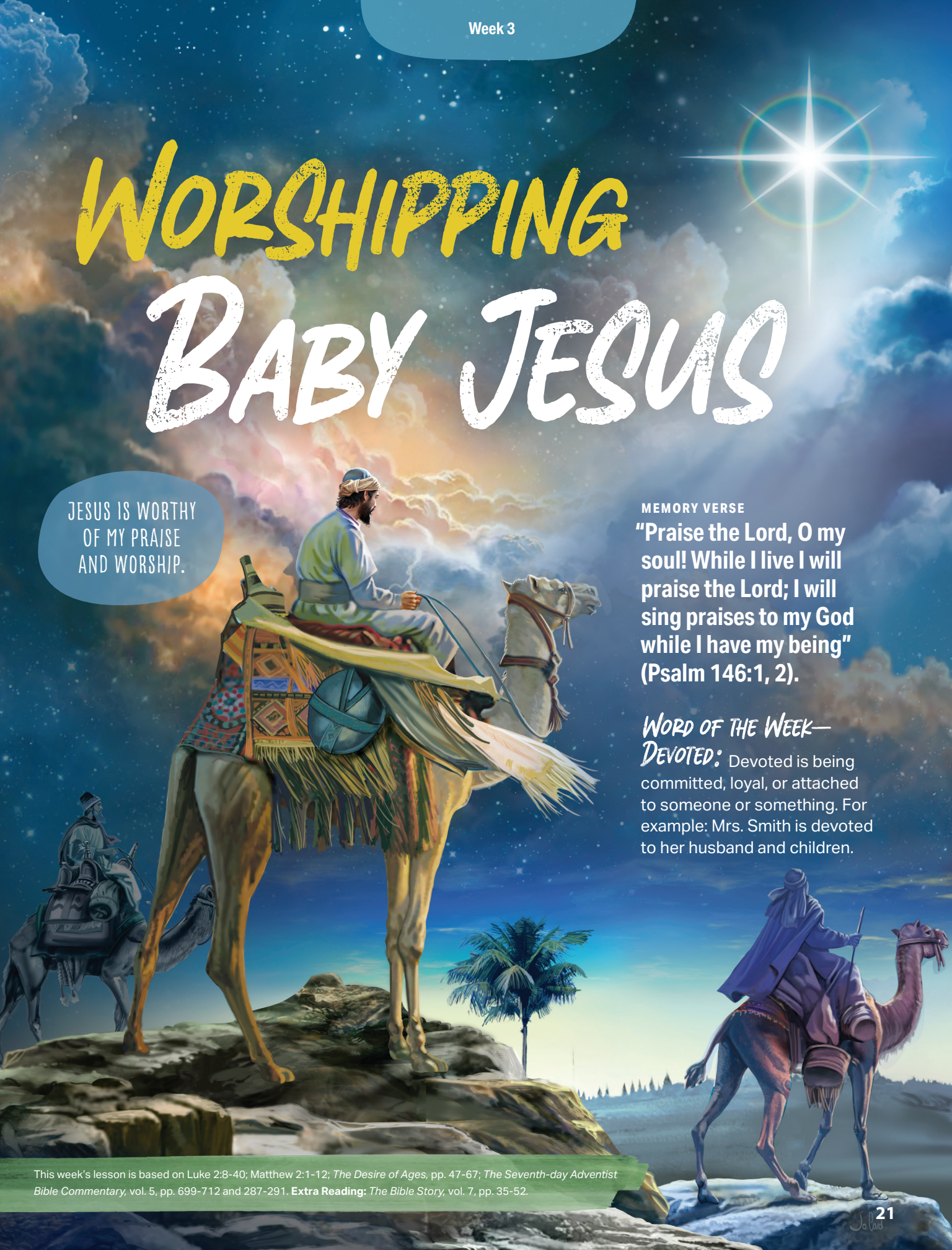
Worshipping Baby Jesus



Jesus is worthy of my praise and worship.

MEMORY VERSE

"Praise the Lord, O my soul! While I live I will praise the Lord; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being" (Psalm 146:1, 2).

Word of the Week—Devoted: Devoted is being committed, loyal, or attached to someone or something. For example: Mrs. Smith is devoted to her husband and children.

This week's lesson is based on Luke 2:8-40; Matthew 2:1-12; *The Desire of Ages,* pp. 47-67; *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* vol. 5, pp. 699-712 and 287-291. **Extra Reading:** *The Bible Story,* vol. 7, pp. 35-52.

