

THE ALTERATIONS: *The Story of Joseph and Mary*



LESSON FIVE

The Alterations: Joseph and Mary

- Unit Memory Verse:** *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. (Genesis 1:27)*
- Biblical References:** **Matthew 1:16-25, Matthew 2:13-14, Luke 2:40-52**
- Key Verse:** *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God... (1 John 3:1a)*

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2.

“Honey Gram, you told us you were finished sewing this wedding dress. Why is it lying on the bed like this?” asked Izzy. “Are you still going to have time to play some games with us today?”

The lacy wedding gown was stretched across the bed with various sewing tools and notions scattered around it. Gram reached for the lovely dress and threaded the needle she held in her hand.

“Oh, you know me. I always have time for a bit of fun,” answered Gram as she affectionately smoothed Izzy’s hair. “The dress is basically finished, but today I’m working on some alterations.”

“Alterations? What are those?” questioned Izzy.

At that moment, Liam breezed into the room holding his laptop under his arm. “I’ll tell you what they are,” he said. “Alterations are something that reminds Gram of a Bible story about marriage. Am I right or what?”

“Right, Liam, and I’ll be getting to that, but answering your question, Izzy, alterations are slight changes that need to be made to have the dress be a perfect fit for the individual bride. My sweet bride lost a bit of weight and I need to tuck in the waistline just a little. She also bought a different pair of shoes, and I need to alter the hem by lengthening it.”

Gram shot a look at her grandson. “Speaking of alterations, you’re sporting a new look, I see.”

Liam’s attempt at a strut in his baseball cap made Izzy giggle.

BOAZ



OBED



JESSE



DAVID

Jeremiah 23:5

“Behold the days come, saith the LORD,
that I will raise unto **David** a righteous
Branch, and a **King shall reign** and
prosper, and shall execute judgment and
justice in the earth.”

3.

“I’m going for my ‘Mr. Cool’ look today. Like it?” Liam sat down with his computer and turned it on. “I also made a chart for you, Gram.”

Gram admired Liam’s work with sincere appreciation. “Wow, Liam, you show the lineage from Boaz all the way to King David. I like the way you found a Bible verse that tells us that our Redeemer, Jesus, will be coming through the line of King David.”

“Let me see,” said Izzy. Izzy walked over to Liam’s computer and began to read out loud.

“Behold the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.”

Izzy looked puzzled.

“That’s a lot of big words, I know,” said Gram, “but essentially the prophet is giving us more details of our promised Redeemer, who would save the world from their sin. We learned earlier through the story of Abraham that our Savior would come from the children of Israel.”

“And then from the tribe of Judah,” added Liam.

“Yeah, I remember that from the chart Liam made for the last story you told us,” said Izzy.



4.

