

Growing Up in God's Word
Bible Curriculum

“... from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures...”
(II Timothy 3:15, NKJV)

LIFE OF
CHRIST
Part 1

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Introduction

Why teach children the Bible using only the Bible? Can they understand it? Yes! Is it too boring? No! I have taught a children's Bible class on Sunday mornings for over twenty years and have home-schooled my three children, teaching them the Bible in our home. Guess what? Children are a lot smarter than we give them credit for! There are just a few key things to remember in teaching the Bible to children. First, we need to be enthusiastic about the Bible ourselves. If children see that we think the Bible is boring, they will most likely adopt the same opinion. Be excited about opening the word of God together! Second, don't be afraid to tell them you don't know an answer to their question. There are many things in the Bible that we have questions about; some things we are able to study and find an answer for, others will have to wait until we get to heaven and can ask God. It's okay to let them know you're stumped too, but encourage them to search for the answer with you. Third, set the bar high for them. Please, please, please don't "dumb" the Bible down to "their level." Children can understand a lot through patient explanation and teaching. For example, if you read a hard word in the Bible that they may not be familiar with, stop and ask them what they think it means, then give them a correct definition. Now they have learned a new word and understand the passage you've just read at the same time. Children like to be challenged and to meet our expectations for them.

The method in this curriculum works because it has been tried among many children of different ages, abilities and levels. Here is the best proof I can offer to you: One of my regular Sunday morning students brought a friend to our class one day. She answered a few questions but mostly sat very quietly, absorbing everything that was going on. Later on, the woman that brought her to church said that the little girl told her on the way home that she wanted to come to our Sunday school class every week because we *actually teach from the Bible*. This little girl is not "unchurched" by any means; in fact, she regularly attends a denominational mega-church every Sunday. As the scripture says, "Out of the mouths of babes!"

May your children be like Timothy in the Bible who, "*from childhood has known the holy Scriptures*" (II Timothy 3:15), and may God bless you as you study His word together.

How to Use this Curriculum

Life began in a garden, so we will be using garden references and symbols throughout this curriculum to designate the different activities. Luke 8:11 says that *“the seed is the word of God”*. Our hearts are the soil that the seed needs to be planted in. We should desire to cultivate the soil of our hearts and the hearts of our children to receive the word so that it will grow and produce good fruit for our Lord.



“Growing In The Word”: Lesson Text And Discussion

This is the most important part of the curriculum – the teaching of God's Word. The lesson text is broken down into manageable sections to be read aloud and then discussed. If children are old enough to read, let them read out loud. If there are several verses to be read as a section, you could take turns reading a couple of verses per person. If it helps your child, let them jot down notes or write down definitions to new words as you discuss the passage. Encourage them to ask questions and ask them leading questions to get them thinking. The discussion section is basically a paraphrasing of what was just read to make sure there is comprehension of the material. Frequently there are questions to be answered during the discussion phase as well. The section of verses often leave off at a “cliffhanger” moment which helps keep the children engaged. You read and discuss and then you're ready to read on to see what happens next. At the end of this section of the curriculum there are review questions. These can be used in several ways: You may ask them at the end of the lesson, at the end of the week for a review, or if you want to have a graded assignment, you can use them as an oral or written quiz.

*A word about translations. It is important to use a reliable and accurate translation. Some dependable ones are KJV, NKJV, and ASV (American Standard). Many modern translations have compromised the integrity of the Scriptures in trying to put it in “easier to understand” language. All references in this curriculum are taken from the New King James Version.



“Putting Down Roots”: Memory Work

Memory work should be practiced every day for the entire week. Use whatever method works the best according to your child's learning style. (Flashcards, audio recording, repetition, etc.) Here is a link containing a list of aids for memorizing scripture: <http://pryorconvictions.com/memorizing-scripture/> The Psalmist said in Psalm 119:11, *“Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee.”* I cannot stress enough how important it is to memorize Scripture. In addition to Scripture, sometimes there are other items included in the Memory Work. A challenge to parents: memorize it with your children!



“Farther Afield”: Map Work

There are blank maps provided in Appendix A in the back of the book. These may be

photocopied for home use with this curriculum. Most lessons have mapping activities to serve as a visual aid of the places you read about in scripture. To be consistent, you may want to follow a system such as: cities – red, countries – green, bodies of water – blue, wilderness or desert areas – brown, lands or regions – yellow. The map work will indicate different places to be located on the map. Locate and label each item.



