

**Focus:** God wants us to be a holy family.

**Materials:**

Prayer Altar: Cross, Candle, Chasuble on stand (priest's vestment) and Altar Cloth  
CD: Toddler 20 Favorite Bible Songs  
Bible: The Beginner's Bible  
Book: The Christmas Story  
Cutouts and Felt Board

**Gathering** (children find/sit on a carpet square)

*Say: Good Morning everyone, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. Last week we talked about Joseph doing what the God asked him to do. Joseph made a home for Mary and Jesus and brought Jesus up knowing about God. Today, we are going to hear a story about the Holy Family and how they listened to God.*

**Opening Prayer**

Together we make the Sign of the Cross (do in reverse so children can mirror).

*Say: Now let's put our hands together and bow our heads.*

*Let us pray.*

*O God, bless all our families so that we may love one another and follow the example of the Holy Family. In the name of Christ our Lord we pray.*

*Amen.*

**Song/Movement**

*Everybody Ought to Know*, track: 8, from Toddler 20 Favorite Bible Songs

Play music, encourage children to stretch or move to the music (clapping, stamp feet march in place to the beat), turn to each other and shake hands, saying hello, etc. Have children sit on their carpet squares when finished.

1. Everybody ought to know,  
Everybody ought to know,  
Everybody ought to know  
Who Jesus is. (2x)
2. He's the Lily of the Valley,  
He's the Bright and Morning Star;  
He's the Fairest of ten thousand.  
Everybody ought to know.
3. Everybody ought to know,  
Everybody ought to know,  
Everybody ought to know  
Who Jesus is. (2x)
4. He's the Lily of the Valley,  
He's the Bright and Morning Star;  
He's the Fairest of ten thousand.  
Everybody ought to know.
5. Everybody ought to know,  
Everybody ought to know,  
Everybody ought to know  
Who Jesus is. (2x)

### Memory Verse

Say: *Now let's take a moment together to learn a verse from the bible.*

*God made him strong and wise*

Have the children repeat the verse after you a couple of times.

Say: *God wants us all to be strong and wise. But he doesn't mean only physically strong. He wants us to be strong in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit helps us do what is right and to be kind to others and to be believers in Jesus' teachings. When we do this we are strong like God wants us to be.*

### Gospel Story

Say: *Today we are reading from the Gospel of Matthew.*

Have children make sign of the cross on their forehead, mouth and heart saying. *"Lord, open my mind, my lips and my heart so that I may learn it, speak it and love it."*

**Read:** The Beginner's Bible, pp. 294-298, *Running Away*

After the reading say: *The Gospel of the Lord*

Children respond: *Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ*

### Discussion Starters:

- *How does Joseph listen to God?*
- *How does Joseph take care of his family?*
- *Why does Joseph take Mary and Jesus to Egypt?*
- *Why does Joseph take Mary and Jesus to Nazareth?*
- *Who are the members of the Holy Family?*
- *Who takes care of you?*
- *How is your family holy?*

### Reflection on Reading:

*On today's feast of the Holy Family the Church celebrates that Jesus was born into a family. Because Jesus was born into a family we recognize that he was born just like us. Jesus' life with Mary and Joseph was holy. The Holy Family helps us to see that family life is a source of holiness for all of us.*

*In today's Gospel Joseph listens to God and cares for his family. Joseph guides his family to safety with God's help. Joseph, Mary, and Jesus listen to the angel of the Lord and they leave Egypt and settle down in Nazareth.*

*Joseph had to take his family to another country to keep them safe. How hard do you think it would be for you and your family to leave all your friends and relatives and move far away?*

## Gospel Activity

### Activity 1:

Read the book *The Story of Christmas*. Use the cutouts and the felt board to make a nativity scene.

### Activity 2:

#### **Get up and Go**

*Say: Just as Joseph had to get up from his sleep and leave quietly when the angel came to him, we also have to do a God teaches us if we are to be strong and faithful.*

Have the children sit in a circle, far enough apart that they aren't touching one another.

Have them sit with their knees up and arms wrapped around their knees, eyes closed, and faces hidden in their laps.

*Say: I am going to walk slowly around the circle and tap one person on the head or shoulder. That person should get up as quietly as possible and slip out of the room, with an aide. Then we will see if you can guess who is missing.*

The first person who gets the right answer, gets to tap the next person. The child who left the room rejoins the circle.

Continue as time allows.

Complete the weekly bulletin as a group-let the children color them if there is extra time

## Closing Prayer

(Children respond: "I Believe!")

Ask: *Do you believe in God, who calls us to live and grow as a holy family?  
Do you believe in Jesus, who trusted the wisdom and courage of his parents?  
Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who gives us the strength to live as a Holy Family?*

## Sending Forth

*Say: Remember how we learned this week that Jesus grew up in a family just like we do. We can help our families be holy families by being good listeners and follow what our parents tell us.*

## Lining Up/Closing Song

Play "*The Lord is My Shepherd*" track 5 from Toddler 20 Favorite Bible Songs while children put away any materials and lineup. Hand out weekly bulletins. Remind them it is important that they return to their family quietly so that we may all listen and pray together in church.