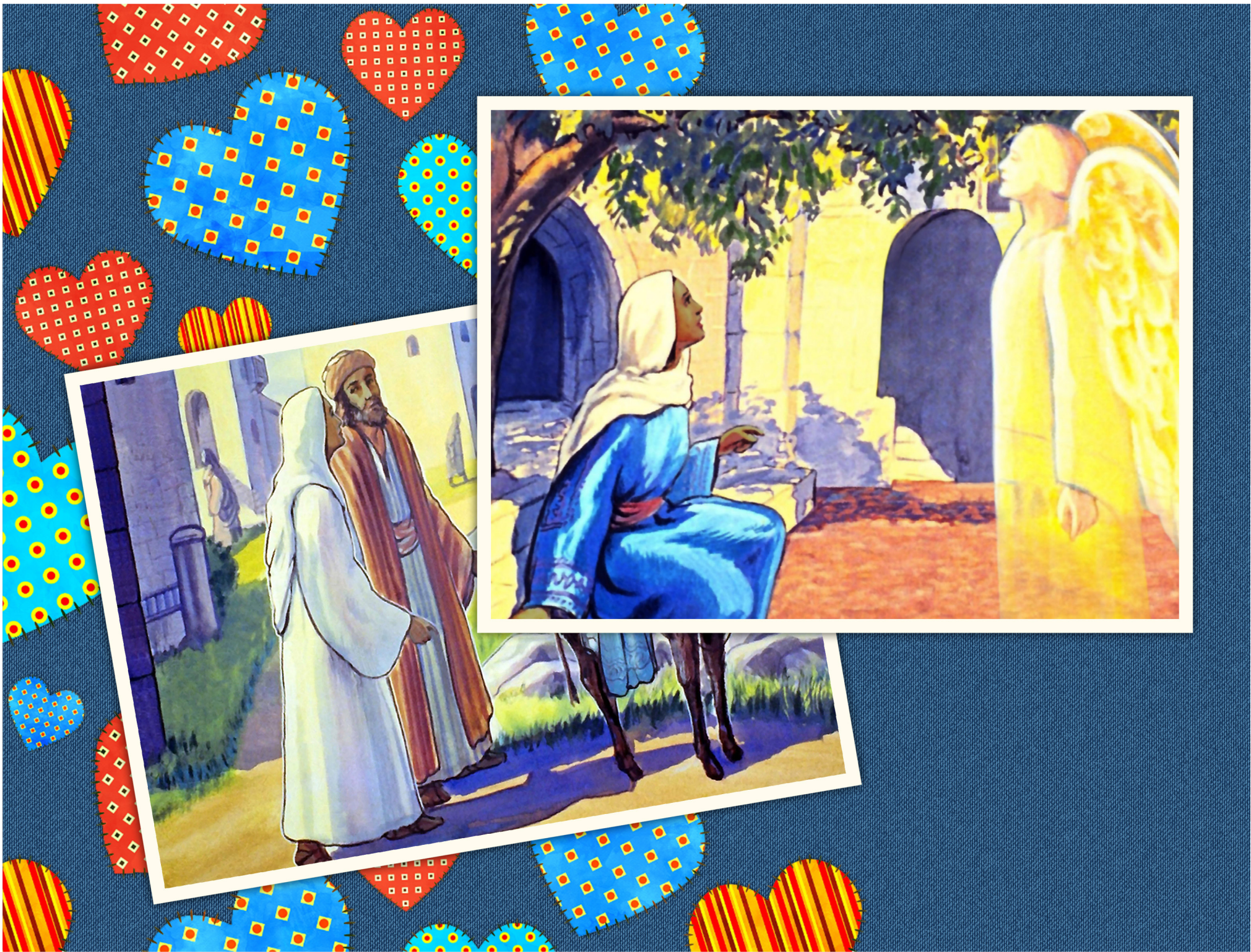
“Right. And now we know the Redeemer will be a descendant of King David,” said Gram.

“I have one big question, though.” Liam closed his laptop giving Gram his full attention. “You’ve been telling us over and over that from the very beginning because Adam and Eve disobeyed that all of us are born sinners, right?”

“Yes, the Bible tells us sin entered into the world by one man, Adam. Death came because of this sin. It passed to all of us for all of us are sinners,” explained Gram.

“Well, if that’s true,” reasoned Liam, “when Jesus came into the world, why wasn’t He born into sin and death too?”

“Ah, let’s revisit the story of Jesus’ birth to get the answer to your very good question,” answered Gram. She put down her sewing.



5.

“God had to do some miraculous alterations of His own before Jesus was born of a woman.”

“What do you mean?” asked Izzy.

Gram began her story. “As you know, Mary, the mother of Jesus, was pledged in marriage to a man named Joseph.”

