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Praise Explosion!

Key References: Luke 2:8-20; *The Desire of Ages*, chap. 4, pp. 43-49; *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 7, pp. 35-42; Our Beliefs, nos. 11, 4, 9.















powertext

"Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests'" (Luke 2:13, 14).

Sabbath

DO Do the activity on page 88.

powerpoint

Every day we can praise and worship God as the angels did.

Have you ever wished to see an amazing miracle happen right before your eyes? Think of the shepherds in Bethlehem when Jesus was born. Aren't you glad Jesus revealed Himself to ordinary people like them?

Pulling their cloaks tighter around them, the shepherds inched closer to the fire. The night air was cool, and it was late. Yet the shepherds did not have trouble staying awake. The interest of these humble men was absorbed by a subject of great significance.

With their spiritual eyesight they looked way beyond the familiar surroundings of Bethlehem, where David once tended his flocks of sheep. Now that everything was silent and calm around them they could talk about the most treasured ideal of the people of Israel—the coming of the Messiah. All of their hopes concentrated on the promised Redeemer. Meanwhile the religious leaders of the time were going through the motions of religious rituals and ceremonies. They had become indifferent about the solemnity of the times in which the prophecies about the Messiah were about to be fulfilled. Although the majority of the nation's leaders had lost sight of the great events that were about to happen, the shepherds were among the few faithful believers who longed and prayed for the promised Savior.

The night grew quieter as a strange hush seemed to fill the air. Seeing that the sky over Bethlehem was growing brighter and sensing that something was about to happen, the shepherds looked on in amazement. Suddenly an angel of God descended from heaven bringing good news. The shepherds were filled with fear at this glorious sight. But the angel spoke to them words of comfort:

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Sunday

READ Read Luke 2:8-10 and this week's lesson, "Praise Explosion!"

LEARN Begin to memorize the power text.

LEARN Write out your power text on both sides of a paper angel that you make out of a circle, two small triangles, and one larger triangle. Be sure to include the reference.

PRAY Praise God for Jesus, the gift of heaven.

Monday

READ Read Luke 2:11, 12.

THINK Why do you think the angels appeared to the shepherds and not to someone like the innkeeper?

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Praise God that He does not show favoritism but that He is just and merciful to everyone.

