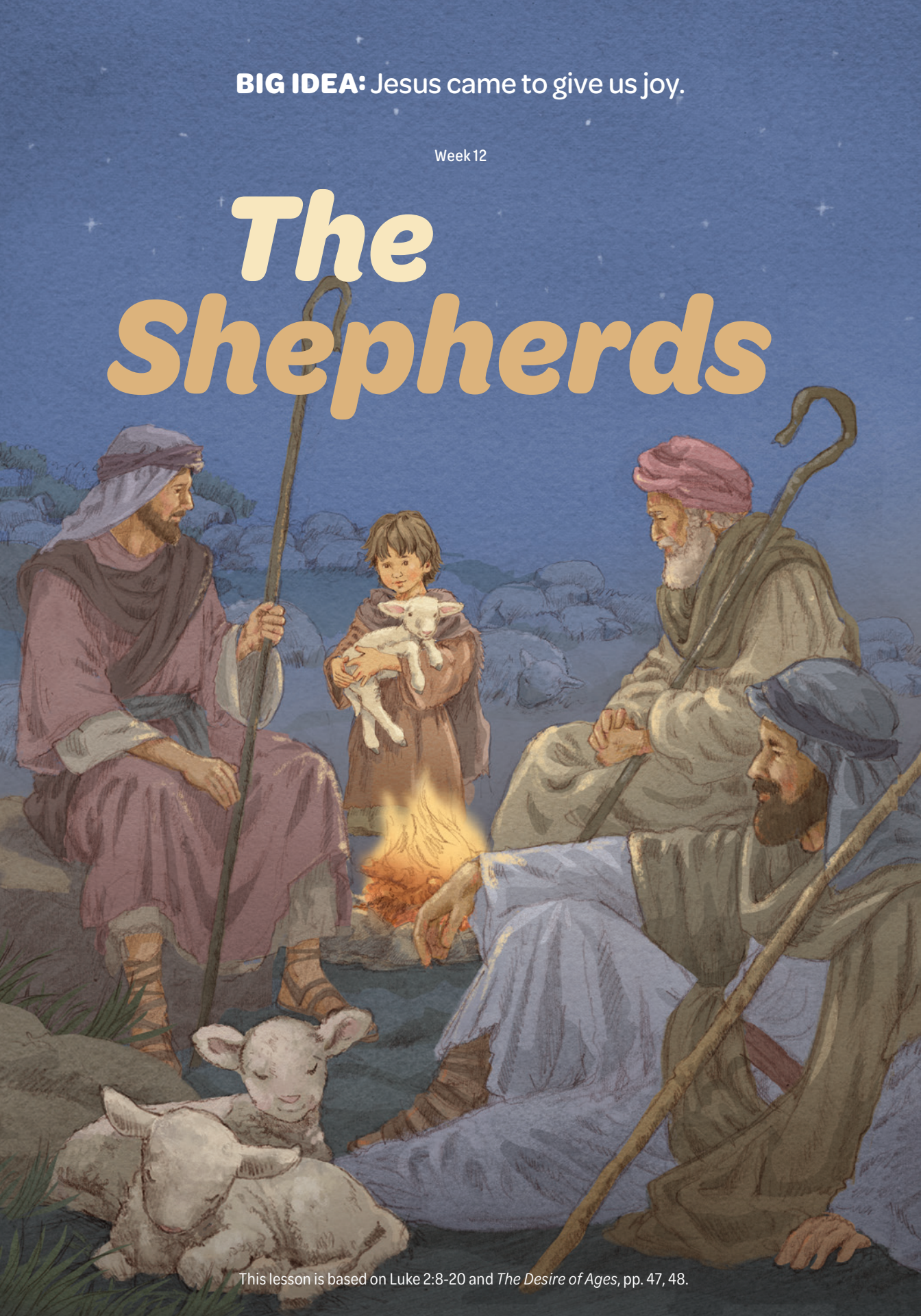
BIG IDEA: Jesus came to give us joy.

