

YEAR C | QUARTER 4

12

Joy to You and Me

Worship

We praise God for His greatest gift.

POWER TEXT

"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 2:20).

KEY REFERENCES

- Luke 2:1-20
- *The Desire of Ages,* chap. 4, pp. 43-49
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 7, pp. 27-42
- student story on page 132 of this guide.

OUR BELIEFS

- No. 4, The Son
- No. 3, The Father
- No. 10, The Experience of Salvation

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

- **Know** that the birth of Jesus was, and still is, cause for great joy.
- **Feel** grateful to God for the great gift of Jesus.
- **Respond** by accepting and worshipping Jesus as their Saviour.

POWERPOINT

We worship God when we accept the gift of His Son.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Mary and Joseph make the long journey to Bethlehem in response to Caesar's decree. They can see God's hand working to ensure that Jesus is born in the City of David. No one wants to take in the poor couple, but at last they find shelter in a stable. Neither friends nor family greet the birth of Jesus, but angels and shepherds worship and praise God for the birth of his Son.

This is a lesson about worship.

What better reason do we need to worship Jesus than the gift of His life to rescue us? Because of our gratitude, everything we do becomes an act of worship to God.

Teacher Enrichment

"By His life and His death, Christ has achieved even more than recovery from the ruin wrought through sin. It was Satan's purpose to bring about an eternal separation between God and man; but in Christ we become more closely united to God than if we had never fallen. In taking our nature, the Saviour has bound Himself to humanity by a tie that is never to be broken. Through the eternal ages He is linked with us. 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son' (John 3:16, NKJV). He gave Him not only to bear our sins, and to die as our sacrifice; He gave Him to the fallen race. . . .

"And through endless ages as the redeemed walk in the light of the Lord, they will praise Him for His unspeakable Gift—Immanuel, 'God with us'" (*The Desire of Ages,* pp. 25, 26).

What has Christ achieved for me? How do I feel knowing that Jesus chose to be "bound" to me for all eternity? For what will I praise Him today?

Welcome

Welcome students at the door and direct them to their seats. Ask them how their week has been. Encourage learners to study their Sabbath School lesson regularly, and use several minutes to debrief students on the previous week's lesson.

Ask: **What was the most interesting part of the Bible story? What activity did you find the most helpful? Which activity was the most fun?** Invite students to share their experiences and/or the handiworks they created for Sabbath School during the week. (The leader should be familiar with the previous lesson to be able to direct the discussion.) This is also a good time to have students recite the power text.

Have students begin the readiness activity of your choice. »

Program notes

LESSON SECTION	MINUTES	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS NEEDED
Welcome	Ongoing	Greet students at door. Ask about their week.	
1 Readiness	10-15	*A. 'Tis the Season*	Bibles, box; Christmas items such as wrapping paper, a long piece of cloth, a stone, a shoe, a piece of straw, a picture of a motel, treats, etc.
		B. Just Like You	Bibles, paper, pens/pencils
* Prayer and Praise	15-20	See page 127. Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.	songbooks, gift box, world map, pushpins
2 Bible Lesson	15-20	Introducing the Bible Story	
		Experiencing the Story	Bibles, paper, pens/pencils
		Exploring the Bible	Bibles
3 Applying the Lesson	10-15	*The Gift*	gift boxes, wrapping paper
		Scenarios	
4 Sharing the Lesson	10-15	*Operation Baby Care*	names of babies in need, paper, pens/pencils
* Closing		A. Prayer and Closing Comments B. Reminder to Parents C. Coming Up Next Week	

1

READINESS ACTIVITIES

Select the activity or activities that are most appropriate for your situation.

A

YOU NEED:

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ box
- ☐ Christmas items such as wrapping paper, a long piece of cloth, a stone, a shoe, a piece of straw, a picture of a motel, treats, etc.

'Tis the Season

Place in the box the items that are associated with the birth of Jesus. Invite a volunteer to select one item from the box. Ask: **What does this object have to do with the story of Jesus' birth?** (Encourage responses.) **Can we make a spiritual application from this object?** (Encourage responses; for example, the baby Jesus was bound by long pieces of cloth. Jesus is bound to us because He was born a human baby just like us and will have a human nature forever [see Teacher Enrichment].) Continue until all the items have been selected.

Debriefing

Ask: **Which spiritual application did you like best?** (Accept responses.) **How do common, ordinary items help make the story of Jesus' birth real?** (Accept responses: They help us realize that Jesus was born in the human family just like we were born—as an ordinary baby—to make it possible for us to be born into God's family as sons and daughters of God.) Say: **Our power text for today is found in Luke 2:20. Let's find it and read it together.** (Allow time.)

"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 2:20).

