

# Shepherds Hear About Jesus' Birth

Bible Point

**Jesus loves everyone...even if we feel like outsiders.**

## Purpose

Sheep were treasured in Bible times. The Israelites needed sheep for milk, wool, and meat. For families who lived in the countryside, it was common for a son or daughter to watch over the flock. City folks were a little different, though. They hired shepherds to watch over their sheep outside the village.

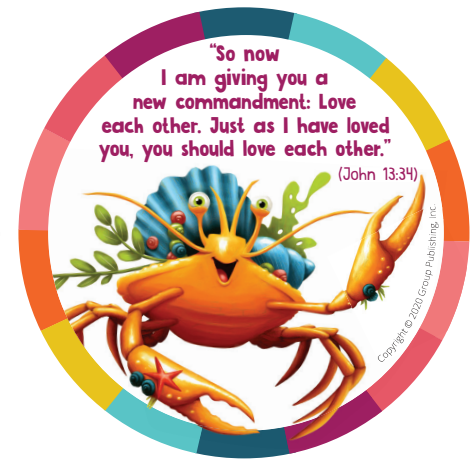
Whether shepherds were family members or hired nomads, they found themselves on the outside a lot. While everyone else was nestled inside the neighborhood, shepherds were out in the fields watching over their flocks by night. Yet they were the first to hear about Jesus' birth. Imagine their excitement! Proximity didn't matter when it came to seeing and celebrating the Savior. Jesus loves everyone!

Even if it's not Christmastime, the story of shepherds hearing about Jesus is a wonderful example of Jesus' love for everyone, any time of the year!

Jesus loves each child in your class. You may notice some kids who are on the fringes, outside of friend groups or new to your church family. Like the angels sought out the shepherds, pursue them with Jesus' life-changing love.

## Prayer

God, thank you for sending Jesus—not just for people I'm close to, but for everyone. Give me eyes to see kids who need an extra dose of your love today. In Jesus' name, amen.



## Prep

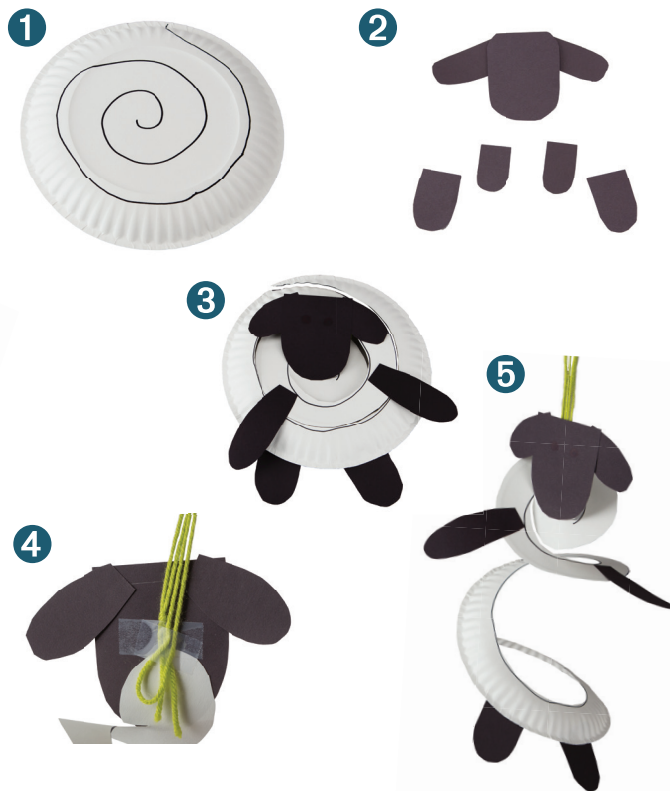
Opening Options	Sing & Play	Bible Discovery & Friendship Finale	Apply-It Options
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Option Cards*</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Merry Pipe Cleaners</i>: chenille wires, child-safe scissors</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Paper Plate Sheep</i>: paper plates, construction paper, child-safe scissors, markers, yarn, clear tape, glue sticks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> countdown video*</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Buddy Video</i> DVD*</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Music Video</i> DVD*</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Decker Bible Memory Buddy poster*</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> media player</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bible (bookmark John 13:34)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> "Shepherds Hear About Jesus' Birth" Bible Story poster*</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Decker Bible Memory Buddy stickers* (1 per child)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Take-It-Home Flyers* (Unit 3, Week 1) (1 per child)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bible (bookmark Luke 2:8-9, 10-12, 16)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> wet wipes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> construction paper</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> markers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> timer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Explore More</i>: Bibles, "To God Be the Glory" music video, media player</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Game</i>: no supplies</li> </ul>