Week 12

The Shepherds



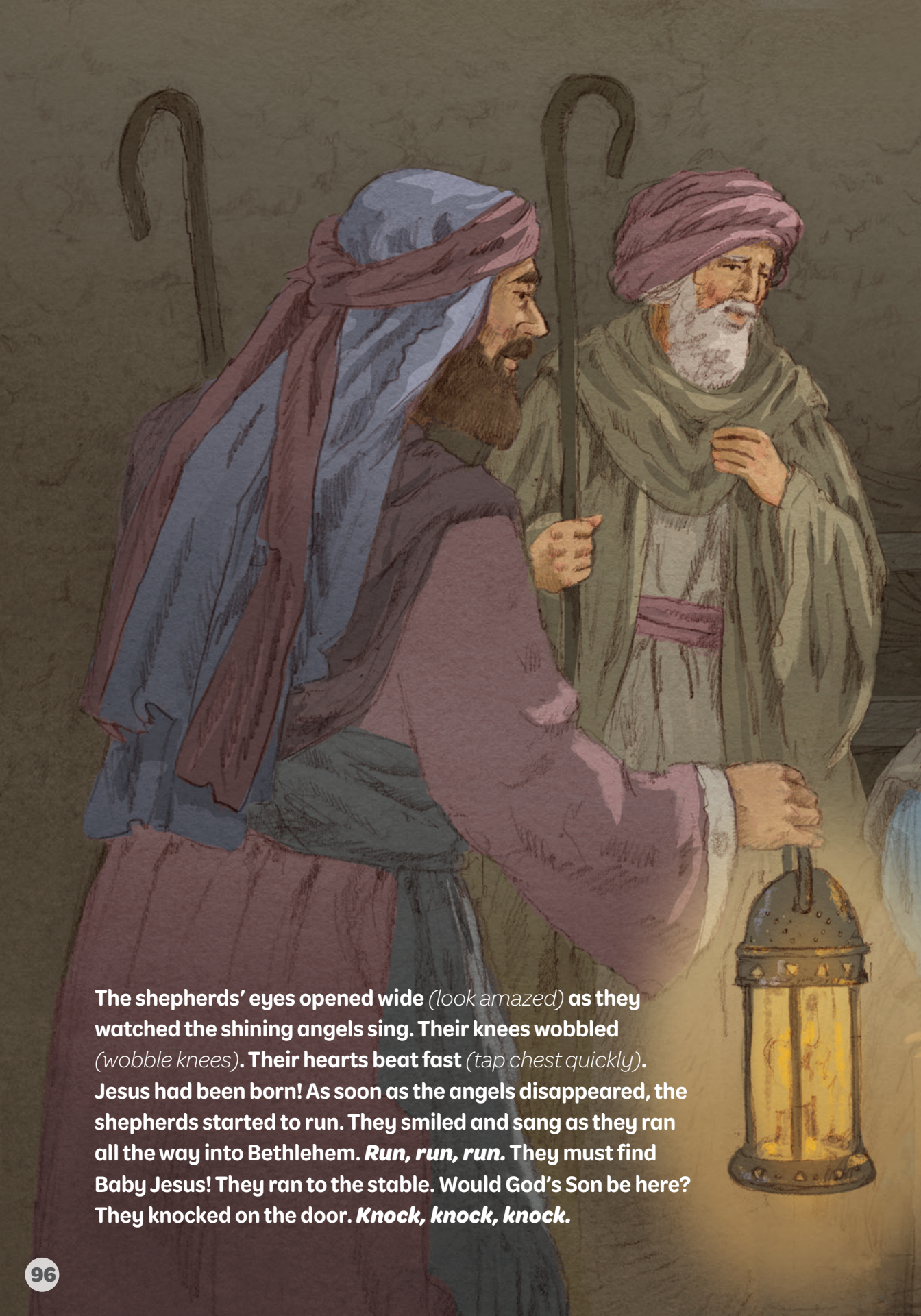
This lesson is based on Luke 2:8-20 and *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 47, 48.



