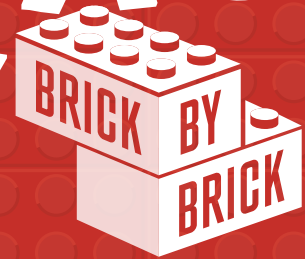


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COMPANY



THE CHRISTMAS STORY



A SURPRISE IN THE SKY

ALL AGE SERVICE

Luke 2:8-16

faith  **kids**

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The Christmas Story Brick by Brick

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We recommend the International Children's Bible for use with children during the lesson. Our leader's notes use the New International Version.

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'All for the glory of God alone' (1 Corinthians 10:31)



A surprise in the sky

LUKE 2:8-16



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Truth that changes me:

Jesus is good news because he is the Saviour who offers great joy for all people.



Faith in Kids looks like:

Families who understand that Jesus is good news and are excited to know him better.

"We'd never have guessed God would choose to be poor. But he made himself nothing, so we could be sure that God really cares and the King has come near. Good news for all people: Jesus is here."

THE CHRISTMAS STORY, BRICK BY BRICK.

This all age service explores Luke's account of the shepherds' surprise as shining angels fill the dark sky announcing glittering GOOD NEWS. This good news is not what might have been top of the shepherds' Christmas wish list – a comfortable indoor job, wealth, health, a steak sandwich – this good news is a person, a baby in a manger, the Saviour we all need. Let's join with the angels in declaring this good news of great joy for all people to the families visiting our churches this Christmas.

The service is split into 4 short scenes:

- Meet the shepherds - we get to wonder what brilliant surprise we would ask for this Christmas.
- Meet the angels - hear why they are delighted that God is sending a Saviour.
- Hear the announcement - be clear that this good news is about a Saviour for everyone.
- What it means - how is this good news for me personally and worth finding out more about.



Helpers Needed

This service requires 3 or 4 people to play characters, rehearsed ahead of time; two shepherds and two angels. This is a great opportunity to involve the church community - ask a Grandad to play a shepherd, the tall Dad everyone is secretly a bit frightened of to play Gabriel, the teenager in his Dr Marten boots to act as the messenger angel.

Make it your own, adding elements that can bring excitement; "Remember the time Maureen set up a mirror ball in church for the angel's arrival!". This is an opportunity for the gifts within your church family to be used for the joy of all. Have fun, but don't overdo it. We'd still like the star of the show to be the good news of Jesus – not the time the over ambitious zip wire broke as the angel entered!

continued →



Here are a few ideas to get you started

- Create a campsite scene at the front where your shepherds will sleep - will you use sleeping bags, a green mat / fake grass, a pop-up tent?
- Organise costumes - will your angels wear white T- shirts and armour with sunglasses, or army uniform? Will the shepherds be in tea towels or flat caps?
- Cue up all songs, readings and video clips you will be using.
- Have your good news signs ready that summarise the message.
- Decide whether there will be any moments where children who have come dressed up take part in a procession, or form a tableau - if so, communicate these clearly.
- Be clear on your closing statement and call to action - what are you inviting them to next? Where should they go for more? Are you offering them anything to take home?
- Pray, and ask the Lord to do what you can't - despite your excellent preparation - to open people's eyes to their need for Jesus.



What to Say

Welcome!

It's brilliant to have you with us at this all age Christmas service where we will be finding out about a big surprise in the sky!

We expect there to be noise and wriggling so please don't worry. There will be drama, songs and time to chat and we will be all done in 45 mins – start the clock!

Let's begin with a prayer asking God to help us enjoy our time together and know him better by the end.

Pray.

We have a really fun video to share with you as you start. Let's watch The Christmas Story - Brick by Brick.



What to Do

Be welcoming - tell them the things they need to know - exits, toilets, nappy changing, etc.

Add details that make families know they are welcome - we expect noise, where to go if you need space for your baby / little one.

VIDEO CLIP – The Christmas Story from Go Chatter



<https://gochatterstudios.org/the-christmas-story/>

In the rest of our service, we are going to think about part of the Christmas story we just watched. We are going to meet some of the characters and hear more about what happened on the very first Christmas.

