



Session Two

COME ALONG, CHRISTMAS!

THE SIMPLE SHEPHERDS MET THE SPECIAL BABY



**The shepherds said to each other,
“Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened.”
They saw the baby lying in a feeding box.**

LUKE 2:15, 17 (ICB)

Our prayer is that these ideas will allow toddler groups to make the most of our biggest opportunity in the year to introduce families to the good news of Jesus Christ. We hope there are enough great ideas here for you to find the two or three that best suit your group.

The first Christmas story

When telling a story to children, get as close as you can to memorising it so that you can make eye contact and have your hands free to gesture and hold the props. Perhaps write a few critical words or phrases on a card as a prompt or put this script beside you. Practise doing it three times beforehand, and enough of it will stick in your memory! The precise words do not matter. Just tell the story as well as you can.

You will need:

- Large white sheet
- Picture of the running shepherd from our downloadable graphics pack
- Baby doll
- Strips of cloth or small white blanket.
- Manger or any box that could pass as a feeding box
- Picture of the stable from our downloadable graphics pack

Turn off some of the lights where you are gathered or draw any curtains as you start the story.

Let's imagine that it's the middle of the night. Let's do what we always do in the middle of the night; lie down, close our eyes and pretend to sleep. Maybe you can even snore!

(Speak more quietly) It was like this in the hills around Bethlehem, that first Christmas. Ordinary shepherds were out in the fields looking after their sheep.

(Speak more loudly. Open curtains. Turn on lights) Then suddenly a crowd of God's angels arrived with good news. Up we get! The angels made everything bright, even in the middle of the night!

(Drape the white sheet around yourself) The angels told the shepherds that in Bethlehem a baby had been born who was God's promised king. The baby had been sent to bring joy and wonder to all people.

The angels told them how they would know they had found this baby king. He would be... **(Hold up one prop at a time, perhaps taken from a box or bag. Could a child help you? Count the three off on your fingers.)**

- **(Hold up the baby doll)** A newborn baby
- **(Hold up the strips of cloth)** wrapped in strips of cloth
- **(Hold up the manger)** and lying in an animal's feeding box

(Take off the sheet. Hold up the picture of the shepherd) As soon as the angels left them, the shepherds ran into Bethlehem. They couldn't get there fast enough!

They searched. **(Walking amongst the group, searching)** They knew what they were looking for. **(Count the three off on your fingers)** A newborn baby, wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in an animal's feeding box. **(Repeating as you search)**

They found him! **(Get the children involved in the celebration! Clapping. Dancing. Cheering)**

(Wrap the baby doll in the strips of cloth and lay in the manger. Quieten the group. Lower your voice to create a special moment.) The shepherds found the baby wrapped in strips of cloth, lying in an animal's feeding box. Exactly as the angel had said.

(Hold up the picture of the stable) This is what the shepherds found.

Right in the middle, there was the baby Jesus, God's promised king who had come to bring joy and wonder to us all.

The simple, ordinary shepherds were welcome and so are you.

Well done for listening so well.

Yummy fun

In our bible story today we met the baby who is the Christmas story. This is a real winner as an easy to make toddler treat - shredded wheat chocolate manger with a jelly baby Jesus!

What to make

Jesus in a manger

What you need

- Shredded wheat
- Milk cooking chocolate
- Jelly babies
- Cupcake cases
- Cupcake tins
- Mixing bowl for mixing ingredients
- Saucepan for melting chocolate/microwaveable bowl
- Spoons

Instructions

- Break up the shredded wheat to look like straw.
- Melt the chocolate (on the hob or in short bursts in the microwave).
- Mix shredded wheat and chocolate together.
- Put cupcake cases into the tin
- Put a spoonful of mixture into each cupcake case
- Add the jelly baby to be Jesus in the manger.

Allergy advice

Gluten, dairy

Safety considerations

Hot melted chocolate



"I dressed up as a shepherd. The angel told the shepherds that the special baby had been born."

Photo time!

Set up a photo area, with simple props and backdrop where children can dress up as a shepherd and snap a photo to show the rest of their family at home.

Character	Props	Dress up	Backdrop
Shepherd	Teatowel on head, toy sheep to hold	Dressing gown	Stable scene, including pictures of Mary and Joseph. You could make a stable out of cardboard boxes or create the outline of a stable using masking tape on a wall or hanging sheet. Have a cardboard box with shredded yellow paper for the manger and a baby doll for Jesus.
Sheep	Handful of grass	<u>Sheep costume</u>	
Another stable animal eg. cow			

Making it shiny

The shepherds listened to the angels' message and hurried to Bethlehem to see baby Jesus in the manger. Make your own manger with baby Jesus lying in the hay.

What you need

- Background paper
- Yellow paper cut in strips to look like straw
- A5 Brown paper to make a manger.
- Baby Jesus in swaddling clothes printed and cut out (see cut out on page 6)
- Glue

Instructions

- Before the session, glue a manger onto each background sheet. (Cut a triangle off each end of the brown A5 rectangle, leaving a manger shape. Glue the triangles onto the background to be the legs then glue the manger on top.)
- During the session, the children glue on the strips of yellow paper to be the straw and then glue the baby Jesus on top.



Sing it out

If you're used to singing with your group, you know that it's not about the quality of your voice. It's all about the energy and simple actions you use to engage the children. Together you will make a joyful sound pleasing to God! This song has a verse for each of the sessions, so it is an excellent way to look ahead as well as remembering the story so far.

On that very first Christmas - Colin Buchanan

Mary and Joseph go to Bethlehem
Bethlehem
Bethlehem
Mary and Joseph go to Bethlehem
On that very first Christmas



**Hold reins. Rise up and down
as if you are riding a donkey!**

The baby Jesus born that night
Born that night
Born that night
The baby Jesus born that night
On that very first Christmas



Rock a baby in your arms.

The wise men come to worship him
Worship him
Worship him
The wise men come to worship him
On that very first Christmas



**Bow down and
worship Jesus.**

The shepherds told that the king is born
The king is born
The king is born
The shepherds told that the king is born
On that very first Christmas



**Put hands on your
head like a crown.**

The angels singing 'Glory to God'
'Glory to God'
'Glory to God'
The angels singing 'Glory to God'
On that very first Christmas



Jazz hands up high!

Mary and Joseph go to Bethlehem
The baby Jesus born that night
The wise men come to worship him
The shepherds told that the king is born
The angels singing 'Glory to God'
On that very first Christmas



All the above!

