

Lesson 4 – Angels Announce that Jesus is Born!

Teacher Prep: Mary and Joseph made the long trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem! But when they arrived, there was nowhere for them to stay because of all the travelers who were also there to be counted in the census. When Baby Jesus was born, Mary wrapped Him in cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. There, alone in the humble stable, Mary and Joseph would soon have visitors. A group of shepherds, who had heard the announcement of the Messiah's birth from a host of angels sent by God, would be the first to come and find the Baby and worship Him.

Major Points: **Mary and Joseph Arrive in Bethlehem**
There Is No Room in the Inn
Baby Jesus is Born!
Angels Make an Announcement to Shepherds
The Shepherds Find Baby Jesus in the Manger

Scripture Ref: **Luke 2:6-20** – The Story of the Nativity
Luke 2:11 *...for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.*

Lesson: **Mary and Joseph Arrive in Bethlehem**

- Christmas is here! We have waited so long for it and now it is finally here! I am so excited! Are you? (*Wait for answers.*)
- We are going to talk about the first Christmas that happened so long ago!
- We know that Mary and Joseph traveled from Nazareth to Bethlehem so that they could be counted for the census.
- It was a long way, but they made it!
- Now it was time for Baby Jesus to be born.

There Is No Room in the Inn

- But there were so many people there (because of the census) that by the time they got there, the town was full!
- There was nowhere for Mary and Joseph to stay
- There was no room in the inn!
- Now what would they do?
 - Mary needed somewhere safe to have her baby.
- Joseph and Mary found a place that was safe and dry where Mary could have her baby.
- They found a nice warm stable.
- What is a "stable"? (*Wait for answers.*)
 - It is a place where farmers or shepherds can feed their animals and keep them safe and dry.

- What kind of animals do you think you would find in a stable? (*Wait for answers*)
 - Farm animals (Sheep, horses, donkeys, goats, & cows)

Baby Jesus is Born!

- People had been waiting for so long for the Messiah to be born!
- But now they didn't have to wait any longer!
- Because... Baby Jesus had been born! (Hurray!!)
- His mother, Mary, wrapped Him up in soft cloths and laid Him in a manger.
- Okay... wait a minute... what's a "manger"? (*wait for answers*)
 - A manger is a long open box that the farm animals would usually eat their supper from.
 - The farmer or shepherd would put hay in the manger and let the horses or sheep eat from it.
- But tonight, there was a brand-new baby sleeping in the manger. Who was that baby? (Jesus!!)
- Baby Jesus had been born! The waiting is over!

Angels Make an Announcement to Shepherds

- Usually, when a baby is born, his or her parents make an announcement – telling everyone that the baby is born!
- Who is Jesus' father? (God!)
- And so, God made an announcement!
- God sent angels to announce the birth of His Son!
- Let's read about it from the Bible!
- **Luke 2:8-12** *In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; ¹¹for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."*
- Where did the angels say they would find the baby? (Manger!)
- Wow! Can you imagine being one of those shepherds?
- You're just out there in the fields, watching your sheep, and suddenly an angel appears and tells you these amazing things!
- Let's look at this one part again... Verse 11...
 - *For today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.*
- Where is the city of David? (Bethlehem)
- And what is a Savior? (Someone who saves you.)

- And who is “Christ?” (The Christ is the long-awaited Savior, who had been promised by God – also called the Messiah.)
- And who is this special baby? (Jesus!!)
- There is some more about the angels...
- **Luke 2:13-14** *And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.”*
- Now there’s not just one angel! Now there is a multitude (lots) of angels (they call them the heavenly host)
- They are praising God and saying:
*Glory to God in the highest,
 And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.*

The Shepherds Find Baby Jesus in the Manger

- Now, if you were one of the shepherds, what would you do?
- Let’s read in the Bible to see what they did.
- **Luke 2:15-16** *When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, “Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶ So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger.*
- So... what did they do? (Wait for answers)
- Yes, they went and found the baby!
- And, where was He? (In a MANGER!)
- How great is that? It was just like the angels had told them!
- Let’s see what happened next.
- **Luke 2:17-20** *When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child. And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart. The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.*

Let’s pray and thank God for sending His Son, Jesus to be born here.

Prayer: Dear God,
 Thank you that you sent your Son, Jesus, to be born here.
 Thank you that He is the Savior of the world.
 Thank you for the angels who told about His birth!
 Thank you for the shepherds who hurried to see Him.
 Thank you for loving us.
 We love you back.
 Amen.

