

Of Shepherds and Angels

Teacher Pep Talk: It wasn't that long ago, if you think about it. Of course, it has been more than 2000 years... but... Bethlehem is still there... and the Judean hills, where the shepherds were "keeping watch over their flocks by night," are still pretty much the same. The low lying hills are covered with large boulders and tufts of dry grass. There are few, if any, trees, which means that at night even a sleepy group of shepherds would be able to see every star in the sky (let alone a "heavenly host" praising God!) Imagine the marvel of it all! The shepherds visited by angels who announced His birth to the whole world! "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." It's like it just happened yesterday!

You will need: A birth announcement to show during the lesson.
Costumes (Optional) for skit. See skit for costume ideas.
Crayons, glitter glue, or other decorations for craft options.

Major Points: The Savior, Jesus, was born in Bethlehem.
Angels told the Good News to the shepherds.
The shepherds came to worship Jesus.

Scripture Ref. Luke 2:8-20 (The angels appear to the shepherds.)

Memory Verse: Luke 2:14 "Glory to God in the highest..."

Lesson: **Christmas is almost here!**

- We have Christmas every year to celebrate that Jesus, the Savior, was born!
- Let's talk about the very first Christmas!

The first Christmas...

- Mary and Joseph had traveled to Bethlehem.
- There was no room for them in the inn, but they finally found a place to stay in the stable.
- Baby Jesus was born while they were there.
- Mary wrapped the baby in cloths and laid Him in a manger

Birth Announcement

- When a new baby is born, parents often send out a birth announcement. (*Show birth announcement.*)
- It tells when the baby was born, and all about the baby.
- God is Jesus' father. He wanted the whole world to know that His One and Only Son had been born in Bethlehem!
- God sent out a wonderful birth announcement of His own!
- But God didn't send paper announcements. God sent angels!

Angels visit the Shepherds

- Shepherds are people who take care of flocks of sheep.
- That night there were shepherds watching over their sheep.
- God sent an angel to talk to the shepherds.
- This is what the angel told the shepherds: "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 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."
- Then all of a sudden the sky was full of angels singing praises to God. They sang "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

The Shepherds came to worship Jesus.

- The shepherds wanted to see the Savior!
- They came to Bethlehem (the town of David).
- They found the baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger... Just as they had been told by the angel!
- They worshiped the baby, Jesus, and praised God!
- We can praise God too! Let's say the words the angels said; "Glory to God in the highest!" (*Have children repeat.*)

Prayer: Let's pray and thank God for sending the baby Jesus!

Dear God,
Thank you for sending the baby Jesus.
Thank you that He is your Son and our Savior.
Thank you for Christmas.
We love you. Amen.

Suggested Activities: (Pick and choose the activities that work best for you!)

Act out Narrated Christmas Skit

Children this young really need to act out the parts of the Christmas story to be able to understand all that happened. Use this narrated script for Preschool to Kindergarten age children to help them act out the parts of the shepherds, angels, Mary and Joseph.

Ideas for Costumes:

Children this young are happy with very simple costumes. For example: Large pieces of cloth (about 4x4 feet square) make excellent capes and/or head coverings. If you cut a hole in the center (for the children's heads to go through) they also make great robes. Use narrow bands of fabric for a sashes or belts. Circles of tinsel make wonderful halos for angels. Make a manger out of a laundry basket and some towels or blankets.

NOTE: After I assembled my first box of costumes, I stored it for future Christmas skits. It has come in handy many times! Over the years I added to the collection. Now, I can outfit quite a few shepherds and a whole "host" of angels! Hang on to your costumes!

SHEPHERDS AND ANGELS – SKIT

NARRATOR:

Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem. When they got there, there were so many people visiting that there was no room for them in the inn.

The innkeeper saw their great need and told them that they could stay in the stable.

While they were there, Mary had her baby, Jesus. She wrapped Him in cloths and laid Him in the manger.

Nearby there were shepherds out in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks at night.

Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared to them! And they were so afraid!

But the angel told them "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 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."

Then the angel was joined by a heavenly host saying "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will to men."

After the angels had gone away, the shepherds said to themselves. Let us go into the town and see this thing that the Lord has told us about.

And so they went and found the baby Jesus. He was wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger, just like the angel had told them!

When the shepherds found the baby Jesus, they worshiped Him.

The shepherds praised God because they were so glad that the Savior had been born!

We are glad too! And we can praise God just like the angels and the shepherds did!

EVERYONE:


Glory to God in the highest!

