

The Flight to Egypt (God watches over Baby Jesus)

Teacher Pep Talk: In this lesson the children will recreate the Flight to Egypt... **right down to the tent!** (*This has to be one of the BEST loved preschool activities EVER!*) The children will learn that God sent an angel to warn Joseph of danger, and that Joseph did exactly what God said to do! The LORD watched over baby Jesus and kept Him safe! This is a great lesson to do just AFTER Christmas!

NOTE: It is not necessary to discuss the “Slaughter of the Innocents” with the children. However it will help if you are familiar with the story. It helps to realize just how much danger they were really in. (See “*Teachers Only*” for just a taste of this real danger.)

Teachers only: Imagine Joseph. It is dark. His heart is pounding. He has just awakened from a dreadful dream. He wakes Mary and tells her to dress quickly. They must take the baby and flee to Egypt. God has told him that there are men coming to try and kill the baby! They gather up their belongings (including the presents just given to them by the wise men.) They leave while it is still dark, perhaps even while Joseph’s heart is still pounding. They disappear into the night and into silence. Behind them they will hear distant cries. It is “Rachel weeping for her children... because they are no more.”

You will need: Materials to help make a “tent” in the room. (*For example: A couple of blankets or sheets to put over a long table.*) Snacks, such as bread and water, to eat in the tent. Other things that you might take with you on a journey. (*For example: Canteens or water bottles, blankets, backpacks, etc.*)

Major Points: God sent an angel to warn Joseph about some danger!
God told them to escape to Egypt.
Joseph did what God said to do.
The LORD watched over Jesus and His family!
He watches over you too!

Scripture Ref. Matthew 2:13-18 (Verses 13-15) When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up,” he said, “take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.” So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.”

Memory Verse: Psalm 121:5 The LORD watches over you...

Lesson: **Christmas was fun!**

- Christmas was fun this year! Tell me about your Christmas.
(Wait for answers. Let each child speak.)
- That does sound like fun!
- Today we are going to have fun! We are going to go camping right here in the room! But first I have to tell you a story about baby Jesus and His family.

God sends an angel to warn Joseph about some danger.

- One day, after Jesus had been born... and after the shepherds had come to worship Him... and after the wise men had come and to worship Him... and brought all their presents... the gold, the frankincense and the myrrh... (Whew... that's a lot to say...)
- Anyway, one day after all that happened, Joseph fell asleep.
- And that night, God sent an angel to talk to Joseph in his dream.
- The angel told Joseph that baby Jesus was in danger!
- There were bad men who wanted to hurt baby Jesus.

God told them to escape to Egypt.

- The angel warned Joseph to get up, take Mary and the baby and flee to Egypt. (*Egypt was another country, pretty far away.*)
- God knew that they would be safe in Egypt.

Joseph did what God said to do.

- Joseph woke up. He did just what the angel had told him to do.
- He woke up Mary and they got baby Jesus and fled to Egypt.
- They left at night and in a hurry.

The Lord watched over Jesus and His family.

- Mary and Joseph and baby Jesus were safe in Egypt.
- They stayed there for several years, until God sent the angel to Joseph again to tell him when it was safe to come back.
- The LORD watched over Jesus and His family.
- And He watches over you too!

Prayer: Let's pray and thank God that He watches over us!

Dear God,
Thank you for watching over us!
Thank you for protecting baby Jesus and His family.
Thank you for Christmas.
We love you. Amen.

Suggested Activities: (Pick and choose the activities that work best for you!)

Christmas Set – Coloring Pages

Give a set of the Christmas coloring pages to each child and have them decorate the pages they have not yet done. Use a variety of crayons, markers, glue with glitter, yarn, cotton balls, etc. Punch holes along the edges of all the papers in the set and bind them together with loops of yarn to make a keepsake book from this Christmas series.

Re-enact the Flight to Egypt

In this wonderful preschool activity the children pretend to re-enact the Flight to Egypt right in the classroom... even down to constructing a "tent!" You will need items to help make a "tent" in your classroom. (***The easiest way is to throw a couple of blankets or sheets over a long table. Practice this before class begins and either leave it set up or rebuild it during the re-enactment.***) You will also need to have items on hand that are usually carried when camping or traveling. Example: Canteens or bottles of water; bread or other dry snacks (like crackers); blankets; and maybe a backpack.