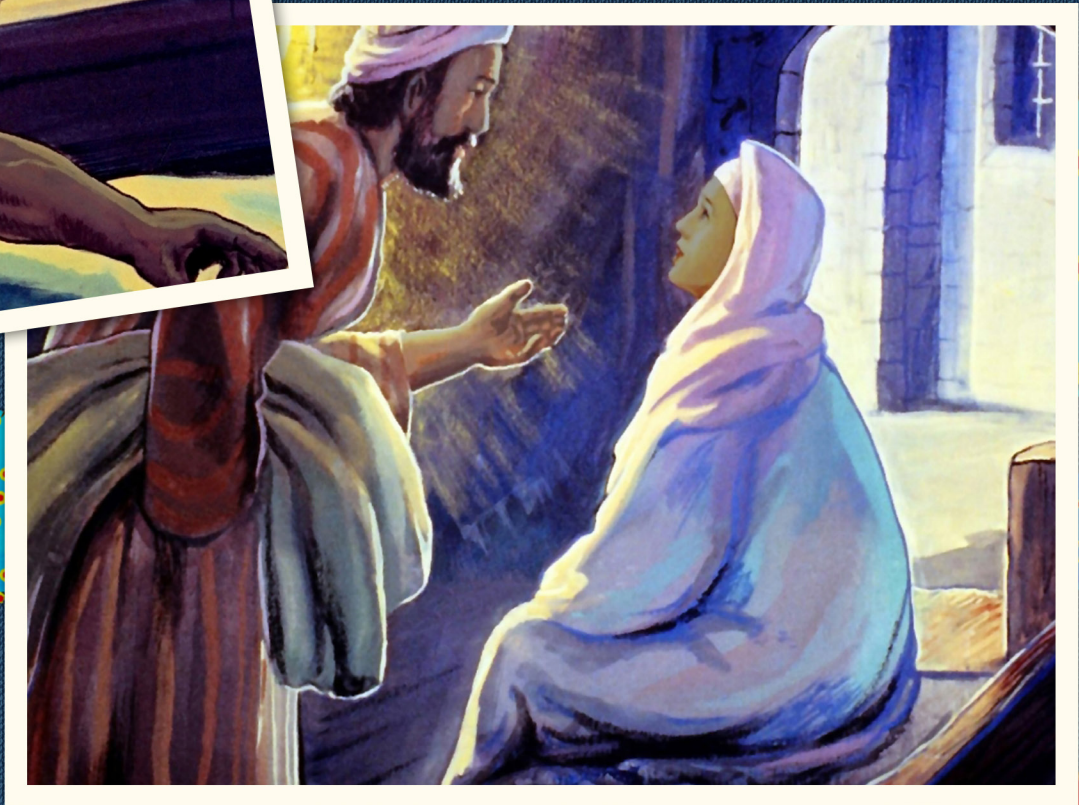
“That’s like being engaged, right?” Izzy knew a lot about this story and was eager to contribute.

“Very similar to being engaged, but much more legally binding in those days. Anyway, before the actual wedding and before Mary and Joseph came together as man and wife, Mary had a visit from an angel telling her that she was chosen to be the mother of God’s Son,” continued Gram.

Izzy looked confused. “How could such a thing happen? You just said the wedding hadn’t taken place.”

Gram reached for her Bible and began thumbing through the pages. “Mary had the same question for the angel. That’s the wonder of the birth of Jesus. It was a miracle.”

From her Bible, Gram began to read, “And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”