We're going to start by singing a classic Christmas carol - the words will appear on the screen, it's like Holy Karaoke. This song is all about a surprise for some shepherds - see if you can spot what surprised them while they were watching their sheep that night.

Invite children who have come dressed as shepherds or sheep to "parade" around the building if this is something your church does.

continued →

What to Say

What to Do

Song 1 – While Shepherds Watched their Flocks by Night

Part 1 – Meet the shepherds

Slide 1 from The Christmas Story Brick by Brick All-age Visuals



We're going to explore the true Christmas story together. The events of that night were written down by a doctor called Luke. He investigated what happened, interviewing the eye witnesses and writing it all down for us, so that we might be certain about what happened. Listen to this short Bible reading where we meet our first Christmas characters.

Bible Reading 1 – Luke 2:8

Have a variety of readers if possible, not those involved in the drama.

Well, here we are, out in a field at the shepherds' camp.

Shepherds arrive & tell some sheep jokes.

Shepherd 1: Wow Bob, it's pretty cold out here tonight!

Shepherd 2: You're right Frank, I wish I had a woolly coat like our sheep. But at least we've got a fire to keep us warm.

Shepherd 1: I heard a great joke this morning, Bob, best one ever: The sheepdog said to the shepherd "Here are your 100 sheep". The shepherd replied, "What, I thought I only had 97!?" The sheepdog answered, "I know, I rounded them up!"

Shepherd 2: I have a better joke than that! Do you know the saying – red sky at night, shepherds' delight, red sky in the morning, Frank forgot to stamp out the fire!

Shepherd 1: That is possibly the worst joke ever! I've got a better one. Knock knock.

Shepherd 2: Who's there?

Shepherd 1: Sheep!

Shepherd 2: Sheep who?

Shepherd 1: Sheep poo!?! Yuck, that's disgusting!

Shepherd 2: HA HA, good one Bob! How about this one? What did the shepherd tell Santa he wanted for Christmas? Pause... All I want for Christmas is Ewe!

Shepherd 1: Wait – what's Christmas? Who is Santa?

Shepherd 2: I've got no idea, I'm just trying to stay awake – not made easier by having to keep counting sheep!

Camp site ready set up.

Two Shepherds arrive in costume.

Ensure the shepherds can be heard – have microphones available.

continued →

What to Say

Hi there shepherds, it's lovely to meet you. I hope you're having a good shift at work so far - tell me what makes a good night at work for you?

Shepherd 1: Well, it's great when Bob's on watch and I get to sleep.

Shepherd 2: I love it when Frank thinks I'm on watch and we both get to sleep!

I was wondering, if you could pick an amazing surprise for yourselves tonight, what would you choose?

Shepherd 1: A massive sizzling steak sandwich - delicious!

Shepherd 2: Oooh, yes please! With a roaring fire to keep us warm all night.

Well we'll leave you two to go off to sleep, or start your watch.

Pause...

The shepherds didn't know it, but they were about to be surprised - not with what they thought they needed most, but with something even bigger and better.

Talk to the person next to you about this: If you could pick one brilliant surprise for yourself, one thing that you think you need most today, what would it be?

Take a few answers.

What to Do

You could show some pictures of their choices.

Shepherds get into their sleeping bags, remain at the front and "sleep".

Write out a list at the front.

We're going to sing again before we meet the ones who delivered the surprise - the angels!

As we sing this song, see if you can spot who the angels sing about.

If you have come dressed as an angel - this is your time to come and visit the shepherds on the stage - but don't wake them up yet!

Song 2 - Hark the Herald Angels Sing

Part 2 - Angel HQ

Slide 2 from The Christmas Story Brick by Brick All-age Visuals



continued →

What to Say

Brad: Messenger Angel Brad the Brilliant reporting for duty Commanding officer Archangel Gabriel, sir! (Salutes)

Gabriel: Ah, excellent, at ease Brad, I believe you requested a transfer to messenger forces?

Brad: Yes Gabriel sir, I just love it when God speaks directly to humans – that feels like a job worth doing. Humans spend most of their time forgetting God's even there, when he's actually made them, given them the sun, the rain and everything else! Then we show up with a BAM, SIZZLE, SPARKLE and tell them something and they're all like AGH!! ANGELS! The look on their faces. I mean, what did they think God's messengers would look like? Pretty fairies with butterfly wings!?

