

Unit 3: Good News for Outsiders

Shepherds Hear About Jesus' Birth (Luke 2:8-20)

Bible Point: Jesus loves everyone...even if we feel like outsiders.

"So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other." (John 13:34)

Purpose

Sheep were treasured in Bible times. The Israelites needed sheep for milk, wool, and meat. For families who lived in the countryside, it was common for a son or daughter to watch over the flock. City folks were a little different, though. They hired shepherds to watch over their sheep outside the village.

Whether shepherds were family members or hired nomads, they found themselves on the outside a lot. While everyone else was nestled inside the neighborhood, shepherds were out in the fields watching over their flocks by night. Yet they were the first to hear about Jesus' birth. Imagine their excitement! Proximity didn't matter when it came to seeing and celebrating the Savior. Jesus loves everyone!

Even if it's not Christmastime, the story of shepherds hearing about Jesus is a wonderful example of Jesus' love for everyone, any time of the year!

Bible Point

Glory to God! I have good news of great joy to share with you. Jesus loves everyone. That's our Bible Point today. Every time you hear the words "Jesus loves everyone!" cross your hands over your heart like this and say, "Thank you, Jesus!"

Bible Memory Buddy & Verse

Our Bible Memory Buddy for Unit 3 is Decker!

The Bible is God's true story of love! The Bible may seem like a big book for grown-ups, but it's for everyone! Our Bible Memory Verse comes from John 13:34. Let's say the verse together.

"So now I am giving you a new commandment: *(hold hands out like a tray)*
Love each other. *(give a friend's shoulder a squeeze)*
Just as I *(point up)*
have loved you, *(point forward)*
you should love each other." *(give another friend's shoulder a squeeze)*
(John 13:34)

Experience the Bible Story

Read aloud Luke 2:8-9.

Shepherds! The angel tells you to not be afraid and then says:

Read aloud Luke 2:10-12.

Then all at once there's a whole *herd* of angels—an angel crowd stretching out as far as you can see. They're all singing and praising God.

You lie there, overwhelmed by what's happening, and then, as fast as it started, it's over. You look around. You sit up. You look at your shepherd friends.

And together you decide to go see the baby.

Read aloud Luke 2:16.

You all start running. You run all the way to Bethlehem, and just like the angel said, there's the baby, all bundled up in a manger. You stop running and kneel. You know you're in the presence of royalty—the King of kings, the Lord of all, the great and good shepherd to his people.

You pause to look at the baby. You nod at Mary and Joseph, and then you stand to leave. And on the way back to your flock, you tell anyone who'll listen what's just happened. You're so excited that you jump up and down. You're so excited that you keep pointing at where the manger is.

You want everyone to know about Jesus! The angel was right: The Savior has finally come! What good news you have to share!

Talk about joyful news! God sent a Savior! Woohoo! That's not just *good* news; it's *great* news! That news means we don't have to be stuck in sin. It means we have a way to have a forever friendship with God.

God could have given the news to teachers called Pharisees. He could have sent angels to doctors or kings. But he didn't. Instead, God told shepherds—people who spent their time outside of town with sheep. Why? Because Jesus loves everyone. (*Thank you, Jesus!*) This savior baby came for everyone: teachers, doctors, famous people, shepherds, and people like you and me.

The Bible calls Jesus the good shepherd. He came to earth and gave up his life to rescue us from sin. Jesus loves everyone. (*Thank you, Jesus!*) When we're his friends, we share his love when we watch out for others who need his love and help.

Prayer

God, thank you for sending Jesus—not just for people I'm close to, but for everyone. Give me eyes to see kids who need an extra dose of your love today. In Jesus' name, amen.