

SHEPHERDS CELEBRATE THE BIRTH OF JESUS

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

LOVE WITNESS GOOD NEWS TELLING OTHERS JESUS' BIRTH

BIBLE REFERENCE

Luke 2:13-20

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help the children learn to tell others the Good News of Jesus' birth.

MEMORY VERSE

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son" (John 3:16a, NIV*).

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

At the time when Jesus was born, shepherds were considered inferior people and of little importance to society. They spent long hours alone, separated from society, caring for their flocks in remote meadows. Because of the type of work, they often did not participate in the religious rituals that were part of the Jewish tradition.

However, God decided to include that humble group of lonely men in the celebration of the birth of his Son, Jesus. Imagine what it meant to them that God had chosen them to receive the good news through an angelic vision. Indeed, because of the excitement and impact that God's message had on them, they did something that shepherds should never do and that could have cost them their jobs. They left the sheep alone, exposed to the dangers of the night and wild animals.

These men did something out of the ordinary in their work because, as Luke says, they had the urgency to arrive in Bethlehem to see the Son of God. Once they saw Jesus in the manger, their joy and emotion had no end. Still amazed, they went to tell other people what they had seen.

This story gives us evidence of the first personal encounter with Jesus Christ. These men met the Son of God, and their lives changed completely. The evangelist tells us that they continued praising and glorifying God, repeating to others the good news.

Reflect on your attitude since you had your personal encounter with Jesus Christ, the Lord and Savior of your soul. Have you

responded with the same joy and emotion with which the shepherds did? Are your thoughts, attitudes and words different since you met Jesus Christ? Do you show your neighbors the gift of love that God has given you?

During this week, pray that the Lord will help you to be a faithful witness of Jesus Christ by joyfully talking about these Bible truths to your children.

It is a disciple's care for non-believers, both local and global, that places a face and hand to God's grace and love. Jesus challenges us to be involved in his compassionate outreach. Matthew observed: "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into the harvest field'" (Matthew 9:36-38). We need to be passionate about evangelism. It needs to be at the heart of who we are. At the center of our compassionate outreach is our desire to help people discover a personal saving faith in Jesus Christ.

ADAPTATION

One of your goals in teaching must be for your children to understand that the birth story of Jesus is completely different from secular stories that they will hear about Christmas. Do not be alarmed if older children combine events of the birth of Jesus with secular stories. Simply guide them with love to discover what the truth is.

Encourage them to experience the hope, joy and reverence the shepherds felt. Teach them that God longs to be worshiped and they must tell their friends and family about the birth of Jesus. Young children do not know what it means to be an evangelist or preacher. However, they know that they can tell others what they have learned. Even at an early age, they are a very important part of the proclamation of the gospel.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

A night full of stars

Draw stars on a card and cut them out. Give one to each child to decorate with frost or to paint yellow or gold. Instruct them to write their names on the back of their stars. When they are finished, stick them around the room as if they were the stars that shine in the sky.

Talk with your children about the stars, telling them that they are God's creation. He made them beautiful so that they illuminate the sky at night. Tell them that in today's story, they will talk about something that happened one night, when the stars were brightly shining...

TEACH THE LESSON

A special guest

Invite a young man or teen from your congregation ahead of time to dress up as a shepherd, wearing a robe and holding a stick. Ask him to study Luke 2:13-20 and be ready to tell the story.

Ask him to tell your class what a shepherd does. For example, he takes care of the sheep, defends them from ferocious animals, guides them to where there is grass to feed them, and takes them to drink water. The shepherd works many hours. Sometimes he must stay up all night to take care of his flock.

We suggest that you invite the young man to tell the Bible story to the group. Provide the study material in advance.

Present the special visitor and give him time to teach. Meanwhile, observe the children's attitudes during the story.

Let's go see Jesus!

"Glory to God!" the heavenly angels sang. They were praising God for the birth of Jesus, the Son of God.

The shepherds heard the singing of the angels and saw how they illuminated the dark night with their radiance.

Later, when the angels returned to heaven, the shepherds said, "Let's go to Bethlehem to see that which the Lord has announced to us!"

Then they did something that was forbidden for those who tended sheep, they left the flock alone! They were so excited and eager to meet the Son of God that they ran to Bethlehem as soon as possible. Soon they reached the stable where Mary, Joseph,

and baby Jesus were. They had run a lot, so they were tired. But, seeing what the angel had told them was true, they were amazed. They had found the Messiah!

“It is Jesus, the Son of God; the angel told us that we would find him here,” one of the shepherds said excitedly.

Mary listened to everything they said and felt very happy. She would never forget all the things that were happening to her that night.

The shepherds worshiped Jesus and thanked God for sending the Savior to this world. Then they went back to take care of their sheep, but they praised God and told everyone about the birth of Jesus.

CONNECT THE LESSON

Good news!

Prior to this session prepare Student Activity Sheet #104-A , #104-B and #104-C. Cut out the pictures corresponding to this lesson that are found in Student Activity Sheet #104-C. Hand out Student Activity Sheet #104-A and #104-B. Provide a set of the pictures from Student Activity Sheet #104-C to each child.

As they write their name, tell them: “Let’s complete the story about the shepherds and the baby Jesus. As I read the story, look for the place that corresponds to each picture.”

Read the story a couple of times so that the children know where to place each figure.

Have the children turn to Student Activity Sheet #104-B and give them time to write the word of faith. Then they can color the lights and the figures of Joseph and baby Jesus.

Encourage the children to take home their activities and share the lesson with their families and friends.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

[Download Suggestions for Bible Memorization PDF](#)

Have your children sit down and form a circle and tell them: “I am going to walk around the circle touching the head of each one of you. If I say ‘sheep’, you will remain seated. But if I say ‘shepherd’, you must stand and run around the circle, just as the shepherds ran to get to Bethlehem. Then go back to your place and together we will repeat the memory verse.” Continue this game until all the children have participated.

WRAP-UP

Pray

Conclude with a prayer of thanksgiving for the birth of Jesus.

Encourage

Encourage the children to experience the hope, joy and reverence the shepherds felt. Remind them that God longs to be worshiped and they must tell their friends and family about the birth of Jesus. Young children may not know what it means to be an evangelist or preacher, but they know that they can tell others what they have learned. Even at an early age, they are a very important part of the proclamation of the gospel.

Invite

Thank your children for attending the class and remind them that the next lesson will be the last one in this unit, so it is important that they attend. Sing a praise or thanksgiving chorus as a farewell.