Suggested Activities: Pick 1-2 activities that will work best with your group.

Christmas Songs – *The children will sing various Christmas songs.*

Before Class: Choose 2 or 3 Christmas songs to sing with the children. Have music to accompany you or plan on leading them yourself *A Capella*. Prepare song sheets for the children with the words of the songs. Remember that the older hymns have a lot of Bible information in them. Talk to the children about some in these two songs.

During Class: Lead the children in 2-3 Christmas songs. Discuss some of the biblical ideas found in the songs. Here are some ideas for songs today.

Angels We have Heard on High

Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o'er the plains
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strains

(Chorus)

Gloria, in excelsis Deo
Gloria, in excelsis Deo

Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heavenly song?

Gloria, in excelsis Deo
Gloria, in excelsis Deo

Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing,
Come, adore on bended knee,
Christ the Lord the newborn king

Gloria, in excelsis Deo
Gloria, in excelsis Deo

Hark, the Herald Angels Sing

Hark, the Herald Angels Sing
Glory to the newborn king,
Peace on Earth and mercy mild
God and sinners reconciled

Joyful all ye nations rise
Join the triumph of the skies
With angelic hosts proclaim
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Hark, the Herald Angels Sing,
Glory to the newborn king.

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear

It came upon a midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth,
To touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to men,
From heaven's all-gracious King."
The world in solemn stillness lay,
To hear the angels sing.

Draw a BIG Christmas Picture! – *The children will draw a picture of the shepherds being visited by the angels on the night Jesus was born.*

Before Class: Provide large pieces of drawing paper and/or construction paper, as well as markers, pencils, and crayons. Consider gold "glitter glue" as well.

During Class: Cover tables to protect them from glitter and glue. Hand out papers. Allow the children to draw a picture of the shepherds and the Angel who came to announce the Birth of Jesus! Use gold glitter glue for the angelic hosts. Don't forget the sheep!

Create a Sheep! – *In this craft, the children will create a sheep with cotton balls, card stock and wooden clothespins.*

NOTE: This craft may take more than one class period to complete. If you like, you may do one or more of the steps for the class ahead of time... *but where's the fun in that?*

Before Class: Provide templates made of cardstock of the sheep from the Activity Sheet. Provide more cardstock, as well as pencils, cotton balls, scissors, paint brushes and black tempera paint. You will also need 2 wooden clothespins for each child, and a plastic tablecloth to cover the painting table. (You could leave the clothespins plain, without paint, or spray paint them all ahead of time and let them dry beforehand.)

During Class: Set up one table where the children may each paint 2 clothespins with black paint. Allow them to come up in small groups to do this as time allows. Set the clothespins aside and allow them to dry. Let each child use a template to draw out a sheep on card stock. Then have them cut them out and write their name on one side of the sheep. On the other side, let them glue cotton balls to the cardstock sheep to make it fluffy. They may pull apart the cotton balls a little bit to make them easier to work with. When the glue is dry, pin one black clothespin on the front of the sheep and one on the back, where the legs would go. Allow them to take the sheep home when they are dry.

A Stable Environment! – *The children will use construction paper and markers to create a Nativity Scene.*

Before Class: Provide large pieces of construction paper (including brown) as well as markers, pencils, crayons, scissors and glue. Use other craft items at your discretion!

