



UPWARD BOUND

Bible Lesson Curriculum

Contents

Introduction	3
Lesson 1	9
The Surprising Journey (Luke 1:26-38, 2:1-7)	
— <i>Born in the Likeness of Men</i>	
Lesson 2	14
The Humbling Journey (Luke 2:39-52)	
— <i>The Form of a Servant</i>	
Lesson 3	19
The Obedient Journey (Luke 3:21-23, 4:1-15)	
— <i>Humbled Himself by Being Obedient</i>	
Lesson 4	25
The Painful Journey (Luke 22:47-Luke 23)	
— <i>Obedient to Death on a Cross</i>	
Lesson 5	30
The Joy of the Journey (Luke 24:1-12; Luke 24:50-53)	
— <i>God Has Highly Exalted Him</i>	

Original Upward Bound Creators:

Writers: Anna Leonard Van Wechel, Bronwyn Rayburn Leonard, Laura Lind

Support Team: Susie Barbo, Barbara Goebel, Kothra Lidstrom, Sheryl Farquhar

Graphic Design: Sandy Flewelling, Josh Alves

CDM Upward Bound Team:

Lindsey Manickavasagam, CDM staff

Graphic Design and Illustration:

Chip Evans and Stacey VanVoorsih

Unless noted, Scripture used is from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version™ Copyright © 2000; 2001; 2016 by Crossway Bibles, A Division of Good News Publishers, 1300 Crescent Street, Wheaton, Illinois 60187, USA. All Rights Reserved.

Scriptures quotations marked (NIV) are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan.

“...that at the name of
Jesus every knee should
bow... and every tongue
confess that Jesus Christ is
Lord, to the glory of God
the Father.”

Philippians 2:10–11



INTRODUCTION

Onward and upward, backpackers! This week at Upward Bound we will follow our Lead Guide Jesus as he shows us that the way up is actually down. Following the trail of Philippians 2, we'll learn of Jesus' surprising birth, humble childhood, obedient life, painful death, glorious resurrection and joy-filled ascension. We will explore this great paradox of the Christian life, that the path to honor is actually a path of humility. We will learn why Jesus is exalted and honored above all. And together we will more deeply discover the greatness of our Savior Jesus who willingly gave up His position and privilege to rescue us from sin and death to restore us to unbroken fellowship with Himself.

Introduction to Upward Bound

Probably no biblical story is more familiar to children than the story of the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. And yet, though the story is familiar, it is often less real to children, less likely to move them to respond than other stories they know. Frequently, fairy tales are told better and more creatively to children than is the life of Jesus. But this should not be so. Children will come out of childhood with an idea, an image of Jesus Christ, often based on impressions, rather than concrete thinking. The real Jesus comes to us through His Word and through the careful enlightening of our minds and imaginations through the use of the Word by His Spirit. Our purpose in Upward Bound is to give each child a truer, more realistic picture of Jesus Christ in order that he or she might fall more deeply in love with Him and trust Him more fully.

When we think of this, though, we at once realize the awesomeness of the task. In many ways this is the most difficult story to present well, creatively, freshly, and in a balanced fashion. No final words of explanation can be written about Jesus Christ. He is the infinite and the finite. He is the mystery of God. He is the truth undiscoverable except by revelation. That which human wisdom cannot plan must necessarily be beyond its power to perfectly understand. There are secret things which belong to the Lord and there are revealed things which God has made plain so that they may be understood by us and the children (Deuteronomy 29:29). We need to ask the Holy Spirit to enable us to understand the revelation of Jesus, the Eternal Word, He who stooped from the position of an infinite expression to the limitations of human life.

It is a precious assignment to so proclaim the character and life of Jesus Christ as revealed in Scripture. If we would know Jesus truly, if we would take the time to read His Word and those books that develop our understanding according to His Word, if we would continually beg God to make Him known to us as He truly is, not one of us would be able to resist Him. Let us see Jesus, then. Let us get to know Him better and let us make sure that not a child leaves our ministry without a clearer idea of who Jesus really is.



LOOK ONLINE

for additional resources (music, artwork, and publicity information) are available on the Upward Bound portal. Talk to your Director for more information or visit: **portal.reachoutadventures.com**

¹John C. Ryle, Train Up A Child In The Way He Should Go, "The Duties of Parents," (Christian Heritage Publisher, 1983) 11.

Foundational Perspective

It is our commitment, as much as possible, to teach the whole counsel of God. It is neither necessary nor appropriate to unduly simplify or neglect certain truths of the Scripture with children. Rather, in a straightforward manner, the deeper doctrines should be presented also. The venerable Bishop J.C. Ryle spoke to this issue in his discourse on the duties of parents:

See that they read it all (the Bible). You need not shrink from bringing any doctrine before them. You need not fancy that the leading doctrines of Christianity are things which children cannot understand. Children understand far more of the Bible than we are apt to suppose.

- ✿ Tell them of sin, its guilt, its consequences, its power, its vileness: you will find they can comprehend something of this.
- ✿ Tell them of the Lord Jesus Christ and His work for our salvation—the atonement, the cross, the blood, the sacrifice, the intercession: you will discover there is something not beyond them in all this.
- ✿ Tell them of the work of the Holy Spirit in man's heart, how He changes, and renews, and sanctifies, and purifies: you will soon see they can go along with you in some measure in this. In short, I suspect we have no idea how much a little child can take in of the length and breadth of the glorious Gospel. They see far more of these things than we suppose.
- ✿ Fill their minds with Scripture. Let the Word dwell in them richly. Give them the Bible, the whole Bible, even while they are young.

Finally, it is important to emphasize the significance of the role of the Bible Lesson Storyteller in tying together all of Upward Bound, its overall themes and truths. As stated in the Teacher Guide, the Bible Lesson Curriculum is the single most important aspect of Upward Bound and its central focus. Its themes are woven through each aspect of the VBS day, bringing meaning and purpose to every activity. May the young Backpackers of Upward Bound be taught of Jesus Christ as they are taught the profound truths of these lessons from His life.

As you prepare to teach, remember that this is God's Word, not yours or mine. May our prayer be that our message will be a "demonstration of the Spirit and of power [...] that [their] faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God (1 Corinthians 2:4-5)."

**FOLLOW CHRIST
TO THE SUMMIT!**



Before You Begin

Set aside a specific period of time to read through all of the Scripture passages and Bible lesson material, preferably in one sitting. Such an overview provides an invaluable sense of the curriculum's total picture and establishes a clear framework from which to teach.

Prayer

The importance of prayer cannot be overstated. The Lord is eager to give the ability to teach, the enthusiasm and creativity to do the teaching well, and even the words that will be on the tongue. But He is also eager that His children faithfully ask Him for His presence and help.

Lesson Format

For each lesson you will find: 1) the title; 2) the storytelling character; 3) the Scripture reference; 4) the main theme; 5) a story summary and outline; 6) teacher notes; 7) story.

Though the lessons are provided in a word-for-word format, it will be important for you to gear your presentation to your audience, both in your choice of the amount of content to cover, and in making specific lesson applications.

Lesson Material

It is so true that the more fully something is understood, the more easily it can be put into profound terms while being simply and briefly taught. With that in mind, additional material has been included with each lesson to aid you in your understanding and portrayal of the story.

Storytelling Character

History comes alive for children as they listen to an imaginary eyewitness account. As a Storyteller, you will increase the children's anticipation, excitement, and interest in the lessons as you capture their imagination and help them realize that these events took place in real history with real people. Try to take on the character of the Storyteller, telling the events of the story in the first person, according to his or her personality and life-context. Alternative characters have also been included for each story to provide flexibility for your setting.

Lesson Application

Though application ideas are provided with each lesson, the job of making practical application specific to the lives of the children you teach rests with you. It will be very important to think carefully about the personal issues and questions facing each different class and to prepare your lessons accordingly. Age-appropriate lesson applications are also very important. Though the main body of each lesson is essentially the same for all grade levels, the concerns of a 4-year-old are different than an 11-year-old. You will want to give prayerful consideration to how to best speak to the different ages you will teach.





LOOK ONLINE

for additional resources (music, artwork, and publicity information) are available on the Upward Bound portal. Talk to your Director for more information or visit: **portal.reachoutadventures.com**

It is also important to consider whether your children come from Christian or non-Christian homes. This knowledge will enable you to choose your words carefully as you speak about the Gospel. You will want to help Christian children understand that believing the Gospel is not only necessary for salvation, but is needed moment by moment in our Upward Bound journey of faith. Likewise, you will want children who have not yet believed to understand that to be Upward Bound, they need to put their faith in Jesus Christ and his work on the cross, confessing Him as Lord.

