

# Herod responds to another ruler



### Verse:

Matthew 2:9-15

Jesus' parents take him to Egypt



### Aim:

To explore our feelings towards refugees



In today's session we'll think about what it feels like to be a refugee, leaving home to find safety in a new place.

Just like many families in the world today, Mary and Joseph made the difficult decision to move to a different country to find safety. Jesus and his family faced an uncertain future, all because of the anger and jealousy of a scared king.

## Each child will need:

- Pens/pencils and paper
- *Explore it ideas* handout

## You will need:

- To be familiar with information on migration and refugees: see **Migration and Refugees** by BBC Bitesize



## Start it

Give each child a piece of paper and some pens/pencils. Ask them to imagine they are king or queen for the day. Give them five minutes to draw themselves as royalty. It's up to them what they are wearing, where they are and what they are doing. After they have completed their drawings, share them together and discuss the following questions.

### Ask:

- If you could be king or queen for a day, what would you do?
- What kind of ruler would you be over your people? How would you treat them?
- How would you react if one of them disobeyed your rules?
- How would you react if you heard there was a new king or queen in town?

## Say:

Having the power to rule over other people can be used in a positive way to make their lives better. Sometimes people use their power to make their own lives better but don't think about how their actions impact others. Today we'll discover more about a member of a royal family who used their power to cause a lot of harm.

## Sing it

## Say:

In today's story Joseph has to trust God to guide him and keep his family safe. We're going to sing a song that reminds us to trust God even when we're uncertain what the future may look like.

## Song

'I'm trusting you' by Roar VBS, Lifetree Kids (3:23)

## Tell it

## Say:

Last week we discovered how the wise men travelled to worship baby Jesus and brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. But there was one important character we never mentioned.

## Ask:

Which important character did we forget to mention last week?

If the children are struggling to guess, then give them clues that lead to the answer – King Herod.

## Say:

Let's recap the story from last week and find out the part that King Herod had to play.

## Video

*The story of Christmas (Jesus and the wise men)* by Saddleback Kids (3:30)

## Ask:

- How did King Herod react to the news that there was a new king in town?
- Why do you think he reacted this way?
- What did King Herod ask the wise men to do once they had met Jesus?

## Read:

**'The wise men heard the king and then left. They saw the same star they had seen in the east. It went before them until it stopped above the place where the child was. When**

**the wise men saw the star, they were filled with joy. They went to the house where the child was and saw him with his mother, Mary. They bowed down and worshipped the child. They opened the gifts they had brought for him. They gave him treasures of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. But God warned the wise men in a dream not to go back to Herod. So they went home to their own country by a different way.'**

(Matthew 2:9-12 *ICB*)

**Say:**

Listening to God's warning, the wise men travelled back to their home because it was safe for them to go there. They were visitors in a new country and, despite fears that King Herod would be angry with them, they were able to return safely to their own home. The same could not be said for Jesus and his family.

**Read:**

**'After they left, an angel of the Lord came to Joseph in a dream. The angel said, "Get up! Take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Herod will start looking for the child to kill him. Stay in Egypt until I tell you to return."'**

(Matthew 2:13 *ICB*)

**Ask:**

- Why did Mary, Joseph and Jesus have to leave their home?
- How do you think Mary and Joseph felt when they discovered that Jesus was in danger?
- What do you think it felt like to have to gather up all their things and go to a strange country?

**Say:**

Due to the threats King Herod made, Jesus and his family were in danger. If they stayed where they were, it would cost them their lives. They had no choice but to leave and go to Egypt, far away from their own home. God told them to stay in Egypt until he said it was safe to return, but they had no idea how long that would be.

**Ask:**

Have you heard the words 'refugee' or 'asylum seeker'? What do you think they mean?

**Say:**

When people have to leave an area, they are sometimes known as 'refugees' or 'asylum seekers'. This is because 'refugee' and 'asylum' are words to describe 'safety' and 'protection'.