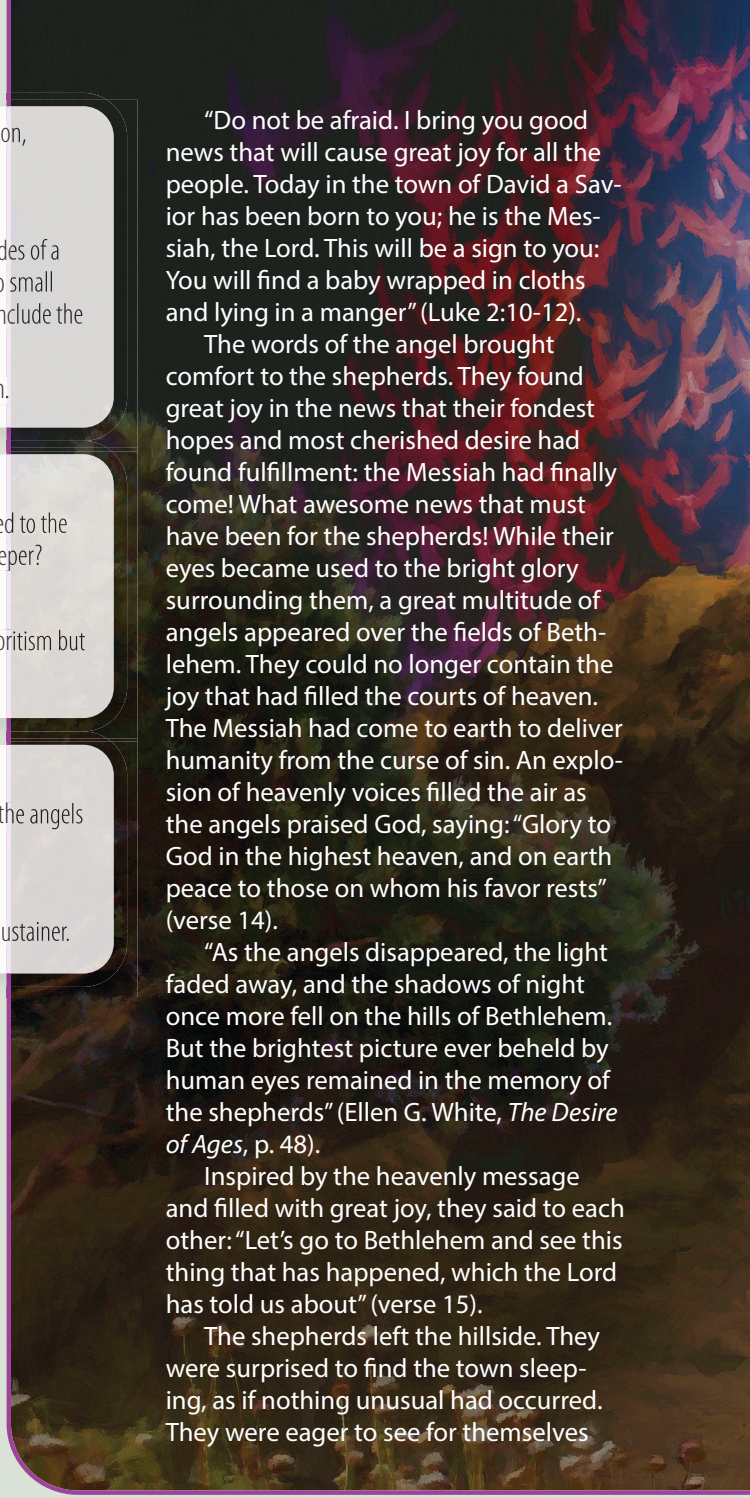
Tuesday

READ Read Luke 2:13.

CREATE Write a carol or poem of praise as if the angels were appearing today in your town.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Praise God for being our Creator and Sustainer.



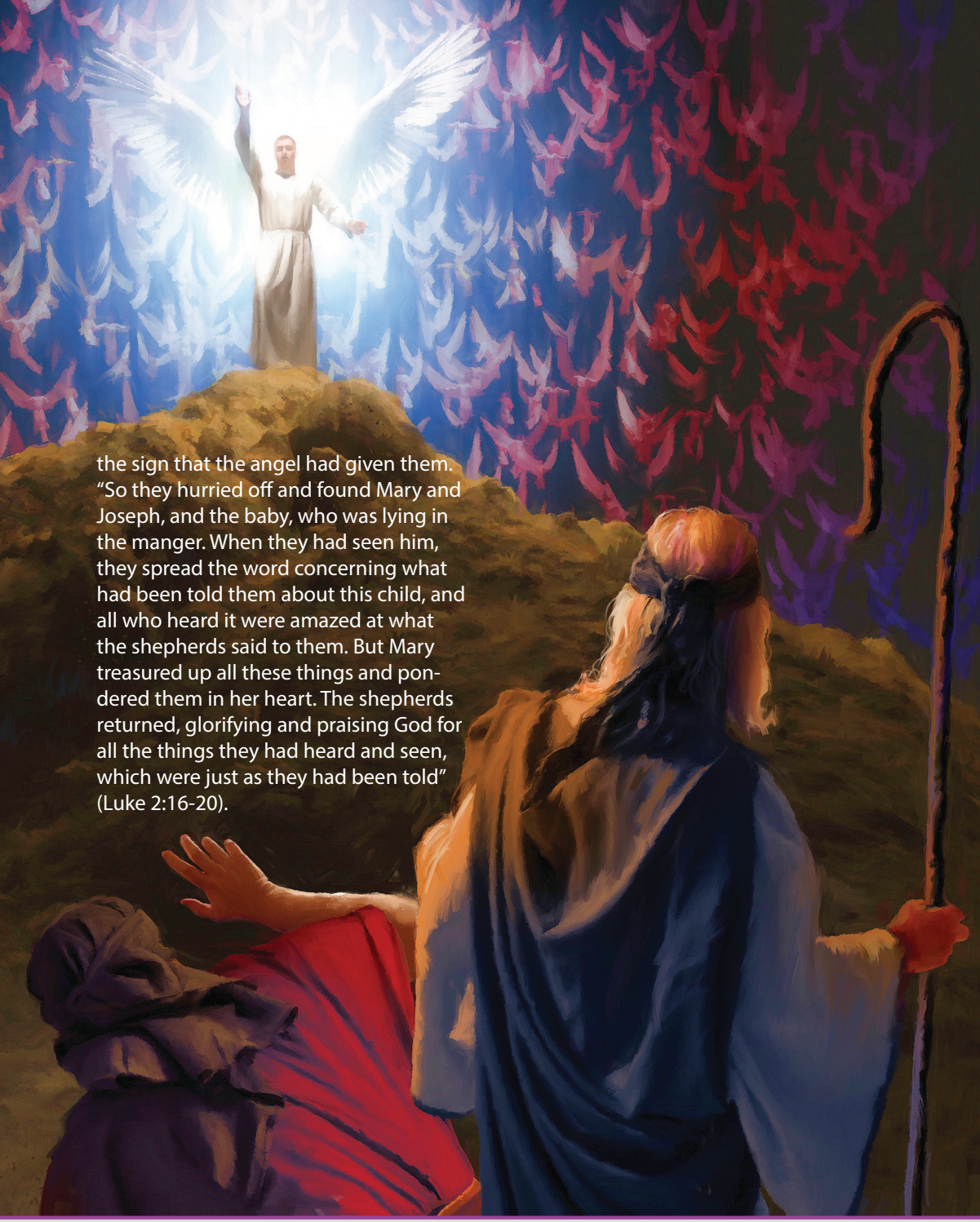
"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger" (Luke 2:10-12).

