

Long Journeys

Matthew 2:13-23; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 64-67

Have you ever gone on a long journey? Did it take a long time to pack and prepare? Mary and Joseph went on a long journey. And they had to leave in a hurry.

For some time after Jesus was born, Mary and Joseph lived in Bethlehem. They moved from the stable to a better place. And Mary often thought of the nighttime visit of the shepherds. Weeks later another group of visitors came to see Jesus. It happened like this . . .

On the night Jesus was born, some wise men in a country to the east of Judea were studying the sky. They saw a strange light that faded away. As it faded away, a new star appeared. These wise men, called magi, had studied the stars for a long time. But this star was one they had never seen before.

The sight of that light and a bright new star made these men curious. They immediately began to study old writings. Soon they discovered an old prophecy about a "Star out of Jacob" and a "scepter" that would "rise out of Israel." (Numbers 24:17). They wondered if this new star could be the fulfillment of that prophecy. Could it be a sign of the promised Messiah the Jews had talked about for years? They decided that it was.

Through dreams, God told the wise men to go and search for the newborn child, the Messiah. In their country it was the custom to give gifts to princes, kings, and other important people. So the wise men carried gold, myrrh, and frankincense with them. They would give these expensive gifts to the promised Savior.

They traveled by night so they could keep the star in view. When they stopped during the day, they continued to study the prophecies. And they became more and more convinced that this child was the Promised One.



The Message

God can guide our lives just as He guided the wise men and Jesus' parents.

Memory Verse

"My God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus"

(Philippians 4:19, NIV).



After many days, the wise men approached Jerusalem. There the star seemed to rest over the temple. They went to the priests and rulers. "Where is the king of the Jews?" they asked. But no one seemed to know.

King Herod heard about these men from the East. So he questioned the Jewish priests and rulers. From them he learned that the prophet Micah had said that the child would be born in Bethlehem.

Herod talked with the wise men and sent them to Bethlehem. "When you have found the child," he said, "come back and tell me where He is. I want to worship Him too." But Herod was lying. He planned to kill Jesus!

So the wise men traveled to Bethlehem. There they found Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus. These wise men were not Jewish. But they recognized that Jesus was the one God had promised. So they knelt and worshiped Him, and presented their gifts.

Before they left Bethlehem, God sent the wise men another dream. "Do not go back to Herod. Go home by a different way," they were warned. Days later, Herod finally realized that the wise men were not coming back to Jerusalem. That made him very angry. He had to find that baby! So he ordered the death of all babies in Bethlehem who were two years old and younger.

But God was still in charge! He warned Joseph in a dream. "Get up! Take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Herod will start looking for the child to kill him. Stay in Egypt until I tell you to return" (Matthew 2:13, ICB). The little family left at once, in the dark of the night. They used the gifts of the wise men to supply their needs. Egypt became their home until Herod died. Then God sent an angel to tell Joseph that it was safe to return to their homeland.

At first Joseph thought about going back to Bethlehem. But again God sent him to another place. They settled in the little town of Nazareth, Joseph's former home. There Jesus grew up.

God loves you and your family too. He will guide you and care for you just as He guided Jesus' parents.

S A B B A T H

SHARE

Go for a walk or a ride with your family. Think about what protects you as you go. Talk about safety rules. Share your lesson story with your family. What protection did Jesus have when He was a child?

ASK

Find an umbrella, an adhesive bandage, and other everyday things that protect us. Pretend to use them. Ask your family to guess what you learned about God today. (He protects us.)

SING

Sing songs about God's care; then thank Him for it.

S U N D A Y

DO

Use some Christmas paper. Cut out shapes of the three presents the wise men gave to Baby Jesus. Stick them on to a piece of paper. Write your memory verse underneath. Use this to teach the verse to your family.

PRAY

Bethlehem was known as the city of David because King David came from there. Where does your country's leader live? Pray for the leaders of your country today.

M O N D A Y

READ

During family worship read Matthew 2:13 together. Look on a map to see how far it is from Bethlehem to Egypt and from Egypt to Nazareth. Find a place that you know that is about as far away from your house.

DO

Mary and Joseph had to leave quietly during the night. Walk around the house quietly for five minutes. Is it easy to be quiet?

PRAY

Ask God to protect people who are traveling.

T U E S D A Y

READ

During family worship, ask your family to draw or list things that are scary. Beside each one, draw things that protect them. Read Joshua 1:9 together. How does that verse help?

THINK

Review your memory verse together. How did God meet all your needs today?

PRAY

Thank God for His promises and ask Him to take away your fears.

W E D N E S D A Y

DO

During worship, ask family members to tell about a time God protected them. Were angels with them?

