

God is with the shepherds

**Verse:**

Luke 2:8-20

Some shepherds hear about Jesus

**Aim:**

To know that 'God with us' means everyone - rich and poor



The repeated message of the Christmas story is that God is with us.

In this week's session, the angels visit the lowly shepherds as they take care of their sheep on the hillside. God values the shepherds enough to send a choir of angels and to give them the opportunity to be the first to meet Jesus. No matter who we are, rich or poor, God loves us very much and is always with us.

Each child will need:

- Pens/pencils and paper
- Explore It Ideas handout

You will need:

- Explore it Ideas handout
- Materials to create a 'God with us' Christmas Tree decoration
- Material to create the 'Love' candle (this will depend on the method you chose for your group)



Start it

To start off today's session, complete the *Beano* Christmas Quiz shown in the link below:
www.beano.com/posts/funny-christmas-quiz

Ask:

What fun facts did you discover from the quiz?

Say:

It's important to remember that there are lots of traditions around at Christmas including Santa, lists and reindeers. However, we are celebrating the birth of Jesus, so let's now turn to the start of that story in music ...

Sing it

Say:

Our song for today shares the story of the shepherds on the hillside.

Video

'It was on a Starry Night' by King's Kids Worship (2:15)



Tell it

Ask:

In our session last week, we discovered that the name 'Immanuel' given to Jesus had a special meaning. What was it?

Say:

Immanuel means 'God with us', and this promise carries on in our story this week.

Read:

'That night, some shepherds were in the fields nearby watching their sheep. An angel of the Lord stood before them. The glory of the Lord was shining around them, and suddenly they became very frightened.'

(Luke 2:8-9 ICB)

Say:

We have just listened to Luke 2:8-9 and everyone here should know what comes next. We've finally reached our memory verse. Let's share it together.

Memory verse

'The angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, because I am bringing you some good news. It will be a joy to all the people. Today your Saviour was born in David's town. He is Christ the Lord.'"

(Luke 2:10-11 ICB)

Ask:

Why was it surprising that the angels came to visit the shepherds?

Say:

The shepherds were not rich, clean, or respected; in fact, they were about as far away from wise men or kings as you could get! They worked with hands covered in dirt, stood in fields in all weathers and looked after filthy animals. These were not the most important people.

Ask:

What do you imagine the angels looked like?

Say:

The Bible suggests that the angels were impressive heavenly beings.

Ask:

Each time an angel appeared in the Christmas story, what did they say?

Say:

'Don't be afraid' was the first thing the angels said to the shepherds. They must have been an amazing sight, filling the night sky with their glorious light.

Read:

“This is how you will know him: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a feeding box.” Then a very large group of angels from heaven joined the first angel. All the angels were praising God, saying: “Give glory to God in heaven, and on earth let there be peace to the people who please God.” Then the angels left the shepherds and went back to heaven. The shepherds said to each other, “Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened. We will see this thing the Lord told us about.” So the shepherds went quickly and found Mary and Joseph. And the shepherds saw the baby lying in a feeding box. Then they told what the angels had said about this child. Everyone was amazed when they heard what the shepherds said to them. Mary hid these things in her heart; she continued to think about them. Then the shepherds went back to their sheep, praising God and thanking him for everything that they had seen and heard. It was just as the angel had told them.’

(Luke 2:12-20 *ICB*)

Say:

The lowly shepherds were chosen to be the first to visit Jesus when he was in the manger. This showed that the good news of Jesus – ‘God with us’ – really was for everyone.

Action it

For the Action It activity, the children are going to make a Christmas tree decoration to remind them of the ‘God with us’ message of Christmas. A Pinterest link is provided below to an image for a decoration using wooden lollypop sticks. You can use this idea as a starting point, but the main aim is to create a decoration which bears the message ‘God with us’. The children can then take their decoration home and hang it on their Christmas tree.

www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/317292736258891991

(by Housing a Forest: www.housingaforest.com/popsicle-stick-manger-craft/)

Pray it

In today's session you will need to prepare the resources for the children to make their 'Love' candle.

Say:

Our Advent prayer theme for this week is 'Love'. The biggest way God showed his love for us was by giving his only son to be born on earth. Through this love, he died on a cross and rose from the dead. This was all so that God could show his love to us.

Ask:

Do you know that God loves you? How do you know?

Say:

Think of someone in your life who doesn't know how much God loves them. As you make your Advent candle this week, spend time praying for them.

Ask:

How could you show love to this person at Christmas?

After the children have completed their candle ask them, if they feel comfortable, to share who they were thinking about as they made it.

Spend time praying for the people the children have mentioned.

Explore it

Remember to send home the *Explore It Ideas* for children and families.



'Explore It!' is produced by the Children and Youth Department in collaboration with Kay Moorby (soulwithaiew)

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Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



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Create

In today's session you tried the *Beano* Christmas Quiz. Create your own quiz to try out with the people at home over Christmas.



Share

In your Explore It session this week, you created a new candle for your Advent wreath representing the love God showed to the world when he sent his only son. Add the candle to your wreath and then watch the following clip with your loved ones at home.

Advent for Kids: LOVE (Week 4) - 5 Minute Family Devotional/Kids Bible Story (5:26)
by Minno Bible Stories for Kids



Song for the week

'It was on a Starry Night' by King's Kids Worship (2:15)



Memory verse

'The angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, because I am bringing you some good news. It will be a joy to all the people. Today your Saviour was born in David's town. He is Christ the Lord."'

(Luke 2:10-11 /CB)

**LIVING
OUT FAITH**

Today's story is illustrated in this week's *Kids Alive!* The UK's only weekly Christian comic – filled with jokes, competitions, Bible-based cartoons and much more...and is now available to read online!

salvationarmy.org.uk/kidsalive.



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& Youth