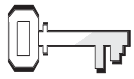


The Shepherds Worship Jesus



References

Luke 2:15-20;
The Desire of Ages,
pp. 47, 48



Memory Verse

“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to men those on whom his favor rests”
(Luke 2:14, NIV)

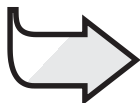


Objectives

The children will:
Know that Jesus is God’s greatest gift of love to us.

Feel thankful for God’s sacrifice of His Son for us.

Respond by telling others about the birth of our Savior.



The Message

We worship the God who guides us.

Monthly Theme

We praise God for the gift of Jesus.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

In this lesson the “Christmas story” is told from the shepherd’s point of view. The shepherds are in the fields on a hillside near Bethlehem. In the evening, probably around a campfire, they talk about the promised Messiah. They are frightened when an angel appears, but they pay attention, and suddenly a host of angels are there to praise God. The shepherds find Jesus and worship Him. As they leave the stable, they tell everyone they meet about their experience. Then they return to their flocks, “glorifying and praising God for all . . . they had heard and seen” (Luke 2:20).

This is a lesson about worship.

The shepherds join in the worship of Jesus in four ways: 1. They cease being afraid and find joy in worship. 2. They follow the angel’s instructions. They search for Jesus until they find Him. 3. They tell others about their experience, sharing the invitation to worship Jesus. 4. They return to carry on their work, all the while praising God for what they have seen and heard. Let us go and do likewise!

Teacher Enrichment

“In the fields where the boy David had led his flock, shepherds were still keeping watch by night. Through the silent hours they talked together of the promised Savior, and prayed for the coming of the King to David’s throne. . . .

“At these words, visions of glory fill the minds of the listening shepherds. The Deliverer has come to Israel! Power, exaltation, triumph, are associated with His coming. But the angel must prepare them to recognize their Savior in poverty and humiliation. ‘This shall be a sign unto you,’ he says; ‘Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger’” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 47).

“But the brightest picture ever beheld by human eyes remained in the memory of the shepherds. . . .

“Departing with great joy, they made known the things they had seen and heard” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 48).

"To meet a bitterer conflict and a more fearful risk, God gave His only-begotten Son, that the path of life might be made sure for our little ones. 'Herein is love.' Wonder, O heavens! and be astonished, O earth!" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 49).

Room Decorations

See Lesson 11.

Program Overview

Lesson Section	Minutes	Activities	Materials Needed
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
1 Readiness Options	up to 10	A. <i>Sheep Ornament</i> B. <i>Telephone</i>	sheep pattern (see p. 152); white and/or brown paper; scissors; hole punch; glue sticks or tape; art supplies; ribbon, yarn, or string none
Any Time Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	Fellowship Songbook Mission Offering Prayer	none <i>Sing for Joy</i> <i>Children's Mission</i> sheep ornaments or Christmas-theme offering device none
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story Memory Verse Bible Study	none none Bibles
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Sights and Sounds</i>	chalkboard or whiteboard, chalk or marker, paper, pencils
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	A. <i>Gift Bags</i> B. <i>"J" is for Jesus</i>	small paper bags, art supplies, small pictures of Jesus or paper and pens J-shaped pattern (see p. 153), heavy paper, art supplies, scissors

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

TEACHING THE LESSON

Welcome

As you welcome students at the door, accept the gift packages they bring to share with children in your community who may not have gifts for Christmas (if you have chosen to do that project). Thank each child and place their gift on a table where all may see. Take note of those who bring no gift. You may need to furnish one for them to add to the gift table.

Ask each child how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Listen to last week's memory verse and encourage the children to share any experiences from last week's lesson study. Have them begin the readiness activity of your choice.

1

Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

You Need:

- sheep pattern (see p. 152)
- white and/or brown paper
- scissors
- hole punch
- glue sticks or tape
- art supplies
- ribbon, yarn, or string

A. Sheep Ornament

In advance, copy a sheep pattern for each child (see page 152). Punch a hole at the top. Have the children decorate the sheep, cut it out, and draw thread, string, ribbon, or yarn through the hole so it will hang from the class Christmas tree or wherever you choose to use it. The pocket should be cut out and glued or taped on front so the children can place their offering inside.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you say: **Show us the sheep you made. Put your offering in the pocket and hang it on our Christmas tree now.**

Our Bible story today is about the shepherds and Baby Jesus. Last week we learned about the angels' song. That's our memory verse this week. "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests" (Luke 2:14).

The shepherds were so excited to see prophecy fulfilled before their very eyes. They probably weren't expecting their Savior to be a baby or to be born in a place where animals were kept. But that is the message God's angel had brought to guide them to Jesus. And they went where God sent them. God will guide us today too. Today's message tells us about that.



WE WORSHIP THE GOD WHO GUIDES US.

Say that with me.