Say: **The shepherds saw many of the things we just talked about. They praised God for what they saw. Today let's look for the new joy this old story can bring us. As our power point says,**

We worship God when we accept the gift of His Son.

B

YOU NEED:

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pens/pencils

Just Like You

Ask: **How many of you remember what it was like to be a baby? How many of you like holding babies or being around babies? Stand on my right. If you don't like to hold babies or be around babies, stand on my left.** (If everyone likes to be around babies, ask a few people to pretend they do not.) Distribute paper and pens/pencils. Say: **Within the next minute I want you to list as many reasons as you can for liking or not liking to be around babies, depending on which group you are in. Try to be the group with the most reasons.** Time the students for one minute, then call **Stop.** Allow the students to share the items on their lists.

Debriefing

Read the list of things people dislike about babies, then ask if they think Jesus did these things. For example, if someone says they don't like it when babies cry or have to have their diapers changed, ask: **What kind of baby do you think Jesus was?** (He was a real baby; He had needs just like every other baby has and expressed them in the same way other babies did; He had to go through the same developmental stages other humans had to, etc.) **Why do you think it was necessary for Jesus to become an actual human baby?** (Accept responses: He had to be "one of us" in every way in order to be our Savior.) **How do you feel about Jesus' becoming an actual human baby?** (amazed, thankful, etc.) **Our power text tells us how the shepherds responded to the baby Jesus. Let's look at Luke 2:20.** (Allow time for students to find it and read aloud with you.)

"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 2:20).

Say: **The shepherds who saw the new baby were filled with joy. Our power point for today is:**

We worship God when we accept the gift of His Son.

Accommodations for students with special needs:
Allow students with learning disabilities to name their reasons while someone else from their group lists them in writing.

Prayer and Praise

Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). If they have given you permission, share one or two special items from students' Bible study during the week. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.

Suggested Songs

"Special Delivery" (*He Is Our Song,* no. 51)
"Emmanuel" (*He Is Our Song,* no. 52)
"Go, Tell It on the Mountain" (*The SDA Hymnal,* no. 121)
"Joy to the World" (*The SDA Hymnal,* no. 125)

Mission

YOU NEED:
- ☐ world map
- ☐ pushpins

Use Adventist *Mission* for youth and adults (go to www.juniorpowerpoints.org and click on MISSION) or another mission report available to you. For the mission story, have a map of the world where the students can identify the location of the mission story and compare it to where they are. You could use pushpins to mark where the mission story takes place.

Offering

YOU NEED:
- ☐ gift box

Say: **Giving offerings for the support of God's work around the world is one way that we can praise God for His greatest gift, Jesus.**

Prayer

Say: **Let's pray today focusing on praising God for the decision to send Jesus to earth to be "one of us." For example, we could say, "We praise You, God, for Your mercy, in sending Jesus so we wouldn't have to die forever for our sins."**

*Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.

Notes

2

BIBLE LESSON

Introducing the Bible Story

Brainstorm for a few minutes about what is needed for a new baby. (clothing, diapers, bottles, bedding/bed, quiet, mother's milk, father's/siblings' attention). Alternatively, you may ask a new mother to come and share what she has in her baby's bag for church.

Ask: **What happens after the baby is born or comes home from the hospital?** (Friends/family call, write, and/or visit and send or bring gifts for the mother and baby; help with housework and meals for the other family members; congratulate the father.) **In our story today we'll explore the kind of welcome that Jesus, Joseph, and Mary received.**

YOU NEED:

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pens/pencils

Experiencing the Story

Read Luke 2:1-20 together. Have the students number themselves from one to five, as many times as it takes to number all the students. Say: **Your task is to rewrite or reenact this story as a first-person account from the viewpoint of one of the participants: a shepherd, an angel, Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus. Determine what you would see, hear, smell, taste, touch if you were one of the people in this story. The ones will work together and create from the shepherd's viewpoint, the twos from the angels', the threes from Mary's, the fours from Joseph's, and the fives from Baby Jesus'. Be prepared to share what you create.** Distribute paper and pens/pencils. Allow time. Have the groups present their writing or their reenactment to the whole class.

Debriefing

Ask: **What things made Jesus' birth common and ordinary?** (He was born as a baby; His mother took care of Him; people came to see Him; He was born in a rough place, etc.) **What things made Jesus' birth uncommon and extraordinary?** (It was announced by angels; He was the Son of the Most High and Creator of the universe.) **How did the angel choir feel about Jesus' birth?** (joyful, excited, etc.) **How did the shepherds feel about Jesus' birth?** (scared, then excited, joyful, etc.) **How do you think the people who heard the story from the shepherds felt?** (excited, curious, surprised, dubious, skeptical, or joyful, depending on whether or not they were actively waiting for the Messiah) **Why was Jesus' birth such a joyful event to some?** (Some people had studied the prophecies and were actively waiting for the Messiah.) **In what ways is Jesus' birth joyful news to us today?** (He is our Savior too; He came so we would have a chance to live with God again, the way He created us to.) **Let's repeat Luke 2:11 together, substituting our town's name for Bethlehem: "Today in the town of _____ a Savior has been born to [us]; he is Messiah, the Lord." And what does the birth of Jesus do for us today?** (provides a chance for us to live forever with God some day; causes great joy) **What is our power point?**

We worship God when we accept the gift of His Son.

