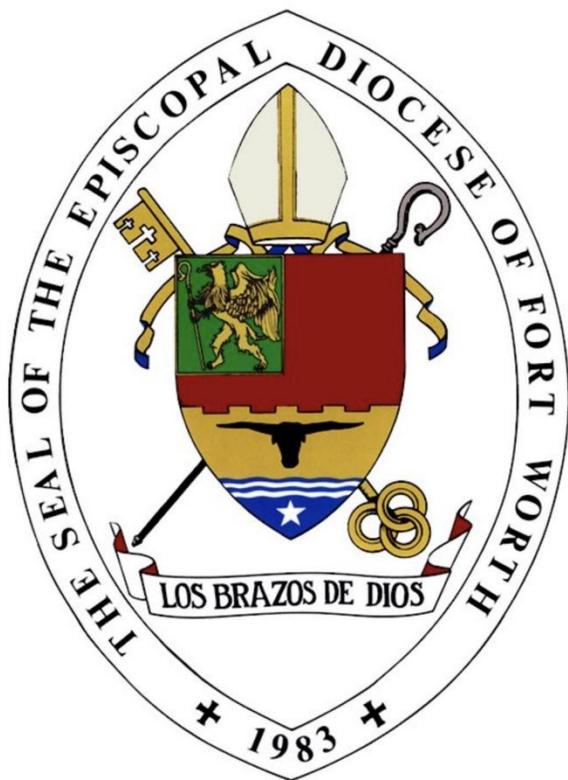


# EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

A lectionary-based Sunday school curriculum for Pre-K through High School



**SECOND  
SUNDAY OF  
CHRISTMAS**

**Sunday from  
January 1 to  
January 5**

A free resource created by the Christian Education Commission  
of the Anglican Diocese of Fort Worth

**Sunday School Curriculum**  
**for the Second Sunday After Christmas, Year A**  
**Sunday from January 2 to January 5**  
**(Before Epiphany)**

**Lectionary Texts:**

Jeremiah 31:7-14

Psalm 84

Ephesians 1:3-14

Matthew 2:1-12

**Jeremiah 31:7-14**

<sup>7</sup> The Lord says,

"Sing with joy because the people of Jacob are blessed.

Shout because the Lord has made them the greatest nation.

Make your praises heard.

Say, 'Lord, save your people.

Save the people who are left alive in Israel.'

<sup>8</sup> I will bring them from the land of the north.

I will gather them from one end of the earth to the other.

Even those who are blind and those who can't walk  
will be among them.

Pregnant women and women having their babies  
will be among them also.

A large number will return.

<sup>9</sup> Their eyes will be filled with tears as they come.

They will pray as I bring them back.

I will lead them beside streams of water.

I will lead them on a level path  
where they will not trip or fall.

I am Israel's father.

And Ephraim is my oldest son.

<sup>10</sup> "Listen to my message, you nations.

Announce it on shores far away.

Say, 'He who scattered Israel will gather them.

He will watch over his flock like a shepherd.'

<sup>11</sup> I will set the people of Jacob free.

I will save them from those who are stronger than they are.

<sup>12</sup> They will come and shout for joy on Mount Zion.

They will be joyful because of everything I give them.

I give them grain, olive oil and fresh wine.

I give them the young animals in their flocks and herds.

Israel will be like a garden that has plenty of water.

And they will not be sad anymore.

<sup>13</sup> Then young women will dance and be glad.

And so will the men, young and old alike.

I will turn their sobbing into gladness.

I will comfort them.

And I will give them joy instead of sorrow.

<sup>14</sup> I will satisfy the priests. I will give them more than enough.

And my people will be filled with the good things I give them," announces the Lord.

## **Psalm 84**

<sup>1</sup> Lord who rules over all,

how lovely is the place where you live!

<sup>2</sup> I long to be in the courtyards of the Lord's temple.

I deeply long to be there.

My whole being cries out

for the living God.

<sup>3</sup> Lord who rules over all,

even the sparrow has found a home near your altar.

My King and my God,

the swallow also has a nest there,

where she may have her young.

<sup>4</sup> Blessed are those who live in your house.

They are always praising you. *Selah*

<sup>5</sup> Blessed are those whose strength comes from you.

They have decided to travel to your temple.

<sup>6</sup> As they pass through the dry Valley of Baca,

they make it a place where water flows.

The rain in the fall covers it with pools.

<sup>7</sup> Those people get stronger as they go along,

until each of them appears in Zion, where God lives.

