

God Tells Joseph to Go to Egypt

Matthew 2:13-23

1

Lesson



Teacher Background

What Happens: King Herod feels threatened when he hears a king has been born, so he decides to kill all boys in Bethlehem who are age 2 and younger. God wants us to be safe, so he warns Joseph, who escapes safely to Egypt with Mary and Jesus.

Why It Matters: Kids are familiar with adults in their lives giving them boundaries to help them stay safe. Use this lesson to help kids see that God cares about their safety, too. And God offers a safe place even when our physical circumstances don't feel safe.

Think About: What makes you feel safe? What makes you feel unsafe? Talk to God about that.

Pray that God will put his hand of protection over each child in your class.



Point

God is our safe place.



Key Verse

“For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”

John 3:16

This Lesson at a Glance



WHAT HAPPENS	KIDS DISCOVER	SUPPLIES
SET THE STAGE Share about a topic related to the lesson.	The connection between their world and the Bible.	
EXPERIENCE THE BIBLE Scoot out of the way of “danger.”	How God protected his Son, Jesus, along with Joseph and Mary.	- o Bible - o beach ball or other soft ball
EXPLORE MORE Make cards for people who keep kids safe.	Even baby Jesus had people who kept him safe.	- o Paper - o Crayons/Coloring Utensils
PLAY A GAME Bounce a ball, avoiding danger zones.	We can turn to God when we worry about being unsafe.	- o masking tape - o tennis balls - o upbeat music (optional) - o music player (optional)
ACTIVITY PAGES WITH A PURPOSE Get safely through a maze.	God helps and guides us when we face danger.	- o “God Tells Joseph to Go to Egypt” Activity Page - o pencils - o star stickers (optional)
PRAY TOGETHER Form a circle and call out things to thank God for.	How to thank God for keeping us safe.	

SET THE STAGE (5 MINUTES)



SAY: Today we're going to learn that ➡ **God is our safe place.**

We'll learn about how he kept Jesus safe! First, let's talk about some unsafe situations.

ASK: Would you rather swim in a pool of sharks or hike in a forest with bears? Have everyone (including you), explain their choice.

ASK: Would you rather go rock climbing with a rope that's fraying or skydiving with a parachute that hasn't been tested to make sure it works? Have everyone (including you) explain their choice.

SAY: None of those situations sounded very safe! ➡ **God is our safe place.** Let's turn to the Bible to learn more.



EXPERIENCE THE BIBLE (10 MINUTES)



SUPPLIES

- Bible
- beach ball or other soft ball

QUICK TIP

If you have a larger number of young kids, reassure them that this happened long, long ago in the Bible. They don't need to worry about a mean king like that today.

SCOOT OUT OF THE WAY

Have kids sit on the floor in a tight group.

SAY: In today's Bible story, we'll learn about a dangerous king named King Herod. You see, God had sent his own Son, Jesus, as a baby to be born on earth! King Herod had heard about baby Jesus and was worried that Jesus was going to try to take his kingdom! So Herod ordered that all the boys under age 2 be killed.

Hold up the ball.

SAY: Imagine this ball is King Herod. He's very dangerous! You do not want this ball to touch you.

But ➡ **God is our safe place.** He showed Jesus' earthly dad, Joseph, where to go to stay out of the way.



Read Matthew 2:13.

Aim the ball at kids.

SAY: This ball is going to come right toward where you're sitting now. Remember, you don't want it to hit you! So quick, scoot that way toward Egypt.



Point to a safe spot. Once kids are all out of the way, roll the ball to where they were sitting. Then retrieve the ball.

SAY: Whew! Good thing I warned you to move! And it's a good thing God warned Joseph to move, too. He quickly got up and took Mary and Jesus to a country called Egypt, where they were safe.

Eventually, Herod died, and Joseph got another message.



Read Matthew 2:20.

SAY: I guess we don't have to worry about *that* king anymore. You can scoot back to where you were.

Pause for kids to scoot.

SAY: But wait!

Look like you're about to roll the ball toward kids.

SAY: Joseph found out that the new king was Herod's son! God warned Joseph in another dream, telling him go to a different place. God wanted Jesus to stay safe, so he showed Joseph where to go.



Read Matthew 2:23.

SAY: Scoot over here instead.

Point to a new place for kids to scoot to. Allow time for them to scoot.

Toss the ball over your shoulder, away from kids.

SAY: And so Jesus grew up safely in Nazareth.

TALK ABOUT IT

SAY: Sometimes bad things happen, but even when they do, ➡ **God is our safe place.**

ASK: Tell about a place that makes you feel safe.

SAY: Sometimes we face dangers. When we do, we can turn to God. He's like those places you just talked about. ➡ **God is our safe place.**



SAY: ➡ **God is our safe place.** God gave his Son, Jesus, a special earthly father to watch over him. Jesus was just a toddler when Joseph led his family to Egypt. Babies and little kids can't really protect or take care of themselves, so Joseph had the important job of keeping Jesus safe until he got older.

ASK: Who watches over and cares for *you*?