NOTE: If your classroom has many children in it, consider dividing into several smaller groups to travel together, with a Smaller Tent for each group. Have one adult with each group of 6-10 children in a "tent". ALTERNATIVELY: Suspend a large sheet, or piece of fabric, by its corners from the ceiling in one corner of the room to create a Larger Tent and have the whole class sit under that.

Begin by just talking to the children, as if the lesson is still going on.

The Flight to Egypt

- Joseph, Mary and baby Jesus and left Bethlehem in a hurry and in the middle of the night.
- They were going on a long journey.
- If you were going on a long journey, what kinds of things would you take with you? (*Wait for answers. When the students mention items that you have with you for the re-enactment, bring them out and put them on the floor in front of you.*)
- These are some of the things like Mary and Joseph would have taken with them on their journey to Egypt. (*Show the children any other items you have as well. Discuss why they might have taken each of these things along.*)

Begin the Re-enactment

- Let's pretend we are with Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus and that we have to run away and hide from the Roman soldiers!
- They left in the middle of the night. (*Darken the room a little.*)
- Quick get all the things! (*Distribute all the items to carry.*)
- Ok, hurry...Let's go! (*Lead the children on a "trip" around the room, stopping briefly now and then at various spots. Pretend to watch for Roman guards. Crouch low so that you won't be seen easily. Speak in hurried whispers. Finally you come to the place where you will "make camp" to rest.*)

Making Camp/ Tent and a Snack

- Whew! We've come a long way! I'm tired and a little hungry. I don't see any Roman guards right now. Maybe we are far enough away from Bethlehem to be safe for a little while. Let's make camp and have some food and some rest. (*Set up the tent just like you practiced before class.*)

- Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus would have had a little tent like this one to rest in. They would have put all their things in it like this. (*Put the things in the tent. Unroll the bedding and let everyone sit inside the tent. When everyone is comfortable, break out the bread and water and have a snack in the tent!*)
- Mary and Joseph and baby Jesus would have had some food and water with them. Water is very important there, because some of the land is desert. (*As you have snacks in the tent, talk with the children about the various aspects of the lesson. Spend some time and let the children enjoy the tent.*)
 - What would it have been like for Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus as they traveled to try and escape from the Roman soldiers?
 - What kind of things did they have to take with them?
 - How did God warn Joseph about the danger to baby Jesus?
 - God watched over baby Jesus and His family!
 - God watches over all of us too!
- As you finish your snack, put your trash in this sack. People who travel have to clean up after themselves. We can't leave any trace that we were here! Someone might find it and follow us! (*Have the children help clean up the snacks.*)

On to Egypt... but first... a little nap!!

- Good job, cleaning up! Oh, I'm sleepy! (*Yawn loudly!*) Time to get a little rest before we have to move on! (*Lie down and pretend to snore loudly. Sit up after a moment or so.*)
- OK... that's enough sleep! We have to go! Those Roman soldiers could still be after us!
- Better break camp. Gather up everything. We can't leave a trace! (*Gather up all the items you brought with you. Pack up the blankets, the snacks... even the trash, if it's still with you.*)
- On to Egypt! Let's go! (*Lead the children out of the tent and around the room again until you end up in "Egypt".*)

Arrive in Egypt.

- Here we are in Egypt! Finally! Now we are safe! (*Sit down.*)
- Mary and Joseph and Jesus stayed in Egypt for a long time, until all the people who wanted to hurt baby Jesus were gone.
- Then God sent the angel to tell them it was safe to come back.
- They went to Nazareth, where they lived until Jesus was grown.
- God watched over baby Jesus and protected Him.
- God watches over you too!
- Well... Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus are safe now! Time to put our things away! (*Involve the children in cleaning up the room and putting it back as it is supposed to be. Dismantle the tent, put away all the items, and throw away the trash!*) **THE END**