\* in your **Simply Loved Kit**



# Opening Options

Set up one—or both—of these intro activities to start your time together. Each activity connects kids to the Bible Point and to each other. Cut apart these Option Cards, and place one by each activity you choose. Crew Guides will follow the directions and build friendships with kids as they make discoveries together!



## Merry Pipe Cleaners

### Supplies

- chenille wires, child-safe scissors

Twist chenille wires into Christmas shapes like candy canes, stars, and trees.

**?** What's a favorite Christmas tradition in your family?

We're celebrating Christmas today! **Jesus loves everyone** every day, and it's never too soon or too late to remember Jesus' birth.

## Paper Plate Sheep

### Supplies

- paper plates, construction paper, child-safe scissors, markers, yarn, clear tape, glue sticks

Create a spiral sheep. Draw a spiral shape on your plate, then cut along the line. Then cut a sheep head, ears, eyes, and legs from construction paper and tape them to the spiral. Add yarn to hang.

**?** If you could care for any animal, what would you choose? Tell why.

In our Bible story, we'll hear about shepherds who cared for sheep. **Jesus loves everyone, including shepherds.**

# Opening

Now's a great time for Opening Options. Choose one—or both—to introduce today's Bible Discovery.



countdown video (1 minute)

Help kids transition, clean up the activities, and sit with Connect Crews. A Connect Crew is a small group of kids with one Crew Guide.

## Sing & Play

Hey, friends! I'm so glad to see everyone today. Let's get started with a song.



"To God Be the Glory" music video

God has done great things! What are some great things God has done for you? Go ahead and shout them out. Invite a few responses from the whole group.

### Bible Point

Glory to God! I have good news of great joy to share with you. **Jesus loves everyone.** That's our Bible Point today. Every time you hear the words "Jesus loves everyone!" cross your hands over your heart like this (demonstrate) and say, "Thank you, Jesus!" Let's try that together.

- Cross your hands over your heart and say, "Thank you, Jesus!"
- Repeat several times.

Kids remember what they repeat! So be sure to say today's Bible Point A LOT. Have fun with it! Kids will love listening for it and responding with "Thank you, Jesus!"

**Jesus loves everyone.** (Thank you, Jesus!) We each get to share his love with others; in fact, we were made for this! Let's sing about that.



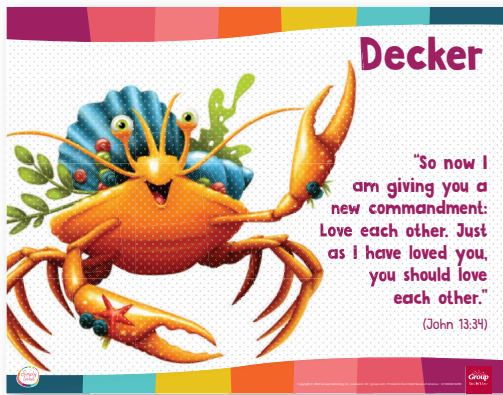
"Made for This" music video



Thank you, Jesus!

### Supplies

- Bible
- media player
- *Buddy Video* DVD  
Decker Bible  
Memory Buddy  
video (Week 1)
- *Music Video* DVD  
"To God Be the  
Glory" music video  
"Made for This"  
music video  
"One Thing Remains  
(Your Love Never  
Fails)" music video
- Decker Bible Memory  
Buddy poster



## Bible Memory Buddy & Verse

Let's meet our Bible Memory Buddy, Decker the decorator crab! Show the Bible Memory Buddy poster. **How much do you know about crabs? Let's find out with a This-or-That Challenge!** You'll hear two fun facts about decorator crabs. It's up to you to decide which is true—this fact or that!