<sup>8</sup> Lord God who rules over all, hear my prayer.

God of the people of Jacob, listen to me. *Selah*

<sup>9</sup> God, look with favor on your anointed king.

You appointed him to be like a shield that keeps us safe.

<sup>10</sup> A single day in your courtyards is better

than a thousand anywhere else.

I would rather guard the door of the house of my God

than live in the tents of sinful people.

<sup>11</sup> The Lord God is like the sun that gives us light.  
He is like a shield that keeps us safe.  
The Lord blesses us with favor and honor.  
He doesn't hold back anything good  
from those whose lives are without blame.

<sup>12</sup> Lord who rules over all,  
blessed is everyone who trusts in you.

### **Ephesians 1:3-14**

Praise God for His Spiritual Blessings in Christ

<sup>3</sup> Give praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. Those blessings come from the heavenly world. They belong to us because we belong to Christ. <sup>4</sup> God chose us to belong to Christ before the world was created. He chose us to be holy and without blame in his eyes. He loved us. <sup>5</sup> So he decided long ago to adopt us. He adopted us as his children with all the rights children have. He did it because of what Jesus Christ has done. It pleased God to do it. <sup>6</sup> All those things bring praise to his glorious grace. God freely gave us his grace because of the One he loves. <sup>7</sup> We have been set free because of what Christ has done. Because he bled and died our sins have been forgiven. We have been set free because God's grace is so rich. <sup>8</sup> He poured his grace on us. By giving us great wisdom and understanding, <sup>9</sup> he showed us the mystery of his plan. It was in keeping with what he wanted to do. It was what he had planned through Christ. <sup>10</sup> It will all come about when history has been completed. God will then bring together all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

<sup>11</sup> We were also chosen to belong to him. God decided to choose us long ago in keeping with his plan. He works out everything to fit his plan and purpose. <sup>12</sup> We were the first to put our hope in Christ. We were chosen to bring praise to his glory. <sup>13</sup> You also became believers in Christ. That happened when you heard the message of truth. It was the good news about how you could be saved. When you believed, he stamped you with an official mark. That official mark is the Holy Spirit that he promised. <sup>14</sup> The Spirit marks us as God's own. We can now be sure that someday we will receive all that God has promised. That will happen after God sets all his people completely free. All these things will bring praise to his glory.

### **Matthew 2:1-12**

<sup>13</sup> When the Wise Men had left, Joseph had a dream. In the dream an angel of the Lord appeared to him. "Get up!" the angel said. "Take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you to come back. Herod is going to search for the child. He wants to kill him."

<sup>14</sup> Joseph got up. During the night, he left for Egypt with the child and his mother Mary.  
<sup>15</sup> They stayed there until King Herod died. So the words the Lord had spoken through

the prophet came true. He had said, "I chose to bring my son out of Egypt."—(*Hosea 11:1*)

<sup>19</sup> After Herod died, Joseph had a dream while he was still in Egypt. In the dream an angel of the Lord appeared to him. <sup>20</sup> The angel said, "Get up! Take the child and his mother. Go to the land of Israel. Those who were trying to kill the child are dead."

<sup>21</sup> So Joseph got up. He took the child and his mother Mary back to the land of Israel. <sup>22</sup> But then he heard that Archelaus was king of Judea. Archelaus was ruling in place of his father Herod. This made Joseph afraid to go there.

Warned in a dream, Joseph went back to the land of Galilee instead. <sup>23</sup> There he lived in a town called Nazareth. So what the prophets had said about Jesus came true. They had said, "He will be called a Nazarene."

### **Overview of the Texts:**

This Sunday's lessons focus on the theme of deliverance, and how we can have faith in God's goodness and take refuge in him, since he will save us from trouble. In our Old Testament lesson from the prophet Jeremiah, we read what's called the "Book of Consolation." This part of Jeremiah's prophecies speaks of the hopes for the restoration and renewal of God's chosen Israel after their captivity in Babylon. Jeremiah calls the people to be hopeful that God will deliver them, bring them back to their home, and bring them peace and prosperity. In our Epistle Lesson we hear how St. Paul encourages the Christians in Ephesus to have hope in God since he has adopted us as his children through his son Jesus Christ. Paul emphasizes God's long-term plans to redeem and deliver us in his great love for us. Finally, in our Gospel Lesson we hear Matthew's account of Joseph's dreams that led him to move his family to Egypt, back again, and on to Nazareth. Each of these moments shows God's commitment to his plan for mankind through Jesus. The Flight to Egypt along with all of Joseph's warning dreams show how God delivers the Holy Family and thus all of mankind.

