

# The Shepherds Hear the Good News

## Overview



### Materials You'll Need

- gold or metallic chenille wires (six per student); other colors can be used if gold ones are not available
- scissors
- cable tie-offs



### Scriptures

Lk 2:8-18

### Bible Truth Objective(s)

The Lord Jesus came to be our Savior

### Behavioral Objective(s)

To share the joy and excitement of knowing Jesus by telling someone about the birth story

### Memory Verse

"I bring you good tidings of great joy."  
(Lk 2:10a)



## Bible Knowledge

### Shepherds

God sent angels to fill the heavens with their hymns of joy to announce the arrival of the Savior of mankind. They praised the heavenly Father for His goodness as they announced the good news to the shepherds.

Interestingly, shepherds were not highly regarded by the religious elite in biblical times. Shepherds had to lead the sheep to pasture and waters, protect them from wild animals, and guard them at night. Because of the demands of looking after the sheep twenty-four hours a day, they could not follow many of the requirements of the ceremonial rites and regulations. But we know from Jesus' birth in the stable that God's plan is different from man's plan. He intended to make the good news known to the lowliest first, just as Jesus came to the world to serve and not be served.

### Jesus, the Good Shepherd

Jesus Christ spoke of Himself as "the good shepherd" who knew His sheep and was willing to lay

down His life for them (Jn 10:7-8). Jesus also commanded Peter to feed His sheep (Jn 21). Other New Testament writers also used the reference to sheep to illustrate the relationship between Jesus and His followers.

### The Wise Men

The shepherds were not the only ones who went to see Jesus. The book of Matthew records that wise men from the East (probably Mesopotamia) also went to worship Jesus (though not on the same night, as Jesus may have been a bit older already). These wise men were educated gentiles, likely astrologers. After seeing the star in the sky, they went to see King Herod. Herod commanded them to go to Bethlehem to find this "King of the Jews" and return with the news so that he too could go and worship Him (Mt 2:8). Of course, Herod was only interested in finding out where Jesus was so that he could eliminate any threat to his throne. Once the wise men found Jesus, they bowed down and presented gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh (Mt 2:11). Later, God warned the men not to return to Herod and they went home by a different route.



## Understanding Your Students

Children in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten are still at a stage in their lives where everything is about them: their toys, their friends, their time. So sharing the good news with others is not something that they will do naturally when they can't see how the birth of Jesus relates to them. Therefore, we need to help them be aware that God cares so much for each of us that He planned long ago for Jesus to be born. Because of Jesus, we now have hope to be in heaven. That is a happy and exciting thing, something they would want to tell others about. They can do this simply by telling their parents or other family members what they learned in class each week. By retelling

these stories, they are not only deepening their understanding of God's words, but also developing a good habit of sharing.

Another wonderful way to show their excitement and joy in the Lord is to sing praises to Him. For young children, this is an easy way for them to feel the love, happiness and blessedness of knowing Jesus Christ. Because they are still young, be sure to include hand gestures or rhythmic clapping so they can enjoy and remember the songs even more.

Finally, they can be encouraged to share their joy in Christ by loving others. In more concrete terms, they should, for example, listen to their parents, help them out when they can, be good friends to people around them and learn to put others first. It is helpful to focus and work on a behavior or skill each quarter to allow the students to really know what loving others means.



## Vocabulary

### **Shepherd**

a shepherd is someone who looks after sheep

### **Praise**

to praise means to say good things about someone or something; for example, if someone asked

you to help pick up the crayons, and you picked them up nicely, he may say "Good job!" to praise you; also, we can praise God by singing

### **Savior**

a savior is someone who saves people; this is why Jesus is our Savior- He was born to save all of us



## Before You Teach

After the shepherds saw baby Jesus, they left the stable and told all who would listen about the angel's announcement and of the Savior who had been born. "Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. And those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds" (Lk 2:17-18). These verses tell us two things the shepherds did right after learning about the birth of Lord Jesus. First, they told everyone they met about the great news. Second, they told the news with great excitement and joy because people who heard their words were in awe. What made the shepherds so enthusiastic and willing to glorify and praise God? This night was probably the most incredible night of their lives. An angel appeared and the glory of God shone all around them. After listening to the angel, a host of angels sang hymns to praise God. After this experience, the shepherds

could think of nothing to do other than share the wonderful news with others

The shepherds set excellent examples for us today. We too have heard the great news of Jesus. Are we just as excited about telling others about the Savior? In fact, the shepherds only learned about the birth at that time. We know that Jesus has died on the cross and shed His blood for us, even though He was sinless and blameless. So we have even more reason to shout out and give praises to His Holy Name.

