

## 5. Shepherds' Story (Luke 2:8-20)

The angel said, "Don't be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people." (Luke 2:10)



# PLAN

### Session Outline

#### 1. Gather

Greeting  
Nativity Dress Up:  
Shepherds and Sheep  
The Angel's Message  
Transition to Explore

#### 2. Explore

Sacred Conversations  
Hear and See the Bible  
Story  
Interact with the Bible Story  
Say the Bible Verse  
Transition to Respond

#### 3. Respond

Loving God,  
Loving Neighbor  
Christmas Story Flip  
Book  
Candy Cane Hunt  
Transition to Bless

#### 4. Bless

Inviting  
Praising  
Blessing  
At Home with God

### Supplies

**Basic Supplies:** Tape | Stickers |  
Markers | Crayons | Pencils | Glue | Paper |  
Scissors

**Gather:** "Angels," "Mary and Joseph,"  
"Animals," and "Baby Jesus" baskets |  
Laundry basket or other large basket | Large  
brown t-shirts or robes | Colorful ribbons for  
belts | Colorful pieces of fabric | Stuffed  
sheep toys | Shepherd crooks or walking  
sticks | Child-safe scissors

**Explore:** No additional supplies needed

**Respond:** Battery-operated tea light  
candles | Candy canes (at least one for each  
child)

**Bless:** Heart-shaped ink stamp or stickers

### Before You Teach

The shepherds were the first to receive the news of Jesus' birth. We have heard of the shepherds' visit to Bethlehem so many times that we may fail to realize how surprising and unusual this event really was. The term *shepherd* evokes calm, pastoral scenes in our minds. However, at the time Jesus was born, this was far from the case. Shepherding was a despised occupation. Shepherds were on the fringes of society. They were looked down upon as shiftless and untrustworthy people. Shepherds often slept outside with their flocks. Imagine how they must have smelled! Yet these shepherds were the first people to receive the news of Jesus' birth.

Not only were they the first, but they received the news of Jesus' birth from *an angel*. One can imagine that to the shepherds, who were used to being looked down upon, the sudden appearance of an angel and then an entire heavenly host must have caused some fear and trembling. In response to the surprising angelic announcement, the shepherds hurried off to Bethlehem. The shepherds' response is almost as surprising as the angel's visit. They didn't wait a couple of weeks until they could arrange for someone to watch their sheep while they took a vacation. They didn't say, "That's interesting and the next time we're in Bethlehem we'll check it out." No, the shepherds went quickly to find Mary and Joseph and the child of whom they had been told. Once they had seen the baby, the shepherds went and told the news to others. This news is far too wonderful to be kept to oneself! Who will you tell? Who will your children tell?

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# GATHER

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## Greeting

*Before class: Display the Attendance Chart (Class Kit—pp. 15–18) at eye level. Put together the model of the school and the figures of Mr. Maxwell, Rachel, and Armen (Class Kit—p. 9).*

- Play, "Come to Us, Emmanuel" (Annual Music CD or Adventure DVD) as you welcome each child.
- Show the children where to place their offerings.
- Help each child mark the Attendance Chart with a sticker or permanent marker.
- Place the Deep Blue Shores Map (Class Kit—p. 11) and the school and the Mr. Maxwell, Rachel, and Armen figures (Class Kit—p. 9) on a table or on the floor for the children to play with and explore. If available, add the Deep Blue Shores Maps, buildings, and figures from previous quarters.

**TIP:** *Have a quiet space in your room with books and soft toys for children who are not quite ready to join in an activity when they arrive.*

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## A—Nativity Dress Up: Shepherds and Sheep (Dramatic Play)

*Before class: Gather large brown t-shirts or robes, colorful fabric pieces for head coverings, colorful ribbons to be used as belts, stuffed sheep toys, shepherd crooks or walking sticks, and other shepherd costume items, and place them in a laundry basket or large basket. Label the basket, "Shepherds."*

- Place the "Angels," "Mary and Joseph," "Animals," "Baby Jesus," and "Shepherds" baskets in the center of the play space.
- Invite the children to explore and play with the costume pieces and toys.
- Encourage the children to dress up and pretend to be angels, Mary and Joseph, animals and shepherds. Encourage them to play with the baby dolls and the stuffed sheep.

**TIP:** *This is the last week of the Nativity Dress Up center. After this session, wash or disinfect all the costumes and other items. Store the costumes or items, and return those items someone lent to you.*

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OR

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## B—The Angel's Message (Puzzle)

*Before class: Make a copy of "The Angel's Message" (p. 36) for each child.*

- Give each child a copy of "The Angel's Message," a pair of child-safe scissors, and a glue stick.
  - Have each child cut out the symbols at the bottom of his or her paper and glue them in the appropriate places to complete the angel's message to the shepherds.
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## Transition to Explore

- Have the children help clean up the area, and then move to the Bible story circle pretending they are sheep and shepherds.

## 5. Shepherds' Story (Luke 2:8-20)

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# EXPLORE

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### Sacred Conversations

**SAY:** This month we have been hearing stories about Jesus' birth. Last week we heard about the night that Jesus was born. What do you imagine we will hear about next?

**ASK:** I wonder:

- How many friends are here with us today? Who is missing?
  - How do you feel today?
  - What's one thing that happened in your community this week that you really liked?
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### Hear and See the Bible Story

**SAY:** Today our Bible story is about some shepherds who heard some good news. I wonder what that news was. Let's find out.