PreK – Kindergarten Lesson Plan:

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**Opening Prayer:** Lord's Prayer

### **Supplies & Preparation:**

Supplies: Coloring page included below, crayons/markers/colored pencils.

Preparation: Make copies of coloring page.

### **Activity:**

Give each child a coloring sheet to work on while you read the Gospel lesson to them. Ask the following questions while they continue to work. Encourage quick finishers to add more color to the page.

Alternative Activity: If you can buy or borrow a copy of Madeleine L'Engle's *Dance in the Desert*, you're in for a special treat. This book gives a fictional and fantastical description of the flight of the Holy Family through the desert. The story is about how all the animals of the desert, from tiny mice, to serpents, to fierce dragons dance for and then bow at the small child's feet. It highlights the very real dangers of traveling way the Holy Family did. If you read the whole book, it will likely take the whole class time.

### **Discussion:**

- Who can tell us who the people are in our coloring sheet and our Gospel Lesson? *The Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, and the little Jesus*
- What are they doing? *Traveling*
- Have any of you ever travelled before, or gone on trips or vacations? Where were they going? *They were leaving Bethlehem and travelling to Egypt. Then they came back from Egypt and settled in Nazareth.*
- This trip, though, wasn't like a fun trip. Does anyone know why they had to leave where they were? *The evil King Herod wanted to kill Jesus. The Holy Family was traveling because they were trying to escape Herod's soldiers who were coming for Jesus.*
- In our Gospel Lesson, who warned St. Joseph about King Herod, that he was coming for Jesus? *An angel of the Lord.*
- Have you ever been scared when something happened? Have you ever been afraid and then someone else came and you felt better? *That's just like in today's Gospel Lesson. The Holy Family had faith in God and he protected them from Herod. Before Herod's soldiers could come God sent his angel to warn Joseph.*

In the spirit of Catechesis of the Good Shepherd and Godly Play, ask these "I wonder" questions about the journey of the Holy family.

- I wonder what the angel looked like in Joseph's dream.
- I wonder how the Holy Family felt when they had to leave their home to hide.
- I wonder what it was like to travel through the desert with the heat, cold, bandits, and wild animals.
- I wonder what it was like to live in a strange new place.
- I wonder what it was like to trust God completely to keep safe.

Elementary Lesson Plan:

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**Opening Prayer:** Lord's Prayer, Hail Mary, Glory Be

**Supplies & Preparation:**

Supplies: Basic costumes (simple tunics that can be made from pillow cases or large pieces of fabric), props like bags and small suitcases, sleeping bags, etc.)

Preparation: Gather supplies and scope out locations for your arrival in Egypt and Nazareth.

**Discussion:**

- Who in our lesson had to go on a great journey? *The Holy Family: Mary, Joseph, and Jesus.*
- Why did they have to leave where they were staying? *King Herod was jealous of Jesus and sent his soldiers to kill the baby and all the babies in the area.*
- How did they know that Herod's soldiers were coming? *Joseph was warned in a dream.*
- Sometimes it's easy to trust in God when things are going well, but have you ever had something bad happen to you, where you had to trust that God would protect you? What happened?
- Do you think Mary and Joseph were afraid, trying to escape from Herod's soldiers?
- Do you think it was hard for them leaving their home and going to Egypt?
- Was God with them, though? *The truth is sometimes we might have to suffer, like the people of Israel who were forced to live outside of their home, but even then God didn't abandon them, and in the end he saved them. We have to have faith that in the end, God will not abandon us, even though we might have to suffer, or endure scary times.*

**Activity:**

Have the children act out the story. You'll need at least 4 characters (Mary, Joseph, young Jesus, the Angel), but you can add in figures like Herod, a donkey, Herod's soldiers, members of the caravan they would have had to travel with for safety, etc.). They can just follow simple instructions for acting out the movements and perhaps the emotional state of the characters (Are they scared? Are they relieved? Are they tired?). To add to the fun, the traveling can take place outside the Sunday School room. Pick a destination that will stand for Egypt and a second destination that will serve as Nazareth.

