

Lesson 7.11 - The Birth of Christ: Finding Safety

Topic: Becoming Peacemakers

Subtopic: Finding Safety

1B. Jesus Christ: God the Son

4F. Peace in the Home & Community

Class: Standard VII (Grade 7)

Objectives: **Knowledge:** Students will know that there are times when we need to go to a place of safety. **Attitude:** Students will seek God's guidance in times of need.

Materials Needed:

Blackboard and Chalk

Exercise book

Chart: Group rules, Peace Definition

Optional: Song to teach the class

References: Matthew 2

Memory Verse: Proverbs 18:10

Teacher Activities

Introduction: *Optional:* Open with a song about peace and a prayer.

Ask students if they have ever felt like they were in danger of being hurt by someone else? What did they do? Our story today is about a time Jesus' life was threatened.

Bible Story: Discuss Matthew 2.

Complete a T-chart for Wise Men and Herod. Joseph did not know what Herod meant to do. How did he find out?

Application: Guide Discussion (see Teacher's Notes) Emphasize the importance of getting away to a safe place when we feel threatened and that God can give guidance in times of need.

Divide the class into discussion groups and assign Discussion Leaders.

Evaluation: Is this classroom a refuge for students who might encounter harm at home or from other students? Are students participating in small groups successfully?

Student Activities

Introduction: Discuss questions about knowing someone wants to harm them.

Bible Story: Students listen to the story of Matthew 2 and then list the different responses to Jesus' birth from Herod and the Wise Men on the T chart. Discuss how and why God intervened in Herod's plan.

Application: Class Discussion

1. If you felt threatened where would you go to be safe?

2. In what ways have you listened for God's orders and obeyed? If you disobeyed, did you face consequences?

Small group discussions

Journal writing (if time)

Evaluation: Do the students understand how Herod and the Wise Men chose and then modeled opposite responses to Jesus? Are they learning to ask God for help in times of need?

Extension Activities: *Memory Verse:* Write the memory verse on the board and have students copy it in their exercise book. If you have time, let them have a few minutes to look at it and try to learn it and then let them say it to a partner or recite it together as a class.

Writing: If students have time, use the journal writing activity included in the Application section of the teacher's notes. Writing helps students summarize what they have learned today.

Leadership Discussion. Discuss leadership using the questions at the end of this lesson.

Game. Ask for two student volunteers. One student is the “guide” and the other is the “follower.” The “follower” is blindfolded and then spun around several times and their partner must then guide them to the other side of the room using only their voice. They must make sure the follower doesn’t trip or run into anything. You might give several students a chance to try this. Then discuss the difficulties that they had in forming directions for their partners and in trying to rely on their ears alone. How does this relate to the difficulty of listening to God’s instructions and obeying them?

Extending Worship. If you have time for a more extended worship time, have the song leaders pick 3-4 songs to teach the class and allow more than one volunteer to pray after the class shares prayer concerns. You may also want to have a Prayer Leader close the class with prayer. *Alternate:* Start with a song and then have your prayer time in the small groups at the end. Students can share prayer requests or praises and then have silent prayer or one student may volunteer to lead the prayer in the small groups. Do this at the end of each small group discussion. Praying for each other helps to build a sense of community in your classroom and also encourages dependence on God.

Notes for Teacher

We return, today, to the story of Jesus’ birth. This story tells about a time when Jesus’ life was threatened and offers an opportunity to talk about times when students feel threatened. The next lesson will continue this story and talk about times when they can give refuge to others whose lives are threatened. God cares very much about us and our lives and wants us to care about others. This unit will be focused on the importance of compassion and forgiveness in peacemaking.

Introduction: *Leadership Development and Worship.* Remember that it is valuable to start each class with a worship. If you don’t have time for an extended worship time open with a song and a student-led prayer or a moment of silent prayer. A Scripture reader volunteer may read the verses from Matthew 2, and other students could lead the discussion questions. Do this each week rotating who leads each portion of class.

Following worship, ask a question to stimulate discussion.

Key Concept: When students feel threatened they should go to a safe place. Obedience to God can help us find refuge and also cause us to give refuge to others.

Bible Story: In today’s lesson we see two very different responses to Jesus Christ. This is a familiar story so ask students what they remember about the story of Jesus and the Wise Men. Follow up their explanation by filling in missing parts of the story or you could have student readers take turns reading the story from Matthew 2. As you discuss the story, bring out these points:

- The Wise Men traveled a long way to find Jesus
- They brought precious gifts; They bowed down and worshipped Jesus
- King Herod lied about wanting to worship Jesus
- He tried to kill Jesus by killing all the boys two years old and younger
- God protected Jesus by giving Joseph a dream and warning him of Herod’s plan
- God told Joseph to take his family to Egypt and Joseph obeyed
- This blessed family became refugees in response to a dictator’s cruel power.

- When Herod died, an angel of the Lord again appeared to Joseph in a dream with the instructions to go back to Israel to settle in a town called Nazareth.

The practice of listening to God and obedience to God was the foundation of Jesus' personal family. Regardless of the challenge and cost, Joseph was willing to follow the word of God. This family of faith provided the right environment of willing obedience to receive Jesus and to raise him. Our families today can offer this same refuge in the face of the world's violence.

Fill in the T chart with answers gathered after the Scripture reading. An example of a T-chart is below:

<u>Wise Men</u>	<u>Herod</u>
<i>Worshipped Jesus</i>	<i>Lied (about wanting to worship Jesus)</i>
<i>Brought Gifts</i>	<i>Killed all the baby boys</i>
<i>Heard from God</i>	<i>Feared Jesus would take his throne</i>

Application: *Discuss the following questions with your students.*

- What did Joseph do when his family was threatened? (fled to Egypt)
- When we feel threatened we need to go to a safe place. Where could you go if you feel threatened? (Answers will vary depending on the situation. *Possible answers: home, school, the home of a friend or relative. Sometimes telling an adult can help.*)
- How did Joseph know what to do? (Angel spoke to him in a dream)
- How does God guide us? (prayer, scripture, dreams, a feeling or idea that comes that warns us not to do something or gives us an idea what to do – this is the Holy Spirit)

Emphasize these points:

- When we feel threatened we need to go to a safe place.
- If we don't know where to go or what to do, God can guide us.

Next week we will discuss how God's friends help those who are threatened by others.

Review the definition of peace and emphasize the importance of relying on God's guidance and prayer. Definition: Peace is harmonious living and respect for life through God's guidance and prayer.

Small Group Discussion. Small group discussion encourages more participation and encourages leadership development. Use it as often as possible. Remind the groups of the rules for small groups. After reviewing the rules, break into groups of 3-4 students with one chosen to be the leader for the discussion. If you had the same groups each lesson last term, *change groups and assign new leaders* for this term. Write these questions on the board for the groups to discuss or have a student write these questions before class.

1. If you felt threatened where would you go to be safe?

2. In what ways have you listened for God's orders and obeyed? If you disobeyed, did you face consequences?

After discussion, take a minute to ask how the discussion groups went.

- Did the leader make sure everyone got a chance to share?
- Were group members respectful to each other?

Optional Journal Writing: (Do this if you have time)

After small group discussion, ask students to personally reflect by writing answers to the two questions in their journal.