

Bible Point

The angels and the shepherds wanted everyone to know that Jesus came to save us.

Bible Verse

"The Savior...has been born today in Bethlehem" (Luke 2:11a).

Growing Closer to Jesus

Children will ■ learn that angels told the shepherds about Jesus' birth,
 ■ discover that the shepherds believed the angels and went to see Jesus,
 ■ celebrate the joy of Jesus' birth, and
 ■ teach Pockets the importance of sharing Jesus' birthday with others.

Teacher Enrichment**Bible Basis****■ The angels tell the shepherds of Jesus' birth.**

**Luke
2:8-20**



Would you have been able to keep quiet? The shepherds couldn't! As they quietly tended sheep outside the sleepy town of Bethlehem, an angel suddenly appeared and announced the birth of a Savior whom they'd find lying in a feeding trough! Then the night sky was filled with the glory of heaven as angelic voices praised God. When the angels left, the shepherds rushed to Bethlehem to see this incredible event. And just as the angel had said, there were Mary and Joseph, huddled over a baby wrapped in cloth and lying in a manger. Would you have been able to keep quiet?

Children like to share their knowledge with others. Whether it's a new word they can read, a fact they learned from a teacher, or a family secret, they want everyone to know! Use this lesson to help children understand the excitement of the angels and shepherds and their eagerness to tell others about Jesus' birth.

Prayer

- Read Psalm 92:4-5.
- The psalmist used this verse to express joy for the Lord. How can you help your students express their joy for God's birth?
- Pray: Dear Lord, thank you for giving us Jesus in an amazing way. Please help me to find ways that my students can spread joy in their lives by...

Before the Lesson

- Collect the necessary items for the activities you plan to use. Refer to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies columns to determine what you'll need.
- Make photocopies of the "Today I Learned..." handout (at the end of this lesson) to send home with your children.
- Pray for the children in your class and for God's direction in teaching the lesson.

This Lesson at a Glance

What Children Will Do	Classroom Supplies	Learning Lab Supplies
Welcome Time Direct children to one or more of the optional activities until everyone arrives.	Welcome! —Receive name tags, and be greeted by the teacher.	“Star Name Tags” (p. 26), markers, pins or tape
Let's Get Started Direct children to one or more of the optional activities until everyone arrives.	Option 1: The Confetti Factory —Make the shepherds' clothes colorful, and make confetti.	Construction paper, glue stick, hole punches, resealable plastic sandwich bags
	Option 2: Green Pastures —Prepare the <i>Learning Mat</i> pasture for the angels' visit.	Green colored sugar, glue sticks, cotton balls
	Option 3: Megaphone Mania —Make angel megaphones to announce Jesus' birth.	“Announcing Angel” handout (p. 68), paper doilies or facial tissues, transparent tape, scissors, crayons, glue
	Pick Up Our Toys —Sing a song as they pick up toys, and gather for Bible Story Time.	CD player
Bible Story Time	Setting the Stage —Decorate the room for Jesus' birthday party.	Streamers, inflated balloons, tape
	Bible Song and Prayer Time —Sing a song, bring out the Bible, and pray together.	Bible, basket of surprise cards from Lesson 1, CD player
	Hear and Tell the Bible Story —Discover from Luke 2:8-20 how the shepherds learned about Jesus' birth.	CD player, tape
	Do the Bible Story —Celebrate Jesus' birthday with a party.	CD player, plain cupcakes, paper towels, frosting, plastic knives, sprinkles, angel megaphones from Option 3
Closing 	All Year Long —Teach Pockets that we celebrate Jesus' birth all year long. Celebration Share —Share ways to celebrate Jesus.	Bits of tinsel Confetti from Option 1

*See the end of this lesson for extra-time ideas and supplies.

Welcome Time

Welcome!

SUPPLIES: "Star Name Tags" handout (p. 26), markers, pins or tape

- Kneel down to make eye contact with children as they arrive.
- Greet each child individually with an enthusiastic smile.
- Thank each child for coming to class today.
- As children arrive, ask them about last week's "Today I Learned..." discussion. Use questions such as "How did your family make room for Jesus?" and "What's the most exciting thing about Jesus' birth?"
- Say: **Today we're going to learn that ►the angels and the shepherds wanted everyone to know that Jesus came to save us.**
- Hand out the star name tags children made in the first lesson, and help them attach the name tags to their clothing. If some of the name tags were damaged or if some of the children weren't in class that week, have them make new name tags using the photocopiable handout.
- Direct the children to the Let's Get Started activities you've set up.