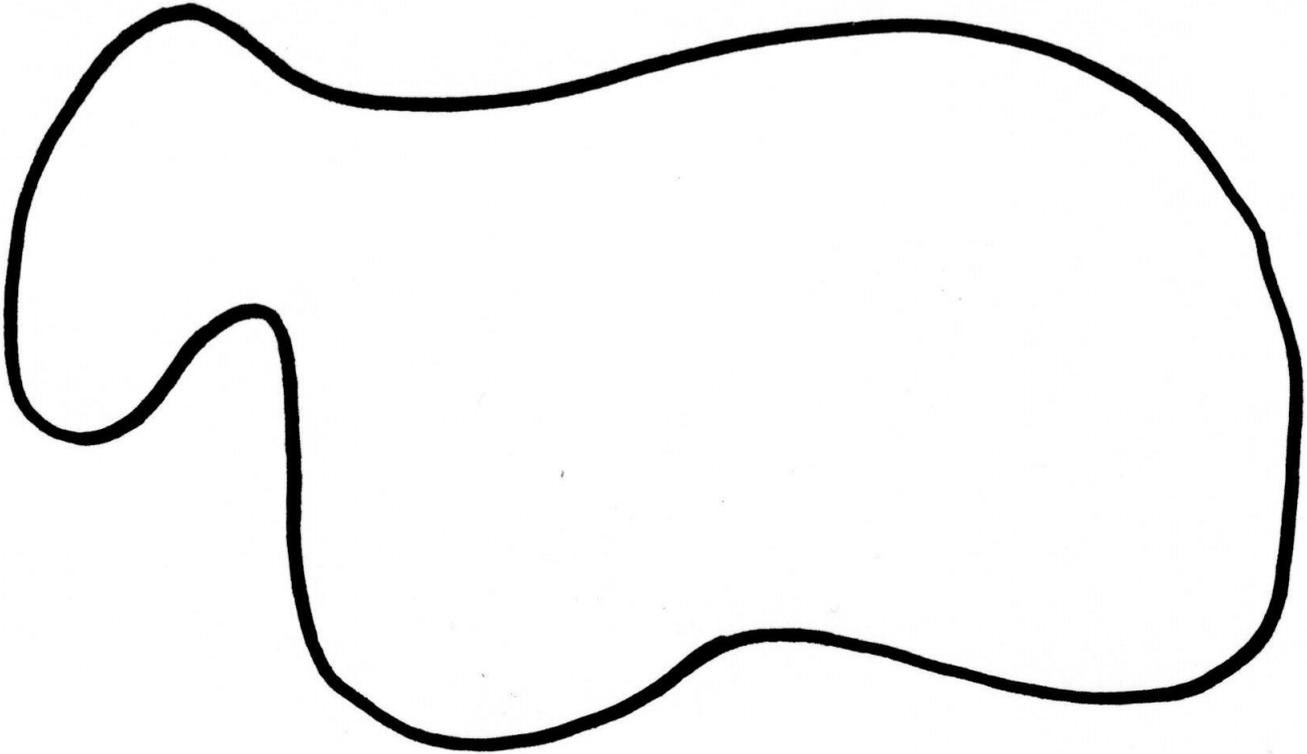
During Class: Explain that you are going to use the construction paper, scissors and glue to recreate a Nativity scene. Explain that it will be a picture of the stable and the manger, with Baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph. They can also add shepherds (with their sheep) and animals that might have been at the stable that night when Jesus was born. The children can use a piece of brown paper to be the stable. They can cut it out and glue it on to a bigger piece of paper. Then they can draw in Mary, Joseph and Baby Jesus. Have them add animals that might have been there. Don't forget the shepherds!

Act it Out! – *The children will act out the story of the Angels visiting the Shepherds.*

Before Class: Think about your classroom and where you could best act out the story. (If necessary, have someone help you move some furniture.) Consider bringing in easy costume pieces and props. A clothesbasket with a towel or soft blanket draped in it makes a great classroom manger. A large doll in a soft towel can be Baby Jesus. Big squares of fabric (with or without holes in the middle) make excellent costumes for your actors. For more, easy Christmas Costume Ideas, see <https://www.sunday-school-center.com/support-files/christmas-skit-costumes-for-children.pdf>.

During Class: Using a Bible (preferably a New King James Version) read the Christmas Story from Luke 2:4-20, having the children act it out. Read a few verses and then give stage directions, such as, "Okay Mary, go ahead and put baby Jesus in the manger." Just live the story with the children. Allow them to figure out how frightened the shepherds must have been at first when they saw the angels. Decide if the angel needs to stand on something to be up higher than everyone else. With the angelic host, everyone says "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

Sheep Template



Directions for Leaders:

Use the template to trace and cut out one sheep from cardstock for each child.

(Note: Use cardstock to stand up better under the weight of the glue and cotton balls.)

Write the child's name on the back of the sheep cutout.

Draw a face for the sheep (on the front of the cutout) if you want to do so.

Allow the children to glue cotton balls on the front of their cutout; creating fuzzy sheep.

(If you have drawn a face, don't glue cotton balls on this area.)

Use 2 clothespins, which have been painted black and allowed to dry, for the legs.

Allow the sheep to dry before taking them home.

Consider "herding" all of your sheep into one area of your classroom for a display.