

The Story of CHRISTMAS

Date: 12.14.25 | Jesus and the Shepherds
Scripture: Luke 2:8-21

LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING

MIDDLE SCHOOL & HIGH SCHOOL:

- The Bible is God's message about Himself and His salvation plan through Jesus.
- God deserves respect, obedience, and honor.
- God wants us to live for His glory.
- God is a righteous judge.
- God sent Jesus to be the atonement for our sins.
- Jesus fulfills Old Testament prophecies and promises.



MEMORY VERSE

"Don't be afraid! I bring you good news that will be great joy to all people. The Savior- yes, the Messiah, the Lord- has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! - Luke 2:10-11

BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

Soon after the birth of Jesus, an angel appeared to shepherds who were out in the nearby fields keeping watch over their flocks. Shepherds were often looked down upon as low-class peasants in Jesus' day. God could have chosen to announce the birth of his Son to someone like the Jewish high priest or the Roman emperor, but He chose humble shepherds. The sight of the angel bathed in God's glory terrified the shepherds. The "glory of the Lord" in this case is a bright light that surrounds the presence of God himself; it sometimes appears as a cloud, a shining light, or a burning fire. The angel tells them not to be afraid. "I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people," he says. This good news is the Greek verb form of "Gospel"! He declares that a Savior—the Messiah has been born that day in Bethlehem, King David's ancestral city. These three titles, "Savior", "Christ," and "Messiah," reveal the greatness of Mary's son. The astonishing announcement that the baby born to them is also the Lord God himself was probably not fully grasped by the shepherds. *Luke 2:11* is one of only two places in the Gospels where Christ is referred to as "Savior"—the other being *John 4:42*, where the men of Sychar confess Him as "Savior of the world".

The shepherds would recognize the Savior by this: They would find a baby wrapped in cloths lying in a manger. Suddenly, many more angels appeared—thousands of angels, and they were praising God, saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth to peace to men on whom His favor rests." The angels proclaim the news about Jesus: the eternal, omnipotent Son of God has just taken "the form of a servant being born in the likeness of men" (*Phil. 2:7*), for "the fullness of time" has now come, and God has "sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law" (*Gal. 4:4-5*). Jesus is the "Prince of Peace" as prophesied by Isaiah in Isaiah 9:6. God gives the peace of salvation through His Son. (*John 14:27*).

After the angels leave, the shepherds go into Bethlehem to see the baby. They find Mary, Joseph, and Jesus, and spread the word about what they have heard and seen. Everyone who listens to them is amazed. The shepherds return to the fields praising God just as the angels had done, and Mary treasures these things in her heart. Wonderment at Christ is one of the threads that runs through Luke's gospel (2:19, 33, 47, 48; 1:21, 63; 4:22, 36; 5:9; 8:25; 9:43-45; 11:14; 20:26; 24:12, 41) and Luke often reports how the proper response is praising God (2:28; 1:64; 5:25, 26; 7:16; 13:13; 17:15-18; 18:43; 19:37-40; 23:47; 24:52, 53).

LOCATE THE SCRIPTURE & TELL THE STORY

Locate the scripture in the Bible: *Luke 2:8-21*

Tell the story: Use the background info for leaders to help tell the story.

Re-tell the Bible Story: Have students re-tell the story as best they can.

Attributes of God: Use the attributes of God list and determine the characteristics of God that we see in today's story. How can knowing these characteristics of God to be true change the way we live in Christ?

Share the GOSPEL: The "multitude of heavenly hosts" praised God, and after finding the baby lying in the manger, the shepherds returned "glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen". These are two wonderful examples of response to the Gospel- the Good News that brings great joy to all people! Today, we glorify and praise God for all we have heard and seen!