SUNDAY

Heaven Rejoices

The Savior had been born! All of heaven rejoiced at His birth. A huge crowd of angels gathered above the hills of Bethlehem, eagerly waiting for the signal to share the good news with the world. Who would rejoice with them?

As Baby Jesus, the Son of God, breathed His first breath on earth, the people of Bethlehem slept on. What a day it had been! More travelers arrived for the Roman census, and every home was filled to the rafters with friends, family, and strangers alike.

God had chosen Bethlehem, naming this town in the Bible scrolls as the Savior's place of birth. But some people in Bethlehem had been too busy to search the scrolls. They had been too busy chasing riches, too busy praying prayers they didn't mean, and too busy trying to look holy. They had been too busy for God. And now God's Son had arrived, while they slept on.

Would anyone notice? Would anyone care?

Down in the fields a group of shepherds was awake. These humble men who cared for their sheep by day and night were devoted to God. As they sat under the stars, protecting their sheep, they talked about the promised Savior and prayed for His coming. Suddenly something amazing happened! Read about it in **Luke 2:9-14.**

Praise God, those angels had found some devoted men who would notice, listen, and care! With great joy the angels lit up the night sky above the startled shepherds, singing and praising God for the newborn Savior of the world. The angels sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" (Luke 2:14).

For You, Parents: "Heaven and earth are no wider apart today than when shepherds listened to the angels' song. . . . To us in the common walks of life, heaven may be very near" (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 48).

Mission Challenge: Pray for the people you noticed last week who serve others in your community. This quarter, you will have a chance to thank some of them with a gift from your Sabbath School class. Ask God to lead you to people who will be open to learning about Him.

Pray: You might like to sing a prayer to praise God, just as the angels did.

Think . . . Then Talk About It

- *Why do you think God announced Jesus' birth to the shepherds rather than to the leaders of God's people?*
- *How can you make time for God today?*





☐ MONDAY

Shepherds Worship

The angels disappeared, the light faded away, and the shepherds found themselves in darkness once again. The words of the angel seemed to echo in the still night's air: "For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger" (Luke 2:11,12).

Amazed and filled with great joy, they ran off to Bethlehem in search of the place where Baby Jesus lay. They gently pushed open the stable door, and there was the Baby—*the* Baby! Wrapped in soft white cloth and lying in a manger. It was just as the angel had said. They tiptoed in, knelt down, and bowed to worship the tiny Jesus. Their eyes sparkled with happiness, for they knew that tiny Baby Jesus was worthy of all their worship and praise.

Then the shepherds told Joseph and Mary about the beautiful angel choir and the message from the dazzling angel. Mary cherished this news in her heart; her Baby was indeed very, VERY special.

With a last look at Baby Jesus, the shepherds quietly left. As they stepped onto the street, their excitement bubbled over. They shared what they had seen and heard with everyone. What else did they do as they returned to their fields? *Read Luke 2:20.*

The shepherds couldn't help praising God for the things they had heard from the angels, for the Savior they had seen in the manger, and for what Mary and Joseph had told them. What a wonderful night it had been.

Baby Jesus was worthy of the shepherds' worship, and He is worthy of our worship today. Our hearts were created to worship Him. Like the shepherds, we can praise Jesus for what we have heard about Him in His Word, what we have "seen" or experienced of Him ourselves, and for what others have told us of their love for Him.

Do: Read or sing hymn no. 142 in *The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*. Note: *Gloria in excelsis Deo* means "glory to God in the highest" in Latin.

Pray: Engage in a "seesaw" prayer with a family member. Take turns back and forth as you praise God for all the things Jesus means to you.

Think . . . Then talk about it

If you had been able to visit Baby Jesus in the stable . . .

- *How would you have worshipped Him?*
- *How might you have offered to help Mary and Joseph?*

TUESDAY

Baby Dedication

Before long, Baby Jesus was 40 days old, and it was time to dedicate Him to the Lord at the temple in Jerusalem. Joseph couldn't afford to buy a lamb, so he put two young pigeons in a cage for a sacrifice, and five silver coins in a money bag to pay the dedication fee. Then his little family made the five-mile trip to Jerusalem.

Mary held Baby Jesus close. Joseph smiled at their little Baby as they walked. Soon they could thank God for the privilege of looking after His precious Son. They wanted to dedicate Jesus to God. And to see Him receive God's dedication blessings from the temple priest.