How can we be motivated to spread the good news? Every day we wake up, we need to think about the blessings we have received as a result of our belief in Him. We have been saved, our sins have been forgiven and we have this wonderful friend and Father we can trust at all times. Our lives have been transformed and we can only be thankful for all that we have. Coming to know our Lord is the most incredible and exciting time in our lives. Just like the shepherds, our job is to go out to the world and tell others about this great news.



## Bible Story

### **The Birth of Jesus**

In the last lesson, we learned about the birth of Jesus. Do you remember what His parents' names were? They were Joseph and Mary. Just before Joseph and Mary had the baby, they were traveling to Bethlehem. But when they got there, there was no room for them to stay in the inn. The only place they could find to rest was in a stable. Do you remember what a stable is? It is a place where the farm animals eat and sleep. Even though they had to stay with the animals, they did not mind. Soon, Mary had the baby and they named Him Jesus. Now Jesus did not have a fancy or nice bed to sleep in. He had to sleep in a manger. But the whole family was thankful because they were taking part in God's important plan. Today, we are going to learn about some people who came to visit baby Jesus after He was born.

### **An Angel Appears to the Shepherds**

Do you know what a shepherd is? A shepherd is someone who looks after sheep. What does a sheep sound like? (Baa...Baa.) But did you know that sheep are not so easy to look after? Sometimes they wander off from the group or get lost. Then the shepherd has to find them and bring them back to the group. This is why shepherds need to watch the sheep all the time.

That is what the shepherds in our story were doing. These shepherds were in the same country where Joseph, Mary and baby Jesus were staying. They were watching the sheep and making sure the sheep were safe and had enough to eat and drink. It was at night. Everything was quiet and still. The stars were twinkling in the sky. But the shepherds were in for a surprise. They were about to hear some good news!

As the shepherds were watching the sheep, suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared to them! And there was a very bright light shining all around them. How would you feel if you were one of these shepherds? What would you think? Would you be scared? These shepherds were very scared. They had probably never seen an angel before, and they were probably thinking, "What is going on?"

The angel could tell that the shepherds were scared. Then the angel said to the shepherds, "Do not be afraid because I have come to bring you good news; this good news is for everyone." What could this good news be?

The angel told them, "Today in Bethlehem, a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord. You will find Him wrapped in cloth. Here is how you will know that He is the one. He will be wrapped with cloth and lying in a manger." Do you know what the angel said to the shepherds? The angel was telling them that Jesus was a special baby. One day, He would save everyone. The angel also told the shepherds how they could find this special baby. Where could they find Him? That's right. They would have to look for a baby lying in a manger.

### **More Angels Appear**

The shepherds were still trying to understand everything the angel had said when all of a sudden the sky was filled with more angels! This must have been an amazing thing to see. The angels were singing a song to praise God. They sang, "Glory to God in the highest! And on earth peace, goodwill toward men." In this song, the angels were singing about how great God is. They also wanted peace for everyone on earth.

After the angels praised God, the angels vanished. Do you remember how the shepherds felt when they saw the first angel? They were scared. But now, the shepherds were not afraid anymore. They said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's go see all the things the angel has told us."

### **The Shepherds Spread the Good News**

The shepherds hurried to Bethlehem. That means they didn't take their time or walk very slowly. After they had heard this exciting news, they couldn't wait to find the Savior. They walked as fast as they could. Soon, they found Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus. Do you know where they found baby Jesus? Baby Jesus was just where the angel had said they would find Him. Jesus was in a stable, lying in a manger, wrapped in a warm cloth.

After the shepherds found baby Jesus, they were very happy and excited. When they left the stable, they ran and told everyone around them what had happened. They told others about the

singing angels in the sky and about the good news the angel had told them. They also told others about finding the baby in the manger. All the people who heard the story from the shepherds were amazed and surprised.

After a while, it was time for the shepherds to go home. It had been a long but happy night for them. Even on their way home, the shepherds kept praising God for all the wonderful things they had heard and seen. It truly was good news!