B. Telephone

Have the children sit in a circle. Tell them they are going to play a game about spreading news. Whisper a phrase such as "Jesus is born" or "The Messiah is here" into the first person's ear. They have to whisper your phrase to the next person sitting beside them. Repeat until the phrase gets all around the circle. The last person will say the phrase out loud. The phrase will usually be mixed up and wrong by the time it gets to the end. Repeat several times.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **Did our phrase ever come out right? Why did it get mixed up?** (Because we whispered; we spoke quietly; we tried to keep others from hearing; etc.) **How does God want us to speak when we tell others about Jesus?** (boldly and clearly) **How softly do you think the shepherds spoke when they talked about Jesus? Our Bible story today tells more about the shepherds. Remember the angels' song? That's our memory verse this week. "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests" (Luke 2:14).**

The message the shepherds heard from the angels didn't get mixed up. They heard it loud and clear, and passed it on that way. They knew who was guiding them to Jesus. And Jesus will guide us too. Our message says:



WE WORSHIP THE GOD WHO GUIDES US.

Say that with me.

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 from last week's lesson study and review last week's memory verse. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special warm greeting to all visitors.



Suggested Songs

- "O Come, All Ye Faithful" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 70)
- "Away in a Manger" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 73 or 74)
- "Infant Holy, Infant Lowly" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 75)
- "Silent Night, Holy Night" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 76)



Mission

Share a story from *Children's Mission*.



Offering

Say: **We worship God when we thank Him for His wonderful gift of Jesus. And we worship God when we give our gifts back to Him so that others may know of His love.** If the children made sheep ornaments (Readiness A), point them out on the tree. If not, collect the offering in a Christmas-theme offering device.

You Need:

- sheep ornaments or Christmas-theme offering device



Prayer

Pray, thanking Jesus for being willing to come to earth to save us. Thank God for loving us so much that He sent us His only Son.

Bible Lesson

Experiencing the Story

Darken the room as much as possible and turn on the angel star.

When you say: **The children say:**
shepherd, shepherds, or sheep baa, baa

angel or angels Glory to God!

Read or tell the story.

Still amazed at what they had seen in the middle of the night, the wide-awake **shepherds** chattered among themselves. The **angel** choir that had come to them in the night was gone now. They had watched as the **angels** moved farther away into the dark sky.

What a message the **angel** had delivered to the **shepherds!** “Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger” (Luke 2:11, 12).

Could it be true? Would they find the Messiah, their Savior, in the nearby city? Bethlehem was known as the City of David. And it was a short distance from the hillside where the **shepherds** watched their **sheep**. But why would the Messiah be lying in a manger? That’s what the **angel** had said. A manger! How could that be? Could the Messiah, the Savior of the world, have come to them as a baby?

They knew that newborn babies were wrapped in soft pieces of cloth to keep them warm and dry. But babies were kept at home—in a house, not in a barn with animals. It seemed so strange.

“Let’s go to Bethlehem and see for ourselves,” said one of the **shepherds**.

“The Lord has sent this message to us,” said another.

“These were **angels!** I’m sure of it,” called out another. “I believe we should go too.”

So it was that in the middle of the night, the **shepherds** rushed off to Bethlehem. Once there, they searched until they found the place the **angel** had described. There in the place that sheltered animals, they found what they were looking for—a baby wrapped in soft cloths, lying in a manger.

How did they find the place where the baby had been born? Surely God guided them there. And once there, they told the baby’s parents of the **angel’s** visit and the beautiful **angel** choir who sang those words of praise:

“Glory to God in the highest,
 And on earth peace to men.”

Together, in silence and awe, the **shepherds** knelt around the manger and worshiped their Savior as the baby’s parents looked on.

All too soon, the **shepherds** had to return to care for their **sheep**. Filled with joy, they had to tell others. As they left the city, they could not keep the good news to themselves. And they spread the word to all they met. Glorifying and praising God, they spoke in awe of the **angels’** visit, of the babe in the manger, and of the God who sent the message to them.

Joseph and Mary were pleased that the **shepherds** had come. They had gladly invited them in and listened to their story. They, too, were amazed at all that had happened. Surely God had guided the **shepherds**. And He would guide the infant’s parents as they cared for the precious gift God had given them.

The **shepherds** would never forget that night. They had seen the fulfillment of

the prophecies they had studied for years. God had guided them to their Savior, and they had worshipped Him. And neither would Mary forget. The Bible tells us that she treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart. She had become the mother of the Messiah—the Savior of the world. Whatever happened in the future, truly she was blessed among women.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **What did the shepherds think about the angel's message? Why did they decide to go to Bethlehem and see for themselves?**

Do you think Joseph and Mary expected Baby Jesus to be born in such a place? How do you think they felt when they saw the shepherds?

