



Advent 4: An Angel Visits the Shepherds

Lesson Aim: To know God sent an angel to tell the shepherds about Jesus.

THE WORSHIP

Who God Is: The God Who Comes Near

THE WORD

Bible Story: Luke 2:8-16

What He Has Done: God sent an angel to announce the birth of Jesus to the shepherds.

THE WAY - BIBLE MEMORY VERSE

"Glory to God in the highest!" Luke 2:14a

Unit 10: The God Who Comes Near			
	Bible Story	What He Has Done	Lesson Aim
48	Advent 1: Gabriel Visits Zechariah, Luke 1:11-22, 62-64	God sent His angel Gabriel to tell Zechariah the good news.	To know God gets believers ready for Christmas.
49	Advent 2: Gabriel and Mary, Luke 1:28-33	God sent His angel Gabriel to prepare Mary for the birth of Jesus.	To know the Lord is with us.
50	Advent 3: Jesus Is Born, Luke 2:1-7	God gave us His Son, baby Jesus.	To know Jesus was born in a manger in Bethlehem.
51	Advent 4: An Angel Visits the Shepherds, Luke 2:8-16	God sent an angel to announce the birth of Jesus to the shepherds.	To know God sent an angel to tell the shepherds about Jesus.
52	Following the Star, Matthew 2:1-2, 9-11	God sent a star.	To know the wise men followed a star.

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 that they might grasp the miracle and spread the good news about Christmas. Amen."

TEACHER'S TIP

What about Santa? Many cultures incorporate the story of Saint Nicholas (Santa Claus) into their family traditions at Christmas. However, not every family follows this tradition. To honor all parents, our role as Bible teachers is not to address (validate or invalidate) this tradition, but to redirect the children's focus to celebrating the gift of God's Son.



Segment	Minutes	Activity	Supplies
THE WELCOME	Up to 20	Treasure Chest	Treasure chest, stamp or sticker of a candy cane
		Coloring Center: Sheep that Go "Baa"	Coloring pages of the angel visit to the shepherds, crayons, optional: cotton balls, glue
		Play-Dough Center: Angels from God	Play-dough, cookie cutters, play-dough tools
		Block and Car Center: Sharing the Good News	Blocks, cars
		Dramatic Play Center: Taking Care of the Sheep	Dishes, cups, napkins, play food
		Nativity Center: They Came in a Hurry	Nativity set, Christmas music
		Preparing for Worship	None
THE WORSHIP	Up to 20	Worship Sheet music and recordings for Bible Memory Verse Songs are available at ResourceWell.org. An Advent Wreath is recommended for the four weeks of Advent. Four purple candles (traditional or battery-operated) are suggested, but use the colors familiar to you. You may choose to include a center Christ candle.	Praise music (you may choose to sing favorite Christmas praise songs), optional: musical instruments Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse Song: "I Bring You Good News" Other Bible Memory Verse Song Suggestions: "Give Thanks to the Lord" "His One and Only Son" "Praise Time: Love the Lord Your God" "Sing Praises" "The Lord Is Faithful" "We Love"
		Offering	Baskets
		Worship Illustration	<i>The Adventures of Delbert and Lello</i> puppet script or storybook: God of Wonders Unit 10, Lesson 51
THE WORD	Up to 10	Watch the Word: Luke 2:8-16	Teacher's Bible with bookmark at Luke 2:10 Visual: Picture of the Bible story, toy sheep
THE WAY	Up to 25	Craft: Shepherd Ornament	Shepherd template for Ages 2-3 (available at ResourceWell.org), sturdy white paper, brown pipe cleaner, glue, crayons
		Game: One Quiet Night	Flashlight or nightlight, Bible Memory Verse Song "I Bring You Good News"
		Game: Balloons of Praise	Sheet, balloons (Only one balloon is needed, but keep extras available in case a balloon breaks.)
		Snack: Happy Birthday, Jesus!	A birthday cake or cupcakes to celebrate Jesus' birthday
	Final 5	Final Five	Ponder, Pray & Play: Unit 10 Lesson 51
GOT TIME?	Up to 10	Say & Do: Luke 2:8-16	None
	Up to 10	Game: Glory to God!	Ribbons or strips of cloth or crepe paper, Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse Song "I Bring You Good News"
	Up to 10	Game: Quiet Time	Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse Song "I Bring You Good News"
	Up to 10	Story Time	Any story about the birth of Jesus

RESOURCES: Supplemental materials are available at ResourceWell.org.



