

The Night the Angels Sang

Luke 2:8-20; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 47-49



Have you ever wanted something very, very much? You prayed for it every day. You dreamed about it every night. Then someone surprises you with what you wanted—when you least expected.

Many, many years ago some shepherds wanted something very much. They got their wish in a surprising way.

The shepherds huddled in the fragrant grass. The sheep rested nearby, pale, rounded shapes in the darkness. The moon was only a sliver in the sky. And the stars twinkled and glittered with the special sparkle they have on clear nights.

The shepherds murmured in low voices. They were discussing their very favorite topic. It was something they talked about almost every night—the coming of the Messiah. Yes, they were tired from the work of the day. But just thinking about, and talking about, and praying for the Messiah filled their hearts with longing.

The shepherds sat quietly together in the



deep silence of the night. An occasional bleat of a sheep broke the stillness.

Suddenly a bright star flared in the sky. It came rocketing toward them. As the light grew larger and brighter, the whole countryside glowed like noontime. The shepherds blinked, frozen with fright. Some jumped to their feet. Others protected their faces with their arms. Before them stood a dazzling person. Could it be an angel?

“Don’t be afraid!” a pleasant voice said. “I bring you good news of great joy. The joy will

The Message

Jesus gives us joy.

Memory Verse

“Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord”

(Luke 2:10, 11, NIV).

be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord! This will be a sign that will prove it to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

Immediately the angel messenger was joined by a great choir of joyous angels. Angels filled the sky! And they were all singing bright, happy music like no one had ever heard before! “Glory to God in the highest heaven,” they sang. “And on earth peace to all on whom God’s favor rests.”

The shepherds watched the angels in wonder, hardly daring to believe they were real! The music swelled and filled the night. Beautiful colors swirled through the sky and dazzled the shepherds’ eyes. The angels’ joy filled the shepherds’ hearts until they felt as if they would burst.

Finally the music drifted slowly away. The angels flew higher and higher, returning to heaven. The shepherds strained to hear the very last notes of the music as the light faded. Then it was quiet. Heart-pounding quiet.

“Did you see that?” one shepherd gasped.

“They were real, weren’t they?” asked another.

“I’ve never heard or seen anything like it!”

“Let’s go!”

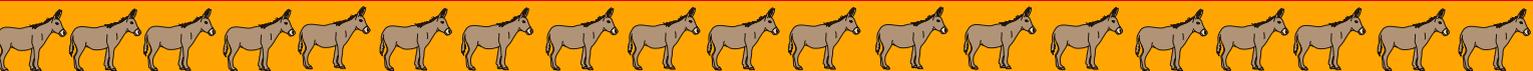
“Go where?”

“To Bethlehem! The angel said

the Messiah was born this very day! This very day!”

One joyous shepherd grabbed his staff and began racing down the hill toward town. All the others followed. That’s how it is with God’s free gift of grace. It gave the shepherds great joy. And it still gives people joy. Jesus gives us joy.





S A B B A T H

DO With your family, go to a field where sheep could live. Pretend you are a shepherd surrounded with sheep. Sit together and read your lesson story. Imagine that the angels have come to you. Can you feel the joy?

READ Read your memory verse in Luke 2:10, 11.

SING Sing "There's a Song in the Air" (Sing for Joy, No. 82).

S U N D A Y

READ During family worship read Luke 2:8-14 together.

DO Continue to work on "Jesus' Baby Book" that you started last week. Today, add some pictures of the angels' visit, the shepherds, and the sheep.

DO Teach your memory verse to your family.

M O N D A Y

READ With your family, read Luke 2:15-20 for worship. The angels who sang were surrounded by bright light. What is the brightest light in your house? What is the brightest light in the sky today? Why shouldn't we look directly at it? Thank God for light.

SING Sing "Now Is Born the Divine Christ Child" (Sing for Joy, No. 78).

T U E S D A Y

DO During family worship today, make a page in "Jesus' Baby Book" with the following information:

Name of baby: Jesus Christ

Parents: Mary and the Holy Spirit (Joseph—earthly father)

Place of birth: Bethlehem

Weight at birth: (Take a guess and write it here.) _____

DO Find the names of some well-known great-grandfathers of Baby Jesus in Matthew 1:1, 2, 5, 6.

W E D N E S D A Y

DO Write the words of your favorite Christmas carol on one of the pages of your "Jesus' Baby Book." Decorate the page. Then sing the carol.

DO The shepherds ran to Bethelhem. Have a race with a friend. Run as fast as you can. Thank God you can run and play.

READ Ask each family member to name one thing that brings them joy. Then read Philippians 4:4 together.

Shepherds were looked down on and even hated. They were poor and often moved from place to place to find food and water for their sheep.





THURSDAY

SHARE

During worship today, give everyone some drawing paper and colors. At the top, write "The Colors of Joy." Make a picture of the colors of joy. What about your picture says "joy"? Talk about it with your family. Then say your memory verse together. From where does your joy come? If your joy comes from the Lord, what will happen to you? See Nehemiah 8:10, last sentence. Ask God to help you tell someone about His joy.

DO

Say or sing your memory verse together.

FRIDAY

SHARE

Plan a Christmas worship for your family. Some suggestions: Light some candles. Read the shepherds' story in Luke 2:8-20. Have the shepherds tell who they are and what they think of Jesus' birth. Focus on their joy.

DO

Other ideas for worship: Sing favorite carols, read favorite Christmas poems, etc.

DO

Make Christmas cards to give to your neighbors. Decorate them and write your memory verse inside. Pray for your neighbors.

SHARE

What will you do tomorrow to share the joy that Jesus brings?

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PUZZLE

Directions: Find the hidden words to spell out the theme of this week's lesson.

HRJESUSE
GOGIVESM
RABGMEKA
PXZJOYWR

