



Advent 4: An Angel Visits the Shepherds

Lesson Aim: To know the good news of Jesus' birth is for all people.

THE WORSHIP

Who God is: The God Who Comes Near

THE WORD

Bible Story: Luke 2:8-18

What He has done: God sent an angel to announce the birth of Jesus to the shepherds.

Key Verse: Luke 2:11

THE WAY

Christ Connection: Exodus 24:17

BIBLE MEMORY VERSE

"I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord. Glory to God in the highest." Luke 2:10b, 11, 14a

Unit 10: The God Who Comes Near			
	Bible Story	What He Has Done	Lesson Aim
48	Advent 1: Gabriel Visits Zechariah, Luke 1:5-25, 62-65	God sent His angel Gabriel to tell Zechariah the good news.	To look for ways God comes near to us and to find ways to come near to Him.
49	Advent 2: Angel Visits—Mary and Joseph, Luke 1:28-37; Matthew 1:20-21	God sent His angel Gabriel to prepare Mary for the birth of Jesus.	To remember that nothing is impossible with God.
50	Advent 3: Jesus Is Born, Luke 2:1-7, John 1:1-2	Jesus was born.	To see God has specific plans for how He comes near to us.
51	Advent 4: An Angel Visits the Shepherds, Luke 2:8-18	God sent an angel to announce the birth of Jesus to the shepherds.	To know the good news of Jesus' birth is for all people.
52	Following the Star, Matthew 2:1-12	God sent a star to guide the Magi to Jesus.	To know God leads all of us to Jesus.

TEACHER'S ENCOURAGEMENT

This week, read Isaiah 9:1-7. Please join us in praying, "Thank you, Lord, for sending the good news to the shepherds. Fill the children with Your Spirit so they might grasp the miracle and spread the good news about Christmas. Amen."

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**THE WORSHIP
THE WORD &
THE WAY**

Segment	Minutes	Activity	Supplies
THE WELCOME	Up to 15	Meet & Greet	None
		Game: Pass the Message	Paper, markers, envelopes, scissors, Bible Memory Verse poster or Bible
THE WORSHIP	Up to 20	Worship Sheet music and recordings for Bible Memory Verse Songs available at ResourceWell.org	Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse Song: "I Bring You Good News" Other Bible Memory Verse Song Suggestions: "Search Me, O God" "For God So Loved the World" "You Will Seek Me" Additional Hymn Suggestions: "O Come, All Ye Faithful" "Angels We Have Heard on High" Additional Song Collection Suggestions: Worship Jamz Christmas—Worship Jamz Shout Praises Kids Christmas
		Worship Scripture Reading: Luke 2:9-14	Bible, Advent wreath with candles. See THE WORSHIP for other supplies.
		Offering	Baskets
		Worship Illustration	Lesson 51 High Seas Adventures script or storybook
THE WORD	Up to 10	Read the Word: Luke 2:8-18	Map—Bethlehem, Israel, Bibles, Bible Story Scripture reference poster, highlighters, optional: Christmas and party decorations
THE WAY	Up to 25	Discussion	Bibles, Christ Connection Scripture reference poster, highlighters
		Christ Connection: Exodus 24:17	
		Golden Bowl	Golden Bowl, pencils, note cards
	Final 5	Final Five Minutes	Treasure Treat—Candy cane, W ³ s, paper, pencils, crayons or markers, Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse Song "I Bring You Good News," CD player
GOT TIME?	Up to 10	Snack: Birthday Party	Cupcakes
	Up to 10	Game: Good News Balloon Bop	Balloon (have more than one in case one breaks)
	Up to 10	Craft: Birth Announcement	Standard-size white sturdy paper, crayons or markers, optional: stickers, glitter, ribbons, or other craft decorations
	Up to 5	Discussion: Angels	None
	Up to 10	Bible Memory Verse Activity: Appearing Angel	Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse poster, dry erase board and marker (or chalkboard and chalk or large piece of paper and pencil)
	Up to 5	Bible Memory Verse Activity: Memory Verse Circle	Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse Song "I Bring You Good News," CD player
	Up to 5	Bible Timeline Review	Timeline

RESOURCES: Supplemental materials are available at ResourceWell.org.



Getting started

THE WELCOME

To spark anticipation, encourage arriving children to meet and greet one another with today's question.
Meet & Greet Question: What is the best news you have ever been given?