The God who comes near

THE WELCOME

Welcome each child as they arrive. **Hello _____. I am glad you are here! Come open the Treasure Chest to find today's treasure.** Child unlocks the Treasure Chest to receive a sticker or stamp of a candy cane. **Candy canes look like the staff a shepherd holds as he watches his sheep. Let this stamp (or sticker) remind you of the shepherds who heard the angels say, "Glory to God in the highest."**

Teacher's Note: These activity centers are designed to reinforce the lesson through hands-on learning experiences either individually or in small groups with the guidance of the teacher. Choose the Bible Activity Centers that best suit the children in your class. Set up the activity centers around the room before children arrive. Allow children to move freely among them.

COLORING CENTER: SHEEP THAT GO "BAA"

SUPPLIES

Coloring pages of the angel visit to the shepherds, crayons, optional: cotton balls, glue

DO

Children color their pictures while talking about the story. Optional: Have children make the sheep fuzzy by gluing cotton balls onto them.

TALK ABOUT

What holiday are we preparing our hearts for with our lesson? (Christmas.) What do we celebrate on Christmas? (Baby Jesus' birth.) The shepherds were some of the first people to hear about His birth. What do shepherds take care of? (Sheep.) Can you point to the sheep in your picture?

PLAY-DOUGH CENTER: ANGELS FROM GOD

SUPPLIES

Play-dough, cookie cutters, play-dough tools

DO

Children create angels with the play-dough while discussing today's lesson.

TALK ABOUT

We have been learning how God sent angels to tell people on earth about Jesus' birth. The angel Gabriel told Zechariah Jesus was coming. Then, Gabriel told Mary she would be Jesus' mother. Today, we will hear how an angel told the shepherds Jesus was born. Can you make an angel with your play-dough? Who sent the angels? (God.)

BLOCK AND CAR CENTER: SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

SUPPLIES

Blocks, cars

DO

Children build a town with the blocks, and then use the cars to travel to tell others the good news.

TALK ABOUT

Who could you tell about Jesus' birth? (Children respond.) Can you build a house for person named and pretend to drive to their house to tell them about Jesus?

THE WELCOME *continued ...*

DRAMATIC PLAY CENTER: TAKING CARE OF THE SHEEP

SUPPLIES

Dishes, cups, napkins, play food

DO

Children play while making food for the shepherds and their sheep.

TALK ABOUT

Today, we are going to hear about the shepherds who went to see baby Jesus. What do shepherds care for? (Sheep.) What do they have to do for the sheep? (Feed them, keep them safe.) Being a shepherd is hard work. Let's make dinner for the hungry shepherds.

What do sheep eat? (Grass, hay.) Can you make some food for the sheep?

NATIVITY CENTER: THEY CAME IN A HURRY

SUPPLIES

Nativity set, Christmas music

DO

Children play with the nativity set. Have the children identify each of the figures in the nativity set. Play Christmas music while children play.

TALK ABOUT

The shepherds hurried to see baby Jesus when the angel told them of His birth. Can you pretend the shepherd is in the field with his sheep and then hurries to find the baby Jesus?

PREPARE FOR WORSHIP

It's time for Praise Time. Let's sing a "Clean Up Song" as we put things away. Praise children as they help clean.

**Clean up! Clean up! Everybody, everywhere!
Clean up! Clean up! Everybody do your share!**

BIBLE MEMORY VERSE SIGN LANGUAGE

(For visual demonstrations, see www.signingsavvy.com.)

**"Glory
to God**

Hold palms together. Top hand moves upward as fingers make wiggling motion.
(God) The open right hand, fingers together and palm facing left, moves upward and then down the center of the face with fingers facing up.

in the highest."

(highest) Held together, pointer and middle fingers point to the side and are raised in front of the body.

Luke 2:14a

Hold hands open, as if holding a Bible.

Adding sign language or motions to the Bible Memory Verse helps children recall what they are learning.



The God who comes near

THE WORSHIP

Supplies: Praise music (you may choose to sing favorite Christmas praise songs), optional: musical instruments, Advent wreath

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 "Praise Time: Love the Lord Your God" as children move to that designated area.

Advent Wreath: An Advent Wreath is recommended for the four weeks of Advent. Four purple candles (traditional or battery-operated) are suggested, but use the candle colors familiar to you. You may choose to include a center Christ candle.