It's important to say the Bible Point just as it's written in each activity. Repeating the Bible Point over and over throughout the lesson will help kids remember it and apply it to their lives.



Let's Get Started

Set up one or more of the following activities for children to do as they arrive. After you greet each child, invite him or her to choose an activity.

Circulate among the children to offer help as needed and direct children's conversation toward today's lesson. Ask questions such as "How can we celebrate Jesus' birthday all year?" or "What are some things we can do to tell others about Jesus?"

Option 1: The Confetti Factory

SUPPLIES: construction paper, glue stick, hole punches, resealable plastic sandwich bags



Set out construction paper, resealable plastic sandwich bags, and the shepherds from the *nativity kit figures*.

Allow children to make confetti by using hole punches or tearing colorful construction paper into small pieces. Set up an assembly line with some children making the confetti while others put it into plastic bags. Rub a glue stick over the shepherds' clothing, and allow children to sprinkle confetti on top of them to make their clothes colorful. When the shepherds are completely decorated, set them aside to dry. Tell children that we use confetti to celebrate exciting events. Explain that today they'll hear how ►the angels and the shepherds wanted everyone to know that Jesus came to save us.



You'll need a bag of confetti for each child in your class to use in the closing activity, so have willing children make extras for those who don't choose this option.





Option 2: Green Pastures

SUPPLIES: green colored sugar, glue sticks, cotton balls



Set out the *Learning Mat: Nativity*, green colored sugar, glue sticks, and cotton balls. Spread glue over the pasture area of the *Learning Mat*, and allow children to sprinkle the green sugar over it. Then have children glue a few cotton balls on the pasture to represent sheep. As children work, explain that in today's story they'll hear about shepherds who heard a special message in an amazing way!

Option 3: Megaphone Mania

SUPPLIES: "Announcing Angel" handout (p. 68), paper doilies or facial tissues, transparent tape, scissors, crayons, glue

Make several photocopies of the "Announcing Angel" handout. Set out the handouts, scissors, facial tissues or paper doilies, crayons, glue, and transparent tape. Allow children to decorate their angels and glue facial tissue or a paper doily to the front. Have them cut along the solid lines for the wings. Show children how to fold back the corners of the paper to make a megaphone. The angel's wings should stand out. Children may use their megaphones during "Do the Bible Story." Tell children that ►the angels and the shepherds wanted everyone to know that Jesus came to save us.

When everyone has arrived and you're ready to move on to the Bible Story Time, encourage the children to finish what they're doing and get ready to clean up.

Pick Up Our Toys

SUPPLIES: CD player



Lead children in singing "Pick Up Our Toys" (track 2) with the CD to the tune of "Skip to My Lou." Encourage the children to sing along as they help clean up the room.

If you want to include the names of all the children in your class, sing the song without the CD, and repeat the naming section. If you choose to use the CD, vary the names you use each week.



We will pick up our toys.
We will pick up our toys.
We will pick up our toys
And put them all away.

There's [name] picking up toys.
There's [name] picking up toys.
There's [name] picking up toys,
Putting them all away.

(Repeat.)

Bible Story Time

Setting the Stage

SUPPLIES: streamers, inflated balloons, tape

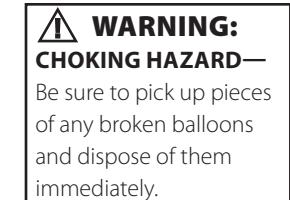
Tell the children you'll clap your hands to get their attention. Explain that when you clap, children are to stop what they're doing, raise their hands, and focus on you. Encourage children to respond quickly so you'll have time for all the fun activities you've planned.

Say: **Today we're celebrating Jesus' birthday!**

Ask: • **What do you do to celebrate your birthday?** (Have a party; eat cake; sing "Happy Birthday"; get presents; play games.)

