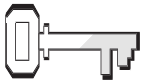


The Night the Angels Sang



References

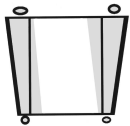
Luke 2:8-20;
The Desire of Ages,
pp. 47-49



Memory Verse

"Do not be afraid.
I bring you good news
that will cause great joy
for all the people.
Today in the town of David
a Savior has been born
to you; he is the
Messiah, the Lord"
(Luke 2:10, 11).

Note: *The children
learned the first half of this
memory verse two weeks ago.*



Objectives

The children will:
Know that Jesus gives
us grace and grace
gives us joy.
Feel the joy of re-
ceiving Jesus.
Respond by joyfully
accepting Jesus into
their lives.



The Message

Jesus gives us joy.

Monthly Theme

God is our best friend.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Some shepherds are watching their sheep at night on a hillside outside Bethlehem. Suddenly a bright angel appears and tells them not to be afraid, but to be happy! The angel brings joyful news of the Savior's birth in Bethlehem, the city of David. Just as suddenly a great company of angels joins the first angel, and the sky glows with angels praising God in joyful song. After the joyous angels leave to go back to heaven, the excited shepherds go to find Baby Jesus.

This is a lesson about grace.

Joy and celebration are the natural result of personally accepting and experiencing God's marvelous grace. When we really realize the magnitude of the love and grace of God in providing Jesus to save us, pure, exuberant joy wells up in our hearts. We can't keep it in because of the wonder of being loved so much. Everyone around us will know about the joy, too, especially children.

Teacher Enrichment

"'Bring . . . good tidings' [is from the] Greek [word] *euaggelizō*, 'to proclaim good news,' or 'to announce glad tidings.' Our words 'evangelist,' 'evangelize,' and 'evangelism' are derived from this Greek word. It is in this sense that the gospel writers are 'evangelists.' From its very inception Christianity has announced 'good tidings' or 'good news.' The 'good news' or 'gospel' of redeeming love and salvation [is its theme]" (*The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, pp. 699, 700).

Room Decorations

See Lesson 10.

Program Overview

Lesson Section	Minutes	Activities	Materials Needed
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
1 Readiness Options	up to 10	A. <i>The Sounds of Joy</i> B. <i>The Movement of Joy</i>	Bible, a variety of musical instruments for children, audio device to download or play spiritual Christmas music colored scarves, audio device to download or play spiritual Christmas music
Any Time Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	Fellowship Songbook Mission Offering Prayer	<i>Sing for Joy</i> <i>Children's Mission</i> gift-wrapped box used last week none
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story Memory Verse Bible Study	Bible-times costumes; a light source—mechanic's drop light, lamp without a shade, flashlight, etc. construction paper, marker Bibles
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Thumbs Up,</i> <i>Thumbs Down</i>	none
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Grace Coupon</i>	"Grace coupon" coupons (see p. 141), strips of rag, a red bow, a sprig of holly or other natural decoration

***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. Have them begin the Readiness Activity of your choice.

1

Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

You Need:

- Bible
- musical instruments
- audio device
- spiritual Christmas music

A. The Sounds of Joy

Provide a variety of musical instruments and give the students a few minutes to express joy in music. Play some joyful, spiritual Christmas carols on an audio device or have someone play the piano. Encourage the children to sing along and play their instruments.

Debriefing

Ask: **Which instrument sounds the most like “joy” to you? Why? Which sounds the least joyful to you? When music makes you joyful, how do you show it?** (Move to the music, wave scarves, sing joyfully, etc.) **How do you feel when you sing or play a joyful song?** (happy, better than before, etc.) Read aloud Luke 2:13, 14. **What do you think the angels’ song sounded like?** (Take answers.) **Our primary Sabbath School songbook is called *Sing for Joy*. Why do you think it was given that name?** (Because singing brings joy; because its songs are about Jesus.) **We have something special to sing about because . . .**



JESUS GIVES US JOY.

Say that with me.