GAME: PASS THE MESSAGE

Purpose: Children will work together in teams to assemble and review the Bible Memory Verse.

Supplies: Paper, markers, envelopes, scissors, Bible Memory Verse poster or Bible

Prepare: In large print, make a copy of the Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse for every four or five children. Cut each copy of the Bible Memory Verse into individual words or phrases, depending on the reading ability of the children in your class. Place the pieces of each copy in a separate envelope.

In today's story, we will discover how God sent an angel to share a very special message with shepherds in the fields who were keeping watch over their flocks at night. In this game, some of you will get to be angels, some of you will be shepherds, and some of you will be the heavenly host. Everyone must work together to pass the message from the angels to the shepherds.

Directions:

1. Form teams of four or five children.
2. Choose a child on each team to be an angel and one to be a shepherd. The rest of the teammates are the heavenly host.
3. Each team stands in a line facing the front of the room and close enough to each other that they can pass paper slips to the next teammate in line. The team angel should stand at one end and the team shepherd at the other end with the heavenly host between them.
4. Lay a Bible Memory Verse envelope on the floor next to each team angel.
5. On your signal, the team angels remove a piece of the verse from the envelope and hand it to the heavenly host next to him or her. The heavenly host hand the paper down the line until it reaches the shepherd.
6. When the shepherd receives the paper, the angel repeats step five with another piece of the verse. The game continues until all the verse pieces have reached the shepherd.
7. Once the shepherd has all the pieces, the team works together to put the verse in order and read the verse aloud. The goal is to be the first team to put the verse in order and read it aloud.



The God who comes near

THE WORSHIP

Teacher Tip: To help children identify time set aside for worship, designate a special corner or area for singing, collecting offering, and watching the worship illustration. Play music as children move to the designated area.

In preparation for Advent Candle Lighting, light the first three candles on the Advent wreath.



Today, we worship the God who comes near for sending His angel with the good news for all people. The good news for all people was that the Savior, who had been promised for thousands of years, had been born that very day in Bethlehem. The angels filled the sky to celebrate the birth of the Savior. He would bring peace between God and man. This was good news for the shepherds and for all people. While collecting the offering, sing "Angels We Have Heard on High."



Advent Candle Lighting Ceremony: The Shepherds' Candle

Advent Wreath: 4 candles set in a wreath of greenery

At Christmas time, we get our hearts ready to celebrate the coming of Jesus by lighting the candles on the Advent wreath. Advent means coming—the coming of Jesus. Our Advent wreath is round; it has no end just as God's love for us has no end. Each candle on the Advent wreath stands for one of the four Sundays before Christmas.

The center candle is called the Christ candle. It reminds us that Jesus is the Light of the world. The Christ candle is traditionally lit on Christmas Eve when we join together to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Today, we light the fourth candle of Advent: the Shepherds' candle. We light this candle to remember the good news the angel brought to the Bethlehem shepherds watching over their sheep that night. The candle lighting takes place during the performance of High Seas Adventures script or after reading the storybook version.



But, before we light the Shepherds' candle, let's see what is happening on the High Seas. Perform High Seas Adventures script or read storybook: God of Wonders Unit 10, Lesson 51. If you chose to read the storybook, choose one child to light the fourth candle on the Advent wreath now and read Luke 2:9-14.



Sing Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse Song: "I Bring You Good News." You may choose to sing other songs that focus on the birth of Christ.



Good news for the shepherds

THE WORD

Additional Supplies: Celebrate with a birthday party for Jesus. Decorate with Christmas decorations and serve cupcakes and drinks as you discuss THE WAY. Finish by singing the Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse Song and other Christmas carols. Don't forget to sing happy birthday to Jesus!

Teacher Tip: As you move from worship to instruction, change rooms or locations within a room to help redirect the children's focus to the Bible story. During this transition time, have each child write his or her name on a card and place it in the Golden Bowl.

Before we read God's Word, let's go over our Class Covenant. A covenant is an agreement. Just as God made a covenant with His people, I ask each of you to make this covenant promise with me today. Listen as I read our Class Covenant: "I will keep my eyes on my teacher, my mouth in control, my ears on God's Word; knowing God is my goal."