Finally, you will notice the potential for you to give the Gospel message every day and an invitation to the children to trust in Jesus Christ. You will, therefore, need to be particularly sensitive to the specific children you are teaching. Pray for the Holy Spirit's leading and discernment of their spiritual condition and responsiveness to the truth, to know when the Spirit wants you to present the Gospel more fully and to invite their response. You do not need to belabor the invitation of the Gospel to the point that the children tire of it early in the week; the message is meant to be laid out in fuller detail with each successive day. Trust the Spirit's leading.

"...that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow... and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Philippians 2:10-11

Storytelling Character Costume Suggestions

Refer to the Storytelling Character section at the beginning of each lesson for a more complete description of the following characters.

Lesson 1: *The Angel Gabriel or John the Baptist's parents, Zechariah or Elizabeth*

Angel (a military messenger):

- White floor-length robe or tunic
- Gold tie belt (cording or fabric)
- Gold battle gear: breastplate, sword belt or bow and arrow, helmet, etc.
- Wings (shaped using gold garland or cardboard spray-painted gold)
- Sandals

Zechariah or Elizabeth

- Follow suggestions listed below for Mary and Joseph
- Add gray wig and or beard

Lesson 2: *Mary, the mother of Jesus, or Joseph, Jesus' earthly father*

Ancient Israelite woman:

- loose-fitting, floor-length dress tied at waist with long, colorful scarf or sash
- large matching or coordinating scarf or square of fabric, draped over head and secured with a narrow band, bobby pins, or hair comb
- sandals

Ancient Israelite man:

- beard (optional)
- long robe with belt
- Israelite headdress, secured with band
- sandals

Lesson 3: *Gilead the Gecko*

A desert lizard:

Create a large hooded jumpsuit as follows—

- Using white nylon tricot, make a loose-fitting hooded jumpsuit: tapered ankles and wrist, zippered front.
- Attach lengths of 1/4" foam "ribs" to inside of jumpsuit to create body shape.
- Use baseball cap to give shape to hood, and blackened tennis balls to form eyes.
- Make attachable tail out of tricot fabric, giving shape with a strip of 1/2" foam.
- Stuff with packing peanuts.
- Paint spots using fabric paints.

OR



Know Your Audience

We want to underscore the importance of knowing your audience, particularly regarding whether or not they are children from Christian homes. This knowledge will enable you to choose your words carefully as you speak about the Gospel. You will want to help Christian children understand that believing the Gospel is not only necessary for salvation, but is needed moment by moment in our Upward Bound journey of faith. Likewise you will want children who have not yet believed to understand that to be Upward Bound, they need to put their faith in Jesus Christ and His work on the cross, confessing Him as Lord.

Create a lizard outfit by wearing—

- fitted long sleeve shirt; green, brown, or orange
- leggings or joggers; green, brown, or orange
- fitted head covering; green, brown, or orange
- a tail; green, brown, or orange
- gloves; green, brown, or orange
- paint face to match outfit

Lesson 4: Simon of Cyrene

1st-century North African:

- Brightly colored robe/tunic with sash
- Turban-style headdress
- Dark beard
- Sandals

1st-century North African woman:

- Brightly colored robe/tunic with sash
- Large matching or coordinating scarf or square of fabric, draped over head and secured with a narrow band, bobby pins, or hair comb
- Jewelry- earrings, bangle bracelets, chains or long beaded necklaces
- Sandals

Lesson 5: Mary Magdalene or Peter

Ancient Israelite woman:

- Follow suggestions listed above for Mary, using more brightly colored robe, headdress

Ancient Israelite man:

- Follow suggestions listed above for Joseph



The Surprising Journey

Born in the Likeness of Men



MAIN THEME:

In the most wonderful and surprising journey ever taken, God the Son purposed with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit to leave the glories of Heaven to become a little baby in this broken world to rescue sinful people.



SCRIPTURE

Luke 1:26-38, 2:1-7

RELATED SCRIPTURE

Luke 2:8-40; Matthew 1:18-25, 2:16-18; Philippians 2:5-11

Story Summary:

Gabriel leads the backpackers to the truths of the Christmas story and the wonders of the Incarnation on an unexpected path. Beginning with the story of the Fall, then going further back to God's eternal plan to save a people for Himself. He then recounts the surprising story of Jesus' humble birth.

Story Outline:

Introduction

- Each person is on an Earthly Bound or Upward Bound Journey.
- Jesus made the most difficult and surprising Upward Bound Journey possible when he left the glories of Heaven to become a human in this broken world.
- Jesus did this to rescue sinful people and make their Upward Bound Journey possible.

The Reason Jesus Made the Surprising Journey: The Fall

- God created the world good.
- Adam and Eve lived in loving relationship with God, each other, and the world.
- Adam and Eve disbelieved God and disobeyed Him.
- Their sin ruined everything, and they could not fix it.

God already had a plan to rescue His people.

- Before Adam and Eve sinned, and even before Creation, God had already decided to save people from their sin and Satan's power.
- God the Father would send His son, Jesus, to become man so that he could take the punishment and death humans deserved because of sin. Jesus would live a completely righteous life in the place of humans.
- When Jesus took on a human body, He was changed forever. He will always be God and man.

CHARACTER:

Gabriel the Angel

ALTERNATIVE CHARACTER:

Zechariah or Elizabeth, the parents of John the Baptist

In thinking about this lesson and the truths to be taught, we can so quickly feel inadequate to the task. To describe something of the Son of God leaving the Courts of Heaven to enter the womb of Mary feels a bit like "rushing in where angels fear to tread." And so it is exactly that. But we must remember that this is God's truth and not ours. He has had the "audacity" to become one of us, and so we need not hesitate to tell the Good News to the generations following.



Gabriel is sent to Mary to announce Jesus' birth.

- Gabriel tells Mary to not be afraid because God is pleased with her.
- He also tells her that she would be the mother of God's son, and she was to name Him Jesus.
- "Jesus" means "God saves" because Jesus will save His people from their sins.

Jesus is born in humble circumstances.

- Mary becomes pregnant.
- She travels to Bethlehem with her betrothed husband, Joseph.
- There is no room in the inns so she gives birth to him in a place that also houses animals.
- King Herod, a cruel Roman governor, hears of Jesus' birth and kills all of the baby boys in the area.

Application:

- Everyone is on a journey. You are either Earthly Bound toward Hell or Upward Bound to Heaven and being a part of God's family.
- If you believe that Jesus took his surprising journey of becoming a man for you, then you are Upward Bound.

Teachers Note:

The Christmas story is surprisingly difficult to teach clearly. Years of cultural distortion have accumulated on the original story like layer upon layer of ill-chosen paint on a stately old home. Every generation has laid a fresh coat of interpretation or more often mis-interpretation until the story we recount whenever Christmas rolls around bears little resemblance to the people and circumstances found in the book of Luke. The heavenly host is not a gaggle of little girls wearing white robes adorned with golden tinsel garlands. Instead, it is the resplendent army of heaven, the advanced guard uttering a war-cry that the triune God is advancing against sin, death, and the devil.

Our first story of Upward Bound opens with a special member of this heavenly host, Gabriel, a messenger who serves in the presence of God (Daniel 8:26, 9:21; Luke 1:19, 26). Following the trajectory of Philippians 2:5-11, he details Jesus' journey from the Courts of Heaven to the humblest of human births. Though Jesus was in the form of God, He did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but was born in the likeness of men. As an angel and not a man, Gabriel offers a unique perspective on the tremendous story of salvation. He can speak of Jesus and the wonder of the Incarnation, but he is not a participant in salvation. It is a privilege of our human condition that God would become man for us, and it is something into which the angels long to look (1 Peter 1:12). Gabriel will tell the children the story of the lesson, but he will also communicate by his very being something of the majesty, wonder, and seriousness of the Incarnation.

Gabriel enters the room with a dignified military bearing. He greets the children, then introduces himself, and lets the children spend a few moments reacting to him and to his costume. They may be surprised that he is dressed more like a warrior than a typical Christmas angel.

Your storyteller may also choose to be either of John the Baptist's parents, Zechariah or Elizabeth. In this case, the storyline would not change significantly but they might emphasize their own experience with the angel Gabriel. They might also choose to include a brief mention of the miraculous birth of their son, John.

