

Adventures with GOD!

THE SHEPHERDS, INVITED TO JESUS' BIRTH (B.3.SPRING.4)

Biblical Reference	Luke 2: 8-20
Key Verse	Luke 2:20
Key Concept	The shepherds witnessed a miracle and praised God, just like I can praise God.
Educational Objectives	At the end of the class today, children will be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Act out what the shepherds did after they saw baby Jesus 2. Explain how the shepherds participated in God's story 3. Say the Bible memory verse

Life Application

The event the shepherds witnessed in Bethlehem changed the world. The birth of Jesus, the Savior, was one of the biggest and best events that has ever happened in human history. The children will learn how God used simple shepherds to be a part of the big plan.

Possible Activities and Class Plan

Activity	Materials	Time
My GROW Adventure	GROW Adventure materials	5 minutes
Opening Prayer	Candle	1 minute
Bible Reading	Bible	5 minutes
Game		10 minutes
Bible Exploration	Bible, time machine	10 minutes
Key Verse		5 minutes
Craft	See instructions	10 minutes
My GROW Adventure	Review	5 minutes
Closing Prayer	Candle	1 minute

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INSTRUCTIONS

My GROW Adventure with God Weekly Review: As children enter, take time to have them reflect on their adventure with God booklets, and either discuss or use art materials to express their journey during the past week. You may wish to add any art work, written poems, prayers or songs to a GROW wall in the room. You can find my GROW Adventure with God materials at CovChurch.org/children/adventures-with-god.

Opening Prayer: Gather children around a candle. Light the candle, and explain that we are entering into a special time with God. Encourage the children to hold their hands out in front of them, palms up, as a sign they are ready to receive what God has for them today.

Prayer Example: Lord God, thank you for making us, for loving us, for forgiving us, and guiding us. We know you are here with us right now. As we enter into your word, the Bible, help us draw close to you, to understand and to listen to what you have to say to us. Amen

(For safety sake, you may wish to extinguish the candle after the prayer.)

Bible Reading: Explain that as we read the Bible we do that first to spend time with God. Children can remain with hands out stretched palms up to receive the word as it's being read. Alternatively they can be invited to draw what they hear. Read Luke 2:8-20 twice and ask children to respond.

Question Examples: What did you notice in this passage? How does it make you feel? Was there anything you would ask God about that you didn't understand or was confusing? Is God saying anything to you though the passage?

Game: Divide the group into two teams. Each team needs to choose a "shepherd." Make a line with masking tape on the ground. Each team will pick a side of the room. The sheep are on one side and must cross to the other side to get to the sheep pen. However, there are wolves that are waiting to get the sheep. If a lamb gets caught by a wolf, he or she turns into a wolf. The shepherd must come up with a way to get the sheep safely across to the sheep pen. After playing for awhile, change roles. The wolves become the sheep and vice versa. When the game is finished, talk about the role of the shepherd. Why is a shepherd important? Were the



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shepherds considered important in the time that Jesus lived? What role do the shepherds play in the story of God's plan to save the world?

Bible Exploration: You may choose to use the time machine this week or you may choose to have the children act out the story they've just read in Luke 2. A sample dialogue is found on page 5 if you choose to have someone act out the part of one of a shepherd and talk to the children. Talk about the important role of the shepherds and how they responded to what they saw and heard. How do we respond to the good news that Jesus came to be with us and bring us back to God? Add an illustration to your mural.

Key Verse: On the board or a large piece of poster board, write out the Key Verse for the children to see. Make note of the responsibility that God gave the shepherds to share with others the good news of Jesus' birth. Read the Key Verse together. Prepare slips of paper to cover up the words of the verse. Give a child a slip of paper and have him or her decide which word to cover up. Repeat the verse again together. Then give another slip of paper to another child and have him or her cover up a word. Repeat it together. Continue until all the words of the Key Verse are covered up.

Craft: On pages 7-8, you will find instructions for how to make an angel or a banner. The children can write the Key Verse on their craft and take the craft home with them.

Today's GROW Adventure with God Review:

G=God's Word: What is the story? (Give children an opportunity to express their understanding of the story).

R=Relationships: Is there anything in today's Bible story that shows us how we should or shouldn't share God's love with others? (Remind children that sometimes God uses the stories of the Bible to show us how we shouldn't act toward God or others. Give children a chance to consider how we might show God's love instead).

O=Outward Action: Is there anything in the Bible story that shows us how we should help or serve God or others? (Explore concrete ways the children could live this out in the coming week).

W=Worship: Is there anything in the Bible story that shows us how we should accept God's love for us and others? Ask: How do you feel about God? What would you like to say to God?



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Closing Prayer: Gather children around the candle again. As you light the candle, explain that the flame is something that is present in the light and the darkness. In the same way, it reminds us that God is always with us. Is there anything anyone wishes to say to God? After children have responded, close the prayer time.

Prayer Example: Lord God, we thank you that you are always with us, and always love us. It's good to be with you. Thank you for what we have learned today. Thank you for being with us and for teaching us through the Bible. Help us to remember what you have taught us today and to live it out when we leave. Amen

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BIBLE EXPLORATION

Questions for the shepherd

Shepherd (dressed accordingly): Quiet little lamb. It's ok, nothing's going to happen to you. (Suddenly he/she realizes that he/she is no longer in the sheep pen). Hey, what's going on?

Question #1 – It's alright, you are in _____. We just wanted to meet you and ask you some questions. But first of all, why were your sheep so agitated? It sounds like you were trying to calm them down.

Shepherd: Not so much agitated, but excited. It has been an unbelievable night for them. For all of us.

Question #2 – What happened that was so out of the ordinary?