Say: **We'll do some of those things today! We're going to have a birthday party for Jesus! To get ready, let's decorate our room and make it look bright and festive.**

Set out balloons, tape, and streamers, and help children decorate the room. When you've finished, say: **We're ready for our party, except for one thing. We haven't sent invitations! But in our Bible story today, we'll learn that God sent the invitations for us because ►the angels and the shepherds wanted everyone to know that Jesus came to save us!**



Bible Song and Prayer Time

SUPPLIES: Bible, basket of surprise cards from Lesson 1, CD player

track 3



Set the basket of surprise cards that you made in the first lesson next to you. If you don't have surprise cards, follow the directions in the "Bible Song and Prayer Time" section of Lesson 1 for this activity. Bookmark **Luke 2:8-20** in the Bible you'll be using.

Have the children sit in a circle. Say: **Each week when we come to our circle for our Bible story, I'll choose someone to be the Bible helper. The Bible helper will bring me the Bible marked with our Bible story for that week. Before I choose today's Bible helper, let's sing our Bible song. As we sing, I'll pass out the surprise cards. Don't look inside your card until the song is over.**

Lead children in singing "Read God's Book" (track 3) with the CD to the tune of "The Muffin Man." As you sing, pass out the folded surprise cards.

SING

Now it's time to read God's book,
Read God's book, read God's book.
Now it's time to read God's book.
Let's hear a Bible story.

(Repeat.)

Now it's time to read God's book,
Read God's book, read God's book.
Now it's time to read God's book.
Let's hear a Bible story.

After the song, say: **You may look inside your surprise cards. The person who has the angel stamped inside his or her card will be our Bible helper for today.**

Identify the Bible helper, and then have the rest of the children clap for him or her. Ask the Bible helper to bring you the Bible. Assist the Bible helper in opening the Bible

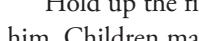


This Bible story is featured in *My First Hands-On Bible*. Order several now for your ministry at group.com.



Hear and Tell the Bible Story

SUPPLIES: CD player, tape



Before this activity, tape the *Learning Mat: Nativity* to a wall near your story area. Place a small ball of sticky tak on the back of each *nativity kit figure*, except for the wise men and the camel.

Gather children and say: **Long, long ago God made a promise to Isaiah and all the people.**

Ask: • **What was God's promise?** (Jesus would come to save us; he would send Jesus.)

Say: **God promised that Jesus would come to save us. To review how God kept that promise I'll hold up a figure from our nativity kit. Then you can tell me everything you remember about that person or thing.**

Hold up the figure of Mary, and have children tell you things they've learned about her. Children may say that she's Jesus' mother, God sent an angel to see her, or that Mary went to see her cousin, Elizabeth. Then call up a volunteer, and have him or her gently press the figure to the stable on the *Learning Mat*.

Hold up the figure of Joseph, and have children tell you what they remember about him. Children may respond that he was a carpenter, that he was Mary's husband, or that he found a stable where they could stay so Jesus could be born. Then call up a volunteer, and have him or her gently press the figure to the stable on the *Learning Mat*.

Repeat this process with the baby Jesus and donkey figures. Then have volunteers hold up the shepherd, sheep, and angel figures. Say: **On the night Jesus was born, shepherds from Bethlehem were out on a hillside watching their sheep. Then the most wonderful thing happened! I'll turn out the lights so it will seem just like that special night. Let's listen to the Bible story on the CD and find out what happened! Listen carefully, so we'll know where to put these shepherds, sheep, and angels on our Learning Mat.**

Turn out the lights and play "A Nighttime Visit" (track 8) on the CD. Turn on the lights when the angels appear, and then turn off the lights when they leave.

When the track ends, turn off the CD player and ask:

- **How do you think the shepherds felt when they saw the angel?** (Afraid; excited.)
- **What did the angel tell the shepherds?** (Jesus had been born; where they could find Jesus.)
- **Where did the shepherds go to find Jesus?** (Bethlehem; a stable.)
- **How do you think the shepherds felt when they saw baby Jesus?** (Happy; excited; thankful.)