Who are we talking to when we pray? (God.) **Let's talk to Him right now.** Have the children bow their heads and close their eyes. **Dear God, we love You. Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to earth to save us. Help us share that good news with others. Amen.**



God sent angels to tell the shepherds the good news. Baby Jesus was born! Sing: "Sing Praises." **As we continue to sing about the night Jesus was born, let's give our offering.** Sing: "We Love" while collecting the offering.



The Lighting of the Christmas Candles: The Shepherds' Candle

We light the Christmas candles to get our hearts ready to celebrate Christmas. Last time, we lit the Angel's candle, Mary's candle, and the Bethlehem candle. Today, we light the fourth candle, the Shepherds' candle. It reminds us of the shepherds who heard the good news of Jesus' birth from an angel. Choose a child to assist in lighting the fourth candle. The candle lighting takes place during the performance of *The Adventures of Delbert & Lello* puppet script or after reading the storybook version.



Before we light the Shepherds' candle, let's see if Delbert and Lello know about the Shepherds' candle. Perform *The Adventures of Delbert and Lello* puppet script or read storybook: God of Wonders Unit 10, Lesson 51. If you read the storybook, light the candle now.



"Glory to God in the highest!" sang the angels. Glory to God in the highest means we give our biggest and best praise and thanks to God who is above all. Let's practice our Bible Memory Verse together. Practice the Bible Memory Verse with the motions.

"Glory	Hold palms together. Top hand moves upward as fingers make wiggling motion.
to God	(God) The open right hand, fingers together and palm facing left, moves upward and then down the center of the face with fingers facing up.
in the highest."	(highest) Held together, pointer and middle fingers point to the side and are raised in front of the body.
Luke 2:14a	Hold hands open, as if holding a Bible.



Each time we sing, "Glory to God in the highest," let's use our strongest, happiest voices and our Whisper Verse motions. Sing: "I Bring You Good News."



An angel brings good news

THE WORD

Supplies: Teacher's Bible with bookmark at Luke 2:10, picture of the Bible story, toy sheep

Before we begin our Bible Time, let's say our Classroom Promise with the motions.

With my eyes on my teacher;	Point to eyes.
My mouth quiet as can be,	Place index finger over mouth as quiet sign.
I will listen to hear,	Cup hand around ear.
How God loves you and me.	Hug self, point to others, and then self.

Let's reach deep in our pockets and pull out our listening ears. Reach in your pocket and cup your hands behind your ears as if listening.

Hold the toy sheep. **What animal am I holding?** (Sheep.) **What do sheep say?** (Baaa.) **Do sheep need someone to care for them?** (Yes.) **What do we call that person?** (A shepherd.) **Shepherds work very hard to watch over their sheep.**

Did you know the shepherds were some of the first people to hear baby Jesus had been born? Today, we will hear how the shepherds heard the good news. Let's listen. Handle Bible as a special treasure, leaving it open to Luke 2:10.



WATCH THE WORD: LUKE 2: 8-16

Read the story below or retell the passage in your own words. To illustrate the story, show a picture of the Bible story from a children's Bible, the coloring page, or other source.

- **The shepherds were out in the fields,**
- **Watching over their sheep at night.**
- **An angel of the Lord appeared;**
- **It was a surprising sight.**

- **"Do not be afraid," the angel said,**
- **"For I bring you good news.**
- **Today in the town of Bethlehem**
- **A Savior was born for you.**

- **"You will find Him in a manger;**
- **The baby wrapped in cloth.**
- **It is good news for all people;**
- **He is come to save us all."**

- **"Glory to God in the highest,"**
- **An army of angels said.**
- **The shepherds said, "Let's go and see**
- **This baby in Bethlehem!"**

What kind of news did the angel bring? (Good news.) **What did the angels who were praising God say?** ("Glory to God in the highest.") **That is our Bible Memory Verse. It means we give our biggest and best praise and thanks to God who is above all.**



We can share the good news

THE WAY

Teacher Tip: Craft and games can be presented at the same time in different areas or one at a time depending on class size and teaching style.

CRAFT: SHEPHERD ORNAMENT

Purpose: To know God sent an angel to tell the shepherds about Jesus.

Supplies: Shepherd template for Ages 2-3 (available at ResourceWell.org), sturdy white paper, brown pipe cleaner, glue, crayons

Prepare: Print and cut out the shepherd template from sturdy white paper. Punch a hole in the top of the cut out. Cut a length of brown pipe cleaner for the shepherd's staff.

