Keeping Baby Jesus Safe

GOD CAN GUIDE MY LIFE.



MEMORY VERSE

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye" (Psalm 32:8).

Word of the Week—Guidance: Guidance means to give advice and information to help do something, or solve a problem or difficulty. Guidance leads and directs us when we need help—like a light would guide someone on a dark path at night. Not all advice is good advice.

This week's lesson is based on the story of God protecting Baby Jesus from King Herod, as found in Matthew 2:12-18. Some insights have also been drawn from *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 62-67, and *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, pp. 291-293, to enhance this lesson. **Extra Reading:** *The Bible Story,* vol. 7, pp. 53-62.

☐ SUNDAY

A Rotten Heart

King Herod stomped down the halls of his beautiful palace. The visit by the Wise Men from the East had left the king in a terrible mood. His robes swirled around him as he began to plot a wicked scheme.

The Wise Men had gone happily on their way. They didn't know that Herod was hiding hatred and jealousy behind the nice words he had spoken to them when they had passed through Jerusalem searching for Baby Jesus. The King had said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also" (Matthew 2:8). But it was all a lie. Instead of worshipping Baby Jesus, King Herod secretly planned to kill Him!

Herod hated the way the Wise Men had called Baby Jesus the "King of the Jews" (Matthew 2:2). Herod was jealous; he wanted power all to himself! The more he thought about it, the angrier he became.

Where does the Bible say bad actions come from? Read the words of Jesus in **Mark 7:21-23.**

Herod is a sad example of what can happen to people's hearts when they reject God and think only about themselves. The Wise Men had given him the opportunity to worship Jesus and get to know the wonderful God of heaven as they had. But Herod rejected their knowledge and didn't want God's guidance. A hard, hateful heart was the result. Herod would never know that God will "guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1:79). How very sad.

Our awesome God can guide anyone's life if they let Him. All God needs is our heart.

Think . . . Then Talk About It

- *What would you have said to King Herod about Jesus if you had been there?*
- *Would you have been brave enough?*

DO: Adults have a lot of decisions to make all the time. Think of two adults you know well and ask them if they need God's guidance for something right now. Let them know that you will pray for them every day for a week as God helps them.

PRAY: Pray for the leaders of your country, that they will let God guide them.



MONDAY

Guided Safely Home

The Wise Men were full of joy as they packed up their belongings and prepared to leave Bethlehem. They had found the Messiah and worshipped Him, so now it was time to begin their long journey home. Not knowing about Herod's hate-filled heart, they planned to stop in Jerusalem and share their wonderful news with him. Then he, and all the Hebrew people, could find Baby Jesus and worship Him too. Or so they thought.

But God had a different plan. He was watching over those Wise Men, and He knew that stopping in Jerusalem was a very dangerous idea. He needed to warn them right away! That night God chose to give them guidance in a vivid dream. What did God tell them to do, and how did they respond? *Read Matthew 2:12.*

The Wise Men were truly very wise. They hadn't grown up knowing God, but they had learned to trust Him because He had already guided them in a number of ways. At first God led them to the Bible scrolls to help them understand the amazing things they saw in the starry heavens. He guided them to accept Him as the Creator. Then God pointed them to the prophecies about Jesus' birth so that they could begin to trust Him. The Bible promises that "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105).

God then guided them through nature; they followed His brilliant star of shining angels in the night sky. Then after they had worshipped Jesus and given Him their hearts, God used a dream to lead them safely home.

God longs to guide us too! The Bible says, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" (Romans 8:14). As we grow closer to Jesus, we will get better at recognizing God's guidance in the Bible, in nature, and in other ways.

Do: To help you think about recognizing God's guidance, blindfold yourself. Have a family member walk around and call to you as you follow their voice.

Think . . . Then talk about it

- *Read* **Psalm 32:8**, *your memory verse. How much do you think the Wise Men would have loved this promise?*
- *What could have happened if the Wise Men had questioned God's guidance?*

Pray: Ask God to help you follow Him as He guides you today.

☐ TUESDAY

"Quick, Go!"

The night was dark and still. The hour was late. Joseph's eyes opened, and he was instantly wide awake. Yes, he was sure of the next steps he must take. In a flash he woke Mary, and together they quickly loaded their little donkey. Silently they hurried away into the night, with God's precious Son held tightly in Mary's arms.

