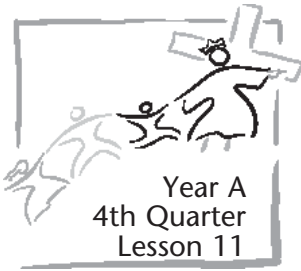


LESSON



The First Christmas Song

WORSHIP

We are thankful for the birth of Jesus.

References

Luke 2:8-14; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 47-49.

Memory Verse

“Every perfect gift is from God” (James 1:17, ICB).

Objectives

The children will:

Know that Jesus is God’s precious gift to them.

Feel the joy of praising God for the birth of Jesus as the angels did.

Respond by singing carols thanking God for Jesus’ birth.

The Message

Jesus is God’s precious gift to us.

Getting Ready to Teach

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

An angel comes from heaven and is happy to share with the shepherds at Bethlehem the news that Jesus is born and where they might find Him. The shepherds are amazed. More angels come, and they all sing a wonderful song for the shepherds. The shepherds are afraid at first, but when they hear the song they are happy.

This is a lesson about worship.

The angels expressed their joy at the birth of Jesus when they sang a won-

derful song to the shepherds. We often forget to praise God for sending Jesus to live and die for us. We too need to express our joy and worship the one who makes our salvation possible.

Teacher Enrichment

“Men know it not, but the tidings filled heaven with rejoicing. With a deeper and more tender interest the holy beings from the world of light are drawn to the earth. The whole world is brighter for His presence. Above the hills of Bethlehem are gathered an innumerable

ELEVEN

Program Outline			
LESSON SECTION	MINUTES	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS NEEDED
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
1 Readiness Options	up to 10	A. <i>Paper Angels</i> B. <i>Shepherd's Hook</i> C. <i>Sheep in the Sheepfold</i>	cutout of angel pattern (see page 143), scissors, art supplies, thread or string, hole punch, pencils chenille sticks or pipe cleaners, red cloth or paper ribbon none
* Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	See page 116. *Prayer and Praise* may be used at any time during the program.	Prepare and send a note to the parents, asking them to help their child set out some clothing, toys, blankets, etc., to bring to Sabbath School for a sharing activity to be completed in two weeks (or earlier if you wish).
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story Bible Study Memory Verse	Bible-times costumes, angel costumes Bible, <i>Little Voices Praise Him</i> Bible
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Christmas Songs</i>	<i>Little Voices Praise Him</i>
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Sharing Our Songs</i>	<i>Little Voices Praise Him</i>

throng of angels. They wait the signal to declare the glad news to the world. Had the leaders in Israel been true to their trust, they might have shared the joy of heralding the birth of Jesus. But now they are passed by" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 47).

"The whole plain was lighted up with the bright shining of the hosts of God. Earth was hushed, and heaven stooped to listen to the song—

'Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace, good will
toward men.'

"Oh that today the human family could recognize that song! The declaration then made, the note then struck, will swell to the close of time, and resound to the ends of the earth" (*ibid.*, p. 48).

Room Decorations

Add a host of angels to the room decorations. (See Readiness Activity A.) A lighted angel (such as that used on top of a Christmas tree) above the stable would add to the atmosphere of joy in the room.

Teaching the Lesson

Welcome

Welcome students at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Encourage them to share any experiences from last week’s lesson study. Have them begin the readiness activity of your choice.



Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

A. Paper Angels

Have each child decorate a large cutout figure of an angel (see page 143). An adult can help each child write his/her name on the angel, punch a hole, attach a string or white thread, and hang the angels from the ceiling in your room.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you say: **God’s angels are His messengers and helpers. How do you think they helped Mary and Joseph on their way to Bethlehem? Yes, God sent angels to protect Mary and Joseph. And God sends angels to protect us today. When Jesus was born, God sent angels to tell some people about it and to sing praises. Angels help us to remember that**

Jesus is God’s precious gift to us.

Say that with me.