What did the shepherds do when they saw Jesus? What did they do as they left the city? Who was guiding them all this time?

Do you remember today's message? Let's say it together:



WE WORSHIP THE GOD WHO GUIDES US.

Memory Verse

Have the children learn the memory verse by using the following motions:

Glory to God in the highest heaven, With palms open facing up, raise arms upward.

and on earth Point downward.

peace With palms facing in, hands at chest, twist palms to face downward as you move hands outward to waist level.

to those on whom his With palm facing left, thumb at

favor rests forehead, move right hand straight forward while closing fingers to thumb.

Luke 2:14 Palms together, then open.

Bible Study

Say: **The people of Jesus' day didn't have the Bible as we know it today. They had scrolls with books of what we call the Old Testament. The shepherds probably couldn't read, but they had heard the prophecies about the promised Messiah at the synagogue, which was like a church. Let's look at some of the texts about the Messiah that they probably studied.** Help the students find and read the following texts:

Isaiah 40:10, 11

Ezekiel 34:11, 12

Psalm 23

Read Psalm 23 together (adults assist as needed).

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **How do you think the shepherds felt when they heard that the Savior called Himself a shepherd?** (It meant a lot to them because it was something they understood very well. They felt that Jesus understood their lives.)

What did the shepherds do to show that they were happy that Jesus understood them? (worshipped Him; told others about Him)

They were thankful for God's gift of Jesus, and they were glad He had sent angels to guide them to Baby Jesus. That brings us to our message:



WE WORSHIP THE GOD WHO GUIDES US.

You Need:

• Bibles

3

Applying the Lesson

You Need:

- chalkboard or whiteboard
- chalk or marker
- paper
- pencils

Sights and Sounds

Say: **Think about all the things the shepherds saw and heard that night in Bethlehem. Let's name some.** Write responses on the board.

Now let's think about the many sights and sounds of Christmas today. What are some sights and sounds that remind you of the first Christmas?

Allow time for responses and write them on the board.

Think of something about Christmas for which you want to thank and praise God. Now draw it for us. It can be from the Bible story or from Christmas at your house.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you say: **Let's see what you drew.** Have the children show their drawings and explain them, if necessary.

Our senses, such as hearing and seeing and smelling, help us to remember things better. For the rest of their lives, the shepherds remembered what they had seen and heard. They praised God for it.

Do you thank and praise God for the things that you like about Christmas, especially about God's most precious and beloved gift to us?

What does God's gift of Jesus mean to you?

God gave His very best to us. Let's always remember to be thankful for the real reason of Christmas. Let's say our message together.



WE WORSHIP THE GOD WHO GUIDES US.

Sharing the Lesson

NOTE: At this time, talk about the gifts the children brought to share with other children in your community (if you did that project). Decide how they will be delivered. Make necessary arrangements to see that the gifts are delivered in the next few days.

A. Gift Bags

Have the children turn the plain paper bags into gift bags by decorating them with art supplies. Help them place a picture of Jesus or a piece of paper with JESUS written on it inside the bag.

You Need:

- small paper bags
- art supplies
- small pictures of Jesus or paper and pens

Debriefing

Allow response time as you say: **Show us your gift bags. Oh, you've done a great job! Now you can take them home with you. Give them to someone this week and tell them about the shepherds and Baby Jesus.**

Then you can ask them to look in the bag to see the greatest gift they've ever been given. And you can tell them how God sent angels to guide the shepherds to Baby Jesus. Remember,



WE WORSHIP THE GOD WHO GUIDES US.

B. "J" Is for Jesus

In advance, make a copy of the J-shaped pattern (see page 153) for each child on heavy paper. Have the children cut them out and decorate them.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask:

What does the "J" you made say on it? If you turn it upside down, what does it look like and remind you of? (a shepherd's staff; the shepherds who worshipped Jesus) **What else does it remind you of—something you see on a tree at Christmas time?** (candy cane)

Take your "J" home and give it to someone this week. Tell them about the shepherds and Baby Jesus. Remind them that Jesus is the greatest Christmas gift our world has ever been given.

And don't forget, just as God guided the shepherds, He guides us to know more about Jesus today. Let's remember to worship Him and thank Him for that. Remember our message? Let's say it again.



WE WORSHIP THE GOD WHO GUIDES US.

Closing

As you pray, thank God for giving us Jesus, His most precious gift, and for guiding us to know Jesus better each day. Ask Him to help us remember the real meaning of Christmas during the holidays.

You Need:

- J-shaped pattern (see p. 153)
- heavy paper
- art supplies
- scissors

The Shepherds Worship Jesus

References

Luke 2:15-20;
The Desire of Ages,
pp. 47, 48

Memory Verse

“Glory to God in
the highest heaven,
and on earth peace
to those on whom
his favor rests”
(Luke 2:14, NIV).

The Message

We worship the
God who guides us.