- ❓ **How many limbs does a crab have, 8 or 10?**
  - Have everyone hold up eight fingers to vote for *this* (8) or 10 fingers to vote for *that* (10).
  - Make a drumroll sound by patting your thighs or the floor.
  - Dramatically give the answer: **It's 10!**
  - Watch the Bible Memory Buddy video to meet Decker.



### Decker Bible Memory Buddy video (Week 1)



Show the Bible. **The Bible is God's true story of love! The Bible may seem like a big book just for grown-ups, but it's for everyone! Our Bible Memory Verse comes from John 13:34. Let's say the verse together. I'll say a line, and then you repeat it after me.**

**"So now I am giving you a new commandment:** *(hold hands out like a tray)*  
**Love each other.** *(give a friend's shoulder a squeeze)*  
**Just as I** *(point up)*  
**have loved you,** *(point forward)*  
**you should love each other."** *(give another friend's shoulder a squeeze)*  
(John 13:34)

**Jesus loves everyone.** *(Thank you, Jesus!)* **No matter who you are or what you do, Jesus' love won't stop.**



### "One Thing Remains (Your Love Never Fails)" music video

# Bible Discovery

## Circle Up & Connect

Let's circle up and spend a little time simply getting to know each other in smaller groups called **Connect Crews**.

- Divide kids into Connect Crews with one helper—or Crew Guide—per group.
  - Invite kids to sit in knee-to-knee circles with their Connect Crews.
  - Have kids give their Crew Guides and each other fist bumps.
  - Have kids take turns saying their names and answering this question. Crew Guides go first.
- ❓ **Would you rather play inside or outside? Why?**

## The Heart of the Matter

Before we dive into our Bible story, you'll each be assigned a job to do, and you'll have three minutes to do it. Have Crew Guides assign one of the following jobs to each person in their Connect Crew.

- **Spiffer-Upper**—wipes down all the tables in your room.
- **Creator**—draws pictures or makes something out of construction paper.
- **Encourager**—remains seated and says nice things to everyone who's working.
- **Entertainer**—sings or tells jokes to lighten the mood while everyone works.
- **Watcher-Outer**—Goes with a Crew Guide to quietly sit in the hallway outside your classroom, watching for people who may come and go.

Okay, you have your jobs; now it's time to get busy.

- Distribute wet wipes and construction paper. Designate the "Watcher-Outer" Crew Guide, then set the timer for three minutes and tell everyone to get to work.
- Call time when three minutes are up, and have everyone sit with their Connect Crews again. Almost "forget about" the Watcher-Outers, then call them in from outside.

**Let's see what we accomplished!** Comment on tables, artwork, jokes, and the kind words that were spoken.

- ❓ **Watcher-Outers, what was it like to sit in the hallway while all this happened in our room?** Invite a few responses.

Let's talk more in our Crews.

- ❓ **Tell about a time you felt like an outsider and you missed out on fun.** Share a quick example from your own life first, then give Crews time to talk.
- Crew Guides give thumbs-up when everyone has shared.

## Supplies

- Bible
- "Shepherds Hear About Jesus' Birth" Bible Story poster
- wet wipes
- construction paper
- markers
- timer

We call helpers **Crew Guides**. If you lead a small class, you can be the **Crew Guide**. Simply circle up with the kids. If you have helpers, form smaller groups so each child can be known—and so kids can befriend your helpers, too!



We just explored what it's like to be outsiders. Today we'll hear how God gave a special message to people outside of town, and it was news that changed everything! We'll discover **Jesus loves everyone**. (*Thank you, Jesus!*)

## Experience the Bible Story

Let's explore a story from the Bible. But instead of just listening to a story, you'll actually help me tell it—and play an important part!


But first...turn to a neighbor and quickly tell that person a job you might like to have when you're a grown-up, and tell about why you'd like that job. You have 30 seconds each to describe that job. Ready? Go! Set a timer for one minute, giving a 30-second alert when it's time for the other partner to share.