ASK: Who are some other people who keep kids safe?

SAY: Jesus was a kid, just like you!

ASK: What, if anything, do you think adults might do differently to take care of *Jesus* than a regular kid?

SAY: It's really cool to think about Jesus being a kid like you, needing grown-ups to take care of him. He knows what it's like to be a kid! And God puts people in our lives to keep us safe, just as he did for Jesus. Let's make cards to thank people who keep the littlest kids safe.

- Set out paper and crayons.
- Let kids make notes or cards of thanks for the people who serve in your church nursery, keeping young children safe.
- After several minutes, gather the cards. (Be sure to deliver them to the nursery as soon as possible!)
- Lead kids in praying, thanking God for people who love him and love children.

SAY: ➡ **God is our safe place.** And he works through people here at church to help you feel safe here.

SUPPLIES

- paper
- crayons





TRY TO KEEP THE BALL IN THE BOUNDARY

SAY: In today's Bible story, God helped Joseph get out of a dangerous place and stay safe. In this game, you'll work to keep some tennis balls out of danger.

- Have kids stand around the tape line of the outer ring.
- Explain that they'll try to toss and bounce the tennis balls so they bounce *only* inside the center ring and then are caught by another team member standing on the outer ring.
- The spaces between the two rings and outside the outer ring are Danger Zones. Don't let the balls go there!
- Use one ball for every two players—including you.
- Tennis balls will be played all at the same time.
- The goal is to keep the tennis balls moving at all times and keep them from bouncing in the Danger Zones.
- If you'd like, play music as kids play.

SUPPLIES

- masking tape
- tennis balls (1 for every 2 people)
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

EASY PREP

- Tape a ringed play area. For the center ring of the play areas, tape a circle that's about 3 feet across. Then tape another ring outside the center one that's about 10 feet across.

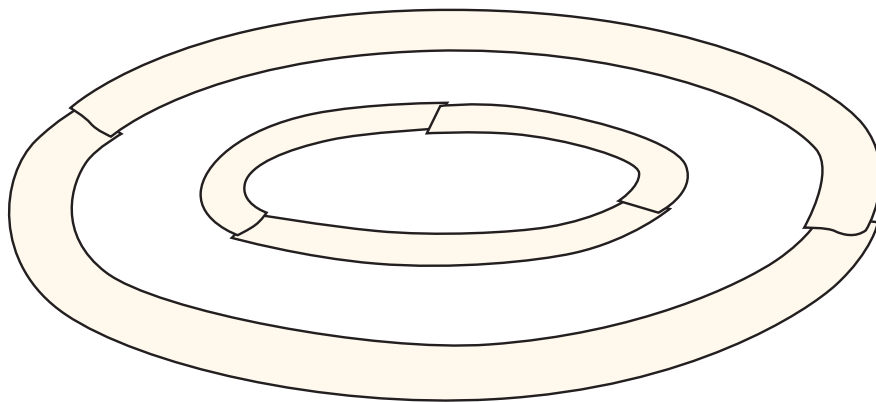
TALK ABOUT IT

ASK: Why was it hard or easy to keep the tennis balls out of the Danger Zones?

ASK: What are Danger Zones in our lives—places we're very careful around, such as busy streets, or places we try to stay away from, such as certain houses?

ASK: Why is it impossible to *always* avoid Danger Zones in our lives?

SAY: Joseph and his family faced danger, and we face dangers in our lives, too. Sometimes things aren't very safe. But we can always turn to God when that happens, because ➡ **God is our safe place.** When we're worried about a Danger Zone, we can turn to God.



ACTIVITY PAGES WITH A PURPOSE (10 MINUTES)



SUPPLIES

- “God Tells Joseph to Go to Egypt” Activity Page (1 per child)
- “God Tells Joseph to Go to Egypt” Coloring Page (1 per younger child)
- pencils
- crayons and star stickers

QUICK TIP

For younger kids, provide the Coloring Page and crayons as an alternative. You may even want to let young children add star stickers to their pictures!

SAY: God kept Joseph, Mary, and Jesus safe. Can *you* keep them safe? You’ll have to lead them through the maze to Egypt without running into any dangers!

Distribute the activity pages and pencils. Kids will complete the maze, avoiding running into dangers such as cliffs, lions, snakes, or fallen trees.

ASK: How well did you keep Joseph, Mary, and Jesus safe?

ASK: Where will you feel most courageous, knowing God wants you to be safe?

SAY: ➡ **God is our safe place.** Even if we do face dangers, God is there to help and guide us, just as he did for Joseph, Mary, and Jesus.

ANSWER KEY ON PAGE 166.



PRAY TOGETHER (5 MINUTES)



SAY: I’m so glad ➡ **God is our safe place.** No matter where we are or what we’re doing, we can trust that God is with us. That’s such a gift!

When a friend gives us a gift, it’s good to say, “Thank you!” Well, God is a friend who gives us so much. So let’s respond to God with a prayer of thanks!

Have kids form a circle so they can see and hear each other well.

