

## 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  
Shepherds' Story  
Spread the News  
Transition to Explore

#### 2. Explore

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

#### 3. Respond

Ring for Joy  
Nativity Story Wheel  
Loving God,  
Loving Neighbor  
Transition to Bless

#### 4. Bless

Inviting  
Praising  
Blessing  
At Home with God

### Supplies

**Basic Supplies:** CD player | DVD player | Projector or screen | Television | Chenille stems | Craft glue | Crayons | Markers | Offering basket | Paper | Pencils | Scissors | Tape

**Gather:** Bell | Carpet squares | Flashlight | Music

**Explore:** Bell

**Respond:** Bell | Brads | Candle | Carpet squares | Jingle bells | Multipurpose lighter

**Bless:** No additional supplies

### Before You Teach

Although we hear the story every year, the message of the Christmas story remains inspiring and empowering. God did not choose to make a flashy and attention-gathering entrance. Instead, God chose to reveal God's presence with us through the birth of a baby born in humble circumstances. The shepherds were the first to receive the news of Jesus' birth.

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

The shepherds learned 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, then an entire heavenly host, must have caused some 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 few weeks until they could arrange for someone to watch their sheep while they took a vacation. They didn't say, "That's interesting. The next time we're in Bethlehem, we'll check it out." No, the shepherds went quickly to find Mary, Joseph, and the child of whom they had been told. Once they had seen the Baby, the shepherds went to tell the news to others. This news was far too wonderful to be kept to oneself!

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# GATHER

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### Greeting

*Before class: Display your choice of attendance chart (Class Kit—pp. 16-17 or pp. 18 & 15).*

- Play "Come to Us, Emmanuel" (Annual Music CD).
  - Welcome and greet each child as he or she enters the room.
  - Indicate location of the offering basket.
  - Help children mark their attendance inside the building on the Community Attendance Chart (opt.).
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### A—Shepherds' Story (Activity Sheet)

*Before class: Obtain Activity Sheets (Session 5).*

- Distribute "A Bright Light"/"Wonderful Word Find" (pp. 11-12).
  - Encourage the children to follow the journaling prompt and complete the activities.
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OR

### B—Spread the News (Game)

*Before class: Obtain CD player, CD, flashlight.*

- Direct all the children to stand.

**SAY:** In today's Bible story, shepherds saw a bright light from an angel and they received good news. Let's play a game with light. When I turn on the music, everyone should start moving and dancing. While you're moving, I will walk around with the flashlight. If I shine the flashlight on you, freeze!" Then you will say "Jesus is born!" After you share the good news, you can start dancing again.

- Play the music and let the children dance and move around. Shine the flashlight on a child.
  - Play the game until each child has participated or as time allows.
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### Transition to Explore

*Before class: Obtain bell and carpet squares.*

- Ring the bell to acknowledge that it is time to transition.
- Direct the children to choose carpet squares (or equivalent items), then sit in a circle on the floor.

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# EXPLORE

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### Sacred Conversation

- Ask a few wondering questions.

**ASK:** I wonder:

- What made you laugh this week?
  - How did you help someone this week?
  - What are you grateful for?
  - Was there a difficult part of your week, and what made it better?
  - Where did you see God this week?
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### Hear and See the Bible Story

*Before class: Prepare television and DVD player.*

- Read the Bible story together (*CEB Deep Blue Kids Bible—Luke 2:8-20*).
- Watch the Deep Blue Adventure DVD Session 5.

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

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### Interact with the Bible Story

*Before class: Obtain Bible Story Sheets (Session 5).*

- Distribute the Bible Story Sheets and draw attention to Bible Story Retelling (p. 1).
  - Assign the seven parts, then present "Shepherds' Story."
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### Say the Bible Verse

*Before class: Display Poster: Unit 1 Bible Verse (Class Kit—pp. 10 & 23). Review Unit 1 sign language (Leader Guide—p. 91).*

- Recite the Bible verse, "The angel said, 'Don't be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people'" (Luke 2:10).
  - Invite the children to say and sign the Bible verse with you.
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### Transition to Respond

*Before class: Obtain bell.*

- Ring the bell, then invite the children to put away their carpet squares.

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# RESPOND

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### A—Ring for Joy (Art)

*Before class: Obtain jingle bells (at least two or three per child).*

- Distribute the bells and one chenille stem per child.
- Show the children how to string the bells onto the stem, form a circle/ring, and tie ends to secure.

**SAY:** The angel brought joyous news to the shepherds. Let's praise God for the birth of Jesus!

- Encourage the children to shake their bells and be joyful.

**TIP:** *The children can use more than one chenille stem to make the bell ring larger. Using chenille stems with sparkles can make the craft look more festive.*

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OR

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### B—Nativity Story Wheel (Art)

*Before class: Photocopy "Nativity Story Wheel" (Leader Guide—p. 36), one per child.*

- Distribute the photocopies of "Nativity Story Wheel."
- Invite the children to color the pictures on the story wheel. Then cut out as directed. Place the circle with the cutout on top of the other circle. Use the brad to connect the spinner to the circles.

**ASK:** Who remembers the stories we have learned about Jesus' birth?

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## Loving God, Loving Neighbor

*Before class: Obtain Map 6: Deep Blue Shores (Class Kit—p. 8) and Figures/Pieces: Deep Blue Shores Map 6 (Class Kit—p. 25). Display Poster: Advent Wreath (Class Kit—p. 31). Obtain Poster Pieces: Advent Wreath (Class Kit—p. 29).*

- Display the Deep Blue Shores Map 6 on the floor or table. While the children interact with the map and figures, talk about Advent.

**SAY:** Advent is a time of waiting and preparing for Jesus. Each week we will add a word label to our Advent Wreath poster. This week the word is "Christ."

**ASK:** Who is Christ?

- Display the poster pieces.
  - Invite a child to attach the #5 "Christ" poster piece to the poster's #5 candle.
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## Transition to Bless

*Before class: Obtain bell, candle, multipurpose lighter (or battery-operated candle), carpet squares.*

- Ring the bell to acknowledge that it is time to transition.
- Direct the children to each choose a carpet square, then sit in a circle on the floor.

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# BLESS

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### Inviting

*Before class: Continue to display Poster: Unit 1 Bible Verse (Class Kit—pp. 10 & 23) where it is easily accessible for children. Obtain Poster Pieces: Unit 1 Bible Verse (Class Kit—p. 22).*

- Gather the children around the Bible-verse poster.
- Display the poster pieces.
- Invite a child to attach to the poster the three "Shepherd" poster pieces.

**PRAY:** Thank you, God, for bringing good news to all people. Amen.

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### Praising

*Before class: Obtain CD player and Deep Blue Song Sheets.*

- Distribute the song sheets of "Come to Us, Emmanuel" (Annual Music CD).
  - Sing the song "Come to Us, Emmanuel" (Annual Music CD).
  - Sign the Bible verse (Leader Guide—p. 91).
  - Collect the song sheets and store.
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### Blessing

- Invite the children to repeat after you Luke 1:46-47:

"With all my heart I glorify the Lord!

In the depths of who I am,

I rejoice in God my savior."

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### At Home with God

**ASK:** What is one thing that you learned today? Can you share with your family what you learned?

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

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### Nativity Story Wheel