Adaptation for Ages 2-3: This craft has been adapted from the curriculum for ages 4-5.

Optional: Cut a strip of felt or fabric for a shepherd's belt or headdress for children to glue onto the ornament.

Directions:

1. Before or after the children decorate the shepherd, thread the yarn through the hole in the top of the ornament and tie the ends together for a hanger.
2. Color the shepherd.
3. Attach the shepherd's staff.

Craft Discussion:

- **What was the good news?** (Baby Jesus was born.)
- **Who is the good news for?** (All people.)
- **Who remembers what "Glory to God in the highest" means?** (It means we give our biggest and best praise and thanks to God who is above all.)

THE WAY *continued...*

GAME: ONE QUIET NIGHT

Purpose: To imagine the shepherds' experience the night the angel brought good news.

Supplies: Flashlight or nightlight, Bible Memory Verse Song "I Bring You Good News"

Let's imagine what it was like to have been a shepherd in the field that night.

Directions:

1. Dim the lights, if possible. Use flashlight or nightlight to create moonlight.
2. Choose a child to be the angel. Divide the rest of the class into two groups: the army of angels and the shepherds.
3. The shepherds lie on the floor or lay their heads on a table and rest. The angels stand nearby.
4. Read and act out the Bible story.

The shepherds were out in the fields watching over their sheep at night.

An angel of the Lord appeared; It was a surprising sight.

"Do not be afraid," the angel said, "For I bring you good news.

Today in the town of Bethlehem A Savior was born for you.

You will find Him in a manger; The baby wrapped in cloth.

It's good news for all people; He is come to save us all."

"Glory to God in the highest," An army of angels said.

The shepherds said, "Let's go and see this baby in Bethlehem!"

5. Play again, allowing the children to change roles.
6. If you have time, have all the children lay on the floor. Play "I Bring You Good News" as the children imagine what the angel and the sky full of heavenly hosts looked and sounded like.

GAME: BALLOONS OF PRAISE

Purpose: Children celebrate the good news by seeing how high their praise balloon can go.

Supplies: Sheet, balloons (Only one balloon is needed, but keep extras available in case a balloon breaks.)

Prepare: Inflate balloon.

God is in heaven. Where is heaven? (Heaven is higher than the clouds in the sky.) **Each of us will get a turn to praise God for something wonderful He has done. Then we will all say, "Glory to God in the highest," and see how high we can bounce our balloon of praise.**

Directions:

1. Children stand evenly spaced around the sheet.
2. Place the balloon in the center of the sheet.
3. First child says, **"I praise God for_____."** (Family members, Christmas, angels, baby Jesus, friends, food, etc.)
4. Children lift and lower the sheet as they say: **"Glory to God in the highest."**
5. Play until each child has a turn.

THE WAY *continued...*

SNACK: HAPPY BIRTHDAY, JESUS!

Purpose: To remember and celebrate the day Jesus was born.

Snack Suggestion: A birthday cake or cupcakes to celebrate Jesus' birthday

Today's birthday snack is part of our celebration of Jesus' birth. When do we celebrate Jesus' birthday? (Christmas day, December 25.)

Directions:

1. Serve snack and drink.
2. **Let's sing the "Blessing Song."** Sing to the tune of "Frere Jacques" or another familiar tune.
**God our Father, God our Father. Once again, once again,
Thank You for our blessings. Thank You for our blessings. Amen. Amen.**
3. Lead discussion below while children enjoy their snack.
 - **What was the good news?** (Jesus was born to save us.)
 - **Who is the good news for?** (All people.)
 - **Who can you share that news with today?** (Family and friends.)



When only 5 minutes remain, begin this segment.

FINAL FIVE MINUTES

BIBLE MEMORY VERSE

Gather children in a circle sitting or standing and practice the words and motions.

**"Glory
to God**

in the highest."

Luke 2:14a

Hold palms together. Top hand moves upward as fingers make wiggling motion. (God) The open right hand, fingers together and palm facing left, moves upward and then down the center of the face with fingers facing up.

(highest) Held together, pointer and middle fingers point to the side and are raised in front of the body.

Hold hands open, as if holding a Bible.

PRAY

Let's pray together. Say a closing prayer with the children.

PLAY

Allow children to play with selected toys or centers or choose a book to read to them.

DISMISSAL

Have children take home their coloring page, craft, and a copy of the Ponder, Pray & Play for 2-3's.



