

Bible Discovery

Hold up the Bible. **Surprise! Today our Bible story tells about the day Jesus was born. We celebrate this story at Christmas, and we'll celebrate Jesus' birth here today!**

- Choose a fun Christmas song like "Jingle Bells" and sing a few lines together.
- Have everyone pretend to decorate a Christmas tree. Add lights, ornaments, and an angel on top.
- **We place an angel on Christmas trees to remember the angels who told people the good news that Jesus was born. Let's start reading the story in the Bible.**

 Read aloud Luke 2:8.

A shepherd's job is to take care of sheep. Let's all pretend to be shepherds. But first, you need sheep!

- Distribute cotton balls to Crew Guides.
- Crew Guides give each child a cotton ball "sheep."
- Have kids baa like sheep as they receive cotton balls.
- Tell kids it's their job to take care of the cotton ball sheep while you tell the Bible story.
- Encourage everyone to gently hold the cotton ball in a closed fist.

Thanks for taking good care of your sheep, shepherds. Shepherds had to stay in the fields with their sheep. Maybe they felt lonely sometimes. Everyone else was at home with their families while the shepherds were alone with their sheep.

- Get comfy and sit in a knee-to-knee circle with Connect Crews.
- **? When have you felt alone?** Briefly share an answer from your own life.
- Crew Guides give thumbs-up when everyone has shared.

We all feel alone sometimes and like we're on our own. Shepherds, pretend we're outside in an open field. Let's all take our sheep and spread out so we aren't close to anyone else.


- Spread out around the room so everyone's at least an arm's length away from friends.
- Have everyone check on their sheep and hold them in their other hand for a bit.
- **Let's read about who came to visit the shepherds.**

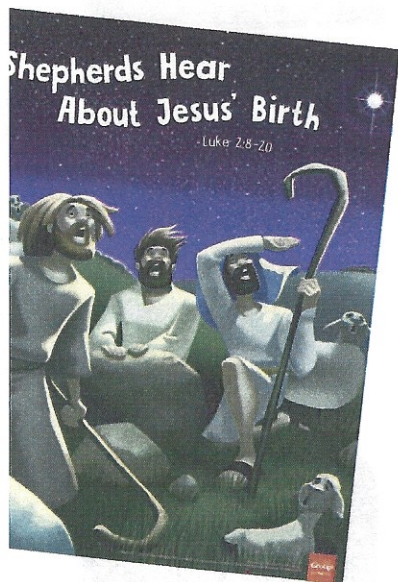
 Read aloud Luke 2:9.

Supplies

- Bible
- "Shepherds Hear About Jesus' Birth" Bible Story poster
- cotton balls (1 per child)

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

 Read the verse from the Bible. You're showing kids that God's Word is special. Don't worry—we've kept the verses short for young attention spans.



The shepherds saw a bright light and angels sent from God!

- Show the Bible Story poster.
- Have everyone make surprised faces and hold their sheep close to their hearts to protect them.
- **But the angels had good news. Listen!**



Read aloud Luke 2:10-12.

Jesus was born! And the shepherds—people who were usually alone and left out—were the first to hear about it. **Jesus loves everyone. (Thank you, Jesus!) Even shepherds! The shepherds decided to go into the town and find baby Jesus. Let's go, too!**

- Have everyone put their sheep on the floor to sleep.
- Gather everyone together, and hurry to another place in your room.
- Pretend to see the baby, and ask if anyone wants to hold him.
- Pass a pretend baby to different kids to "hold."
- **Babies are so cute. And this baby was extra special. He's our friend Jesus. Let's find out what the shepherds did when they met him.**



Read aloud Luke 2:16-20.

The shepherds were happy to be invited to see baby Jesus. God picked them to see Jesus first even though some people thought shepherds weren't very important. But they were! **Jesus loves everyone! (Thank you, Jesus!) The shepherds told people the good news—Jesus was here!**

- Invite everyone to go back to their cotton ball sheep.
- Have everyone tell the sheep, "Jesus is born!"
- Have everyone baa with excitement.
- Have everyone rush around the room shouting, "Jesus is born!"
- **? What good news has someone told you?** Invite a few responses from the whole group.

Good news makes me happy! After hearing about Jesus' birth, maybe the shepherds didn't feel so lonely anymore. We don't have to feel lonely either, because our friend Jesus is always with us. And he always loves us. **Jesus loves everyone! (Thank you, Jesus!) Let's put our sheep in their pen for the night.**

- Have everyone tell the sheep goodnight.
- Crew Guides collect cotton balls and put them all in one place together.

Welcome a few responses. Be sure to summarize what kids say so everyone can hear.

Now's a great time for Apply-It Options. Choose one or more that fit your time frame to support today's Bible discoveries before the closing Goodbye Circle.

Apply-It Options

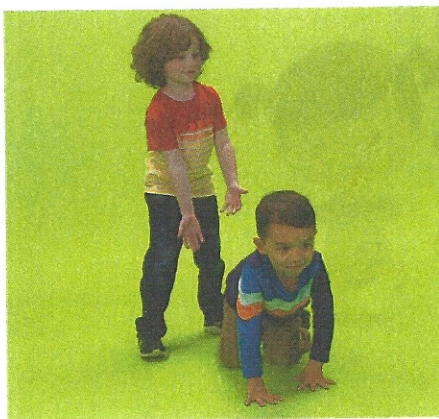
Choose one—or all—of these activities to support kids' learning after Bible Discovery.

Game

Have kids pretend to be sheep and shepherds.

- Choose one child for every three kids to be a "Shepherd." All other kids are "Sheep."
- Have Sheep baa as they move around the room.
- Have Shepherds care for the Sheep and lead them to one wall—the sheep pen.
- Randomly shout, "Sheep are out!" and let Sheep leave the pen.
- Choose new Shepherds, and play again.


Whew! Shepherds had a tough job. They had to keep track of all the sheep. Later in the Bible, Jesus called himself the good shepherd. Jesus loves us and takes care of us. **Jesus loves everyone. (Thank you, Jesus!) Even when we don't follow him, Jesus will always find us and bring us close to him again.**



Food-n-Friendship

Supplies: snack, napkins, hand cleanser, *Music* CD, media player

- Give a napkin to a friend and say, "**Jesus loves everyone!**" (Thank you, Jesus!)

 "God, You Are So Good"
(*Music* CD track 3)

- Eat snack together.
- ❓ **When we pray, we talk with Jesus. Who has something we can talk with Jesus about?**
- Pray together.

Jesus loves everyone! (Thank you, Jesus!) Shepherds were the first people to hear about baby Jesus. They hurried to see him. Let's hurry and clean up our snack!




Coloring Creation

Supplies: "Shepherds Hear About Jesus' Birth" Coloring Creation pages (1 per child), crayons, glue sticks, wet wipes, chenille wires pre-cut in half (1 per child), *Music* CD, media player

Jesus loves everyone, (Thank you, God!) **including shepherds! Let's color the shepherds and give them each a staff.**

- Review the Bible story as you identify the shepherds on the page.
- Color the picture.
- Help kids shape the chenille wire into a staff and glue it onto a shepherd's staff.
- Play music as kids create.

 "As I Have Loved You" (John 13:34)
(*Music* CD track 7)

