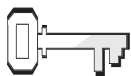


## Songs of Joy



### References

Luke 2:8–20; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 47, 48



### Memory Verse

“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests” (Luke 2:14, NIV).



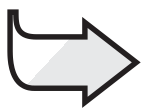
### Objectives

The children will:

**Know** that the good news of Jesus’ birth and life brings us joy.

**Feel** glad that Jesus came to earth.

**Respond** by planning to share their joy with others.



### The Message

Jesus gives me joy and hope.

### Monthly Theme

God’s grace gives us hope and joy.

### The Bible Lesson at a Glance

A group of shepherds are on a hillside outside Bethlehem, taking care of their sheep. They are talking about the coming of the Messiah when an angel suddenly appears and tells them that the Promised One of Israel has been born. They will find Him lying in a manger. Then the sky is filled with angels who sing “Glory to God in the highest.” The angels disappear. The shepherds go to Bethlehem where they find the baby just as the angel said. They worship the child, then leave and tell everyone they meet what they have heard and seen.

### *This is a lesson about grace.*

When we understand the extent of God’s grace, hope and joy overflow into praise as we experience and cherish the knowledge that Jesus came for us, for each person individually.

### Teacher Enrichment

“The story of Bethlehem is an exhaustless theme. In it is hidden ‘the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.’ Rom. 11:33. We marvel at the Savior’s sacrifice in exchanging the throne of heaven for the manger, and the companionship of adoring angels for the beasts of the stall. Human pride and self-sufficiency stand rebuked in His presence. Yet this was but the beginning of His wonderful condescension. It would have been an almost infinite humiliation for the Son of God to take man’s nature, even when Adam stood in his innocence in Eden. But Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin. Like every child of Adam He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity. What these results were is shown in the history of His earthly ancestors. He came with such heredity to share our sorrows and temptations, and to give us the example of a sinless life” (*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 48, 49).

### Room Decorations

See Lesson 10.

## Program Overview

Lesson Section	Minutes	Activities	Materials Needed
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
<b>1</b> Readiness Activities	up to 10	A. <i>Too Busy</i> B. <i>Deaf</i>	stickers, manger cotton balls, pin, paper bag, paper, pencil, optional recorded household sounds
<b>Any Time</b> Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	Fellowship Songbook Mission Offering Prayer	none <i>Sing for Joy</i> <i>Children's Mission</i> gift box outline of sheep (see p. 143), cotton balls, glue
<b>2</b> Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story  Memory Verse Bible Study	Bible-times costumes, manger, baby doll, angel costume, toy sheep, imitation campfire white/chalkboard, markers/chalk Bibles, strips of cloth, marker
<b>3</b> Applying the Lesson	up to 15	<i>God's Gift</i>	Bible, baby doll
<b>4</b> Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	A. <i>Sing With the Angels</i> B. <i>Christmas Project</i>	<i>Sing for Joy</i> songbooks information on community Christmas project

**\*Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.**

# TEACHING THE LESSON

## Welcome

Welcome students at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Encourage them to share any experiences from last week's lesson study. Have them begin the readiness activity of your choice.

1

## Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

### You Need:

- stickers (or other small gift) for each child
- manger

### A. Too Busy

Ask two volunteers to go out of the room. Have a helper explain to them that a sticker or small gift for each child is by the manger. They are to persuade the other children to come and take one. They can use any method to get the other children to listen and follow them.

Explain to those remaining in the room that when the two volunteers come back into the room, they should pretend to be very busy and ignore them no matter what happens. Let the children continue the activity until someone responds to those who are pleading and goes to get a sticker.

### Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **Why didn't you go to the manger and take a sticker? How did it feel to have something good that no one wanted? What do you think about ignoring the people who were trying to share with you? What did you think when you saw what you had missed out on?**

Say: **In our story today people were too busy to hear about the best present the world has ever received. They missed out on the happiness and joy of knowing that gift. But we don't have to miss out. Our message says:**



**JESUS GIVES ME JOY AND HOPE.**

**Say that with me.**

### You Need:

- cotton balls
- pin
- paper bag
- paper
- pencil
- recorded household sounds (optional)

### B. Deaf

Give each child paper, pencil, and two cotton balls to put in their ears when you have finished explaining what you are going to do. Say: **After you have put the cotton balls in your ears, I am going to stand at the back of the class and make some sounds. On the paper list the sounds you recognize.** Make sounds. For example, drop a pin, burst a paper bag, play a note on the piano. Or if you prefer, play household sounds recorded in advance. When finished, have the children tell about the sounds they heard.

### Debriefing

Ask: **How many sounds did you recognize? Was it easy to hear the sounds with the cotton in your ears? Would it have been easier to hear without it? What are some times when we do not hear what people say to us?** (When Mother calls us to tidy up, when it is time to go to bed, when the TV is too distracting or too loud.)

Say: **In our story today most people were too busy to listen to the good news about Jesus' birth. They missed sharing in the hope and joy of that important event.**

**Our message for today is:**



**JESUS GIVES ME JOY AND HOPE.**

**Say that with me.**

## Prayer and Praise

Any  
Time



### Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Allow time for sharing experiences from last week's lesson study and review the memory verse. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.



### Suggested Songs

- "Away in a Manger" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 74)
- "Infant Holy, Infant Lowly" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 75)
- "O Come, All Ye Faithful" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 70)
- "Silent Night, Holy Night" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 76)
- "Now Is Born the Divine Christ Child" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 78)



### Mission

Share a story from *Children's Mission*. Stress how God's gift of His Son is for everyone, no matter where they live.



### Offering

Say: **At this time of year it is easy to think only of presents and the nice things we hope to receive for Christmas. But God gives us gifts all year round. One way we can respond to His generosity is to give Him back a little of what He gives to us.**

#### You Need:

- gift box from Lesson 10



### Prayer

Invite the children to come and stick a cotton ball on the sheep. As they do so, they are to name a prayer request or tell something they would like to thank God for. Allow each child to stick on several cotton balls. Say: **Prayer is a two-way process. We talk to God, but we also need to listen for His answers. When we pray today, I will mention our prayer requests and then pause so we can pray silently and listen for God's thoughts to come into our minds.**

#### You Need:

- large outline of a sheep on paper (see p. 143)
- cotton balls
- glue

# 2

## Bible Lesson

### You Need:

- Bible-times costumes
- manger
- baby doll
- angel costume
- toy sheep
- imitation campfire

### Experiencing the Story

**Characters:** Mary, Joseph, Angel Gabriel, angels, shepherds

Place Mary and Joseph beside the manger on one side of the room. Have the shepherds sit on the floor around the “campfire” on the opposite side of the room. Have Gabriel and the other angels wait in a corner. Encourage the children to act out the story as you read or tell it. Have an adult helper prompt them. This is how it may have happened.

### Read or tell the story.

No one in Bethlehem took much notice of the poor couple who moved into the stable behind the inn. People were too busy. Bethlehem was crowded with people who had come to be counted. Soldiers and officials were getting ready to register all those people. Everyone rushed around. No one was interested in a newborn baby. *[Mary rocks the baby; Joseph prepares the manger and lays the baby in it.]*

In heaven it was different. All the angels held their breath and watched closely. When Jesus was born, they began to sing praises. Jesus was now a little baby boy! *[Gabriel motions to the other angels to come and look at Mary and Joseph. Acts as if excited.]*

A group of shepherds sat on the hills overlooking Bethlehem. *[Shepherds sit in a circle on the floor.]* They were looking after their flocks of sheep and goats. The shepherds sat around a fire keeping themselves warm, and keeping an eye out for anything that might attack their flocks. *[Shepherds “warm” their hands and*

*“talk” to each other.]* They talked about their favorite subject—the promise of the Messiah, the one who would come to save them. Surely He must come soon.

