

LETTERS & DEVOTION

Bible: The Gospels and Acts, a Fourth Grade Year

Free sample: Unit 1, Lessons 1 to 8

These are 8 lessons from *Bible: The Gospels and Acts, a Fourth Grade Year: Grade 4*, a Grade 4 year a parent runs at the kitchen table. Each lesson is a short script for you, a page to read together, and a practice sheet you may copy for your household. Answers are at the back.

Bible: The Gospels and Acts, a Fourth Grade Year: Grade 4. Sample edition.

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Letters & Devotion is a Christian curriculum: a Bible course in every grade from the King James text, and science taught as scientists teach it, including an old earth. Standards references: Common Core State Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards.



BIBLE · UNIT 1

Who Jesus Is

Nine weeks from John's opening sentence to the first miracle at a village wedding: the announcement to Mary, the birth from Luke and the wise men from Matthew, the boy in the temple, the baptism, the forty days in the desert, and the first disciples walking away from a full boat.

In this unit

1. Before the manger
2. The angel and the yes
3. Born in Bethlehem
4. Wise men, and a night escape
5. The boy who stayed behind
6. The one in the water
7. Forty days hungry
8. Follow me

BIBLE · UNIT 1 · LESSON 1

Before the manger

Goal: Read, narrate and discuss “Before the manger” (John 1:1-18), and say John 1:14 (part) by heart.

About 100 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: Before the manger

Four sittings this week, about twenty-five minutes each: read, narrate it back, work on the verse, then the activity.

READ: John 1:1-18, from the King James Bible. Let your child read some of it aloud. Take turns by paragraph if the passage is long.

WHAT HAPPENS:

John does not begin his book with a baby. He begins before there was anything to begin with.

He calls Jesus the Word: the one who was with God at the beginning, and who made everything that was made.

Light came into a dark world, John says, and the darkness could not put it out.

Then the sentence this whole year hangs on. The Word became a person and moved in among us. God did not send a message about himself. He came himself.

MEMORY WORK (John 1:14 (part)):

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.

TALK ABOUT IT:

1. John calls Jesus 'the Word'. Why is that a strange name for a person?
2. According to verse 5, what could the darkness not do to the light?
3. If you had to tell someone who had never heard of Jesus who he is, what would you say first?

DO: Start the notebook you will keep all year. On the first page write the year's question in large letters: Who is Jesus? Underneath it write your answer today, in your own words, and date it. Do not read it again until week 36.

LOGGING: a parent records the minutes on the Transcript & Hours page. Reading, discussion and the written work all count.

Practice: Before the manger

1. Where does John start his book?
☐ A In the stable at Bethlehem ☐ B Before anything had been made
☐ C At the river with John the Baptist
2. What name does John give Jesus in his first sentences?
☐ A The Word ☐ B The Shepherd ☐ C The Rock
3. Light came into a dark world. What could the darkness not do?
☐ A Put the light out ☐ B Cover the light for three days
☐ C Come anywhere near the light
4. The memory verse says the Word was made flesh, and then what?
☐ A And dwelt among us ☐ B And sent us word about himself
☐ C And spoke to us from heaven

The angel and the yes

Goal: Read, narrate and discuss “The angel and the yes” (Luke 1:26-38), and say Luke 1:37 by heart.

About 100 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: The angel and the yes

Four sittings this week, about twenty-five minutes each: read, narrate it back, work on the verse, then the activity.

READ: Luke 1:26-38, from the King James Bible. Let your child read some of it aloud. Take turns by paragraph if the passage is long.

WHAT HAPPENS:

Gabriel is sent to a town nobody important came from, to a young woman nobody had heard of, named Mary.

He tells her she will have a son, that she is to call him Jesus, and that his kingdom will never end.

Mary asks a fair question: how can this happen, since she is not married?

Gabriel answers, and then mentions her old cousin Elisabeth, who is expecting a baby herself, because with God nothing is impossible.

Mary says yes. Be it unto me according to thy word.

MEMORY WORK (Luke 1:37):

For with God nothing shall be impossible.

