

Purpose

- To learn of the flight into Egypt
- To learn of Jesus' visit to the temple
- To learn of John the Baptist
- To learn of Jesus' temptations in the desert
- To learn about Jesus calling the 12 disciples

Materials

- Bibles
- Handouts

Background Information**FLIGHT INTO EGYPT**

Remember last week when told how Joseph took Mary and Jesus and fled into Egypt because an angel told him in a dream that King Herod was dead but his son Archelaus was following his fathers pursuit of all the baby boys born in at the same time of Jesus. They then fled to Nazareth and their Mary, Joseph and young Jesus stayed. This fulfilled the prophecy that was told to early Christians that Jesus would be a Nazarene.

THE TEMPLE VISIT

We know very little about Jesus in his young years. We are told that he grew and became strong in spirit. The next mention in our Gospels is of the time when Jesus and his family visited the temple.

It was customary for a Jewish boy to be considered a man and to be held accountable to the many Jewish laws. This happened at the time of his bar mitzvah at the age of 13. Parents customarily took their son to the temple one or two years before he turned 13. Jesus' visit to the temple was considered normal. What was not normal was the depth of Jesus' understanding and knowledge of the law and God.

Each year one of the Jewish holidays that was celebrated was the Feast of the Passover. This was when they visited the temple. Mary and Joseph took Jesus when he was 12. While at the temple Jesus spent his time talking and studying with the priests in the temple. After they finished their time at the temple Mary and Joseph started home. After one day of travel Mary discovered that Jesus was missing. This may seem strange to us, but consider that travel was done on foot and usually large families and extended families traveled together. It would be very usual for Jesus to be with a cousin or another family member.

When they could not find Jesus Mary and Joseph returned to the temple and started searing for him. After three long and anxious days they found him in the temple. Jesus was calmly sitting in the midst of the teachers. He was listening to them and asking questions. Jesus was also giving them answers to their questions. This was shocking to the teachers because of his young age. Mary and Joseph questioned him and probably scolded him for not staying with his family. Jesus was shocked that they would not know that he was in the temple taking care of His Father's business. This is the first mention that Jesus was aware that he was God's son.

After this event we again hear very little about Jesus until he was baptized by John the Baptist.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

He was born to Elizabeth and Zechariah only 6 months before Jesus was born. Elizabeth was a relative of Mary's and the two women shared their experiences about the angel's visits to inform them that they would give birth. Elizabeth was told that her son would prepare the way for the King of the Jews.

We believe that John the Baptist started his ministry at the age of 31. John left the desert and traveled to Judea. Many saw John and thought that he was Elijah because he wore a leather belt around his waist. His diet consisted of locusts and wild honey. He was frequently found down by the Jordan River baptizing people that he was preached to. Many times the Pharisees and the Sadducees would approach him and John would preach to them. John looked very rough and rugged, but he was very gentle and approachable like Jesus. John spoke exactly what was on his mind and was very blunt. Some considered him unkind, but he was doing what he felt God led him to do.

John preached about the one who would follow him and save them from their sin. John told that he himself would baptize with water, but the one to come (Jesus) would baptize with the Holy Spirit. John also felt that he was very unworthy to even touch the feet of the one to come. Many called John a prophet, but he denied it.

It is interesting to know that John the Baptist and Jesus were related but did not seem to know each other. This probably was true because they were raised in different regions of the country and had no contact with each other.

JESUS IS BAPTIZED

As John was baptizing people at the river Jordan, Jesus approached John and asked to be baptized. John tried to refuse saying that Jesus should baptize him, but Jesus insisted. Jesus explained to John that he had to be baptized as an example to others. Jesus had no sin, but he was to show others what to do. It also fulfilled the prophecy that Jesus would be baptized by one who would come and pave the way for him.

This was pleasing to God because as Jesus came out of the water the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in the form of a dove. A voice from heaven spoke saying "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Mark 1:11)

TEMPTATION IN THE DESERT

As soon as Jesus was baptized the spirit led him into the desert. When Jesus went into the desert he knew that he would be tempted by the devil, but he had to prepare himself for the ministry. In the desert he fasted for 40 days and 40 nights. Can you imagine how hungry he was after fasting for 40 days? The devil tempted him for the entire time he was in the desert but especially at the end he told Jesus “If you are the Son of God turn these stones to bread and feed yourself.” The devil then took him to the Holy City and asked him to prove he was the Son of God by jumping from the highest point. The devil even promised Jesus that if he would worship the devil, he would be given the kingdoms of the world. Each time Jesus answered by saying, “Do not put the Lord your God to a test.” The devil finally left Jesus alone and God’s angels came and took care of Jesus.