3

APPLYING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles

Exploring the Bible

Have the students find and read the following verses on worship: Psalm 95:6; 100:2; Philippians 2:10, 11. Ask: **What are some ways to worship Jesus?** (kneel; bow down; with gladness and songs; with our words to others) Say: **Let's look again at Luke 2:16, 17, and 20.** Pay close attention to verse 20. Have a student or two read the verses. Ask: **How did the shepherds worship Jesus?** (went to see for themselves, told others, praised and glorified God) Say: **Isaiah 40:9 and 52:7 prophesied about people rejoicing or sharing the joy about Jesus' birth. The shepherds fulfilled that prophecy, and so can we.** Have student volunteers find and read the verses.

We worship God when we accept the gift of His Son.

YOU NEED:
- ☐ gift boxes
- ☐ wrapping paper

The Gift

Wrap several small gift boxes, each with a slip of paper inside having one of the following words written on it:

(1) Jesus
(2) eternal life
(3) forgiveness
(4) unconditional love
(5) no fear
(6) rescue

Have a volunteer open the box with the word Jesus inside. Say the powerpoint after the gift is opened and the paper discovered.

Have other volunteers open the rest of the boxes one at a time. After each discovery say: **Thank You, God, that Jesus' birth also gave us the gift of** *(word inside box)*.

When all gift boxes have been opened, ask: **What other joyful things do we have because of Jesus' birth? Remember:**

We worship God when we accept the gift of His Son.

Scenarios

Read the following scenarios to the students:

1. **You are a medical researcher and you have just discovered a cure for cancer. How will you announce your discovery?**
2. **You are a member of a group of workers in your city. Few people think the work you do each day is very important. You learn of a special event that no one else in your city realizes has happened. How will you tell people about it?**
3. **Your sister has just had a baby. She says he will grow up to be the leader of the world. Do you believe her? What do you say to her?**
4. **Someone tells you that a celebrity is staying in your city. You want his/her autograph, but when you go to the address, you find a shabby motel. What do you do?**

Debriefing

Ask: **What things made it hard for people to believe the shepherds' story?** (They were common, ordinary shepherds; it seemed to be news that should have been coming from important people in Bethlehem, etc.) **What made it hard to believe that Baby Jesus was the promised Messiah?** (He was born into a poor family; He didn't look extraordinary or special in any way, etc.) **Do you think the shepherds were able to convince some people about the news of Jesus' birth?** (Maybe; they were so excited and filled with amazement and joy; others had read the prophecies and were expecting the Messiah.) **How is Jesus' birth still joyful news?** (He is the Savior for each one of us. It's as if He is born for the first time anytime anyone accepts Him.)

4

SHARING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:

- ☐ names of babies in need
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pens/pencils

Operation Baby Care

Furnish the names of babies in your congregation or community (check with your local Community Services center, social services agencies, or hospital volunteer office for names) who are in need of food, clothing, blankets, etc. Ask the students to list items that they can bring next week to contribute. Have them plan a way to gather items needed and take these to the babies' families or the appropriate agency.

Closing

Prayer and closing comments:

Pray for the students, asking God to fill each of them with the joy that the shepherds felt at the good news of Jesus' birth.

Reminder to parents:

Say: **Check out the student Bible study guide to find Parents' Pages for your use in family worship, or however you wish to use them to spiritually guide your children. You may listen to the podcast of the lesson online at www.juniorpowerpoints.org/podcast.php?channel=1.**

Coming up next week:

Say: **God protects Baby Jesus. As we obey God we honor and worship Him.**

Notes

Student lesson

Joy to You and Me

Think of a time you heard some really good news. How hard was it to keep it to yourself? How did you share it with your friends and family? Read on to find out how angels and shepherds shared the good news they heard. When you have finished the story, think how you can spread the same good news today.

No doubt the whole town was buzzing with the news. The emperor Caesar Augustus had issued a decree that there should be a census of all the countries in the Roman Empire. Everyone who came into Joseph's workshop was talking about it. The older customers moaned and groaned; the younger ones thought it would be great fun to make a journey back to where their families had come from, meeting distant cousins and making new friends.

That evening Joseph gently broke the news to Mary; they would have to make the journey to Bethlehem, since they were King David's descendants. Everyone had to go back to the place that their family had come from.