Sample Story:

Note: *You may wish to leave out some material to better suit younger listeners.*

Warm-up/Introduction (1-2 minutes)

Greetings, children. My name is Gabriel and I am an angel, that is a messenger who serves in the very presence of God. I will admit that I am surprised by your reaction, or rather your lack of reaction. Usually when I appear to people, they are frightened at the first look of me. I've been sent with some very important messages through the years. Today is no different, I have come to tell you good news from the word of God.

Before I begin, I must tell you that just as you are each on a hike here at Upward Bound, each one of you is also on a journey in your life. You are either Earthly Bound or Upward Bound in that journey. This week we want to be sure that each of you knows what that means and whether you are Upward Bound in your life and will reach the Summit of your life's journey, Heaven.

Today I am tasked with telling you of the most difficult and surprising journey that has ever been made. The journey that makes your Upward Bound journey possible. That journey was made by Jesus, God the Son who decided with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit to leave the glories of Heaven to become a little baby in this broken world to rescue sinful people.

Story (10 minutes)

But children, before I begin to tell you the story of this surprising journey, we have to go back in time so you can understand why Jesus undertook this dangerous expedition. The world has not always been the way that it is now—stained with sin, sorrow, and pain. God made the world beautiful, full of amazing creatures and fascinating plants. He made a man and a woman to live in His world and named them Adam and Eve. He loved them very, very much and gave them hearts to love Him, too. It was a perfect world and there was plenty of delicious food for the man and woman and all the animals. They worked hard, and rested well. They were never sad or sick. They always got along. Can you imagine a world like that?





Our Focus

We realize we are not developing some of the more well-known aspects of the birth of Jesus. We are doing this purposefully, so that we can dwell on other parts as teaching points.

However, a terrible thing happened. Even though God was so good to them, Adam and Eve listened to Satan, God's enemy, and disobeyed Him. When that happened, everything changed!

Adam and Eve and all of their descendants, that includes you, could no longer love and obey God on their own. Now people had to work very hard for their food and they were often sick. They were no longer happy and they sometimes even killed each other. Adam's and Eve's sin had changed everything in the world and there was nothing they could do to fix it. We angels wondered what God would do.

God is perfectly just so He could not pretend they had not sinned. God is also kind and He loved the people He had made, and He wanted them to love Him, be close to Him, and obey Him again. Only He could fix the terrible problem of their sin.

Unknown to us, God already had a plan. Long before Adam and Eve sinned. Even before the world was made, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit had talked together in Heaven about what was going to happen—that men and women would sin and choose to follow Satan. God the Father said that He would be the One to save people. He would send His Son to become a human being—just like people on earth—so He could be one of them and rescue them from their sin and Satan's power! God the Son would suffer and be punished for sin in place of the people who deserved to be punished! I couldn't imagine that God could love these people so much! How could God's Son want to give up His power as God, and the joy of life in Heaven with His Father and the Holy Spirit, to go to earth and be a man?

Children, consider carefully what this means. When God's Son chose to take on a human body, with flesh and bones like you have, He made the greatest choice that has ever been made. Do you realize that when God's Son left the Courts of Heaven, He knew that He would never be the same? He, the Son of God, would be changed forever by what He was about to do. Never before had God had a human body, but now He would never again be without His human body. He would always be God and man. Even now, He stands in his human body at God the Father's right hand. Isn't that amazing?!

Well, you might suppose that God's Son would come and live on earth as the greatest, richest, most powerful King the earth had ever seen. After all, He was God! But, children, that is not what happened. God wanted His Son to be born just like any ordinary human baby, and He was going to be born into a very poor family. Imagine that! And can you guess what God wanted me to do? Yes, I was to carry the message. I was told to go to a young girl named Mary, and tell her she was the one who was to be the mother of God's Son.

When I first appeared to her, Mary was startled. She had never seen an angel before. But I assured her, "Do not be afraid Mary. God is very pleased with you." And then I told her that God had chosen her to be the mother of His

Son, and the baby was to be given the name Jesus which means “God saves” because He would save His people from their sins.

Now Mary could not imagine how she could have a baby because she did not have a husband yet. But I told her that nothing is impossible with God—He can do anything He wants to do. So, even though Mary did not understand everything I was saying to her, she said, “I am God’s servant and I will do whatever He wants me to do.”

After I left her, Mary became pregnant and nine months later she was ready to have her baby. God had even given her a husband named Joseph, so that baby Jesus would have a father on earth to care for Him and protect Him. But then, just about the time Jesus was to be born, His mother and father had to take a trip to another city. It was so hard on Mary because she was about ready to have the baby and they didn’t have any easy way to get where they had to go, to Bethlehem. Walking and riding their donkey, they finally arrived; but when they got there, the inns were all full and they couldn’t find a room.

And so, Jesus, God’s Son from Heaven, was born—not in a palace or a cozy warm bed, but in a room shared with animals. His first bed, was a manger, the place where cows and donkeys ate. God, who had all the power in the world, chose for His Son to be born like many other poor people in the world.

Already as a tiny baby Jesus was suffering because of our sin. When the cruel Roman governor heard that a special child had been born, he had many little baby boys killed, hoping to kill Jesus. Jesus’ journey to earth was already filled with many dangers!

Application (1-2 minutes)

Children, what I have told you today is the beginning of the greatest, most surprising, most important story you will ever hear. And it is absolutely true. During Upward Bound you are pretending to be Backpackers on a hike, but do not forget that each one of you is really on a journey in your life. In your journey, you are either Upward Bound toward Heaven, or you are Earthly Bound toward hell. If you do not believe Jesus made His journey for you, then you are Earthly Bound and cannot reach the Summit. But if you believe Jesus left the Court of Heaven and became a man so that you could be a part of His family, you belong to Him and are Upward Bound in your lives and headed for the Summit—Heaven!

Closing (1 minute)

The journey has just begun! Be sure to be here tomorrow because all the rest of this week you will learn more about Jesus’ Upward Bound journey on earth and how, because of Him, and through faith in Him, your life can be an Upward Bound journey to Heaven, too!

Prayer



The Humbling Journey

The Form of a Servant



MAIN THEME:

Jesus had one driving purpose in his life: to do the will of his Heavenly Father. He humbly lived every moment of every day loving and learning to obey God his Father, and loving and serving the people around Him, even as a child!



SCRIPTURE

Luke 2:39-52

RELATED SCRIPTURE

*Hebrews 3:17-18, 5:7-8;
Philippians 2:5-11*

CHARACTER:

Mary, the mother of Jesus

ALTERNATIVE CHARACTER:

Joseph, Jesus' earthly father

Story Summary:

Mary, the mother of Jesus, tells the children of Jesus' life of humble obedience as she recounts stories from Jesus' growing up beginning with his visit to the Temple at age 12.

Story Outline:

Review:

- Gabriel told Mary that God had chosen her to be Jesus' mother.
- Everyone is either Upward Bound or Earthly Bound.
- It is only possible for us to be Upward Bound because of Jesus' life and death.

Jesus' family traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover.

- Jewish people celebrated Passover to remember how God had rescued them from being slaves in Egypt and to remind them how God would save them from sin.

When Passover was over, Jesus' family began the journey back to Nazareth.

- Mary and Joseph noticed that Jesus was missing at the end of the first day of travel.
- They returned to Jerusalem in search of Jesus.

On the third day, Mary and Joseph found Jesus in the Temple.

- Jesus was listening to and talking with the teachers.
- Mary asked Jesus how He could do this to them.
- Jesus told her that He must be about His Father's business.
- Mary was reminded of Jesus' special purpose: to obey the Father completely.

- To be the Savior, Jesus had to be completely faithful and obedient no matter how much He suffered.

Jesus went back to Nazareth with Mary and Joseph.

- He lived humbly and obediently with his family until He was 30.
- He loved the Bible and memorized it.
- He learned to be a carpenter from Joseph.
- Jesus never sinned.

Application

Living a sinless life was not easy for Jesus.

Jesus lived a humble obedient life for the Father's glory and because He loved you.

What should we do?

- Trust Jesus to be your Savior!
- If you have trusted Jesus to be your Savior, ask the Holy Spirit to help you follow Jesus and become more and more like Him.

Teacher Notes:

The years between Jesus' birth and public ministry are rightly called His "years of silence". The Bible gives us very little information other than two brief summary statements, and a vignette from his twelfth year. While we want to give children a sense of Jesus' true humanity and true divinity, we must also tread carefully among topics on which Scripture is silent.