SAY: Sometimes we close our eyes when we pray. Today we’ll pray all together and with our eyes open so we can see God’s blessings all around us.

I’ll call out a category, and we’ll focus on things or people God gives us to keep us safe. We’ll go around the circle and each person will shout out something in that category to thank God for. So if the category is “people who help us,” you might shout, “Doctors!” After each person shouts something, we’ll all respond with “Thank you, God!”

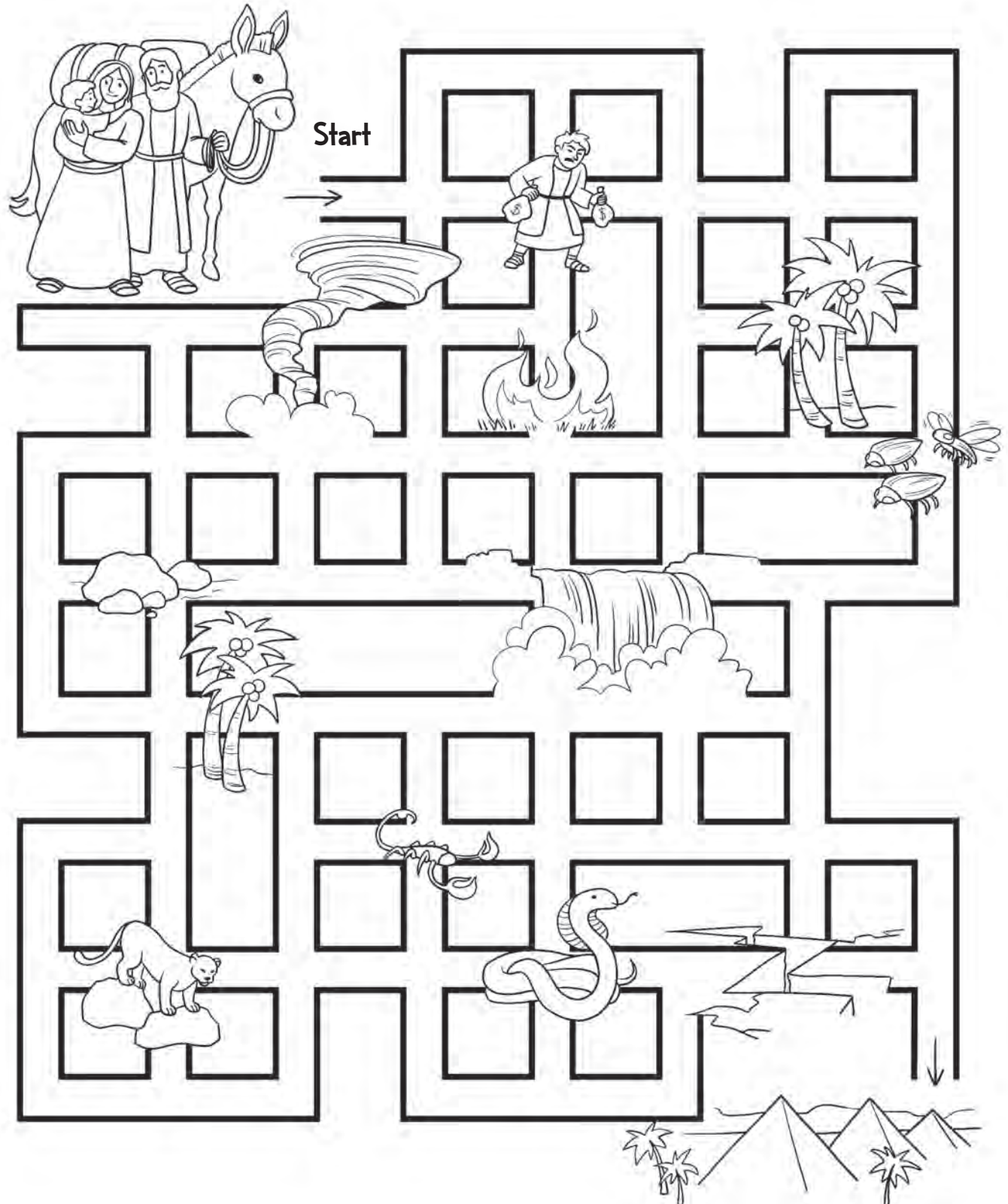
Call out a few categories. Ideas include people who help us, things that keep us safe (like bike helmets or seatbelts), and things or animals *we* keep safe.

PRAY: We thank you, God, for all these things and more! Most of all, we thank you that ➡ **you are our safe place.** Amen.

God Tells Joseph to Go to Egypt

Activity Page

Get Joseph, Mary, and Jesus to safety!
Help them find a way to Egypt, but avoid the dangers.



God Tells Joseph to Go to Egypt

Coloring Page



Matthew 2:13-23: God knew that Joseph and his family were in danger. So he appeared in a dream and told Joseph where to go. Joseph woke up his wife, Mary, gathered their young son, Jesus, and got everyone safely to Egypt. *God wants us to be safe, too!*