

# Love is powerful


**Bible verses:**

Luke 2:8-20

Some shepherds hear about Jesus


**Aim:**

To consider why the angels appear to shepherds, and why the 'outsiders' receive the good news first


**Today's fruit:**

Love



Today's session is a celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ and his powerful, all-inclusive love.

As we explore the story of the shepherds, who were the first to hear the good news, we'll discover how God's love reaches even those who are often left out. There will also be time for the children to celebrate together, remembering that everyone is invited to share in the joy of Jesus' birth.

We know that God loves everyone – we too can show love to those people who may be on the outside, like the shepherds.

**Each child will need:**

- *Explore It ideas* handout

**You will need:**

- Fruit of the Spirit poster: *Love* – download from **Salvationist**
- Resources for a Christmas celebration – see Action it



## Start it

**Say:**

Imagine you were asked to organise a special Christmas celebration.

Discuss with the children how they would plan the Christmas celebration, encouraging them to think about who they would invite and what makes someone feel included or important.

**Discuss:**

- Who would you invite?
- What would the party invitations look like?
- Where would it be?
- What would you eat?
- What kind of event would it be?
- Some parties have a VIP section for 'very important people'. If your celebration had one of these, who would you include? Would anyone be left out?

**Say:**

Christmas is a time of celebration, but God's celebration looked a little different! On the very first Christmas the most important invitation didn't go to kings or celebrities. Instead, God's powerful love reached the ordinary shepherds out in the fields. Later we'll find out why God chose them to hear the good news first.

**Sing it****Say:**

You'll probably know our song for this week: it's all about celebrating the birth of Jesus!

**Song**

**'Come and join the celebration'** by Scampton church (1:53)

**Share it****Ask:**

In our last session we looked at the meaning of the name Immanuel. What did it mean?

**Say:**

Immanuel means 'God with us', and that message continues in today's story. Jesus wasn't sent just for kings or important people, but for everyone, rich or poor, near or far. God showed his powerful love by sending the angels to some very unexpected visitors.

**Video**

***The story of Christmas (Jesus and the shepherds)*** by Saddleback Kids (2:25)

**Ask:**

Who were the first special visitors who came to see Jesus?

**Say:**

You might think the birth of such a special baby would bring VIP guests from palaces or temples. But instead, the angels appeared to shepherds, ordinary people who were often ignored or left out. God's love is so powerful that it reaches everyone, especially those others might forget.

**Ask:**

- Why do you think God chose the shepherds first?
- How does that show God's love?

Display the *Love* sign.

**Say:**

This week's fruit of the Spirit is love. God's love reached out to the shepherds, people who lived away from the hustle and bustle of the city. When we know how much God loves us, we can reach out to others with that same love.

**Say:**

As well as experiencing God's love, the shepherds got to hear the most amazing choir that night.

**Read:**

**'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."**

(Luke 2:13-14 *ICB*)

**Ask:**

- The Bible says the angels sang to the shepherds. If you were in charge of the angel choir, what song would you ask them to sing?
- Can you think of a Christmas carol all about the angels singing to the shepherds?

**Say:**

The angels' song filled the sky with joy and peace, reminding us that God's love brings hope to the whole world. Let's join in and celebrate with our own song of praise.

You can use this music to transition to the celebration part of the session.

**Listen**

**'Hark the Herald (Sing out loud)' (official music video)** by The Spirituals Choir (5:55)

## Action it

Spend some time celebrating the birth of Jesus.

Here are some ideas:

- Do a Christmas praise dance party!  
**TGIF Dance party - Christmas themed** (kids worship with motions and lyrics) by Kids Zone 473 (9:40)
- Play some Christmas games.  
Eg *Nighty night sheep* from [Biblegamescentral.com/the-story-of-christmas-minute-to-win-it-games](http://Biblegamescentral.com/the-story-of-christmas-minute-to-win-it-games)
- Make some sheep cupcakes.  
Bake from scratch or use plain shop-bought ones to decorate and to eat at the party.  
You may wish to add a bit of Christmas cheer to the decorations – eg Sheep cupcakes by [preppykitchen.com](http://preppykitchen.com)

To bring the time of celebration to a close, and to prepare the children for the prayer time, watch the clip that reminds us that God chose the humble shepherds to meet Jesus. This song should also settle the children down, ready for the Pray It section.

## Song

'He chose the shepherds' (nativity video) by friendsandheroestu (3:25)

### Say:

This song reminds us that God chose the shepherds, who were ordinary, hardworking people, to be the first to hear about Jesus. His love reached people who were often left out, and it still does today.

### Ask:

- The shepherds were the first to be invited to see Jesus. If you were planning your own celebration, who might you invite that other people sometimes forget?
- How can we make sure everyone feels welcome in the celebration of Jesus' birth?



## Pray it

### Say:

At the end of the clip we saw Jesus as a grown man meeting the disciples after his resurrection. Jesus may have come to us as a baby boy, but he grew to be a man who showed his love to all people. God chose the shepherds as the first people to meet Jesus to show us that God's love is for everyone. This is a powerful message that we can share with the world – not just at Christmas, but every day.

## Say:

To bring our time of celebration to a close, we are going to share our memory verse together. With big loud voices we are going to celebrate the special gift of Jesus.

## Memory verse

**'For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given,  
and the government will be on his shoulders.**

**And he will be called  
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.'**

(Isaiah 9:6 NIV)

## Explore it

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



# Love is powerful

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



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**Today's fruit:**  
Love



## Sing

Listen to this song all about the Christmas Story and see if you can either learn the words or make up some actions to go along with the song.

**'The very first Christmas' (official music video)** by LifeKids



## Care

As a family, think of someone who might feel alone or find Christmas difficult, like a neighbour, a friend, or someone at church. Make a simple card or Christmas decoration with a message that reminds them they are loved.



## Song for the week

**'Come and join the celebration'** by Scampton church (1:53)



## Memory verse

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to us a son is given,  
and the government will be on his shoulders.  
And he will be called  
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,  
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Kids Alive! The UK's only weekly Christian comic – is filled with jokes, competitions, Bible-based cartoons and much more... and is now available to read online!



Children  
& Youth