



EASTER FAMILY DEVOTIONAL

WEEK 1
MARCH 13-17



FIRST BAPTIST SIMPSONVILLE
UPSTATE CHURCH

WEEK 1, DAY 1

WAYNE BRAY

SCRIPTURE: LUKE 2:1-7, JESUS STORYBOOK BIBLE, HE IS HERE

EXPLAIN:

THIS MAY BE THE FIRST TIME YOU’VE EVER READ THE STORY OF JESUS’S BIRTH IN THE SPRINGTIME. WHEN YOU HEAR THE NAME CAESAR AUGUSTUS, OUR MINDS RACE IMMEDIATELY TO CHRISTMAS TREES AND NATIVITY SCENES. FAMILIARITY WITH THE STORY OFTEN LEADS US TO MISS THE PURPOSE OF THE EVENT WE CELEBRATE EACH DECEMBER.

THE NARRATIVE FOUND IN LUKE 2:1-7 IS NOT ONLY THE INTRODUCTION TO THE CHRISTMAS STORY; IT IS THE BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL. THE BIRTH OF JESUS IN BETHLEHEM OVER 2,000 YEARS AGO WAS THE FIRST FLICKER OF LIGHT IN A WORLD FILLED WITH DARKNESS, THE FIRST GLIMMER OF HOPE FOR A PEOPLE WHO WERE DEFINED BY DESPERATION AND DEATH.

WHILE WE CELEBRATE HIS PRESENCE IN DECEMBER, WE OFTEN NEGLECT TO FOCUS ON HIS PURPOSE DURING THE SEASON OF CELEBRATION. IN FACT, IT’S A CHALLENGE TO RESOLVE THE TENSION OF CELEBRATING CHRIST’S BIRTH, KNOWING IT WILL NEVITABLY LEAD TO HIS DEATH. REMEMBER, THIS PERFECT BABY WRAPPED IN SWADDLING CLOTHES, LYING IN A MANGER, IS EMANUEL, “GOD WITH US,” WHO HAS BEEN BORN FOR THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF BECOMING A SACRIFICE FOR OUR SINS.

APPLY:

FOR FAMILIES WITH YOUNGER KIDS:

JESUS CAME TO BE WITH US WHEN HE WAS BORN IN BETHLEHEM, BUT HE IS STILL WITH US TODAY. WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT JESUS WILL NEVER LEAVE US? HOW OFTEN DO YOU THANK JESUS FOR YOURSELF, NOT FOR DYING FOR EVERYONE ELSE, BUT FOR YOU?

FOR FAMILIES WITH TEENS AND ADULTS:

DISCUSS HOW YOU AS A FAMILY MIGHT CONNECT THE DOTS OF THE GOSPEL STORY, BRINGING THE VARIOUS MAJOR EVENTS OF SCRIPTURE TOGETHER TO SHOW THE UNENDING LOVE OF OUR GOD. JESUS LIVED AND HE DIED, BUT HE NOW LIVES INSIDE OUR HEARTS. DISCUSS WHAT PAUL MEANS WHEN HE SAYS, “CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY.” (COLOSSIANS 1:27)

PRAYER:

GOD, TEACH US TO SEE THE BIG PICTURE, NOT VIEWING BIBLE STORIES IN ISOLATION BUT AS ONE BEAUTIFUL STORY OF LOVE, GRACE, AND FORGIVENESS. HELP US TO RECOGNIZE THE EXTREME VALUE OF THE GIFT OF YOUR SON, JESUS. THANK YOU FOR SENDING HIM TO DIE, THAT WE MIGHT LIVE WITH YOU FOR ETERNITY. AMEN.

WEEK 1, DAY 2

EMILY TOOLE

SCRIPTURE: LUKE 2:8-21, JESUS STORYBOOK BIBLE: THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

EXPLAIN:

HAVE YOU EVER SEEN SOMETHING SO AMAZING AND WONDERFUL THAT YOU COULD NOT CONCEAL YOUR SENSE OF AWE? PERHAPS YOU HAVE BEEN FROZEN IN A MOMENT SO PROFOUND THAT THE MERE THOUGHT OF IT TAKES YOU BACK TO THE EXPERIENCE, AND YOU ARE EAGER TO SHARE EVERY DETAIL.

LUKE 2:8-21 BEAUTIFULLY DEPICTS THE MOMENT WHEN THE SHEPHERDS LEARNED ABOUT THE BIRTH OF JESUS. THE SHEPHERDS, BEING ORDINARY PEOPLE LIKE YOU AND ME, WERE AMAZED AS THE GLORY OF GOD SHONE AROUND THEM AND A CHORUS OF ANGELS PRAISED HIM. DID THEY RUN AND HIDE IN FEAR? DID THEY KEEP THIS NEWS TO THEMSELVES? NO. WHEN THE SHEPHERDS HEARD THE GOOD NEWS OF THE MESSIAH BEING BORN, THEY HURRIED TO SEE HIM. THEY WERE DRAWN TO JESUS FIRST. THEN, AFTER SEEING HIM, THE LIVING FULFILLMENT OF THE SCRIPTURES, THEY TOLD OTHERS ABOUT HIM AND THE PEOPLE WHO HEARD WERE AMAZED.