Say: **Our Bible verse tells us what the angels said to the shepherds. Let's stand up and say our verse from Luke 2:11, and then we'll sit down again.** Ready? ►“**The Savior...has been born today in Bethlehem.**” That's right! God sent angels to tell the shepherds so we'd know that Jesus came to save all people. ►**The angels and the shepherds wanted everyone to know that Jesus came to save us.** Let's add the shepherds, sheep, and angels to the nativity scene. Choose volunteers to gently press the figures to the appropriate places on the *Learning Mat*. After class, return the figures to the Learning Lab.

◀ BIBLE VERSE



Say: **The shepherds were happy when they heard the news about Jesus! We can be happy, too, because Jesus came to save us. Let's show our biggest smiles as we tell Jesus how glad we are that he was born in Bethlehem.**

Pray: **Dear Lord, we're so glad that you sent Jesus to save us and that you care about us. Help us to share the good news about Jesus with others. We love you. In Jesus' name, amen.**

Do the Bible Story

SUPPLIES: CD player, plain cupcakes, paper towels, frosting, plastic knives, sprinkles, angel megaphones from Option 3



Before this activity, set out a cupcake on a paper towel for each child, a bowl of frosting, a small dish of colorful sprinkles, and plastic knives for decorating.

Form a circle and say: **Now it's time to celebrate Jesus' birthday! Let's start by decorating cupcakes to enjoy later.** Pass the plain cupcakes, one at a time, to the child on your right, and instruct children to continue passing them around the circle until everyone has one. As they pass the cupcakes, have children chant, “Jesus was born on Christmas day. He came to take our sins away!”

When children have finished decorating, gather them together and say: **Let's sing “Happy Birthday” and use our angel megaphones to really celebrate!** Have children use their angel megaphones as they sing and then give three cheers for Jesus. You may want to play a CD of Christmas music as children enjoy their cupcakes. Then gather the children and say: **Now let's sing “The Savior Has Been Born” to the tune of “Jesus Loves Me.” Today we'll add an extra verse that tells about the angels and shepherds. It goes like this:**



**Shepherds heard the angels sing,
Then they found the newborn king.
Wise men came to worship, too,
Just like you and I should do!**

Say the verse line by line, and have the children repeat it after you. Then lead children in singing “The Savior Has Been Born” (#2) (track 9).



SING

The Savior has been born today,
Born today in Bethlehem.
Horses, donkeys, cows, and sheep
Watched the little baby sleep.

(Chorus)

He came to save me. (*Point to self.*)
He came to save you. (*Point to someone else.*)
He came to save us (*open arms to include others*)
Because God loves us so! (*Hug self.*)

**Shepherds heard the angels sing,
Then they found the newborn king.
Wise men came to worship, too,
Just like you and I should do!**

(Repeat chorus.)

Say: Now let's share Jesus' birthday celebration with our friend Pockets!



Closing

All Year Long

SUPPLIES: bits of tinsel

Before class, drape tinsel around Pockets.

Bring out Pockets the Kangaroo, and go through the following puppet script. When you finish the script, put Pockets away and out of sight.

- **Pockets:** Merry Christmas, everyone! Don't you like my Christmas decorations? (*Models tinsel.*)
 - **Teacher:** Merry Christmas, Pockets! You're sure wrapped up in holiday happiness!
 - **Pockets:** We've been celebrating at home, and I thought I'd decorate myself, too! Christmas is so much fun!
 - **Teacher:** Yes, Pockets! We've been celebrating Jesus' birthday, too.



- **Pockets:** (A little sadly) I just wish Christmas lasted all year long...
- **Teacher:** We can celebrate Jesus' birthday all year long!
- **Pockets:** (Surprised) We can keep the decorations up and keep giving and getting gifts and eating candy?! That's great! Wait till I tell my mom!
- **Teacher:** No, that's not exactly what I meant. You see, Pockets, the most important part of celebrating Jesus' birthday is doing what the angels and the shepherds did.
- *The angels and the shepherds wanted everyone to know that Jesus came to save us.*
Children, let's share our Bible story with Pockets. (*Allow children to share about the angels visiting the shepherds.*) Like the angels and the shepherds, we can celebrate Jesus' birthday every day when we share the good news about Jesus' birth.
- **Pockets:** Well, what about the gifts? It won't be much of a celebration without gifts...
- **Teacher:** Oh, Pockets, that's the best part! Each time we share the good news about Jesus' birth, we're sharing the best gift of all—Jesus!
- **Pockets:** I like that! A celebration all year long!
- **Teacher:** That's right! We can tell everyone that God's best gift to us is Jesus.
- **Pockets:** Thank you. Goodbye, everyone. Merry Christmas! Happy birthday, Jesus!