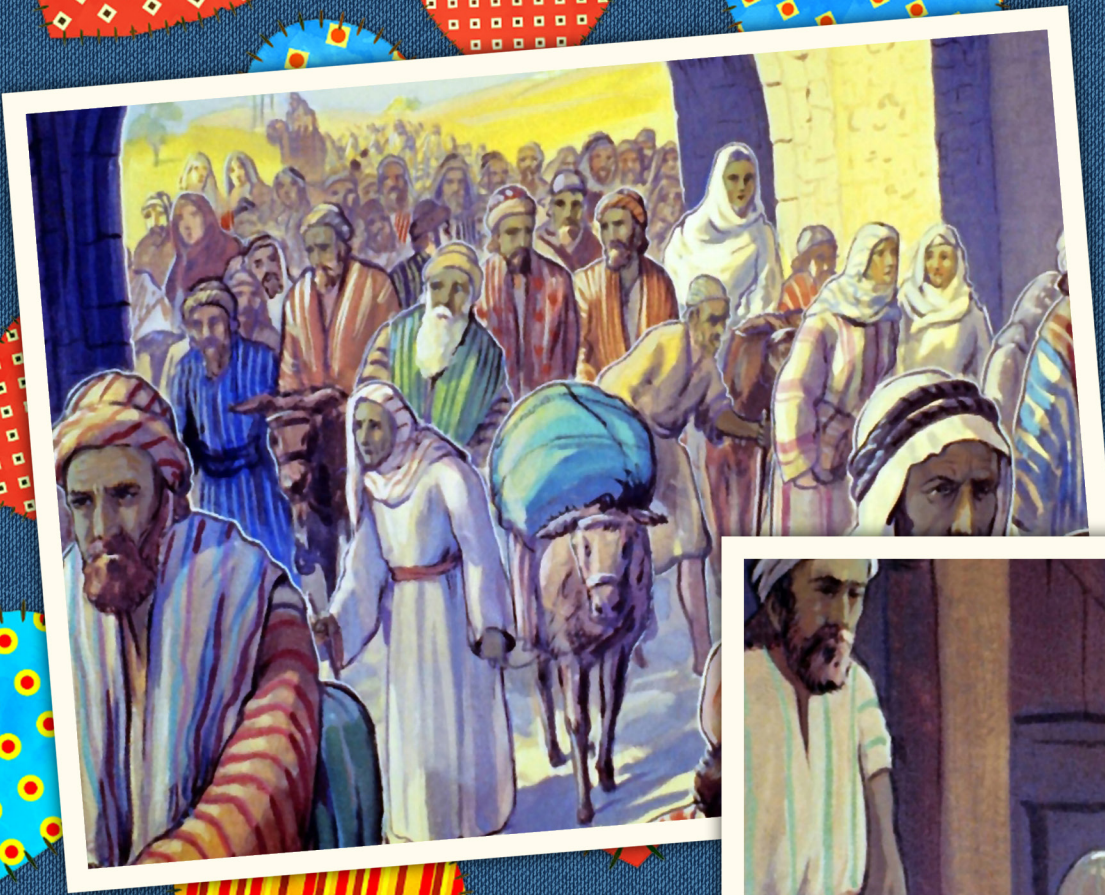


6.

Liam looked up. “How did Mary explain such a thing to the man she promised to marry?”

“We’re told in the Bible that Joseph was a righteous man and didn’t want to expose Mary to disgrace. He considered quietly dissolving their marriage agreement, but an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and explained to him that the child Mary was expecting was indeed God’s Son. He was told to name him Jesus because He would save His people from the penalty for their sins.” It was a long explanation, and Gram hoped her grandchildren could understand its meaning.

A look of understanding came over Liam’s face. “Oh, I get it, I think. This is God’s ‘alteration.’” Liam made little air quotes with his hands. “Jesus wasn’t born into sin because He was God’s son, not the natural human son of Joseph. Joseph agreed to be the earthly father of Jesus, but God is His actual Father. So Jesus is perfect.”



7.

“Yes,” said Gram, “and although the Bible doesn’t tell us a great deal about Joseph, we see in his actions that he was a man with a deep commitment to God and his family. Even though he knew that Jesus wasn’t his natural son, he raised him as his own.”

“From the very beginning, even before Jesus was born,” added Izzy. “He got married to Mary and then they went to Bethlehem to be taxed. I learned that from the Christmas play.”

Liam laughed. “I remember that. You were an angel and your wings kept falling off.”

Izzy playfully thumped her brother on the head. “It’s better than being a mean, old innkeeper who wouldn’t let Mary and Joseph stay there.”

“Simmer down, you two,” Gram lightly scolded. “God had a plan and a place for Jesus to be born. I’m glad He provided a good and strong man to care for Mary and Jesus during that time.”



8.

“I remember another thing Joseph did that showed he protected and cared for Jesus as his own son,” added Izzy.

“What are you thinking of?” asked Gram.

Izzy began, “Well, a really bad King named Herod wanted to harm Jesus. Joseph had another dream, and an angel told him to leave with his family.”

