



Date: _____

Series: God Gives the Best Gifts
Winter Year 2, Lesson 31

Shepherds Spread the Good News

Bible Event: Luke 2:8-18

Take Home Point: *GOD GIVES THE BEST GIFTS –
Praise be to God!

*Repeat this phrase throughout the lesson. The leader will say the first part of the phrase (CAPS). The children respond with the second part of the phrase (*italics*).

Jesus Link: Because Jesus gave his best, we can praise God.

What kids will learn about God in this worship experience:

- Children will learn that our God is a giving God. The season of Christmas is about the best gift God has ever given us – his Son Jesus. He sent Jesus to be our Savior and friend. Every year at this time, we get to remember what it was like when Jesus was born to Mary and Joseph and how the angels told the shepherds about the Good News. Kids will take home the point: **GOD GIVES THE BEST GIFTS – *Praise be to God!***
- Children will respond to God's love as they pray to him, thanking him for loving them and giving them Jesus. They will offer him their songs of worship, their offerings, and their actions of love as they actively learn God's word.

Kids Church Year 2 - Lesson 31 - 1



Welcome Zone: (15-20 minutes)

Purpose: While kids arrive give them a simple learning readiness activity that requires minimal supervision. This might include a video, games, blocks, or puzzles.

Video Suggestion: Choose a video and list it here.

Activity Suggestion: Blocks, toys, puzzles, paper, and crayons.



Opening Worship: (10-15 minutes)

Children can bring forward the cross, candles, Bible, offering plate, and treasure box. The treasure box contains the props used to tell or dramatize the Bible event. Open with a simple prayer having the children repeat after you. Collect offering and talk about how God will use it.

Praise Songs:

Choose two or three songs and list them here.

Bible Event: Video

Test your sound and video system beforehand. Cue the video to its precise beginning. For larger groups of children (15 or more), use a large screen TV or imager. Dim the lights before starting the video. To introduce a video, you might read from a Bible storybook and leave off the ending, inviting children to see what happens by watching the video. You could also introduce the video by inviting children to keep an eye out for special actions or words they will see during it.

Show the video clip from *The Animated Stories from the New Testament: The King is Born*, produced by Animated Stories, Inc., 1987. It may be ordered from www.nestfamily.com. The clip starts at 12 minutes, 12 seconds after the opening title. Begin just after Joseph says “strong, beautiful woman, sleep” and end it when the North star is twinkling. The length of the clip is 2 minutes, 58 seconds.

After the clip, invite the children to put on their imagination caps to review the event together.

Have one child come up before hand to dress as an angel. Keep him or her off to the side until it's time for the angel to appear.

Pretend you're all shepherds. I wonder if you can remember this event well enough to show me what happens. Let's begin.

Some shepherds were in the field watching their sheep. It was late at night so some of them were sleeping and others were watching the sheep. Do I see any shepherds sleeping?

Have children put their hands together and pretend to make a pillow on the side of their head while they close their eyes.

Do I hear them snoring?

Have children make snoring sounds.

Suddenly the sky lit up with a very bright light. It was an angel!

Bring out the child dressed as an angel and have him repeat the lines as needed.

The shepherds were afraid! They had never seen an angel before. He was very big and very bright.

Have children act scared and put their hands over their face to block the bright light.

Then the angel spoke to them. He said, “Do not be afraid! I bring you good news. It will bring joy to everyone. Today in Bethlehem, a baby has been born. That baby is the Savior, Jesus. He is Christ, the Lord. You will see a sign. You will see the baby wrapped in blankets and lying in a manger.” Then even more angels appeared. They began to sing and praise God saying “Glory to God in the highest and peace to all people on whom his favor rests.”

Invite children to say “Glory to God in the highest” several times in unison.

Then the angels left (help angel off stage) and the shepherds hurried to Bethlehem to see the new baby Jesus. They found Mary and Joseph and Jesus in a manger just like the angel said they would. They were filled with joy!

Invite the children to be filled with joy by jumping and shouting “Praise be to God!”

Then the shepherds left and starting spreading the news about the baby Jesus. They told everyone they knew that the Savior had been born!

Close by having children practice the take home point: ***GOD GIVES THE BEST GIFTS – Praise be to God!**

Safety and Security: Safety and security procedures are important for each church to carefully define and implement according to their unique needs. The security, safety, illness and accident procedures described in this curriculum are provided for example purposes only and may not be appropriate, applicable or adequate for every situation. Each church is responsible for determining whether any security, safety, illness and accident procedures contained in the curriculum are appropriate, applicable or adequate for its unique situation. The activities described in this curriculum require adult supervision and may not be suitable for each child and each situation. Each church is responsible for ensuring that adequate adult supervision is provided for all activities and for determining whether an activity is appropriate for each child and each situation. Kids Kount Publishing disclaims all liability for the implementation of any procedures or the performance of any activities described in this curriculum.



Action Zones: (20-30 minutes)

Purpose: Children move at their leisure to the activities according to their interest. Adults are assigned to oversee each of the zones watching for safety, assisting any activity, and helping the children connect to the lesson of the day. All zones are introduced at the beginning of Zone Time. Some suggested zones are included below. It is usually best to have all children go to the Snack Zone first. Sing a blessing song or say a snack prayer together before dismissing to the zones.

During the Zone Time, children may arrive from mid-service dismissal. If this is an option at your church, be prepared to welcome the children and invite them to choose a zone.

Snack Zone: Let each child frost a graham cracker square with red or green frosting. Give each child a small handful of Alphabits cereal to place on the frosted cracker to be the 'good news.' Another option: give each child a small candy cane. Before eating them, have the children turn it upside down and explain that it is now a shepherd's staff.

Drama Zone: Provide manger scene props, fake sheep, and shepherd costumes and headpieces for the children. Another option: contact a local sheep farm, petting zoo, etc. and arrange for real sheep to visit.

