



Date: _____

Series: Real Life Stories of God Sightings
Winter Year 3, Lesson 31

Shepherds Point to Jesus

Take Home Point: *God shows us the Savior so we can point others to Jesus. *Repeat this phrase throughout the lesson.

Bible Event Luke 2:8-20; Philippians 2:6-11

Key Verse: Philippians 2:6-7, "Although he (*Jesus*) was in the form of God and equal with God, he did not take advantage of this equality. Instead, he emptied himself by taking on the form of a servant..."

We will help kids know:

- The Bible event of the angels appearing to the shepherds and proclaiming the birth of the Messiah.
- The sign given to the shepherds was that he would be a baby lying in a feed trough in Bethlehem.
- Just as the shepherds pointed others to the arrival of Jesus, so can we.




We will help kids feel:

- Surprised that God's Son would be born in a barn and his bed would be a feed trough.
- Excited that they, too, can share the good news of the Savior with others.

We will help kids do:

- Make a special Christmas card to share with someone who needs to hear the good news of Jesus.
- Pray for people who need to hear the good news of Jesus.
- Identify with the shepherds that ordinary people, especially kids, are invited to welcome Jesus and share him with the world.

THIS LESSON'S ROADMAP

DESTINATION	PAGE #	DISCOVERIES ON YOUR JOURNEY	SUPPLIES NEEDED
Small Group Warm-Up 	3	Kids play a mystery game trying to find a present, which is a clue to how Jesus was wrapped.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a wrapped box with an easy-to-remove lid for each group (Remember the boxes you used two lessons ago.) • a sock with small candy canes inside of it
Large Group 	4 8 14-15	Overview Puppet Presentation: “Gordy Finds a Sign”—Gordy dresses cool so he can be chosen by God to point others to the Savior. He learns that God chooses ordinary people, like the shepherds, to spread the good news that God sent his Son Jesus to the world to save us from our sin. Appendix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a small bundle of straw • a megaphone or microphone with a clue taped to it • clues (see appendix) • Gordy wearing sun-glasses • small camera • costumed shepherd • a small bundle of straw • props for series
Small Group Application 	5	Kids make a Christmas card to share with someone who needs to hear the good news of Jesus while they discuss the significance of why God chose to send his Son into such a lowly lifestyle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 1/2"x 11" sheet of paper per child • Christmas wrapping • glue stick • fabric glue • scissors • ribbon and bows • “God wrapped his presents, too.” printed on labels • “A Savior, Christ the Lord ... you will find lying in a manger.” on labels

Small Group Warm-Up: 15 minutes



Purpose: *Get pointed in the right direction!* Build relationships and help guests feel at ease. Do the learning readiness activity that will point your group in the right direction for the lesson.

The opening activity is an interactive mystery game. Each small group will be given a wrapped box with an easy-to-remove lid. The empty box should be placed conspicuously in the middle of the group. In a hidden place will be a sock with enough small candy canes for each child inside.

Begin with light conversation. Let kids have an opportunity to share about their Christmas preparations.

What are you doing to get ready for Christmas? Do you have any presents under the tree yet? Are you buying any presents?

I have a present for each of you this morning. This present will remind us of whom we are talking about today. Why don't you see if you can find it?

When the children check the wrapped box, they will find nothing inside of it. If you would really like to be tricky, the box could be filled with tissue paper or something that is useless to the children.

Encourage the kids to look around the room for the present since they did not find it in the wrapped package. Since the candy canes are hidden in a sock, the sock might be hidden in the tub of supplies, your coat pocket, or wherever you choose.

Here are some clues that might help the kids find your gift.



Your present is wrapped in something that sometimes stinks.



Your present is wrapped in something that your mom does not like to see lying on the floor.



Your present is wrapped in something that is seldom used for wrapping gifts. Although, sometimes it is used at Christmas. (Hint: A Christmas stocking.)

After the kids have found the sock with the candy canes, distribute the candy. Ask the children not to open the candy until they return from large group.

One would expect the present or surprise to be in the nicely wrapped package. This is not true of how God gave us his Son Jesus. He placed Jesus into the world “wrapped” in a feed trough of a barn. That was the sign given to the shepherds by the angels so they might identify the Lord and Savior of the world. What a surprise wrapping! It does make sense, though, when we think of how God humbled himself to come into our world and take our sin and pain upon himself as he went to the cross.

The candy canes remind us whom we are going to talk about today. Who wants to guess whom it is? Right! The candy canes remind us of shepherds because they look like a shepherd’s staff.

