

## Family Worship Guide – Week 51

### READ

Read Matthew 2:13-23.

A major theme of chapter 2 is the contrast between Herod's response to Jesus and the wise men's response to Jesus. From birth we see that Jesus is sought after by kings and worshipped by people from all nations. In fact, it is amazing to see representatives from the nations coming towards Jesus even before he had been born!

On the one hand we have Herod: a proud, murderous, weak, paranoid ruler, seeking to kill Jesus. On the other hand we have the magi: humble, determined, wise worshippers of Jesus. So we see a portrait of the varied responses to Jesus for the rest of his life: some proud and murderous, others humbled worshippers. In the middle we see Jesus, humbly born, the desire of the nations, great to the ends of the earth, foretold from of old, the King of Kings.

It is also important that we treasure how *real* the story of Jesus is. The birth of Christ is often portrayed as this soft, fuzzy, manger scene full of peace and tranquility. This, of course, is not an accurate telling. The story of the birth of the King of Kings is full of mystery and intrigue, murder and close escapes, angels and soldiers. The coming of the King of Kings, the One who will Judge the living and the dead, the One who would suffer under the wrath of God for the sins of man was not soft and fuzzy.

If the harsh realities of Jesus' birth have been absent from your family's traditions, seek this year to walk your family through the *whole* story. Our families must see that Jesus came into a *real* world, filled with *real* sin and *real* trials. This is the same backdrop we find ourselves in, the world where Jesus comes to save us from the same sin that he came save the wise men from.

#### Questions:

Talk about Herod's response to Jesus. Are there others in the Gospel of Matthew that respond similarly? Why do you think they responded this way?

Talk about the wise men's response to Jesus. Are there others in the Gospel of Matthew that respond similarly? Why do you think they responded this way?

The primary purpose of God in Jesus' life on earth was to save his people from their sins. Talk together about that reality in your family. Has Jesus rescued *you* from your sins? For those who have been rescued, share with the others how God brought it about in your life.

**Bottom Line:** Jesus, the humbly born, shepherd King, great to the ends of the earth, is hated by the proud and worshipped by the wise.

### PRAY

The text for this Sunday revolves around two main themes: God's sovereignty over all things, and the evil attempts by sinners in this world to thwart God's will. These are themes that we will see throughout the book of Matthew. Jesus came to bring light and show love in the middle of a dark world filled with hatred, violence, grief, and pain. Pray that God would fill our hearts with a proper perspective of Christmas, filled with the Christ-exalting gospel. Pray that in the midst of violence, pain, grief, and darkness God would fill us with confidence in His sovereignty over it all.

### SING

This week our family worship song is 'Glory in the Highest' by Chris Tomlin. As we celebrate Jesus' birth with family and friends and reflect on Christ's humanity as a baby boy in a manger, may our hearts also be captivated by the reality of Christ's deity as the Son of God. He is the "first and the last", the "light of the world" and at the coming of his birth the angels declared, "Glory to God in the Highest" for this little baby would make peace between sinful man and a holy God through his perfect life, sacrificial death and triumphant resurrection from the grave. Therefore, let us sing with thankful hearts for the gift of grace we have received because of Christ.

## MEMORIZE

Matthew 2:23 – And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled: He shall be called a Nazarene.

## SUGGESTIONS

These suggestions were created by the age-group ministry leaders as a way to help parents better communicate the biblical truths discussed in the Family Worship Guide. These suggestions are intended to help parents facilitate God-centered discussions with their children. Parents should prayerfully use these suggestions, and any other means necessary, to help their children discover the truths of God's word and worship Him together.

### Preschool

- Before you begin: grab your Bible, a suitcase and a few small moving boxes.
- Read Matthew 2:22-23 with your preschoolers.
- Now talk with your preschooler about the suitcase and boxes. Ask if they know what the boxes are used for. When do you use these? (Encourage your child to respond.) Moving!
- Use the suitcase and boxes to pretend you are moving.
- Remind your child that last week the wise men followed the star, found Baby Jesus and worshipped him. They did not go back to tell King Herod where to find Jesus. King Herod was mad and wanted to hurt Jesus. So, God told Joseph to pack and take Mary and Jesus far away where it was safe.
- King Herod had a plan to hurt Jesus, but we know that God is in control. He sent an angel to tell Joseph to move and take Jesus far away where he was safe.
- God knew Herod's plans. Herod could not stop God's plan. God is in control and he is faithful. Joseph, Mary and Jesus moved to Egypt and then to the town of Nazareth so they would be safe. God is faithful; he always does what he says he will do. God knows everything.
- Remember, we have talked about God's special plan. God's special plan was to send Jesus to earth, born as a baby just like us. This baby would grow up and die for us. God made a way for us to know him, to have our sins forgiven and to live forever in heaven.
- Let's pray and thank God for sending Jesus and for his special plan.

