



All Hands on Deck

Jump In

This month we will be exploring stories about Jesus' family. We will begin by hearing the story of Jesus joining his earthly family. This story is a familiar one that children will know, but it is not a story we usually tell at this time of year. We associate the story of Jesus' birth when it is told in preparation for Christmas. Instead, we hear it today as we talk about Jesus' family. It is important for families to tell their stories. Whether it is the story of the birth of a child, the adoption of a child, or the blending of a family by marriage, our families' stories are important. Family stories help us feel a sense of belonging. Just like us, Jesus was a part of a family.

Dive Deeper Together

Read Luke 2:1-7 in the Deep Blue Kids Bible or "Jesus is Born" in the Deep Blue Bible Storybook.

OR

Read "Jesus Joins His Family": Hi! My name is Jesus and I'm God's son. Today I want to tell you about the day I was born. My mother, Mary, lived in Nazareth. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph who also lived in Nazareth. At that time Caesar Augustus was the emperor and he decided everyone needed to be enrolled in the tax lists. Caesar said everyone had to travel to the city their family was from in order to sign up. This meant Joseph had to travel to Bethlehem. Since they were engaged, Mary went with Joseph. When Mary and Joseph got to Bethlehem there were so many people there. People had traveled from all over to register for the tax lists. Because Bethlehem was crowded, there was no place for Joseph and Mary in the guestroom. While they were in Bethlehem, Mary gave birth to me! She wrapped me up snugly and laid me in a manger. My mother loved to tell me about the day I was born.

Grow Stronger Together

This week, share stories about your family with your children. How did you become a family? What were you like as a child? Invite everyone in your family to tell their favorite stories about your family.

Pray Together

Share joys and concerns, and then say this prayer: Dear God, thank you so much for my special family. Amen.

Session 1: Jesus Joins His Family (Luke 2:1-7)

Unit 1: Jesus' Family

BV: A voice from heaven said, "This is my Son whom I dearly love; I find happiness in him." (Matthew 3:17)

Hi, I'm Asia and I want you to meet my family! There are four people in my family—my mom, my dad, my baby brother, and me! I am excited to invite you into my home so we can learn about being a part of God's big family.





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Luke is the only gospel to give us a story from Jesus' boyhood. Luke tells us the story of Jesus' visit to the temple with his parents when he was 12 years old. The presence of this story in the Bible assures us Jesus did not transform miraculously from an infant to an adult, but being sent to earth as a human, he grew up, just as we do. Furthermore, Jesus grew up in a family. The story we are told from Jesus' childhood is the story of the boy Jesus, at age twelve, visiting the temple with his parents. According to Jewish law, all male Israelites were required to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. Since Joseph and Mary were making this trip we know Jesus' parents carefully observed Jewish laws and raised their son in the Jewish tradition.

Dive Deeper Together

Read Luke 2:39-52 in the Deep Blue Kids Bible or "Talk With the Teachers" in the Deep Blue Bible Storybook.

OR

Read "Jesus and His Parents": Every year while Jesus grew up, his family traveled to the city of Jerusalem to celebrate Passover at the Temple. When Jesus was twelve, Mary, Joseph, and Jesus traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. When the celebration was over, the family started to head home, but Jesus stayed behind at the Temple without telling Mary or Joseph. His parents thought Jesus was somewhere in the crowd headed home too and they didn't know he was missing until they walked a whole day. When Mary and Joseph realized Jesus wasn't with them, they turned right around and ran to Jerusalem to find Jesus. It took them three days to find Jesus! He was in the Temple talking with the teachers. His parents were happy to see him and were angry he didn't tell them where he was going. Jesus didn't understand why they were upset—he was in his father's house! Mary, Joseph, and Jesus headed home to Nazareth where Jesus continued to grow.

Grow Stronger Together

It was a family tradition for Jesus, Mary, and Joseph to travel to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. What are some of your family's traditions? Talk together this week about your favorite ones!

Pray Together

Share joys and concerns, and then say this prayer: Dear God, thank you for family celebrations and traditions. Amen.

Session 2: Jesus and His Parents (Luke 2:39-52)

Unit 1: Jesus' Family

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John the Baptist grew up and went to live in the wilderness wearing camel's hair, eating locusts and wild honey, and exhorting people to acknowledge their sin and accept God's forgiveness. John encouraged people to be baptized in the Jordan River to symbolize that they had changed their hearts and lives. One day as John is going about the business of baptizing people, Jesus comes from Nazareth to be baptized by John. As Jesus was coming out of the water, the heavens opened, the Spirit descended on him like a dove and a voice from heaven claimed Jesus as God's son. Jesus' baptism marked the beginning of his ministry. God claimed Jesus as God's son and then Jesus began teaching people how God wanted them to live.

Dive Deeper Together

Read Matthew 3:13-17 in the Deep Blue Kids Bible or "Come to the River" in the Deep Blue Bible Storybook.