*[The lead angel moves near the shepherds. Other angels follow, some excited, some looking back at the baby.]*

Suddenly the sky was filled with a blazing light. The shepherds held their hands up to their faces and backed away. *[The shepherds hold up their hands to shade their eyes and back away.]*

A beautiful voice spoke: “Don’t be afraid. I have good news for everyone!” *[Gabriel holds up his hand.]*

The shepherds looked in amazement. *[Shepherds look surprised.]*

“Today in David’s town a baby has been born,” the angel continued. “This baby is the Lord, the Promised One of Israel! You will find the baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

The shepherds had barely caught their breath before the sky was filled with angels who sang together, praising God with the words: “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

*[sing “Joy to the World” (Sing for Joy, no. 81).]*

Just as suddenly, the angels disappeared. The shepherds rubbed their eyes. Everything seemed so dark. *[The shepherds rub their eyes and look around.]* As they looked at each other’s faces, they knew that this had not been a dream. They could still hear the angels’ song echoing off the nearby hills.

Happy and excited, joy bubbled up inside them. The shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.” *[The shepherds walk quickly around the room.]*

The shepherds hurried down the hill-

side and into the town. Eventually they found the stable. *[The shepherds breathe as if they have run a long way.]* They entered the stable quietly. *[The shepherds stand near Mary and Joseph.]* When they looked around, they saw the donkeys, a cow, and some chickens. Then they saw the baby lying in the manger. Mary and Joseph stood nearby. In awe, the shepherds knelt by the manger and worshiped the baby. *[The shepherds kneel by the manger.]* They had found this special gift from God—Jesus, their hope and joy, their Savior.

### Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask:

**What did the angel say about the baby? Do you think Mary and Joseph had many visitors before the shepherds came?**

**Were many people interested in Jesus' birth? Why?**

**What would you have done if you had been one of the shepherds? if you had been Mary, or Joseph? How would you have felt?**

**Who had joy and hope at the time of Jesus' birth? Who has joy and hope because of Jesus today? Let's say our message together:**



**JESUS GIVES ME JOY AND HOPE.**

### Memory Verse

In advance, write the words of the memory verse where all may see. **"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests" (Luke 2:14).**

Seat the children in a circle on the floor around the "shepherd's fire." Read the memory verse and clap out the rhythm as you say the words.

#### You Need:

- white/chalk-board
- markers/chalk

Remove one word from the chalkboard each time you say and clap the verse. When all the words are removed, the children should know the verse.

### Bible Study

In advance, write one of the texts below on each cloth strip.

Form five groups. Give each group a cloth strip. Say: **Find and read the text written on your cloth strip. Each text will tell us something about the good news of Jesus' birth. Be ready to share what you learn with the class.** Adults assist as needed. Allow time, then ask each group to report.

**John 3:16**

(God loves us and is willing to do anything for us.)

**Luke 24:2-6**

(Jesus is alive.)

**Acts 1:11**

(Jesus will come back from heaven.)

**John 14:1-3**

(Jesus is preparing a special home for us in heaven.)

**Revelation 21:4**

(In heaven there will be no sadness.)

#### You Need:

- Bibles
- five strips of plain cloth
- broad-tip marker

### Debriefing

Ask: **What do you think about these good news texts?** (I'm happy, excited, looking forward to going to heaven.)

**What did the shepherds do when they heard the good news from the angels?** (They acted. They went to look for the baby.) **What should we do with the good news we have about Jesus?** (Act on it. Share it with others.)

**Do you have joy and hope because of Jesus? If you do, say today's message with me:**



**JESUS GIVES ME JOY AND HOPE.**

**3**

## Applying the Lesson

**You Need:**

- Bible
- baby doll

### God's Gift

Seat the children in a circle around the shepherd's fire. Say: **I have the doll we used earlier to represent Baby Jesus. I am going to give it to someone. As I give it to them, I am going to tell one reason why the gift of Jesus gives me joy and hope.**

Give a few practical examples, such as: The gift of Jesus gives me hope and joy when I am lonely. The gift of Jesus gives me hope and joy when others are unkind to me.