### **We Can Share the Good News Too**

Do you know why people call the story of Jesus

the “Good News”? They call it the “Good News” because it is the most wonderful and happy news they have heard. When something exciting happens to us, like when we get a new toy or do well in school, we want to share our news with others because we are so happy. The shepherds in the story were so excited that they had to tell others about the news of Jesus’ birth right away. We can do the same thing today. We can be just like the shepherds. We should be excited that we know about Jesus. We can tell other people about what we have heard today too. It makes God happy to know that we want to tell others about Him.



### Check For Understanding

1. **What is a shepherd?** (A shepherd is someone who looks after sheep.)
2. **Who did the angel come and see?** (The angel came to see the shepherds.)
3. **How did the shepherds feel when they saw the angel and the bright light?** (They were scared.)
4. **What good news did the angel bring to the shepherds?** (The angel said that Jesus, the Savior had been born; the shepherds could find Him in a manger in Bethlehem.)
5. **What happened after the angel told the shepherds the good news?** (More angels

appeared in the sky and sang songs of praise to God.)

6. **What did the shepherds do after the angels disappeared and went back to heaven?** (They weren’t scared anymore and went as fast as they could to find Jesus.)
7. **What did the shepherds do after they found Jesus in the manger?** (They went and told everyone what they had heard and seen.)
8. **How can we be like the shepherds, who were excited about knowing Jesus?** (Allow students to answer. We can share the good news too and tell others about the stories of Jesus we already know.)



### Life Application Story

#### **Thanking God Every Day**

Michelle was coming home from her friend Mary’s house one day. It was a cold winter afternoon in December. As Mrs. Marsh drove the car home, Michelle saw lots of stores with bright lights all around the windows. Michelle also saw tall fir trees in the windows. The trees were decorated

with bright, shiny balls, and lights and candy canes. When Michelle was in Mary’s house, she also saw a tree like that. It was called a Christmas tree. There were many presents under the tree.

Even though all the lights made everything look pretty, Michelle felt a little bit sad looking at all these beautiful things. She was sad because she wished her family could have a tree with presents under it.

As Mrs. Marsh pulled to a stop at a red light, Michelle asked, “Mom, how come we don’t have a

tree with lights and balls in our house? If we had a tree, we could put presents under it, too, like Mary's family does. It would make our room look pretty and we would have a great time opening the presents."

Mrs. Marsh began to drive again as the light turned green. She said, "Mary has a tree like that because she believes in Christmas."

"I learned about Christmas already," Michelle said. "At school, we made wreaths and candy canes. We also sang a lot of Christmas songs. Last year, Santa Claus came to visit us too."

"Well, many people do many different things at Christmas because it has become such a big holiday. There is definitely a lot of presents and Santa Claus is very famous. But the reason why people celebrate Christmas is that they think Jesus was born on December 25th," Mrs. Marsh explained. "But actually, the Bible never says when Jesus was born."

"So we don't know when Jesus was born?" Michelle asked.

"Right. In fact, we believe that Jesus could not have been born on December 25th," Mrs. Marsh said.

"Why not?" asked Michelle .

"Do you remember the Bible story about how the angel appeared to the shepherds while they were watching the sheep to tell them the good news about Jesus?" asked Mrs. Marsh.

"Yes, I know that story. The shepherds found baby Jesus in the stable with all the animals. I think it was in a city called Bethlehem," answered Michelle.

"That is exactly right. Well, December 25th is winter time near Bethlehem. In the middle of winter near Bethlehem, shepherds do not take their sheep out to eat grass because it is too cold. Because the Bible tells us that the shepherds brought their sheep out to eat and drink, we know that Jesus could not have been born on December 25th," explained Mrs. Marsh.

"Oh," said Michelle out loud.

"Since we know that Jesus was not born on December 25th, Christmas cannot be Jesus' birthday," continued Mrs. Marsh.

"Well, we can always celebrate Christmas on a different day, on a day that is not so cold. How about the spring time? We could still have presents and a tree," suggested Michelle .

"I don't think people would think that it is the

same as the Christmas they know now. Besides, we can't just pick any day we want to be Jesus' birthday."

"I guess you are right," said Michelle, still a bit sad. Mrs. Marsh could see that Michelle was still unhappy about not having a tree and presents.

"But it doesn't really matter that we don't know exactly when Jesus was born. God tells us to give thanks every day for His son, Jesus Christ. That is the most important thing for us to remember. In fact, at Christmas, many people only think about the presents and Santa Claus and don't really think that much about Jesus. Do you think that is what we should do?" asked Mrs. Marsh.