➤ If time remains, choose from the connected activities below.

GOT TIME?

SAY & DO: LUKE 2:8-16

Purpose: This pantomime version of the Bible Story helps children remember the story details.

Supplies: None

Directions: With each phrase, the teacher says the phrase and leads the children in doing the hand motions.

- **The shepherds were out in the fields** (Fold arms.)
- **Watching over their sheep at night.** (Hand across brow, searching.)
- **An angel of the Lord appeared;** (Raise arms, as wings.)
- **It was a surprising sight!** (Look surprised.)
- **"Do not be afraid," the angel said,** (Shake head no.)
- **"For I bring you good news.** (Point to self.)
- **Today in the town of Bethlehem** (Point outward.)
- **A Savior was born for you.** (Point to others.)

- **"You will find Him in a manger;** (Point to the ground.)
- **The baby wrapped in cloth.** (Rock baby in arms.)
- **It is good news for all people,** (Thumbs up.)
- **He is come to save us all."** (Hands on heart.)
- **"Glory to God in the highest,"** (Raise both hands high.)
- **The sky full of angels said.** (Point to the sky.)
- **The shepherds said, "Let's go and see** (Beckoning gesture.)
- **This baby in Bethlehem!"** (Rock baby in arms.)



BIBLE MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITIES

"Glory to God in the highest!" Luke 2:14a

GAME: GLORY TO GOD!

Purpose: To help children memorize and review the Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse.

Supplies: Ribbons or strips of cloth or crepe paper, Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse Song "I Bring You Good News"

God sent an angel to the shepherds with good news. Do you know what that good news was? (Baby Jesus was born.) **The angel said, "Glory to God in the highest." Let's say that together, "Glory to God in the highest." Glory is the praise and thanks we give to God. As we sing, let's dance and wave these ribbons as a way to praise God for sending Jesus to us.**

Directions:

1. **Listen for the words, "Glory to God in the highest," and sing along.**
2. Play the Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse Song "I Bring You Good News."
3. Lead the children in waving the ribbons as they dance about the room. Encourage them to sing along when they hear "Glory to God in the highest!"

GOT TIME? *continued...*

GAME: QUIET TIME

Purpose: To take a moment of silence to think about God's goodness.

Supplies: Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse Song "I Bring You Good News"

Zechariah could not say a word for about 300 days. Since he was not talking, he had plenty of time to think about God and to listen. Let's take a minute to be quiet and hear what the angel said to the shepherds about baby Jesus.

Directions:

1. Invite children to get in a comfortable position either by laying their heads on a table or by resting on the floor.
2. **Listen for the words: "Glory to God in the highest." Glory is the praise and thanks we give to God. Glory to God in the highest means we give our biggest and highest praise and thanks to Him.**
3. **It is good to take time to be quiet and think about God. Let's be quiet and think about God while we listen to our Bible Memory Verse Song.** Play the Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse Song "I Bring You Good News." Children rest quietly as they listen.



STORY TIME

Gather the children and read a favorite story. This can be a Bible Story, a chapter from *The Adventures of Delbert & Lello*, or a story about the birth of Jesus.

PONDER, PRAY & PLAY

Unit 10, Lesson 51: Advent 4: An Angel Visits the Shepherds

PONDER! To celebrate the coming of Jesus as a family, light candles on your Advent wreath. (A circle of greenery and four candles; place additional candle in the center to be lit on Christmas Eve as the Christ candle.) This week, gather your family to light four candles and read Luke 2:8-16. Discuss what it may have been like to hear angels say, "Glory to God in the highest."

PRAY! Pray this prayer each day this week: "Lord, thank You for coming near to the shepherds in the field. Thank You for coming near to everyone during this Christmas season. Amen."

PLAY! Go outside at night and look at the sky. Imagine what the shepherds saw and heard that night. Draw a picture of an angel and the shepherds. Fold the paper in half with your drawing on the inside. Ask a family member to write "Good News!" on the front. Give the card to someone to celebrate Jesus' birth.

BIBLE MEMORY VERSE

"Glory to God	Hold palms together. Top hand moves upward as fingers make wiggling motion. (God) The open right hand, fingers together and palm facing left, moves upward and then down the center of the face with fingers facing up.
in the highest."	(highest) Held together, pointer and middle fingers point to the side and are raised in front of the body.
Luke 2:14a	Hold hands open, as if holding a Bible.