You Need:

- sheer, colored scarf for each child
- audio device
- spiritual Christmas music

B. The Movement of Joy

Provide colored scarves and play some joyful Christmas music. Give the children time to wave their scarves to the music.

Debriefing

Did you like waving the scarves to the music? Did that feel like joy to you? What other movements feel joyful to you? (Take suggestions. If appropriate, try some of the other joyful movements the students suggest.) **Why can you be so joyful?** (Accept answers.) **Today’s message tells us that:**



JESUS GIVES US JOY.

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). Review the memory verse and allow time for sharing experiences from last week's lesson study. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.



Suggested Songs

"Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 1)

"I Have the Joy" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 109)

"There's a Song in the Air" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 82)

"Joy to the World" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 81)



Mission

Share a story from *Children's Mission*. Identify something in the story that brings joy.



Offering

Say: **Our offering goes to help others learn about the joy that Jesus brings.**

You Need:

- gift-wrapped box used last week

Prayer



Ask the children if they are using their daily prayer calendars they made in Lesson 10. Any answered prayers, requests? Then do a "popcorn prayer" with joy bursting out all over. Ask the children to form a circle, close their eyes, and tell God what brings them joy and thank Him for it. Have them do this like popcorn popping—speaking out from anywhere in the circle at any time. In closing, an adult can again thank God for the gift of Jesus and for the joy that gift brings.

Bible Lesson

You Need:

- Bible-times costumes
- a light source (mechanic's drop light, lamp without a shade, flashlight, etc.)

Experiencing the Story

Dress the children in Bible-times costumes. Have them speak and act their parts as you prompt them.

Characters: angel Gabriel, other angels (half the class), shepherds (the other half of the class)

Prop: A light source—mechanic's drop light, lamp without a shade, flashlight, etc.

Preparation: Tell the "angels" they will sing "Joy to the World" to the shepherds at the appropriate time, when you prompt them.

Read or tell the story.

(Divide the children into groups of shepherds and angels. Bring the shepherds up front and have them sit on the floor.)

It was a quiet night outside Bethlehem. Like any other night, the shepherds sat together on the grass as their sheep grazed quietly nearby.

The shepherds murmured in low voices. They may have been discussing their very favorite topic—the coming of the Messiah. Just thinking and talking about and praying for the Messiah filled their hearts with longing.

The shepherds sat quietly in the deep silence of the night. An occasional bleat of a sheep broke the stillness.

Suddenly a bright star flared in the sky. *(Have a helper turn on your light source and point it at the shepherds.)* It came rocketing toward them. As the light grew larger and brighter, it lit the whole countryside like noontime. The shepherds blinked, frozen with fright. *(Prompt the shepherds.)* Some jumped to their feet. *(Prompt some of the shepherds.)* Others protected their faces with their arms. *(Prompt the other shepherds.)* Before them stood a dazzling per-

son. Could it be an angel? *(Prompt Gabriel to stand in front of the shepherds.)*

"Don't be afraid!" a pleasant voice said. *(Prompt Gabriel to repeat the lines as you say them.)* "I bring you good news of great joy. The joy 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 that will prove it to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Immediately the angel messenger was joined by a great choir of joyous angels. *(Prompt the other angels.)* Angels filled the sky! They were all singing. "Glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth peace to all on whom God's favor rests." *(Prompt your angels to sing "Joy to the World.")*

The exciting song sent shivers down the shepherds' backs. They watched the angels in wonder. The music filled the night. Beautiful colors swirled through the sky. The angels' joy filled the shepherds' hearts.

Finally the music drifted slowly away. The angels flew higher and higher, returning to heaven. *(Turn out the light and prompt your angels to sit down.)* The shepherds strained to hear the very last notes of the music as the light faded. Then it was quiet. Heart-pounding quiet.

"Did you see that?" one shepherd gasped. *(Prompt a shepherd.)*

"They were real, weren't they?" *(Prompt a shepherd.)*

"I never heard or seen anything like it!" *(Prompt a shepherd.)*

"Let's go!" *(Prompt a shepherd.)*

One joyous shepherd grabbed his staff and began running down the hill toward town. All the others followed. *(Prompt the shepherds to run to the back of the room.)* That's how it is with God's free gift of grace: it still gives us joy.