In a few days everything was packed and ready to go. They would make the journey slowly, camping along the way. Mary couldn't walk the 80 miles, and even riding on a donkey was uncomfortable. However, Joseph did his best guiding the donkey to avoid the bumps in the road.

It was evening, many days later, when they finally arrived in Bethlehem. All the inns were full. They trudged from one inn to the next, but no one had any room for them. The innkeepers were sorry, but they were full. Undoubtedly Mary was so tired that she felt as if she would burst into tears any minute. It had been such a long journey.

Joseph knocked at one more door. As the innkeeper said no, he caught sight of Mary. He saw Mary's condition and felt sorry for the exhausted couple. "I don't have any rooms in the house, but you are welcome to stay in the stable," he said abruptly.

Mary and Joseph knew the stable sounded better than staying outside all night. It would be warm and dry. They gladly accepted.

That night Baby Jesus was born. Mary did not have a crib for Him, so Joseph cleaned out the feed from a feed trough and put fresh straw in it. Mary took the swaddling cloths she had prepared, and wrapped the Baby snugly. Then she laid baby Jesus gently in the cleaned-out feed trough—a manger.

Outside Bethlehem some shepherds sat by the fire talking, watching for anything prowling in the shadows that might attack their sheep. They had been talking about the promised Messiah and praying that God would send Him soon. Perhaps they were just discussing the Scriptures and trying to understand the prophecies. They felt sure that it was almost time for the Messiah to come.

Suddenly there was a dazzling light in the sky. The shepherds covered their faces and shrank back in fear. What was it? Then they heard a glorious musical sound that they had never heard before.

The angel said, "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."

The sky blazed even more brightly and filled with angels singing praises to God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests" (Luke 2:10-14).

No doubt the shepherds looked on, speechless. They had never seen or heard anything so beautiful. Then, just as suddenly, the angels disappeared.

Everything seemed very dark and quiet. Likely no one dared to say anything, as no one wanted to break the wonder of the moment. Then they all began to speak: "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened" (verse 15). They left their sheep and started toward the town.

At first they walked, then jogged, and then they ran down the hillside as fast as they could go. They had to be sure that this was not a dream.

They found the family just as the angel had described. Mary and Joseph sat admiring their baby Son as He lay in the manger. The shepherds knelt and worshipped the Baby. They praised God for His amazing gift.

As they went back to the hillside, they told everyone they met about the angels and the Baby who had come to save all people. From that day on they kept praising God for sharing the good news of His wonderful gift with everyday people.

KEY REFERENCES

- Luke 2:1-20
- *The Desire of Ages*, chap. 4, pp. 43-49
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 7, pp. 27-42
- Our Beliefs, nos. 4, 3, 10

POWER TEXT

"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 2:20).

POWER POINT

We worship God when we accept the gift of His Son.







Sabbath

DO Do this week's activity on page 89.

Sunday

READ Read Luke 2:20 and this week's story, "Joy to You and Me."

LEARN Begin to learn the power text, Luke 2:20.

PRAY Pray that God will help you find something new in this familiar story.

Monday

READ Read Micah 5:2 and Luke 2:1-7.

THINK How was the prophecy about the place of Jesus' birth fulfilled?

SING Sing, hum, or recite the words to your favorite song about the birth of Jesus.

PRAY Praise Jesus for being born to save you.

Tuesday

READ Read Luke 2:8-14.

WRITE In your Bible study journal, write about why the announcement brought by the angels to the shepherds was news of great joy for all people.

CREATE Construct a Nativity scene using materials found around your home. Place it where your family can see it.

PRAY Ask God to help you share with someone the great news about the birth of Jesus, who has come to save us.

Wednesday

READ Read Luke 2:15, 16.

WRITE What great news about what Jesus has done for you can you share with someone who does not know Him personally. Write about that experience in your Bible study journal.

SHARE With your parents' permission, think of someone you can invite for Friday dinner and family worship to share the good news about Jesus' birth.

PRAY Ask God for the desire to experience Jesus with the same excitement as the shepherds did.

Thursday

READ Read Luke 2:17-20 and Isaiah 40:9 and 52:7.

IMAGINE Imagine the shepherds running throughout Bethlehem in the middle of the night shouting the good news. What do you see, hear, feel, smell?

REWRITE Rewrite the power text on an outline of a foot, using your name in place of "shepherds" to describe an experience you've had telling someone about Jesus.

PRAY Ask God to give you ideas of how to tell the story of Jesus as joyfully as the shepherds did.

Friday

SING Begin your family worship by singing Christmas carols.

READ Read Luke 2:1-20.

GIVE Present the Nativity scene to the guest you invited on Wednesday.

PRAY Thank God for your guest and praise Him for the joy of the good news about His Son's birth.