

TEXT

Luke 2:8-20

OBJECTIVE

The students will be able to relate how the angel announced Jesus' birth to the shepherds who received the news with joy.

MEMORY VERSE

Lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them. — Luke 2:9

The Angels and the Shepherds

MEMORY VERSE IN ACTION

LO, THE ANGEL OF THE LORD — Hold hands at shoulders, pointing out, flutter like wings.

CAME UPON THEM — Extend right hand out, palm up, move toward body.

AND THE GLORY — Hold left palm out, facing up. Have right finger tips touch left palm, raise right hand while wiggling fingers.

OF THE LORD — Point up.

SHONE ROUND ABOUT THEM — Open palms facing each other with finger tips pointing up. Spread hands apart to the sides while the fingers are wiggling.

MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

The visual representation of our memory verse for this week is the angel of the Lord announcing Jesus' birth to a shepherd. (See pattern at the end of this lesson.) Cut apart the five sections as indicated by the heavy black lines. Arrange the sections on your display board, one at a time, as your students learn the verse.

BIBLE LESSON OUTLINE

Introduction: Bring a printed birth announcement to class. Let your students look at it and talk about how this is the way we often let people know of a baby's birth. But God chose a very special way to announce the birth of His Son. Progression of events:

1. God chose a dramatic way to make the announcement to mankind — the appearance of the angels to shepherds watching their flocks on the Judean hills.
 2. Explain the angel's message.
 3. Explore the probable emotions of the shepherds.
- Climax: They left their sheep and hurried to Bethlehem.
Conclusion: The shepherds believed, therefore they saw the Baby Jesus with their own eyes.

Response: Your students will be able to explain the good news brought by the angels and tell how the shepherds responded.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Shepherding may be considered by some to be a lowly occupation, but it is given considerable mention in the Bible. It is good to know something about those who are mentioned in the Bible as being shepherds. The first shepherd we have record of is Abel, the son of Adam. Joseph and his brethren were shepherds and later Joseph became a ruler in Egypt. King David was a shepherd in his youth. Amos, the prophet, was a shepherd. And Jesus Christ, Prophet, Priest, and King, is known as The Good Shepherd, saying Himself: "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (John 10:11).

While the task may seem simple on the surface, to be a good shepherd involves many duties and responsibilities; and we see these exemplified in Christ's care for His sheep. The shepherd secures pasture and water for the flocks, shade from the summer sun and protection from vicious animals. The sheep depend on him. He is their security. The shepherd knows the number of sheep in his flock and will go to extreme lengths to locate a missing one; he knows each one by name. Various Scriptures describe good shepherds as being faithful, fearless, unselfish, considerate, and believing.

Angels had an important place in the life and ministry of Christ. They made their appearance to Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds in connection with His birth. After His temptation in the wilderness, angels ministered to Him; and an angel strengthened Him in the Garden. It was an angel who rolled away the stone from His tomb, and angels were at His ascension. And it will be with His angels, and the

great sound of the trumpet, that Christ will announce His return and the Rapture of the saints.

SPECIAL NOTE FOR THIS LESSON

Refer to lessons 4c and 28c for additional ideas.

IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

Make a file-folder hillside scene showing the angels, shepherds, and the sheep (see Patterns). Using a file folder, paste the picture of the Bethlehem hillside and angels on the background. Connect the cloud with a paper fastener to cover the angels. On the foreground paste or tape the angel, shepherds, and sheep to the designated places. Attach a paper strip to the back of each standing figure and secure that strip to the background scene (see thumbnail sketch with pattern). As the file is opened it makes a pop-up scene of the hillside.

Have your students help you make an angel choir for use in teaching the lesson. Give each child a copy of the angel, and have him cut out the components, following the outlines (see Patterns). Decorate as desired before assembling. Roll skirt into cone shape and fasten by gluing the flap. Glue the head and wings onto shaded area (A) after folding wings back. Next, glue arms directly over shaded area (B), completing the figure.

Use cut-out angel cookies to make a heavenly choir. Let each child hold one angel. Then enjoy the angels as your snack for the day, or send one home with each child.

Let the children make the Good News! Christmas cards (see Patterns). Cut around the heavy lines. Have the children color their cards and sign their names. Then fold on the dotted lines, making sure to fold number 1 first, number 2 second, etc. Glue or tape the top flap in place. Have each child write on the outside of his card the name of the person he will give it to.

Help the children make paper-plate lamb masks. Cut eye holes, about one inch apart, just above the center of the plate. Attach the ears, cut from black felt, to each side of the plate. Cover the plate with cotton balls. Add a black nose cut from felt. Attach a stick to the back of the mask so the child can easily hold it in front of his face.

QUESTIONS

Have you ever seen a birth announcement? What did it say? What was its purpose? What was the purpose of Jesus' "birth announcement" by the angels?

Do you think the shepherds were surprised to hear that Jesus was born? Do you think they were looking for His coming? Why?

When the shepherds heard about Jesus' birth, what did they do?

The Bible says, "...the glory of the Lord shone round about them," (the shepherds). Tell how you think it looked to have the glory of the Lord shining all around them.

Why do you suppose God chose the countryside where the shepherds were, to tell of the good news of Jesus' birth instead of the busy city where most of the people were?

The shepherds spread the good news. How is that like a testimony?

When people hear about Jesus today, what do they do?

When did you first hear about Jesus? Do you pass the good news on to others?

PRESCHOOL SUGGESTIONS

For each child make one finger puppet of a shepherd and one stand-up angel (see Patterns). Have shepherds listen as the angel tells them the good news. Then the shepherds can tell how excited they are over the news the angel brought them.

Paper-chain angels cut from gold foil make a bright, shiny display (see Patterns).

Give each child a copy of the lamb picture (see Patterns). The children may add fleece to their lambs by gluing cotton on them, or they may scribble curly fleece all over them.

Prepare a shepherd and a lamb for each child (see Patterns). Attach a small round tube to the back of each one so that they will stand alone. (A portion of a paper towel tube works very well for this.)

REVIEW IDEAS

Give an overhead review and compare the shepherds' reaction to the Sunday school students' reaction when learning of Jesus' birth (see Patterns).

Use students or large pictures in tableau-style scenes. Make a cassette tape of Christmas music to go along with the story. Narrate between songs. Suggested scenes: shepherds and flocks in fields (one angel appears to them); a multitude of angels appear to them; shepherds go to Bethlehem to find Baby Jesus and worship Him. Corresponding songs: "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night" — one verse; "Angels We Have Heard on High"; "Drummer Boy."

Copy the angel finger play poem onto an overhead transparency or a large sheet of posterboard (see Patterns). Display it as you teach the children this little finger-play. Have the children hold up one of their hands with all five fingers extended. For the first line of the poem they should wiggle all five fingers. When they say, "The first one said..." they should wiggle just their thumb. When they say, "The second one said..." they should wiggle just their pointer finger, etc. When you again talk of the "five little

angels," they should wiggle all five fingers. And when they say, "Glory to God..." they should clap their hands.

COORDINATING SONGS

"Angels We Have Heard on High"

"While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night"

SUPPORT MATERIAL

The Night the Angels Sang — Arch Book, Concordia
The Little Shepherd and the First Christmas — Arch Book, Concordia

Little Benjamin and the First Christmas — Arch Book, Concordia

MEMORY VERSE SONG



MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