Debriefing

When you are excited about something, what do you want to do? (Share it with someone.) **Why do you think the angels came to earth to sing?** (They wanted the shepherds to share the joy of Jesus' birth.) **Why did they choose the shepherds to whom to tell their good news?** (The shepherds were looking forward to the coming of the Messiah; they would be excited too.)

How would you have felt if you had been one of the shepherds? (scared, happy, excited, etc.) **How would you have felt if you had been one of the angels? Today's message reminds us that:**



JESUS GIVES US JOY.

Memory Verse

You Need:

- construction paper
- pen/pencil/marker

Before class, write the six phrases (as listed below) of the memory verse

on construction paper.

Form six groups. (A group may be one person, or the children can take more than one phrase.) Give each group their phrase. Allow time to learn their phrase, and to make up a simple melody for their words. When everyone is ready, assemble the groups and have each sing their phrase, in order, as an original song. Repeat until all know the song.

Group 1 Do not be afraid.

Group 2 I bring you good news of great joy

Group 3 That will be for all the people.

Group 4 Today in the town of David

Group 5 A Savior has been born to you.

Group 6 He is Christ the Lord.

Bible Study

Have the children read Luke 2:8-20 in the following manner: Use the same "shepherds" and "angels" from Experiencing the Story to read what the shepherds and angels say. Choose two narrators (one from each group) to read the narration in the scriptural account. Divide the verses as follows:

First narrator: verses 8, 9, 10a, 13, 15a

Second narrator: verses 16-20

Angel(s): verses 10b, 11, 12, 14

Shepherds: verse 15b

Have the children read the verses in order. Help where needed.

Debriefing

Even though you have heard or read the Christmas story every year, how does it make you feel? Did you learn anything new about the familiar Christmas story from our lesson today? If so, what?

Do you want to spend more time with Jesus during this holiday season? (Yes.) **How do you choose to make that happen?** (Study my Sabbath School lesson and pray daily; share my joy about Jesus with others; think more about Jesus than about things; etc.)

What are you going to remember during the holidays and all year long? Let's say it together:



JESUS GIVES US JOY.

You Need:

- Bibles

Applying the Lesson

Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down

Say: **I am going to read a list of things that could happen at Christmas-time. Rate each event according to how much joy it would bring you.**

The Rating Scale:

Rating	Rating Sign
Great joy	Two thumbs up
Some joy	One thumb up
Little joy	One thumb down
No joy	Two thumbs down

The events: Read the following one by one. At the end of each, ask: **How do you feel? Show me your rating signs.** Allow time.

1. You are shopping at the mall when someone dressed as an angel gives you a \$20 free gift certificate for a store called Toys Be It!
2. You are playing computer games against a real expert—and you win!
3. You have a \$10 gift certificate for Toys Be It! As you enter the store you see a ragged boy staring at a display of \$10 gifts. You give the child your certificate.
4. The boy looks at your certificate, then gives it back to you and walks away.
5. While you are Christmas caroling in your neighborhood, someone wearing a scary costume appears in front of you.
6. You find out that the scare-you prank was just a joke by your friend's brother.

Debriefing

How do you think the boy felt when

he refused your gift certificate? (sad, OK, proud, don't know) **How would he have felt if he had accepted it and bought the gift?** (happy, joyous, full of joy, thankful, good) **Do you think your gift certificate brought the boy joy? Why or why not?** (No, because he did not use it. Yes, if it made him feel strong to give it back.) **How is receiving God's gift of grace (His love and forgiveness) like receiving that gift certificate?** (You have to accept the gift to find the joy.)