**The person I give the doll to then gives it to the next person while sharing a reason Jesus gives them hope and joy.**

If you have a small group each per-

son may have several turns.

### Debriefing

Ask: **Do you always feel happy? Why? Let's read what Paul wrote in Philippians 4:4.** Have one of the children read the verse.

**Is it possible to be happy all the time?**

Say: **Sometimes we may be sad, but even when we are sad we can have the joy of knowing that we can have hope and joy because of our Savior, Jesus.**

**Whom should we think of when we feel sad? (Jesus) If you really mean it, let's say our message together:**



**JESUS GIVES ME JOY AND HOPE.**

# 4

## Sharing the Lesson

### A. Sing With the Angels

Arrange in advance for the children to sing for church service, for another Sabbath School group, or to sing carols at a retirement or nursing home.

Say: **When the angels saw the birth of Jesus, they were so happy they sang praises to God to share the good news with the shepherds. Today we have heard again the good news about Jesus' birth. Let's follow the angels' example and sing about it. Let's share the good news of Jesus' birth with others.**

Practice some carols and tell the children where and when you are going to sing.

#### You Need:

- *Sing for Joy* songbooks

### Debriefing

Ask: **How do you feel when you sing?** (happy, joyful, good, etc.) Say: **Even if we are feeling sad inside, we begin to feel better and happier when we sing praises to God. Jesus is God's gift of love to all of us. Let's say our message together:**



**JESUS GIVES ME JOY AND HOPE.**

### B. Christmas Project

Continue the community Christmas project started two weeks ago.

### Debriefing

Ask: **What have you done about our project this week?**

**What more do we need to do?**

Make sure that everyone knows what they are to do. Encourage the children to work in pairs, if possible.

Say: **It is nice to get presents, but it also makes us feel good when we give presents. When we help others, we show God how much we appreciate Jesus, His gift of grace to us. Let's say our message together:**



**JESUS GIVES ME JOY AND HOPE.**

#### You Need:

- information about a community Christmas project

### Closing

Gather the children in a circle around the manger. Thank God for the gift of His Son and ask Him to be with the children as they share the story of Jesus' birth with others.



## Songs of Joy

### References

Luke 2:8–20; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 47, 48

### Memory Verse

“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests” (Luke 2:14, NIV).

### The Message

Jesus gives me joy and hope.

*It’s hard to keep good news to yourself. When something really good happens, you just have to tell everyone. “I got an A at school today!” “My team came in first!” No matter what it is, news can’t be kept secret—especially good news. A long time ago some angels shared some very good news. This is how it may have happened.*

No one in Bethlehem took much notice of the poor couple who moved into the stable behind the inn. Bethlehem was crowded with people who had come to be counted. Soldiers and officials rushed to get ready for the census. No one was interested in a newborn baby.

It was different in heaven. The angels watched closely. When Jesus was born, they began to sing praises. They shouted their songs with joy.

Some shepherds sat on the hills overlooking Bethlehem. All was quiet. Their flocks of sheep and goats rested peacefully. The shepherds sat around a fire to keep warm. And they talked about their favorite subject, the promise of the Messiah. Yes, the Messiah! The one who would come and save them. Surely, He must come soon.

Suddenly a blazing light filled the

sky. The shepherds held their hands up to protect their eyes. Then a beautiful voice said, “Don’t be afraid. I have good news for everyone! Today in David’s town (another name for Bethlehem) a baby has been born. This baby is the Lord, the Promised One of Israel! You will find the baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

The shepherds gasped. Before they caught their breath, the sky was filled with angels. Joyful praises to God were sung: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

Just as suddenly, the angels disappeared. The shepherds rubbed their eyes. Everything seemed so dark. As they looked at each other’s faces, they knew it was not a dream. They could still hear the angels’ song echoing off the nearby hills.