"Harvest Fun": Games And Activities

There are games and activities for each lesson to help review and reinforce the material that was covered. It is best to read through these at the beginning of the week to see if any planning ahead needs to be done.



"Digging Deeper": Research

This is primarily for the older students who are able to work independently. If your younger children wish to do these assignments with your help, then by all means, let them! It is a good idea to keep a notebook for these written assignments. These assignments are meant to encourage students of the Bible to learn how to study a topic deeper by using other resources to shed light on the subject. Primarily, books and the Internet will be your sources of information so it's important to do two things: 1) Check the reliability of your source, and 2) Check multiple sources; you might find two or more very different theories or opinions. Some good resources to use are Bible commentaries, concordances (such as Strong's), Bible dictionaries, Bible atlases and Bible software. There are many things we run across in the Bible that we would like to know more about. Have fun exploring!



"Food For Thought": Puzzles

There are at least two puzzles with each lesson to, again, provide review and reinforcement or plain just to have fun! The puzzles may be worked in the book or photocopied. All puzzle answers are provided in the Answer Key in the back of the book.



"Fruits Of Our Labor": Crafts

There are at least two crafts to do with each lesson. They vary in level of difficulty, but are another means of reinforcement of material covered. Crafts are a good activity for the kinesthetic (hands-on) learner as well as a tangible reminder for the visual learner. Please read ahead early in the week to see what materials you may need to gather in advance.

Suggested Schedule

This curriculum is designed to be used five days a week, 30 minutes to 1 hour per day. It is designed to be used with multiple ages with some activities geared toward older children and others geared toward younger. You may use as much or as little of the activities listed as you choose. Please feel free to alter the suggested schedule to fit the time constraints and needs of your family. However, the lesson and memory work portions should be used for all ages.

Begin or end each day's activities with prayer.

- Day 1 – Read “Growing in the Word”: Lesson Text and Discussion. Begin “Putting Down Roots”: Memory Work assignments.
- Day 2 – Continue memory work, do “Farther Afield”: Map Work activities, and “Harvest Fun”: Games and Activities.
- Day 3 – Continue memory work, do “Digging Deeper”: Research activities, and/or “Food for Thought”: Puzzles.
- Day 4 – Continue memory work, do “Fruits of Our Labor”: Crafts, or continue working on previous activities.
- Day 5 – Recite memory work, do lesson Review Questions and finish any assignments or activities from the week that time didn't permit.

A Word About the Gospels

In studying the life of Christ, we will be looking at passages from all four gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. It is important to understand why each of these gospels was written. They were addressed to different people for different purposes.

Matthew was written to the Jews by a Jew and about a Jew. This is why he begins his book with genealogies – something the Jews had great interest in. Mark addresses his gospel to Gentile readers (all non-Jews) who would not be very familiar with Old Testament law. He focuses on the servanthood of Christ. Luke was a physician who writes his account to Theophilus who was possibly a government official or member of nobility. Luke writes from a historical perspective and may have been trying to make the case that Christianity was not a threat to the Roman empire. The gospel of John was written by the apostle John in the Greek language and emphasizes the deity of Jesus.

Taken all together, the gospels paint a complete picture of the birth, life and death of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

There is also a *Harmony of the Gospels* reference chart in Appendix C located in the back of the book. This is a handy study tool to see all of the events of the gospels in chronological order as well as which of the gospels reference each event.

Lesson 1: Angels Announce the Birth of Jesus

Text: Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38



"Growing In The Word": Lesson Text And Discussion

Read Matthew 1:18-20. Joseph and Mary were to be married. They were betrothed which is similar to an engagement but much more committed. A betrothal usually consisted of two families entering into a contract to marry one family's son with the other family's daughter and a dowry, or bride price, was usually involved. If you were betrothed, there was no backing out! You were as good as married; that's why Joseph considers "putting Mary away" or divorcing her when he thought she had been unfaithful to him. A divorce was what would have been necessary to break the betrothal. Joseph loved Mary, but all he knew was that she was going to have a baby and he wasn't the father! The angel reassured him that this is a very special baby – one from heaven itself through the Holy Spirit. The angel is not named in these verses but appears to Joseph to give him instructions. How does the angel appear to Joseph? (In a dream)