Many of you remember how the angels appeared to the shepherds. Do you remember the whole story? The angels told the shepherds they would find Jesus because of a certain sign or clue. Does anyone know what that sign or clue was? (A newborn baby in Bethlehem would be found lying in a feed trough.)

If there is more time for discussion, you might ask the kids their opinions about why God would choose to have his Son born into the world and laid in a manger for his bed.

Today we will learn that **God shows us the Savior so we can point others to Jesus.*

Large Group Overview: 20-30 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids observe what the Bible says. Present the Bible event in creative fashion. Help kids begin to interpret what it means.*

Puppet Presentation: “Gordy Finds a Sign” – Gordy dresses cool so he can be chosen by God to point others to the Savior. He learns that God chooses ordinary people, like the shepherds, to spread the good news that God sent his Son Jesus to the world to save us from our sin.

Small Group Application: 20-25 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids map out the meaning of the Bible event in their lives. Use the questions to stimulate discussion but don't feel tied to them. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you. Include personal examples from your own faith journey. The example of Christ at work in your life will leave lasting impressions of how Christ can work in the children's lives.*

Use your Bibles! Children need to learn how to look up references and follow along when scripture is read aloud. Allow for quality time of prayer at the close of the lesson.

Observation Questions: What happened?

With Bibles open to Luke 2:8-20, briefly review the story. Try to adjust the questions to fit the reading and learning level of the children. While reviewing the observation questions, let the children have their candy canes that remind them of shepherds' staffs.

Whom did God choose to announce the news of the birth of the Savior and where were they located? *(Luke 2:8. Shepherds in fields near Bethlehem.)*

How did the shepherds react when the angel first appeared to them and the Lord's glory filled the area with light? *(Luke 2:9. They were terrified.)*

What did the angel tell the shepherds? *(Luke 2:10-11. "Don't be afraid! I have good news for you... Today your Savior, Christ the Lord, was born in David's city.")*

What were the signs for how the shepherds would recognize the Savior? *(Luke 2:12. The infant will be wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger.)*

What did all of the angels then begin to sing? *(Luke 2:14. "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those who have his good will!")*

What did the shepherds do after they went to Bethlehem and saw the baby? *(Luke 2:17, 18, and 20. They told others the amazing story and glorified and praised God for everything they had seen and heard.)*

Interpretation Questions: What does this mean?

Why do you think God chose to have his own Son born in a barn and laid in a manger?

Allow some of the children to share their ideas.

Jesus' mission was humble. He came as a servant king into the world to give his life for us. Jesus' birth was humble to show what his whole life would be.

Read Philippians 2:6-11 to the children.

In a way, we can say that God wrapped his Christmas present not with fancy wrapping, but with very humble wrapping. Instead of having Jesus born in a palace or hospital, he was born in a barn. His wrapping paper was "straw." That is surprising, isn't it? Let's make a Christmas card to share that surprise with others.

Directions for Christmas Card

Supplies needed: 8 ½-inch x 11-inch sheet of paper and wrapping paper for each child, scissors, fabric glue, glue sticks, ribbons and bows, two preprinted labels (see appendix) for each child

Give each child an 8 ½-inch x 11-inch sheet of paper. Using a glue stick, affix it to the backside of a piece of wrapping paper slightly larger than the copy paper. Cut the wrapping paper around the edges of the copy paper. Fold the card in half so the wrapping paper is the outside cover.

Apply sections of ribbon and a bow with fabric glue to make the front of the card look like a wrapped Christmas present. Then attach the phrase "God wrapped his presents, too," which has been preprinted on a label. (Older children may want to write the phrase out themselves.)

Affix the other label to the inside so the card opens up with the following phrase, "A Savior, Christ the Lord... you will find lying in a manger." (*Older kids may want to write this out also.*)

The children can then write "Merry Christmas from..." and sign their names. Use fabric glue to attach straw to the open spaces on the inside of the cards.

The overall appearance of the card creates an element of surprise when we consider that God wrapped the best present we have ever received in such a humble way. He used the most appropriate wrapping, though, because Jesus would give his life for all of us.

Application Questions: What does this mean to me?

While kids are making the Christmas card, discuss the following questions.

If Jesus was born today, what humble modern day setting do you think he might choose? (*A park, a homeless shelter.*)

If you were told this good news by an angel, with whom would you want to share it?

Who do you know that really needs a Savior and may not know Jesus?

