

St. John's Church School
Old Testament - JSB Supplemental Lesson

Lesson 13: Advent IV - The Shepherds SEE the Good News

Goal: The children will know that

- Jesus is God's Gift to us
- God's gift, the Lord Jesus, came to us in humble wrappings, born in humble circumstances
- The shepherds responded to the angel's announcement with faith and worship
- The shepherds rejoiced and told others the truth about Jesus

Supplies:

A beautifully and ornately wrapped nice sized package with a beautiful ribbon.

A smaller package wrapped in plain rough brown paper and tied with twine. Inside is picture of the nativity. Can use template that comes with craft

Today's Scripture:

The Shepherds SAW the Good News

And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

Luke 2: 16

Resource: JSB pgs. 180-182, 190

Instruction (10 min)

Very soon now you will be having a wonderful time with your family unwrapping the presents underneath your Christmas tree! That is going to be so much fun! (*Hold up the nicely wrapped gift*) Look at this one! It's BEAUTIFUL! Do you think there is something really nice in here? (*Nod you head "yes" and let them answer*) So if you woke up on Christmas morning and saw this really nice present under the tree with your name on it and beside it was this present (take out the brown paper package) with your name on it, which one would you probably want to open first? The brown one? I don't think so. After all, really nice gifts usually come in really nice packages, don't they?

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Not always. You see, Jesus is God's gift to us. God's gift of His Son did not come in a beautifully wrapped package. His mother was not a regal princess; she was a young virgin. His earthly father was not a prosperous businessman; he was a poor carpenter. He was not announced to the high officials in the city; but to humble shepherds in the field. He was not born in a clean, sanitized hospital; but in a smelly stable that kept cows and donkeys. He was not lying in a beautiful crib draped in soft golden cloths; but in straw in a manger for feeding the animals, wrapped in swaddling cloths. Not a very pretty package was it?

But you know what, in that humble package was the greatest gift the world has ever known. It was the gift of the person who would bring salvation.

When the shepherds were able to get over the terror of seeing angels face to face, and their fears were calmed, they heard the message the angel gave, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

So the angel told them that the sign that would tell them they had the right baby would be that he was wrapped in swaddling clothes and would be lying in an animal's manger.

Immediately after hearing that, the shepherds were probably stunned as the sky became FILLED with angels, singing and praising God saying, "Glory to God in the highest..." What a sight that must have been. Very fitting for the fact that the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the Hope of the whole earth, had finally come! The greatest Gift of all had been given to man, our Hope of Salvation.

Luke 2:15 then says, "And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go

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even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us." And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

(unwrap the brown paper wrapping and take out the ornament showing it to the children) So the shepherds, believed the angels and were full of faith, and they went down into Bethlehem and there in the very unlikely giftwrap of a stable, was the Christ child. There was Mary near her child and Joseph attending to their needs. And there...just as the angel said...wrapped in strips of cloth to keep Him warm and snuggled...and cushioned by straw...was the babe, Christ Jesus Himself. They were SEEING with their own eyes, the invisible God, made visible with a human body and soul! Amazing!

Luke 2:16-20 tells us, "And when [the shepherds] had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them."

The shepherds could not keep silent. The GIFT OF ALL GIFTS, the Son of God had been born! The long awaited Messiah, the ONE who would take away their sins, the Savior of the world, had been born just as the Old Testament had predicted. He was there in a stable in Bethlehem, just like the angels had said.

There is so much to be learned from these shepherds and from Mary. We need to have the same response as we consider the advent, the coming of the Lord Jesus. We need to hear and receive this good news of Jesus' coming and respond with the faith and rejoicing that they did. They immediately went to Him to give Him praise and worship, and they spread the good news to all of the truth of His birth. We need to do the same. Don't be afraid to talk about Christmas as being all about Jesus. He is the reason we celebrate Christmas. Also, Mary pondered all of this in her heart, and so should we. Take some time to carefully unwrap the gift of Advent in your heart. Get your parents to read Luke 2 to you at home and think, ponder what you hear. Ask God to help you to love Him more and to understand what a great Gift His Son is to you.

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Let's pray...

PRAYER (1 min)

Dear God, thank you for sending us the greatest gift of all, the Lord Jesus Christ. Without your Son, we have no hope of having our sins taken away. Thank you Jesus for taking on flesh and doing for us what we cannot do for ourselves. You can make us right with God. Through You we can have our sins forgiven. Help us to think about You and know you better. Help us to realize that sometimes the greatest gifts come in the most humble packages. We love you Lord, AMEN.

ACTIVITY TIME (15 min) same activity for all ages

**Humble Gift
Ornament**

Supplies:

- Small boxes
- Brown paper
- Twine
- Nativity template
- Saying template
- Tape and Glue



Have children wrap the box in brown wrapper. (Younger children can use already wrapped boxes to save time) Wrap twine around top of box to bottom, cross and come up the other sides, knotting in the middle. Pull up both ends and knot to make hanging loop. Have children paste nativity template onto one side and Saying on the other. Older children can cut theirs out themselves. Write their names on the bottom WITH THE YEAR.

Talk to them about using this ornament to remind themselves and others, that the greatest gift of all, the Lord Jesus Christ, came to us in humility.