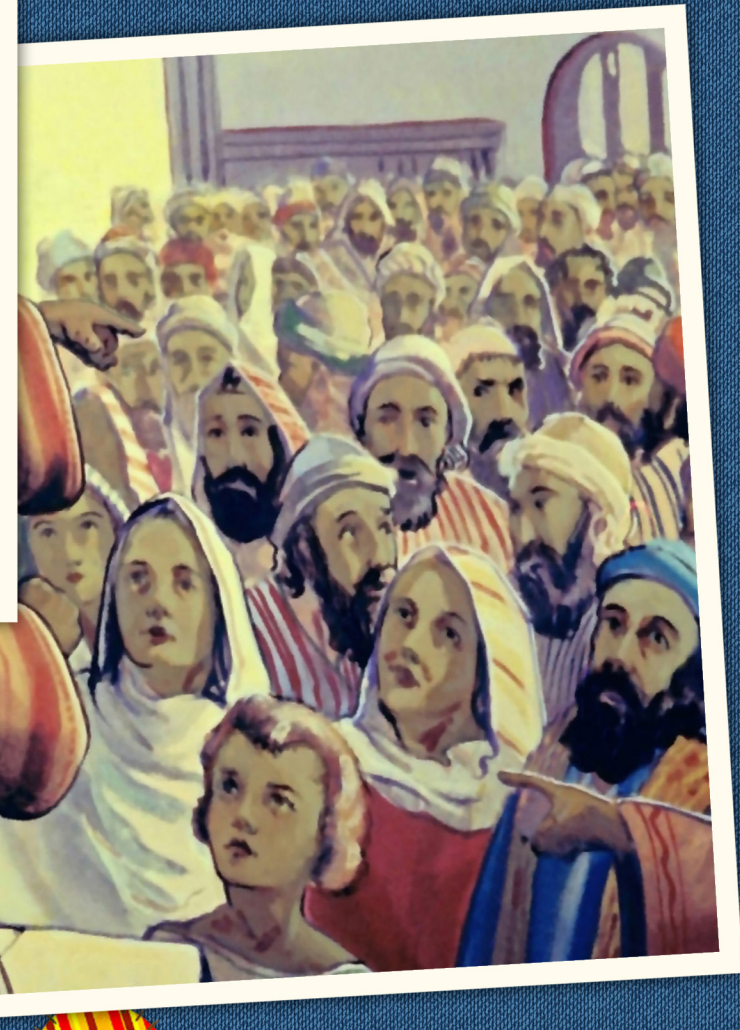
Suggested Activity

This would be a good place to insert the **Packing for the Journey Relay**. *Note: After game is completed, use a “Call to Order” technique to settle the children.*

Gram nodded. “I’m sure it was a difficult journey. They fled to Egypt until it was safe for them to go back to Nazareth, their home town.”

“When I think of Joseph in the Bible, I like that story about Jesus going to the temple with His parents when He was the age I am right now, twelve years old,” said Liam.

“Yes, that story shows us many things about Mary and Joseph.



9.

For one thing, we learn in the Bible that the family went up to Jerusalem each year at the feast of the Passover.” Gram looked directly into the eyes of her grandchildren. “Your parents, like Mary and Joseph, take seriously the responsibility of teaching you the things of God.”

“You do too, Honey Gram,” Izzy said. “I’m glad.”

Gram smiled. “Thank you, Izzy. I hope we’re all learning together. Speaking of learning, Jesus’ parents were reminded again of their special mission of raising God’s Son.”

“What do you mean?” asked Liam.

“Well, when it was time for the feast to end, Jesus stayed behind, but His parents were unaware of that. Thinking that Jesus was with the company of other people traveling with them, Mary and Joseph journeyed for a whole day without Him.”

“A whole day! Boy, I’ll bet they were worried when they realized Jesus wasn’t with the group,” remarked Izzy.

“Yes,” agreed Gram, “they were very concerned. They asked all the relatives and friends among them if any had seen Jesus. Then they went back to Jerusalem looking for Him.”



