



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

Whisper Verse: "Glory to God in the highest."

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 as He was with Mary.
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 may grasp the miracle and spread the good news about Christmas. Amen."



Segment	Minutes	Activity	Supplies
THE WELCOME	Up to 15	Treasure Chest	Treasure chest, stamp or sticker of a candy cane
		Whisper Verse	Sign language for "Glory to God in the highest."
THE WORSHIP	Up to 20	Worship Sheet music and recordings for Bible Memory Verse Songs are available at ResourceWell.org. Additional Supplies: Advent wreath (See GOT TIME?)	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" Additional Song Suggestions: "Away in a Manger" "O Come, All Ye Faithful"
		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: Shepherd's staff or candy cane
THE WAY	Up to 25	Craft: Shepherd Ornament	Advent Angel craft created in Lesson 48, white felt (or fabric or paper), sturdy white paper, brown pipe cleaner, glue, crayons or markers
		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
		Circle of Prayer	None
	Final 5	Final Five	Ponder, Pray & Play: Unit 10, Lesson 51 Color This Story: "The Angel and the Shepherds"
GOT TIME?	Up to 10	Say & Do: Luke 2:8-16	None
	Up to 10	Craft: Advent Wreath	See GOT TIME?
	Up to 10	Game: Quiet Time	Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse Song "I Bring You Good News"
	Up to 10	Game: Memory Verse Echo	None
	Up to 10	Story Time	Any story about the birth of Jesus

RESOURCES: Supplemental materials are available at ResourceWell.org.



Glory to God in the highest

THE WELCOME

Welcome each child as they arrive. **Hello _____. I'm 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. **A candy cane at Christmas reminds us of the staff a shepherd holds when he watches over his sheep. Let this stamp (or sticker) of a candy cane remind you of the shepherds who heard the angels say, "Glory to God in the highest."** Teach the Whisper Verse in spoken language and in sign language below. **We call it the Whisper Verse so you can whisper it to others.***

SIGN LANGUAGE: "Glory to God in the highest."

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

Each time we say today's Whisper Verse, let's say it with three hand motions:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| "Glory" | Place palms together with the left palm up and the right palm down at waist level, bring hands apart while wiggling fingers. The right palm ends level with the right shoulder while the left hand ends level with the left hip. |
| "to God" | First, touch tips of index fingers together. Then, the right hand is lowered and then slightly raised in front of face with palm facing left and fingers together. |
| "in the highest." | Hands make a circle above the head with palms facing inward and ending outward. This is the sign is for heaven. |

Allow children to enjoy free play until everyone has arrived. **Let's sing the "Clean Up Song" as we put toys away before Praise Time.** Praise any child who helps. Allow several minutes for clean up.

**"Clean Up Song": Clean up! Clean up! Everybody, everywhere!
Clean up! Clean up! Everybody do your share!**

Gather and seat children in Praise Time area.

***Today's Whisper Verse:** "Glory to God in the highest," Luke 2:14a. The Whisper Verse is a tool to help the children learn a major point in the lesson. It is coupled with sign language or hand motions as a memory aid. The verse is not necessarily chosen from today's Bible story.



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

To prepare for the lighting of the Christmas candles, light the first three candles on the Advent wreath.



It's Praise Time—our time to sing praise to the God who comes near. He came near when He sent an angel with good news to the shepherds. We can come near to God today by giving, singing, and praying to Him. Let's start by giving our offering now. Play: “Away in a Manger” as background music while collecting the offering.

Our Whisper Verse for today is, “Glory to God in the highest.” Review the Whisper Verse with the sign language. **When we say, “Glory to God in the highest,” we are giving praise to God who is way up high in heaven. Our Whisper Verse is the same as our Bible Memory Verse. Let's sing our Bible Memory Verse Song right now. 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.”**



The Lighting of the Christmas Candles: The Shepherds' Candle

Advent Wreath: 4 candles set in a wreath

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. We light it to remind us of the shepherds who heard the good news of Jesus' birth from an angel. Choose a child to assist in lighting the fourth of the four candles on the Advent wreath. 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 chose to read the storybook, have a child light the fourth candle now.



The angel brought good news that a special baby had been born. Who was that special baby? (Jesus.) We can spread the good news, too, just as the angels and the shepherds did. Sing: “O Come, All Ye Faithful” and “His One and Only Son.”



An angel brings good news to the shepherds

THE WORD

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

With my eyes on my teacher;
My mouth quiet as can be,
I will listen to hear,
How God loves you and me.

Point to eyes.
Place index finger over mouth as quiet sign.
Cup hand around ear.
Hug self, point to others, and then self.

Last time, we learned baby Jesus was born in a manger. Today, we will hear about the shepherds who heard the good news of Jesus' birth. Handle the Bible as a special treasure, leaving it open to Luke 2:10.

