

date: **12/17/17****Bible Passage: Matthew 1:18–25**
(Joseph)

God Gave The Promise, Part 2

REMEMBER VERSE

Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come to his people and redeemed them.

Luke 1:68

Inspire

Shares personal stories from fellow ministry leaders about how God has worked in their lives

God designed us to travel together in our journey through this life. A life of forging through on our own strength and will was never what He intended. His image is infused throughout us, and His Spirit quickens our soul. Together, we are a better reflection of Him, though still an imperfect one.

But for some reason, I keep trying to push through the hard life lessons on my own, away from the input and influence of others. Looking back, I see my foolishness. I need the wisdom and experience of others speaking into my life—reminding me of the Truth they have discovered as they have gone before me. Receiving from them, I am awakened to the many others sharing my journey—others I can walk alongside and encourage. I can help them see our connectedness and point them to The Promise. I can invite them to join in the celebration of Immanuel, God with us.

Cristi Thomas
Tru Team

Equip

Offers perspective and context to the lesson's Bible passage

Joseph was a righteous man, pledged to be married to a young woman named Mary. In Jewish culture at this time, the engagement period or betrothal lasted about one year. It was a binding agreement between the bride and bridegroom and could only be broken with a legal statement or certificate of divorce—at the request of the bridegroom. Throughout

this period, the couple was considered essentially married even though the wedding ceremonies and traditions had not taken place. During this time, the groom was to begin making preparations for the bride to be brought into his home.

Before the end of their engagement period, the angel Gabriel came to Mary and told her she would be giving birth to the Messiah through the Holy Spirit. If people found out Mary was pregnant outside of a consecrated marriage, she could be put to death. “Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly” (Matthew 1:19). She would be free to go and quietly have her baby away from public speculation. Instead, God sent an angel to Joseph in a dream and assured him there was nothing to fear; what Mary had told him was the truth. The angel went on to tell Joseph that the child was the One prophesied. He would be Immanuel, “God with us.”

The Old Testament is the anticipation of the coming of The Promise. The New Testament begins with The Promise given and fulfilled. Jesus is heir not only to an earthly throne—the throne of David—but the only heir to the eternal throne. His kingdom will never end. The promise for the coming Savior was made in the garden. Immanuel came to earth as our sacrifice, and He has promised to come again. His Kingdom will never end.

Support

Provides reflection and assessment through encouragement, prayer, and time in God’s Word

This week, pause from the busyness of the holiday season. Grab your favorite holiday or winter drink. Then sit down with the Christmas cards you’ve received so far this year—or from years past. As you read each card, take a minute to think about how God has used the person or family represented in your life over the last year (or years). How have they been used to strengthen your faith? Have they encouraged you, or walked with you through a difficult time? Thank God for how He has used each one. Thank God for allowing you to be used by Him in the lives of others. Before you move back into your day, spend a moment praying for the people whose holiday cards have blessed you.

Lord, thank You for bringing so many wonderful people into our lives. Thank You for the influence they have had on us, and the experiences we’ve had because of their presence. Thank You for using every situation and circumstance in our lives as an opportunity for us to see You more clearly. Thank You for giving us Your Promise. Thank You for allowing us to know You. You are Immanuel. It is because of You we celebrate. It is because of You we have hope. May You continue to use each of us to love and encourage those around us. May You use us as Your light in this world, so others may come to know the truth of who You are. Amen.

Small Group SECTION

EXPLORE::: 10 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children engage in fun, creative activities designed to pique their curiosity about the day’s portion of The Big God Story.

Name on the Door

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- [Name on the Door template](#) (see Resources)
- Scissors
- Card stock (1 sheet per every 2 children)
- Baby name book (1 or more)
- Markers and crayons

SET UP

Print or copy the Name on the Door template onto card stock, enough for one per child. Cut out the doorknob danglers, including the circle and slit near the top. Set the doorknob danglers, baby name book(s), markers, and crayons on a table.

RELATE

Welcome children as they arrive and invite them to join you at the table. **Names are very meaningful. During Bible times parents chose their children's names very carefully, and often a child's name said something about who she would become. We're going to learn later today about a very special baby who was given a very special name. Who gave you your name? Do you know what your name means?** Share what you know about your own name. Hand out Name on the Door hangars and spend a few minutes looking up the meanings of each child's name in the baby name book. (If you have a large group, bring more than one name book and have another adult leader or parent help look up some of the names.) Invite children to write their name in the appropriate spot on their doorknob dangler, assisting those who need it. Then write the meaning of each child's name for them. Encourage kids to decorate their doorknob danglers and take them home. Before moving on, invite children to share their creations and the meaning of their name with the group.

DISCOVER::: 25 min.

Host/Worship Leader/Storyteller

Children participate in discovering God's Word through Bible verse memorization, interactive storytelling techniques, and worship as response.

