



## A Christmas Story Bible Study

This Bible study lesson based on a portion of the Christmas story may be used with any age. We have included a basic Bible lesson script with a variety of interactive options for different ages including children, youth and adults.

This is also a great tool for family worship and can easily be divided into two lessons.

**Title: Even the Lowliest Matter to God**

**Scripture: Luke 2:1-20**

Introduction: Candy Cane Staff

To introduce this Christmas Story lesson, give everyone a candy cane or talk about [candy canes](#) and how they were designed like a shepherd's staff turned one way and the letter J turned upside down. God revealed the birth of His Son first to the ones others tended to shun, yet God showed His love is for everyone through the shepherds.

### **Hope for All - Read Luke 2:8-14**

**Wonder:** Have you ever wondered why God did not prepare room in the Inn for Jesus to be born? He certainly didn't forget!

If Jesus had been born in an Inn or even someone's home, it's doubtful the shepherds would have been welcome to come in and see Him. Their job was a dirty one. They stank, and where would they have left their sheep?!

**Wonder:** The shepherds were real people like you and me; have you ever wondered more about what they may have been like, how they may have felt?

They were common, hardworking folks and often looked down upon by others who thought them to be "less". Many times the job of shepherding fell to the youngest in the family like David in the Old Testament (remember the "little guy" who God used to kill the giant Goliath [1 Samuel 16](#) - 17; one of Jesus' ancestors) or to women like Rachel (another ancestor of Jesus - [Genesis 29](#)).

In that day in time, children and women were not held in high esteem. So in addition to the shepherds being dirty because of their work, they may have also been shunned for other reasons. Have you ever considered some of these shepherds may have been a lot like you? Have you ever thought about how they felt? God chose the lowly to give the invitation to His Son's birth!

Take time to read through Psalm 139 which was written by David. Go back and focus on verse 14 -

*"I will give thanks to Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are Thy works, And my soul knows it very well."*

### **Activity: I am unique & special**

In verse 14 David points out that we have been made – “wonderfully” – the Hebrew word there ‘Pala’ (paw-law) translated means “to distinguish, put a difference, show marvelous, separate, set apart, sever, make wonderfully”.

David realized God had made him unique...different...even maybe a little “weird”!, and that was a wonderful thing! There is and never has been nor ever will be another me...another you! God never makes a duplicate! Even twins have differences!

- Have those with blue eyes stand. Everyone sit.
- Those with curly hair stand. Everyone sit.
- Those with earlobes attached at the bottom stand. Everyone with sit.
- Those who can curl or roll their tongue stand. Everyone sit.
- Those with dimples stand. Everyone sit.
- Those who are left-handed stand. Everyone sit.
- Those who have freckles stand. Everyone sit.
- Those whose hairline on their forehead makes a point or widow’s peak stand. Everyone sit.
- Finally have everyone clasp their hands together without thinking about it. Have them look to see which thumb is on top and if their left thumb is on top to stand. Genetic studies have shown that about 55% clasp with their left thumb on top and 45% with their right hand on top. Everyone sit.

The point is that God has created us to inherit different genes. No two people have the exact same DNA! We are created to be different...unique...which is INCREDIBLE – unbelievable and wonderful!

Each shepherd that night was uniquely different and special. God wanted them to know that they mattered! Just the same, the Christmas story is for each of us. God wants us to know...we matter to Him so much that He sent His only begotten Son, that whoever would believe in Him would not perish but have eternal life! (John 3:16)

### **Back to the Christmas Story**

Count how many times "you" is spoken by the angel. God wanted to assure the shepherds that this good news, this Savior, this sign was for them. The Messiah wasn't just for kings and those well off; He wasn't just for a certain age or sex. Jesus came for ALL including those considered to be "less".

*"And so the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring **you** good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for **you** a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for **you**: **you** will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army of angels praising God and saying,*

*"Glory to God in the highest,*

*And on earth peace among people with whom He is pleased."*

Luke 2:10-14

One of my favorite names of God is El Roi - "God Who Sees". God sees each of us and loves us just the way we are...stinky and all! Yet God also loves us too much to leave us that way. Through Jesus He offers cleansing and forgiveness. ([1 John 1:9](#))

Jesus was born in a manger with dirty animals to show or demonstrate He would be available to everyone with our dirt and all.

Think about those around you that others may look down upon, or you yourself may feel rejected by others like the shepherds. Each of us matter to God; God loves us in spite of us not loving Him. That's the whole point of the Christmas story -

*"But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners." Romans 5:8*

## **The Shepherds Obeyed & Shared - Luke 2:15-20**

The shepherds were some of the first in the Christmas story entrusted with the Good News that the Savior was born. After the angel told them about Jesus, their reaction was to go! They listened and believed. Their belief moved them to act...that's called [faith](#)! They went to Bethlehem. They went to seek the Savior! That's exactly what God's desire is for each of us - to seek Him and believe in faith - to trust Him and obey.

**Wonder:** What if the shepherds had heard, but didn't go. What if they were too afraid or too busy with their sheep? They would have missed God's gift for them. They had to go and seek to find Jesus.

Most of us know John 3:16 we looked at earlier, but if we keep reading we find that this gift of eternal life is not automatic. The shepherds were not supernaturally transported to where Jesus was. They had to choose to follow the angel's directions and act on what they heard.

John 3:18 goes on to say - *"The one who believes in Him is not judged; the one who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God."*

The shepherds had a choice, to believe and obey or stay where they were out in the cold away from God's presence. We have that same choice, but we must choose God; He will never force Himself into our life. We see in the Christmas story, God made the way. It is up to us to believe and receive His gift.