How would you feel about seeing a scary face when you don't expect it? (frightened, shocked, surprised) **When you are filled with fear, there is no joy, right? So how does it feel when you find out that there is nothing to fear after all?** (like laughing, relief, joy)

Jesus was born to show us how to live and make good choices so that all humans may join Him in heaven. What did that have to do with the angels' song? (The angels announce Jesus' birth to the shepherds so they would know that God loved them. God sent Jesus as a great gift not just to the shepherds but to all the world. Jesus was a baby, but He would grow up choosing well. His life, death and resurrection would help people know they too could make right choices, live a joyful life here on earth, and receive the gift of eternal life.) **You can receive the gift now. All you have to do is tell Jesus that you believe and that you choose to be His child.* Let us never forget that ...**



JESUS GIVES US JOY.

*Ask the children who want to do that to raise their hands. Have them go with an adult to a quiet place and tell God about their decision.

Sharing the Lesson

Grace Coupon

You Need:

- photocopies of “grace coupon” (see p. 141)
- strips of rag
- a red bow
- a sprig of holly, or other natural decoration

In advance, make a copy of the “grace coupon” for each child. (See page 141.)

Help the children to share the joy this week. Explain that this means that they would think up ways to help other

people experience the joy and surprise of God’s grace. An ambassador is a representative or messenger of someone else. When we help others to experience the joy of God’s grace, we are being “grace ambassadors.” (The angels were “grace ambassadors” to the shepherds.) To get them started, read some of the grace starters below. Let the children role-play the situations.

1. **Grace Coupons.** Give a coupon to each child. Encourage them to give it this week to someone with whom they will share God’s grace. Sharing God’s grace means doing something nice for or doing something nice to someone else.
2. **Christmas wreaths.** Give the children strips of rag to braid and then to join in a circle. Complete with a red bow or a sprig of holly or some other natural decoration. (Option: a bunch of evergreens or wild or dried flowers tied with a bow.) Give this to someone as a surprise gift and leave a grace coupon.
3. **Christmas deeds.** Secretly make the bed of a family member and leave the

coupon on the pillow. (Options: complete some household chore, such as washing dishes, taking out the trash, putting away toys, sweeping the walk, raking the yard, shoveling snow.)

4. **Joyful songs.** The children could knock on the door of a neighbor (accompanied by an adult family member) and ask, “May I share something with you that I learned about God?” And then sing part of a carol, or say the memory verse, or show a Christmas picture they have drawn, and/or pray for the neighbor. Before leaving, they can say: Did you know that Jesus gives us joy? Leave a grace coupon.

Debriefing

Say: **For a grace ambassador to truly bring joy, we need to pray for three things. First, let us pray that Jesus will come into our hearts and give us joy. What will we do?** (Pray that Jesus will come and give us joy.)

Next, we need to pray that Jesus will help us share the joy. What two things are we going to do first? (Pray that Jesus will come and give us joy. And that He will help us share the joy.)

And third, we need to pray for the people we are giving our coupons to that God will give them joy. Review all three steps again. What message do we want the people to remember?



JESUS GIVES US JOY.

Closing

Sing “Joy to the World” (*Sing for Joy*, no. 81) to close. Ask a child to pray that this Sabbath and the new week will be full of joy—the joy that comes from God.

The Night the Angels Sang

References

Luke 2:8-20;
The Desire of Ages,
pp. 47-49

Memory Verse

"Do not be afraid.
I bring you good
news that will
cause great joy
for all the people.
Today in the town
of David a Savior
has been born
to you; he is the
Messiah, the Lord"
(Luke 2:10, 11).

The Message

Jesus gives us joy.

Have you ever wanted something very, very much? You prayed for it every day. You dreamed about it every night. Then someone surprises you with what you wanted—when you least expected.

Many, many years ago some shepherds wanted something very much. They got their wish in a surprising way.

The shepherds huddled in the fragrant grass. The sheep rested nearby, pale, rounded shapes in the darkness. The moon was only a sliver in the sky. The stars twinkled and glittered with the special sparkle they have on clear nights.

The shepherds murmured in low voices. They may have been discussing their very favorite topic. It was something they may have talked about every night—the coming of the Messiah. Yes, they were tired from the work of the day. But just thinking about and talking about and praying for the Messiah filled their hearts with longing.