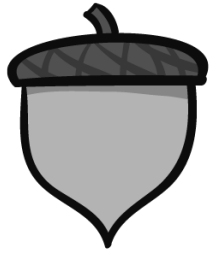
However, it is in this lesson particularly that we have the opportunity to impress His humanity on the children. Sometimes children have a tendency to minimize His humanity and treat Jesus as though everything was easy for Him. "After all, He was God," they might say. But though He was God, He emptied Himself of the rights of His deity and became obedient. He had to grow in understanding wisdom, and knowledge, and the way He did this is the very way we are to do it—through the power of the Holy Spirit, through the Word, and through prayer. His example was beyond us in that He was perfect and He always did everything He did perfectly, and that perfection was for us. And neither should we minimize it. He had to work out our salvation. He had to grow strong, suffer, fight, seek the Father. Who He was in His heart, his tenderness, lowliness, His determination of purpose—that He would be for us, and work and suffer beyond that which we will ever know, must win our hearts. Then, because He did it for us and because we are so in love with Him, we will want to follow His example.

The Storyteller today is Mary, the mother of Jesus. She was a devout and godly woman who loved her Son deeply. As she reared Jesus, she may have had a



LOOK ONLINE

for additional resources (music, artwork, and publicity information) are available on the Upward Bound portal. Talk to your Director for more information or visit: **portal.reachoutadventures.com**



spirit of awe and wonder at who her little one was even while sometimes forgetting his special purpose in the mundanities of daily life. It is likely that Mary told the story from today's lesson to Luke when she was an old woman, and that it would have been forgotten if she had not "treasured it up in her heart."

If the Storyteller today is a man, he may choose to be Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus. Joseph's attitudes and experiences would have been much like Mary's. He, therefore, would tell the story in a style similar to hers, with perhaps more emphasis on his perspective as a man observing the relationship between Mary and her Son.

Sample Story

Note: *You may wish to leave out some material to better suit younger listeners.*

Warm-up/Introduction (1-2 minutes)

Good morning, children. My name is Mary, and I am very glad to be able to visit you today at Upward Bound. Yesterday the angel Gabriel told you that God chose me to do something very special—something that no other woman in the whole world would ever do. Do you remember what special job God gave me? Yes, I was Jesus' mother!

There are so many wonderful stories I could tell you about Jesus when He was growing up. He was kind to other children, and always a good friend. He loved to play hard and laugh and be silly with his friends and siblings. Other kids liked to play with him because he played fair, told the truth, and wasn't selfish. Jesus was so loving and obedient...oh, my! I think I am getting carried away with stories about my son!

Story (10 minutes)

You learned yesterday how everyone is on a journey- either an Upward Bound journey toward Heaven or an Earthly Bound journey away from God. I actually came today to tell you about a trip we took as a family one year when Jesus was 12 years old. It was a trip I'll never forget because it was on that trip that I began to understand even more about Jesus' Upward Bound journey.

Have you ever traveled some place with your family? It's fun, isn't it? Well, Jesus liked it, too. Jesus was 12 years old at the time, and we had traveled together with our relatives and friends to the big city of Jerusalem. We were Jews, you see, and we went every year to the Temple in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. The Passover was a very important holiday for us. It was when we celebrated how, many years before, God had saved us from being slaves in Egypt to the wicked king, Pharaoh. Passover also helped us remember God's special promise to save us from something else, too—our sins.

After celebrating the Passover for a whole week, we gathered up all our things to start home. We left Jerusalem with a big crowd of aunts, and uncles, and cousins, and grandparents, and friends and children. As we traveled, we'd talk and sing and tell stories. Some of us would walk, while others rode donkeys. Jesus was a boy who loved to be with his friends and cousins so I didn't worry when he wasn't with his father and me as we traveled. He always obeyed us and we knew we could trust Him. But when we stopped for dinner at the end of the first day, we looked for Jesus and could not find Him! We asked everyone, "Do you know where our son Jesus is?"; "Have you seen our son?"; "We can't find Jesus anywhere!" But no one could remember seeing Him since we had left Jerusalem.

That's when I began to panic. Where could He be? Why hadn't He come with us? Why didn't I look for Him earlier? Even though my husband, Joseph, reminded me that Jesus was a big boy now and a good boy, I was very worried. So, we hurried back to Jerusalem thinking we must have left Jesus behind in that big city.

It took us a whole day to get back to Jerusalem. Once we were there, we searched high and low asking everyone if they had seen Him. Finally, on the third day after we had missed Jesus, we decided to go to the Temple and see if anyone there knew where He was. When we walked through the great Temple doors, who do you think we saw? That's right! There was Jesus, sitting and talking about God with the teachers! I was so glad He was all right, but I was upset with Him, too. I burst out, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been looking for you everywhere, and I have been so worried!" Can you guess how Jesus answered me? He gently said, "Why were you looking for me? Didn't you know I had to be about my Father's business?"

Even though I didn't really know what Jesus meant when He said that, I knew immediately that I needed to allow Jesus to be just who He was. I had been thinking of Jesus as Joseph's and my son. That day in the Temple, Jesus was reminding me that He had been born for a very special purpose—to obey God the Father every minute of His Upward Bound Journey—and being in God's Temple in Jerusalem was exactly where Jesus was supposed to be those three days when He was 12. He was God's Son and every day He was learning new ways to obey God the Father.

If He had not been so faithful and obedient even as a child, Jesus never could have been the Savior. He suffered in so many ways in His life; even I, His own mother, misunderstood Him at times. But one day, when He was grown up, He would be the Perfect One who would die to save His people from their sins—to save His own mother from her sin! Jesus couldn't let anything or anyone keep Him from doing what God wanted Him to do. He had to be perfectly obedient, and He was.

And so, Jesus came back home with us that day, and continued to be a wonderful son—such a helpful teenager and then such a fine young man. He loved the Bible and spent a lot of His time memorizing it and talking about it with



our friends. They loved to be around Jesus and have Him in their homes spending time with their families. And do you know an amazing thing, children? Even though Jesus was God's own Son, and the most important person who ever lived, He was happy living in our humble little home with us and all His younger brothers and sisters.

My husband, Joseph, taught Jesus to be a carpenter—to work with His hands and make things out of wood—and Jesus spent many, many years doing just that, being a small-town carpenter in Nazareth. At times He must have wondered when God would send Him out, away from our home, into the big, important cities to tell people about Himself. But years went by and Jesus stayed in Nazareth until He was thirty years old, having an Upward Bound Attitude of faithfully doing His work, pleasing God, and being content with where God had put Him. In every part of His life—what He said, thought, did; at home, at work, with friends—Jesus never sinned.

Application (1-2 minutes)

Children, you might think that because Jesus was God it was easy for Him to always be loving and obedient. Well, I can tell you it wasn't. Jesus was fully human living in a broken world. He was constantly tempted to do the wrong things every day, but He never did. He daily humbled Himself so that He could serve us.

His life was lived in order to save sinners like you and me. He had to say no to every temptation that Satan brought into His life—and He did it. He did everything God commanded in His law and He refused to do anything God said not to do. Jesus obeyed God perfectly! He always kept going on His Upward Bound Journey for his Father's glory and because He loved you!

Children, if you have already trusted in Jesus to be your Savior, then ask the Holy Spirit to help you follow Jesus on your Upward Bound journey and make you more and more like Him. If you have not yet believed in Jesus, I pray that you will do so before Upward Bound is over!

Closing (1 minute)

Come back tomorrow to learn more about Jesus' amazing journey!

Prayer



The Obedient Journey

Humbled Himself by Being Obedient



MAIN THEME:

In all Jesus did, God the Father was fully pleased with Him. Jesus never, ever sinned or gave in to Satan's temptations. Because of his settled purpose to do the will of the Father, his having fed on the Word of God throughout his life, and his complete dependence on the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus was able to be fully obedient.



SCRIPTURE

Luke 3:21-23, 4:1-15

RELATED SCRIPTURE

***Matthew 4:1-11; James 4:7;
1 Corinthians 10:12-13;
Philippians 2:5-11***

Story Summary:

Gil the Gecko continues the story of Jesus' Upward Bound journey telling of His baptism in the Jordan River and His agonizing temptation in the desert showing that in every situation even under the most difficult of circumstances, Jesus was completely obedient through the power of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.

Story Outline:

Review

- Mary was Jesus' mother.
- Jesus humbly obeyed and served those around Him even as a child.

John the Baptist was preaching and baptizing by the Jordan River.