Many Christian parents today dedicate their babies to God too. A little ceremony is held at church. The baby doesn't understand what is happening, but the parents and the church members do. Mothers and fathers are publicly saying that they want their child—their precious gift from God—to grow up loving and trusting Jesus. What else are parents committing to at the dedication of their baby? **Read Psalm 78:4.**

Parents know they need God's help to be wise and kind parents, so the pastor prays for both the parents and the baby, asking God to bless the little family with His love as the baby grows up. Church members may also commit to teach the child to love Jesus.

When Jesus was an adult, He took children in His arms and blessed them too. Read about it in **Mark 10:13-16**. What a wonderful thing to have God's blessings and be dedicated to Him as a little child.

Parent Faith Talk: If your child was dedicated, share special highlights from this day. Whether your child was dedicated or not, share how precious they are and how much you love to see them choosing to be Jesus' friend.

Fast Fact: Just like the temple priests, the government keeps a record of every baby that is born. They also give parents a birth certificate. Ask your parents to show you yours.

Pray: Thank Jesus for caring so much about children, especially you. Thank Him for His blessings.

Think . . . Then talk about it

- *What Bible stories have your parents told you that make you want to follow Jesus?*
- *How would you have felt if Jesus had taken you in His arms and blessed you?*





☐ WEDNESDAY

Praise in the Temple

Simeon walked quickly to the temple in Jerusalem. He had felt the Holy Spirit tell him to get there, *now!* Simeon quickened his pace and prayed as he walked. Prayer came often to Simeon. "Just and devout" (Luke 2:25), he had earnestly prayed for Israel to return to God. And he had watched, waited, and prayed with longing for their Savior to appear.

Breathlessly he scanned the temple court, perhaps wondering why the Holy Spirit had brought him here. Then Simeon's eyes saw them. He saw *Him*!

Rushing to Mary and Joseph, Simeon took Baby Jesus in his arms and praised God. The Savior! At last the Messiah had come!

God, in His kindness, had promised His devoted friend Simeon that he would see the Messiah in his lifetime. What did Simeon say to God now that he stood holding God's Son? Read Luke 2:30-32.

While Simeon praised God, a prophet named Anna entered the temple. An 84-year-old widow, Anna served God in the temple night and day—He was her everything! Seeing the baby in Simeon's arms, her face lit up. It was the *Messiah!* She gave thanks to God and began to tell everyone the good news.

These two humble worshippers had hoped and prayed that they would see and be able to worship the Messiah. That very day God rewarded their devotion—all their hopes and dreams came true.

Getting to know Jesus will give you great joy too! Like Simeon and Anna, you will want to share this joy with everyone.

Do: Simeon and Anna praised God and thanked Him that they had seen Baby Jesus. Imagine you had been in the temple too. Write down what you would have said to praise God for Jesus.

Think . . . Then talk about it

- *How did Simeon and Anna recognize who Baby Jesus was?*
- *Simeon promised that Jesus would be "a light for the non-Jewish people to see" (Luke 2:32, ICB). What do you think this means?*

Pray: Turn the praises you wrote down into prayers.

THURSDAY

Wise Men From the East

The men smiled as they gazed up at the bright, twinkling stars that filled the inky black sky. These wise, educated men loved to study the stars. The men, who lived in a far country to the east of Jerusalem, loved to study many things. They even studied the Bible scrolls to try to learn more about them. As they studied, they also learned about the true God and the prophecies that showed Jesus would soon be born. They were excited!

One night as they gazed at the stars, the Wise Men noticed an especially bright star that was really a cluster of shining angels. God told them in a dream to follow it, for it would lead them to the promised Savior they were devoted to learning about. They followed the brilliant star at night until they arrived in Jerusalem. What did they ask the people there? **Read Matthew 2:2.**

The Wise Men were surprised when no one knew what they were talking about. *Why don't the people know? Can't they read? Don't they care?* the Wise Men wondered. They had expected to find the city celebrating.

When news about the baby "King of the Jews" reached King Herod, he was not happy! He tricked the Wise Men into believing he wanted to worship the baby King too. What did he tell them to do? **Read Matthew 2:7, 8.**

The priests and religious leaders weren't happy either. They were upset because they thought God hadn't told *them* about the birth of the promised Savior. Those jealous leaders refused to accept the news from richly dressed strangers from a far country. Oh, what a blessing they missed! And all because they overlooked what God had told them in the Bible scrolls. They hadn't eagerly studied the way the Wise Men had.

