



LIBERATING
FAITH STUDIES

CALL IN
The
NEW TESTAMENT

The Order of Service

- I. Bell tap or organ voluntary
as a signal for silence
- II. Singing
- III. The Apostles' Creed
- IV. Prayer, closing with the
Lord's Prayer in concert
- V. Singing
- VI. Calling roll of officers and teachers
- VII. Responsive reading
of the lesson text by school
- VIII. The Decalogue

The Lesson

- I. Organ interlude while
the classes are being arranged
- II. Class study of the lesson
- III. Warning bell — 5 minutes
- IV. Closing bell — silence

The Closing

- I. Singing
- II. Review and application
of the lesson
- III. Secretary's report
- IV. The Church School Creed
- V. Singing
- VI. Benediction

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— Lessons —

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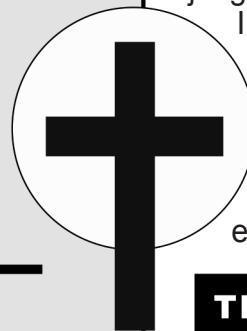
The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; the third day He arose from the dead, He ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Church Universal, the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

The Church School Creed

I believe my A.M.E. Church School must grow and grow; and that I must make it a top priority to make it so. Every member a Christian, every Christian a worker, every worker trained so that a worker need not be ashamed. This we ask in Jesus' name.



Called Through Heritage

Lesson Scripture: Matthew 1:1-17; Hebrews 1

Focus Scripture: Hebrews 1:1-5, Matthew 1:1-6, 16-17

Key Verses: In these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. Hebrews 1:2 (NRSV)

HEBREWS 1:1-5; MATTHEW 1:1-6, 16-17 (NRSV)

Hebrews 1:1-5

1 Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets,

2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds.

3 He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

4 having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

5 For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you"? Or again, "I will be his Father, and he will be my Son"?

Matthew 1:1-6

1 An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

2 Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers,

3 and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Aram,

4 and Aram the father of Aminadab, and Aminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon,

5 and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse,

6 and Jesse the father of King David. And

HEBREWS 1:1-5; MATTHEW 1:1-6, 16-17 (KJV)

Hebrews 1:1-5

1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high:

4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

Matthew 1:1-6

1 The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

2 Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren;

3 And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Tamar; and Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram;

4 And Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon;

5 And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse;

6 And Jesse begat David the king; and David

David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah,...

the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias;...

16-17

16 ...and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah.

16-17

16 And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

17 So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations.

17 So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.

KEY TERMS

- **Genealogy** – A record of ancestry of one person, a family tree of a particular group.
- **Eschatology** – A branch of study about the end times or last things; a study of the end of life, the world, or study of how the world ends including death, judgment, human destiny, the future.

“yes.” Others may question if they heard God’s voice. Some may wonder if God made a mistake. Some may ask God, “Did you mean to call me?” Still others may tell God, “No.” Sometimes, people rely on their family ancestry to determine if God called them to a particular vocation. Knowing one’s family tree can give information. God may call family

members to the same type of work. Family members may have similar traits. Every Christian can trace their family roots to Jesus. Jesus’ genealogy includes people who did good and people who did evil. God calls everyone in Jesus’ family. That includes you. You decide how



Every Christian can trace their family roots to Jesus.

you will respond to God’s call.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, God called people. From the call of Adam and Eve to the present, God gives people assignments, but the way people respond to God’s call differs. People may answer God’s call by saying