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Celebration Share

SUPPLIES: confetti from Option 1

Gather children and say: ► *The angels and the shepherds wanted everyone to know that Jesus came to save us! We can celebrate Jesus' birthday all year long by sharing God's best gift with others!* Distribute the bags of confetti from Option 1. **This celebration confetti is something you can share with others as you tell them about Jesus. Find a partner, and sprinkle some of your confetti in his or her bag while you share one thing you love about Jesus.**



After children have shared in pairs, bring everyone together and pray: **Dear God, we thank you for Jesus, your best gift to us. Help us to celebrate Jesus' birthday every day by telling others that Jesus came to save us. In Jesus' name, amen.**



Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.

Photocopy the “Today I Learned...” handout (at the end of this lesson) for this week, and send it home with your children. Encourage parents to use the handout to plan meaningful family activities to reinforce this week’s topic.



For Extra Time

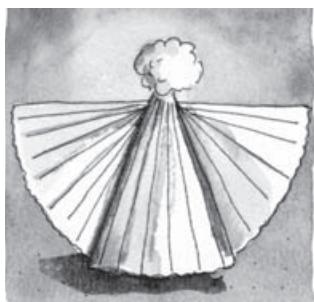
If you have a long class time or want to add additional elements to your lesson, try one of the following activities.

Lively Learning: Celebration Pass

You'll need Life Savers candies (or fruit ring cereal) and plastic coffee stirrers. Form groups of three, and within each group have children decide who will be the Angel, the Shepherd, and the Announcer. Give each child a stirrer and each group a Life Savers candy. Say: **Since Jesus came to save us, he's our lifesaver! Let's have a relay to pass on that good news! The Angel will put the Life Saver on the stick and carry the Life Saver to the Shepherd, who will use the stick to carry and deliver the Life Saver to the Announcer. When the Announcer receives the Life Saver, he or she will say, "Good news! Jesus came to save us!"** After the activity, throw away the used Life Savers, and give each child a clean candy to enjoy.



Make to Take: Angelic Finger Puppets



Gather paper muffin cups, tape, glue, and cotton balls. Give each child two muffin cups and a cotton ball. Demonstrate how to fold a muffin cup in half and roll it to make a funnel shape. Help tape the edges together. Have children fold their second muffin cups in half and tape them to the back of the funnels to form wings. Demonstrate how to glue the cotton ball to the top of the funnel as the angel's head. As children work, talk about how **►the angels and the shepherds wanted everyone to know that Jesus came to save us.**

Treat to Eat: Edible Story

Before class, mix equal parts of cream cheese and powdered sugar until you have a firm dough. Give each child a lump of dough. Encourage children to use the dough to create something from the Christmas story, such as a shepherd's staff, sheep, a baby, or angels. Talk about the different people that God chose to tell about Jesus' birth. You may choose to let the children eat their dough or place it in sandwich bags to take home.