- He preached that people were full of sin and needed to be sorry and ask God's forgiveness.
- He baptized people in the river to show that they wanted God to wash away their sin.
- He also preached that the Savior of the world was coming to wash away people's sin.

Jesus asked John to baptize Him.

- Jesus did not have any sin, but He needed to be baptized to live a completely obedient life.

CHARACTER:

***Gilead the Gecko,
"Gil"***

ALTERNATIVE CHARACTER:

None

- John declared that Jesus was the Savior of the world.
- The Holy Spirit came in the form of a dove to strengthen Jesus, and the Father declared that He was pleased with Jesus.

Jesus went to the desert alone.

- He sat, walked, and prayed for 40 days.
- He did not have food or water.

While Jesus was weak, Satan tempted Jesus three times.

- Satan tempted Jesus to turn stones into bread: use His power to take care of His own needs instead of depending on His Father
 - Jesus said: People need to do what God tells them more than food and water.
- Satan took Jesus to a high cliff and offered Him all the kingdoms of the world if Jesus would worship him: get what you want by loving something more than God.
 - Jesus said: Worship and serve God only.
- Satan took Jesus to the top of the Temple and told Him to throw Himself down so that the angels would catch Him: go the easy way and show off your power.
 - Jesus said: Do not put the Lord your God to the test.
- Jesus suffered under these temptations, but He obeyed the Father so that He could live a perfect life to save us.

Application:

Satan tries to tempt you every day:

- You can't trust God to provide.
- Love other things more than God.
- Take the easy way out and assume God will forgive you.

You don't have the power on your own to say no to Satan.

- You can only have victory over Satan and sin by asking God to forgive your sins and believing that Jesus lived and died in your place.
- Then through the Holy Spirit, God gives you the Word of God, prayer, and His power to resist the devil.

Teacher Notes:

Today it will be the job of the storyteller to make the transition from the years of silence to the years of His public ministry. Who better to do it than a desert gecko who witnessed both Jesus' baptism and His temptation in the wilderness?

It is important for the children to realize that Satan's temptation of Jesus was a clever and subtle attack. The idea that Jesus was out in the wilderness with a

big, black, horned creature standing next to Him, does not do justice to the reality of the temptation. We do not know exactly how Satan tempted Jesus, but we know that the struggle within the mind and heart of Jesus was deeply difficult. It was the subtlety of the lie. Satan tried to make his lies look absolutely true, and there was a semblance of truth to it all. There is always enough truth in Satan's lies to hook us, and it is hard for us to discern when he attacks us. We can be beguiled into thinking that something wrong is right. Satan's distortion of truth is subtle and hard to reason out; and Satan's methods would in all likelihood have been very hard for Jesus to discern.

In the issue of obedience, the question is one of absolute submission to the will of God. This was the nature of the temptation of Jesus. Jesus knew if He submitted to the will of God, it would mean suffering to the bitter end. There would be the agony of the cross; He would be denounced, betrayed, rejected by friends and family, alone and even forsaken by His Father. This is Jesus' state of mind in the wilderness: beaten down by temptation; His powers reduced to their lowest; weary and near death from hunger; totally alone, no one to sympathize with Him. In this state of mind, a small voice comes and whispers in His ear.

Gil could enter the room, rapidly sliding his tongue in and out in lizard-like fashion, and give a brief introduction of himself. He may want to let the children guess what kind of an animal he is and where he lives.

Sample Story

Note: *You may wish to leave out some material to better suit younger listeners.*

Warm-up/Introduction (1-2 minutes)

Good morning, Backpackers! Some of you might be surprised to find that the storyteller today is a reptile so let me introduce myself, I am Gilead the Gecko. You may call me Gil. If you listen carefully to my story, you may be able to figure out why I was the one chosen to come and talk to you today about something that happened to Jesus during His earthly journey.

Yesterday Jesus' mother Mary told you what Jesus was like as a young boy growing up in Nazareth. (Ask the children if they remember what kind of a boy and young man Jesus was. Let them briefly tell you about Him.) Yes, you saw how even as a child Jesus humbly obeyed and served those around Him. I've come today to tell you about something very important that happened when Jesus was 30 years old.

Story (10 minutes)

One evening I was out by the River Jordan, catching some nice flies for dinner, when I heard a lot of humans talking. I was curious, so I crept closer to the hubbub to see what all the excitement was- making sure, of course, not to



get stepped on! There I saw John the Baptist in his camel hair coat preaching to the people as he often did. John was telling them as usual that their hearts were full of sin and that they needed to be sorry, and ask God to forgive them. After hearing this, many people asked to be baptized. So, John took the person into the waters of the river, to show that that person wanted God to wash their sins away. That evening as he often did, John was also saying that the Savior of the world, was coming—to wash away the people's sins!

I was curious to see who was being baptized so I crept even closer. Do you know what I saw? It was Jesus, and John was baptizing Him! I was so surprised that I nearly fell off my rock. Jesus did not have any sins, nothing He needed to be sorry for, so why did He come to get baptized? Well, I'll tell you. Jesus came because He knew that God His Father wanted John to baptize Him. Jesus knew that being baptized was part of what He needed to do to be perfect and live His life for sinful people, so they could be saved from their sins.

Then I heard John say out loud to everyone that Jesus was the Savior he had been telling them about! People didn't know what to think, and as they were wondering, a bird, a beautiful dove, flew down out of Heaven and landed right on Jesus! This dove was the Holy Spirit, who came to strengthen Jesus for His very difficult journey ahead. After the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus, a voice suddenly came from the sky. It was the voice of God the Father saying that Jesus was His wonderful Son, and that everything Jesus was and did made His Father pleased and happy!

Let me tell you, boys and girls—I knew that Jesus' baptism was very special. People had known Him as a boy and a carpenter, but now John was telling everyone that Jesus was the Savior of the world! I was so amazed that I decided to scurry after Jesus to see what would happen next. And boys and girls, do you know what Jesus did? He went out into the desert! Well, Jesus was in the desert all by Himself; no people were around to see what happened. But guess who was there! Yes—I was! The desert is my home, and I know my way around it, even at night. Now do you know why I was picked to come to talk to you today? That's right—I could easily follow Jesus wherever He went.

So, day after day after day, I watched Jesus. And do you know what He was doing? He was praying to His Father. At first, I thought He would soon leave the desert, but He didn't. He just sat and walked about and prayed for 40 whole days. He didn't even eat anything! He got thinner and thinner, and His body looked so weak. Do you like to be very hungry? What if you had no food to eat for one whole month! That's a very long time.

Well, when Jesus was so hungry and weak, something strange and terrible happened. Satan came to tempt Jesus to disobey His Father. Satan hated Jesus and since Satan knew Jesus was so weak and hungry, he thought this was the perfect time to act. He spoke to Jesus and told Him to use His power to turn the rocks into bread. Satan really meant, "Jesus, you are so hungry, you might die out here. Your Heavenly Father sent you to be the Savior, but if you die out

here, you will fail. You had better not wait for God to help you because it doesn't look like He is going to. Listen to me. Save yourself!"

Can you imagine how Jesus felt? He was so hungry. And since He was the Son of God, He could turn those stones into bread. But Jesus wanted more than anything else to obey God the Father, and He knew that this would not be God's way. So, Jesus told Satan, "The Bible says people need more than food to be alive and happy—they need to do what God tells them to do in the Bible." Jesus did not use His power the way Satan wanted Him to. Instead, Jesus trusted God the Father to give Him all that He needed, even His food, and He obeyed all of God's Word in the Bible.

Jesus had resisted the devil, but Satan wasn't finished. Satan came again to Jesus and somehow took Him up on a high mountain cliff. In seconds, Satan showed Jesus all the magnificent kingdoms of the world. Satan said, "Look at all these cities. If you will worship me, you can have all these places." Can you believe it? That terrible devil was trying to tempt Jesus to be Earthly Bound! He was telling Jesus that he would give Him money and make Him powerful and famous, if Jesus would worship Satan instead of God the Father. But Jesus just looked down on Satan and said, "Go away Satan! The Bible says, 'Worship God and serve Him only.'"

I was thinking about all this when I realized that now Satan had taken Jesus to the very top of the Temple. I scurried after Him to find out what would happen next. Again, Satan spoke to Jesus and said, "If you really are the Son of God, jump down from the top of this tall building, because the Bible says, 'God will give you angels to hold you up and to keep you from getting hurt.'" I thought, "Maybe if Jesus did jump from the Temple and God saved His life, everyone would worship Him!" But, boys and girls, Jesus knew better. He realized that Satan was tempting Him to show off His power in a way that would not please God the Father. It was not God's way. Jesus had not come to earth to live His life in a magical sort of way, jumping off buildings and being amazingly rescued. He didn't come to change things by saying "Abracadabra." He came to change things by living a perfect human life for us, just the way God wanted Him to. Jesus knew that what Satan had said was another evil trick, and so Jesus answered Satan with a verse from the Bible that says, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test."