God chose lowly shepherds to welcome the Son of God in his humble birthplace and to share the good news of a Savior with everyone they knew. Likewise, God chooses us ordinary adults and children to share the same exciting good news with everyone we know. **God shows us the Savior so we can point others to Jesus.*

Closing Prayer:

Thank God for the best gift ever, Jesus Christ, whom he sent to ordinary people as Savior of the world. Encourage kids to pray for the person with whom they want to give the card. Also pray for other people who need to know the good news of the Savior.

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Large Group Presentation

Gordy Finds a Sign

Puppet Presentation

Take Home Point: **God shows us the Savior so we can point others to Jesus.*

The presenter will role play as an investigative reporter looking for real life stories of God sightings. Gordy will serve as his sidekick detective.

Props needed:

- *“Real Life Stories of God Sightings” sign*
- *any props to create the setting of a live interview such as a director’s scene board clapped in front of the camera before the action goes live*
- *backdrops of palm trees and first century Judea villages could be used—use your imagination and facility to create a setting that resembles the landscape of Jesus’ birth*
- *small bundle of straw*
- *a megaphone or microphone*

Costumes:

- *The investigative reporter (presenter) needs costuming that fits his role—add a baseball cap with a front label, “God Watcher,” or the character could also sit behind a desk in a suit coat and tie*
- *A child volunteer with safari-like costume*
- *Gordy would need a similar hat and could be in a safari shirt and/or have a set of binoculars around his neck*
- *sunglasses*
- *Adult volunteer costumed to look like a biblical shepherd*

Each week the puppet drama will involve a volunteer looking for clues that give the identity of the person interviewed. After the child finds the clues, the character will enter and give his or her story based on the interview questions posed by the investigative reporter.

The two clues hidden in the audience to be discovered by the child investigator will be a small bundle of straw and a megaphone. (A microphone can be substituted for the megaphone.) The large group Bible event is presented in the context of the puppet script and the interview with the Bible character, a shepherd.

NOTE: The following script is a paraphrase of the gospel event.

Gordy comes out with sunglasses or some other type of costume to show he is trying to appear cool.

Mr. King: Kids, are you ready for our special investigative report? We are looking for real life stories of God sightings. Today we are going to talk to someone who had a “real life God sighting.” I need some help from my special assistant investigator, Gordy. Gordy, are you there?

Gordy: *(Appears wearing sunglasses and looking cool)* Good morning! I am ready for a God sighting and I’m ready to make the scoop!

Mr. King: I’m glad you are ready to make the scoop, Gordy. Today we will talk to someone who actually did have a God sighting. But wait a minute, what’s up with the sunglasses?

Gordy: Well, I heard God had *chosen* some people to come and meet him personally and I thought I would like to be *chosen* also.

Mr. King: So what do the sunglasses have to do with God choosing to meet you personally?

Gordy: Obviously, God is going to choose way cool dudes, like me, to come and meet him.

Mr. King: So you need sunglasses to be cool?

Gordy: I’m sorry, Mr. King, but it’s just too hard to explain to *you* about being cool *(looking Mr. King up and down)*. Plus, it would take a lot of work!

Mr. King: So you think God is going to choose cool people to come and meet him?

Gordy: That’s a fact, Jack!

Mr. King: What do you think, kids? Maybe Gordy has something to learn today. Let’s have a volunteer from the audience come forward and see if we can locate our clues for today.

Introduce the volunteer, and then ask the following question.

The first clue we have is, “Can you find something that might be used for loud announcements?”

In advance have hidden a megaphone or microphone with the following clue attached. Have the volunteer look for the clue and read the attachment:

“When God’s Son Jesus came into the world, how did God make a special announcement that Jesus was born?”

Gordy: *(As the question is read and before it is answered, Gordy continues.)* I know! I know! God sent a magic lighting bolt and zapped all of the important leaders in the whole world! He should have called the Roman emperor, the President of the United States, *and me* and told us he was sending his Son.

Mr. King: **But Gordy, there wasn’t even a President of the United States back then. Why should God have called you?**

Gordy: Because I’m cool and I’m president of the *Gordy Fan Club*.

Mr. King: **God did not just try to zap cool or important people. Who in the audience knows how God announced the birth of Jesus? (Pause.) Right! Angels announced his coming to shepherds.**

Here is the next clue. Read:

“The angels told the shepherds there would be a sign to help them find the newborn Savior of the world. This thing had to do with the sign they were to look for.” (The answer is a bundle of straw.)