God could see that there was terrible danger ahead for His precious Son. Satan was determined to destroy Jesus, using King Herod. But God was watching over His beloved Son. What message had He sent Joseph in his dream? *Read Matthew 2:13*.

Joseph praised God for providing a safe hiding place in Egypt. As they traveled the lonely path to a foreign land, Joseph may also have praised God for the Wise Men's expensive gifts, for they would pay for the journey and the things they would need while living in Egypt.

God was an amazing guide in Joseph and Mary's lives. He had thought of and provided for their needs: direction, protection, money to live, and a safe hiding place. They were truly blessed by trusting Him.

Just as He guided Joseph to protect Jesus, our caring God will guide your parents, grandparents, and other adults in your life to protect you as you grow up. There may be some adults who do not want to keep you safe, but there will always be many that follow God's guidance. You can trust their guidance and protection and thank God for them.

Think . . . Then talk about it

- *Read* **Proverbs 1:8**. *How much do you listen to your parent's or caregiver's guidance?*

Mission Challenge:

Think about a family member (grandparent, uncle, cousin) who has helped guide you. Think of a creative way to connect with them this week through a song, letter, or video message. Include a Bible verse or something you have learned about God in this week's lesson.

Do: Mary and Joseph had to escape quietly during the night. If it is safe to do so, go for a quiet walk in the dark with a grown-up and think about Joseph and Mary's escape. How easy is it to be quiet?

Pray: Thank God for protecting you whenever and wherever you travel. Ask Him to help you humbly accept guidance from the trusted adults in your life.





☐ WEDNESDAY

A Sad, Sad Day

King Herod sat on his throne fuming. His servants trembled as he began to rage. *Where were those Wise Men from the East?* As he counted up the days since they had visited, realization hit. The Wise Men were not coming back. He'd been tricked!

His anger boiling over, Herod called for his top soldiers. *The people would pay for this!* The Jewish priests and leaders hadn't told him much about the newborn baby King. Herod was sure they were secretly planning to steal his throne and make this baby their king.

The soldiers bowed low. In a fit of rage, the king ordered that all the boy babies 2 years old and younger in Bethlehem and the surrounding districts were to be killed. What a terrible, terrible thing to ask his soldiers to do.

A very sad day followed. God had longed to protect His people from such a horrible thing, but they didn't trust Him. Many of the Jewish leaders had become proud. They trusted themselves more than God. What promise in the Bible scrolls had they forgotten? **Read Psalm 25:9.**

God always draws us to follow His guidance, which will always be in harmony with the Bible. He says, "Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it' " (Isaiah 30:21). God speaks to our minds and hearts, and sometimes it's as if we can hear Him out loud. We can choose to listen, as the shepherds and Wise Men had, or we can reject His guidance, as had Herod and the Jewish people. God will always let us choose.

Do: Go to your favorite place out in nature. Quietly think about the people God has been able to guide in this story, and those who haven't let Him guide them. Humbly ask God to guide you.

Think . . . Then talk about it

- *How well do you let God guide you?*
- *Will you choose to be like the shepherds and Wise Men, or will you let other interests and stuff separate you from God? How, and how often, will you make this choice?*

Pray: Say Isaiah 30:21 as your own prayer.

☐ THURSDAY

Returning Home

Joseph lay gently down on his bed. A soft smile played on his lips as he closed his eyes, ready for sleep. Life was good in Egypt. Little Jesus was growing well. He was about 3 years old. His family was safe, far away from wicked King Herod. There were many other Jews living there too, so they were not among total strangers. God had guided them well.

Soon Joseph was fast asleep. Then God gave Joseph a dream—his third dream from God. What did the angel in the dream tell Joseph to do? *Read Matthew 2:20.*

Once more, Joseph and Mary loaded up the donkey, maybe even with the help of little Jesus. And off they went.

Joseph planned to set up home in Bethlehem, but Herod's meanest son Archelaus was now the ruler there. Joseph was afraid he would harm little Jesus. God spoke to Joseph in a fourth dream that guided him many miles north of Jerusalem to their old hometown of Nazareth. Once again the little family enjoyed God's care and protection. It was a good thing they had God in their hearts and trusted His guidance!

God often guided people through dreams in the Bible and still leads many people by dreams and visions today. However, God's guidance is available to us every day, not just in dreams. Can you think of three ways that God can guide us?

God uses His Word, the Bible. He guides us through people and circumstances—this special care is called providence. God also guides us by the Holy Spirit, who brings thoughts to our hearts and minds. God is able to constantly lead us in ways we will understand. "The Lord will guide you continually" (Isaiah 58:11).

