

LESSON PLAN

SHEPHERDS WORSHIP JESUS: CHRISTMAS LESSON #3

Luke 2:1-20

Lesson Memory verse: Luke 2:10 “And the angel said to them, Fear not; for behold, **I bring you good tidings of great joy**, which shall be to all people.” (Grades 1 & 2 memorize portion printed in bold.)

Lesson Aim: To know that Jesus came to save everyone from Hell to give them great joy.

Lesson Plan: Use the KEY – HE – SEE – WE – BE plan (explained in the Introductory Notes).

KEY (for Attention): How many of you think that you are going to get at least one present this Christmas? Suppose a thief came into your house and took all of the presents. It is not likely to happen, but that would be bad news. Now suppose that you receive the one present that you wanted most. That would be good news. What gift would you want most? (Let them tell you. You might be surprised at what they say, but it will give you insight into the values that are most dear to them.)

Do you think that gift will make you happy? What will you do if you are happy with the gift? (Discuss what they might tell others about the gift that they received.) Our Bible story today will tell us about good news that made some shepherds joyful. Listen carefully to learn what they did when they heard this good news.

HE (for Authority): Our memory verse tells us about this good news. Let us look at it in Luke 2:10. (Let them find it in their Bibles. Also print it on the whiteboard or on a poster board so that you can refer to it easily. (Use lower case letters, except where capital letters are needed. Some children have difficulty reading capital letters.) In our evil world, it does not seem possible that there is good news for everybody – good news for young people and for old people, good news for rich people and for poor people, good news for you and for me. Can there be good news like that? We get angry and fight. We cry when we do not get what we want. We do not act like we have heard any good news. But God has some good news which can make us happy all the time. That good news is the birthday of His Son, Jesus Christ. That is what the angel told the shepherds on the very night that Jesus was born. Jesus would bring great joy to all people. So His birth is the good news.

But how can Jesus' birth be good news? (Let the children try to answer, if they can.) He came to save us from going to Hell. If He had not come, we would die in our sins and go to that awful place forever. We would never be able to go to Heaven. But Jesus came to earth to save us from our sins and from Hell so we could live with Him forever. That is good news, isn't it? It is good news for everyone who will believe it. That is why the angel said he was bringing “good tidings of great joy.” It was good news that should fill all people with much joy. That is why Christmas can be a very joyful time.

Words and phrases to explain in the verse:

“Fear not” – do not be afraid

“Behold” – please listen to me

“Good tidings” – good news

SEE (for Apperception) and WE (for Application): PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word.

This story will remind us how joyful Jesus made some people when He was born in Bethlehem. I hope that you will joyful as you think about the good news of Jesus' birth.

I. Caesar's Law (2:1-3)

Caesar Augustus was the first emperor, or king, of Rome. He made a law that every man had to return to his parent's hometown to be counted.

II. Joseph's Obedience (2:4-7)

Joseph obeyed this law. He went from his home in Nazareth to Bethlehem. This is where his grandparents first lived. He took along Mary, his wife, and she was about to have a baby. After a long trip, the couple reached Bethlehem. Many other travelers had also come to Bethlehem. The sleeping rooms were full. There was no room anywhere, except in a stable, which was used for keeping animals. Maybe it was used for the donkeys of the travelers. But whatever it was used for, that stable was the only place that Joseph and Mary could find in the crowded city of Bethlehem. So it was that while they were in

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that stable, Mary gave birth to her first child at night. It was a boy and she named Him Jesus, which means Savior. She wrapped up baby Jesus in narrow strips of cloth and laid Him in the manger. Yes, baby Jesus was born in a very poor place, but He came so that we might be able to go to a very rich place. Do you now where that rich place is? (Heaven) That is good news, isn't it?

But do you know that 700 years earlier God had told Micah that His Son would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2)? When Joseph obeyed Caesar's law, he made it possible for Jesus to be born in Bethlehem just as God had said to Micah. God wanted Joseph to obey Caesar and it was a good thing that he did. How happy he and Mary must have been when they realized that they had gone to the right place for Jesus to be born.

WE: We, too, must learn to obey our leaders and when we do, we will be obeying God unless God has said something different in the Bible. Always obey what God says in the Bible. But if our leaders tell us to do something that is not against what God says, we must obey, if we want God's blessing. Will you remember this?

III. Angel's Good News (2:8-14)

God sent a special angel to earth to tell some people about His Son's birth. God did not send His angel to some great religious leaders, or to powerful kings, or to some famous people. Instead He sent His angel to tell some humble shepherds who were guarding their sheep that night. When the angel showed himself to them, they were very much afraid. You would be, too! Then the angel said something like this, "Listen, I have good news which will cause great joy to everyone. A baby boy is born in Bethlehem who came to be our Savior. He is Christ the Lord. To prove this, you will find the baby wrapped up and lying in a manger." Then the heavens were filled with angels who praised God, rejoicing in the birth of Jesus and claiming that God was bringing peace to those who pleased Him.

WE: Have we all heard the good news that Jesus came to save us from our sins so we would not go to Hell? Is it good news to you? Are you sure you will go to Heaven, if you were to die right now? You can be sure! That is what Jesus came to do. He wants to save all of us and take us to Heaven someday. But He will not do that until you ask Him to be your Savior.

IV. Shepherd's Joy (2:15-20)

When the angels went back into heaven, the shepherds decided to find this Savior that the angel had said was born in Bethlehem. So they quickly went into the city and found the stable where Joseph and Mary and baby Jesus were staying. There they saw the baby all wrapped up and lying in a manger – just like the angel had said. They believed that this baby was their Savior and they were glad that He had come. So they returned to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for this good news. They were telling God how great He was and were thanking Him for His great gift to them.

WE: We need to be willing to receive the good news like those shepherds. They heard the good news, found Jesus and received Him as their Savior. That is why they were praising God. If you have truly received Jesus as your Savior, you will be rejoicing and praising God.

BE (for Action): Can you tell me what the shepherds did that proved that they received Jesus as their Savior? ("They glorified and praised God.") Why do you think they were joyful? (Because they believed that Jesus would save them from going to Hell.) Jesus will save all from Hell who receives Him as their Savior and He will take them to Heaven when it is time to leave the earth. That will make every believer joyful. Have you received Him as your Savior? If not, you can do it today, and He will be the best Christmas gift you could ever have. Your toys will get old and broken, but Jesus will be your best friend forever. Your toys and games will give you a little joy, but Jesus will give you much joy now and forever. (Invite the children to accept Jesus Christ as their Savior.)