WATCH THE WORD: LUKE 2:8-16

Read the points below or retell the passage in your own words using the points below as a general guide. To illustrate the story, display a shepherd's staff or candy cane. Other visual options include the craft sample, Color This Story picture, or any related picture.

- 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.) **Let's find our answer in the Bible.** Read Luke 2:10 from the teacher's Bible.

What did the big group of angels say? ("Glory to God in the highest!") **Our Whisper Verse tells us the answer. Let's say it together, "Glory to God in the highest!"** Include sign language or hand motions. **It means praise God who is way up high in heaven.**



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: Advent Angel craft created in Lesson 48, white felt (or fabric or paper), sturdy white paper, brown pipe cleaner, glue, crayons or markers

Prepare: From white felt, cut a 4-inch triangle. Draw and cut out the shape of a shepherd from sturdy white paper. Cut a length of brown pipe cleaner for the shepherd's staff.

Alternate Craft: Instead of adding this ornament to the Advent Angel created in lesson 48, create an individual ornament by punching a hole in the top and threading ribbon through the hole.

Directions:

1. Use crayons or markers to color the shepherd.
2. Glue the shepherd cut-out onto the felt triangle.
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?** (Praise God who is way up high in heaven.)

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.) **"Glory to God in the highest"** means we praise God who is way up high in heaven. 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 the Whisper Verse: **"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 other 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.
 - **Who remembers our Whisper Verse?** ("Glory to God in the highest.") **What does that mean?** (It means praise God who is way up high in heaven.)
 - **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.)



CIRCLE OF PRAYER

God made you and He cares for you. He loves to hear you pray with private words or words you say out loud. Let's fold our hands and close our eyes. As I lift up your name to God in heaven, I will lay my hand on your shoulder. Let's pray together.

Dear God, thank You for making us and loving us. We lift up to You a special prayer for ____, ____, ____ (read every name). We pray for our families and friends. Thank You for teaching us how to love one another. Amen.



When only 5 minutes remain, begin this segment.

FINAL FIVE MINUTES

COMPLETED CRAFT: Take home your "Shepherd Ornament" craft. You may attach it to the robe of the angel you made a few weeks ago or hang it in your home. Share the good news the shepherds heard; baby Jesus was born!

PONDER, PRAY & PLAY: Distribute Ponder, Pray & Play cards if available. **Show this card to your family. Talk about what it would have been like to be a shepherd in the field hearing the news of Jesus' birth from an angel.**

COLOR THIS STORY: "The Angel and the Shepherds." Discuss the Bible Story and play the Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse Song, "I Bring You Good News," as children color.



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 acts it out with hand motions; then repeats the same phrase and motions with the children.

- **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.)

GOT TIME *continued...*

CRAFT: ADVENT WREATH

Purpose: Children work together to create an Advent wreath.

Supplies: Wire or pipe cleaners (brown or green), greenery (ivy strands, pine needles, etc.), four tall purple candles, four candleholders, sturdy paper plate, glue or tape

Teacher Tip: Create one wreath for the classroom or individual wreaths for children to take home. The directions for this wreath suggest four candles. Some wreaths add a fifth candle, "the Christ candle," which is in the center of the wreath and is lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

Advent means coming. In the four weeks before Christmas, believers use an Advent wreath to celebrate the coming of Jesus our Lord. Each week we light a new candle. The circle shape of our Advent wreath has no beginning and no end reminds us of the promise of a never ending life forever with God.

Directions:

1. Use wire or pipe cleaners to create a wreath shape (circle) and place it on the plate.
2. Attach the greenery to the wreath shape using glue, tape, or additional pipe cleaners.
3. Place the four candleholders evenly along the inner rim of wreath.
4. Place the purple candles in the candleholders.
5. Note: Over time, you may need to replace any browning greenery with fresh greenery.

Flameless Advent Wreaths: (1) Cut candle shapes from sturdy gold or yellow paper. Color the flames red or orange. Attach the candles to the plate with tape. (2) Use battery operated candles.



BIBLE MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITIES

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

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.

GOT TIME *continued...*

GAME: MEMORY VERSE ECHO

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

Supplies: None

Glory to God in the highest means we give our biggest and highest praise and thanks to God. Let's echo our praises to God.

Directions:

1. Divide your class into three groups.
2. Assign one group to be the loud echo, one the regular echo, and one the whisper echo.
3. Shout the verse and have each group echo your words, the loud group first, then the regular voice group, and then finally the whisper echo.
4. Repeat a few times.
5. If you have time, reassign which group does each kind of echo and play again.



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 one 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 the 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. Afterward, make a Christmas card to share the good news of Jesus' birth with a friend. 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 of card.

Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse: Luke 2:14a

"Glory to God in the highest."