Fast Fact: Honeybees are amazing guides. When a worker bee returns to the hive, it moves in a figure 8 and wiggles its body to accurately share information about how to get to a great food source, which could be up to seven miles away.

Do: Using a journal or blank paper, write down the verses below, then match with the following words to discover the ways God uses to guide us.

Genesis 50:20
John14:26
Deuteronomy 6:6, 7
Psalm 119:9
Proverbs 6:6

The Bible
Providence
Nature
Adults who love Jesus
The Holy Spirit

Pray: Thank God for guiding you continually.

Parent Faith Talk: Share a time God guided you.

Think . . . Then talk about it

- *How does God most often guide you?*





☐ FRIDAY

God's Guidance

When we let God into our hearts, we will trust Him and ask Him to guide us. King David gave God this role as king of his heart, and wrote in Psalm 25:4, 5: "Show me Your ways, O Lord; teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; on You I wait all the day."

Wise King Solomon also gives us advice about God's guidance. *Read Proverbs 3:6.*

When we tell God what's happening in our lives and ask for His guidance, He will help us to make wise choices. We will let Him show us what to do, which path to take. Sometimes the path may not be clear at first, but we can keep praying for guidance, and trust God's promise in Isaiah 48:17: "I am the Lord your God. I teach you to do what is good. I lead you in the way you should go" (ICB).

God is the best guide we could ever have, because He has such loving care over us. Psalm 139:1-3 tells us He knows when we sit, lie down, and stand up. He knows what we are thinking, and everything we say and do. God knows all of this because He loves us so much. We can love him back by saying, "You will guide me with your counsel, and afterward receive me to glory" (Psalm 73:24).

Think . . . Then talk about it

- *Which Bible people can you think of who trusted God to guide them well?*

Friday Night

Share and Praise

- Sing songs about God's care, guidance, or protection. For example, "He's Able."
- Invite family members to share times God has guided and/or protected them.
- God sent an angel messenger to Joseph four times. How many different ways can we send messages to others? Have each family member choose one way to send a message. They can then send a message to someone, telling them how much God loves them and wants to guide their lives.

Family Journal

- What is God inviting you to do in this week's lesson?
- Which is your favorite Bible promise?

Pray

Thank God for His guidance for you and your family.

For You, Parents

Be encouraged by God's beautiful promise in Isaiah 40:11: "He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those who are with young."

SABBATH

God's Helpers

God loves to watch and care for His children. His guidance and protection can take many surprising forms. Discover these two amazing helpers and keep your grateful eyes alert to God's continual leading.



Guided by an Eagle

As the hot sun beat down, Cynthia's family became even more worried. Where was Uncle? How could they find him?

Cynthia is an Aboriginal girl who lives in Australia. Aborigines are the first people to have lived there.

At her Adventist school Cynthia learned that she can always ask God for help and guidance. She looked at the sky again—she really needed God's help! Her aging uncle had wandered away from home. The family searched for him all day, but they couldn't find him anywhere. Cynthia prayed that God would help them find her uncle.

The next day the searchers saw an eagle up on top of a hill. It was looking down toward a dry riverbed. The searchers decided to follow the eagle's eyes, and soon they found their missing uncle.

"I thank God for using an eagle to help us find my uncle," Cynthia said happily.

We can trust God to guide us with the big and little things in our lives too.

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Guided by God's Furry Angel



Six-year-old Menka's only friend was her relative's dog, Rani. The little girl from India had been taken away from her mother. Missing her mother terribly, she wanted to go back home.

Menka asked God to help her get home to her mother. One day Menka heard Rani barking, as if to say, "Follow me." Menka chased Rani to the train station, where a train had just arrived. Menka couldn't see Rani and thought he might be on the train. Menka climbed aboard to find Rani, and suddenly the train began to move.

When the train stopped, Menka got off and asked a station worker what town she was in. When the man told her, Menka's eyes lit up. "My mommy lives here!" She told the man her mother's name, and he took her home.

Mother hugged Menka tightly. "How did you get home?" Mother asked.

"I followed Rani to the train," Menka said. "I couldn't find him, and then the train started moving. When it stopped, I was here."

"Hmm," Mother said. "Perhaps Rani wasn't a dog at all, but an angel—like a furry angel!"

Mother and Menka thanked God for sending an angel to guide Menka safely home.

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