If a Bible Timeline is available, point to Jesus on Earth (Circa 1-33 A.D.). For a Bible Timeline Review activity, see the GOT TIME? segment of this lesson. **Last time, we heard how God came to the world and was born as baby Jesus.**

Today, we will learn what happened right after Jesus was born. Do you remember where He was born? (Bethlehem.) If a map is available, point to Bethlehem. **Our story begins at night, in the fields outside of Bethlehem where the shepherds took care of their sheep.**



Let's play Find It First! Bring out your Bible; keep it right in front of you. Hand out spare Bibles. **Today's Scripture verse is behind the curtain** (or secret door, secret window, etc.). Child reveals the Bible Story Scripture reference: Luke 2:8-18. **Let's see who can Find It First. Ready? Set? Go!** Children race to find it first. The winner helps others find it. **Let's highlight our Key Verse: Luke 2:11.**

Before we read, let's stand and ask God to open our eyes, ears, hearts, and minds to His Word today. Who would like to pray that for us? Child prays aloud. **Be seated.**

Let's read how the shepherds learned Jesus had been born. Read Luke 2:8-18.



Good news for all people

THE WAY

Who were the first people to hear the Savior was born? (Shepherds.) **How does that show the good news would be for all people?** (Children respond.) **God could have first told kings, priests, or powerful rulers about Jesus' birth. Why do you think God chose the shepherds?** (Children respond.) **Jesus came to save all who would believe in Him. No matter how much money or toys we have, what we look like, where we live, what our families are like, or which school we go to, Jesus was born for all of us.**

What were the shepherds doing when the angel appeared? (They were watching over their sheep in the field.) **What does that show you about God's presence in every part of our lives?** (Children respond.)

The shepherds were the first eyewitnesses to spread the good news about the Savior. What does that show you about who God chooses to tell others about Him? (We do not need special training or practice to share what we have seen God do. We can share it right away.) **Think about who you could share the good news with this Christmas season. Ask God to bring that person to your mind and give you the opportunity to spread the good news.**



Connecting the Old Testament, the New Testament, and Us

CHRIST CONNECTION

What was shining around the angel and the shepherds when the angel announced Jesus' birth? (The glory of the Lord.) **Nearly 1500 years before the shepherds saw the glory of the Lord, Moses and the Israelites saw it shining on Mount Sinai as Moses went up to get the Ten Commandments. Let's see how the Israelites described the glory of the Lord.**



FIND IT FIRST > Everyone, place your Bible closed on your lap. Choose a child to reveal the Christ Connection Scripture reference: Exodus 24:17. **Let's see who can Find It First! Ready? Set? Go! Find it and highlight it.** Read Exodus 24:17.

What did the glory of the Lord look like to the Israelites? (Fire on top of the mountain.) **How would you feel if you saw the glory of the Lord nearby?** (Children respond.)

What did the heavenly host do when they suddenly appeared at the shepherds' field? (They praised God.) **The heavenly host praised God and said "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men on whom His favor rests." What do you think that means?** (Children respond.) **It means praise God in the highest heavens. Jesus would bring peace between God and man to those God favors, those who believe in His Son.**

What did the shepherds find when they followed the angel's instructions and went to Bethlehem? (Baby Jesus lying in a manger.) **They went to the manger and saw the miracle for themselves. They saw the Savior!**

THE WAY *continued...*



Revelation 5:8

GOLDEN BOWL

Teacher Tip: Write the names of classmates, local church leaders, children in other nations, or others who need prayer on small pieces of paper. Place the papers in a golden bowl.

Revelation 5:8 says our prayers are like sweet smelling incense in the golden bowls at God's throne. I will lift each one of your names to God's throne as you pray for each person silently. Then, we will pray the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) aloud together. Let's pray.

Lord God, we lift up to Your throne the name of each child here. We trust You to watch over us and our needs, the ones we say aloud and the ones hidden in our hearts. First, we lift up to You ____, ____, ____. Read names in Golden Bowl.

Now, we pray the prayer Your Son taught us: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.



When only 5 minutes remain, begin this segment.

FINAL FIVE MINUTES

TREASURE TREAT: Today, your Treasure Treat is a candy cane. Think of it as a shepherd's staff. Each time you eat a candy cane this Christmas, remember that the good news of Jesus' birth is for everyone.