TALK ABOUT IT:

1. Mary asked how it could happen. Was that doubting, or was that a fair question?
2. Why do you think Gabriel told her about Elisabeth?
3. Saying yes cost Mary her reputation. Name a time when doing the right thing cost

DO: Begin the year's narration habit. After the reading, tell the passage back out loud without looking at it, then write four or five sentences of it in the notebook. Do this every single week from now on. It is the main work of this course.

LOGGING: a parent records the minutes on the Transcript & Hours page. Reading, discussion and the written work all count.

Practice: The angel and the yes

1. Who was sent to Mary?

- ☐ A Joseph, the carpenter ☐ B Elisabeth, her cousin ☐ C Gabriel, an angel

2. What was Mary told to call her son?

- ☐ A John ☐ B Jesus ☐ C Joseph

3. What did Mary ask Gabriel?

- ☐ A What will people in the town say? ☐ B How can this happen, since I am not married?
☐ C Why has he chosen me and not somebody important?

4. Gabriel told Mary that her old cousin Elisabeth was expecting a baby. The memory verse gives the reason. What is it?

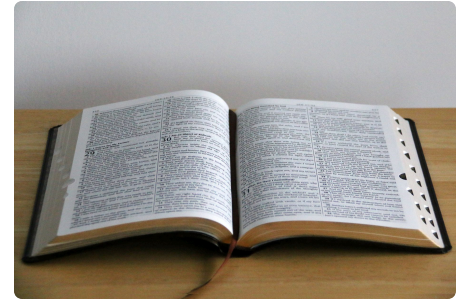
- ☐ A Mary should keep the whole news a secret ☐ B With God nothing shall be impossible
☐ C Elisabeth would look after Mary

BIBLE · UNIT 1 · LESSON 3

Born in Bethlehem

Goal: Read, narrate and discuss “Born in Bethlehem” (Luke 2:1-20), and say Luke 2:11 by heart.

About 100 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: Born in Bethlehem

Four sittings this week, about twenty-five minutes each: read, narrate it back, work on the verse, then the activity.

READ: Luke 2:1-20, from the King James Bible. Let your child read some of it aloud. Take turns by paragraph if the passage is long.

WHAT HAPPENS:

An emperor orders a tax count, and a whole country goes on the road. Joseph and Mary walk about eighty miles to Bethlehem because that is where his family came from. There is no room for them. The baby is born wherever the animals were kept, and laid in a feeding trough.

The announcement does not go to the palace. It goes to shepherds working the night shift, in a field, at one of the lowest paid jobs there was.

They go, and find it exactly as they were told, and tell everyone. Mary says nothing and keeps all of it, turning it over in her mind.

MEMORY WORK (Luke 2:11):

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

TALK ABOUT IT:

1. The angels told shepherds before they told anybody else. What does that suggest about who this king came for?
2. What is a manger actually for, and what does it say that they used one?
3. Who in your town do most people look past? What could your family do for them this

month?

DO: Start the map. On a double page of the notebook draw Israel roughly, and mark Nazareth, Bethlehem and Jerusalem, with the miles between them. You will add a place to this map almost every week for the rest of the year.

LOGGING: a parent records the minutes on the Transcript & Hours page. Reading, discussion and the written work all count.

Practice: Born in Bethlehem

1. Why did Joseph and Mary walk about eighty miles to Bethlehem?
☐ A An emperor ordered a tax count ☐ B An angel told them to move house
☐ C They were looking for work there
2. Where was the baby laid?
☐ A In a cot the shepherds brought ☐ B In a feeding trough ☐ C In a bed at the inn
3. Who was told the news first?
☐ A The emperor and his officials in the capital ☐ B The priests in the temple
☐ C Shepherds working the night shift
4. The memory verse says a Saviour is born in the city of David. Which town is that here?
☐ A Bethlehem ☐ B Jerusalem, the big city ☐ C Nazareth, their hometown

Wise men, and a night escape

Goal: Read, narrate and discuss “Wise men, and a night escape” (Matthew 2:1-23), and say Matthew 2:2 (part) by heart.

