

CITY LG – Dec 27th/28th

Bible Story: Shepherd Guys Are Comin' to Town (Shepherds visit Jesus) • *Luke 2:8-20*

Bottom Line: God gave us great news. Who will you tell?

Memory Verse: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” *John 3:16, NIV*

Life App: Compassion—caring enough to do something about someone else's need.

Basic Truth: I should treat others the way I want to be treated.

Storyteller enters, whistling (or humming) Christmas songs and dressed in over-the-top Christmas attire.

Opener

HOST: “Merrrrrrrry Christmas! I am SO excited to be here with you this week as we keep celebrating the BEST, most WONDERFUL time of the year! I'm a little excited—some might say hyper—as I've been indulging in my well-rounded Christmas diet: candy, candy canes, candy corn, and syrup! I know, I know, some people say Christmas is over and I should just let it go, but I say, NO! I will keep celebrating Christmas as long as my calendar says 'December'! Speaking of December, all month long, we've been talking about compassion.

CG: Compassion Slide

“Compassion is caring enough to do something about someone else's need. And the last few weeks, this box has given us a fun challenge to show compassion. Let's see what challenge we've got today!

CG: Triple Dog Dare Theme Slide

Walk over to the present, open it up, and read the challenge.

“You've done a great job at your Compassion Challenges this month,
So this last challenge will be extra fun.
Watch the video clip for a clue....

Video: Elf Clip

For this week's game, we went to Buddy the Elf.
But as in all our Compassion Challenges, you mustn't think just of yourself.
So when your teammate needs you,
You should step in and help.
As Buddy says, 'The best way to spread Christmas cheer
'Is singing loud for all to hear.'
So finish the song even if it's tough
And help each other when things get rough.”

“I like it! This is gonna be fun. Let's see what else the Compassion Challenge box has for us today.

(Pull out the elf hat and put it on.) I knew my outfit was missing something this morning. Now that I'm appropriately dressed, it's time to play our challenge. I need two volunteers who think they are the experts on Christmas music.

Choose kids from opposite sides of the room.

"Here's how this will work. We're going to play the first part of a Christmas song, and when the music stops, you have to finish that line of the song. Let me show you what I mean.

SFX: "Jingle Bells" clip

When the music stops, finish singing the line.

"See how that works? But here's where the compassion part comes in. Sometimes, you guys might not know the song, or you think you do, but you mess up. Well, when all of you in the audience see they need help, you get to come to their rescue! This half of the room will help [contestant's name], and this half will help [other contestant's name]. If you see your teammate up here struggling and you think you know the answer, raise your hand. If they call on you, you can come up and share the answer with your teammate! If your team gets it right, you'll score a point. Any questions? Great! Let's do this!

Play several rounds, playing more difficult songs as the game goes on so that kids will hopefully need help from their teammates! When a kid needs help, choose the first person to raise her hand and bring her on stage. Have her whisper the answer to the contestant. If it's still wrong, you as the Host can show compassion by helping out and whispering the answer to the contestant.

"That was awesome! You guys really came through for each other and showed compassion when your teammate needed your help. This side of the room (*point*) may have won, but truly, when it comes to compassion, ALL of you are winning big time this month!"

ST dismisses the volunteers back to their seats

SETTING UP THE STORY

STORYTELLER: "I hope everyone had a great Christmas. It's my favorite time of the year—celebrating the best news ever with my family and friends. And speaking of good news, that's exactly what we're going to talk about today. Because the Christmas story doesn't end with the birth of Jesus. That's right. It's actually the beginning. But before I explain what that means, I'll need your help with something. You'll need to stand up for this. You're going to help me tell this story by acting out three groups that make up the main characters of this story. The first group is the shepherds. Every time I say the word 'shepherd,' I want you to pretend like you're gathering the sheep with your arms. (*Put your arms out in front of you and make a scooping motion back toward your body.*) Let's practice that. The shepherds (*do the motion with them*) were out in the field. Nice. Now, whenever I talk about the angels, I want you to make an imaginary snow angel in the air. You'll need to spread out to do this one. Do it with me. (*Do the motion.*) And then, lastly, when I talk about the sheep, I want you to crouch down on all fours and say one 'baa.' Let's practice that. (*Do the motion and say, 'Baa.'*)

Note: You can select a Small Group Leader or older child to stand on stage and direct the audience to do each motion when it's time.

SHEPHERDS IN THE FIELDS

STORYTELLER: “It looks like you guys are ready, so let’s jump into the story. You remember that last week we talked about the night that Jesus was born. Mary and Joseph had traveled far to get to Bethlehem and when they got there, there was no room for them. So they stayed in the place where animals were kept, and it was there that Jesus was born. Our story today picks up after Jesus was born, and it’s found in the book of Luke. *(Hold up the Bible.)*”

Each time you get to the one of the action words, pause and do the action with the kids.