TELLING THE BIBLE STORY

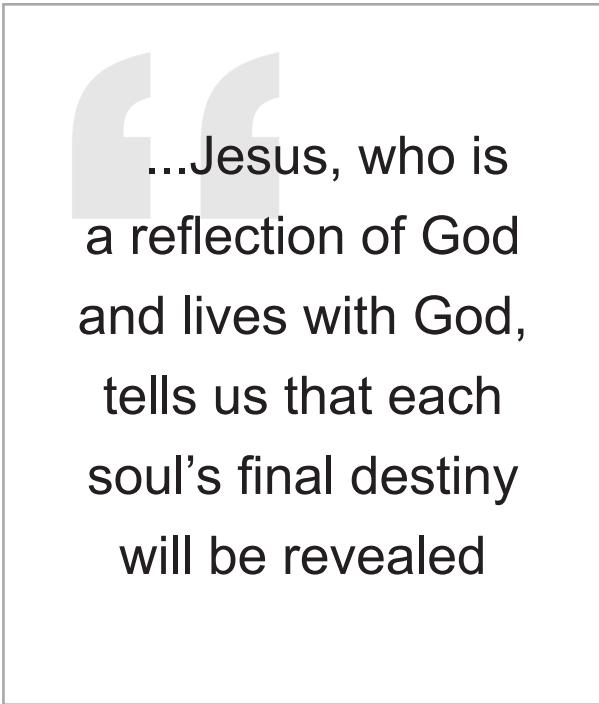
Hebrews 1:1-5

God created the earth, skies, animals, and people. Humans were expected to worship God, love one another, and care for the earth. When humans failed to do any of these, God called and sent prophets among them. Prophets warned about coming judgment. Prophets told people to repent and turn back to God. Prophets gave God's restoration promise to those who repented. Every prophet shared a specific message, to a specific people, over a specific period of time. From Moses to Malachi, God spoke through prophets. However, the prophetic voice did not stop patterns of obedience then disobedience, faith then doubt, worship then blasphemy. Therefore, the last days God chose to speak in a new way. Like the parable, God said, maybe if I send my son they will listen (Mt. 21:33-46). So, God sent Jesus who speaks the same eschatological message as the prophets. Jesus says that in the last days, death and judgment

will happen (Mt. 24). Most importantly, Jesus, who is a reflection of God and lives with God, tells us that each soul's final destiny will be revealed.

Why do you think people do not respond to prophetic warnings?

If God calls you to share a prophetic message now, what would you say?



...Jesus, who is
a reflection of God
and lives with God,
tells us that each
soul's final destiny
will be revealed

Matthew 1:1-17

Biblical genealogical records may prove hard to read. After all, reading "was the father of" or "begot" repeatedly may seem pointless. And in addition, many biblical names seem hard to pronounce. For God, genealogy has significance. Beginning with the first record in Genesis 4 to the one in

today's lesson in Matthew 17, genealogy gives important information and insights. Persons listed in Jesus' ancestry have flaws; they all sinned. Because God loved them, God overlooked their sin. God chose them as Jesus' ancestors. Jesus' genealogy includes foreigners, sinners, old, young, and poor, and shows God's

love. Jacob tricked his father and stole his brother's blessing. Judah fathered his daughter-in-law's son, Perez. Some scholars believe Rahab was the prostitute who hid the spies (Joshua 2). David, the youngest of Jesse's sons, a warrior with blood on hands, ignored Tamar's rape (2 Sam. 13). David had forbidden sexual relations with Bathsheba and ordered Joab to orchestrate the killing of her (Bathsheba's) husband Uriah (one of the mighty men). Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, married several foreign women. These women convinced Solomon to erect idols to their gods. Even worse, Solomon turned from the true God and worshipped these idols (1 Kings 11:1-8). Mary lived in Nazareth, a small unimportant town.

God chose the least likely to show us that Jesus' family is made of ordinary people. From one generation to the next, God called imperfect people. From Abraham to Joseph, they answered God's call. They did not use their flaws as an excuse to tell God no. In considering

Jesus' ancestors, we can understand why God sent Jesus to earth. We needed a Savior and God called Jesus from an ancestral line of sinners. In turn, Jesus calls us as imperfect as we are to do God's will.

What do you know about your family history? Which family traits do you see in yourself? How can adopted children learn about their relatives?



“It's not what you call me, but what I answer to that matters”; that defines a person.

SANKOFA

Chika Onyeani, a native Nigerian and former ambassador, self describes as “the N-word.” He wrote a book entitled, “Capitalist N-word.” Using the word *capitalist*, Onyeani believes that it allows others to know that he is rich. Onyeani says, “It's

not what you call me, but what I answer to that matters”; that defines a person. He questions why people of African descent allow “the N-word” to cause anger and fear. According to Onyeani, overreaction to the word gives power to those who use it as a weapon. He hopes black people de-emphasize the N-word's power. For

Onyeani, black people have greater concerns than being called the N-word. Instead, black people should decrease financial, educational, technological, and health disparities. Onyeani tells black people that “we are as capable, as naturally endowed, as any other group.” The “N-word” has a 500-year history. Before there was an “N-word,” God said we are beautifully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14 NIV). This is our heritage from the Lord.

CASE STUDY

We may find it difficult to trace our family tree. Records kept by ancestry companies have incomplete genealogy research. It's easy to start the process. We usually know the relatives in our immediate family. These family members include parents, siblings, children, uncles, aunts, and cousins. You may know your grandparents. Going back through your family history often comes to a sudden stop. Census, birth, and death records may not go back far enough. Who were your first ancestors? When were they born? Where did they

live? What work did they do? Unable to answer these questions? Then unlike Jesus, we have a limited family history. But like Jesus, we have an inheritance. Putting together known family details can teach us about ourselves. Family history affects our likes, skills, beliefs, values, and much more. The good news: all of us were created by God.