AS WE DRAW NEARER TO JESUS, OUR SAVIOR, WHO LOVES US SO DEEPLY HE DIED FOR US HAVE A RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, OUR LIVES BEGIN TO HAVE A GREATER SENSE OF JOY, HOPE, AND AWE. THE LIGHT OF THE LOVE OF CHRIST SHINES THROUGH THE SADNESS, CHALLENGES, AND MUNDANE IN OUR LIVES, TRANSFORMING OUR DEEPEST AND DARKEST PARTS. AND THAT LIGHT CAN SHINE THROUGH OUR WORDS AND ACTIONS AS WE SHARE THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS WITH THOSE AROUND US JUST LIKE THE SHEPHERDS DID SO LONG AGO.

APPLY:

FOR FAMILIES WITH YOUNGER KIDS:

WHAT IS THE MOST EXCITING THING YOU HAVE EVER SEEN?

HOW CAN WE DRAW CLOSER TO JESUS?

HOW CAN WE TELL OTHERS ABOUT JESUS?

FOR FAMILIES WITH TEENS AND ADULTS:

HOW CAN THE WORK OF CHRIST BE ILLUMINATED THROUGH YOUR LIFE?

WHEN FACING CHALLENGES AND HARDSHIPS, WHAT ARE PRACTICAL WAYS TO DRAW NEAR TO GOD?

HOW DOES THE SPIRIT HELP BELIEVERS SHARE THE GOSPEL?

PRAYER:

DEAR HEAVENLY FATHER, THANK YOU FOR SENDING JESUS TO SAVE US SO THAT WE MIGHT HAVE A RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH YOU. HELP US DRAW NEAR TO YOU DAILY THROUGH SCRIPTURE AND PRAYER. DIRECT OUR STEPS. WE PRAY THAT WE WOULD BE ABLE TO SHARE THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE HOPE AND JOY THAT COMES FROM KNOWING YOU WITH THOSE WE ENCOUNTER IN OUR DAILY LIVES SO THAT WE MIGHT BE LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS. THANK YOU, JESUS. AMEN.

WEEK 1, DAY 3

KAYLEIGH MAYFIELD

SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 2:1-12, JESUS STORYBOOK BIBLE, KING OF ALL KINGS

EXPLAIN:

YOU MAY WONDER: WHAT DOES THE STORY OF THE WISE MEN HAVE TO DO WITH EASTER? THE STORY OF THESE RICH, INFLUENTIAL, AND POWERFUL MEN IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT BEGINS TO REVEAL WHO JESUS IS AND WHY HE CAME.

AT THE TIME, THE JEWISH PEOPLE ALREADY HAD A KING, HEROD, APPOINTED BY ROME. SO, WHEN THESE WISE MEN APPEARED, ASKING WHERE THE KING OF THE JEWS HAD BEEN BORN, IT CAUSED QUITE A STIR. HEROD WAS ESPECIALLY TROUBLED AS YOU MIGHT IMAGINE. ONCE HE DISCOVERED THE OLD TESTAMENT HAD PREDICTED THE CHRIST WOULD BE BORN IN BETHLEHEM, HEROD SENT THE WISE MEN THERE IN HOPES OF TRICKING THEM INTO BRINGING THE CHILD'S LOCATION BACK TO HIM. HEROD SAID HE WANTED TO COME AND WORSHIP THE NEWBORN CHRIST, BUT IT WAS A LIE. MIRACULOUSLY, A STAR BEGAN TO MOVE ACROSS THE SKY, LEADING THE WISE MEN TO BETHLEHEM. WHEN THE WISE MEN ARRIVED, THE STAR STOPPED OVER THE HOME WHERE MARY, JOSEPH, AND JESUS WERE STAYING.

WHEN THEY SAW THE BABY JESUS, THEY REJOICED AT FINDING THE KING OF THE JEWS, GOD'S SON SENT TO RULE AND SHEPHERD HIS PEOPLE. AND FALLING DOWN BEFORE JESUS, THEY WORSHIPED HIM AND OFFERED HIM THEIR TREASURE. JESUS WAS A KING UNLIKE ANY OTHER - FULLY GOD, YET FULLY MAN - AND HE CAME, NOT TO BE SERVED, BUT TO SERVE AND TO GIVE HIS LIFE FOR US. DESPITE HIS AGE AND HIS POOR ESTATE, THE WISE MEN KNEW JESUS WAS THE CHOSEN KING.