Ponder Point

God Gave The Promise

Chloe's Rules

Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- [Chloe's Rules videos](#)
- Worship music (suggestions: "I Can Sing" and "I Am Listening to You," TruWorship *Sincerely Yours*)

RELATE

Welcome children as they're entering the large group meeting area. *Tech: Cue Chloe's Rules video.* The theme song

will play as the Worship Leader/Host enters and makes his way up front, welcoming and greeting children along the way. This should be a high-energy entrance. *Tech: Cue preschool program theme song.* Choose and play two upbeat worship songs of your choice from a worship album that complements the theme and focus of the lesson.

Mail Time

Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- Mail Time intro clip and image (see Resources)
- Remember Verse image (see Resources)
- Remember Verse cards (see Resources)
- Mail Time envelope
- Bibles (your personal and large children's)
- Mailbox

PREPARE AHEAD

Print or copy the Mail Time envelope art and attach to a large envelope. Print or copy one Remember Verse card and put it inside the envelope.

RELATE

Tech: Cue the Mail Time intro clip and image. Choose one volunteer to hide the mail and another to find the mail. Have the "Seeker" close her eyes while the "Hider" finds a good place to hide the Remember Verse. Once the mail has been hidden, the Seeker will begin to look for the mail while the children give clues to its whereabouts by calling out "hot" and "cold."

Once the Seeker finds the mail, the Host invites her to pull out the enclosed Remember Verse. Next, the Host should find the Remember Verse in his Bible and read the words aloud. Talk about the meaning of the verse while interacting with the children.

Lead the children in reciting the Remember Verse several times together using a variety of engaging methods. Hand motions, different voices, various speeds, and character integration are all great ways to help commit the Scripture to memory. For longer verses, approach the verse one section at a time, increasing what the children repeat back each week.

REMEMBER VERSE

**Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has
come to his people and redeemed them.**

Luke 1:68

REMEMBER VERSE DEFINITIONS

redeemed: bought back. Jesus paid the price of our sin so we can have eternal life.

REMEMBER VERSE MOTIONS

Praise: Hold hands up in the air and wiggle all fingers.

be to the Lord: Use right hand to make an *L* with index finger and thumb at left shoulder. Cross over front of body and end on right hip.

the God of Israel: Extend right hand in front of body with palm facing to side. Bring hand to rest fingertips just below chin.

because he has come to his people: Hold out both arms at sides of body and pull inward to hug chest.

and redeemed them: Place palms together in prayer motion.

Wardrobe of Wonder

Storyteller/Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- What'sIt: "Jesus" Name Plaque (see image in Resources)
- 5" x 7" photo frame

What'sIt: "Jesus" Name Plaque

In traditional Hebrew culture, and in many cultures today, the meaning behind a child's name carried great significance. The name the angel gave to Joseph for the child Mary was carrying was to be "Jesus," because He would save His people from their sins. This child's name would be an important message of assurance and promise for all generations to come.

PREPARE AHEAD

Print the What'sIt image, cut out, and place in a 5" x 7" photo frame.

ASK

What do you think a picture frame might be doing in the Wardrobe of Wonder? Pause for volunteer's suggestions. **I wonder ... what do you think is inside the frame? It doesn't look like a normal picture.** Show children the front of the frame. **This is a fancy name sign, called a "plaque." Have any of you ever seen a sign like this with a name and its meaning on it? The name on this plaque isn't just any name. I'll read it out loud. "Jesus—Savior. The One who saves His people from their sins." Names are very important. The meaning of a name can tell a lot about a person. I wonder ... why is the name "Jesus" written on this plaque? I think we're about to find out, because it's time for The Big God Story!**

The Big God Story

Matthew 1:18–25

Storyteller

Storytelling Technique: Readers' Theater and Puppets

SUPPLIES

- The Big God Story intro clip and image (see Resources)
- What'sIt: "Jesus" Name Plaque (see Resources)
- Readers' Theater script (see Resources)
- Mary, Joseph, and Angel puppets (see Resources)
- Bible (adult or children's to use during teaching)
- Readers (3 volunteers)

- Paper
- Card stock (3 sheets, 11" x 17")
- Scissors
- Craft sticks (3, large)
- Wood glue
- Optional: rocking chair, fireplace (with stockings hung), big storybook or binder (2, with scripts inside)

PREPARE AHEAD

Today's The Big God Story is presented in a "Readers' Theater" style. Make three copies of the script and consider placing them in large, solid-colored books or binders. Print the Mary, Joseph, and Angel puppets onto card stock and cut out. Glue each puppet to a large craft stick, creating stick puppets. Invite three volunteers (youth, parents, etc.) to read parts in The Big God Story. Give each volunteer a script ahead of time and let him know which part he will be reading. Encourage volunteers to go over their script prior to the lesson.

SET UP

Set the stage to look like a living room, complete with a rocking chair and mock fireplace with stockings hung from the mantle. Give a puppet to each of your volunteer readers. ("Mary" to Reader #1, "Joseph" to Reader #2, and "Angel" to Reader #3.) Ask them to hold the puppets down to their sides, facing away from the children, until otherwise directed in the script.

RELATE

Tech: Cue The Big God Story intro clip and image. **Hello, friends! It's good to see you today. There are so many things we get to share together each time we meet. I've invited a few people from our faith community to help tell today's part of The Big God Story. But before we begin, there's something we need to do. There's someone we need to invite into our time and ask to teach us. Who would that be?** Children answer. **God! That's right. Let's pray and talk to God together.** Lead the children in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds.