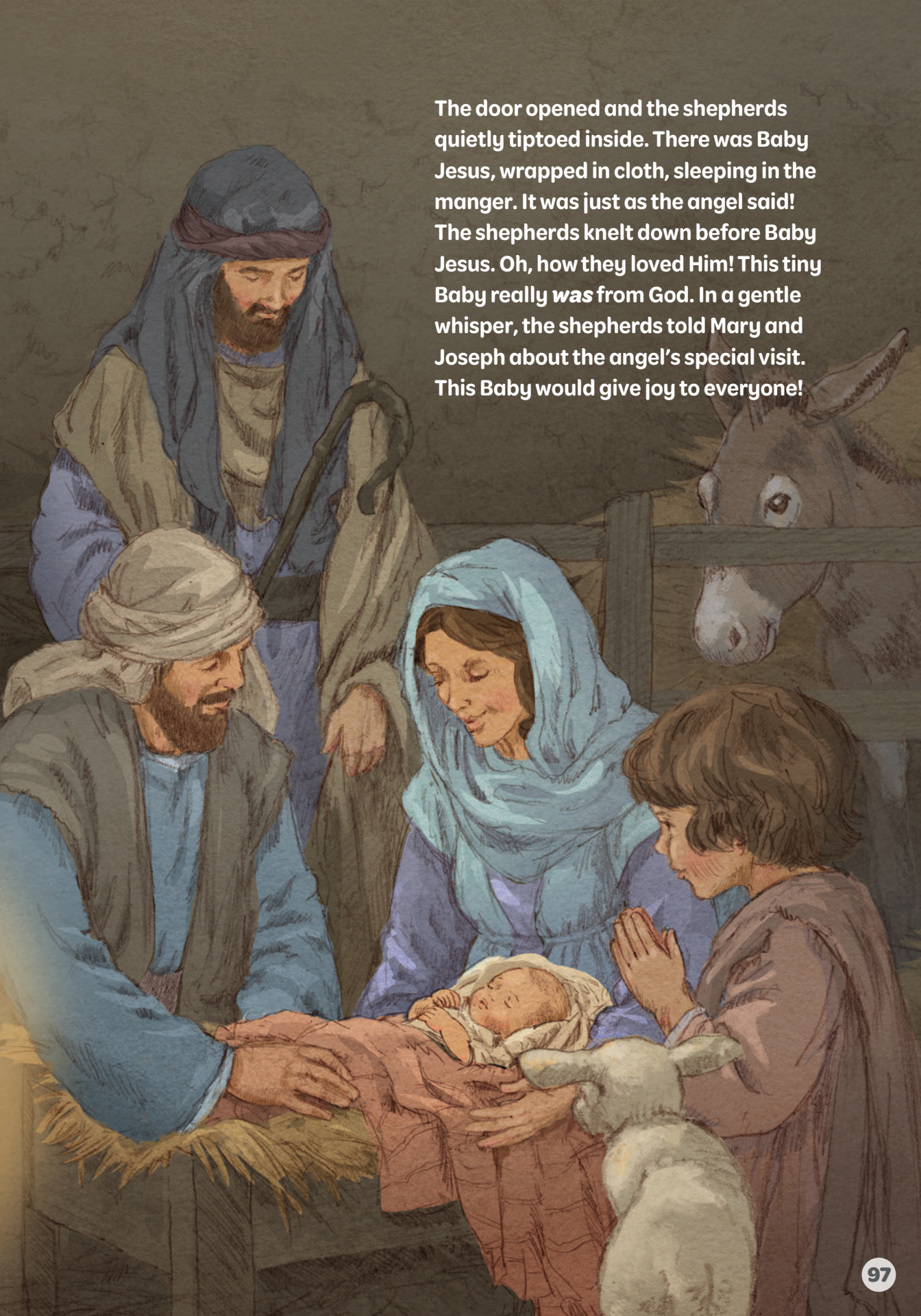
The shepherds smiled as they watched over their sheep. The night was very dark. All their fluffy sheep were sleeping. *(Shh!)* **All their little lambs were sleeping too.** *(Shh!)* **All was quiet in the fields outside Bethlehem. Suddenly, bright light swirled around them. *Shimmer, shimmer, shine.* The shepherds looked up in surprise. It was a sparkling angel! The angel said, "I am bringing you some good news. It will be a joy to all the people"** (Luke 2:10, ICB)**. Jesus had been born!**