When this last temptation failed, Satan was finished trying to make Jesus disobey. Jesus would not listen to Satan, He had used the Word of God, prayer, and the power of the Holy Spirit to resist so Satan went away! Jesus won! He had been faithful and obedient to God His Father and had shown that God's way is always the right way.

You might think, boys and girls, that it was easy for Jesus to say no each time Satan tempted Him. "After all," you might think, "He's God!" But I can tell you, it was very clear to me that it was not easy for Jesus. Yes, He was God, but He was also a man. At times it was very hard for Him to obey God His Father, especially there in the desert, when He was so hungry and



LOOK ONLINE

for additional resources (music, artwork, and publicity information) are available on the Upward Bound portal. Talk to your Director for more information or visit: **portal.reachoutadventures.com**

weak, and when Satan was trying so hard to make Him believe that something wrong was right. But Jesus never, ever sinned. He knew that if He obeyed Satan even once, He could not save people from sin, and His journey on earth would be a failure. He had to be absolutely perfect; He had to be single-minded about our salvation so that we could be saved from our sins and have eternal life.

Application (1-2 minutes)

Boys and girls, what I have told you today is a true story. This really happened to Jesus and He wants all the world to know about it, so that we can learn some very important things. Satan tries every day to make you disobey God.

Sometimes he whispers to you that you can't trust God to provide for you so you have to take what we can get. Or at other times Satan tempts you to worship him. That sounds scary and really wrong, and it is, but it can be so easy for us to do. If you care more about toys or clothes or play or anything more than you care about God, the Bible says that is like worshipping Satan. It is putting something else other than God in the center of your heart. Still other times, Satan tempts you to take the easy way out and assume that God will forgive you anyway. Maybe telling a little lie to keep you out of trouble or going along with your friends when you know they are doing wrong or perhaps not completing your chores when no one is looking.

And do you know what? You do not have the power on your own to say no to him.

Unless you have asked God to forgive you for your sins, and have told Him that you believe Jesus came to live and die for you so that He could take away your sins, you cannot have victory over Satan's temptations.

But if you belong to Jesus and are Upward Bound, Jesus will change your heart so that you want to be like Him. He will give you His Holy Spirit to help you obey God the Father. He'll help you to grow in loving to spend time with God, praying to Him, reading His Word, the Bible, and worshipping Him with His people. All those things will help you say no Satan's temptations. And when you do sin, the Bible says you need to confess your sins to Jesus, and He will forgive you and give you the strength to continue your Upward Bound journey by faith in Jesus.

Closing (1 minute)

Well, if you will excuse me, all of this talk is making me hungry. Come back tomorrow to learn more of Jesus' journey to the Summit. Meanwhile, I must go find some juicy flies!

Prayer

The Painful Journey

Obedient to Death on a Cross



MAIN THEME:

Jesus' complete obedience to the Father and selfless love for us led him to the Cross where he took our sins on Himself and died the painful death we deserved.



SCRIPTURE

Luke 22:47-Luke 23

RELATED SCRIPTURE

Matthew 27: 32-56; John 19: 16-37; Philippians 2:5-11

Story Summary:

Simon of Cyrene shares a moving account of Jesus' death and his own role in the dramatic events.

Story Outline:

Review:

- Jesus' surprising decision to become a man
- How Jesus lived humbly as a child and learned obedience
- How Jesus remained obedient even in the face of great temptation

Simon of Cyrene, North Africa (Libya) had heard of Jesus.

- Jesus healed sick people, made the blind see, and even brought people back to life.
- Jesus told people about His Father and their need to repent.
- Jesus claimed to be God.

Jerusalem was crowded with people for the Passover celebration.

Simon heard terrible news.

- Jesus had been arrested, put on trial, and sentenced to death.
- Jesus had done nothing to deserve this.
- The leaders were jealous of Jesus and hated Him because He was so good.

Simon heard the crowd as Jesus was being sent to execution.

- People were yelling, laughing, and pointing at Jesus.
- Jesus was beaten and bloody. He wore a crown of thorns on His head and was dragging His cross through the streets.
- Roman soldiers grabbed Simon and forced him to help carry Jesus' cross.

CHARACTER:

Simon of Cyrene

ALTERNATIVE CHARACTER:

Alexandra, the wife of Simon of Cyrene

At the hill called, “The Skull”, Jesus was executed between two thieves.

- Jesus did not struggle; He gave up His life freely.
- Jesus’ hands and feet were nailed to the wooden cross, and a sign put over His head “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.”
- Jews and Romans mocked and yelled at Jesus.
- Jesus prayed for the forgiveness of those who crucified Him.
- One of the thieves being executed with Jesus put his faith in Him.

An earthquake shook the ground and it became dark.

- Jesus cried out, “It is finished!” and died.
- Jesus had completed the work on earth God had given Him to do.

Application:

Jesus was always Upward Bound in His life and His death to rescue you from sin, Satan, and death.

We cannot be perfect like Jesus by trying to be good.

- Have you ever gotten angry and hit someone?
- Have you ever snuck something without asking?
- Have you ever thought or said something mean?
- Have you ever lied?

Only Lead Guide Jesus can make us Upward Bound.

- Jesus lived and died for us.
- He gives us His goodness as a present if we ask Him.

Teacher Notes:

Picture an extremely hard climb and what it is like as the journey is reaching its climax. As our story opens, circumstances are terribly difficult for Jesus and His followers. Many can no longer keep up; they quit the climb and fall back. Jesus’ disciples are struggling with the overwhelming hardships and problems, and Jesus Himself has to agonize in prayer in order to defeat the temptations of Satan. The whole world is against Him—those in Jerusalem want to kill Him, tens of thousands from the provinces turn from Him in disappointment, not one of His disciples truly understands Him. Yet He is not alone. He seeks out His Father and His Father is with Him. He calms Himself through the knowledge that His Father’s perfect love and wisdom are appointing everything that is happening to Him, and that He is glorifying the Father and finishing the work the Father has given Him to do.

The Storyteller today is Simon of Cyrene, the man who was forced to carry Jesus’ cross. Perhaps out of curiosity, Simon had stopped to see what was happening and, before he knew it, he was carrying the cross of Jesus the Christ. Simon may have been angry, resentful, and embarrassed at first. But later, when he looked back on it, perhaps he thanked God for what had been the

greatest honor of his life. We cannot help but assume this hour changed Simon's life and brought him and his household into the Christian faith. In fact, church tradition holds that he was the father of two church members mentioned in Romans 16:13, Alexander and Rufus.

As the Storyteller today, Simon's attitude should convey great love for Jesus. As an observer of Calvary, he would have seen the sufferings of Jesus and come to know that it was for him that Jesus died. Simon should tell of his initial horror and resentment at having to carry the Savior's cross, but then of his profound realization of what a great privilege it had been. It was, in fact, that experience that led to his encounter with Jesus.

If your storyteller is a woman, she may choose to be Simon's wife, Alexandra. Maintain the main storyline throughout but adjust details and tone to better match the storyteller.

Sample Story

Note: You may wish to leave out some material to better suit younger listeners.

Warm-up/Introduction (1-2 minutes)

Good morning, children. My name is Simon and I'm from the city of Cyrene in the faraway land of North Africa. I understand that you are here at Upward Bound to learn all about the difficult journey that our Lead Guide Jesus Christ made for us. You have seen how He made the surprising decision to become human to save sinful people, how He lived humbly as a child learning to obey, and yesterday how at the beginning of His public ministry He remained obedient to the Father even in the face of great temptation. Today you will see how far His obedience would take Him— even death on a Cross.

Children, I was there and I have come here today to tell you what I saw and about something that happened to me—something that never happened to any other person that has ever lived.

Story (10 minutes)

As I told you, I come from the city of Cyrene in North Africa. I believe you call my country, Libya. Before this day, I had heard many wonderful things about Jesus. People talked about the prophet from Nazareth in Israel, who healed sick people, made blind people see, and even brought dead people back to life. They said he had spent many long hours talking to all kinds of people telling them about God His Father. He also taught that all people are sinful and need to tell God they are sorry for their sins. This Jesus even claimed to be God! Naturally, I was curious and I wanted to know more.