Reader #1: A long time ago, in the garden God created, God said He would someday send a Savior for everyone. The Savior would be able to forgive people of the things they did wrong, so they could know God and be with Him forever. The Savior was going to be named Jesus. Jesus was God's promise to save the world.

Reader #2: When God says He is going to do something, He always does it! But sometimes it can seem like He takes a long time. God didn't want people to forget His promise. He wanted to keep telling people about His promise so they'd be ready when He came. Who is The Promise? Children answer. **Jesus, that's right! So, God used some special men who were called prophets. A prophet is someone God uses when He wants to tell people something special. These prophets believed what God said, and told people about The Promise who would be coming.**

Reader #3: Many, many years went by. People waited and waited until one day, God sent the angel Gabriel to a young woman named Mary. Reader #3 holds up the Angel puppet for children to see. Reader #1 holds up Mary. **"Greetings!" said Gabriel to Mary. "The Lord has given you special favor. He is with you," Gabriel said.**

Reader #1: **Mary wondered what kind of greeting this could be.**

Reader #3: **The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary. God is very pleased with you. You are going to**

have a baby. You must name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God.”

Reader #1: **“How can this happen?” Mary asked the angel.**

Reader #3: **The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come to you. And the power of the Most High God will cover you.”**

Reader #2: **This was it! It was time! The Promise of God was coming! Jesus was going to be born! Readers move puppets back down to their sides. At this same time, Mary was planning to marry a man named Joseph. Reader #2 holds up Joseph puppet for children to see. Joseph was a good man who loved God. When he heard what had happened and that Mary was going to have a baby, Joseph was nervous, because he and Mary weren’t married yet. Reader #1 holds up Mary puppet. What would happen if he didn’t marry her? There were things Joseph just didn’t understand yet. Joseph began to think about what he should do. He thought about it, and he thought about it. Then he had an idea. He could call off the wedding and Mary could be free to go have her baby. Yes, he decided. That was what he would do!** Reader #1 puts down Mary puppet.

Reader #3: **Then one night, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. Reader #3 holds up Angel puppet. The angel said to him, “Joseph, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. The baby growing inside her was put there by God’s Spirit. She will have a baby boy and you are to give Him the name Jesus. He will save His people from their sins.”** Readers lower their puppets.

Reader #1: **This news changed Joseph’s mind. When he woke up, he did everything God had told him to do. He and Mary were married and waited for the baby to be born. And when it was time, the baby came and Joseph named Him Jesus, just as God had told him.**

Reader #2: **God had planned long before any of this happened for Mary and Joseph to be married. They were a part of the faith community of people who had trusted and obeyed God for hundreds of years. And God used them as a part of His big plan to bring Jesus, the promised Savior, into the world. Jesus is The Promise. Jesus is how God planned to show the whole world how much He loves us.**

Reader #3: **God had chosen a very special name for this very special baby, His one and only Son. God did all He said He would do so long ago in the garden. God knew we would need a Savior.**

Reader #1: **That Savior is The Promise.**

Reader #2: **The Promise is Jesus.**

Readers #1, #2, and #3 (in unison): **God gave The Promise.**

Reader #3: **And because of Him, we get to be a part of God’s family. We get to care for each other and worship God together as His children forever!**

The three readers take a seat, and the leader addresses children again. **Thank you to our special guest Storytellers! Lead children in clapping for your guests. Wow! God gave the baby—His Promise—a very special name: Jesus. That reminds me of what we found in the Wardrobe of Wonder! Hold up the What’sIt name plaque and read it to the children. JESUS—Savior. The One who saves His people from their sins.**

Wonder Questions

Small Group Enhancements, coloring pages, and discussion questions help your group go deeper into today's portion of The Big God Story.

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- [Wonder Questions coloring pages \(see Resources\)](#)
- [TruWonder Small Group Enhancements timeline and images \(see Resources\)](#)
- Crayons

RELATE

This week in The Big God Story, we heard that Jesus is The Promise God said He would send for us! God sent an angel to tell Joseph what God wanted him to do.

I wonder ... What did Joseph think after the angel told him about Jesus?

I wonder ... Who did Joseph tell about The Promise?

I wonder ... Who can I tell that Jesus is The Promise?

BLESS::: 5 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children receive a blessing from their leaders and sometimes one another. A blessing may be a prayer of commission, a portion of Scripture, or words to encourage and guide.

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- [Remember Verse cards \(see Resources\)](#)

RELATE

In the Bible, people would sometimes use their words to remind each other of things that were true about God. Today we're all going to have a chance to bless each other with our words. Pair up each child with a partner, and explain how the time of blessing will happen today. You're going to take turns saying the blessing to a partner. Then after you're done, your partner will say the blessing to you. Model this for the children by pairing up with another leader or child and speaking the blessing.

May you know Jesus is The Promise and God's gift to you!

After the children have blessed one another, end with a corporate prayer of blessing over the children.