The shining angel told them where to find Baby Jesus. He was wrapped in cloth, sleeping in a manger in Bethlehem. Then the sky grew *brighter . . . and brighter . . . and brighter*! It was filled with lots and lots of shining angels. The angels were so happy. Jesus had been born! In sweet voices they sang, "Glory to God in the highest" (Luke 2:14)**. Jesus would bring joy to everyone.**



The shepherds' eyes opened wide *(look amazed)* **as they watched the shining angels sing. Their knees wobbled** *(wobble knees)***. Their hearts beat fast** *(tap chest quickly)***. Jesus had been born! As soon as the angels disappeared, the shepherds started to run. They smiled and sang as they ran all the way into Bethlehem. *Run, run, run.* They must find Baby Jesus! They ran to the stable. Would God's Son be here? They knocked on the door. *Knock, knock, knock.***



The door opened and the shepherds quietly tiptoed inside. There was Baby Jesus, wrapped in cloth, sleeping in the manger. It was just as the angel said! The shepherds knelt down before Baby Jesus. Oh, how they loved Him! This tiny Baby really ***was*** from God. In a gentle whisper, the shepherds told Mary and Joseph about the angel's special visit. This Baby would give joy to everyone!

Mary and Joseph smiled big, happy smiles at the kind shepherds. God had sent them to welcome His Son, Baby Jesus. The shepherds were so thankful. They sang and thanked God all the way back to their sleeping sheep. Their eyes had seen the angels from heaven *(point to eyes)***. Their ears had heard the angels' song** *(cup ear)***. Their hands had held Baby Jesus close** *(pretend to hold baby)***. They knew God loved them. He loved everyone so much. He had sent Jesus.**

(Say together) **Thank You, God, for sending Jesus. Thank you that Jesus gives us joy.**



play
Throughout the Day

Create
Draw a chalk-outline of an angel. Have your child lay down on the footpath or a concrete area, with their arms by their sides. As you draw around their outline, have them slowly move their straight arms up, until pointing to the sky, creating the outline of "wings." If you live where there is snow, make a snow angel by laying down in the snow and moving your straight arms from your sides until they are straight up. Repeat a few times for a good indent. Share how beautiful it would have been to see the light swirling around the angels, and how the music would have filled the air!

Play
Act out the story of the shepherds and the angels, together. Find props to help you (a doll for Baby Jesus, cotton wool for fluffy sheep, a flashlight for the light in the sky). You may also use items from last week's lesson. Talk about what the shepherds' faces would have looked like when they first saw Baby Jesus.

Learn
Jesus came to bring joy to everyone. Talk to your child about the meaning of "joy." Joy is the biggest, best happiness. It fills our hearts. Jesus came to give us joy even when we are feeling sad, tired, or grumpy. Joy is knowing we are loved no matter what happens.

Give
How could you bring joy to someone this week? Your child might sing for someone, draw them a picture, or help them with something. Brainstorm an idea and follow through on it this week. Remind your child that Jesus came to give us joy.

Sing
Sing or listen to the song "Angels We Have Heard on High." Make some ribbon streamers to wave in the air as you sing/listen. Repeat the song each night for worship this week.

Pray
Thank God for sending Jesus and for giving us joy.



Extension weekly memory verse: "I bring you good tidings of great joy" (Luke 2:10).

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

For You, Parents

The shepherds were the lowest in society; the outcasts. But they were the ones watching for Jesus to come. They were alert and waiting while they looked after their sheep. "Through the silent hours they talked together of the promised Savior, and prayed for the coming of the King to David's throne" (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 47).

God honored these humble, faithful men with the heavenly announcement of His Son's birth. What a privilege! They were the first to hear that Jesus had come to save us and to bring joy to all men. That joy was theirs to see, hear, touch, and know.

You have been chosen as a faithful, humble parent. While you watch over your little "flock," be alert. God has a message for you to share too—the good news! Jesus saves. He brings peace and joy for all people. It's a powerful message of hope for our hurting friends, neighbors, and family members.

Not sure where to start? Run to Jesus first. Bow down, like the shepherds in prayer, and thank Him. He will fill you with the joy you need for your heart, and joy to pass on to others. When we know Jesus, we won't be able to contain the joy in our hearts! Remember, the shepherds ran back to their sheep, loudly praising God all the way.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). This is joy, eternal—to know Jesus Christ, whom God has sent.