When you receive a gift, do you thank the person who gave it to you? I hope you do! Thanking people for their gifts is very important.

Still amazed at what they had seen in the middle of the night, the wide-awake shepherds chattered among themselves. The angel choir that had come to them in the night was gone now.

What a message the angel had delivered! “Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger” (Luke 2:11, 12).



Could it be true? Would they find the Messiah, their Savior, in the nearby city? Bethlehem was known as the City of David. And it was a short distance from the hillside where the shepherds

watched their sheep. But why would the Messiah be lying in a manger? That’s what the angel had said. A manger! How could that be? Could the Messiah, the Savior of the world, have come to them as a baby?

They knew that newborn babies were wrapped in soft pieces of cloth to keep them warm and dry. But babies were kept at home—in a house, not in a place with animals. It seemed so strange.

“Let’s go to Bethlehem and see for ourselves,” said one of the shepherds.

“The Lord has sent this message to us,” said another.

“These were angels! I’m sure of it,” called out another. “I believe we should go too.”

So it was that deep in the night, the shepherds rushed off to Bethlehem. There in a stable near an inn where people slept the night away, they found what they were looking for—a baby wrapped in soft cloths, lying in a manger.

How did they find the stable where the baby had been born? Surely God guided them to that place. And once there, they told the baby’s parents of the angel’s visit and the beautiful angel choir who sang those words of praise:

“Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace to men.”

Together, in silence and awe, the shepherds knelt around the manger. There, they worshipped their Savior as the baby’s parents looked on.

All too soon, the shepherds had to return to their sheep. Filled with joy, they just had to tell others. As they left the city, they could not keep the good news to themselves. And they spread the word to all they met. Glorifying and praising God, they spoke in awe of the angels’ visit. They told of the babe in the manger, and of the God who sent the message to them.

Joseph and Mary were pleased that the shepherds had come. They had gladly invited them inside and listened to their story. They too were amazed at all that had happened. Surely God had guided the shepherds. And He would guide the infant's parents as they cared for the precious gift God had given them.

The shepherds would never forget that night. They had seen the fulfillment of the prophecies they had studied for years. And neither would Mary forget. The Bible tells us that she treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart.

Daily Activities

Sabbath

- If possible, go with your family and sit on a hillside. Or sit in front of a campfire or fireplace. Imagine that it is night and sheep are all around you. What sounds do you hear?
- Read your lesson story together. Then teach the memory verse to your family. Make up a tune and sing the memory verse together. Sing some other songs too.

Sunday

- Share the gift bag or "J' is for Jesus" shepherd's staff you made in Sabbath School with someone today. (Or cut out a large J shape and write "J' is for Jesus" on it. Turn it upside down. Does it look like a shepherd's staff?) Tell the person about the shepherds and Baby Jesus.
- During worship today, ask your family to tell about the best gift they ever received. Ask: How does that compare to God's gift of Jesus? Sing some carols; then thank Jesus for coming to be your Savior.

Monday

- With your family, read and discuss Luke 2:15-20. What do you think Mary and Joseph thought when the shepherds came in the night? Whom do you think the shepherds told about seeing Jesus? Whom can you tell?
- Practice some Christmas carols with your family. Make a plan to sing carols in your neighborhood sometime soon. Thank God for music that tells about Jesus and His love.

Tuesday

- During worship today, read Luke 2:8-16. Talk about the sights, sounds, and smells Mary and Joseph lived with in the stable. What sights and sounds and smells remind you most of Christmas? Thank God for them.

- Ask your family to tell you about a Nativity scene. Go someplace to see one, or look at pictures. Could you make a Nativity scene for your family? Ask permission. If it is all right, collect some things you will need. Invite your family to help.

Wednesday

- With your family, work on your Nativity scene. Add a baby doll and some straw to the manger. When you finish, sing "Away in a Manger" together. Then thank Jesus for coming.
- Sit in a circle together. Whisper "Jesus is born" to the person next to you. Then they are to whisper it to the one next to them. Go around the circle. Have the last person tell what they heard. Is this the way you want to tell others the good news? How did the shepherds spread the good news? Ask God to help you tell others.

Thursday

- For worship, read Genesis 22:1-12 together. What does Abraham's experience make you think of? Think about a time you gave someone something very special to you. Why did you do it? Was it easy or hard? Was it easy or hard for God to give His only Son to save us?
- Ask your family to help you finish your Nativity scene. Sing some carols as you work together.

Friday

- Invite your neighbors and friends to see your Nativity scene this evening. Read Luke 2:1-20 with them, then sing some carols.
- Ask them to tell about the time they first knew Jesus is their Savior. What did they do? Thank God for sending Jesus to save us all.
- Is this the night you will sing carols in your neighborhood? If so, invite your guests to go with you. Thank God for the gift of music.