

With all my heart I glorify the Lord! In the depths of who I am I rejoice in God my savior. (Luke 1:46-47)

Joyous News – Luke 2:8-20

Prepare to Wonder

Shepherds were quietly going about their night, when suddenly an angel appeared to them. The angel said, “Don’t be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people” (Luke 2:10, CEB). The Bible states that the shepherds were terrified. Yet, instead of running away in terror, they listened to the message and made the decision to go to Bethlehem to confirm that what the angel said was really true.

Shepherds were the first to hear of Jesus’ birth. There is much speculation on why the angel announced the news to shepherds. Some think it was because shepherds were low on the societal rung, and God wanted it known that Jesus was for everyone.

We may never know why the humble shepherds were the first to hear the news. We do know the shepherds went to Bethlehem; found Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus; and shared with them what the angels had said. Then the shepherds returned home and spread the news of Jesus’ birth.

From the angels to the shepherds to the world, the good news of Jesus is for all people, not just the rich and powerful. Spreading the news brought joy to the shepherds and to all who heard it. Joy is meant to be shared, as joy is for all.

Spiritual Practice for Adults

Light a candle. Close your eyes and imagine a light around the top of your head. Imagine that light moving all the way down your body. As you let the light pass, say to yourself, “The light of Christ is inside me.” Continue letting the light radiate through your body until it reaches your toes. Then say, “Amen.”

Welcome to Wonder

Supplies: CEB Bible, Annual Music CD or song download, optional: Digital Class Pack

- Gather together near your Wonder Table.

SAY: Today's faith word is *joy*.

- Show the children the "Joy" poster (Digital Class Pack).

SAY: Joy is a feeling of gratitude and happiness. Joy makes us want to tell others.

WONDER: When have you been so joyful that you wanted to tell others?

SING together

- Use your Annual Music CD or download the song, "Joy" (<https://www.cokesbury.com/Celebrate-Wonder-Annual-Music>).
- Play the song, "Joy." Sing and celebrate.

Wonder with Me

Supplies: CEB Bible, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, optional: Wonder Cube (Digital Class Pack)

READ the Bible Story

- Read the Bible story, Luke 2:8-20.
- Roll the Wonder Cube. Take time to answer a few of the questions.

WATCH the Bible Story

- Visit <https://www.cokesbury.com/Celebrate-Wonder-Video> to download and watch today's Bible story, or watch on www.amplifymedia.com.

WONDER together

- How would you feel if an angel appeared and spoke to you?
- How would you have told people that Jesus had been born?
- What joyous news can you share with others?

CONTINUE to Wonder

- When the shepherds learned of Jesus' birth, they went to see for themselves what was happening. Would you have had to see it to believe it?
- Shepherding was considered lowly work during this time. How do you think the shepherds felt being chosen as the first to hear and share the news of Jesus' birth?

PRAY together

- Dear God, help me be full of joy. Amen.

Experience Wonder—Light the Night (Art)

Supplies: black paper, chalk, easy-to-remove tape (masking, painters', or Mavalus), angel stencils, pencils

- Distribute the supplies to the children.

WONDER: What do you think the sky looked like when the angels appeared to the shepherds?

SAY: Let's re-create the scene with the shepherds.

- Encourage the children to tape the angel stencils to their papers, then color over the stencils with chalk. Gently remove the tape and stencils. Shake off the excess chalk.

WONDER: What would it have been like to be there with the shepherds?

Spiritual Practice—Exploring Joy Through Celebration

Supplies: Advent Wreath (Digital Class Pack or real family Advent wreath), candles (real or LED), optional: Celebration Chart (Digital Class Pack) and Celebrate Wonder Family Activity Book

SAY: Today we celebrate Christmas. We will place a flame on the Christ candle on our Advent wreath.

- Invite a child to color or help you light the white Christ candle on the wreath.

SAY: We have been learning about joy. Each person can share joy with the whole world.

WONDER: How do you share joy with the world?

- Share a joy affirmation with each child.

SAY: (*Name of child*), you are filled with joy. May you share your joy with the whole world.

- Sing the first verse of "Joy to the World":
Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King; let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing, and heaven, and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven, and nature sing.
- Encourage the children and their families to use the Celebration Chart (Digital Class Pack) and to read together the *Winter 2020–21 Celebrate Wonder Family Activity Book* (if purchased) at home this week.