

11

A Change of Plans

Worship

We praise God for His greatest gift.

POWER TEXT

"Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I entrust my life" (Psalm 143:8).

KEY REFERENCES

- Matthew 1:18-25
- *The Desire of Ages,* chap. 3, pp. 31-42
- *The SDA Bible Commentary,* vol. 5, pp. 282-286
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 7, pp. 23-26
- student story on page 122 of this guide.

OUR BELIEFS

- No. 23, Marriage and the Family
- No. 5, The Holy Spirit
- No. 4, The Son

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

- **Know** that God speaks to them today just as surely as He spoke to Joseph.
- **Feel** safe because God reveals His plan to them today.
- **Respond** by making a commitment to trust God's plan.

POWERPOINT

We worship God when we trust His plan for our lives.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Joseph discovers that Mary, his fiancée, is pregnant. He decides to "divorce" her without humiliating Mary. Before he does this, an angel appears to him in a dream and tells him that Mary's baby was conceived by the Holy Spirit and that he should marry her. The angel tells Joseph that Mary will have a son who will "save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). He then instructs Joseph to name the baby Jesus.

This is a lesson about worship.

In telling this part of the story of Jesus' birth, Matthew focuses on how His birth fulfills the prophecy in Isaiah 7:14 which states that a virgin will be with child, will give birth to a son, and call Him Immanuel. Today God leads us through His messages in the Bible, through His Spirit, and through providential working. We worship God by listening to and trusting His Word.

Teacher Enrichment

"In biblical times, an engagement was as legally binding as a wedding. In a ceremony before witnesses, the bridegroom paid a bride price, or *mohar*, to the father of his fiancée; this transaction sealed the couple's union. The engagement typically lasted a year. During this time the pair was considered husband and wife, so they could be separated only by a formal divorce" (*Illustrated Dictionary of Bible Life and Times* [Pleasantville, N.Y.: Reader's Digest Association, 1997], p. 122).

What situation in my life requires a great deal of trust in God? How will I trust His plan for my life today? How will I praise God for the safety of His plans?

Welcome

Welcome students at the door and direct them to their seats. Ask them how their week has been. Encourage learners to study their Sabbath School lesson regularly, and use several minutes to debrief students on the previous week's lesson.

Ask: **What was the most interesting part of the Bible story? What activity did you find the most helpful? Which activity was the most fun?** Invite students to share their experiences and/or the handiworks they created for Sabbath School during the week. (The leader should be familiar with the previous lesson to be able to direct the discussion.) This is also a good time to have students recite the power text.

Have students begin the readiness activity of your choice. »

Program notes

LESSON SECTION	MINUTES	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS NEEDED
Welcome	Ongoing	Greet students at door. Ask about their week.	
1 Readiness	10-15	*A. Am I Dreaming?* *B. Trust Fall*	Bibles
* Prayer and Praise	15-20	See page 117. Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.	songbooks, gift box for the offering, world map, push-pins, slips of blank paper, pencils/pens
2 Bible Lesson	15-20	Introducing the Bible Story Experiencing the Story Exploring the Bible	 Bibles, reference books, art supplies, paper, white/chalkboard, markers/chalk Bibles
3 Applying the Lesson	10-15	*Good News, Bad News* *Change of Plans*	 slips of paper, envelope, container
4 Sharing the Lesson	10-15	*My Life, God's Plan*	angel pattern (p. 158), scissors, art supplies
* Closing		A. Prayer and Closing Comments B. Reminder to Parents C. Coming Up Next Week	

1

READINESS ACTIVITIES

Select the activity or activities that are most appropriate for your situation.

A

YOU NEED:
- □ Bibles

Am I Dreaming?

Instruct the students to find partners and talk about a dream they have had recently (positive dreams) that seemed so real they couldn't tell if they were dreaming or not. Give them about two minutes each (you may want to give a signal to announce the time).

Debriefing

Ask: **What makes a dream memorable?** (It was realistic) Say: **God spoke to His people in the past through dreams.** Ask: **What ways does God use to guide/speak to us today?** (His Word; things working out; answered prayer; wisdom of others) Say: **Our power text this week tells us that we can ask God to guide us. Let's look at Psalm 143:8.** Have a student volunteer read it:

"Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I entrust my life" (Psalm 143:8).