About 100 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: Wise men, and a night escape

Four sittings this week, about twenty-five minutes each: read, narrate it back, work on the verse, then the activity.

READ: Matthew 2:1-23, from the King James Bible. Let your child read some of it aloud. Take turns by paragraph if the passage is long.

WHAT HAPPENS:

Scholars from the east follow a star to Jerusalem and ask the wrong king where the real king has been born.

Herod is frightened, and so is the whole city with him. His own experts know the answer from the prophets: Bethlehem.

The visitors find the child, kneel down, and give gold, frankincense and myrrh. Warned in a dream, they go home a different way.

Joseph is warned too, and takes his family out of the country at night. Herod, cheated, kills the little boys of Bethlehem, and Matthew quotes a prophet about a mother weeping who refuses to be comforted.

MEMORY WORK (Matthew 2:2 (part)):

for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

TALK ABOUT IT:

1. Why did the wise men go home by another road?
2. Herod had an army, a palace and a title, and was terrified of a toddler. Why?
3. Jesus and his parents were refugees for a while. Do you know anyone who has had to

leave their country? What would you want them to know?

DO: Find out what frankincense and myrrh actually were, what they were used for, and roughly what they cost. Write one line in the notebook for each of the three gifts: why you would give gold to a king, incense to a priest, and myrrh to someone who is going to die.

LOGGING: a parent records the minutes on the Transcript & Hours page. Reading, discussion and the written work all count.

Practice: Wise men, and a night escape

1. What were the scholars from the east following?
☐ A A letter from the priests ☐ B A map Herod had sent them ☐ C A star
2. Herod's own experts knew where the child would be born. Where did they say?
☐ A Egypt, where the family later fled ☐ B Jerusalem, Herod's own capital city
☐ C Bethlehem
3. Why did the visitors go home by a different road?
☐ A They wanted to see more of the country ☐ B Herod told them to take the other road
☐ C They were warned in a dream
4. The memory verse says why the visitors came. What did they come to do?
☐ A To take him back east with them ☐ B To crown him in Jerusalem ☐ C To worship him

BIBLE · UNIT 1 · LESSON 5

The boy who stayed behind

Goal: Read, narrate and discuss “The boy who stayed behind” (Luke 2:41-52), and say Luke 2:52 by heart.

About 100 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: The boy who stayed behind

Four sittings this week, about twenty-five minutes each: read, narrate it back, work on the verse, then the activity.

READ: Luke 2:41-52, from the King James Bible. Let your child read some of it aloud. Take turns by paragraph if the passage is long.

WHAT HAPPENS:

Every year the family walks to Jerusalem for Passover. The year Jesus is twelve, they set off home in a large group and he is not in it.

They search for three days and find him in the temple, sitting with the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

Mary asks why he has done this to them. He answers with a question about being in his Father's house, and Luke says plainly that they did not understand him.

Then he goes home to Nazareth and obeys them, and grows up: taller, wiser, and better known.

MEMORY WORK (Luke 2:52):

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

TALK ABOUT IT:

1. Where did they find him, and what was he doing there?
2. He was in trouble with his parents and had done nothing wrong. How do you think that felt on the walk home?
3. What is one question about God you actually want answered? Who could you ask it

this week?

DO: Ask real questions. Write down three questions about God or the Bible that you genuinely want answered. Take them to an adult who will take them seriously, write down the answers in the notebook, and put a star next to the one that still bothers you.

LOGGING: a parent records the minutes on the Transcript & Hours page. Reading, discussion and the written work all count.

Practice: The boy who stayed behind

1. How old was Jesus the year he stayed behind?
☐ A Twelve ☐ B Only five years old ☐ C Already thirty
2. Where did his parents find him?
☐ A Far ahead of the group on the road ☐ B Back at home in Nazareth
☐ C In the temple, with the teachers
3. What was he doing with the teachers?
☐ A Already out preaching to a large crowd of people ☐ B Waiting for his parents to notice
☐ C Listening to them and asking questions
4. How long did Mary and Joseph search before they found him?
☐ A A whole month ☐ B Three days ☐ C Three hours

The one in the water

Goal: Read, narrate and discuss “The one in the water” (Matthew 3:1-17), and say Matthew 3:17 (part) by heart.