LIFE APPLICATION

God said in Genesis, “Let us make humans in our image.” Though we are made in God's image, we still sin. Prophets may deliver God's word, begging us to repent and warning of judgment if we don't. Too often their words fall on deaf ears. If we look at our family history, we see victories and

“Onyeani tells black people that “we are as capable, as naturally endowed, as any other group.”

failures. For that reason, the message of Jesus' ancestors should encourage us. God had sinners included in Jesus' ancestors. God includes sinners like us in the record of Jesus' descendants. The only thing God requires is that we believe in Jesus, which will change us from sinners to saints.

QUESTIONS

1. What can you learn from reading about genealogies in the Bible? Which person(s) included as Jesus' ancestor most surprised you? Why?
2. How do you respond when someone calls you "the N-word?" Why?
3. What can we do to eliminate its use?

CLOSING DEVOTIONS

1. Call the names of your ancestors and thank God for their lives.
2. Read the words of the hymn, *Amazing*

Grace: meditate on how those words apply to you (and your family).

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost, but now am found
Was blind but now I see.

Prayer: Lord, we thank you that you call ordinary people to become a part of your family. We are grateful that Jesus, our brother, sits at your right hand praying for us. We thank you for our ancestors. We thank you for our calling and our place in history. In Jesus' name. Amen.

HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

November 30–December 6

Monday	Psalm 2	(God's Anointed Ruler of All Nations)
Tuesday	Ephesians 1:1-14	(Blessed and Chosen in Christ)
Wednesday	Ephesians 1:15-23	(Christ, Head Over All People/Things)
Thursday	Matthew 1:6b-15	(In the Family Line of David)
Friday	Hebrews 1:6-9	(God Anoints Jesus King)
Saturday	Hebrews 1:10-14	(Jesus, Creator and Eternal Ruler)
Sunday	Hebrews 1:1-5; Matthew 1:1-6, 16-17	(Expectations of Jesus Before His Birth)

CALLED BEFORE BIRTH

Lesson Scripture: Matthew 1:18-25

Focus Scripture: Matthew 1:18-25

Key Verses: "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:20b-21 (NRSV)

MATTHEW 1:18-25 (NRSV)

18 Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

19 Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly.

20 But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

21 She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

22 All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

23 "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us."

24 When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife,

25 but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

MATTHEW 1:18-25 (KJV)

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.

20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.

22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus.

KEY TERM

- **Consider** (Greek word *enthumeomai*, pronounced en-thü-me'-o-mi) – to ponder, to deliberate, to turn repeatedly in the mind.
- **Angel** – Hebrew word for angel, *mal'ach*, a messenger of God who delivers a word or gives direction to people, or performs a task.
- **Jesus** – Hebrew name *Yehoshua* (Joshua) meaning to deliver, to rescue.

INTRODUCTION

God knits us together in our mothers' wombs. From our head to our toes God makes us unique. Parents take and share pictures of their newborn babies. Family and friends wonder who the baby favors in their looks. Some say the father, others say the mother, still others say a grandparent, aunt, or uncle. However, the baby's soul we cannot see. We do not know their personality, thoughts, emotions, talents. God does. God sees

the invisible part of us. God uses that knowledge to call us to specific works. We were designed before birth to do God's will.

TELLING THE BIBLE STORY**Matthew 1:18-19**

In the ancient Israelite society, a husband could demand that a woman provide proof of her virginity. Parents provided this proof publicly to the elders. The proof, a bloody cloth, was given to the parents by their daughter, as proof of her first sexual relationship with her husband. Wives who were unable to give this proof were stoned to death (Deut.

22:13-24). Joseph knew Mary's parents would not have a bloody rag. However, Joseph did not want to subject Mary to the ritual which could have resulted in her death. God had created Joseph to become a righteous and kind man – a man who would support Mary during her unusual

“ God sees the invisible part of us. God uses that knowledge to call us to specific works.

pregnancy.

Matthew 1:20-25

Joseph thought a long time about Mary's pregnancy. *Enthumeomai*, the Greek word for *consider*, means to revolve around in the mind. In other words, Joseph thought about Mary's situation from every angle. He probably wondered about her story of an angel visiting her and the Holy Spirit overshadowing her. What was

Joseph to make of what Mary said? And then, an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream! The angel confirmed what Mary had said, that she would have a son and name him Jesus. Jews expected a Messiah. God had spoken through the prophets that a savior would come. Joseph

would know of this expectation. What he would not know, until the angel told him, was the role Joseph would have in the Messiah's life: Emmanuel, God with us, would become a part of his family. This dream caused Joseph to think differently. With his spiritual mind awakened, Joseph did what the angel said, and with his fear gone, Joseph went to get Mary. In ancient Israel an engaged woman remained with

her parents. Her husband would go to her parent's home and take her to live with him. The time of Joseph's arrival was unknown to the bride, therefore the bride needed to remain in a state of readiness. Joseph probably surprised Mary when he arrived to claim her as his wife. How marvelous! Joseph's love for Mary led him to move his pregnant wife from

her parent's home to his home. Joseph exercised great restraint and did not have sexual relations with Mary, now his wife, until after Jesus was born.



