

Savior

Session 3 • Luke 2:8-20

ENGAGE

PREPARE: Display **Pack Item 5** (*Poster: Key Verse: Luke 2:11*). Prepare copies of Luke 2:13-15 as a dramatic reading for a narrator, the angels, and the shepherds.

READ: Share that the group will take a break from 1 Samuel to examine Luke's account of Jesus's birth. Call on a volunteer to read the opening paragraph on page 29.

ASK: Have you known someone others might have written off as a "least likely candidate," yet who later excelled in life or career? (p. 29)

DISCUSS: Lead a brief discussion on responses. Note that most people have known individuals whose lives turned out different than anyone expected.

ASK: What factors contributed to that outcome? (p. 29)

CONTEXT: Point out that many people in Israel were waiting for the Messiah to establish God's kingdom, but most were not expecting Him to come like Jesus did. Explain how Luke's Gospel reveals a unique side of Jesus's ministry.

- "One of the major themes in Luke's Gospel was Jesus's showing compassion and offering support to the seemingly insignificant of His day. . . . He emphasized that Jesus reached out to Samaritans, tax collectors, women, children, and the poor. He alone spoke of the celebration that occurs when the lost are found, even rebellious prodigals who are welcomed home with open arms. Over and again, Luke showed how God included and elevated the humble and brought down those who were proud." (p. 29)

TRANSITION: *In today's session, we'll study how the good news of Jesus's birth took place in an unlikely setting and was announced to an unlikely audience.*

EXPLORE THE TEXT

READ: Call on a volunteer to read aloud Luke 2:8-12 while the group listens for the titles given to Jesus. Allow volunteers to call out the titles they heard. Record them on the board.

SUMMARIZE: Explain what Luke meant by the "glory of the Lord":

- **(2:9)** God's glory refers to His radiant majesty. His glory appeared when He provided the Israelites with manna, established His covenant at Sinai, and descended at the consecration of the

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tabernacle and the temple (Ex. 16:6-15; 24:12-18; 40:33-35; 1 Kings 8:1-11; 2 Chron. 5:1-14). His glory had departed from the temple in Ezekiel's day because of Israel's rebellion (Ezek. 9–11). Its presence here provided a visible sign that God's presence was once again intersecting the world.

ASK: Why do you think God chose to tell the good news of His Son to lowly shepherds? What implications does that have for today? (p. 31)

RECITE: Point to **Pack Item 5** (*Poster: Key Verse: Luke 2:11*). Guide adults to read the verse aloud together. Challenge them to memorize the verse and to reflect on it throughout the Christmas season.

READING: Distribute copies of Luke 2:13-15 written in the form of a dramatic reading with parts for a narrator, the angels, and the shepherds. **Enlist three volunteers to share Luke 2:13-15** as a dramatic reading.

ASK: What message did the angelic host proclaim? What are the greatest needs for peace today? (p. 31)

RECAP: Summarize this content to highlight God's glory and the peace He alone provides:

- **(2:14)** The heavenly hosts' proclamation looked both to "the highest heaven" and to "earth"—glory to God above and peace to people below. This peace referred to peace from grief, anger, and broken hearts, something even first-century pagans longed for. It echoes Isaiah's promise of the coming Prince of Peace in Isaiah 9:6-7. Heaven declares God's glory, and earth receives His peace. This peace is offered to all, consistent with the angel's message of good news for all people (v. 10).

ASK: What are some proper responses for believers who have heard the gospel message? (p. 31)

DISCUSS: Guide adults to consider the content of the angelic message and the response of the shepherds. Lead a brief discussion on the peace Jesus provides. Highlight the immediate response of the shepherds to make the trip to Bethlehem.

TRANSITION: *Even though the shepherds might seem to be an unlikely bunch to hear the good news of Jesus's birth, their eager response was motivated by faith, joy, and excitement. They accepted the angels' message, and they wanted to be a part of what God was doing.*

READ: Call on a volunteer to read aloud Luke 2:16-20 as adults listen for all the actions the shepherds took and what Mary did.

LIST: Guide adults to share the shepherds' response. Record their response on the board. Point out what they did before visiting Jesus and after visiting the manger.

DISCUSS: What do you think the shepherds were thinking and feeling on the way to Bethlehem? (p. 31)

RECAP: Explain why the shepherds may have reacted as they did. Share this information to contrast Mary's response:

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- **(2:19)** *Luke offered a glimpse of Mary's response to the sequence of events taking place around her and her newborn. Demonstrating a reflective nature, she was "treasuring up all these things in her heart and meditating on them." The term "meditating" relates to pondering on something. She was putting everything together and mulling them over in her heart, weighing each word spoken and each event that occurred. Understandably, she wasn't sure how to react to this attention given to her child. The same thing happened several days later when Jesus was presented in the temple to Simeon and Anna. Everyone in the temple was told about the child (Luke 2:21-38). Years later, when twelve-year-old Jesus said He had to be "in my Father's house," Mary again "kept all these things in her heart" (2:49,51).*

EXPLAIN: Highlight the shepherds' willingness to share the Messiah's birth with others. Note that they were not inhibited or fearful about letting others know what God was doing and what He had shown them.

ASK: **What would you like others to know about Jesus and the difference He makes in your life?** (p. 31)

CHALLENGE

SUMMARIZE: Review these points from this week's Bible study passage:

- We can be assured that Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah whom the prophets foretold.
- We can experience peace through saving faith in Jesus Christ.
- Believers should tell others of all God has done.

REFLECT: Remind adults that the shepherds not only heard the good news but became faithful evangelists, spreading the good news of Jesus's birth. Challenge adults to consider who they might share the good news of Jesus with during the Christmas season.

PRAY: Lead adults in a time of prayer, thanking God for the gift of Jesus and for the good news that He is the Savior, Messiah, and Lord.

AFTER THE SESSION

Follow up the Bible study session with a Christmas card, a text, or an email to all adults who have been a part of your Bible study group during the past few weeks. Let them know you are praying for them as they celebrate the birth of Jesus.

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