Gabriel: All well and good but let's not forget why we do this... we're the warrior messengers of heaven on a mission from God.

Brad: And I heard that there is a really big and really good assignment coming. Could I be considered, Gabriel Sir?

Gabriel: Yes, you're to lead the troops to the hillsides outside Bethlehem, you'll find a group of shepherds, sleeping – wake them up, calm them down, then give them the big message for the world – I've written it down for you – don't mess this up.

Brad: (reading) "Good news, great joy, all people, Saviour born" This is the big one? What about Mary and Joseph?

Gabriel: I did the pre-work a few months back – the parents have been informed. Now, you and your crew will take the message for all people on earth.

Brad: Wow, this is so good – It's happening. God's sending his son to fix it for them isn't he! We've spent years watching them trying to sort their own mess out, looking everywhere for love and meaning, apart from to the one who made them, loves them and knows them! God's stepping in. AH this is so good – God becoming like them so they won't be able to miss it – oh I can't wait – you won't regret it Gabriel sir. Thank you Sir.

Gabriel leaves

Brad: Wow, this is going to be epic – good news, all people, big lights, big sound, big routine – jazz hands.

Oh no – wait – I'm sure I've got it, let me see... Big People, all born, Saviour news – oh no – what was the good news again?

Shepherds turn over and in their "sleep" shout "steak sandwich, big fire"

Don't worry Brad – we can help you – We're going to sing about angels and hear a Bible reading and we'll help you make sure your good news message is exactly as God said.

What to Do

Angel 1 = Gabriel – commanding officer angel – sitting in a chair.

Angel 2 = Brad – messenger angel, marches up, reporting for duty.

Gabriel hands Brad sheets of paper one at a time reading "Good, news, great, joy, all, people, Saviour, born."

Brad waves his hands in the air and drops all the pieces of paper.

continued →

What to Say

What to Do

Song 3 – Joy to the world

Part 3 – The announcement

Slide 3 from The Christmas Story Brick by Brick All-age Visuals



We're going to hear the message read that angel Brad needed to deliver, let's make sure we help him get it right! Listen carefully!

Bible Reading 2 – Luke 2:8-12

Emphasise – good news, great joy, all people, Saviour born

Have volunteers come out and hold the pieces of paper – help get them in the right order.

The baby God is sending into the world is good news for everyone because he is a Saviour for everyone.

This baby is coming to do a job - to save, to rescue people from danger and trouble. Shepherds know what a Saviour is, they're used to having to save their sheep - have a look at this clip.

The sheep needed help - again and again! It couldn't get out without the shepherd. A rescuer is needed when we can't get ourselves out of trouble. Look at the front pages of the papers, the world around us, the arguments in our homes, the selfishness of our hearts. If we're really honest, it's not a stretch to know we're like the sheep, prone to go the wrong way, not know what we need and end up in a mess. The Saviour God is sending is going to help us, just like a shepherd helps his sheep.

Now we know what a Saviour is, we're ready to help Brad with his big announcement!

You could use a toy sheep to act this out - or show a video clip of the sheep.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bLZW-kWr1F4>

Brad: Excellent, now we need to work on the routine!

Good news – thumbs up.

Great joy – arms out.

All people – finger guns round the room.

Saviour born – rock the baby.

I think we're ready. It's time to wake up the shepherds and make the announcement. After three I'll turn on my lights and we'll all do the routine.

1,2,3 - Good news, great joy, all people, saviour born!

Get everyone to join in and copy the actions – practice a couple of times so you can deliver to the shepherds.

Turn on lights / mirror ball.

continued →

What to Say

What to Do

Shepherds: AGH! This is terrifying!

Brad: No, it's good news – better than a steak sandwich, more joyful than the best party. God is giving every boy, every girl, every person from every town and country in the whole world the best gift ever, the rescuer he promised. You'll find the baby lying in a manger. He's come to help you – it really is good news – God is really certain about it – he sent me to tell you!

Good news, great joy, all people, saviour born!

Shepherds wake up and shout AGH!

Shepherds look at each other and repeat with actions – good news, great joy, all people, saviour born.