Direct child to find the straw. When the straw is found, the puppet dialogue continues.

Gordy: Whoa! Wait a minute. What’s with the horse food here?

Mr. King: **Let’s ask the kids and see if they might know how this straw is a sign of what the shepherds were looking for. (The kids guess that the baby would be found in a manger.)**

Mr. King: **That’s right! The sign was that the baby would be in a manger.**

Gordy: Wait a minute! What’s a manger?

Mr. King: **It’s a food trough, a place where animals eat their straw.**

Gordy: I thought animals lived in barns.

Mr. King: **And that’s where Jesus was born.**

Gordy: Why would God want his Son Jesus to be born in a barn?

Mr. King: That's a good question, Gordy. Maybe we can have some help from someone who was actually there and had a real life God sighting. Gordy, why don't you go and get your camera to take some pictures. Here's our guest now—a shepherd.

Gordy disappears as a costumed shepherd appears.

Mr. King: Welcome, Mr. Shepherd. Thank you for joining us today. I heard you had a real life God sighting.

Shepherd: That's true. God chose my friends and me to hear the good news of the Savior Jesus coming into the world, and we were to greet him.

We were just shepherds. We were ordinary people just like you. Maybe since Jesus would someday call himself the Good Shepherd, he wanted to have some shepherds greet him when he arrived.

Mr. King: Tell us about your God sighting.

Shepherd: My shepherd friends and I were in the fields near Bethlehem. It was late at night and we were taking turns watching the sheep. Suddenly there was this HUGE light and an angel from the Lord was right there in front of us!

Mr. King: What did you do?

Shepherd: I said (screaming) AAAAAAHHHHHHH!

Mr. King: So you were scared.

Shepherd: We were terrified! You could tell this angel was from a whole different place. The Lord's glory was shining from him.

Mr. King: What did the angel say?

Shepherd: "Don't be afraid. I have good news for you. It's a message that will fill everyone with joy."

Mr. King: What was the message?

Shepherd: He said, "Today your Savior Christ the Lord was born in David's city."

But we didn't know where to look until the angel gave us this clue. He said, "This is how you will recognize him. He will be a newborn baby wrapped in cloth and lying in a manger."

The whole sky was suddenly filled with angels. They were singing, "Glory to God in the highest. On earth may there be peace to those who have God's favor."

Mr. King: So did the angels lead you to Bethlehem?

Shepherd: No. They went back to heaven and we went looking for a baby wrapped in cloth and lying in a manger. We started checking the barns of Bethlehem.

It was our job to welcome the baby. We found Mary and Joseph and told them what had happened to us. They knew for sure that their baby was the Son of God. They had already named him Jesus, which means "Savior."

Mr. King: What did you do then?

Shepherd: We realized we had a God sighting. God's own Son Jesus the long expected Messiah had come into the world. He was going to save us from our sin. We had to go tell others!

Mr. King: Is that when you used the megaphone? I bet you wanted to shout it from the street.

Shepherd: You are correct! We talked to everyone we saw. God had finally sent the Promised One, his own Son. He was going to be our Savior.

Mr. King: Wow! I wish we could have been part of that.

Shepherd: Well, I think you can. You can welcome Jesus into the world—into your world as Savior. Then you can tell others about him.

Mr. King: We can all point to Jesus because God has shown us he is the Savior. Thank you for sharing your story, Mr. Shepherd. Maybe we can follow your example, as well. We can **welcome Jesus as our Savior and point others to him*. Let's give a round of applause for our special God sighting visitor. (Turns to Gordy.) I hope you wrote all that down... (Gordy appears.)

Gordy: Ok, I'm ready. Bring on the Shepard. I got my camera, and it's all loaded.

Mr. King: Gordy, it's too late. You missed him.

Gordy: (Disappointed) Ohhhh, man!

Mr. King: Don't worry, Gordy, I'll fill you in as we track down our next God sighting! Let's close in prayer.

Mr. King: Dear God, thank you for sending your Son Jesus on that cold night in a manger. Thank you for **showing us the Savior so we can point others to Jesus*. And thank you for giving us ears to hear the good news and voices to spread it. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Gordy: Cool Prayer! Christmas *is* a great time to **point others to Jesus*! He is the Savior of the world. Bye, kids!

Mr. King: Bye, Gordy.

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When God's Son Jesus came into the world, how did God make a special announcement that Jesus was born?

Attach this clue to a megaphone or microphone.