OR

Read "God's Family": About thirty years after Jesus, God's son, was born, a man known as John the Baptist appeared in the desert and began preaching. John wore clothing made of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist and he ate locusts and wild honey. John preached that people should change their hearts and lives. When people admitted they needed to change their hearts, John the Baptist baptized them in the Jordan River to symbolize their decision. While John was preaching and baptizing people, Jesus, God's son, came from Nazareth and asked John to baptize him. John did not want to baptize Jesus. He said Jesus, God's son, should baptize him. Jesus insisted John was the one to baptize him, so John did. As Jesus, was coming out of the water, the heavens opened and the Spirit of God came down from heaven and rested on him like a dove. A voice from heaven said, "This is my Son whom I dearly love; I find happiness in him."

Grow Stronger Together

Talk with your children this week and decide on a way to serve together. SAY: We know and trust that Jesus is God's Son. Did you know that we are also a part of God's family. One way we can show we are a part of God's family is through Baptism. What other ways do you think we can serve our church family as a part of God's big family?

Pray Together

Share joys and concerns, and then say this prayer: Dear God, thank you for including all of us in your special family. Amen.

Session 3: God's Family (Matthew 3:13-17)

Unit 1: Jesus' Family

BV: A voice from heaven said, "This is my Son whom I dearly love; I find happiness in him." (Matthew 3:17)

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Today's Bible story begins with Jesus walking alongside the Sea of Galilee, where he sees two brothers throwing their fishing nets into the sea. Jesus calls out to the two brothers—Simon Peter and Andrew—and says, "Come, follow me." Matthew does not tell us whether Peter and Andrew had any previous knowledge of Jesus. Yet when Jesus calls them, they drop everything and follow him. As they continue on, Jesus sees another set of brothers—James and John—who are repairing their fishing nets. James and John also follow Jesus immediately, leaving their boat and their father. Jesus does not give them a lengthy explanation with twenty-seven reasons why they should follow him. He simply says, "Come, follow me." At the time of Jesus, rabbis did not seek out students. Those wishing to study with a particular rabbi sought him out. Here the initiative is with Jesus. It is Jesus that chooses his students or disciples. The disciples were Jesus' chosen family.

Dive Deeper Together

Read Matthew 4:18-22 in the Deep Blue Kids Bible or "Jesus Calls the Fishermen" in the Deep Blue Bible Storybook.

OR

Read "Jesus Creates a Family": One day Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee. He saw two fishermen throwing fishing nets into the sea. The two men were brothers named Peter and Andrew. Jesus called out to them, "Come, follow me! I'll show you how to fish for people." Right away, they left their nets and followed him. Continuing along the shore, Jesus saw another set of brothers, James and John. They were in a boat with their father, Zebedee, repairing their fishing nets. Jesus called them and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed Jesus.

Grow Stronger Together

Does your family include anyone that isn't "blood related"? Maybe your family is really close to another family at church, or your children see your college roommate as an aunt or uncle. These folks are your chosen family. This week, invite some of your chosen family over for a meal. Invite your children to share stories about their love for your chosen family members, or to make them a special card expressing their care.

Pray Together

Share joys and concerns, and then say this prayer: Dear God, thank you for our chosen family members. Amen.

**Session 4: Jesus
Creates a Family**
(Matthew 4:18-22)

Unit 1: Jesus' Family

**BV: A voice from heaven
said, "This is my Son
whom I dearly love; I
find happiness in him."
(Matthew 3:17)**

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to meet my family! There are
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In today's lesson, we will explore the familiar Bible story of Jesus blessing the little children. We are not told why the parents were bringing their children to Jesus. It is likely that the parents had heard of Jesus' healing miracles and wanted him to bless and protect their children. When the disciples attempted to discourage the parents from bringing their children to see Jesus, they were acting in a way consistent with the social norms and expectations of the time. At the time Jesus lived, children were not viewed as persons in their own right. When Jesus reprimanded the disciples for keeping the children away, he made a clear statement that access to him and to God's love was for everyone. There are no "non-persons" in God's kingdom. By blessing the children, Jesus showed that they were full members in God's family.

Dive Deeper Together

Read Matthew 19:13-15 in the Deep Blue Kids Bible or "Jesus and the Children" in the Deep Blue Bible Storybook.

OR

Read "Jesus and the Children": Parents were trying to bring their children to Jesus so he could place his hands on them and pray. The disciples tried to stop parents from bringing their children to Jesus. Jesus told the disciples to let the children come to him. Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven belongs to people like these children." Then Jesus blessed the children and sent them on their way. Jesus was trying to teach his disciples that the kingdom of heaven does not belong to those who are powerful, but that it is available to everyone. The kingdom of heaven refers to what the world would be like if everyone were living as God wants them to. When you share God's love with others, you are living out the kingdom of heaven. Everyone is important in the kingdom of heaven—including children!

Grow Stronger Together

Next Sunday, do something as a family for the littlest church members at your church. You could bring a toddler friendly snack to share with the babies in the nursery. You could go through old toys together and donate gently used toys to the nursery. You could each read Bible stories to the children in the nursery. Or you could think of other ways to include the youngest children in your church family.

Pray Together

Share joys and concerns, and then say this prayer: Dear God, thank you for including people of all ages in your family. Amen.

Session 5: Jesus and the Children (Matthew 19:13-15)

Unit 1: Jesus' Family

BV: A voice from heaven said, "This is my Son whom I dearly love; I find happiness in him." (Matthew 3:17)

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