Shepherd: It started out just like any other night, we were watching our sheep and all of a sudden the sky lit up and the light from the heavens was so bright.

Question #3 – What was it that made the night sky shine so brightly?

Shepherd – It was something even more extraordinary that UFOS...there were angels. They were shining down on us all of God's glory and it was so bright and overwhelming. We were terrified.

Question #4 – What did they say to you?

Shepherd: They told us not to be afraid. Can you imagine?! Yeah, right. Don't be afraid, easy for you to say. They told us they had a come with great news that was to be told to the world. They told us about the birth of a baby, but not just any baby. God's own son. God had come to earth in the form of a baby.

Question #5 – And why in the world would God choose to tell you? No offense.

Shepherd: It's true. It didn't make much sense. I mean, we aren't usually the first ones to get important news. But, just like anyone else, we need a savior. And that's what the angels told us – that this baby was the Savior of the world and that we could go and see him. It was like we had a personal invitation to the baby shower.

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Question #6 – And where was the baby?

Shepherd: The baby was in Bethlehem. The baby was in a stable. The baby wasn't in a palace or a mansion, but a simple stable, surrounded by smelly animals. We fit right in! We didn't have to worry about getting clean or making ourselves presentable. The angels told us to go and so we did.

Question #7 – Did you really believe what the angel told you?

Shepherd: We had no reason not to believe. It was obvious that this was something only God can do. And then as if it couldn't get any more spectacular the sky was filled with angels singing and worshipping God. They couldn't stop praising God for the birth of this baby.

Question #8 – And were you really welcomed into this special baby's presence?

Shepherd: Yes! We ran to Bethlehem and found the stable. It wasn't a big place, but there was the baby with Mary and Joseph. We were welcomed in and were in awe of the baby before us. When we left we couldn't contain ourselves. We told everyone we could find about this baby, God's son sent to earth to be our Savior. And now I get to share the news with you. God wants the whole world to hear this good news.

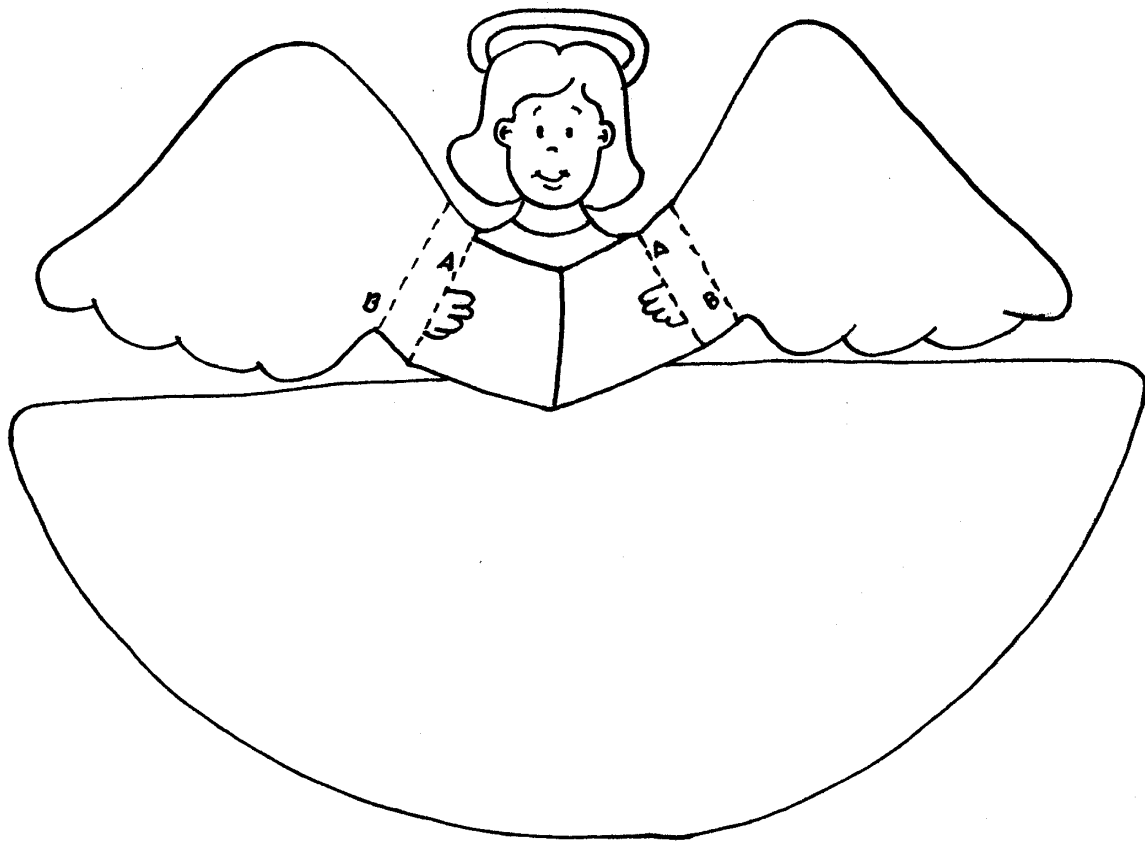
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CRAFT

Materials: disposable cup, scissors, colored paper, glue, card stock, markers, tape.

Instructions:

1. Take a disposable cup.
2. Color and cut out the angel pattern below.
3. Glue or tape the base of the angel to the cup.



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CRAFT 2

Banner

Materials: Card stock, scissors, markers, glue, tape, yarn, felt

Instructions: Give the children material to make a banner. Children can make it out of cardstock or felt. The idea is to have them represent the story of the shepherds and include the Key Verse. Let them use their creativity. Punch two holes at the top and string the yarn between the holes so they can take it home and hang it up.