APPLY:

FOR FAMILIES WITH YOUNGER KIDS:

WHY DID THE WISE MEN WANT TO FIND JESUS?

WHAT DID THE WISE MEN BRING TO JESUS?

WHAT GIFTS DO YOU HAVE THAT YOU COULD GIVE TO JESUS?

FOR FAMILIES WITH TEENS AND ADULTS:

WHAT DO YOU THINK CONTRIBUTED TO THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE WISE MEN'S RESPONSE AND HEROD'S RESPONSE TO THE NEWLY BORN KING OF THE JEWS?

HEROD WAS TROUBLED BY THE NEWS THAT THERE WAS ANOTHER KING AND WANTED TO PROTECT HIS POWER.

WHEN WE HEAR THE NEWS THAT GOD THE SON CAME TO RULE AND SHEPHERD OUR LIVES,

HOW DO WE RESPOND? DO WE WORSHIP OR DO WE TRY TO MAINTAIN OUR OWN THRONE?

WHAT DID WORSHIPING JESUS INVOLVE FOR THE WISE MEN?

HOW DOES THIS INFLUENCE YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF HOW YOU SHOULD WORSHIP JESUS?

PRAYER:

JESUS, THANK YOU FOR STEPPING DOWN FROM HEAVEN FOR US - OUR SIN LEFT US FAR AWAY FROM YOU, BUT YOU CAME TO EARTH TO BRING US NEAR. THANK YOU FOR DOING FOR US WHAT WE COULD NEVER DO FOR OURSELVES AND SHOWING US HOW TO REALLY LIVE THROUGH LAYING DOWN OUR DESIRES TO WORSHIP YOU AND SERVE OTHERS. YOU ARE WORTHY OF EVERYTHING WE HAVE - REMIND US OF ALL YOU'VE DONE TO FREE US OF SIN AND GIVE US A RELATIONSHIP WITH YOU. AMEN.

WEEK 1, DAY 4

BRANDON SHILEY

SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 3:1-17, JESUS STORYBOOK BIBLE, HEAVEN BREAKS THROUGH
EXPLAIN:

AROUND THE SAME TIME JESUS WAS BORN, A MAN BY THE NAME OF JOHN WAS BORN TOO! JOHN WAS JESUS' COUSIN, AND HE COULD HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED A BIT OF AN ODDBALL. HE LIVED IN THE DESERT HIS ENTIRE LIFE, WORE CAMEL'S HAIR, AND ATE ONLY BUGS AND HONEY FOR FOOD! BUT GOD HAD A SPECIAL PLAN FOR JOHN, AND THAT PLAN WAS TO PREPARE THE WAY FOR JESUS.

HIS PURPOSE WAS TO TELL PEOPLE ABOUT THE SAVIOR WHO WOULD BE COMING AT ANY TIME. HIS MESSAGE WAS SIMPLE: "REPENT!" THAT MEANS STOP RUNNING FROM GOD, TURN AROUND, AND RUN TOWARDS HIM INSTEAD! MANY PEOPLE BELIEVED HIS MESSAGE, CONFESSED THEIR SINS, AND TRUSTED IN THE COMING JESUS. JOHN BAPTIZED THOSE WHO BELIEVED IN HIM, DEMONSTRATING THE NEW LIFE THEY HAD FOUND IN GOD. FOR THIS REASON, HE CAME TO BE KNOWN AS "JOHN THE BAPTIST!"

ONE DAY, JOHN WAS SPEAKING BEFORE THE CROWDS AND BAPTIZING WHEN JESUS HIMSELF WALKED UP TO HIM! JESUS ASKED JOHN TO BAPTIZE HIM, AND SO HE DUNKED JESUS BENEATH THE WATER. THE BIBLE SAYS, "THE HEAVENS WERE OPENED UP TO HIM," AND WE CAN IMAGINE A BRIGHT LIGHT COMING DOWN FROM THE SKY AS GOD SAYS, "THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, WITH WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED." THIS MARKED THE VERY BEGINNING OF JESUS' MINISTRY ON EARTH, AND THE MISSION OF SALVATION WAS FULLY UNDERWAY!

APPLY:

FOR FAMILIES WITH YOUNGER KIDS:

WHAT IS SOMETHING IN YOUR LIFE THAT YOU HAD TO APOLOGIZE FOR?

IS JUST SAYING SORRY ENOUGH IF YOU ARE GOING TO DO THE SAME THING AGAIN?

WHAT SHOULD APOLOGIES LEAD TO?

WHY IS JOHN THE BAPTIST TELLING PEOPLE THEY NEED TO REPENT (AN APOLOGY LEADING TO A CHANGE)?