Well, when I arrived in Jerusalem, the city was crowded with people. Hundreds of Jews had come for a big Feast called Passover. It was very exciting because there were so many people everywhere and so much going on—people selling



continued

food and animals, children playing in the streets.

But in the middle of the confusion, I heard some terrible news. This Jesus I had come to find had been captured like a criminal, put on trial and was now condemned to be killed. I could hardly believe what I was hearing. How could it be? What had Jesus ever done to deserve this? As I listened some more, I began to understand what was happening. Jesus had been put on trial and was now sentenced to death because the leaders were jealous of Him. They hated Jesus because He was so good. Jesus made them see how wicked their own hearts were, but instead of asking God to forgive them and change their hearts, they wanted to get rid of Jesus.

I decided to get out of Jerusalem as fast as I could, but as I was leaving town, a huge crowd of people came towards me. The streets were full of terrible screams. “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!” was all I heard, and people were laughing and pointing at a poor young man, dragging His own cross up the street. “Could this be Jesus?” I wondered. As He came closer, I could see He had been beaten; there was blood on His back where He had been horribly whipped. I was very afraid, but I couldn’t help getting a little closer to the front. I saw that He was almost fainting from pain and exhaustion. Someone had pushed a circle of thorns down on His head, making blood run down His face. It looked like He was wearing a cruel crown. And then I knew. It was Jesus.

As I stood there watching Him, I felt as if my stomach were going to be sick. I stood frozen to the spot. I saw Jesus stumble and fall down under the heavy wooden cross. Right then one of the soldiers standing next to me grabbed me by my tunic and pushed me out into the road! He told me to carry the cross if I wanted to stay alive. I can tell you, children, the last thing I wanted to do was to carry that cross or to have any part of what was going on. But I knew I must.

I was so scared I just grabbed the cross and started dragging it down the road, while the soldiers pushed Jesus on in front of me.

They forced me to carry that heavy cross outside the city to the hill they called “The Skull,” and then they took Jesus and threw Him down onto it. I felt as if my heart would break. I know if I had been Jesus, I would have been fighting to be free. But Jesus did not struggle. I didn’t understand it at the time, but Jesus had chosen to be put on that cross. Those soldiers did not have to force Him; He was giving up His life freely. He had humbled Himself to the point of death, even death on a Cross. And as I watched Him, I became convinced that all the things people had told me about Him were really true. No ordinary man would give up His life in that way. The soldiers bound His feet and took out long nails to drive into His hands and feet. I wanted to stop it from happening, but the soldiers pushed us back. And then—(pause and shudder in remembrance)—and then they nailed Jesus to the cross. Words cannot describe the horror of it. When that was done, the soldiers put above Jesus’ head a sign that said, “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.”

I stayed near the foot of the cross the rest of the day. Mocking Jews and Romans

yelled out all kinds of horrible things. “He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ of God!” someone shouted. But do you know what Jesus was doing? He was praying! He prayed, “Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing.” I could not believe my ears. He wanted God to forgive them! Even though he was in great pain, too, one of the thieves hanging and dying on the cross next to Jesus could not help but watch Jesus.

The thief turned to Jesus and asked to be forgiven and, in spite of all His pain, Jesus looked at him and forgave his sins saying, “Today you will be with me in Paradise.”

Suddenly, though it was the middle of the day, it became dark and an earthquake shook the very ground under our feet! Everyone was very frightened, wondering what would happen next. It was then that Jesus yelled out, “It is finished!”—and He died. (Pause.) His life, His journey, was over. The work God had given Him to do on earth was finished.

Application (1-2 minutes)

Children, these things took place many years ago, but those days in Jerusalem changed my life forever.

Throughout His whole life, Jesus was always Upward Bound—every minute of every day of His life, Jesus was obedient to God the Father. Jesus hung on that cross for me and for you—to rescue us from our sin, from Satan, and from death.

We cannot become perfect like Jesus by trying to be good. Think about the things you do that are wrong. Do you ever get angry and hit people? Have you ever thought it would be okay to sneak some food without asking? Have you ever said or thought something mean? Have you ever lied? Now think about whether you could try very hard and never do any of those things again—ever. You couldn’t, could you?

We cannot make ourselves perfect; we cannot become Upward Bound by ourselves. Only our Lead Guide Jesus can do that for us. Jesus made His journey on earth, and He did it perfectly so that He could give us His goodness. He made His journey not for Himself, but for us—to live and die in our place—and He gives His goodness to us as a present if we ask Him.

I’m so glad I got to drag that cross for Jesus because that day I learned that Jesus’ heart is full of love, and that He suffered all that pain and sadness for an ordinary person like me—a stranger in Jerusalem that day and for you- a backpacker in this room today.

Closing (1 minute)

Before I leave, I must tell you that Jesus’ story is not over- tomorrow you must come back to hear of the joy in the journey!

Prayer



LOOK ONLINE

for additional resources (music, artwork, and publicity information) are available on the Upward Bound portal. Talk to your Director for more information or visit: **portal.reachoutadventures.com**

The Joy of the Journey

God Has Highly Exalted Him



MAIN THEME:

Jesus rose from the dead, conquering it forever, and returned to Heaven as the victorious God-man, where He reigns as King and Lord of all with the "name that is above every name" (Phil. 2:9).



SCRIPTURE

Luke 24:1-12; Luke 24:50-53

RELATED SCRIPTURE

*Hebrews 12:2;
Philippians 2:5-11*

CHARACTER:

Mary Magdalene

ALTERNATIVE CHARACTER:

Peter the apostle

Story Summary:

Mary Magdalene joyfully tells of her life-changing discovery when she and the other women went to the tomb early on the third day after Jesus' crucifixion and shares with Backpackers how they too can be Upward Bound with Jesus.

Story Outline:

Review:

- Gabriel the angel told you how Jesus left the amazing glories of Heaven to become a little baby in this broken world.
- Jesus' mother, Mary, told you how as He grew up, Jesus lived every moment of every day loving and obeying God His Father, and loving and serving the people around Him.
- Gil the Gecko told how Jesus never, ever sinned or gave in to Satan's temptations.
- Simon of Cyrene told how Jesus took our sins on Himself and died an awful death on the cross.

After Jesus died, he was laid in a tomb.

- Jesus' body was wrapped in a large piece of fabric.
- Then it was laid in a tomb with a large stone rolled in front of the door.
- Mary Magdalene, the disciples, and the other followers of Jesus were sad and confused after His death.

Early on the third morning, Mary and the other women decided to prepare Jesus' body for burial.

- They were worried about rolling the stone away.
- When they got to the tomb, the stone was already rolled away.
- The women entered the tomb only to find that Jesus' body was gone and the large piece of fabric was neatly folded where it had been.

Two angels appeared to the women.

- They told the women that Jesus had risen from the dead just as He had told them.
- The women ran to tell the disciples the good news, but they did not believe right away.

For 40 days, Jesus came and went among his followers.

- This showed them that Jesus was really alive.
- His followers also learned that while Jesus' body was different, His kindness and love were the same.

Jesus ascended to heaven while His disciples watched.

- Jesus had fought the battle against sin, death, and Satan, and had won!
- All of Heaven rejoiced and hailed Him as the Great King and Mighty Victor.
- At this moment, Jesus is sitting at the right hand of God praying for us.
- One day He will come back as the Mighty King over the New Heavens and the New Earth to be with those who love and believe in Him forever!

Application:

Are you Upward Bound or Earthly Bound?

- Bible says that everyone is full of sin.
- The only way to please God and go to Heaven is to be without sin.
- Jesus lived the perfect life for us because He loved us.

How do you become Upward Bound?

- Believe that you are a sinner who needs Jesus' perfect life and death.
- Believe that Jesus lived the perfect life for you and died in your place.
- Tell God, and He will give you salvation through faith in Jesus!

Christian life is not easy, but we have help and joy along the way.

- God gives us His Word, prayer, and the friendship and power of His Holy Spirit.
- Through Jesus, one day you will reach the Summit and be with Him forever!

