancient Eastern custom, a 1-year-old would be a child who had not reached its first birthday. To be 2 years old would be between the first and second birthday. It is probable that Herod extended the age range to make sure that he achieved his objective of killing the child mentioned by the wise men. (See The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 5, pp. 291, 292.)

Nazareth was a small town about 64 miles (102 kilometers) north of Jerusalem. (See The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 5, pp. 292, 293.)

“Through the gifts of the Magi from a heathen country, the Lord supplied the means for the journey into Egypt and the sojourn in a land of strangers” (The Desire of Ages, p. 65).

Room Decorations
See Lesson 10.
### Program Overview

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*Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.*
Welcome
Welcome students at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Listen to last week’s memory verse and encourage the children to share any experiences from last week’s lesson study. Have them begin the readiness activity of your choice.

Readiness Activities
Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

A. Going on a Journey
Give each child a suitcase shape (see p. 144) and tell them that they are going on a journey to one of the following: mountains, beach, town, country. Say: We are going on a sudden journey. You just have a few minutes to draw the things that you will need to pack in your suitcase. Allow time, then look at the suitcases.

Debriefing
Ask: Are all the suitcases the same? Why? (We need different things for different places.) Did all the suitcases have anything in common? (Each probably had clothing.) If you had to go on a sudden journey, what one thing would you be sure to take? What would you miss most while you were away from home? In our story today Joseph and Mary had to leave their home very quickly. They did not know what the future held, but they were sure that God would be with them. And that leads me to our message for today:

GOD CAN GUIDE OUR LIVES JUST AS HE GUIDED THE Wise men AND JESUS’ PARENTS.

Say that with me.

B. Protection
In advance, gather a selection of items used for protecting the user. Place them in a box. Invite the children to reach into the box, choose an object without looking, and hold it up. Ask: What would you use this for? Encourage the children to act out how their object could be used.

Debriefing
Ask: What do all these things have in common? (All are used for protection.) Can you think of other things that we use/need to protect us? What are some of the things that we need to protect babies from? (fire, extreme heat/cold, hunger) In our story today we will learn more about how God protected Baby Jesus. Our message today is:

GOD CAN GUIDE OUR LIVES JUST AS HE GUIDED THE Wise men AND JESUS’ PARENTS.

Say that with me.
**Prayer and Praise**

**Fellowship**
Report the students’ joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Allow time for sharing from last week’s lesson study and review last week’s memory verse. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special warm greeting to all visitors.

**Suggested Songs**
- “There’s a Song In the Air” (*Sing for Joy*, no. 82)
- “Joy to the World” (*Sing for Joy*, no. 81)
- “O Come, All Ye Faithful” (*Sing for Joy*, no. 70)
- “Go, Tell It on the Mountain” (*Sing for Joy*, no. 83)
- “O Little Town of Bethlehem” (*Sing for Joy*, no. 72)

**Mission**
Share a story from *Children’s Mission*. Emphasize God’s guidance and care.

**Offering**
Say: **God gave the gift of His Son so that everyone might have the opportunity of living with Him in heaven. When we give our offerings, we give others the opportunity to hear about God’s wonderful gift.**

**Prayer**
Say: **God gave us the very best that He had—the gift of His Son.** Ask for prayer requests. During prayer ask the children to raise their hand if they would like to give their best (themselves) to God.

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*You Need:*
- gift box
Bible Lesson

Experiencing the Story

As you tell the story, have the children participate by doing the following:

When you say:  They do:
Mary/Baby Jesus  Fold arms as if rocking a baby.
Joseph  Thumbs up.
Wise men  Point to forehead.
Herod  Thumbs down.

Practice until the children are sure of the actions. You may want to have an adult lead the group.

Read or tell the story.

For some time after Jesus was born, Mary and Joseph stayed in Bethlehem. The census was finished, and they had moved from the stable to a better place. And Mary often thought of the nighttime visit of the shepherds.

Weeks later another group of visitors came to see Jesus. It happened like this . . .