About 100 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: The one in the water

Four sittings this week, about twenty-five minutes each: read, narrate it back, work on the verse, then the activity.

READ: Matthew 3:1-17, from the King James Bible. Let your child read some of it aloud. Take turns by paragraph if the passage is long.

WHAT HAPPENS:

John lives in the desert in camel hair and eats locusts and wild honey, and crowds walk out of the cities to hear him.

His message is short: turn around, the kingdom is close. People confess and he baptizes them in the Jordan.

He is blunt with the religious leaders who come to watch, and tells everyone that someone far greater is coming behind him.

Then Jesus comes to be baptized and John tries to refuse. Jesus insists. As he comes up out of the water, heaven opens, the Spirit comes down like a dove, and a voice says he is the beloved Son.

MEMORY WORK (Matthew 3:17 (part)):

This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

TALK ABOUT IT:

1. Why did John not want to baptize Jesus?
2. Three things happen at the same moment as he comes out of the water. What are they?

3. The voice speaks before Jesus has preached one sermon or healed one person. What does that tell you about why God might love you?

DO: Write Matthew 3:17 on a card and tape it inside a wardrobe door or on the bathroom mirror where you will read it while getting dressed. Then find out what your own baptism looked like, or your parents': who was there, what was said, whether there are photographs.

LOGGING: a parent records the minutes on the Transcript & Hours page. Reading, discussion and the written work all count.

Practice: The one in the water

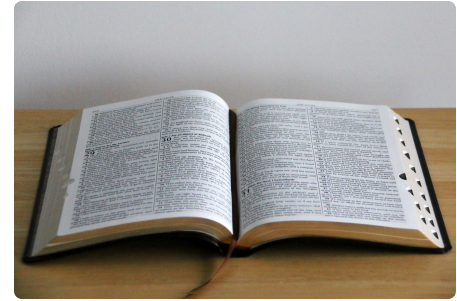
1. What was John's message to the crowds?
☐ A Pay your taxes to Rome ☒ B Come and live in the desert with me
☐ C Turn around, the kingdom is close
2. Where did John live, and what did he eat?
☐ A In Jerusalem, at the temple ☒ B Down in a fishing village beside the lake
☐ C In the desert, on locusts and wild honey
3. Three things happened as Jesus came up out of the water. Which three?
☐ A A bright star appeared and angels sang out to shepherds
☐ B Heaven opened, a dove came down, a voice spoke
☐ C The sky went dark and the ground shook
4. What did the voice from heaven call him?
☐ A The son of Joseph the carpenter ☒ B My beloved Son ☐ C A great prophet

BIBLE · UNIT 1 · LESSON 7

Forty days hungry

Goal: Read, narrate and discuss “Forty days hungry” (Matthew 4:1-11), and say Matthew 4:4 (part) by heart.

About 100 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: Forty days hungry

Four sittings this week, about twenty-five minutes each: read, narrate it back, work on the verse, then the activity.

READ: Matthew 4:1-11, from the King James Bible. Let your child read some of it aloud. Take turns by paragraph if the passage is long.

WHAT HAPPENS:

The Spirit leads him out into the desert, and he goes forty days without food.

Three offers come. Turn these stones into bread. Jump off the temple and let angels catch you in front of everyone. Bow once, and take every kingdom in the world without any of the trouble.

Each time he answers with a sentence out of Deuteronomy, from memory. He does not argue, explain, or perform.

The devil leaves him, and angels come and look after him.

MEMORY WORK (Matthew 4:4 (part)):

Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

TALK ABOUT IT:

1. Where did the words Jesus answered with come from?
2. Bread, safety and kingdoms are not bad things. So what exactly was wrong with the offers?

DO: Look up the three verses he quoted: Deuteronomy 8:3, 6:16 and 6:13. Copy them into the notebook next to the temptation each one answered. Then pick one verse you will actually need this month and learn it well enough to say it without thinking.