You Need:

- copies of angel pattern (see page 143)
- scissors
- glitter glue or other art supplies
- pencils
- white thread or string
- hole punch

B. A Shepherd’s Hook

Have adult helpers ready to assist children as needed. Distribute materials. Say: **Take these three chenille sticks and twist them together so they become one stick.** Demonstrate. (See drawing in the margin.) When finished, have the children bend their stick into the shape of a J and tie a ribbon around it near the hook of the J, then turn it upside down. Hold up a sample and say: **A shepherd uses something like this, called a shepherd’s hook, to guide sheep and to lean on while working in the pastures. In our story today we are going to hear about some shepherds.**

Have the children put their shepherd’s hooks aside until it’s time to go home.

You Need:

- three chenille sticks or pipe cleaners for each child
- narrow red cloth or paper ribbon



Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **What would it be like to take care of sheep? What are some things you might need to do to care for your sheep?** (feed them, give them water, find a good place for them to sleep, keep them safe) **A long time ago some shepherds who were taking care of their sheep at night learned that**

Jesus is God's precious gift to us.

That is something we want to remember too. Say that with me.

C. Sheep in the Sheepfold

Say: **Sheep have babies called lambs, and lambs like to run and jump. But mother sheep like to have their babies nearby. At night most shepherds put their sheep and lambs in a safe place called a sheepfold.** (Designate an area of the room as a sheepfold.) **Let's pretend that you are little lambs and the grown-ups here are the shepherds. When I say "Go," you act like lambs running in the pasture. The shepherds will catch you and put you in the sheepfold.**

Say: **"Go"** and let the children move about the room until the adults catch them and take them to the designated sheepfold area.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you say: **You are fast runners, but you are also good lambs. We had several shepherds today. But usually only one shepherd takes care of many sheep and lambs. Do you think it would be easy to be a shepherd? Why?**

In today's story some shepherds learned that

Jesus is God's precious gift to us.

That is something we want to remember too. Say that with me.



NOTE: Prayer and Praise appears on page 116.

2

Bible Lesson

Experiencing the Story

You Need:

- Bible-times costumes
- angel costumes

Characters in order of appearance:

- Mary and Joseph
- angels
- shepherds with headdresses
- Gabriel

If you have decorated your room as a stable, have the story begin there. If not, designate a place in the room as the stable in which Jesus was born.

Designate a place in the room where the shepherds are sitting while they watch their sheep.

The children are to listen to the story and do the actions as described. You may need to give help and encouragement at the beginning. Have adults ready to assist as necessary.

Setting the scene: *Mary and Joseph are in the stable; angels are gathered around the manger; shepherds are sitting on the hillside.*

The angels watched excitedly as Jesus was born. They watched His mother, Mary, tenderly wrap Him in warm cloths and lay Him in the manger.

No one else on earth knew about the marvelous thing that had just happened. No one else was there to welcome the newborn King. The angels wanted to share their happiness with someone, but who would be ready to receive it and share their joy?

[Shepherds sit around in a group.] That night shepherds were out in the field watching over their sheep. That very night they were probably talking with each other about the promise God had given them so long ago. God had promised to send a Savior, and they prayed that He would come soon.

Angels watched over the shepherds,

too. And they knew whom they would tell about Baby Jesus.

Suddenly the shepherds saw a bright light. An angel appeared in the night sky. *[One angel stands in front of the shepherds with arms raised.]* They had never seen anything like it. And it frightened them. They covered their eyes with their hands to shut out the light. *[Shepherds cover their eyes.]* Then they heard the angel speak.

“Do not be afraid,” said the angel. “I bring you good news of great joy. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord. Go and look for Him. You will find Him lying in a manger.”

[All angels come.] Suddenly more angels joined the one who had spoken to the shepherds. The sky was bright with hundreds of glorious angels. The angels sang a song unlike any the shepherds had ever heard. The shepherds watched and listened in amazement.