On the night Jesus was born, some men in a country far away and to the east of Judea saw a mysterious light in the sky. As it faded away a new star appeared, one they had never seen before. These were wise men, called Magi, because they studied carefully to understand many things. So that light and a bright new star interested them. They immediately began to study and soon discovered an old prophecy about a “star . . . out of Jacob” and a “scepter” that would “rise out of Israel” (Numbers 24:17). They wondered if this new star could be the fulfillment of the prophecy of the promised Messiah the Jews had talked about for years.

In their country it was the custom to give gifts to princes, kings, and other important people. So the wise men carried gold, myrrh, and frankincense with them, expensive gifts to give to the promised Savior.

They traveled by night in order to keep the star in view. When they stopped during the day, they probably continued to study the prophecies about Jesus, and became more and more convinced that this child was the Promised One.

After many days the wise men approached Jerusalem, where the star seemed to rest over the temple. There they told the priests and rulers why they had come. “Where is the king of the Jews?” they asked. But no one seemed to know.

When King Herod heard about these men, he questioned the Jewish priests and rulers, who told him that the prophet Micah had said that the child would be born in Bethlehem. So Herod sent the wise men to Bethlehem. “When you have found the child,” he said, “come back and tell me where He is, so I might worship Him too.” But Herod was lying. He didn’t want a Jewish king—he planned to kill Jesus.

So the wise men traveled to Bethlehem where they found Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus. Even though these men were not Jewish, they recognized that Jesus was the one God had promised. So they knelt and worshiped Him, and presented their gifts.

In a dream God warned the wise men, “Do not go back to Herod. Go home by a different way.” When Herod finally realized that the wise men were not coming back to Jerusalem, he became so angry that he ordered the death of all babies in
Bethlehem who were 2 years old and younger.

But God was still in charge! He warned Joseph in a dream and told him to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt. They were to stay there until God sent word that it was safe to return home. The little family left at once, in the dark of the night. And Egypt became their home until Herod died. Then God sent an angel to tell Joseph that it was safe to return to their homeland.

At first Joseph thought about going back to Bethlehem. But again God sent a message and directed him to another place. As God had said, Mary and Joseph took the child Jesus to the little town of Nazareth, Joseph’s former home. There Jesus grew up. As He had protected the infant Jesus, God continued to watch over Jesus and His family. For almost 30 years Jesus lived peacefully in Nazareth.

God loves you and your family, too. And He guides and watches over you every day.

**Debriefing**

Allow response time as you ask:

What would you have thought if you had seen the wise men arriving in Jerusalem? (amazed, curious) What would you have told them about Jesus?

Describe King Herod.

How do you think Mary and Joseph felt when they had to leave Bethlehem? (They were probably uncertain about the future and fearful of Herod. But their faith in God was strong—they did what He said.) Why didn’t they move back to Bethlehem? (God told them not to.)

God promised to look after Baby Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. God always keeps His promises. He promises to be with us throughout our lifetime too.

**Let’s say our message together:**

GOD CAN GUIDE OUR LIVES
JUST AS HE GUIDED THE Wise men AND JESUS’ PARENTS.

**Memory Verse**

The memory verse is: "My God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

Write the words of the memory verse on slips of paper, one word on each. Mix them up and put them in the gold box. Help the children find the memory verse in the Bible, then take the paper slips from the box and put them in the right order. Repeat until they can do it without looking at the Bible. Large class: use several boxes.

**Bible Study**

Form three groups and give each group one of the following texts. Ask them to read the text, then find where it is referred to in Matthew 2:13–23. Pair readers with nonreaders. (Adults assist as necessary.) Allow time to report.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Reference</th>
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<tr>
<td>Hosea 11:1</td>
<td>Out of Egypt I called my son. (Matthew 2:15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeremiah 31:15</td>
<td>Killing of the babies. (Matthew 2:18)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Isaiah 53:3 and John 1:46</td>
<td>He will be called a Nazarene, or be despised. (Matthew 2:23)</td>
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**Debriefing**

Ask: Why do you think God told people about Jesus hundreds of years before He was born? What does that tell you about God? (You can trust Him. He does what He says He will do.)
God has promised that He is preparing a home for us in heaven. Do you think He is? Why? (We can trust God because fulfilled prophecy proves that He keeps His word.)