### Children

- Materials needed:
  - Treasure – it could be candy, a gift card, a dollar bill, etc.
  - Directions that hint at where treasure is hidden
- Hide the treasure in a trash can.
- Tell your child(ren) that you have hidden treasure somewhere in the room or house and ask them where they think you have hidden it. (Suggestions might include under the table, under a couch cushion, inside a drawer, etc.)
- Ask them why those would be good places to hide something. (Possible answers might be "so it stays hidden longer", "so it won't be obvious", "so it can't be found accidentally", etc.)
- Give them each at least one hint about where the treasure is and let them look for it together.
- When they find the treasure, ask why it was strange to see it in the trash with things that are being thrown away.
- Relate how Jesus was born in a manger surrounded by animals and poor, commonplace shepherds (who lived with animals) and how this was not a place that one would expect to find a king, much less a king that was great to the ends of the earth.
- Ask them if a person who did not want to be around or touch trash would want to have to dig through it to find a treasure. Discuss how those who are proud, like King Herod, would not be looking for a great king in such a humble place as a stable.
- Ask children if they felt "wise" when they finally located the treasure. Tell them that God drew the wisest men from far away nations away from their work, responsibilities, and families to a place where his son was hidden. They probably had to make choices along the way about whether they should continue on their journey. Add that once the wise men found Jesus, God revealed to them that he was treasure they were seeking, so they gave him gifts and worshipped the King of Kings.
- Pray together that God will reveal how worthy King Jesus is of worship this Christmas.

## Students

- Before you begin, create a short exam about this week's passage in Matthew for your students.
  - Include several questions on the sheet about the passage. A few suggestions are:
    - Where did Joseph and his family depart to first?
    - What appeared to Joseph in his dream?
    - Who was trying to destroy Jesus? In what town did this evil man kill every young male child, two-years-old and younger?
    - Which prophet spoke of the disaster Joseph's family fled from?
    - Who ruled in Israel when Joseph returned from Egypt?
    - What district did Joseph take his family to after returning to Israel? What town did Jesus' family return to after leaving Egypt?
  - At the very top of the page include instructions to read through the entire exam before completing the questions. Indicate that you will time them, and the first one to correctly complete the exam will win a prize or a privilege.
  - The very last thing on the exam should read, "Please turn in the exam completely blank. Do not write anything on the page but your name." (Do not point out this set of instructions. The test is to see if your students will read all the instructions on the page and follow them.)
- Read Matthew 2:13-23 together as a family, and then administer the exam.
- Per the instructions, your student should complete the exam very quickly and place nothing on the sheet but their name. The point is that Joseph followed God's instruction completely and carefully.
- Ask them to share all of the ways in which Joseph's obedience impacted his family. Each time Joseph followed one of God's instructions, it placed him and his family in the center of God's desire for their lives. By following God's will for their lives Joseph's family did not just remain safe, but were used by God in a manner that changed history and eternity.
- Certainly, our lives are not that of the Messiah, but our obedience to God's will certainly changes lives around us, even into eternity. We need to give just as much care and complete obedience in our decisions as Joseph did in his.

## Prayer

### Lives/Church

The text for this Sunday revolves around two main themes: God's sovereignty over all things, and the evil attempts by sinners in this world to thwart God's will. These are themes that we will see throughout the book of Matthew. Jesus came to bring light and show love in the middle of a dark world filled with hatred, violence, grief, and pain. Pray that God would fill our hearts with a proper perspective of Christmas, filled with the Christ-exalting gospel. Pray that in the midst of violence, pain, grief, and darkness God would fill us with confidence in his sovereignty over it all.

### Local

**Local Church:** The Family Worship Center - Stephen Manyama

**Focus:** I can See, I Can Read Ministry - provides eyeglasses for every man, woman or child who can't afford them so they can attend school, get a job, read the Bible and teach others. Imagine if you could not see to read God's Word and how a simple pair of eyeglass can literally "give sight to the blind" in our communities.

**Monday:** Pray that God opens doors for this ministry to continue to receive eyeglasses, readers and eyeglass cases that can be given primarily to people in poverty in our city and state, but also in third world poverty places of ministry.

**Tuesday:** Pray that God gives the ministry volunteers many opportunities to share the gospel as they fit people for glasses.

**Wednesday:** Pray that the people receiving these eyeglasses will have a desire to read God's Word for themselves.

**Thursday:** Pray that once these people are able to read they will understand the Word and want to know more of the truth in God's Word.

**Friday:** Pray for those who lead this ministry that they would know how best to partner with local churches, Christian ministries, and non-profit organizations to serve others in Jesus' name in a way that advances the gospel.

**Saturday:** Pray for long-term financial support for this ministry ([www.icanseecanread.org](http://www.icanseecanread.org)).

## Scripture Memory

And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled: He shall be called a Nazarene. Matthew 2:23

## Week 51

### Glory in the Highest

by Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash, Matt Redman, Jesse Reeves and Daniel Carson

You are the first You go before  
You are the last Lord You're the encore  
Your name's in lights for all to see  
The starry host declare Your glory

Glory in the highest  
Glory in the highest  
Glory in the highest

Apart from You there is no God  
Light of the world the bright and morning star  
Your name will shine for all to see  
You are the one You are my glory

And no one else could ever compare  
To You Lord  
All the earth together declares

All the earth will sing Your praise  
The moon and stars the sun and rain  
Every nation will proclaim  
You are God and You will reign

Glory glory Hallelujah  
Glory glory to You Lord  
Glory glory Hallelujah  
Hallelujah

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