Read Matthew 1:21-25. Joseph is told that Mary will have a son to be called Jesus and He will do a wonderful thing – save His people from their sins! It's important to know that everything that happens concerning the birth, life, and death of Jesus is a fulfillment of prophecy; none of it is a coincidence or "just happened". It was all in God's divine plan. The angel quotes an Old Testament prophet to Joseph. Do you know which one? (Isaiah) Another name for Jesus will be Immanuel. What does that name mean? (God with us) When Joseph awakens he does as commanded and takes Mary for his wife. This shows us the faith of Joseph. **Read Romans 10:17.** Faith comes by hearing the word of God. Joseph hears the message from the Lord by an angel in his dream. He believes that message and obeys exactly what he is told to do.

Read Luke 1:26-27. We are given the name of the angel who appeared to Mary. What was his name? (Gabriel) He appears to Mary in the city of Nazareth in the region of Galilee. Who sent Gabriel to Mary? (God) Mary is a virgin which means she is a pure, unmarried woman. She is betrothed to Joseph.

Read Luke 1:28-29. Gabriel greets her by saying she's highly favored and blessed. Mary is clearly puzzled by all of this. What would you think if an angel appeared and greeted you like this? The fact that God chose Mary from all other women in the world to be the mother of Jesus says a lot about the kind of woman she was. What must she have been like to have been chosen by God for such a special task – to be the mother of the Messiah? (Discuss)

Read Luke 1:30-33. Wow! She's told she is going to have a baby boy who will be great, a King, and have a kingdom that lasts forever. Now Mary is just a poor woman, and not yet married to Joseph. Can you imagine what she's thinking? She probably has *a lot* of questions!

Read Luke 1:34-38. The angel Gabriel now tells her that this baby will be the very

Son of God! This is *the* Messiah for whom the Jews have watched and waited for so long. How exciting! Did Mary understand exactly how all of this was going to happen? (No) Mary is also told that her relative, Elizabeth, is six months pregnant (another miracle, since she was old and childless). Do you know who Elizabeth's baby was? (John the Baptist) The angel Gabriel finally tells the astonished Mary that *nothing* is impossible with God. He can do anything! Mary then concludes by saying she's the Lord's servant and she's willing to do whatever He asks of her. Mary trusted God. We need to learn a lesson from Mary – how to be a *willing* servant of the Lord no matter how difficult something is or when we don't understand all of the “why's”. Being a cheerful, obedient child of God should always be our goal.

Review Questions: (Answers are provided in the Answer Key.)

1. Who told Joseph about Jesus' birth?
2. How did he appear to Joseph?
3. What did the angel tell Joseph to not be afraid to do?
4. What Old Testament prophet is quoted in Matthew 1:23?
5. What does Immanuel mean?
6. What did the angel tell Joseph that Jesus would do?
7. Who told Mary about Jesus' birth?
8. What city did Mary live in?
9. What is impossible with God?
10. Who was Mary's cousin?
11. What amazing news did the angel give Mary concerning her cousin?
12. Mary called herself the _____ of the Lord.



“Putting Down Roots”: Memory Work

- Memorize Matthew 1:23
- Memorize Matthew Luke 1:37
- Romans 10:17



"Farther Afield": Map Work

Map 1

- Locate the city of Nazareth
- Locate the region of Galilee



"Harvest Fun": Games And Activities

- Act it out - Act out the scene where the angel Gabriel announces Jesus' birth to Mary. Dress the parts and be dramatic. Don't forget how the angel greets her: "Rejoice highly favored one!" You may even want to video your scene.
- Deliver the Message - The angels in our lesson were acting as messengers from the Lord. You're going to deliver a message to people in your family. First, make up a message. For example: "I love you", "Have a great day", or "We're having chicken for dinner." Second, make up a way to communicate or deliver the message. You could speak it in a foreign language, write in in code, play charades, or write it down and hide it in the house playing "hot or cold" to find it or giving clues to its location.