Do you believe that God loves you and will be with you as you grow up?

What difference will that make in your life?

Let’s say our message together:

GOD CAN GUIDE OUR LIVES
JUST AS HE GUIDED THE Wise men AND JESUS’ PARENTS.

### Applying the Lesson

**Future Promises**

Say: Let’s look in the Bible to see what God has promised for our future.


Discuss the verses.

Say: God promises that He is making beautiful homes for us. In His city there will be no more crying, sadness, or pain. Let’s draw a picture of where we would like to live in heaven. Allow time.

**Debriefing**

Ask: Who would like to live in heaven? (We all would.) How can we be sure that we can live there one day? (God sent His Son to this earth to die for our sins and to show us how to live the right way.)

Sometimes we get frightened. God has promised that He will be with us always—here on earth and in heaven. Do you believe that? Why?

Let’s say our message together:

GOD CAN GUIDE OUR LIVES
JUST AS HE GUIDED THE Wise men AND JESUS’ PARENTS.
Sharing the Lesson

A. Christmas Project
Finishing the project you started earlier this month. Talk about how people responded. Be sure to thank everyone who helped.

Debriefing
Ask: What do you think about our project now that we are finished? How do you feel? (happy, satisfied, good to have helped others)
What was the best part? What was the hardest part?
What would you do differently next time?
Let's say our message together:

GOD CAN GUIDE OUR LIVES JUST AS HE GUIDED THE Wise men AND JESUS' PARENTS.

B. Looking Into the Future
Have each child tape two tubes together for a pair of “binoculars.”
Say: These are special “binoculars.” When I look through them, I can imagine many things that I would like to do in the future.
Divide into pairs and share what you would like to do in the future. When you have finished say today's message to your partner.

Debriefing
Allow response time as you ask: Would anyone like to share some of their dreams for the future with the group?
What should we do when we make our plans? (Ask God to be with us.)
If God is with us, what kind of future can we be sure of? (happy and fulfilled)
Take these “binoculars” home and show them to someone this week. Tell them how God protected Baby Jesus, and that God wants to protect them too. They can look forward to the future because God loves them and will guide them just as He guided Jesus' parents. Let's say our message together:

GOD CAN GUIDE OUR LIVES JUST AS HE GUIDED THE Wise men AND JESUS' PARENTS.

Closing
Sing “Jesus Keeps His Promises” (Sing for Joy, no. 41). Say: Soon it will be a new year. We can trust God to keep His promises to take care of us and bless us throughout the year and all the years to come.
Let's thank God for being with us in the past year and for being with us in the year ahead.
Long Journeys

Have you ever gone on a long journey? Did it take a long time to pack and prepare? Mary and Joseph went on a long journey. And they had to leave in a hurry.

For some time after Jesus was born, Mary and Joseph lived in Bethlehem. They moved from the stable to a better place. And Mary often thought of the nighttime visit of the shepherds. Weeks later another group of visitors came to see Jesus. It happened like this . . .

On the night Jesus was born, some wise men in a country far away and to the east of Judea were studying the sky. They saw a strange light that faded away. As it faded away, a new star appeared. These wise men, called Magi, had studied the stars for a long time. But this star was one they had never seen before.

The sight of that light and a bright new star made these men curious. They immediately began to study old writings. Soon they discovered an old prophecy about a “star . . . out of Jacob” and a “scepter” that would “rise out of Israel” (Numbers 24:17). They wondered if this new star could be the fulfillment of that prophecy. Could it be a sign of the promised Messiah the Jews had talked about for years? They decided that it was.

In their country it was the custom to give gifts to princes, kings, and other important people. So the wise men carried gold, myrrh, and frankincense with them. They would give these expensive gifts to the promised Savior.

They traveled by night so they could keep the star in view. When they stopped during the day, they probably continued to study the prophecies. And they became more and more convinced that this child was the Promised One.

After many days, the wise men approached Jerusalem. There the star seemed to rest over the temple. They went to the priests and rulers. “Where is the king of the Jews?” they asked. But no one seemed to know.