Teacher Notes:

With this final portion of our story about the greatest journey ever made, we want to paint a picture of the risen, victorious Lord returning to the Courts of Heaven. We started the journey there, and now we see Him return, the King of Glory with the name that is above every name (Philippians 2:9). Jesus was sent because of the love of the Father, and having perfectly done the Father's will, He

returns, the Mighty One, able to save to the uttermost those who call on His name. The Storyteller today is Mary Magdalene, a repentant woman who found great forgiveness with Jesus. She always stood first among the women who followed Jesus, as Peter did among the men. Jesus had cast seven demons out of her and her wretched condition had been transformed through her relationship with Him. She had found in Jesus what she had never found anywhere else. There was no one for her but Jesus. She came to the tomb with the other women, crushed in spirit after the crucifixion, and discovered the amazing truth of the Resurrection. Jesus was so tender with Mary. He appeared first to her (John 20:10–18), and by doing so, showed His deep understanding of her incredible need for Him.

If the storyteller is a man, he can play the role of Peter, a man overwhelmed by his denial to his Lord, but then enlivened by the tremendous reality of the Resurrection and his private encounter with the risen Jesus.

Sample Story

Note: You may wish to leave out some material to better suit younger listeners.

Warm-up/Introduction (1-2 minutes)

Mary comes rushing in with a big smile on her face.

Good day, children! Have you heard? Have you heard the wonderful news?! Oh, I am so delighted to find so many of you gathered, for I have wonderful news to share! Such good news, in fact, that some of you may not believe it!

Perhaps I am getting ahead of myself! My name is Mary Magdalene and Jesus has changed my life. You see, I was once a very sinful woman; I even had seven demons living inside me. But when I met Jesus, He sent those demons away and changed my life forever! He showed me how sinful I was, but, children, He also loved me like I had never been loved before. Jesus forgave all my sins, and from that time on, I followed Him and worshipped Him and listened to everything He taught.

I have heard from the other storytellers, that you have also see how much Jesus loves us. Perhaps we can help each other remember what you have learned from the other stories this week: (have the children help briefly review the main point from each story)

Gabriel the angel told you how Jesus left the amazing glories of Heaven to become a little baby in this broken world. Jesus' mother, Mary, told you how as He grew up, Jesus lived every moment of every day loving and obeying God His Father, and loving and serving the people around Him. You learned from Gil the Gecko how Jesus never, ever sinned or gave in to Satan's temptations. Then of course, yesterday Simon of Cyrene told how Jesus took our sins on Himself and died an awful death on the cross.

All of this is great news but, do you know, children, I actually have even MORE good news to share with you! I am going to tell you about the most important day there ever was because it can change your life too, and you need to know about it!

Story (10 minutes)

As we just said, Simon told you yesterday—how they hung Jesus on the cross. I was there too, trying to stay close to my dear Jesus. My heart broke when I realized He was dead. We watched while they took Jesus down from the cross and carried Him away to be laid in a tomb. They wrapped Him in a large cloth, as was our custom, and we cried as they put Him in the tomb and rolled a huge stone, bigger than this (outstretch arms), across the opening.

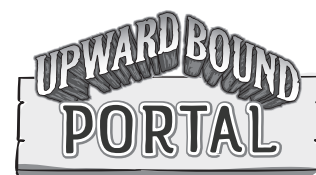
I was sadder than I have ever been in my life. This was the worst thing that ever could have happened. We thought He was the Savior promised by God, but now He was dead. Were we wrong about Jesus? What were we to do now? At last, one of my friends said, “We’d better go back to Jerusalem since it’s the Sabbath evening.” I didn’t want to leave—I didn’t even want to move. That was the worst day of my life.

When we got back to Jerusalem, the men from our group, the disciples of Jesus, were all gathered together in a room. They were very frightened because they thought the angry people who had crucified Jesus might come and kill them, too. The disciples locked and bolted the doors. We were all very sad and confused and heartbroken. We women wanted so much to do something for Jesus. We decided that even though we could no longer be with Jesus, at least we could prepare Jesus’ body for burial with some sweet-smelling spices. We were determined to go first thing in the morning, when the Sabbath was over.

The very minute the sun peeked out the next morning, we started for the tomb. Just as we got near, we remembered the huge stone covering the entrance to the tomb. What were we going to do? We would never be able to roll that huge stone away to get inside the tomb. But at that moment, we saw the tomb, and we couldn’t believe our eyes: the stone wasn’t in front of the opening anymore! It was rolled off to the side!

Bewildered, we stepped into the tomb. Children, do you know what we saw? The large cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus’ body was lying there, but He was gone! We couldn’t believe it! Where was He? We were all talking at once: “He is gone!” “Somebody has stolen His body!” “What should we do?”

Suddenly two angels appeared right there in front of us—the light around them was so bright our eyes hurt! They said to us, “Why are you looking for Jesus here in the tomb? He isn’t here; He has risen from the dead—He’s alive! Remember how He told you that He would be crucified and then after three days be brought back to life?” As they spoke, I remembered! Of course, Jesus told us all that, but I had forgotten! Then just as suddenly as it had come the light left, the two angels disappeared, and we were alone again. We were so excited, we raced back to tell the disciples what we had seen.



LOOK ONLINE

for additional resources (music, artwork, and publicity information) are available on the Upward Bound portal. Talk to your Director for more information or visit: **portal.reachoutadventures.com**



The King of Glory

With this final portion of our story about the greatest journey ever made, we want to paint a picture of the risen, victorious Lord returning to the Courts of Heaven. We started the journey there, and now we see Him return, the King of Glory. Jesus was sent because of the love of the Father, and having perfectly done the Father's will, He returns, the Mighty One, able to save to the uttermost those who call on His name.

But do you know what? The men would not believe us! They thought we were imagining things. Are you like that sometimes? Do you find it hard to believe that something has happened if you haven't seen it with your own eyes?

Well, Jesus knew that the disciples did not yet believe He was alive, so He came to see them! For 40 days our dear Jesus came and went among His followers; over 500 of us saw Him after the Resurrection! He talked with us, and ate with us—even cooked some fish for us!—so we could understand that He really was alive. We also learned that though His body was new and different, He was still the same Jesus with the same kindness and love.

At last Jesus' journey on earth was finished; He had done what He had come to earth to do, and He had done it perfectly. The disciples watched as Jesus left the earth and rose up to the Courts of Heaven, back to God His Father. Jesus had fought the battle against sin, death, and Satan, and Jesus had won! He had become the Savior!

Children, when Jesus of Nazareth returned to His home in Heaven, can you imagine what a celebration there was? All of Heaven was singing that Jesus was the Great King, the Mighty Victor! Jesus had done just what His name had said He would do: He had saved His people from their sins. Do you know, children, that at this very moment, Jesus, the man from Nazareth, the Son of God, is sitting on the right side of God the Father, praying for us? And one day He will come back as the Mighty King over the New Heavens and the New Earth to be with those who love and believe in Him forever!

Isn't that just the best news?!

Application (1-2 minutes)

Now, children, as Upward Bound is drawing to a close, I have a very important question to ask you: do you love and believe Jesus did all of this for you? Or as we have talked about this week, are you Upward Bound? Each storyteller has told you that every person is either Upward Bound and headed toward Heaven where Jesus is, or Earthly Bound and headed toward that terrible place called hell.

The Bible says that everyone is full of sin. Each one of you needs to live your life perfectly and without sin to please God and go to Heaven, but you cannot do that, and neither can I. None of us can because of our sin. Jesus, because He loves sinners like us so much, came to earth for that very reason—to live a perfect life for us, that perfect life we cannot live.

If you believe Jesus did all of that for you, and if you know in your heart you are a sinner, and you want to be forgiven, all you need to do is tell God that, and He will forgive you. Your sin will be paid for by Jesus. You will become a Christian, God will give you salvation and make you His child, and by faith, you will become Upward Bound. Then, when you die, God will welcome you into Heaven, just like He welcomed Jesus! He will say, "Welcome to the Summit! I love you, my dear child."

I know that some of you children have already done that and are Upward Bound by faith in Jesus. I'm so happy for that!

You know that, as Christians, your journey won't be easy. It wasn't for Jesus, was it? But even in the middle of a hard climb, through God's Word, prayer, and the friendship and power of the Holy Spirit you will reach the Summit and the joy for which God made you- to be with Him forever!

Closing (1 minute)

Backpackers, do you remember how afraid the disciples were after Jesus died—how they hid in that room, behind locked doors? Well, you should have seen them after Jesus ascended into Heaven! They were completely different! Instead of hiding, they boldly went where everyone could see them, and they praised God and worshipped Him and eagerly talked about Him over and over again. They weren't afraid anymore. Because of this week of Upward Bound, I pray that you too will go out into the world boldly declaring Jesus so that as our theme verse Philippians 2:10-11 says, "At the name of Jesus every knee should bow... and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Prayer



--	--