THE END

Heavenly Birth Announcement

God announced the birth of His One and Only Son in a wonderful way: He sent angels to talk to the shepherds! Decorate this Heavenly Birth Announcement for Baby Jesus or design your own. Cut it out and mount it on construction paper.

Born this day in the City of David, a Savior which is Christ the Lord.




*“Glory to God in the Highest
And on Earth
PEACE
Good will to Men!”*

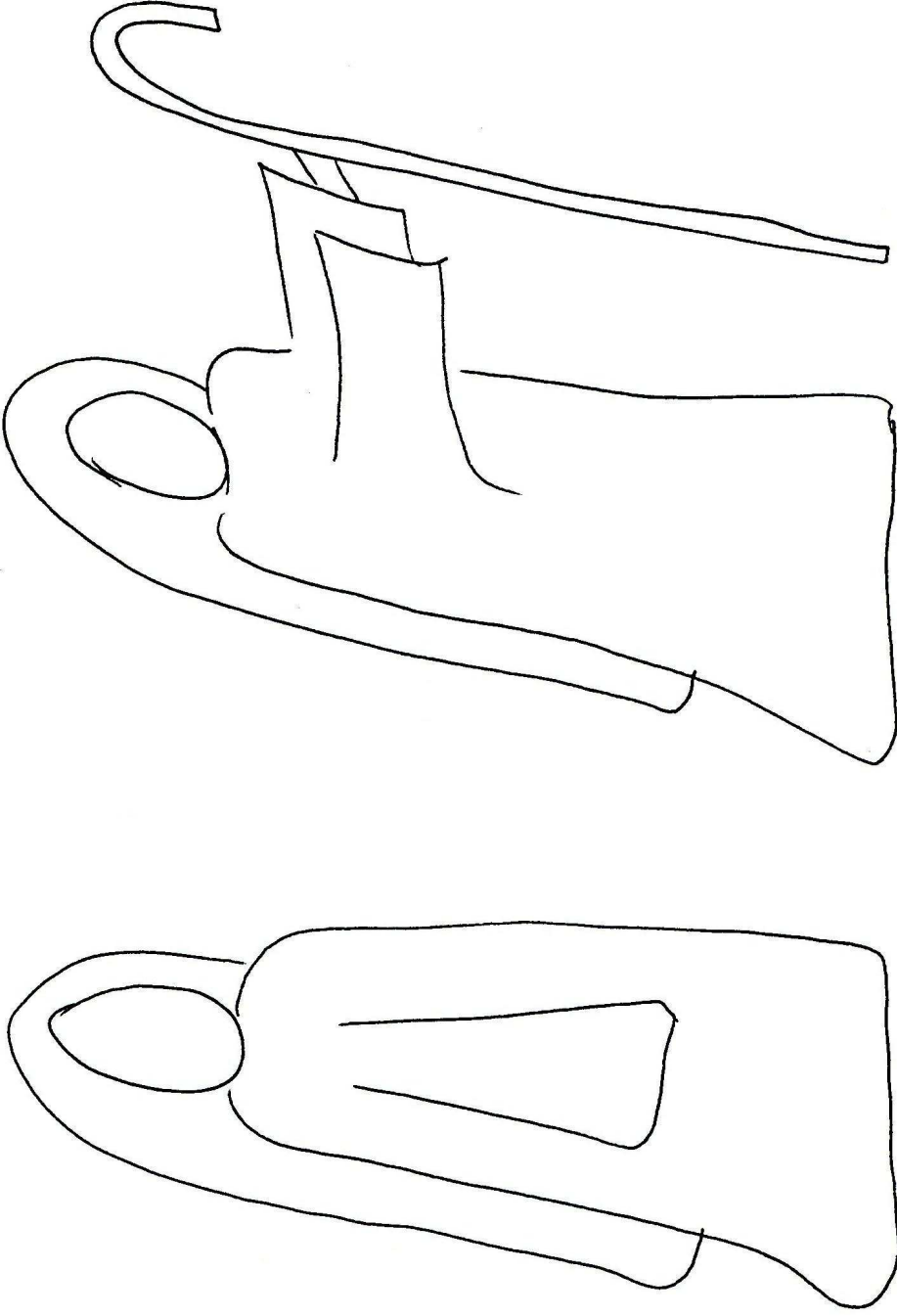
Name: Jesus, Son of God, Savior, Christ the Lord

When: First Christmas

Where: Bethlehem... the stable... the manger



Shepherds came to worship the baby Jesus.



Help the shepherds find baby Jesus. Draw in their faces, hands and feet, and color their robes.