The words of the angel brought comfort to the shepherds. They found great joy in the news that their fondest hopes and most cherished desire had found fulfillment: the Messiah had finally come! What awesome news that must have been for the shepherds! While their eyes became used to the bright glory surrounding them, a great multitude of angels appeared over the fields of Bethlehem. They could no longer contain the joy that had filled the courts of heaven. The Messiah had come to earth to deliver humanity from the curse of sin. An explosion of heavenly voices filled the air as the angels praised God, saying: "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests" (verse 14).

"As the angels disappeared, the light faded away, and the shadows of night once more fell on the hills of Bethlehem. But the brightest picture ever beheld by human eyes remained in the memory of the shepherds" (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 48).

Inspired by the heavenly message and filled with great joy, they said to each other: "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about" (verse 15).

The shepherds left the hillside. They were surprised to find the town sleeping, as if nothing unusual had occurred. They were eager to see for themselves



the sign that the angel had given them. "So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told" (Luke 2:16-20).

Wednesday

READ Read Luke 2:15-20.

THINK Why were "all who heard" the shepherds' message "amazed" (see verse 18)?

SEARCH Look up the word "pondered." In your journal, write what things Mary "pondered."

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank God for people who are willing to share the good news about Jesus. Praise Him for the plan of salvation.

Thursday

READ Read Isaiah 7:14 and 9:6.

WRITE If Mary had been given a baby book, what might she have written about the events of the night Jesus was born? Ask your mom about your birth.

REVIEW Review the power text.

SHARE Tell someone about Jesus' great love for us.

PRAY Thank God for revealing His plans to people willing to listen and wait. Praise God for His love toward humble people whom others ignore.

Friday

READ Read Luke 2:8-20 with your family during worship.

TALK With your family members, discuss the similarities and differences between Jesus' first and second coming.

SING Sing your favorite Christmas carols.