King Herod heard about these men from the East. So he questioned the Jewish priests and rulers. From them he learned that the prophet Micah had said that the child would be born in Bethlehem.

Herod talked with the wise men and sent them to Bethlehem. “When you have found the child,” he said, “come back and tell me where He is. I want to worship Him too.” But Herod was lying. He planned to kill Jesus!

So the wise men traveled to Bethlehem. There they found Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus. These wise men were not Jewish. But they recognized that Jesus was the one God had promised. So they knelt and worshiped Him, and presented their gifts.

Before the wise men left Bethlehem, God warned them in a dream not to go back to Herod but to go home a different way.

Days later Herod finally realized that the wise men were not coming back to Jerusalem. That made him very angry. He had to find that baby! So he ordered the death of all babies in Bethlehem who were 2 years old and younger.

But God was still in charge! He warned Joseph in a dream: “Get up! Take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Herod will start looking for the child to kill him. Stay in Egypt until I tell you to return” (Matthew 2:13, ICB). The little family left at once, in the dark of the night. They may have used the gifts of the wise men to supply their needs. Egypt became their home until Herod died. Then God sent an angel to tell Joseph that it was safe to return to their homeland.

References
Matthew 2:13–23; The Desire of Ages, pp. 64–67

Memory Verse
“My God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19, NIV).

The Message
God can guide our lives just as He guided the wise men and Jesus’ parents.
At first Joseph thought about going back to Bethlehem. But again God warned him and told him to go to another place. They settled in the little town of Nazareth, Joseph’s former home. There Jesus grew up.

God loves you and your family too. He will guide you and care for you just as He guided Jesus’ parents.

### Daily Activities

#### Sabbath
- Go for a walk or a ride with your family. Think about what protects you as you go. Talk about safety rules. Share your lesson story with your family. What protection did Jesus have when He was a child?
- Find an umbrella, an adhesive bandage, and other everyday things that protect us. Pretend to use them. Ask your family to guess what you learned about God today. (He protects us.)
- Sing songs about God’s care; then thank Him for it.

#### Sunday
- Use some Christmas paper. Cut out shapes of the three presents the wise men gave to Baby Jesus. Stick them onto a piece of paper. Write your memory verse underneath. Use this to teach the verse to your family.
- Bethlehem was known as the City of David because King David came from there. Where does your country’s leader live? Pray for the leaders of your country today.

#### Monday
- During family worship, read Matthew 2:13 together. Look on a map to see how far it is from Bethlehem to Egypt and from Egypt to Nazareth. Find a place that you know that is about as far away from your house.
- Mary and Joseph had to leave quietly during the night. Walk around the house quietly for five minutes. Is it easy to be quiet?
- Ask God to protect people who are traveling.

#### Tuesday
- During family worship, ask your family to draw or list things that are scary. Beside each one, draw things that protect them. Read Joshua 1:9 together. How does that verse help?

#### Wednesday
- During worship, ask family members to tell about a time God protected them. Were angels with them?
- God sent an angel messenger to Joseph and the wise men. What ways do we send messages? Send a message to someone today. Tell them that God loves them.
- A new year is a new beginning. Make some New Year’s resolutions or promises. Sing “He’s Able” (*Sing for Joy*, no. 40). Thank God that He is able to take care of you and your family. Ask Him to help you keep your promises.

#### Thursday
- With your family, read and discuss Psalm 32:7; Psalm 34:7; and John 17:11. Copy the texts and carry them with you. Read them when you are troubled or afraid.
- Ask your family about transportation in Bible times. Which would you like to try? Draw how you think Mary and Joseph traveled to Egypt, or how the wise men traveled to Bethlehem. How do you get from your home to church?
- Thank God for keeping you safe as you travel.

#### Friday
- During family worship, read Matthew 2:1–23. With the help of your family, tell the story as if you were one of the wise men. As if you were Herod. As if you were Mary.
- Ask your family: How has God helped our family in the past year? Together, make a list.
- Sing praise songs together; then thank God for all He does to care for you and your family.