10.

“After three days they found Him in the temple courts among the teachers, listening to them and asking questions,” continued Gram.

Izzy asked, “Were they mad at Him?”

“Well,” said Gram, “I’m sure they were relieved to find Him. Any parent would be. The Bible says His parents were astonished when they saw Him. Everyone who saw and heard Jesus was amazed at His understanding and His answers to the teachers.”

Gram continued. “His mother had lots of questions. ‘Son, why have You treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for You.’”

“Yep,” remarked Liam. “That sounds like the things parents say all right.”

“It was the answer Jesus gave them that made them think long and hard about the job they had been given to care for and raise God’s Son,” Gram replied.

“What did He say?” asked Izzy.



11.

“Jesus answered them with two questions of His own: ‘Why are you searching for Me?’ and ‘Didn’t you know I had to be in My Father’s house?’” Gram finished this explanation as she cut the last thread from the hem she just finished sewing.

Liam said, “After all the love and care they had given Jesus as His earthly parents, it must have been hard to be reminded that Jesus was really God’s Son.”

“I’m certain it gave them all a great deal to think about,” agreed Gram. “The Bible tells us that at that moment they didn’t understand what Jesus was saying to them.”

“You’re making me think so hard, Gram, I think I’m getting a brain cramp.” Liam dramatically rubbed his head with his hands.

“You know, Honey Gram,” Izzy said, “Jesus’ parents were very unselfish, I think. They knew before He was born that Jesus was God’s Son, and they loved Him as their very own child. It’s almost like a kid that’s been adopted into a family. It’s an extra special kind of love.”

“Yes, Izzy, you’re exactly right.”



12.

And that's the extra special kind of love God and Jesus have for the world. Jesus grew up and lived a perfect, sinless life. He died on a cross to take the punishment for our sins," said Gram.

Liam interrupted. "But He didn't stay dead. That's what you always say, Gram. And now He's in heaven with God preparing a place for us."

"Yeah, Gram. You say that too," added Izzy.

Gram smiled her big, wrinkled smile. "Isn't that kind of love just wonderful? Like being adopted into the most remarkable family ever. Like that Bible verse we sing sometimes, 'Behold what manner of love the Father has given unto us that we should be called the sons of God.'"

Izzy began to sing along with Gram as she said the words.



"YOU NEED AN
ALTERATION IZZY."

MOUNTAIN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

13.

Liam gave her one of his big-brother looks and grabbed Gram's measuring tape. "You need an alteration, Izzy."

"What? Why?" Izzy tried to run away from her brother.

He caught her and tied the measuring tape around her head. "You need an alteration, sister. Your brains are falling out."

"You might be the kookiest grandkids ever, but I'm sure glad we're family," laughed Gram.

"Me too, Honey Gram," giggled Izzy.

Liam cocked his head to the side. "Well, I'm still thinking about it. Let me see if the alteration I made on Izzy has any effect. Then I'll let you know."

End of Story Review

Answers from the Bible

(4th-6th graders)

1. Did Joseph and Mary have other children after Jesus was born? (Matthew 13:55-56)
2. How does God demonstrate His high regard for the fatherless child? (James 1:27, Deuteronomy 10:18)
3. An angel of the Lord appears to Joseph more than once to give instructions regarding the birth and care of Jesus. Who else experienced receiving instruction from an angel regarding the birth of God's Son? (Luke 1:27-32, Luke 2:8-12)
4. Where in the Old Testament is the birthplace of Jesus foretold? (Micah 5:2)
5. Where in the Old Testament do we learn about God's plan to have Jesus pay the penalty for our sin? (Isaiah 53:3-6)

Review Questions

(1st-3rd graders)

1. In what town was Jesus born? (Bethlehem)
2. How did Joseph know that Mary was going to give birth to God's child? (He was told by an angel in a dream.)
3. What was Jesus doing when His parents found Him after three days at the temple. (He was listening to the teachers and asking questions.)