Say: **Our power point this week is:**

We worship God when we trust His plan for our lives.

B

Trust Fall

Tell the students to get into groups of four. Two will be catchers, one will be a faller, and one will be an observer. Rotate positions if there is time. The catchers should face each other and join both hands to catch the faller, who will fold their arms across their chest and fall backward, allowing the other two to catch them. The observer will stand so that they can observe everyone's expressions—especially the faller's. Remind the catchers to be extra cautious in handling their peers to ensure that the fallers are caught on time.

Debriefing

Ask (the observers): **Describe the expression on the fallers' faces. What do you think was going through their minds? Describe the expressions on the catchers' faces. How do you think they felt? As an observer, how did you feel?**

Ask (everyone): **What made this activity difficult?** (aren't sure you will be caught; fear, etc.) **Which role do you think God would play in this activity: catcher, faller, or observer? Explain why. Which role do you think you would feel most comfortable playing? Why? Why do you think it is difficult to trust other people?** (Accept all responses: people let us down; people prove untrustworthy, etc.) **What makes it difficult to trust God?** (We can't see Him, haven't had enough experience with Him, don't know how He works.) **Our power text says,**

"Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I entrust my life" (Psalm 143:8).

Say: **Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus and Mary's almost-husband, and Mary herself had to learn to trust the Lord's plan for their lives.**

We worship God when we trust His plan for our lives.

Prayer and Praise

Notes

Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). If they have given you permission, share one or two special items from students' Bible study during the week. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.

Suggested Songs

"Emmanuel" (*He Is Our Song,* no. 52)
Continue to use appropriate Christmas songs you have selected.

Mission

YOU NEED:
- ☐ world map
- ☐ pushpins

Use Adventist *Mission* for youth and adults (go to www.juniorpowerpoints.org and click on MISSION) or another mission report available to you. For the mission story, have a map of the world where the students can identify the location of the mission story and compare it to where they are. You could use pushpins to mark where the mission story takes place.

Offering

YOU NEED:
- ☐ gift box

Continue to use the gift box. Say: **God tells us in Malachi that His plan is for us to give our tithes and offerings to His work. Even though we sometimes think that we cannot afford to follow this plan, trusting God to take care of what we need is a special way to worship Him.**

Prayer

YOU NEED:
- ☐ slips of blank paper
- ☐ pencils/pens

Prior to praying, hand out blank slips of paper and a pen/pencil to each student. Say: **Joseph was willing to trust God even when all his experience told him that what God had said was impossible. Before we pray today I want you to list on this paper the areas of your life that you want to trust God with. Fold the paper and say with me, "I give this to You and trust You."**

*Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.

2

BIBLE LESSON

Introducing the Bible Story

Ask: **What are your plans for today after church? Are you going home for lunch? Are you going out in nature? Or perhaps you are going over to a friend's house? How would you feel if you were suddenly told that the plans had changed? What if everything you were looking forward to was no longer going to be possible? How do you think you would feel?** Say: **In our story today, Joseph and Mary had their wedding and married life all planned. Suddenly God's messenger changed everything.**

YOU NEED:

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ reference books
- ☐ art supplies
- ☐ paper
- ☐ white/chalkboard
- ☐ markers/chalk

Experiencing the Story

Have the students read the story in Matthew 1:18-25 aloud. Then have pairs or groups of students choose one of the following (write the ones you select on the board):

- Design a banner using the power text/power point and an image representing trust.
- Compose or perform a song about trusting God's plans. Teach it to the class.
- Create a game that requires trusting another person. Play it in your group, then demonstrate it for the class.
- Create a poem in which Joseph responds to Mary, to the angel, or to God.

Allow time to work. Then have each group present their project to the class.

Debriefing

Ask: **What difficult decision did Joseph have to make?** (how to divorce Mary without causing her embarrassment or death) **What information did the angel give Joseph that he wasn't sure of before?** (that Mary's baby was conceived by the Holy Spirit and was the Messiah) **Why do you think God communicated with Joseph in a dream?** (Accept all responses.) Say: **If Joseph had not had a previous relationship with God, God couldn't have trusted him to be Jesus' father. Joseph might have ignored the dream. Our power text, Psalm 143:8, describes the relationship Joseph might have had with God. Let's look at it again:**

"Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I entrust my life" (Psalm 143:8).