The Wise Men were devoted to learning all they could about the promised Messiah. A devotion to learning can lead us to worship Jesus too.

Do: Make and gift wrap some star-shaped cookies or healthy treats. Give them to someone who has had a baby. Alternatively, give them to a neighbor and share the story of Jesus' birth.

Pray: Ask God to help you devote time to learning more about Him.

Think . . . Then talk about it

- *How did the Wise Men know about the Messiah?*
- *Why did they want to find Him?*
- *How devoted are you to learning more about God?*





FRIDAY

Lavish Gifts for the Baby King

As the evening sky darkened, the Wise Men left Jerusalem. And there was God's star, twinkling above them once again! "When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy" (Matthew 2:10) and they followed it to Bethlehem, right to the very house where Baby Jesus lay sleeping.

The Wise Men knocked and entered the cozy home. Here was Jesus, God's Son, the Savior, the newborn King. They knelt and worshipped Him with love and devotion. They gave Him their hearts. Then they gave the other gifts they had brought. What were they? **Read Matthew 2:11.**

These were expensive and precious gifts, and each had special meaning for Jesus. They gave Him gold because Jesus was a king. They gave Him frankincense because Jesus would be a priest. Frankincense was the valuable perfume that the priests burned in worship ceremonies in the temple. And because Jesus would die one day to save His people, they gave Him myrrh. It was a sweet-smelling perfume used to prepare bodies for burial.

Jesus is our *King*, our *Priest*, and our *Savior*. He is worthy of our worship. We may not be able to give Him expensive gifts, but we can give Him our time, talents, gifts of money, and other things. And best of all, we can give Him our hearts.

Think . . . Then Talk About It

- *The Wise Men handed three gifts to Joseph and Mary. What other gift did they give Jesus?*

Friday Night

Share and Praise

- Pretend you are one of the Wise Men. Tell your story to Mary and Joseph.
- Pretend you are Mary and Joseph. Tell your story to the Wise Men.
- When it is dark, go outside and find the brightest star in the sky. Imagine what an angel star might have looked like. Imagine following it night after night.
- Listen to or sing the hymn "Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven" (*The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, no. 4). Imagine how the Wise Men felt to worship Baby Jesus. You can worship Him too this Friday night.

Family Journal

- Say or sing your memory verse. Name the people in the story who would have praised God with similar words of devotion.
- One great new thought I discovered about devotion in this lesson was . . .

Pray

- Make a family circle and imagine you are surrounding Baby Jesus in the manger. Have each person finish this sentence as their own prayer: "Dear God, I'm so thankful Jesus came so . . ."

Do

Think of someone who is in need right now. What is the best thing that you could give them? Think and pray about it. Then ask your family to help you prepare and deliver a gift.

☐ SABBATH

Creative Praise

Organize and practice a special closing Sabbath worship for your family. Choose from the ideas below or create some of your own. Involve any family members who are willing to help you.

1. Read the poem "What Can I Give Him?"
What can I give Him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.
If I were a wise man, I would do my part.
Yet what I can, I give Him.
Give my heart.

2. Dress up as an angel, and read or sing **Luke 2:14**, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

3. Dress up as a Wise Man and choose three objects to represent the gifts they gave. You might like to wrap them. Hold each one up and explain to your family what it is, and its special meaning for Jesus. (Refer back to Friday's lesson.)

4. Sing several of your favorite praise songs. If any family members play an instrument, invite them to accompany the singing. You might like to give family members something they could use, such as a percussion instrument to keep the beat or rhythm of the song. For example, two spoons to gently tap together, a rubber band stretched over a box to twang, a jar with some rice in it to shake.

5. Have an adult write the words from Luke 2:25-32 (ICB) on a big sheet of paper so your family can read it as a reader's theater.

You: *A man named Simeon lived in Jerusalem.*
Everyone: He was a good man and devoted to God.
You: *He was waiting for the time when God would help Israel.*
Everyone: The Holy Spirit was in Him.
You: *The Holy Spirit told Simeon that he would not die before he saw the Christ promised by the Lord.*
Everyone: The Spirit led Simeon to the temple.
You: *Mary and Joseph brought the Baby Jesus to the temple . . . Then Simeon took the Baby in his arms and thanked God:*
Everyone: "Now, Lord, You can let me, your servant, die in peace as You said. I have seen your Salvation with my own eyes. You prepared him before all people. He is a light for the non-Jewish people to see. He will bring honor to your people, the Israelites."