**Closing Prayer:** Collect of the Day

Junior High Lesson Plan:

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**Opening Prayer:** Lord's Prayer, Apostles' Creed, Hail Mary

**Supplies & Preparation:**

Supplies: Bibles

Preparation: None

**Activity:**

Read through each of the lessons, having a different student read each one. After each lesson is complete have the children talk about what's going on in that particular lesson, encouraging them to come to a group summary of the reading, in their own words. The leader should feel free to use the above summaries to guide the conversation and offer context for the students.

**Discussion:**

- Why do you think that we come to Sunday School? *Answers may relate to morality like "learn how to obey God" or "learn God's will." If a student says their parents make them, praise their obedience and their parents.*
- Why do we try to learn more about the Bible, if it's just a book? *It's the inspired word of God. It tells us about Jesus. It tells us about God's will for us.*
- Is it hard to get to know God? *Answers might be "sometimes" or "yes, because we can't see him."*
- How many of you have really good friends that know you really well?
- How did you get to know your friends really well? *Talking to them and spending time with them.*
- What are some ways that we can know God better? *Studying his Word, talking and listening to him in prayer, receiving him in the Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist.*
- What do the words of Ephesians mean to you? What is the main point of what Paul was trying to tell us? *We belong to God. We have always belonged to him before he even made us.*
- What does it feel like to know that God loves us this much? And what Jesus did for us? Reread this passage and discuss it.

**Closing Prayer:** Collect of the Day

Senior High Lesson Plan: \_\_\_\_\_

**Opening Prayer:** Lord's Prayer, Apostles' Creed, Hail Mary

**Supplies & Preparation:**

Supplies: Bibles

Preparation: None

**Discussion:**

Read through each of the lessons, having a different student read each lesson. After each lesson is complete have the children talk about what's going on in that particular lesson, encouraging them to come to a group summary of the reading, in their own words. The leader should feel free to use the above summaries to guide the conversation and offer context for the students.

- Do any of you have jobs of your own? What are your responsibilities at work?
- If you don't have jobs, have any of you ever had special jobs or tasks your parents have given you to do, maybe around the house, like the laundry, yardwork, or dishes?
- Do you always want to do your jobs all the time, or sometimes, would it be easier to skip work?
- Today's gospel lesson tells us about a man, who had some difficult responsibilities. Who do you think I'm talking about? *St. Joseph*
- Was Joseph the father of Jesus? *Not really. He was Jesus' adopted Father and so even though Jesus wasn't his child, God had commanded him to take Mary as his wife and to raise Jesus as his son.*
- Do you think that was ever hard for Joseph?
- What about today's gospel lesson? *In today's gospel Joseph has to leave everything he's ever known and flee so that he can protect his wife and Jesus his adopted son.*
- Why might that have been hard for him? *He knew that being with Mary and Jesus meant danger. It meant leaving his home. It meant living with Mary as a virgin. It meant raising Jesus even though he wasn't his own natural son.*
- All of those reasons made Joseph's God given responsibilities hard, yet Joseph was faithful in all those things. How do you think Joseph was able to be so faithful?
- Are there responsibilities that you've been given that were hard? Maybe in school, at home, in church?
- Have you ever had something about spiritual life that was hard to fulfill? Being pure before marriage? Not gossiping about others? Going to mass on Sundays?
- How do you think Joseph might encourage you?

If you have additional time:

In the gospel reading, there are several references to certain things happening so that the prophecies would be fulfilled. What are they? *The first is attributed in the text: "I chose to bring my son out of Egypt."—(Hosea 11:1) But the second simply says, "So what the prophets had said about Jesus came true. They had said, 'He will be called a Nazarene.'" There is no specific Old Testament prophecy or allusion to Nazareth, but this is likely a reference to the fact that Jesus was of lowly station. Nazareth was a tiny town that no one thought much of. It housed the northern garrison of the Roman guard and was unpopular, as Nathaniel points out in Matthew, "Can anything good come from Nazareth."*

What other prophecies about Jesus do we read in the Old Testament? Ask the students to look up the following verses. Have each student read one and then say what the verse predicted about Jesus or how Jesus fulfilled the prophecy.

Malachi 3:1/Isaiah 40:3-5    Micah 5:2 (two things)    Isaiah 7:14    Isaiah 9:6-7

Read the following passages to see how Jesus fulfilled these prophecies.

Matthew 2:1    Luke 1:32-33    Matthew 1:18-23-23    Mark 1:1-4    Hebrews 7:14

Let your students know that these are just a few of the prophecies concerning Jesus. There are many more about the birth, life, and death of the Messiah.

**Closing Prayer:** Collect of the Day