Puppet Zone: Let the children use puppets to tell each other about happy, good things that happened this week. Then have them discuss with each other what the best news of all is – Jesus being born to be our Savior.

Felt Zone: Use felt board materials to show the story of the shepherds spreading the good news from today's Bible event. (For example, use Lesson #98, "A Visit from the Shepherds" from *Betty Lukens Through the Bible in Felt*.)

Craft Zone: Provide each child with a half sheet of red or green construction paper. With a glue stick, let the children arrange small newspaper squares collage-style onto the construction paper. Glue glitter or Christmas garland around the edge of the construction paper to serve as a 'frame' for the project. In the center of the paper, on top of the newspaper, attach a pre-made label: "Jesus is the good news."

Play Zone: Create "candy cane zip lines." Attach varying lengths of string, yarn, etc. to craft sticks. Let children place candy canes at one end and maneuver the zip lines to see how fast the candy canes can slide from one end to the other.

Quiet Reading Zone: Basket of books. Include any that feature the story of Christmas. Set up a manger scene for children to read in.

Music Zone: Your choice of music.

Coloring Zone: “Shepherds Spread the Good News” coloring page



Closing Worship: (20 minutes)

Purpose: As you empty the zones and clean up, begin the music so the children can start wandering over.

Worship Songs:

Choose one or two songs and list them here.

Bible Application with Puppet Presentation:

Purpose: The puppet demonstrates the need that will be met in today's lesson. The scripts are not written verbatim, but give a story line in which the group leader can interact with the puppet.

Bubba comes onto stage dressed as a shepherd holding a staff. The presenter tells him what a nice shepherd he makes. Bubba happily proclaims that he isn't just dressed like a shepherd, but he even knows what a shepherd is supposed to say. The presenter asks him, "What do shepherds say?" Bubba says boldly, "Praise be to God!"

But Bubba actually isn't sure what that means. He asks the presenter to help explain it to him. The presenter tells Bubba that it's kind of like this: When you get a really cool present from someone, like a Christmas present from your grandma, what should you say? Bubba knows the answer to that. He tells the presenter that when you get a present, you should say "thank you." The presenter is impressed that Bubba knows that.

The presenter goes on to explain that God gave each of us a very special gift, which is why we celebrate Christmas. He asks the kids if they know what that special present was. (*Jesus*) That's right. God gave us Jesus so that he could grow up here on earth, die on the cross for our sins, and rise again so that we could be with him in heaven. The way that we say "thank you" to God for that amazing gift is to say, "Praise be to God." The word "praise" means that we want to give God all of our love and say "thank you" for giving us, Jesus.

The presenter closes by having Bubba and the kids practice the take-home point: ***GOD GIVES THE BEST GIFTS – Praise be to God.**

Prayer Time:

Purpose: Allow children to contribute their own prayers. This will teach them to turn to God in both good times and in times of trouble. End with the Lord's Prayer.

"Children Pray" Options: (select one from the options below)

_____ **Prayer Train Option:** Children line up and take turns stepping in front of the microphone and speak their brief prayers of thanksgiving.

_____ **Prayer Chair:** Children stand in a circle around one child sitting on a chair in the middle. All children in the circle will lay a hand on the child sitting in the chair as they say a prayer together.

_____ **Popcorn Prayer:** The leader moves through the crowd with a microphone and taps children on the head to stand and speak their prayer.

Lord's Prayer: Lead the children through the Lord's Prayer, phrase by phrase, or let them pray the entire Prayer along with you.

Blessing:

May God, who is all around you,
pour his love upon you.

(Beginning at the bottom of the circle, slowly make a large circle with your hands. Finish by bringing your hands down and wiggling your fingers to resemble rain.)

And Jesus, his life a sacrifice,
walk right there beside you.

(Slowly make a large sign of the cross. Then move your hands out to the sides.)

And may God's Holy Spirit,
the one who lives inside you,

(Cross hands over your heart.)

keep you strong,
comfort, lead and guide you!

(Move to a "strong man" position. Then cross your arms with your hands on corresponding upper arms to communicate comfort. Bring one hand forward with "lead" and the other with "guide" to complete the blessing.)

Song of Sending:

Choose one song and list it here.



Closing Zones:

Purpose: Children go to an activity zone such as, the coloring zone, quiet reading zone, and children's Christian music video zone, as they wait for their parents.

Supplies:

Welcome Zone:

- blocks, toys, puzzles, paper, and crayons

Opening Worship:

- cross, candles, Bible, offering plate, and treasure box—the treasure box contains the props used to tell or dramatize the Bible event
- *The King is Born: Animated Stories from the New Testament*, Animated Stories Inc., 1987

Action Zones:

Snack:

- graham cracker squares
- frosting tinted red and green
- Alphabits cereal
- *Optional:* miniature candy canes

Drama:

- shepherd costumes and headpieces
- stuffed sheep
- a box for a manger

Craft:

- red and green construction paper
- scissors
- old newspapers, cut into small squares
- glue sticks
- glitter glue or strands of garland
- pre-made label: "JESUS IS THE GOOD NEWS"

Play:

- string or yarn
- large candy canes
- craft sticks

Quiet Reading:

- basket of books including seasonal books like *Santa's Favorite Story*
- create a manger scene with stuffed animals and old blankets

Music:

- your choice of music

Puppet:

- various puppets

Felt:

- materials to reenact story (For example, use Lesson #98, "A Visit from the Shepherds" from *Betty Lukens Through the Bible in Felt.*)

Coloring page:

- "Shepherds Spread the Good News"

Closing Worship:

- Bubba, the puppet
- shepherd headpiece and staff

Closing Zones:

- colored pencils
- paper
- basket of books