

# Home Activity

## Joyous News

### Bible Verse

This is a sign for you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly and lying in a manger. (Luke 2:12)

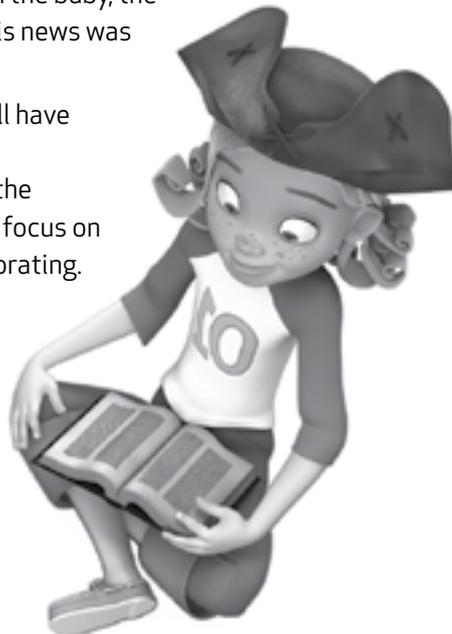
### Before You Begin

**A**lthough we hear the story every year, the message of the Christmas story remains inspiring and empowering. God did not choose to make a flashy and attention-gathering entrance. Instead God chose to reveal God's presence with us through the birth of a baby born in humble circumstances. The shepherds were the first to receive the news of Jesus' birth.

We've heard of the shepherds' visit to Bethlehem so many times that we may fail to realize how surprising and unusual it was. Although the term *shepherd* evokes calm, pastoral scenes in our minds, at the time of Jesus' birth shepherding was a despised occupation. Shepherds were on the fringes of society, looked down upon as shiftless and untrustworthy people. Shepherds often slept outside with their flocks. Imagine how they must have smelled! Yet it was these shepherds who were the first to receive the news of Jesus' birth.

The shepherds received the news of Jesus' birth from an angel. One can imagine that the sudden appearance of an angel and then an entire heavenly host must have caused some trembling. In response to the surprising angelic announcement, the shepherds hurried off to Bethlehem to find Mary, Joseph, and the child of whom they had been told. Once they had seen the baby, the shepherds went and told the news to others. This news was far too wonderful to be kept to oneself!

When your children gather this week, they will have already celebrated Christmas. For children the celebration of Christmas is often equated with the presents they have received. Help your children focus on the joy of Christmas and the experience of celebrating. Also be sensitive to those children in your class for whom Christmas may be a sad or difficult time for whatever reason. Emphasize that the Good News of God's gift of Jesus is for everyone. And even now, many years after Jesus' birth, this is a cause for celebration.



### Bible Story

Luke 2:8-20

### Anchor Point

Jesus is God's gift to all people.



## FIX THE STORY

**Supplies:** Bibles, Activity D, pencils

- ✂ Photocopy "A Mixed-Up Story" (Activity D) for each child.
- Give each child a copy of "A Mixed-Up Story" and a pencil.
- Encourage each child to read through the story and circle any words that seem not to belong.
- Have the children look up Luke 2:8-20 in their Bibles.
- Encourage the children to work together to replace each word that does not belong in the story with the correct word.

## Answers Mixed-up Story Activity 4c

streets: fields	Antarctica: heaven
sheepdogs: sheep	digestion: peace
spotlights: glory	engineers: angels
anteater: angel	choir: shepherds
sad: good	next: right
unhappy: joyous	year: now
cousin: savior	Margaret: Mary
cymbal: sign	Jonathan: Joseph
sleepy: newborn	sand: manger
teenager: baby	crying: amazed
hammock: manger	Melissa: Mary
elephant: angel	sheep: shepherds

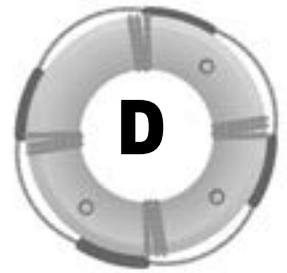
Nearby shepherds were living in the streets guarding their sheepdogs at night. The Lord's spotlights shone around them, and they were terrified.

The anteater said, "Don't be afraid! Look! I bring sad news to you —wonderful, unhappy news for all people. Your cousin is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord. This is a cymbal for you: you will find a sleepy teenager wrapped snugly and lying in a hammock. Suddenly a great assembly of the heavenly forces was with the elephant praising God. They said, "Glory to God in Antarctica and on earth digestion among those whom he favors."

When the engineers returned to heaven, the choir said to each other, "Let's go next year to Bethlehem and see what's happened. Let's confirm what the Lord has revealed to us." They went quickly and found Margaret and Jonathon and the baby lying in the sand. When they saw this, they reported what they had been told about this child. Everyone who heard it was crying at what the shepherds told them. Melissa committed these things to memory and considered them carefully. The sheep returned home, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. Everything happened just as they had been told.

# A Mixed-up Story

Something is not quite right with the following story about the shepherds. Circle each word that you think does not belong in the story. Find the correct story in Luke 2:8-20.



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