The angel confirmed what Mary had said, that she would have a son and name him Jesus.

SANKOFA

Phillis Wheatley, taken from Senegal/Gambia, West Africa,

was enslaved in John Wheatley's home. Though the law prohibited educating slaves, the Wheatleys taught Phillis to read and write. Highly educated, Phillis studied the Bible, astronomy, geography, history, and British, Latin, and Greek writings. By the age of eighteen, Wheatley had written a 28-poem collection. Many were published in the Boston newspaper. "On Being Brought from Africa to

America,” her best-known poem, stated that everyone including Africans were Christians.

Twas mercy brought me from
my *Pagan* land,
Taught my benighted soul to understand
That there’s a God, that there’s
a *Saviour* too:

Once I redemption neither sought nor knew.

Some view our sable
race with scornful eye,
“Their colour is a diabolic
die.”

Remember,
*Christians, Negros, black
as Cain,*
May be refin’d, and join
th’ angelic train.

Unable to gain a publisher in America, Wheatley found one in London. In 1773, Wheatley’s *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*, was the first volume published by an African American. Wheatley authored over 140 poems. If the family that enslaved her had not been willing to defy taboos, Phillis would have remained uneducated and unpublished.

CASE STUDY

Pre-natal visits help pregnant women and their babies. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that expectant women should have at least eight visits with a health care provider prior to giving birth. Unfortunately, most women worldwide do not have eight visits. Most, 65%, have four visits. Some

only have one prenatal health care visit. Limited visits result in miscarriage and high infant death rates. Adequate prenatal care helps mothers receive medical treatment and advice that can improve their health. If Joseph had divorced Mary, she would have become an outcast. Without Joseph’s support Mary would have been on her

own. Instead, Joseph took care of her. Mary had food, shelter, and protection. Mary had a successful childbirth because Joseph listened to the angel. Unfairness in health care systems negatively affects women of color. Even in countries rich in health resources, underweight and still born babies occur in higher numbers for

“
In 1773, Wheatley’s
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women of the African diaspora.

What can your church do to help women around the world receive prenatal health care?

LIFE APPLICATION

No one chooses their parents. God places children in families. Because God knows the work each person should complete, the chosen family shapes and molds children for their future. Families may seem perfect or less than ideal. Jesus had a perfect father in heaven. Jesus' earthly family was not perfect. His mother pondered in her heart (Lk. 2:19) throughout his life about him. Jesus' brothers did not believe he was the son of God (John 7:5). Yet, this was the family God chose. Just as God chose Jesus' family, God chooses your family. That family, whether biological, adopted, or foster, will help you become the person God called and created you to be.

What can your church do to help women around the world receive prenatal health care?

QUESTIONS

1. Many women are raising children without male support (and vice versa). How can the church help?
2. How important are dreams? How do your dreams impact your life?
3. How could God use the WHO (World Health Organization) to compel the world to support the care of pregnant women?

CLOSING DEVOTIONS

Meditate on this Jewish Prayer for Boys (probably prayed on Jesus' behalf).

May you be like Ephraim and Menashe.

May God bless you and protect you.

May God show you favor and be gracious to you.

May God show you kindness and grant you peace.

or

Meditate on this psalm:

Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him.

*Like arrows in the hands of a warrior
are children born in one's youth.*

*Blessed is the man whose quiver is full
of them.*

Psalms 127:4-5 (NIV)

Sing one of the Christmas carols – think
of how Joseph, not mentioned by name

in the lyrics, played an important role.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the spirit of
righteousness. May we learn from the
life of Joseph how to be kind and to
do everything you ask, no matter how
difficult. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

December 7 – December 13

Monday	Isaiah 7:10-15	(Sign of God's Presence)
Tuesday	Isaiah 42:1-9	(Called as Light to the Nations)
Wednesday	Isaiah 49:1-7	(Called to Mission Before Birth)
Thursday	Luke 1:26-38	(Birth of Jesus Foretold to Mary)
Friday	Luke 2:34-38	(Simeon Foretells Jesus' Ministry)
Saturday	Ruth 4:9-17	(Mary, in the Lineage of Ruth)
Sunday	Matthew 1:18-25	(Miracle of the Holy Spirit Conception)