Ask: **How did Joseph indicate that he trusted God?** (He did as the angel told him to.) **Joseph worshipped God by following God's plan. Our power point this week is:**

We worship God when we trust His plan for our lives.

Accommodations for students with special needs:
Allow students with special needs who experience difficulty with this activity to work with a partner who could assist them.

YOU NEED:

- □ Bibles

Exploring the Bible

Say: **Let's read our power text again.**
Have someone read Psalm 143:8.

"Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I entrust my life" (Psalm 143:8).

Say: **Imagine Joseph saying something like this in the morning when he thought about his dream the night before. Let's look at some other verses that tell about the trust relationship we can have with God.** Have volunteers find Psalm 20:7; 32:8-10; 56:3, 4, 11. Debrief after each passage.

Debriefing

After Psalm 20:7, ask: **What are some things today that people trust in other than God? If trusting God is the same as worshipping Him, what commandments do we break when we don't trust Him?** (the first and second: no other gods and no idols, Exodus 20:3-5) **What is it called when we worship someone or something other than God?** (idolatry) **In what way is trusting God worshipping Him?** (It demonstrates respect for and honor for God; it demonstrates that we believe God, etc.)

After Psalm 32:8-10, ask: **Why does the psalmist say to not be like a horse or mule?** (They are strong-willed and stubborn.) **What do a bit and bridle do?** (allow a human to control the animal so that it will go in the right direction) **In what ways does the Lord's unfailing love surround us?** (as He gives us life and provides many good things for us)

After Psalm 56:3, 4, 11, ask: **What causes people to be afraid?** (natural disasters, illness, death, danger, other people, etc.) **What is a way of showing that we trust God when we are afraid? Why is trusting God so important?**

We worship God when we trust His plan for our lives.

Notes

3

APPLYING THE LESSON

Good News, Bad News

Share the following story:

A wise old Chinese man lived on the troubled Mongolian border. One day his favorite horse, a beautiful white mare, jumped the fence and was seized on the other side by the enemy. His friends came to comfort him. "We're so sorry about your horse," they said. "That's bad news."

"How do you know it's bad news?" he asked. "It might be good news."

A week later the wise man looked out his window to see his mare returning at breakneck speed, and alongside her was a beautiful stallion. He put both horses into the enclosure, and his friends came to admire the new addition. "What a beautiful horse," they said. "That's good news."

"How do you know it's good news?" replied the man. "It might be bad news."

The next day the man's only son decided to try riding the stallion. It threw him, and he landed painfully, breaking his leg. The friends made another visit, all of them sympathetic, saying, "We're so sorry about this. It's such bad news."

"How do you know it's bad news?" asked the wise man. "It might be good news."

Within a month a terrible war broke out between China and Mongolia. The Chinese recruiters came through the area, pressing all young men into the army. All of them perished—-except for the wise man's son, who couldn't go off to war because of his broken leg.

"You see," said the wise man, "the things you considered good were actually bad, and the things that seemed to be bad news were actually for our good."

Or, as Hudson Taylor put it:

Ill that God blesses is our good,
And unblest good is ill.
And all is right that seems most wrong,
If it be His sweet will

(Robert J. Morgan, *Nelson's Complete Book of Stories, Illustrations, & Quotes,* pp. 653, 654).

Debriefing

Ask: **What did the wise, old man understand that his friends didn't? What might be bad news in your life right now that God could turn into good news eventually?**

Say: **Let's repeat our power point:**

We worship God when we trust His plan for our lives.

Change of Plans

YOU NEED:
- ☐ slips of paper
- ☐ envelope
- ☐ container

Prepare in advance an envelope labeled "My Plans." Inside the container place cards or slips of paper with the following scenarios written on them.

1. I plan to go to boarding academy next year.
2. I plan to go to my best friend's house this afternoon.
3. I plan to have my own room when my older sibling moves out.
4. I plan to invite my friend to sit next to me in church.
5. I plan to use the money I saved to buy a new bike.
6. I plan to invite my three closest friends over for my birthday party.