"No. God wouldn't want us to just think about presents," replied Michelle

"That's right. So even though we don't really know the real day of Jesus' birth, we can still give thanks to God every day for giving us His Son to save us," said Mrs. Marsh. "That would be the best present we could give to God. So, Michelle, what do you think you can do today to show your thanks to Jesus for coming to this earth for you—even though it may not be His birthday?"

"When I get home, I think I am going to draw a picture of Jesus' birth to show my thanks to Jesus for coming to live on this earth for me- even though Christmas may not be His birthday!" Michelle said.

"That's a great idea. We must always remember to give thanks to God for sending Jesus to be our Savior, no matter what day it is," said Mrs. Marsh.

#### Questions to Think About:

1. **What did Michelle wish her family had in the house?** (She wanted a Christmas tree with presents under it.)
2. **Why don't we celebrate Christmas?** (Because Christmas day is not Jesus' birthday)
3. **How can we remember Jesus even though we don't really know when He was born?** (Allow students to answer; we can give thanks to God every day for sending us Jesus and being our Savior; we don't need to wait for any special holiday to do that; God will be happy if we give thanks every day for Him.)



## Activity 1

### The Shepherds Worship Baby Jesus

Review the story by reading the rebuses. To help the students “read,” you may wish to designate different children to be one of each of the pictures so that when it is their turn, they can say that word out loud. Alternately, you can enlarge the pictures and have them ready in front of you. When it comes to that particular picture, you can raise it up in front of the class and every one can say the word together.



## Activity 2

### The Angels Bring Good News

The angels announced the birth of Jesus because He is the Savior. Six angels are hidden in this picture. Find them and color them in.



## Activity 3

### Shining Stars

#### Materials:

1. gold or metallic chenille wires (if none are available, other colors can be used); six per student
2. cable tie-offs
3. scissors

#### Directions:

1. In this activity, the students will be making stars. Although this story does not talk about stars specifically (the verses in Matthew do refer to the wise men who followed the star so you may wish to share that briefly), the stars can remind the students of how the angels appeared in the sky to tell the shepherds of the good news of Jesus’ birth. They can also be like shining stars and shine for God, telling others about Jesus and His love.
2. Provide each student with six chenille wires. Have them stack the wires together in a straight pile.
3. Show the children how to tie off the wires in the middle. Secure the wires so that they are snug. Cut the loose end of the cable tie.

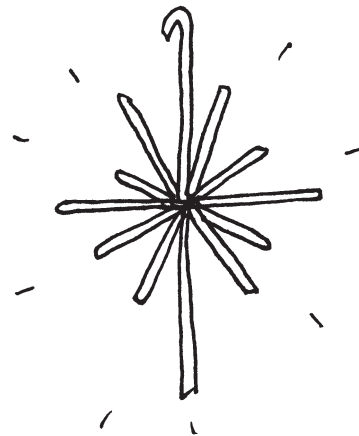
4. Allow the students to now spread out the wires so that they look like the points of a star. They may use scissors to cut some wires a little bit shorter than others to create a “sparkling” and defined star.
5. Make sure they leave one wire that is especially long so that they can hang the star by bending the tip of it.
6. As they students engage in this activity, review the story.

\*Talk about how the shepherds were happy and excited when they saw Jesus. In fact, they were so happy that they went and told everyone about what they had heard and seen.

\*The stars can remind the students about how the angels appeared in the heavens and told the shepherds about the good news.

\*When they see the stars, they can be reminded too, to share the good news of Jesus by telling another about what they learned.

\*How else can they be like a shining star and show others what Jesus is like? (i.e. being kind to others, singing songs about God, saying grace before meals)



Activity 2:1

## The Shepherds Worship Jesus

Review the story by reading the rebuses together.



baby Jesus



shepherds





manger



Mary



sheep

When  was born, an angel told some  about His birth. While the



shepherds



were watching their sheep, an angel appeared in the sky.

“Don’t be afraid. I bring you good news.



 is born in Bethlehem.” Then

other angels filled the sky and sang praises to God. Suddenly they were gone. The

shepherds



excited shepherds said, “Let’s go see



.



The shepherds found



 in a




 must have told the



shepherds that the baby’s name was Jesus. After the



 saw the baby, they went

out and told others all they had seen and heard.

Activity 2:2

### The Angels Bring Good News

The angels announced the birth of Jesus because He is the Savior.  
Six angels are hidden in this picture. Find them and color them in.