Now, with a show of hands, how many of you said you might like to be a teacher? Pause. Doctor? Pause. Actor, singer, or professional athlete? Pause. Shepherd? Pause.

Well, that's too bad, because for the next couple of minutes, you're all grown-ups and you're all shepherds. You're in the hills outside a little village called Bethlehem, and as I describe what happens to you, I'd like you to act it out. You won't say anything, and now and then I'll yell "Freeze!" When I do that, freeze in place until I unfreeze you. Let's give it a go!


It's late at night, and you and some other shepherds are relaxing. So, sit on the ground, lean back, and relax. Pause. You're telling a few jokes and talking about nothing in particular. Pause. But then—WHAM! Suddenly a bright light appears and there's an angel standing next to you!

Show the Bible Story poster. This happened to shepherds in the Bible, too. Listen to what happened.

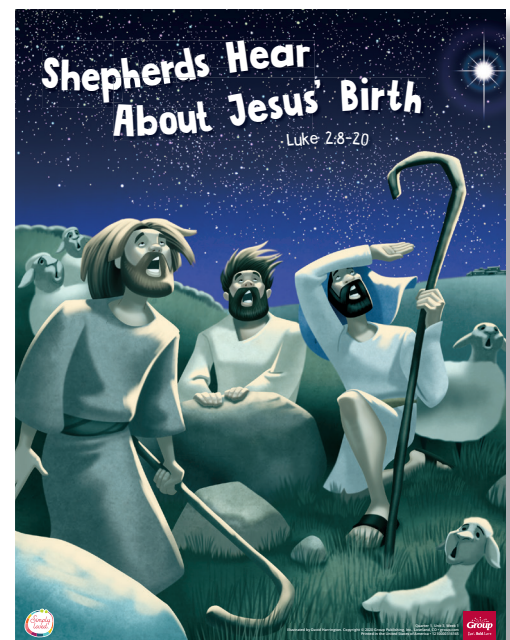
 Read aloud Luke 2:8-9.

Shepherds! Your jaws drop. Your eyes bug out. Your knees shake. You are **scared!** Freeze!

The angel tells you to not be afraid and then says:

 Read aloud Luke 2:10-12.

Okay, unfreeze. Pause. Then all at once there's a whole **herd** of angels—an angel crowd stretching out as far as you can see. They're all singing and praising God. You're now **terrified**, so you lie on the ground and cover your head with your arms. Pause. You can't look! It's too scary! Freeze!



You lie there, overwhelmed by what's happening, and then, as fast as it started, it's over. You look around. You sit up. You look at your shepherd friends.

And together you decide to go see the baby.



Read aloud Luke 2:16.

You all start running—running in place, that is. Pause. You run all the way to Bethlehem, and just like the angel said, there's the baby, all bundled up in a manger. You stop running and kneel. Pause. You know you're in the presence of royalty—the King of kings, the Lord of all, the great and good shepherd to his people.

You pause to look at the baby. You nod at Mary and Joseph, and then you stand to leave. Pause. And on the way back to your flock, you tell anyone who'll listen what's just happened. You're so excited that you jump up and down. Pause. You're so excited that you keep pointing at where the manger is. Pause.

You want everyone to know about Jesus! The angel was right: The Savior has finally come! What good news you have to share! Have kids sit down.

Talk about joyful news! God sent a Savior! Woohoo! That's not just *good* news; it's *great* news! That news means we don't have to be stuck in sin. It means we have a way to have a forever friendship with God.

Let's think about jobs again. God could have given the news to teachers called Pharisees. He could have sent angels to doctors or kings. But he didn't. Instead, God told shepherds—people who spent their time outside of town with sheep. Why? Because **Jesus loves everyone**. (*Thank you, Jesus!*) This savior baby came for everyone: teachers, doctors, famous people, shepherds, and people like you and me.

Stand up again, and turn to someone next to you. Give that person a high-five. Pause. Turn to someone else, and give that person a low-five. Pause.

Now give high-fives to as many people as you can by the time I count to 10!