*"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."*

Ephesians 2:8-10

## **The Good Shepherd**

Jesus changed what people thought of shepherds. He called Himself - The Good Shepherd.

Jesus wants to be our Savior...our Shepherd.

*"I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep."* John 10:11

This verse says a good shepherd lays down his life, he cares for the sheep, he protects the sheep, he gathers the sheep, he leads the sheep, he knows his own sheep. Think

about the many ways God has cared for you today. Make a list of just a few; pray and take time to thank God for each.

God knows everything about each of us and still cares and loves us. He is our protector. The question is – do we know Him? Jesus says “My own know Me.” If you don’t [know Jesus](#), you can! You do not have to be a lost sheep wandering all by yourself. The Good Shepherd has come searching for you to make you His own.

Let’s be like the shepherds from that first Christmas night and share the Good News that Jesus, the Son of God, has come to save and give life. Hope is found in Him!

Keep your eyes open during this Christmas season for shepherds and let them remind you Jesus came for you and everyone regardless of their social status, past, age, etc.; also be reminded how much the Good Shepherd loves you!

This news, this privilege, also gave the shepherds boldness to share! May we each be bold to share the wonder of the Christmas story with those around us this holiday season and throughout the year. [Hope](#) is found in Jesus alone!

## Christmas Story - Interactive Options

### Children

A few additional Christmas Story fun activities for children include:

- Shepherd Spotting - Around where we live, we don't see real shepherds, but at Christmas there are a multitude everywhere in holiday decorations depicting the Christmas story. Have everyone in the class or family become shepherd spotters and keep a list for the week of all the places they "spot" a shepherd. Remind them to remember that Jesus wants to be our Good Shepherd and how much He loves us.
- Follow My Voice - Version 1 - This is best played in an open area. Have a blindfold for all but two people. The blindfolded "sheep" begin behind a boundary together. One of the other two people represents Jesus and will be trying to get the sheep to follow their voice to the goal. The other represents the world or Satan and will be trying to mimic the other person's voice and get the sheep to follow them. The winner is the first person to follow the "Good Shepherd's" voice to safety.

Version 2 - If you have small space use this option. Give every blindfolded sheep a cotton ball. The instructions are given by the Good Shepherd for sticking it to a target while the others shout out the wrong directions trying to distract and lead the blindfolded sheep away from the target.

- Soft Prayers - Take time in the Bible lesson to also discuss how we use the soft wool from sheep. Their wool is used to make many things in many places. Give each person several cotton balls. Have them pray for others as they stick the cotton balls to an outline of a sheep reminding them that our prayers can go many places to help others as God uses them to touch other peoples' lives.
- Sheep Tag - This is played like a regular game of touch tag with the Good Shepherd as base and the tagger as a predator. You may have more than one tagger. The sheep must run from a designated area (out in the field grazing) and try to reach the Good Shepherd who lets them into the safety of the fold before being tagged.
- Graham Cracker Sheep Snack - What you need: graham crackers (1/2 each child), mini marshmallows, white icing, chocolate melts or Hershey kisses, and little edible eyes. Spread icing on the square of graham cracker. Have them stick the chocolate in the middle of one edge of the square for the sheep's face and mini marshmallows over the rest. Stick eyes on the chocolate and EAT! :) If you don't have the chocolates or edible eyes, you could use chocolate icing to make a face and then the white icing for eyes.
- Shepherd's Staff Craft - Give each child a pipe cleaner and several beads with holes in the middle. Have them load the pipe cleaner with beads wrapping ends around the last beads to lock in place and then bend like a shepherd's staff. Talk about all the ways a shepherd uses his staff - to protect sheep by fighting off predators, to gently lead sheep, to rescue sheep that may have fallen over a ledge. Jesus wants to protect, lead and rescue us as our Good Shepherd! He laid down His life for us.

## Youth

- Word Creations - Create an acrostic poem from the word Shepherd or Sheep. Each line must begin with the corresponding letter.
 

Another Christmas story word game option is to see how many words they can create using only the letters in shepherd. Give a 2-3 minute time limit and watch them go!
- Christmas Story Seek & Find - This game is known as "Sardines"; it is like hide and seek, but only one person hides and the rest search for them. When someone finds the hidden person, they stay with them hiding as others continue seeking. Relate this to how Jesus desires for us to seek and find Him every day of our life. We are to stay with Him...abide with Him.
- Sheep Fondue - Have marshmallows and small bowls or cups with melted chocolate. Do not give them skewers though; they must use their hands to

illustrate the messiness of sin. The marshmallows begin clean and white, but when dipped in the chocolate they become messy. Sin can be pleasant for a season (Hebrews 11:25), but causes a big mess in our lives. Have students think about what in their own life may seem pleasurable for a season, but is out of God's will and really a sin separating them from God.

## Adults

- Connect the Christmas story prophecies found in Micah 5:2, Jeremiah 23:5, Isaiah 7:14, Numbers 24:17, Jeremiah 31:15, Hosea 11:1. Have adults research the prophecies from the Old Testament which point to Jesus and how they connect and were fulfilled in the New Testament.
- See the "lowly". This week make a few "care bags" that contain things like a water bottle, healthy snacks, etc. Write Psalm 139:14 on it along with a message that God cares - you matter. Take these along with you, and when you see someone others may shun, give them the gift and the message of God's love.
- With COVID-19 we have all been mindful of washing our hands. Make this time a time of prayer while also remembering how Jesus came to cleanse and forgive us. If you are with a group, have hand sanitizer instead and let the smell on your hands remind you as you pray.