FOR FAMILIES WITH TEENS AND ADULTS:

WHAT KIND OF EXAMPLE DO WE SEE IN JOHN THE BAPTIST WHERE HE IS WILLING TO GIVE UP HIS ENTIRE LIFE FOR THIS ONE MESSAGE?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE BAPTIZED? WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

IF YOU READ THE PASSAGE, WHY IS IT IMPORTANT THAT GOD SAYS, "THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, WITH WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED?"

PRAYER:

GOD, HELP ME TO LIVE IN THE SAME WAY JOHN THE BAPTIST DID, GIVING UP MY LIFE FOR YOU AND YOUR MISSION. GIVE ME A CONSISTENT HEART OF REPENTANCE, A HEART WILLING TO ADMIT MY MISTAKES AND RUN BACK TO YOU WITH OPEN ARMS. EMPOWER ME TO DO THESE THINGS THROUGH THE WORK OF YOUR SPIRIT. AMEN.

WEEK 1, DAY 5

CHUCK FULLER

SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 4:1-22, THE JESUS STORYBOOK BIBLE CHAPTER, “LET’S GO!”

EXPLAIN:

JESUS EXPERIENCED MANY DIFFICULT THINGS, INCLUDING TEMPTATION. TEMPTATION HAPPENS WHEN A PERSON FEELS ENTICED TO DO SOMETHING WRONG. SOMETIMES WE ARE TEMPTED TO CHEAT, LIE, STEAL, OR MISTREAT SOMEONE. JUST AS ADAM AND EVE WERE TEMPTED BY SATAN IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN, SATAN STILL TEMPTS US TODAY, AND SATAN EVEN TEMPTED JESUS HIMSELF.

IN MATTHEW 4:1-11, SATAN TEMPTS JESUS THREE TIMES. SATAN TEMPTS JESUS TO STOP TRUSTING GOD, TO DOUBT GOD’S PROTECTION, AND TO STOP WORSHIPING GOD. IN FACT, SATAN PROMISES TO MAKE JESUS WEALTHY AND POWERFUL IF HE WOULD STOP FOLLOWING GOD AND FOLLOW HIM INSTEAD. ALL THREE TIMES, JESUS QUOTES SCRIPTURE BACK TO SATAN AND SHOWS HIS TRUST IN GOD. IT’S IMPORTANT FOR US TO REMEMBER THAT IN THE FACE OF TEMPTATION, WE TOO CAN TRUST GOD AND REMEMBER WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS. IT’S EVEN MORE IMPORTANT TO SEE WHAT JESUS DID FOR US WHEN HE OVERCAME TEMPTATION. THE FIRST PERSON, ADAM, FACED TEMPTATION AND FAILED. WE ALL FACE TEMPTATION AND FAIL, BUT JESUS FACED TEMPTATION AND DID NOT FAIL. HE IS THE ONE WHO OVERCOMES SIN AND DEFEATS SATAN, AND HE IS THE ONE WE CAN TRUST TO SAVE US!

ONCE JESUS PROVED SATAN CANNOT DEFEAT HIM, HE BEGINS TO PREACH THE GOOD NEWS OF HIS VICTORY AND CALL PEOPLE TO FOLLOW HIM IN MATTHEW 4:12-22 – PEOPLE WHO WOULD GO AND TELL OTHERS THIS GOOD NEWS. AFTER ALL, THE ONE WHO DEFEATS OUR ENEMY IS WORTH FOLLOWING, AND HIS MESSAGE IS WORTH TELLING OTHERS!

APPLY:

FOR FAMILIES WITH YOUNGER KIDS:

CAN YOU THINK OF TIMES YOU’VE BEEN TEMPTED TO DO WRONG THINGS?

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO WHEN YOU ARE TEMPTED TO DO SOMETHING WRONG?

HOW CAN YOU FOLLOW JESUS AND WHAT CAN YOU TELL OTHERS ABOUT HIM?

FOR FAMILIES WITH TEENS AND ADULTS:

WHY IS IT SO SIGNIFICANT THAT JESUS OVERCAME TEMPTATION FOR US? HOW DOES THIS EVENT PREVIEW THE CROSS AND RESURRECTION?

WHAT DOES JESUS’S VICTORY OVER TEMPTATION TEACH US ABOUT OUR OWN TEMPTATIONS?

WHAT DOES JESUS’S VICTORY OVER TEMPTATION TEACH US ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW HIM AND SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH OTHERS?

PRAYER:

FATHER, HELP ME TO TRUST JESUS WHEN I FACE TEMPTATION. HELP ME TO REMEMBER HE DEFEATED MY WORST ENEMY AND HE IS WORTH FOLLOWING MY WHOLE LIFE. GIVE ME THE COURAGE I NEED FOLLOW HIM AND TELL OTHERS ABOUT HIM. AMEN.