According to some authorities Jesus did not begin his ministry until John the Baptist completed his. Matthew and Mark put Jesus’ ministry in Galilee after John was arrested and killed. Luke shows John’s arrest before Jesus’ baptism. According to John, Jesus and John seemed to minister at the same time before John fades from the scene. All seem to agree that Jesus began ministering to the people at about the age of 30.

THE CALLING OF THE DISCIPLES

We first four books of the New Testament are Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. These are called The Gospels. Many events of the Bible are recorded in each of these books. Not all are in all four, but each event appears in at least one of the Gospels. The best way to study about the life of Jesus is to refer to all four books and compare them. Many times this is called the Harmony of the Gospels.

The four gospels do not agree exactly in what order Jesus found and gathered his 12 disciples. We are going to try to put them in a logical order but it may vary from gospel to gospel. They do agree that they were the 12 disciples that Jesus selected to follow and help him.

As soon as Jesus heard that John had been arrested, Jesus went to Capernaum and started preaching.

As Jesus walked along by the Sea of Galilee he came upon two brothers. Peter (also called Simon) and Andrew, who were fishermen. Jesus asked them to drop their nets and come with him. Jesus promised he would make them fishers of men. They both did as Jesus commanded. Jesus had started calling his disciples. These two brothers were the first two called. Traveling on Jesus discovered Zebedee fishing in a boat with his two sons, James and John. Jesus commanded James and John to drop their nets and follow him. Again these two brothers obeyed Jesus.

The next day encountered Philip and asked him to follow. Phillip went out and found Nathanael and asked him to come with him to be with Jesus. Nathanael did as Philip asked. Nathanael was later called Bartholomew.

The men went to Capernaum to the temple. Here Jesus began to preach to the people. At the temple they encountered a man possessed by a demon. Jesus commanded the demon to leave the man, but he forbid the demon to speak because the demon knew whom Jesus was. Jesus was not ready to announce to the world who he was. The news

of this event spread quickly throughout the area and the people flocked to Jesus. Jesus did heal many. He also went to the home of Simon. Simon's mother-in-law had a very high fever; Jesus took the fever from her body. Even at this early time in his ministry Jesus had a hard time finding a solitary place to pray.

Jesus continued to travel throughout Galilee preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons. Jesus healed a leper and again gave him a strong warning to tell no one about the healing. The leper did not obey, he talked freely telling everyone what Jesus had done for him. A few days later Jesus again entered Capernaum (many considered Capernaum Jesus' home) and the masses followed him and filled his house. A paralytic was brought by his friends to be healed. When they could not get through the crowd they cut a hole in the roof and lowered the paralytic down to Jesus. Jesus was pleased by the loyalty of the friends and the man's faith, so he commanded the man to take up his mat and walk.

Once again Jesus went out to the lake to be alone. There he saw Levi sitting at the tax collectors booth. Jesus commanded him to follow and Levi did. Levi was a tax collector and they were hated and feared by the people. Levi took Jesus to his house to meet his other tax collector friends. Levi was later called Matthew (the writer of the book of Matthew). The Pharisees criticized Jesus for handing out with sinners. Jesus now had seven disciples.

As he traveled preaching and healing Jesus also called Thomas, James (the younger), Judas (he was also called Thaddeaeus), Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot. This completed the calling of his 12 disciples. They were also called the 12 apostles.

Jesus went up into the mountain and called the 12 to go with him so that he could appoint them. He sent them out to preach, and he gave them the power to heal sickness and cast out demons. The twelve were:

1- Simon (whom he named Peter) **2-Andrew** **3- James** **4- John** **5- Philip**
6- Bartholomew **7- Matthew** **8- Thomas** **9- James** (the son of Alphaeus)
10 - Thaddaeus **11 – Simon the Canaanite** **12- Judas Iscariot.**

Procedure

- Read background information on Visit to the Temple, and Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist.
- Check out handout 58-1. You can either do it quickly or put it in the folder for future use.
- Read background information on Temptation in the Desert.
Read background information on Calling of the Disciples.
- Go over handout 56-2 as you name each disciple and how Jesus called him.