

RESPONSES TO JESUS' BIRTH

Scripture:

Matthew 2:1-18, Luke 2:8-38

Memory Verse:

Matthew 2:2 Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.

Objectives:

 As a result of this lesson, I want my students

To Know—When people first heard that Jesus, the Savior-King had been born, they responded either in praise and worship, or with fear and angry jealousy.

To Realize—That there is no middle ground when one hears about Jesus, they will respond either with praise and worship or in fear and angry jealousy.

To Respond by—Praising and worshipping Jesus.

Setting up the Story:

Have three students come to the front. Write an identical message on three pieces of paper, and hand it to them, telling them they can't look at the message until you say. Tell the rest of the class that they have to watch to see the responses of the three to see if the news is good or bad. (You might have a message that says, "Your last quiz grade doesn't count.": to the student that didn't do well, it would be good news, to the student that did well, it would be bad news.) When the three students read the message, they can't say what they read. The other students try to guess if it was good news or bad news. Then have the three students read their message aloud and explain why they responded the way they did.

Ask: why would the same message be good for one person, and not good for another person?

In today's passages, there was identical news given to six different people, and we are going to look at their reactions to the news.

Scripture Telling the story:

Lk. 2:8-20

- I. Shepherds hear of Jesus
 - A. In fields near Bethlehem
 - B. Angel brings them good news of great joy:
Savior has been born!
 - C. Sign will be wrapped in cloths lying in a manger
 - D. They came in a hurry and found baby
 - E. They told everyone what they had heard and seen

Mt. 2:3-6

- II. Jewish Wise Men hear of Messiah
 - A. The city is stirred from foreign

As you tell the story:

Storytell this part or have students read a section of the worksheet and then report what they have found.

- wise men
 - B. Herod asks where Messiah is to be born
 - C. They quote Micah passage: Bethlehem
 - D. They don't go to worship or find out

- Mt. 2:1-2, 7-12

 - III. Foreign Wise Men follow star
 - A. Come to Jerusalem and inquire about the king who has been born
 - B. Herod directs them to Bethlehem
 - C. They follow the star with great joy and worship Jesus
 - D. They present their gifts

- Mt. 2:1-2, 16-18

 - IV. Herod hears of new king
 - A. From wise men of east
 - B. From own wise men
 - C. Enraged when he realizes he's been tricked
 - D. Orders murder of infant boys 2 years and younger

- Lk. 2:25-32

 - V. Simeon sees Jesus
 - A. Looking for Savior
 - B. Holy Spirit revealed he would not taste death before seeing Messiah
 - C. Mary and Joseph bring Jesus to the Temple
 - D. Simeon blesses him

- Lk. 2:36-38

 - VI. Anna sees Jesus
 - A. Had been in the Temple for years after husband's death
 - B. Joins Simeon in giving praise to God
 - C. Speaks of Jesus to everyone

Concluding the Story:

Why would the news about Jesus being the Savior-King be good news for some but not good news for others? (like Herod or the Jewish wise men?) There is one thing that you don't find in this chart: you don't find the middle—the no response. Everyone had a response when they heard about Jesus. What were the two responses? Why were they different?

If a person today heard about Jesus, what would make them happy to hear it? The same reason: they need a Savior! If a person heard about Jesus and they weren't happy about it, why would that be? Same reason: they feel that Jesus is going to take over, and they are going to be out of control. Which side are you on?

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Read the Scriptures and fill in the chart with the answers you find. Sometimes how a person felt may have to be inferred from the text.

Scripture	Person	How they learned of Jesus' Birth	How they felt	What they did
Lk. 2:8-20	Shepherds	The angel told them in the fields.	Amazed, wondering, overjoyed	Ran to see if it were true; told everyone about it.
Matt. 2:3-6	Jewish Wise Men	Foreign wise men and Herod.	Stirred up; inquired; disinterested.	Nothing. Stayed where they were.
Matt. 2:1-2, 7-12	Foreign Wise Men	From the star they saw while in the east.	Great joy	Worshipped Jesus and presented gifts.
Matt. 2:1-2, 16-18	Herod	Foreign wise men. Own wise men.	Jealous; threatened; enraged.	Used deceit and then murder to get rid of Jesus.
Lk. 2:25-32	Simeon	From Holy Spirit	Awed and full of joy	Praised God and blessed Jesus
Lk. 2:38	Anna	Saw Simeon, Mary and Joseph	Filled with joy	Praised God and told everyone

Everyone who heard of Jesus had one of two responses. What were they?

1. Praised and worshipped God.
2. Had angry jealousy and hate.