[Angels raise arms and “sing.”] “Glory to God in the highest,” the angels sang with gladness. “And on earth, peace to all people.” They were so happy to share the news of Jesus’ birth. Their beautiful song flowed from hearts brimming over with happiness. It was a song of praise for the precious gift of Jesus.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **Why were the angels singing?** (Because they were happy that Jesus was born.) Say: **What do you think their singing sounded like?** (Like the most beautiful music ever heard, heavenly, etc.) **How do you think the shepherds felt? How would you have felt if you had heard the angels sing? Let’s always remember that**

Jesus is God's precious gift to us.

Say that with me.

You Need:

- Bible
- Little Voices Praise Him*

Bible Study

To begin this activity, you may wish to sing "The Bible" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 53).

Open your Bible to Luke 2:8-14 and say: **This is where today's story is found in God's Word, the Bible.** Hold the Bible so the children can see. Point to the passage as you read the verses aloud, paraphrasing as necessary.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **Why do you think the shepherds were frightened when the angel spoke to them? Would you have been afraid? What was the first thing the angels said to the shepherds?** (not to be afraid, they had good news) **What was the special message the angel gave to the shepherds? Where would the shepherds find Baby Jesus? What happened when all the angels came? Do you like to sing praises to Jesus? Let's stop right now and sing a praise song.**

Sing together any of the praise songs found in *Little Voices Praise Him*. Possible songs are:

- "I Love the Lord" (no. 207)
- "I Love Thee, O Lord" (no. 208)
- "I Love Jesus!" (no. 205)
- "Hallelu, Hallelu" (no. 213)

Say: **We too want to sing praises to God for His precious gift of Jesus to us. That is the real reason we celebrate Jesus' birth. Remember,**

Jesus is God's precious gift to us.

Say that with me.

Memory Verse

Open your Bible to James 1:17 and say: **This is where today's memory verse is found in God's Word, the Bible.** Read the verse aloud, then teach it as described below.

You Need:

- Bible

"Every perfect gift Pretend to hold a gift.



is from God." Point upward.



James 1:17 Palms together; then open as if opening a book.



Repeat in a rhythmic manner, using the actions, until the children are familiar with the verse.

PRAYER AND PRAISE



Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Allow time for sharing experiences from last week's lesson study and review the memory verse. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special warm greeting to all visitors.

Suggested Songs

"Angels Singing" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 140)

"Away in a Manger" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 141)

"God's Best Gift" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 145)

"Mary's Little Baby" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 151)

Mission

Use a story from *Children's Mission*.

Offering

Say: **Because Jesus loves us, we give Him our offerings. Let's sing as we give our offering.** Sing "Giving" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 285).

Prayer

Say: **We can show we love Jesus when we thank God for giving Jesus to us.** Say and have children repeat after you: **Thank You, God, for sending us the precious gift of Your Son, Jesus. Amen.**

*Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.

NOTE: Prepare and send a note to the parents, asking them to help their child set out some clothing, toys, blankets, etc., to bring to Sabbath School for a sharing activity to be completed in two weeks (or earlier if you wish).

3

Applying the Lesson

Christmas Songs

You Need:

- Little Voices Praise Him*

Allow response time as you ask: **What songs do you know that tell about Jesus' birth?** ("Silent Night," "Away in a Manger," etc.) **What do these songs tell us about Jesus?** (That He was born in a stable, that His bed was a manger with hay in it, that angels sang to welcome Him, etc.) Ask: **Are they happy**

songs? (yes) Let's think of some songs we might sing that tell about Jesus' birth. Decide which three songs most of the children would like to sing.

Debriefing

Ask: **At what special times do you sing?** (When I'm happy, at Sabbath School, etc.) **Do you sing when you are happy, or do you sing to make yourself happy?** (both) Keep the three songs chosen by the children and go directly to the next activity.

4

Sharing the Lesson

Sharing Our Songs

You Need:

- Little Voices Praise Him*

Make arrangements with the adult Sabbath School leader for the children to sing three songs sometime within the next three Sabbaths. If possible, plan to have the children sing those same songs at a home for the elderly as part of a Christmas program your church will supply.