W³: Take home today's W³ Journal Entry as your personal devotional study. Keep your journal entries together in a notebook or in your Bible. Distribute W³ Journal Entry #51. Complete this at home and let God speak to you through His own words in the Bible!

OFFERING OF ART: Until it is time to be dismissed, make an Offering of Art. For your offering, draw a picture of the angel telling the good news of Jesus' birth to the shepherds. The Offering of Art can be finished at home or given as an offering for the teacher to display.

PRAYER REQUESTS: As children work on their Offering of Art, ask how you can pray for them this week. Write requests in a prayer notebook.

BIBLE MEMORY VERSE SONG: Play the Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse Song, "I Bring You Good News," in the background as children wait to be dismissed.



If time remains, choose from the connected activities below.

GOT TIME?

SNACK: BIRTHDAY PARTY

Purpose: Children enjoy a snack as they celebrate Jesus' birthday.

Snack Suggestion: Cupcakes, optional: candles, matches or lighter

Optional: Place a candle on each cupcake. Sing happy birthday to Jesus and let the children blow out the candles. You may wish to do this during THE WAY to help the children visualize God's glory shining on the mountain and around the shepherds.

Today, we discovered how God sent an angel to tell the good news of Jesus' birth to the shepherds. Let's celebrate His birthday with cupcakes!

Directions:

1. Serve cupcakes and drinks.
2. Ask a child to pray and thank God for the snack. Sing happy birthday to Jesus.
3. Ask the Snack Discussion Question: **What are some of the ways your family celebrates Christmas and Jesus' birth?**

GAME: GOOD NEWS BALLOON BOP

Purpose: Children work together to keep a balloon in the air as they review the Bible Memory Verse.

Supplies: Balloon (have more than one in case one breaks)

Prepare: Inflate a balloon.

Today, we are going to celebrate the birth of Jesus by using a balloon to help us remember the good news the angel brought to the shepherds. Each time you bop the balloon, I want you to say the next word of our Bible Memory Verse.

Directions:

1. Children stand in a circle.
2. The teacher bops the balloon into the air as he or she says "I."
3. Children take turns bopping the balloon and saying the next word until the whole verse is recited.
**"I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.
Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you;
He is Christ the Lord. Glory to God in the highest."**
4. If the balloon touches the floor, pick it up and continue. For an added challenge, start the verse over when the balloon touches the floor. Challenge the children to say the whole verse without letting the balloon fall.
5. If you have a large class, you may choose to have children step out once they have bopped the balloon so everyone has a chance to play.

GOT TIME? *continued...*

CRAFT: BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT

Purpose: For children to think about the angel's announcement of Jesus' birth while they create a baby announcement to share with others.

Supplies: Standard-size white sturdy paper, crayons or markers, optional: stickers, glitter, ribbons, or other craft decorations

Prepare: Cut a sheet of white paper in half for every two students.

Today, we discovered God sent a very special message to the shepherds. The angel He sent told them the good news of Jesus' birth. The angel said the message was for all people.

New parents want everyone to know when their baby is born. Some send cards to announce the baby's birth. God wanted everyone to know about Jesus' birth. Let's announce His birth with birth announcement cards. You can use the cards to tell your friends and family the good news.

Directions:

1. On the left side of a half sheet of paper, draw and color a picture of baby Jesus in the manger.
2. On the right side, write:

Baby Jesus is born!

Parents: Mary and Joseph

Where: Bethlehem

Glory to God in the highest!

3. Decorate the card. You may choose to write the Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse on the card.
4. Give the birth announcement to someone and share the good news, just as the angels did!

DISCUSSION: ANGELS

Purpose: To focus on the important role of angels.

Supplies: None

Today, we talked about the angel who brought God's message to the shepherds. Has any of you ever seen a real angel? (Children respond.) What do you think an angel looks like? (Children respond.)

Artists often draw angels as women with wings. The Bible describes angels as men in shining robes. Because they appear suddenly from heaven, many of us picture them with wings, but the Bible doesn't mention angel wings. But, the most important fact about angels is not their clothes or whether they have wings. The most important thing is that angels bring us messages from God. They are one of the ways God came near to people during Bible times.

GOT TIME? *continued...*



BIBLE MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITIES

"I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.
Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you;
He is Christ the Lord. Glory to God in the highest." Luke 2:10b, 11, 14a

GAME: APPEARING ANGEL

Purpose: Children learn the meaning of the Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse: Luke 2:10b, 11, 14a.