- Tell the children the story, "Joyous News" (*Deep Blue Bible Storybook*—p. 308).
- Watch the Deep Blue Adventure for Session 5 (Adventure DVD) with the children.

**ASK:** What is the best news you've ever been given?

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### Interact with the Bible Story

- Give each child a copy of "Shepherds' Story" (Bible Story Sheets—Session 5).
  - Read the story with the children, encouraging them to read the words in blue.
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### Say the Bible Verse

*Before class: Post the Bible Verse Poster—Unit 1 (Class Kit—p. 3) on a wall or bulletin board.*

- Point to the Bible Verse Poster. Say the Bible verse for the children, and then repeat it together.
  - Teach the children signs from American Sign Language for some of the words in the Bible verse (Leader Guide—p. 91 and [www.deepbluekids.com/This-Sunday](http://www.deepbluekids.com/This-Sunday)).
  - Watch the Unit 1 Bible Verse video (Adventure DVD) with the children.
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### Transition to Respond

- Have the children move to the next activity pretending that they are sheep and shepherds.

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# RESPOND

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## Loving God, Loving Neighbor

*Before class: Post "All Are Welcome" (Class Kit—p. 2) on a wall or bulletin board. Locate the "Advent Wreath" (Class Kit—p. 27) and five battery-operated tea light candles.*

- Play, "All Are Welcome" (Annual Music CD or Adventure DVD). Sing along and dance to the music.
- Place the "Advent Wreath" (Class Kit—p. 27) in the center of the circle or on a table.

**SAY:** We have already celebrated all four weeks of Advent. Baby Jesus was born! Today we light the last candle of our "Advent Wreath." It is called the *Christ Candle*, and sits right in the center of our wreath.

- Turn on five battery-operated tea light candles and place them on the purple candles, the pink candle, and the white candle in the center of the "Advent Wreath."
- Take turns sharing with one another something about Jesus' birthday that makes you feel joyful, hopeful, loving, and peaceful.

**PRAY:** Thank you, God, for Jesus. Amen.

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## A—Christmas Story Flip Book (Activity Sheets)

- Give each child a copy of Activity Sheets—Session 5A and 5B and a glue stick.
- Invite the children to create "Christmas Story Flip Books" according to the instructions.
- Read the flip books together.

OR

## B—Candy Cane Hunt (Game)

- Have the children close their eyes while you hide candy canes around the room. Make sure to hide at least one for every child.

**SAY:** Candy canes are a special Christmas treat. They remind us of the shepherds' staffs. I have hidden candy canes all around our room. Will you help me find them?

- Have the children work together to hunt for the candy canes until they have found enough for everyone to have one.
- Eat the candy canes together as a special treat, or send them home.

**TIP:** Remember to check for allergies and have the children wash their hands before any activity involving food.

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## Transition to Bless

- Have the children help clean up, and then move to the Bible story circle like sheep and shepherds.

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# BLESS

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### Inviting

*Before class: Cut out the mural pieces from the bottom of the Unit 1—Bible Story Mural (Class Kit—p. 19) and place them in an envelope or zip-top bag. Post the Unit 1—Bible Story Mural on a wall or bulletin board.*

- Gather the children around the mural. Invite a child to tape the image of the shepherd with his sheep to the mural.

**ASK:** What do you remember about the Bible story we heard today? What do you think we can learn about community from this story?

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### Praising

*Before class: Display "Singing Together" (Class Kit—p. 31) on a wall or bulletin board.*

- Sing together, "Don't Be Afraid" (Class Kit—p. 31).

**TIP:** If time permits, invite the children to choose more songs to sing.

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### Blessing

- Invite the children to sit in a circle with you. Hold the heart-shaped ink stamp or some heart stickers in your hand.
  - Turn to the child on your left and place a heart ink stamp or sticker on his or her hand.
  - Say to the child, "Glory to God, and peace to you!"
  - Give the heart ink stamp or stickers to the child, and invite him or her to repeat the blessing to the next child in the circle.
  - Continue around the circle in this way until the last child receives a blessing and gives one to you.
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### At Home with God

**ASK:** What's one thing about our time today that you can tell your family?

- Give each child a copy Bible Story Sheets—Session 5. Look at "Family Faith Activities" together.

**ASK:** Which of these activities are you most excited to try this week?

- Send home the Bible Story Sheets—Session 5 with each child.

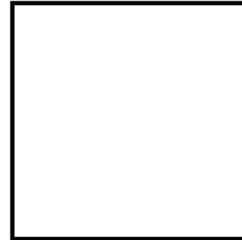
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## The Angel's Message

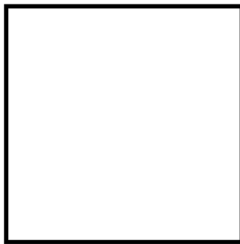


# The angel said,

# “Don't be !



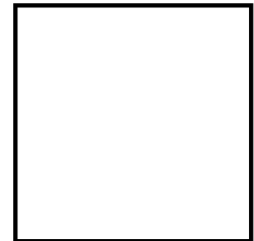
afraid



Look

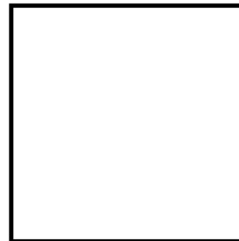
# ! I bring good

# news to you—



wonderful, joyous

# news for .”



all people

