

An rfour.org Children's Time Message

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Written for January 1, 2023
1st Sunday after Christmas
Lectionary Year A

Scripture: [Matthew 2:13-23](#) [**Summary:** *God Directs Joseph and Mary*]

Supplies Needed: Print out [Maze #1](#) (pdf), [Maze #2](#) (pdf), and [Maze #3](#) (pdf) as props (or show on a phone/tablet)

ASK (a.k.a. *The On-Ramp*)

- Good morning
- Can you tell me what this is? [hold up [Maze #1](#)]
- That's right, it's a maze.
- And what do you do with a maze?
- That's right! You figure out how to get from start to finish.
- What happens if you make a mistake? (You turn around. Or erase the mistake. Or draw a different line.)
- In other words, it's no big deal if you make a wrong turn, right?
- And that's part of what makes these mazes fun: It's a fun puzzle to figure out AND it's okay to make a mistake while you solve it.
- But what if the maze worked like this?! [hold up [Maze #2](#)]
- What if the maze EXPLODED and everything went KABLOOIE just because you made the wrong turn?
- That would make the maze a little bit less fun, don't you think?

TELL (a.k.a. *The Freeway*)

- In today's scripture story, we hear that Joseph and Mary are in a bit of a scary maze themselves.

- They don't know where to go, but if they go the wrong way, then they will be killed by King Herod.
- But what we also hear in today's story is that God is telling Joseph and Mary where to go.
- In fact, we hear God tell them where to go three different times in today's story.
- And because Joseph and Mary listen to God's instructions and follow God's instructions, then they don't make a wrong turn and go KABLOOIE! [*Hold up [Maze #2](#) again*]
- Instead, God leads Joseph and Mary out of the maze and to a place where they can live safely and where Jesus can grow up.

SHARE the Good News (a.k.a. *[The Destination](#)*)

- In other words, in today's story we see that God leads Joseph and Mary away from destruction while also leading them towards life, sort of like this [*hold up [Maze #3](#)*].
- And guess what? God wants to do the same thing for us.
- When we listen for and then follow God's directions, God will help us see what turns and decisions to make that will direct us to live God's better way.
- And the more we live God's better way, the more of God's better way we have to share with others.
- That's the good news for today.
- Let's pray. This is a repeat-after-me prayer.

CLOSING Prayer

Dear God, thank you ...

Dear God, thank you ...

...for sharing with us...

...for sharing with us...

...how to live your better way.

...how to live your better way.

Help us to listen and do...

Help us to listen and do...

...just like Joseph and Mary did.

...just like Joseph and Mary did.

Thank you and Amen.