

THE ADVENT-URE OF SOME SHEPHERDS

BIG IDEA

When Jesus was born, God announced it in a really unexpected way. He wanted the world to know that this Good News was for everyone. Not just 'important' people.

PREP *(Kids can help!)*

Sort out the shepherd figures from your nativity set (see last week for alternatives)

Make or buy some star Christmas biscuits (shortbread or ginger biscuits are yummy)

Find a mobile or cordless phone

Put everything into the Faith Box before you start



INTRO

GATHER AROUND THE TABLE. MAKE SURE YOU HAVE THE MARY AND JOSEPH FIGURES FROM LAST WEEK ALREADY DISPLAYED.

Bring out the shepherd figures. Ask the children to identify them.

What was their job?

What did people think of them? (Being a shepherd was a very lowly job and people thought they were dirty and unimportant. They often didn't want to be friends with them).

*"Make a memory with your children -
spend some time to show you care;
Toys and trinkets can't replace those
precious moments that you share"
Elaine Hardt*

GAME

SHEEP RUSH

TAKE EVERYONE OUTSIDE

Have all the family line up on one side of the backyard – they are the sheep.

Dad or Mum is in the middle – he/she is the Shepherd. Dad calls out the name of one of his sheep (eg Emma). She tries to run to the other side of the yard without being caught by the shepherd.

If she gets to the other side, the shepherd calls out “Sheeprush” and all the rest of the sheep run to the other side.

Each caught sheep then joins in to help the shepherd catch the other sheep.

READ

Hand out the star gingerbread biscuits (or other Christmas treat) to enjoy while you are reading.

“ The night Jesus was born, in amongst the other stars, suddenly a bright new star appeared. Of all the stars in the dark vaulted heavens this one shone clearer. It blazed in the night and made the other stars look pale beside it.
God put it there when his baby Son was born to be like a spot light.
Shining on him. Lighting up the darkness.
Showing people the way to him.
You see, God was like a new daddy – he couldn’t keep the good news to himself. He’d been waiting all these long years for this moment, and now he wanted to tell everyone. So he pulled out all the stops. He’d sent an

angel to tell Mary the good news. He’d put a special star in the sky to show where his boy was. And now he was going to send a big choir of angels to sing his happy song to the world: He’s here! He’s come! Go and see him. My Little Boy.

Now where would you send your special choir? To a big concert hall maybe? Or a palace perhaps? God sent his choir to a little hillside, outside a little town, in the middle of the night. He sent all those angels to sing for a raggedy old bunch of shepherds watching their sheep outside Bethlehem.

In those days remember, people used to laugh at shepherds and say they were smelly and call them other rude names (which I can’t possibly mention here). You see people thought shepherds were nobodies, just scruffy old riff-raff.

But God must have thought shepherds were very important indeed, because they’re the ones he chose to tell the good news to first. That night some shepherds were out in the open field, warming themselves by a campfire, when suddenly the sheep darted. They were frightened by something. The olive trees rustled. What was that... a wing beat? They turned around. Standing in front of them was a huge warrior of light, blazing in the darkness. “Don’t be afraid of me!” the bright shining man said,. “I haven’t come to hurt you. I’ve come to bring you happy news for everyone everywhere. Today in David’s town, in Bethlehem, God’s Son has been born! You can go and see him. He is sleeping in a manger. ”

The Jesus Storybook Bible, Sally Lloyd-Jones, Pages 184-186, Zonderkids

EXPLORE

CODEBREAKER

Bring out the mobile or cordless phone.

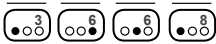
Look at the keypad and notice the letters that are under the numbers 2-9.

Use these letters to break the code below for this activity.

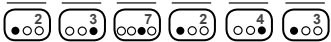
Hand out the paper and pens.

Have someone call out each line of the code and another read the keypad.

Everyone write the letters as they are read out.

1st word 

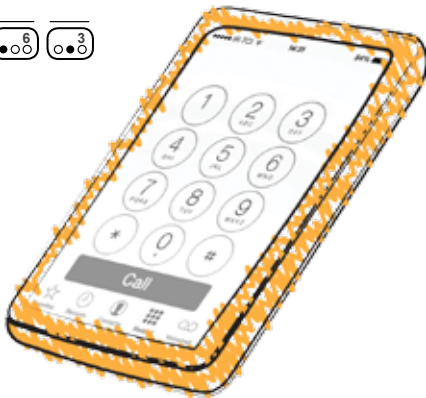
2nd word 

3rd word 

4th word 

5th word 

What is the message?



(Answer: Don't be afraid of me!)

QUESTIONS

How do you think the shepherds felt after this had happened?

What did the shepherds do next?

The good, wonderful exciting news that the shepherds received is for us too.

What do you think we can do with this wonderful message?

How could we do this? (e.g. we share the good news by what we do and what we say.)



PRAY

Can you remember what the last two weeks' candles were? (*Hope and Peace*).

Light these on the Advent Wreath as the children remember them. Then light the third candle of Joy. (It will be the pink one if you have opted for the liturgical colours.) God sent hundreds of angels to sing with Joy and announce "I have come to bring happy news for everyone – everywhere."

LIVE

Watch the youtube video of 'An Unexpected Christmas' from St. Paul's church at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TM1XusYVqNY>. Think about how you can share the Good News this week with another family. Perhaps you could bake some Christmas shortbread, pop them into a small bag, tie the top with string, attach little cards and take them to neighbours and friends.

FAITH BOARD



OTHER IDEAS

1 Cut out an angel from the appendix (or as many angels as you wish) and leave it on the table this week to remind you of the angels that appeared to the shepherds.

2 Take a late night expedition to see some Christmas lights as a fun family event

3 Talk about what makes you feel full of joy. Try to do some of those things during this week. Create your own manger and prepare your hearts for Jesus' coming. Everyone can help to make the bed by putting a piece of straw into a basket each time they do something kind for someone. A straw can only be put in the basket if you have done a loving, Christlike deed for another or have shown a Christlike attitude toward a problem.

Any number of actions can help fill the basket; working without complaining, helping a brother clean up a mess etc.

BUY FOR NEXT SESSION

- 10 Candy canes
- Gold wrapped chocolate coins

SESSION THREE

ANGELS