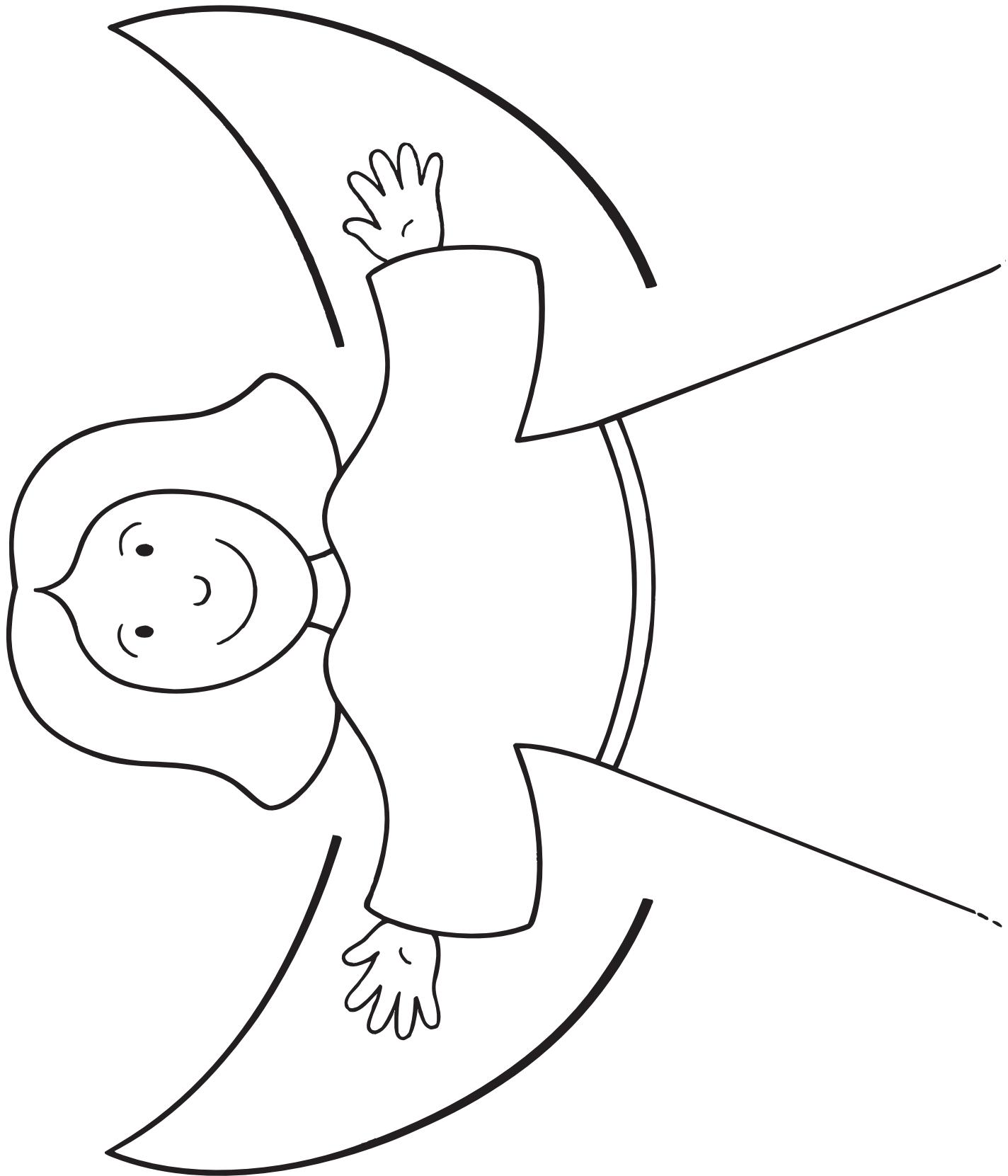


Story Picture: Announcing: Jesus' Birthday!

Give each child a photocopy of the "Today I Learned..." handout. Cover a work area with newspapers. Set out crayons, cotton swabs, and glitter glue. Have children color the picture and then spread a thin layer of glitter glue on the angels.

Announcing Angel

Photocopy the handout. Help children cut along the solid lines and then roll the edges back to form a megaphone.



Today I learned...

Today your child learned that the angels and the shepherds wanted everyone to know that Jesus came to save us. Children learned that they can tell others about Jesus, too. They shared ways we can celebrate Jesus' birthday every day.

The angels and the shepherds wanted everyone to know that Jesus came to save us.

Verse to Learn

"The Savior...has been born today in Bethlehem"
(Luke 2:11a).

Ask Me...

- What did the shepherds do when they learned of Jesus' birth?
- How can you share the good news about Jesus?
- What special things can our family do to celebrate Jesus' birth?

Family Fun

- Go caroling as a family (or invite friends to go along) to share the good news of Jesus' birth with neighbors and relatives, even if it's after Christmas Day.
- Use angel-shaped cookie cutters to cut angel-shaped toast for a breakfast treat. Or cut fluffy angels from slices of angel food cake. Decorate them with white frosting and share your angelic treats with elderly neighbors.

Announcing: Jesus' Birthday! (Luke 2:8-20)