QUESTIONS TO REBUILD THE STORY

1. When Jesus was born, to whom did the angels first announce the good news?
2. What were these shepherds doing?
3. Why was this birth considered "good news"?
4. How did the shepherds respond to the angels' good news?
5. How did they respond after they saw Jesus?
6. Who did they tell? In what ways is their response a good example for us?
7. How does the story of Jesus' birth relate to the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden

of Eden? What had God promised after Adam and Eve sinned? In what ways did Jesus fulfill this promise?

8. What does the birth of Jesus show us about God's faithfulness in keeping His word? What does it show us about His compassion for us?

9. Why did the angels tell the shepherds, "on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased"? What does this mean?

10. How does Jesus bring you peace with God?

11. The shepherds praised God because of the good news they heard and saw. How have you heard or seen the good news of Jesus at work in the hearts of others? What was your response?

12. How does Jesus show us what God is like?

13. What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?

14. What does this story teach me about myself?

15. Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?

16. Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?

17. How does this story help me to live on mission better?

PRAYER PROMPTS

Thank you for being the “Savior of the World”! Thank you for revealing Yourself to all mankind and offering the peace that comes only through salvation in You. We ask that You help us treasure these thoughts and ponder them in our hearts. We want to glorify and praise You for all that we have seen and heard!

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

ATTENTIVE - God hears and responds to the needs of his children.

COMPASSIONATE - God cares for his children and acts on their behalf.

CREATOR - God made everything. He is uncreated.

DELIVERER - God rescues and saves his children.

ETERNAL - God is not limited by time. He exists outside of time.

FAITHFUL - God always keeps his promises.

GENEROUS - God gives what is best and beyond what is deserved.

GLORIOUS - God displays His greatness and worth.

GOOD - God is what is best and gives what is best. He is incapable of doing harm.

HOLY - God is perfect, pure, and without sin.

IMMUTABLE/UNCHANGING - God never changes. He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

INCOMPREHENSIBLE - God is beyond our understanding. We can comprehend Him in part but not in whole.

INFINITE - God has not limits in His person or on His power.

JEALOUS - God will not share his glory with another. all glory rightfully belongs to him.

JUST - god is fair in all his actions and judgements. He cannot over-punish or under-punish.

LOVING - God feels and displays infinite, unconditional affection toward his children. His love for them does not depend on their worth, response, or merit.

MERCIFUL - God does not give his children the punishment they deserve.

OMNIPOTENT/ALMIGHTY - God holds all power. nothing is too hard for God. What He wills He can accomplish.

OMNIPRESENT - God is fully present everywhere.

OMNISCIENT - God knows everything, past, present, and future - all potential and real outcomes, all things micro and macro.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

PATIENT/LONG-SUFFERING - God is untiring and bears with His children.

PROVIDER - God meets the needs of his children.

REFUGE - God is a place of safety and protection for his children.

RIGHTEOUS - God is always good and right.

SELF-EXISTENT - God depends on nothing and no one to give him life or existence.

SELF-SUFFICIENT - God is not vulnerable. He has no needs.

SOVEREIGN - God does everything according to His plan and pleasure.

TRANSCENDENT - God is not like humans. He is infinitely higher in being and action.

TRUTHFUL - Whatever God speaks or does is truth and reality.

WISE - God knows what is best and acts accordingly. He cannot choose wrongly.

WORTHY - God deserves all glory and honor and praise.

WRATHFUL - God hates all unrighteousness.

Application Questions

LOOK UPWARD

- How does this story apply to your relationship with God?
- What does it teach you about Him- His will and His heart?

LOOK INWARD

- How does this story apply to your heart and your own spiritual growth?
- What does it teach you about yourself?

LOOK AROUND

- How does this story apply to your relationship with others?
- What does it teach you about how to see others and relate to them?
- What is God inviting you to do differently in your relationships?

LOOK OUTWARD

- What does it teach you about God's purposes for the world?
- What part of His mission is He inviting you to participate in?
- What practical steps can you take to live out these truths in the world?

LOOK FORWARD

- What does it teach you about God's plan for your life, now and forever?
- What practical steps can you take to impact eternity now with these truths?