All characters freeze for the following section.

What good news would you like to wake up to? Some of the things we wrote down earlier? A big pile of presents? Fewer worries? More money?

We all know what we think would be the best news for us, what would make life peaceful, better, happier.

But what if we don't really know what we need? What if the thing we think will make all the difference turns out to be a disappointment? What if we're still left wanting more?

God is certain about what we need most, that it's to know Jesus, the Saviour he has sent. We saw earlier that we all need rescuing and so God is absolutely sure that a Saviour offers good news and great joy for all people.

We are going to sing again about that good news of great joy for all people - the Saviour born and lying in a manger.

Song 4 – Away in a Manger

This could be your moment to make a nativity tableau scene if this is something your church does / would enjoy.

Part 4 – The meaning

Slide 4 from The Christmas Story Brick by Brick All-age Visuals



continued →

What to Say

What to Do

Listen out in this next Bible reading for what the shepherds did when the angels left, where they went, what they found and what they did next.

Bible Reading 3 – Luke 2:15-17

And they're off! WOW! That was fast, job done Brad!

The shepherds didn't hang about. They didn't roll over and go back to sleep until morning, they didn't wait for a second invitation – they hurried off to find Jesus, the Saviour the Lord had told them about.

What would make you drop everything and run out of work? Of school? Of Church? When we think about it, usually bad news; someone is ill or something bad has happened.

But the shepherds are running to find out about good news – something that sounds so good they can't wait to find out more. If we don't feel the same way about Jesus, maybe we don't understand the good news as much as the shepherds did – they left everything and ran to find the baby.

Shepherds run back in saying: That was incredible – a saviour in a manger – good news for me – good news for everyone!

Our Shepherds weren't used to being the first ones invited to the party, they were used to being ignored and forgotten about, unimportant. The fact that God sends his messengers to them means we can be sure that when the angel announces it's good news for **all people** it means everyone – even those used to being left out or forgotten. This is a party we are all invited to.

And this is good news! Jesus is good news for you, for me, for all of us.

Every minute of his life was **good news** for those around him. Jesus lived getting it right, loving others, showing us God's heart in action. Just like the shepherd helps the sheep live their best lives, a life of **great joy** is what Jesus offers us, joy that lasts beyond the sparkle of Christmas, through the credit card bill and into the grey of a rainy February Tuesday.

Don't think that this news is only for the person next to you. The angel was clear: good news for YOU!

Shepherds jump up and run out of the back of the church.

Shepherd characters run back in from the back.

Have the shepherds and angels at the front – give them words from the angel's message to hold as you apply.

Give Shepherd 1 the notice "All people".

Give Angel Gabriel the notice "Good news".

Give Shepherd 2 the notice "Great joy".

continued →

What to Say

What to Do

All of the events of the first Christmas - the shepherds, the angels, the singing, the running - all revolved around this baby, the **Saviour born** in a manger.

The angels knew better than us who this baby was. They knew he was God's son, the king of kings, the lord of lords, the promised rescuer. As they announced the news of his arrival on earth to the shepherds and to us, they were totally clear how brilliant it was, they sang and praised God for his goodness and kindness to people.

The angels are clear who Christmas and life should revolve around. Perhaps this Christmas we could start to re-orientate ourselves around the Saviour. It would surely be worth doing if he is the source of great joy and good news.

Give Angel Brad the notice "Saviour born".

This is the start of the story – this is chapter 2 of Luke's gospel. Don't let all you know of Jesus be his birth announcement. Read on, find out how good he is, hear more of the good news he offers, hear how he talks with people who struggle and question and hurt, meet the Saviour that God is convinced you need who can bring real joy and lasting peace.

We would love to give you a copy of Luke's gospel to take home and read.

And you are welcome and warmly invited to join us in church here every Sunday – that's what we're about – wanting to see more of Jesus.

Or there's an online course run by Speak Life you can follow on your phone called 3,2,1 that invites you to see life the way Jesus does.

Be clear on what your take home message is – will you be running a finding out more course? Can you show a QR code of the Speak Life course or have a leaflet?

What does a normal Sunday look like – what will you be doing in Jan?

Don't make it easy for them to switch off and walk off.

