

## Aim of lesson

To consider why God sent his Son and how the events surrounding his birth illustrate the purpose of his coming.

## Bible background

Matthew 1 & 2; Luke 1:26-38; 2:1-40

## Outline of lesson

### Whose son is he?

Ask the class whose Son Jesus is. It might be worth putting their answers on a blackboard or large sheet of paper. Hopefully you should get the answers that he is God's Son and Mary's son. If you don't, use Luke 1:30-35 to establish this.

Get them to read Matthew 1:1 and ask why Matthew begins his gospel by calling Jesus the son of Abraham and the son of David. Do any of them think of themselves as the son or daughter of their great, great... grandfather? Avoid dealing with the promises to Abraham and David in any detail here as that could easily take up the whole lesson but bring out that Abraham was promised a descendant who would bring a blessing to all people and David was promised a descendant who would be king for ever. (Genesis 22:18; 2 Samuel 7:12,13). Matthew is saying here that Jesus is this son.

### Born to be the Saviour

Ask the class to open their workbooks and discuss the answers to the first part as you go along. Show that God decided Jesus would be born before he created the earth; he knew what he would suffer but he still sent him to save us from our sins. You may like to use some of the following to show that God does care and suffers with his people – how much more with his perfect Son. Isaiah 63:9; Jeremiah 8:21; John 5:20. See Matthew 1:21 for the reference to Jesus' name. If you have time also look at the titles of 'Christ' (meaning "anointed" – as was the king) and 'Emmanuel' (meaning "God with us"). (Matthew 1:18,23).

### God's Preparation

Use the two cribs to contrast the prams, cots, high-chairs, nappies etc., thought necessary now in preparing for a baby, with the stable and feeding trough, straw and poverty that God provided for his Son. You may like to include the rejection and persecution he came to, from the occupied inn and the jealous Herod. In this and in the next question, encourage the class to face the questions "Did God care?" "Then why did he allow it?"

Draw out the fact that the way God chose demonstrates to us:

- (i) that the salvation he offers in Christ is not restricted to those who can pay for it and
- (ii) the security God offers is not affected by the insecurity that may surround us.

### Announcements

The remaining questions are about God using a star and a host of angels to announce the birth to the most lowly and to the most respected of men.

## Digging deeper

### What is the gospel?

This section explains that the Gospel is the Good News of the Kingdom. It is a blessing, and we shouldn't feel ashamed of it.

### Relevance to our lives

Ask the class to think of one gift that they would like to give the Lord Jesus this week. A gift of practical help to someone else is valued by him as a gift to himself (see Matthew 25:40). They may like to write their intended "gift" in a greeting card.

## Prayer

Dear Father, thank you for sending your Son to save us even though you knew what people would do to him.

## Other suggestions for activities

- Hebrews 1:6 says "When God brings his first born into the world he says 'Let all the angels of God worship him'". Ask the class to think of ways they can join the angels and obey the commands of God to worship Jesus. They may like to write a song or perhaps plan some singing and readings for some older people in your area.
- The class may like to write down what may have been the thoughts of Mary (or Joseph) after the birth, visits and flight.