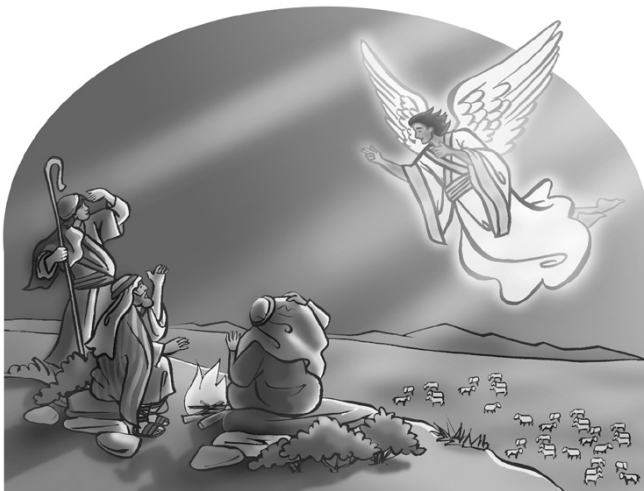
Joy and happiness bubbled up inside them. They said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

The shepherds hurried down the hillside and into the town.

Finally they reached the stable. When they looked inside, they saw donkeys, camels, a cow, and some chickens. Then they saw the baby lying in the manger. Mary and Joseph were nearby. Quietly the shepherds came in, knelt by the manger, and worshiped the baby. And Mary wondered about these things in her heart.

The angels were the first to share the good news of Jesus’ birth with others. God wants us to share that good news too. It is good news that everyone needs to hear, even though it happened long ago. Just as the angels praised God, we are also thankful for the greatest gift of all time, the birth of Jesus—the Son of God, the Promised One.

With whom will you share the good news today?



## Daily Activities

### Sabbath

- If possible, go for a walk with your family and share your lesson with them. What do you see that reminds you of the story? Ask your family: What Bible stories about sheep or shepherds can you think of?
- Draw the outline of a sheep. Write your memory verse on it, including the reference. Use it to teach the verse to your family.
- Thank God for people who care for animals.

### Sunday

- For family worship today, read and discuss Luke 2:8–14. What was the good news the shepherds heard?
- Find out five things about sheep you didn't know before. Look around your house for things made of wool. How many can you find? Share all of this with your family.
- Thank God for clothes and covers that keep you warm.

### Monday

- The angels sang for joy. Make up a joyful tune for your memory verse. Teach it to your family. If possible, have a campfire and sing carols around it. If not, have worship by candlelight.
- Sit in a dark place (perhaps a closet) until your eyes get accustomed to the darkness. Turn on a bright light. How do your eyes feel? What part of the lesson story does that remind you of?
- Thank God for light and for your sight.

### Tuesday

- During family worship, read and discuss Philippians 4:4. What does Paul tell us to do?
- Find some old newspapers and magazines. Ask your family to help you cut out pictures to make a "good news" collage. While you work together, ask each person to share something good that happened today.

- Thank God for the good news of Jesus' birth and His life.

### Wednesday

- With your family, read Luke 2:8–14 in a different Bible version. Which version is easiest to understand?
- If possible, go outside at night and look at the stars. If not, look at a book about stars. Which star is the brightest? What is the difference between a constellation and a planet? (See a dictionary, the internet, or an encyclopedia.)
- Draw and cut out a star from cardboard. Cover it with aluminum foil. Punch a hole in one point, thread some yarn through it, and hang it.
- Thank God for the stars.

### Thursday

- Before worship, ask your mother if you can make some angel- or star-shaped cookies. Share them with your family tonight.
- During worship, ask your family to tell about a time they were surprised by good news.
- To learn about a shepherd from Bethlehem who became king, read 1 Samuel 16:1–13 together. What else do you know about him?
- Share the good news of Baby Jesus with a friend. Ask God to be with your friend.

### Friday

- During family worship, ask each person to choose a favorite carol as you sing together.
- Ask someone to pretend to be an angel who sang for the shepherds. What did they see? Where did they go? How did they feel? How did the shepherds act?
- Ask each person to think of one way to share the good news about Jesus with others. Then make plans to do so.
- Ask God to be with you as you share the good news about Jesus with others.