LOGGING: a parent records the minutes on the Transcript & Hours page. Reading, discussion and the written work all count.

Practice: Forty days hungry

1. How long was Jesus in the desert without food?
☐ A Only one single night ☐ B Three days altogether ☐ C Forty days
2. What was the first offer made to him?
☐ A Walk right out across the open water ☐ B Turn these stones into bread
☐ C Turn this water into wine
3. Where did the words he answered with come from?
☐ A Words an angel gave him at the time ☐ B Deuteronomy, said from memory
☐ C A scroll he had carried into the desert
4. The memory verse says man shall not live by bread alone, but by what?
☐ A Bread and water together ☐ B Every good thing a person can work for and earn
☐ C Every word out of the mouth of God

Follow me

Goal: Read, narrate and discuss “Follow me” (Matthew 4:18-22 and Luke 5:1-11), and say Matthew 4:19 by heart.

About 100 minutes



Read together FOR THE STUDENT

THIS WEEK: Follow me

Four sittings this week, about twenty-five minutes each: read, narrate it back, work on the verse, then the activity.

READ: Matthew 4:18-22 and Luke 5:1-11, from the King James Bible. Let your child read some of it aloud. Take turns by paragraph if the passage is long.

WHAT HAPPENS:

Professional fishermen have worked all night and caught nothing. Jesus borrows Simon's boat and teaches the crowd from a few feet offshore.

Then he tells the fisherman where to fish. Simon says they have worked all night for nothing, and then says nevertheless, at thy word.

The catch is so large that the nets tear and two boats nearly sink. Simon falls down and asks Jesus to leave, because he is a sinful man.

Jesus does not leave. He tells them that from now on they will be catching people. They pull the boats up on the beach, walk away from the best day's fishing of their lives, and follow him.

MEMORY WORK (Matthew 4:19):

And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

TALK ABOUT IT:

1. Simon was the expert and Jesus was a carpenter. Why was that an awkward instruction to obey?
2. Simon's first reaction to the miracle was to ask Jesus to go away. Why do you think

that was?

3. He called working people, not scholars. What are you good at that could be useful to God right now, at nine?

DO: Learn the twelve. Mark 3:13-19 lists them. Write all twelve names in the notebook, then find out which four were fishermen, which one collected taxes for the Romans, and which one handed him over.

LOGGING: a parent records the minutes on the Transcript & Hours page. Reading, discussion and the written work all count.

Practice: Follow me

1. How much had the fishermen caught after working all night?
☐ A Enough for one meal ☐ B Two full boats ☐ C Nothing at all
2. What did Jesus use Simon's boat for first?
☐ A To sail across to the other side ☐ B To teach the crowd from just offshore
☐ C To get away from the crowd for a while
3. What did Simon say before he let the nets down?
☐ A Nevertheless, at thy word ☐ B You are the expert, not me
☐ C We will try again tomorrow
4. The memory verse says: Follow me, and I will make you what?
☐ A Fishers of men ☐ B Rich in one night ☐ C Teachers in the temple

Answer key

Bible

Lesson 1	1. B 2. A 3. A 4. A
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Lesson 2	1. C 2. B 3. B 4. B
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Lesson 3	1. A 2. B 3. C 4. A
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Lesson 4	1. C 2. C 3. C 4. C
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Lesson 5	1. A 2. C 3. C 4. B
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Lesson 6	1. C 2. C 3. B 4. B
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Lesson 7	1. C 2. B 3. B 4. C
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Lesson 8	1. C 2. B 3. A 4. A
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Unit 1 check-up	1. B 2. B 3. B 4. C 5. A 6. C 7. B 8. A 9. C 10. A 11. B 12. C 13. B 14. A 15. B 16. B
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The same lessons, with a teacher who talks back

Every lesson in this book also lives at **lettersanddevotion.com**, where Clara, a built-in teacher, works through it with your child as a conversation: she explains a wrong answer instead of marking it, reads aloud for a child who cannot read yet, and keeps the hours and the transcript for you.

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