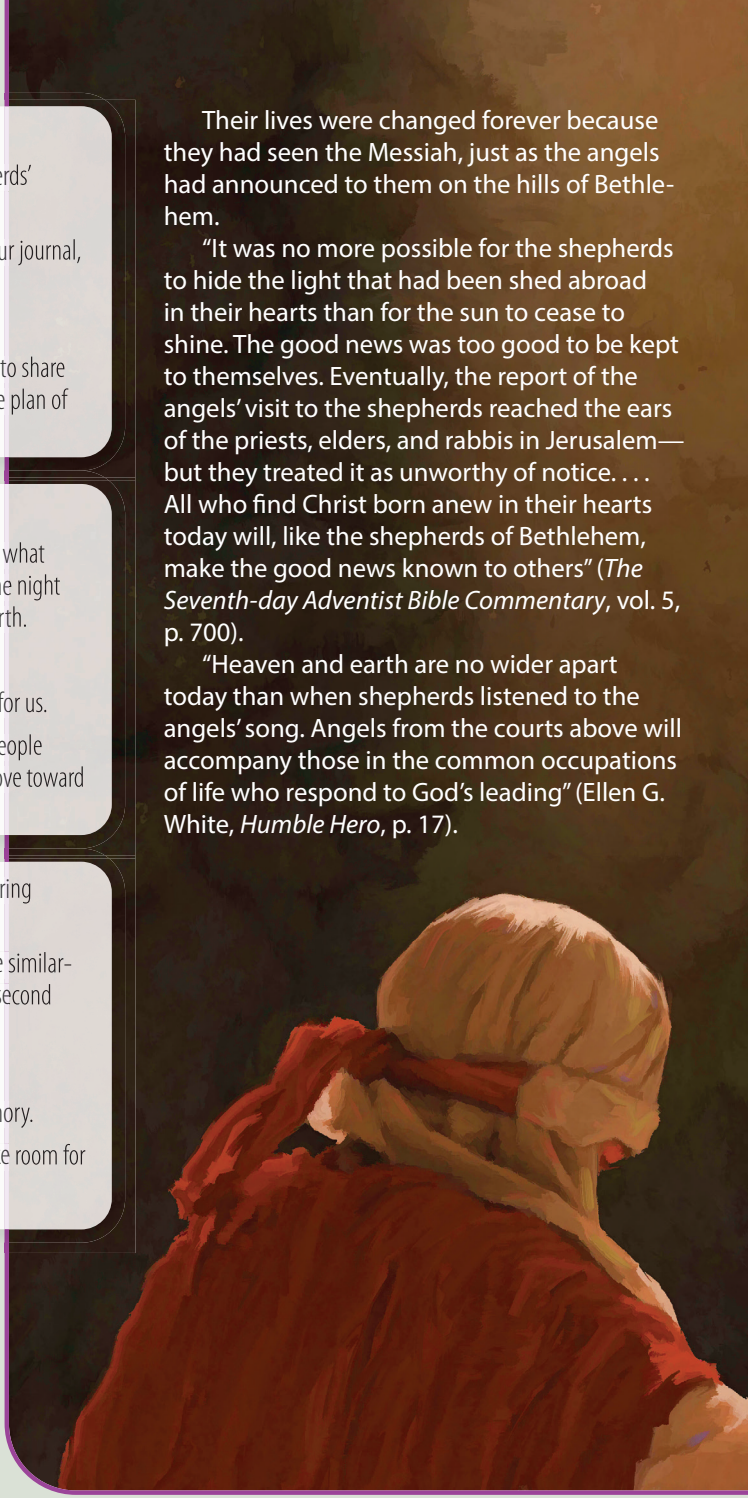
REPEAT Say the power text aloud from memory.

PRAY Ask God to help you be willing to make room for Jesus in your heart.

Their lives were changed forever because they had seen the Messiah, just as the angels had announced to them on the hills of Bethlehem.

"It was no more possible for the shepherds to hide the light that had been shed abroad in their hearts than for the sun to cease to shine. The good news was too good to be kept to themselves. Eventually, the report of the angels' visit to the shepherds reached the ears of the priests, elders, and rabbis in Jerusalem—but they treated it as unworthy of notice. . . . All who find Christ born anew in their hearts today will, like the shepherds of Bethlehem, make the good news known to others" (*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 700).

"Heaven and earth are no wider apart today than when shepherds listened to the angels' song. Angels from the courts above will accompany those in the common occupations of life who respond to God's leading" (Ellen G. White, *Humble Hero*, p. 17).





PUZZLE
11

SHOUT FOR JOY

Instructions: Cross off all the words that rhyme with "bee." The leftover words reading from the outside to the middle will give a Bible verse praising God.