Count loudly to 10. *That's* how excited our shepherd friends were when they found out what you already know: that Jesus has come and that we are loved.

Now's a great time for Apply-It Options. Choose one—or both—of the following reinforcement activities to support today's Bible discoveries before the Friendship Finale.

# Apply-It Options

Choose one—or both—of these activities to support kids' learning after Bible Discovery.

## Explore More

### Supplies

- Bibles, "To God Be the Glory" music video, media player



Distribute Bibles, and help kids find and read Luke 2:13-14 together.

**The angel chorus said, "Glory to God." The word *glory* comes from the Latin word *gloria*. It means "famous"! The angels celebrated God's greatness and fame—there's no one like him! We sing songs about giving glory to God today. It's our way for everyone to celebrate that God's the best!**

- Play the "To God Be the Glory" music video again. But this time, imagine you're angels, singing the song to the shepherds.
- ❓ **What's a great thing God has done in your life?** Share a quick story from your own life to begin the conversation.

**Jesus loves everyone.** (*Thank you, Jesus!*) **And the good news of great joy given to the shepherds still brings glory to God today!**



## Game

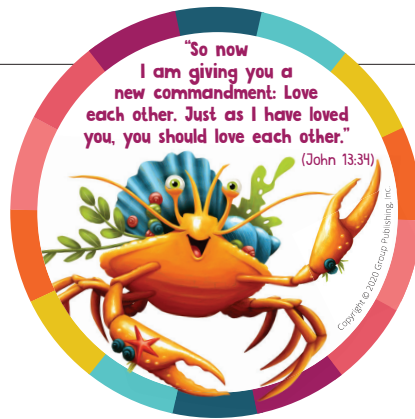
- Designate one person to be the "Wolf" and another person to be the "Shepherd." If you have a large group, choose several Wolves and Shepherds.
- All other players are "Sheep."
- Play a tag game. When tagged by a Wolf, Sheep must freeze and "baa" until a Shepherd comes to tag and unfreeze them.
- Play for several minutes, then switch roles before playing again.
- ❓ **Shepherds, what was it like to watch over all your sheep?**
- ❓ **Tell about a time you watched out for a friend who needed help.**

**The Bible calls Jesus the good shepherd. He came to earth and gave up his life to rescue us from sin. *Jesus loves everyone.* (*Thank you, Jesus!*) When we're his friends, we share his love when we watch out for others who need his love and help.**





# Friendship Finale



Invite kids to sit in knee-to-knee circles with their Connect Crews.

**Our Bible Memory Buddy friend Decker helps us remember Jesus loves everyone.** *(Thank you, Jesus!)* You'll each receive a Decker sticker to help you remember Jesus' love throughout your week. You can wear it now or keep it for later. Crew Guides will give each person a sticker like this.

- Demonstrate the following actions with a Connect Crew.
- Have Crews stand in close circles facing outward. Have Crew Guides walk around the outside of the circle and give a sticker to each child.
- As they give each child a Bible Memory Buddy sticker, Crew Guides say, "**Jesus loves everyone...**including you, [Child's name]."
- Have kids sit down but remain facing out in their Crew circles.

Saying each child's name in a loving way helps kids simply experience Jesus' love through you!

**I'd like to read you something about our friend Jesus. As you listen, close your eyes and keep facing toward the outside of the circle, imagining you're sitting in a field outside of town and watching sheep.**

- Read the first section of the Unit 3, Week 1 Take-It-Home Flyer.
- **Now I'll give you one of these flyers to help you talk about Jesus' love in your Connect Crews and at home, too.**
- Distribute Take-It-Home Flyers to Crew Guides, and have them share about their own friendship with Jesus as they answer the "Talk Starter" question and then invite kids to talk.
- Kids share prayer requests—things they'd like to tell Jesus—in their Connect Crews.
- Connect Crews pray together.
- Crew Guides distribute Take-It-Home Flyers and follow the directions to help kids fold the paper to "fly" home. 🌈

## Supplies

- Decker Bible Memory Buddy stickers (1 per child)
- Take-It-Home Flyers (Unit 3, Week 1) (1 per child)