In a second envelope or container labeled "Change of Plans," the slips should read:

1. Your dad lost his job, so you must go to a local school.
2. Your friend called and canceled, so you spend the afternoon with your little brother.
3. Your cousin left a troubled home and needs to share your room with you this year.
4. A visitor at Sabbath School seems lonely, and you invite them to sit with you.
5. You hear of a mission project badly in need of funds, and you send your money there instead.
6. A new neighbor your age moves in to the neighborhood, and your mom invites them to your party.

Divide the class into two groups. Allow the first group to draw all the scenarios from the first envelope. The second group will draw all the scenarios from the second envelope. Have the student with "My Plan" number 1 read their slip. The person with "Change of Plan" number 1 will then read their slip. Briefly discuss the change and any positives or negatives that might result. Continue until all six plans and changes have been read and discussed.

Debriefing

Ask: **How might some or all of these changes of plan actually turn out to be God's plan?** (We have more opportunities to worship Him and serve others.) **What makes this difficult? What makes it easy? What benefits are there to following God's plan for our lives?** (We don't have to worry. We can have peace and joy. We can feel satisfaction in knowing we are doing what God wants. We live a life of worship and praise.)

4

SHARING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ angel pattern (p. 158)
- ☐ scissors
- ☐ art supplies

My Life, God's Plan

Distribute the photocopied angels, scissors, and art supplies. Instruct the students to write their power text at the bottom of the angels. They can decorate the angel if desired. Ask them to continue to pray during the week to know God's plan for this time of their lives. Encourage them to choose a person that they can pray with as they try to understand and follow God's plan for their lives.

Debriefing

Ask: **What are some ways of knowing God's plan for your life?** (through the Bible, advice of other people, providential workings) Say: **Providential workings are the answers God gives when we allow Him to work out His plan and don't get ahead of Him.** (For example, you are sick and pray to be healed. You also pray that God's will be done. Instead of feeling better, you get sicker and end up in the hospital. While there you are able to tell your hospital roommate about God's love. He tells his family. They all request Bible studies and a year later they join your church.) **Why should we try to follow God's plan for our lives? What benefits are there to sharing this approach to life with your friends?** (It's a way of introducing them to God.) Say: **Remember:**

We worship God when we trust His plan for our lives.

Accommodations for students with special needs:
Encourage students with special needs who experience difficulty with this activity to work with a partner who could help them.

Closing

Prayer and closing comments:

Pray that God will gently guide each of your students in the path He has chosen for them.

Reminder to parents:

Say: **Check out the student Bible study guide to find Parents' Pages for your use in family worship, or however you wish to use them to spiritually guide your children. You may listen to the podcast of the lesson online at www.juniorpowerpoints.org/podcast.php?channel=1.**

Coming up next week:

Say: **Jesus is born! We worship God by expressing our gratitude to Him.**

Student lesson

A Change of Plans

Think of a time you have been disappointed when plans you made didn't work out. You might then understand how Joseph felt when he discovered that Mary didn't appear to be the girl of his dreams. Let's imagine their conversation.

Joseph looked up, and his heart began to beat a little faster. Mary was coming up the path. His beautiful, beautiful Mary. Just the sight of her made him smile. It wouldn't be long now until the wedding preparations were completed, and she would finally be his wife. He had missed her the three months she had been visiting her cousin in the hill country.

Mary walked slowly, Joseph noted, not quickly and eagerly as she usually did.

"Mary!" he called.

She looked up and picked up her pace. When Mary arrived, her eyes and face showed that she had an important message to share.

Joseph must have felt fear prickling near his stomach. Something was wrong. He was sure of it.

Mary looked around and observed the wooden objects that Joseph had been working on. A new yoke for Old Nathan's oxen. She ran her hand along Joseph's workbench. She picked up his chisel.

"What's the matter, Mary?" Joseph asked quietly.

Mary looked up.

How can a person look so happy and so frightened at the same time? Joseph wondered.

"Joseph, I'm expecting a child," Mary announced softly.

Joseph's heart sank.

"I know it's a little hard to believe," Mary continued, "but just before I went to visit cousin Elizabeth an angel appeared to me. He told me that I would have a child," she explained simply.

Joseph took a deep breath. Then he took another. It was true that angels had visited people before. But this was *Nazareth*. Angels didn't visit Nazareth!