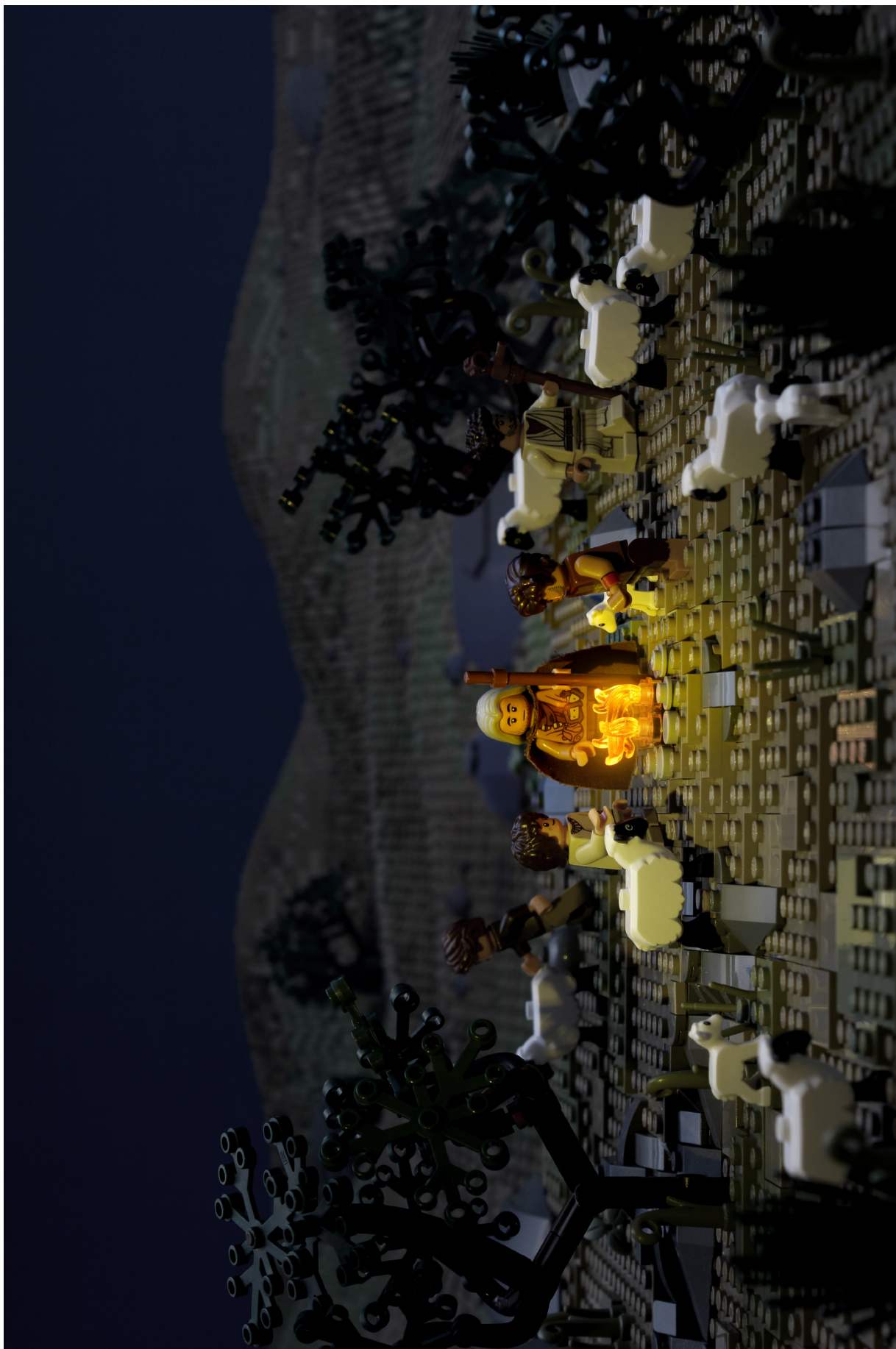
Pray

Sing to finish – Oh Come all Ye Faithful

Thanks so much for being here today.

Please collect a gift bag as you leave – Merry Christmas.

Is there something families can take home – a copy of The Christmas Story - Brick by Brick, a tract, some chocolate?











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