

## THE SHEPHERDS' GIFTS

All Activity Sheets

### KEY WORDS

BELIEVE SHARE GOOD NEWS WORLD JESUS' BIRTH

### BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Luke 2:8-20

### MEMORY VERSE

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16, NIV\*).

### LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help children to accurately tell others the biblical account of Jesus' birth.

### PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

The Gospel of Luke is the only one of the four gospels that tells us about the angel's visit to the shepherds during the night as they tended their sheep near Bethlehem, a small and unknown city. But Bethlehem was a city rich in history. And Rachel, the wife of Jacob, a very important person in the Old Testament, was buried there when the city was called Ephrath.

Bethlehem was also the home of Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz. It was there that the prophet Samuel met David, the future king of Israel. Micah prophesied that the Messiah himself would be born in Bethlehem. All of these people lived many years before Jesus was born! The angel's announcement was very clear when he told them who Jesus was. He called him "Savior" and "Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11).

Perhaps the shepherds interpreted this as if he was to become a military or political savior who would lead the people of Israel to form a great nation. His birth was good news for all (v. 10), not just for the more powerful Jews. The birth of Jesus was good news even for the most humble person on earth.

The announcement that the angels made to the shepherds is still valid today. Year after year, we celebrate the glorious truth that Jesus, the Son of God, came to this world to save us from our sins.

## ADAPTATION

Depending on the structure of their school, your children may be able to relate to being among the younger children in their school. Remind them that, when they came from “preschool” or “kindergarten” where they were the eldest, they had to adjust to their new situation of being the youngest in their new school. They went through a transition from leaving the security of their previous school, where perhaps they were the center of attention, to confront a large and unknown place where they may feel unprotected.

It is natural for children to struggle under these new conditions. Many cannot wait to be bigger to enjoy the privileges that “older children” enjoy. Children of this age will identify with the story of the shepherds.

The shepherds were considered low class people, humble, and often poor. Even so, God considered them important and thus they were to be the first to know the good news of Jesus’ birth.

Encourage your children to experience the hope, joy, and reverence that those shepherds felt when they heard the angel’s announcement. God cares for everyone, including those who are very humble.

The shepherds did not have expensive gifts to bring to Jesus. What they had to offer was their worship. Like them, children often feel that they have little to give. Help them see that God values the worship they give him.

Just as the shepherds gave the good news, they can also tell others about the birth of Jesus. Young children do not know what it means to be an evangelist or a preacher, yet they know they can tell others what they have learned. Even at an early age, they can help spread the gospel.

## INTRODUCE THE LESSON

### Assess Prior Knowledge

Consider bringing something that the children would like to have shared with them as an object lesson. Maybe a snack or small toy. Tell the children how much you like the object and ask them if they wish they could have that object too. Pretend that you are selfish and won’t share. Then ask: “How would you feel if your best friend did not share new toys with you?” (You will hear answers such as “sad, hurt, I would feel my friend is selfish, etc.) Also, ask them: “How would you feel if someone knew something important and did not tell you?”

Then say, “In today’s story, you will learn about some people who heard a very important message, and now, a very special guest will be in charge of giving that great message to you.”

## TEACH THE LESSON

If possible invite ahead of time a young man or adult in your congregation to represent a shepherd to tell today’s story. Another option is to use a puppet to tell the story. This way the children will listen to the story more realistically and identify with the guest character. Whichever option you choose, you must previously deliver the Luke 2:8-20 Bible study passage to the special guest and explain what the emphasis is for today’s session.

Have the children form a semicircle and present the guest (if using a puppet take the necessary steps to set up a simple stage). Tell the children that someone who has a very important story to share with them is visiting today.

Allow time for the guest, and when they are done, allow your children time to ask questions and interact with the guest.

## CONNECT THE LESSON

After the guest has said goodbye, ask the children what they liked most about the visit.

### The shepherd’s cube

You will need to align and print Student Activity Sheet #156-A and #156-B. Provide the group the activity sheet as well as scissors and glue. You can cut up one copy of the activity sheet so that you can review the story by putting the squares in order of how the events happened in the story.

Help the children cut out the shape along the outer solid black lines, taking care not to cut the tabs that will be used to put the cube together. When you have finished cutting, fold the shape along the inner solid lines to form a box. Use one of the cubes as an example and point to the sequence of events that make up today's Bible story. Using the drawings on the cube, review the lesson with your children and ask them to put a number in each square according to the order in which the story took place.

Return to Student Activity Sheet #156-B (the inside of the box) and read the memory verse (John 3:16). Then fold the tabs at the ends and glue them into the appropriate places to assemble the cube.

Wait until the glue is dry before letting the children handle the cubes. It is likely that if there are very young children in your group, they will need additional help to complete this activity. These cubes can serve as a tool to help your children tell their friends the story of how the shepherds went to Bethlehem in search of the baby Jesus to worship him.

## **PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE**

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

[Download Suggestions for Bible Memorization PDF](#)

Have your children sit in a circle and place yourself in the center. Throw them a light ball. The child who receives it should stand and say the verse by heart (John 3:16). Repeat this exercise so all of your children participate. Help any children who are struggling with memorization.

## **WRAP-UP**

### **Pray**

Lead the children in a closing prayer, asking God to give them the courage to tell the good news to others. Thank God for the Christmas holiday and what it represents. Praise him for sending Jesus as a gift of love to us and ask him to help each of the children tell others the story of Christmas.

### **Encourage**

Encourage your students to practice telling the good news to someone this week. Encourage your children to use the shepherds' story to tell others that Jesus came to earth as a baby to save the world from their sins.

### **Invite**

Invite the children to worship God for the Gift of his Son and to bring a friend with them next week.