Mary wiped away a tear as she watched Joseph's reaction. Then a wonderful smile spread across her face. "The angel told me that I am going to have a son!" she said. "Not just an ordinary son, but a holy one. The angel said my baby will be called the Son of God."

Joseph was speechless. So many thoughts clouded his mind and filled his heart with anxiety. He was unable to reconcile his image of Mary with what he had just heard from her.

Mary stood in silence. She couldn't think of anything else to say to make him believe her. The plain truth was the best approach. Yet he hadn't seemed to have understood at all.

All of Joseph's plans for the future were now in ruins. He knew he could no longer take Mary for his wife. He planned to leave her without telling anyone else about what had happened.

That night an angel from heaven came to Joseph in a dream. The angel spoke with quiet authority: "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

The angel continued:

"All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 'The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel' (which means 'God with us')" (Matthew 1:20-23).

Joseph woke up and looked around. Everything looked as it always had, but different at the same time. Then Joseph realized that everything *was* different. *Everything!*

The Messiah was coming! The Messiah was finally coming after all these years of waiting. The Son of God was coming to earth, and He was coming as a *little baby!* It was too incredible for his human mind to understand.

Joseph leaped to his feet.

"Mary!" He had to find Mary and tell her he had seen the angel too.

KEY REFERENCES

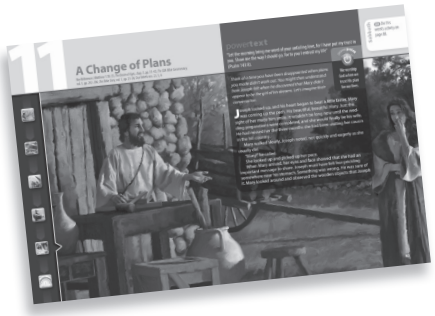
- Matthew 1:18-25
- *The Desire of Ages*, chap. 3, pp. 31-42
- *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, pp. 282-286
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 7, pp. 23-26
- Our Beliefs, nos. 23, 5, 4

POWER TEXT

"Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I entrust my life" (Psalm 143:8).

POWER POINT

We worship God when we trust His plan for our lives.







Sabbath

DO Do this week's activity on page 88.

Sunday

READ Read Psalm 143:8 and this week's story, "A Change of Plans."

IMAGINE Imagine how Joseph felt before and after his dream.

LEARN Begin to learn the power text, Psalm 143:8.

PRAY Pray that God will help you learn to trust Him.

Monday

READ Read Matthew 1:18, 19 and Deuteronomy 22:23, 24.

THINK If Joseph would have sent Mary away when he found out that she was pregnant, what would have been her punishment by the religious authorities of that time?

TALK Talk with someone about Joseph's character. Why do you think God chose him to be Jesus' earthly father?

PRAY Ask God for a character of integrity in dealing with others when they hurt you or treat you unfairly.

Tuesday

READ Read Luke 1:26–37.

THINK Why was it important for Mary and Joseph to see and hear an angel speaking directly to them?

WRITE In your Bible study journal, write how you think the angel's announcements helped Mary and Joseph to trust God's plan for their lives?

PRAY Ask God to help you believe in His Word.

Wednesday

READ Read Matthew 1:24 and Luke 1:38.

THINK What did both Mary and Joseph do after their angel encounters? What does this tell you about the relationship each had with God?

PRAY Ask God to make you willing to trust Him and follow His plan for your life.

Thursday

READ Read Proverbs 3:5, 6.

WRITE Is there a situation in your life for which you need to trust God? In your Bible study journal, write the need you have.

DISCUSS Ask an adult to share a situation when he/she trusted God and He provided for specific needs.

PRAY Thank God for the plan He has for you.

Friday

READ Read Psalms 20:7; 32:8–10; 56:3, 4, 11.

DISCUSS What are some of the things people trust other than God and why?

THINK What does God want to teach us when He uses the object lesson of the horse and the mule?

LIST List ways that God's love surrounds your family.

SING For family worship, sing together several songs that express trust in God. After the time of singing, share ways you each experienced God's blessings when you placed your trust in Him.

PRAY Thank God that you can trust Him and that He has a plan for you and for each one of your family members.