Say: **Let's practice singing the three Christmas songs you like best. We want to sing them for a group of people, such as the adult Sabbath School or a group of older people.** Review the three songs chosen in the previous activity. Say: **Let's practice our songs so we will know**

them very well. Practice three songs with the children.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **What do you think about singing these songs for others? How do you think they will feel? Do you really want to tell others about Jesus? Is singing about Him a good way to do that? Let's remember that we want to share our songs because we want to praise God for His gifts to us. Remember,**

Jesus is God's precious gift to us.

Say that with me.

Closing

Sing verse three of "Angels" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 121) or "Good-bye to You" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, no. 45).

Pray and have children repeat after each phrase: **Thank You, God, for giving us the precious gift of Jesus. Amen.**

STUDENT LESSON

The First Christmas Song

References

Luke 2:8-14; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 47-49

Memory Verse

"Every perfect gift is from God" (James 1:17, ICB).

The Message

Jesus is God's precious gift to us.

What do you do when something really wonderful happens? Do you want to tell someone else? Do you ever feel like singing?

The night Jesus was born was a very special night for all the angels in heaven. They watched excitedly as Jesus was born in a stable, and as His mother, Mary, tenderly wrapped Him and laid Him in the manger. They couldn't keep quiet a minute longer. God had just given the world the precious gift of His Son. It was wonderful news!

But no one on earth knew about the marvelous thing that had just happened. No one was there to welcome Jesus, the newborn King. The angels wanted to share their happiness with someone, but whom would they tell?

That night shepherds watched over their sheep on a hillside near the city. Perhaps the shepherds were talking with each other about the promise God had given them so long ago. They knew that God had promised to send a Savior, and, like many in Israel, they prayed that He would come soon.

Suddenly the shepherds saw a bright light. They had probably never seen anything shining so brightly at night,

and it frightened them. Then they heard a voice as they looked up. The bright light was an angel!

"Do not be afraid," said the angel. "I bring you good news of great joy. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord. You will find Him wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Suddenly the sky was bright with hundreds of glorious angels. They sang a song unlike any the shepherds had ever heard. The shep-

herds watched and listened in amazement.

"Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth, peace to all people."

The angels were so happy to share the news of Jesus' birth! Their beautiful song flowed from hearts brimming over with joy. It was a song of praise for the precious gift of Jesus.

Today we still sing songs about Jesus' birth. Let's thank God for the precious gift of His Son, Jesus.



Do and Say

Sabbath

Each day this week read the lesson story and use the following to review the memory verse:

“Every perfect gift is from God.” Point upward.

James 1:17. Palms together; then open as if opening a book.

Sunday

Help your child share a Nativity picture with someone. Tell that person that Jesus is God’s precious gift to us. Let your child share the story of Baby Jesus (assist as needed). Pray for that person today.

Monday

Help your child make and wrap a simple gift and give it to someone. Help them tell that person that Jesus is God’s precious gift to us.

Look at Christmas lights. What do they remind us of from the story of Jesus’ birth? (the star or stars, the angel or angels)



Tuesday

Help your child read the pictures in the lesson story and count the shepherds, the sheep, and the angels. Thank Jesus for making animals for us to enjoy.

Wednesday

Make a paper chain of angels to remind your child that the angels sang at Jesus’ birth. (Fold a length of paper several times, draw an angel shape, and cut around it. Be careful to leave the folded side uncut in several places. Unfold the paper and show the angel chain to your child.) Thank Jesus for angels that watch over us as they watched over Baby Jesus.



Thursday

Help your child make a sheep to remind them of the lesson story. Cut a large oval for the body, a small triangle for the head, and four long, narrow rectangles for the legs. Glue the pieces together, then glue cotton balls all over. Use a black crayon or marker to make eyes, nose, and mouth. Thank Jesus for the shepherds who worshipped Baby Jesus.

Friday

Tell your child where he or she was born and look at pictures from that time. Sing songs about Jesus’ birth. Thank God for Jesus and for the joy your child brings to your life.