DO

God sent an angel messenger to Joseph and the wise men. What ways do we send messages? Send a message to someone today. Tell them that God loves them.

SING

A new year is a new beginning. Make some New Year resolutions or promises. Sing "He's Able" (Sing for Joy, No. 40). Thank God that He is able to take care of you and your family. Ask Him to help you keep your promises.

The star the wise men saw was really a company of shining angels.



THURSDAY

READ With your family read and discuss Psalm 32:7, Psalm 34:7, and John 17:11. Copy the texts and carry them with you. Read them when you are troubled or afraid.

ASK Ask your family about transportation in Bible times. Which would you like to try? Draw how you think Mary and Joseph traveled to Egypt, or how the wise men traveled to Bethlehem. How do you get from your home to church?

PRAY Thank God for keeping you safe as you travel.

FRIDAY

READ During family worship read Matthew 2:13-23. With the help of your family tell the story as if you were a wise man. As Herod. As Mary.

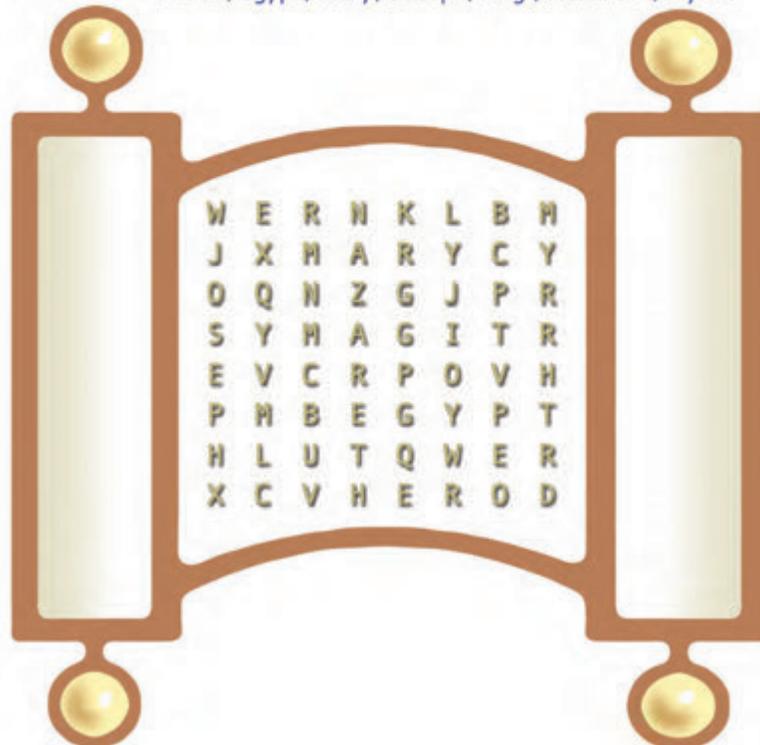
ASK Ask your family: How has God helped our family in the past year? Together, make a list.

SING Sing praise songs together; then thank God for all He does to care for you and your family.

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PUZZLE

Directions: Find the following words hidden in the grid of letters:
Herod, Egypt, Mary, Joseph, Magi, Nazareth, Myrrh





Grace Box



Directions: Make this a family worship activity. Collect a variety of items that represent people, places, and objects mentioned in Lessons 10–13. See how many you can collect – there is no limit! Decorate a box just the way that you want it. Label the box with your name and the words “Grace Box.” Place the items that you collected in the box. Before prayers, put your hand in the box (without looking!) and select one item. As you look at your selected item, think about the Bible story that it represents and thank Jesus for what you learned about grace from that story. Read these Bible verses for some ideas.

Write an object for each:

Luke: 1:42 _____

Luke 1:63 _____

Luke 1:80 _____

Luke 2:7 _____

Luke 2:8 _____

Luke 2:13 _____

Matthew 13:55 _____

Matthew 2:1 _____

Matthew 2:2 _____

Matthew 2:9-11 _____

Matthew 2:13, 14 _____

Some ideas for decorating your cardboard box:

1. Wrapping paper
2. Ribbon
3. Paint (water-based)
4. Markers
5. Glitter (find at craft stores)
6. Glue
7. Yarn
8. Stickers
9. Cut-out stars
10. Crayons

Some ideas for items to be placed in your box:

1. A small plastic bag of sand.
2. A toy camel or a cut-out of a camel or crown.
3. Coins or gold-colored objects.
4. A strong smelling leaf such as mint for the incense.
5. A small piece of wood.
6. A paper cone to represent a megaphone (for loud voice).
7. A picture of a musical instrument or angel.
8. A piece of wool or cotton.
9. Cloth for Baby Jesus' swaddling clothes.
10. Paper, pen, pencil.
11. Sandpaper.