**Ask:**

Thinking about the meaning of the words 'refugee' or 'asylum seeker', is this how you would describe Jesus and his family when they fled to Egypt? If so, why?

**Say:**

Jesus and his family had to stay in Egypt until King Herod died.

## Read:

**‘So Joseph got up and left for Egypt during the night with the child and his mother. Joseph stayed in Egypt until Herod died. This was to make clear the full meaning of what the Lord had said through the prophet. The Lord said, “I called my son out of Egypt.”’**

(Matthew 2:14-15 *ICB*)

## Action it

Prompt some discussion in the group about our feelings towards refugees. This is a challenging topic, but it could prompt some useful discussions and clarify misunderstandings about people who seek refuge in our country.

Rather than setting a list of prescribed questions, use the video clip to help explain migration and refugees. It is written from the perspective of someone from Wales, but it applies to all nations across the UK and Ireland. A range of information is provided on the page available for discussion. Be guided by your group during this activity, using the questions below as a prompt if necessary.

## Video

***Migration and refugees*** by BBC Bitesize (1:30)

### Possible questions

- What do you think it might feel like to leave home to go and live in another country?
- How are refugees welcomed in the UK and Ireland?
- Why do you think some people are unkind to refugees?
- Herod was angry that there was a ‘new ruler’ on his patch, but how would you react if someone new came into your class?
- In what ways can new people sometimes seem a threat to us?
- How can we view new people joining our communities as a positive thing?
- What positive contribution do refugees make to our communities?

## Pray it

### Say:

Today we have thought about the many people in our country who have had to leave their homes to escape danger. It must be so scary to move away from the people and places that are familiar. Those who come to the United Kingdom and Ireland to find refuge are not always treated with kindness. As Christians, we need to set a good example about how to treat refugees the way Jesus would want us to.

## Say:

We're going to take some time to pray for those in our communities who are refugees. We are also going to ask God to give us guidance to treat people with love and respect.

## Say:

Our memory verse for this month reminds us that we are all one in Christ. Let's share it together.

## Memory verse

**'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.'**

(Galatians 3:28 *ESV*)

## Say:

Before we spend time praying together, we're going to sing our memory verse song.

## Video

**'Neither Jew nor Greek' Galatians 3:28** by I Believe (1:05)

Encourage the children to keep praying for families who have had to leave their homes to find a safe place to live. Ask the group for suggestions about what they could pray for. Encourage the children to use the suggestions to pray for refugees. A prayer is provided, to bring the session to a close.

## Prayer

Dear God,

Help us to remember that your own Son was once a refugee. He had to leave his home to find safety in another country with his Mum Mary, and Dad Joseph. We don't know how Jesus and his family were treated by the people of Egypt. We do know that, as he grew up, Jesus taught us to love others and care for them. Help us to treat refugees that we meet with the same love and respect that Jesus would.

Amen.

## Explore it

Remember to send home the *Explore it ideas* for children and families.



*Explore It* is produced by the Children and Youth Department in collaboration with Kay Moorby (soulwithaueivew)

# Herod responds to another ruler

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



### Verse:

Matthew 2:9-15

Jesus' parents take him to Egypt



### Aim:

To explore our feelings towards refugees



## Pray

In our *Explore it* session, we spent time praying for families that have had to leave their homes to find safety. Take time each day this week to pray for all the refugees currently living in the UK and Ireland. You might want to listen to our memory verse song during your prayer times.

**'Neither Jew nor Greek'** Galatians 3:28 by I Believe



## Share

Watch the clip with someone at home and discuss the questions raised in the story.

***My name is not Refugee*** Children's books read aloud by The StoryTime Family



## Memory verse

**'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.'**

(Galatians 3:28 ESV)



## Song for the week

**'I'm trusting you'** by Roar VBS, Lifetree Kids

**LIVING  
OUT FAITH**