The shepherds sat quietly together in the deep silence of the night. An occasional bleat of a sheep broke the stillness.

Suddenly a bright star flared in the sky. It came rocketing toward them. As the light grew larger and brighter, the whole countryside glowed like noontime. The shepherds blinked, frozen with fright. Some jumped to their feet. Others pro-

tected their faces with their arms. Before them stood a dazzling person. Could it be an angel?

"Don't be afraid!" a pleasant voice said. "I bring you good news of great joy. The joy 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 that will prove it to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Immediately the angel messenger was joined by a great choir of joyous angels. Angels filled the sky, and they were all singing! "Glory to God in the highest heaven," they sang. "And on earth peace to all on whom God's favor rests."

The shepherds watched the angels in wonder, hardly daring to believe they were real! The bright, happy music swelled and filled the night. Beautiful colors swirled through the sky and dazzled the shepherds' eyes. The angels'

joy filled the shepherds' hearts until they felt as if they would burst.

Finally the music drifted slowly away. The angels flew higher and higher, returning to heaven. The shepherds strained to hear the very last notes of the music as the light faded. Then it was quiet. Heart-pounding quiet.

"Did you see that?" one shepherd gasped.

"They *were* real, weren't they?" asked another.

"I've never heard or seen anything like it!"

"Let's go!"

"Go where?"



"To Bethlehem! The angel said the Messiah was born this very day! *This very day!*"

One joyous shepherd grabbed his staff and began racing down the hill toward town. All the others followed. That's how it is with God's free gift of grace. It gave the shepherds great joy and it still gives people joy. Jesus gives us joy.

Daily Activities

Sabbath

- With your family, go to a field where sheep could live. Pretend you are a shepherd surrounded with sheep. Sit together and read your lesson story. Imagine that the angels have come to you. Can you feel the joy?
- Read your memory verse in Luke 2:10, 11.
- Sing "There's a Song in the Air" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 82).

Sunday

- During family worship, read Luke 2:8-14 together.
- Continue to work on "Jesus' Baby Book" that you started last week. Today, add some pictures of the angels' visit, the shepherds, and the sheep.
- Teach your memory verse to your family.

Monday

- With your family, read Luke 2:15-20 for worship. The angels who sang were surrounded by bright light. What is the brightest light in your house? What is the brightest light in the sky today? Why shouldn't we look directly at it? Thank God for light.
- Sing "Now Is Born the Divine Christ Child" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 78).

Tuesday

- During family worship today, make a page in "Jesus' Baby Book" with the following information:

Name of baby Jesus Christ
Parents Mary and the Holy Spirit
(Joseph—earthly father)
Place of birth Bethlehem
Weight at birth (Take a guess
and write it here.)



- Find the names of some well-known great-grandfathers of Baby Jesus in Matthew 1:1, 2, 5, 6.

Wednesday

- Write the words of your favorite Christmas carol on one of the pages of your "Jesus' Baby Book." Decorate the page. Then sing the carol.
- The shepherds ran to Bethlehem. Have a race with a friend. Run as fast as you can. Thank God you can run and play.
- Ask each family member to name one thing that brings them joy. Then read Philippians 4:4 together.

Thursday

- During worship today, give everyone some drawing paper and colors. At the top, write "The Colors of Joy." Make a picture of the colors of joy. What about your picture says "joy"? Talk about it with your family. Then say your memory verse together. From where does *your* joy come? If your joy comes from the Lord, what will happen to you? See Nehemiah 8:10, last sentence. Ask God to help you tell someone about His joy.
- Say or sing your memory verse together.

Friday

- Plan a Christmas worship for your family. Some suggestions: Light some candles. Read the shepherds' story in Luke 2:8-20. Have the shepherds tell who they are and what they think of Jesus' birth. Focus on their joy.
- Other ideas for worship: Sing favorite carols, read favorite Christmas poems, etc.
- Make Christmas cards to give to your neighbors. Decorate them and write your memory verse inside. Pray for your neighbors.
- What will you do tomorrow to share the joy that Jesus brings?