Supplies: Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse poster, dry erase board and marker (or chalkboard and chalk or large piece of paper and pencil)

Prepare: Display the Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse poster.

Directions:

1. From the list below, choose one of the phrases of the Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse.
2. Draw one line for each letter in the phrase. Leave a blank space between each word.
3. Choose a volunteer to guess a letter.
 - a. If the letter is found in the phrase, write it on every blank where it belongs.
 - b. If it is not in the phrase, draw one part of an angel (Head, robe, hands, feet, eyes, nose, mouth, hair, etc.) The goal is to guess all the letters before completing the angel.
4. Choose another volunteer to guess a letter.
5. Continue playing until all the letters are revealed or until the angel drawing is complete.
6. Read the phrase to the class and use the description below to explain that part of the verse.
7. If time allows, play again using another phrase.

Phrase

"I bring you good news of great joy."
"That will be for all the people."
"Today in the town of David,"
"A Savior has been born to you."
"He is Christ the Lord."
"Glory to God in the highest."

Description

The angel brought an announcement from God.
The announcement was for everyone.
Both Jesus and King David were born in Bethlehem.
Jesus came to save the world.
Jesus is the Lord Himself, the Messiah.
The heavenly host praised God with these words.

GAME: MEMORY VERSE CIRCLE

Purpose: Children memorize the Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse.

Supplies: Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse poster, Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse Song "I Bring You Good News," CD player

Directions:

1. Practice the verse together a few times.
2. Play the Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse Song and sing along.
3. Children sit on chairs or kneel in a circle.
4. Pick one child to stand and say the first word of the Bible Memory Verse, "I."
5. The next child stands and says "bring." Continue around the circle until the Bible Memory Verse has been completed.
6. Play as often as you like. Challenge the children to see how fast they can say the verse or try reversing directions.

GOT TIME? *continued...*



BIBLE TIMELINE REVIEW

God of Wonders Part Two studies the miracles and stories of the Bible from Genesis through Joshua. Review recent Bible stories to see the continuing story of who God is and what He has done.

Joshua (Circa 1450 B.C.) Who replaced Moses as the leader of the Israelites? (Joshua.) How did Rahab help the two spies Joshua sent to Jericho? (She hid them and helped them escape.) What was God's plan for conquering Jericho? (The Israelites marched around the city with the ark for six days. On the seventh day, after a long trumpet blast, everyone shouted and the wall crumbled to the ground.)

John the Baptist (Circa 1 A.D.) Who did God send to prepare Zechariah for the special son he and his wife Elizabeth would have? (The angel Gabriel.) What happened to Zechariah when he didn't believe Gabriel? (He could not speak until the baby was born.) Who was the baby? (John the Baptist.) John prepared people for the coming of Jesus, our Savior.

Jesus on Earth (Circa 1 A.D.) A.D. stands for Anno Domini, which means "in the year of our Lord." A.D. begins with Jesus' birth and continues until the end of time. Everything written in Genesis through Malachi led up to the birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The books of Genesis through Joshua are filled with miracles from the God of Wonders. His greatest miracle of all was announced by angels to Zechariah, Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds. In this miracle, God gave Jesus, His only Son, so that whoever believes in Him will have life forever close with God.

How to create a Bible Timeline from Genesis through Joshua:

1. Print each scroll on sturdy paper.
2. Choose a wall or other visible location to display the timeline.
3. Before each lesson, add the scroll for that lesson to the Bible Timeline using the list below. Add the two Unit 10 cards for God of Wonders Advent: Lessons 48-52.
4. To review the Bible Timeline, ask the corresponding questions as you point to the associated scroll.

Genesis through Joshua: Creation > Adam and Eve > Cain and Abel > Noah (Circa 2350 B.C.) > Tower of Babel > Abram (Circa 2100 B.C.) > Hagar and Ishmael (Circa 2065 B.C.) > Abraham and Isaac (Circa 2050 B.C.) > Isaac and Rebekah > Jacob and Esau (Circa 1900 B.C.) > Joseph (Circa 1850 B.C.) > Moses (Circa 1500 B.C.) > Joshua (Circa 1450 B.C.)

Unit 10: John the Baptist (Circa 7-2 B.C.) > Jesus on Earth (Circa 2 B.C.-33 A.D.)