

The Birth of Jesus

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: Jesus the Savior was born for all people, just as God promised. When we hear the good news, we go to Jesus and tell others, like the shepherds did.

Bible passage: Luke 2:1–20. Read it before class.

Memory verse: "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." *Luke 2:11 (KJV)*

You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), paper and a pencil for each child, a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.

Before class: write the memory verse on the board.

1. Opening game: Pass the News (5–10 minutes)

Kids sit in a line or circle. Whisper a long sentence to the first child: "The shepherds found the baby wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger in Bethlehem." Each child whispers it once to the next. The last child says it out loud. Compare it with the real sentence and laugh at the changes. Ask: *Why did the message change?* Say: "Today the shepherds get a message straight from an angel, and when they find Jesus, everything is exactly 'as it was told unto them' (Luke 2:20). God's Word is always true."

2. Bible story: Good News for All People (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Luke 2. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

The long trip. Look up Luke 2:1. Caesar Augustus, the ruler of the Roman Empire, made a **decree** (an official order) that all the world should be **taxed**. That means everyone had to be counted and written down so they could be taxed. Cyrenius was the governor of Syria at that time (2:2). Everyone went to their own family's city (2:3). Joseph went up from Nazareth in Galilee to Judaea, to **Bethlehem**, the city of David, because he was of the **house and lineage** of David. That means he came from King David's family line (2:4). Mary went with him. She was his **espoused** wife, which means she was promised to marry him, and she was **great with child**: her baby was coming soon (2:5).

God's promise. Long before, God had told the prophet Micah where the promised ruler would come from. **Look up Micah 5:2.** God named little Bethlehem! Caesar thought he was in charge, but God used Caesar's order to bring Mary and Joseph to the very town God had named.

The manger. Look up Luke 2:7. Mary's firstborn son was born. She wrapped Him in **swaddling clothes**, strips of cloth wrapped snugly around a baby, and laid Him in a **manger**, a box that animals eat from, because there was no room for them in the inn.



The shepherds. In the same country, shepherds were **abiding** (staying) in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night (2:8). The angel of the Lord came upon them, the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were **sore afraid**, which means very afraid (2:9).

The good news. Look up **Luke 2:10**. **Tidings** means news. Then look up **Luke 2:11**. The angel gave them a sign: they would find the **babe** (baby) wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger (2:12). Suddenly there was with the angel a **multitude of the heavenly host**, a huge crowd of angels from heaven, praising God. Look up **Luke 2:14**.

The shepherds go and tell. When the angels went back into heaven, the shepherds said, "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing" (2:15). Look up **Luke 2:16**. **With haste** means in a hurry. They found Mary, Joseph and the baby lying in a manger. Then they **made known abroad**, which means they told people everywhere, what the angel had said about this child (2:17). Everyone who heard it **wondered**, or was amazed (2:18). Mary kept all these things and **pondered** them, which means she thought about them carefully, in her heart (2:19). Look up **Luke 2:20**. The shepherds went back **glorifying and praising God**, because everything was just as the angel had told them.

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. The Savior of the world was laid in an animal's feeding box (2:7). What does that tell you about Jesus?
2. God announced the news first to shepherds working in a field at night, not to kings (2:8–11). Why do you think He did that?
3. The angel said the good news was for "all people" (2:10). Who is included in "all people"?
4. The shepherds "came with haste" (2:16). What would make you hurry like that?
5. Mary "pondered" these things in her heart (2:19). What is something about Jesus you want to think about this week?

Recall questions

1. Who made the order that all the world should be taxed? (*Caesar Augustus, Luke 2:1*)
2. What was the sign the angel gave the shepherds? (*A babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger, 2:12*)
3. What did the shepherds do after they saw Jesus? (*They made it known abroad and went back glorifying and praising God, 2:17, 2:20*)

4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **unto** means to, a **Saviour** is the One who saves and rescues us, **Christ** means the promised King God sent, and the **city of David** is Bethlehem (2:4). Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.



5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "The angel said the good news was for all people, and that includes you. God loves you. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. That night in Bethlehem, God was manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). That baby in the manger is our Savior. When He grew up, Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). How do we obey the gospel? 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."

Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

This week: be like the shepherds. Tell one person what the angel said in Luke 2:10-11.

6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10-15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. Luke 2:1: Who sent out the order that all the world should be taxed? (*Caesar Augustus*)
2. Luke 2:2: Who was governor of Syria? (*Cyrenius*)
3. Luke 2:4: What city did Joseph come from? (*Nazareth, in Galilee*)
4. Luke 2:4: Why did Joseph go to Bethlehem? (*He was of the house and lineage of David*)
5. Luke 2:7: What did Mary wrap her baby in? (*Swaddling clothes*)
6. Luke 2:8: What were the shepherds doing? (*Keeping watch over their flock by night*)
7. Luke 2:13: Who suddenly appeared with the angel? (*A multitude of the heavenly host*)
8. Micah 5:2: What town did God name, long before, as the place the ruler would come from? (*Bethlehem Ephratah*)

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for keeping Your promise and sending Jesus, our Savior. Thank You that the good news is for all people. Help us hurry to You like the shepherds did, and help us tell others about Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks about the wise men, the star or a stable: say, "Luke 2 doesn't mention them. The wise men and the star are in Matthew 2, which says they came later 'into the house' to see 'the young child' (Matthew 2:11). The Bible doesn't say Jesus was born in a stable; it says Mary laid Him in a manger because there was no room in the inn (Luke 2:7). We tell the story the way the Bible tells it."

