

# Songs of Joy

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

**I**t'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.

**N**o 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

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 men on whom His favor rests."

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



## The Message

Jesus gives me  
joy and hope.

## Memory Verse

“Glory to God in the  
highest heaven, and on  
earth peace to those  
on whom his favor  
rests”

(Luke 2:14, NIV).

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?



Shepherds were looked down on, but God sent a choir of angels to tell them about Jesus' birth.



## S A B B A T H

**DO** 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** Draw the outline of a sheep. Write your memory verse on it, including the reference. Use it to teach the verse to your family.

**PRAY** Thank God for people who care for animals.

## S U N D A Y

**READ** For family worship today, read and discuss Luke 2:8-14. What was the good news the shepherds heard?

**DO** 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.

**PRAY** Thank God for clothes and covers that keep you warm.

## M O N D A Y

**DO** 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.

**DO** 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?

**PRAY** Thank God for light and for your sight.

## T U E S D A Y

**READ** During family worship, read and discuss Philippians 4:4. What does Paul tell us to do?

**ASK** 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.

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

## W E D N E S D A Y

**READ** With your family, read Luke 2:8-14 in a different Bible version. Which version is easiest to understand?

**DO** 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** 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.

**PRAY** Thank God for the stars.

# THURSDAY

**DO** Before worship, ask your mother if you can make some angel- or star-shaped cookies. Share them with your family tonight.

**ASK** During worship, ask your family to tell about a time they were surprised by good news.

**READ** 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** Share the good news of Baby Jesus with a friend. Ask God to be with your friend.

# FRIDAY

**SING** During family worship, ask each person to choose a favorite carol as you sing together.

**ASK** 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?

**THINK** Ask each person to think of one way to share the good news about Jesus with others. Then make plans to do so.

**PRAY** Ask God to be with you as you share the good news about Jesus with others.

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## PUZZLE

Directions: Match the answers with the correct boxes.

1. (Across) Who is the best gift of all?
2. (Across) To find what Jesus gives us, change the first letter of *rope* to an "h".
3. (Across) Who sang in celebration of Jesus' birth?

1. (Down) This three-letter word means happiness and is part of this lesson's title.
4. (Down) The first word of this lesson's title.
5. (Down) Who watched sheep in the fields?