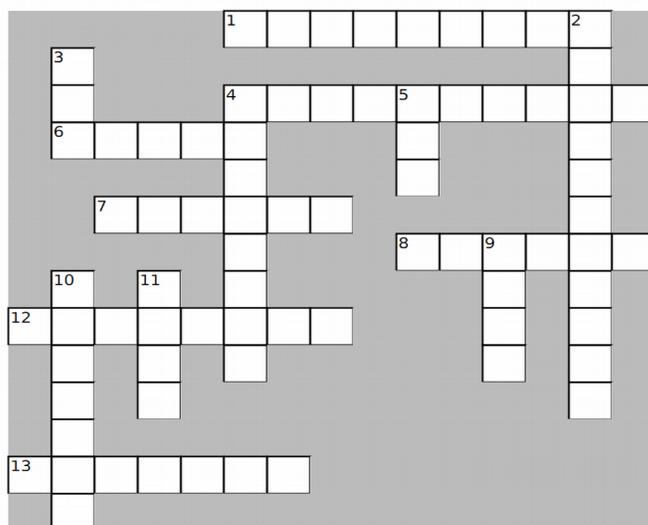
"Digging Deeper": Research

- The angel Gabriel - This is not the only occasion where we read about Gabriel. See if you can find the other places he's mentioned in the Bible and who he spoke to.
- Names of Jesus - An angel tells Joseph that Jesus will be called Immanuel meaning "God with us". The Scriptures are full of many names referring to Jesus. How many can you find? Here's just a few to get you started: Counselor (Isaiah 9:6), Lamb of God (John 1:36), The Way (John 14:6) Make a list and include references.
- Betrothals - Learn what you can about betrothal arrangements in Bible times. Do you think you would have liked to have been in a betrothal arrangement? Why or why not?



"Food For Thought": Puzzles

- Crossword Puzzle - If an answer has more than one word, the space(s) are included. Answers are provided in the Answer Key.



- | Across | Down |
|--|--|
| 1 Mary's relative who was also pregnant | 2 Mary was with child of the _____ |
| 4 "With God nothing is _____" | 3 Who sent the angel to Mary? |
| 6 an angel came to Joseph in a _____ | 4 means "God with us" |
| 7 _____ Gabriel told Mary not to be _____ | 5 Mary was told her baby would be the _____ of God |
| 8 _____ Mary's betrothed city where Mary lived | 9 Joseph was told that Mary's son would save his people from their _____ |
| 12 _____ | 10 name of angel who visited Mary |
| 13 Mary calls herself the _____ of the Lord | 11 mother of Jesus |

- Coded Message -

7 19 22 2 8 19 26 15 15 24 26 15 15 19 18 8

13 26 14 22 18 14 14 26 13 6 22 15 4 19 18 24 19

14 22 26 13 8 20 12 23 4 18 7 19 6 8

Key to the Code:

F N R U A G O S V C H T D I E B W K Y P M L J
21 13 9 6 26 20 12 8 5 24 19 7 23 18 22 25 4 16 2 11 14 15 17



"Fruits Of Our Labor": Crafts

- Make a name for yourself - Angels told Joseph and Mary some different names their child would be called: Jesus, Son of God, Son of the Highest and Immanuel which means "God with us." Find out what your name means and make a name plaque for your room. You will need a rectangular piece of thin wood or poster board or card stock measuring about 5 inches wide by 10 inches long. If you're using wood, you may want to paint a background color first. Write or paint your name in large letters. Underneath it in smaller letters, write or paint the meaning of your name. Decorate your name plaque however you'd like and hang it in your room.
- Make an angel - You will need: Two large white coffee filters, a piece of thin ribbon, gold spray paint, a white twisty tie and glue. (You can substitute acrylic paint with a sponge brush instead of spray paint.) First, make a small ball for the head by rolling up some paper tissue (like kleenex or toilet paper). Place the ball in

the middle of one of the coffee filters then pull the filter up around the ball. Tie the piece of ribbon around the filter over the ball. Turn it upside down with the covered ball now as the head of the angel and the rest of the filter as its gown. Tie the ribbon in a bow at the neck. If you'd like, draw a face on the angel with a marker very carefully. For the wings: Take the other coffee filter and lightly spray gold paint on both sides. Let it dry. Fold the coffee filter in half, then pinch it together in the middle to form wings. Wrap a white twisty tie around the pinched portion to keep it in place. Glue the wings to the back of the angel at the neck and upper back.