“There were shepherds *(pause)* living out in the fields nearby. It was night, and they were taking care of their sheep.’ *(Pause.)* In other words, it was just another night on the job for these shepherds. *(Pause.)*”

“The sheep *(pause)* were probably doing their thing, you know, ‘baaaing’ and being scared of wolves. Regular sheep *(pause)* stuff. And the shepherds *(pause)* were doing their thing—keeping the sheep *(pause)* safe and trying to stay awake. When suddenly, something happened that would change their lives forever!”

ANGELS VISIT

STORYTELLER: “An angel *(pause)* appeared! Did you catch that? An angel! *(Pause.)* In fact, let’s read exactly what the Bible says happened in that moment.

“‘An angel *(pause)* of the Lord appeared to them. And the glory of the Lord shone around them. They were terrified.’”

“Terrified! I would be too, wouldn’t you?! But the angel *(pause)* tried to comfort them, and most importantly, the angel *(pause)* had some incredibly important news for the shepherds *(pause)*.”

“‘But the angel *(pause)* said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news. It will bring 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. Here is how you will know I am telling you the truth. You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger.”’”

“Wow! That’s some amazing news for a group of shepherds *(pause)* hanging out on what seemed like just a regular night on the job. This angel *(pause)* had told them that the Savior of the world had just been born! And that’s not all. The Bible says that suddenly more angels *(pause)* appeared! I can only imagine how terrifying and awesome that scene would have been. Let’s see what the Bible says those angels *(pause)* had to say!

“‘Suddenly a large group of angels *(pause)* from heaven also appeared. They were praising God. They said, “May glory be given to God in the highest heaven! And may peace be given to those he is pleased with on earth!”’”

“Can you even imagine what that must have been like for those shepherds? *(Pause.)* Before that night, they probably considered chasing off a wolf to be the most exciting night on the job. And now they’ve been visited by a choir of angels *(pause)*, singing and praising God, with news that the SAVIOR had been born. I don’t know how you’d ever go back to life as usual after that!”

SHEPHERDS FIND JESUS

STORYTELLER: “After delivering their message, the angels *(pause)* left and went back to heaven. And at that point, the shepherds *(pause)* probably looked at each other and said, ‘Guess we’ll keep watching the sheep!’ *(Pause.)* Nooooo, I’m just kidding. How could you go back to watching sheep *(pause)* when an angel *(pause)* has just given you the best news in the entire world?! Here’s what really happened.

“Then the shepherds *(pause)* said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem. Let’s see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

“They did what probably anyone would do who had just had a visit from an angel *(pause)*. They took off to see what all the fuss was about. They must have been confused, as well as excited! But if the shepherds *(pause)* were stunned, they didn’t waste any time trying to figure things out. They took off quickly and found Mary and Joseph and the baby. Jesus was lying in the manger. Things were JUST as the angel *(pause)* had told them!

“You guys can go ahead and have a seat now. Thanks for your help in telling that part of the story!”

WRAPPING UP THE STORY

STORYTELLER: “Things could have ended there. No one made the shepherds to go and tell others about what they had seen and heard. They could have kept things to themselves. It’s BIG news, but it also might be hard to believe. But the shepherds didn’t let that stop them. They went out and told everyone! They told them about the angel and the baby and what the angel had said about the baby! And all the people who heard what the shepherds had to say were amazed!

“The shepherds eventually went back home. But the Bible says that they gave glory and praise to God. After all, everything they had seen and heard was just as the angel had told them. The news was good and it was true.

“The really awesome thing is that this news is STILL good and it’s STILL true. And it may be hard to believe, but there are some people who haven’t heard it. So just like the shepherds went around telling everyone the good news, you and I have the same opportunity. We can—and we should—share the good news of God’s love with everyone around us. After all, if you didn’t know about it already, you’d want someone to tell you, wouldn’t you?

CG: Bottom Line Slide

“This is our challenge for today: **[Bottom Line] God gave us great news. Who will you tell?** This is SO important to remember so let’s say it a few times. I will say, “God gave us great news” and you will say, “who will you tell?”

ST: God gave us great news!

KIDS: Who will you tell?!

ST: God gave us great news!

KIDS: Who will you tell?!

Think about who in your life needs to hear the good news about God's love. How can you go about sharing it with them? Let's ask God for some help figuring that out!"

Pray

STORYTELLER: "Dear God, thank You for giving us Jesus to be our Savior—that really is the greatest news in the world! It's so great that we can't keep it to ourselves. Just like the shepherds went out and told everyone the good news they had heard, we know we should do the same. We can't keep quiet when the news is this good, so please give us wisdom to know how we can share this news with the people around us. We love You and we ask these things in Jesus' name, amen."

Dismiss children to their Small Groups.