

Third Part (Shepherds and sheep)

Narrator. Read or tell by memory Luke 2:8–20. Then say, “Hear what the shepherds say.”

Three of the **shepherds** say, “It is cold tonight.” “The stars are bright.” “The sheep are content.”

Sheep. Move around the shepherds on hands and knees. Make noises like sheep.

Angels and Shepherds. The angels appear. The Shepherds fall to the ground, afraid.

Angels. “Shepherds! Do not be afraid. We bring you good news. A baby is born. He is Christ, the Lord. You will find him wrapped up in a cloth and lying in a manger in Bethlehem.”

Shepherds' leader. “Let's go see! Hurry!”

Shepherds. (Run to where Jesus is. Look in the box and kneel. After a few moments rise.)

Shepherds' leader. “Praise God. His anointed one, the Christ, is born. The Lord is with us!”

Narrator. When the drama is finished, thank the children and everyone who helped prepare it.

Questions. Let the children ask the adults the questions listed under activity # 2.

Memorize Luke 2:14.

Poem. Let three children recite verses from Mary's prayer, Luke 1:46–55.

Prayer. Let the children repeat each phrase of this prayer after you.

“Glory to God in the highest.” (Children repeat)

“We praise you, Lord, for giving to us your Son.” (Children repeat)

“You did not provide a rich palace for your Son.” (Children repeat)

“You sent Him to the poor and helpless.” (Children repeat)

“You sent Him to save us from all evil and pain.” (Children repeat)

“We joyfully celebrate His birth like the shepherds and angels did.” (Children repeat)

“In Jesus' name, Amen.” (Children repeat)

We Celebrate the Birth of Jesus our Saviour

Prayer: “Dear Father in Heaven, please use this lesson to help the children appreciate the greatest, most loving present that you have given to us, your Son Jesus.”

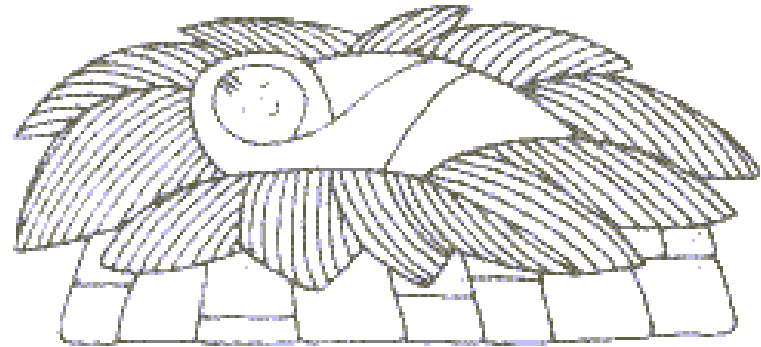
Select activities that fit your plans and local customs.

1. Sing songs about Jesus' birth.

Some believers sing songs in front of friends' houses during the Christmas season.

2. Copy or colour this picture of a manger.

- Jesus' first bed was a manger, a box that holds hay for cattle and sheep to eat.



- Let the children show their pictures to the adults during the Christmas celebration.
 - Let the children explain to the adults that the manger reminds us how Jesus was born in a very poor place. People did not yet recognize him as the Son of God
- #### 3. Tell to the children the story of Jesus' birth, in Luke 1:26–38 and Luke 2:1–20.
- Let an older child or teacher read this story of the Birth of Jesus, the Son of God.

- Explain that God's Son was born as a human, not in a king's palace but in a barn where animals were kept.

Questions. After relating the story, ask these questions. *Answers follow each question.*

- a) How did Mary feel when she saw the angel? *See Luke 1:29.*
- b) What promises did the angel make about Jesus? *See Luke 1:32–33*
- c) How did Mary respond to the angel's message? *See Luke 1:38*
- d) Why did Joseph and Mary have to go to Bethlehem? *See Luke 2:1–3 (The Roman Emperor made people go to the city of their birth to be counted).*
- e) Where did Mary lay the newborn baby? *See Luke 2:7*
- f) Why were the shepherds terrified that night? *See Luke 2:8–10*
- g) How would the shepherds know which baby was Jesus? *See Luke 2:11–12*
- h) What did the shepherds do after they saw Jesus? *See Luke 2:20*

4. Let the children dramatize Jesus' birth for the adults.

Arrange this drama with the worship leaders. If possible, start preparing several weeks ahead.

- If time is limited, then skip less important parts of the drama.
- If there are too few children, then ask adults to help, or let neighbours' children play the easy roles.
- Add or change things so that the drama fits the occasion and local customs.

Preparations for teachers and older children:

- **Narrator.** Rehearse summarizing the story. Help children recall what they are to say and do.
- **Mary and Joseph.** Mary will hold a doll representing Jesus. Wrap it in a cloth.
- **Angel Gabriel.** Wear a white robe if possible. A white bed sheet may serve as a robe.

Preparations for younger children:

- Play the roles of **innkeeper**, **cows** in the barn, **shepherds** and their **sheep**.
- Have the **shepherds** hold shepherds' staffs (long sticks).
- Put hay or grass in a large box, to be the manger.

1st Part of the Story (Mary and the Angel Gabriel)

Narrator. Read or tell by memory Luke 1:26–38. Then say, "Hear what the angel Gabriel says."

Gabriel. (Speak loudly) "Greetings, Mary. Do not be afraid. You are going to have a child who will be Jesus, the Son of the Most High. He will be King."

Mary. "But I have no husband."

Gabriel. "It is God who will give you the child."

Mary. "I am God's servant. I will do as you say."

Part 2 (Mary, Joseph, shepherds, innkeeper, cattle)

Narrator. Read or tell by memory Luke 2:1–7. Then say, "Hear what Joseph says."

Joseph. "Mary, we must go to Bethlehem to register. The Emperor has ordered a census."

Mary. "But the baby is about to be born."

Joseph. Take Mary's arm (if your culture permits) and walk with her to one side and back.

Mary. "Hurry, Joseph, the baby is coming now. Look. Here is an inn."

Joseph. Walk to where the Innkeeper is standing. Pretend to knock on a door. "Knock! Knock! Knock!" Shout, "Innkeeper, do you have a room for us?"

Innkeeper. "No, but you can sleep in the barn with the cows."

Joseph. Take Mary by the arm and walk to the manger

Cattle. On hands and knees, go around Mary. Make noises like cows.

Mary. Wrap the doll in the cloth. Lay it in the box and say, "Jesus is born!"