

date: __ **12/24/17****Bible Passage: Luke 2:8–20**
(Christ's Birth)

Jesus Is The Promise

REMEMBER VERSE

Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come to his people and redeemed them.

Luke 1:68

Inspire

Shares personal stories from fellow ministry leaders about how God has worked in their lives

Every part of our being was created to be in personal relationship with God. This relationship was broken when sin entered into the human experience. Mankind was in desperate need of the Savior—for God Himself to once again meet us in person. God drew near and placed Himself into His creation. God showed us The Promise in Jesus.

When He physically left earth, Jesus did not leave us alone. He gave us His Spirit to dwell within us, but we still long for Him. He is coming back, and this longing reminds us of the things we hope for—the One we hope for. God will show us The Promise once again. We will see Him with our eyes for the first time, but we will know Him. Until that day, when we are aching and longing for more of Him, let us cheer one another up with this hope that we have, the hope that He will come back for us.

Cristi Thomas
Tru Team

Equip

Offers perspective and context to the lesson's Bible passage

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "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." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." When the

angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

Luke 2:8–15

God chose an angel to announce the arrival of The Promise on earth. This angel appears to the lowest segment of society in that time—shepherds. But heaven would not be contained—a great company of beings spills out of heaven and fills the skies of earth. The great divide is bridged. Heaven and earth join together to celebrate this moment in time that angels and man had anticipated for so long.

Some Bible versions refer to the heavenly hosts as the heavenly army. This is a strategic moment in God’s plan to redeem man and all of creation. This is the key battle in a war that will eventually be won and so, in a sense, this is heaven saying “Charge!”

This community of shepherds responds to the presence of God’s glory and the message of hope fulfilled. From their heavenly encounter they hunger for more—they want to see Jesus personally. Once they do, they’re compelled to tell others about their experience with God (Luke 2:17). They spontaneously “evangelize” (*euangelizomai*) or proclaim the coming of The Promise.

Support

Provides reflection and assessment through encouragement, prayer, and time in God’s Word

“Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart” (Luke 2:19). Contemplation. How many times did Mary replay each miraculous moment of the previous year of her life? Each account was an individual gem she collected and placed in her heart so they would always be part of her.

What has God shown you through His Promise this past week, month, or even this last year? What experiences with Christ have you collected? Take a few moments and write down the top three. Contemplate each experience. How did Jesus reveal Himself? How did you respond to Him then? Looking back, how do you respond to Him now?

Christmas is the perfect opportunity to celebrate—within your faith community of family and friends—the goodness and faithfulness of God. As you celebrate Advent this year, consider reading the account of the Christmas story in Luke chapter two with those who are participating in the festivities with you. Take a few moments to share any observations you have from hearing this story once again.

Take courage, and be filled with this hope—Jesus is The Promise. He is your Promise, now and forevermore. May you be filled with much cheer for the hope that you have. May you build others up in this hope; in fact, that is what you are already doing!

Small Group

SECTION

EXPLORE::: 10 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children engage in fun, creative activities designed to pique their curiosity about the day’s portion of The Big God Story.

Sunlit Stars

Children will make stars and interact with the beauty of light shining from them.

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- [Sunlit Star template \(see Resources\)](#)
- Construction paper (1 sheet per child, yellow)
- Scissors
- Paper clips (1 per child)

SET UP

Print or copy and cut out the Sunlit Star template. Using it as a pattern, cut stars out of the yellow construction paper (1 star per child). Set a star and paper clip out on a table for each child.

RELATE

Invite the children to join you at the table. Show the children how to unfold their paper clip so that one end pokes out like a stick. (Demonstrate each step of the activity as you describe it.) Then invite them to carefully poke tiny holes in their star using their paper clip. The more holes they poke, the more light will shine through their star. As children work, talk about the amazing things God created in the sky. **What's the brightest thing in the sky? I wonder ... why do you think the sun is so bright? If you look at the sky at night, what do you see? I wonder ... how many stars do you think there are in the sky?**

When they finish poking holes in their stars, invite the children to hold them up to the light. If you have a window, encourage them to hold their stars directly up against the window. **What happens to your star when you hold it up to the light?** Allow children to answer. **Yes, your stars get brighter! I wonder where we'll see—or hear about—stars in The Big God Story today.** Encourage children to save their stars to take home later and, with their parents' help and permission, tape them to a window where the sun will light them up.

DISCOVER:: 25 min.

Host/Worship Leader/Storyteller

Children participate in discovering God's Word through Bible verse memorization, interactive storytelling techniques, and worship as response.

Ponder Point

Jesus Is The Promise

Chloe's Rules

Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- [Chloe's Rules videos](#)
- Worship music (suggestions: "Glorious" and "I Am Listening to You," TruWorship *Sincerely Yours*)

RELATE

Welcome children as they're entering the large group meeting area. *Tech: Cue Chloe's Rules video.* The theme song will play as the Worship Leader/Host enters and makes his way up front, welcoming and greeting children along the

way. This should be a high-energy entrance. Choose and play two upbeat worship songs of your choice from a worship album that complements the theme and focus of the lesson.

Mail Time

Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- [Mail Time intro clip and image \(see Resources\)](#)
- [Remember Verse image \(see Resources\)](#)
- [Remember Verse cards \(see Resources\)](#)
- [Mail Time](#)
- Bibles (your personal and large children's)
- Mailbox

PREPARE AHEAD

Print or copy the Mail Time envelope art and attach to a large envelope. Print or copy one Remember Verse card and put it inside the envelope.

RELATE

Tech: Cue the Mail Time intro clip and image. Choose one volunteer to hide the mail and another to find the mail. Have the "Seeker" close her eyes while the "Hider" finds a good place to hide the Remember Verse. Once the mail has been hidden, the Seeker will begin to look for the mail while the children give clues to its whereabouts by calling out "hot" and "cold."

Once the Seeker finds the mail, the Host invites her to pull out the enclosed Remember Verse. Next, the Host should find the Remember Verse in his Bible and read the words aloud. Talk about the meaning of the verse while interacting with the children.

Lead the children in reciting the Remember Verse several times together using a variety of engaging methods. Hand motions, different voices, various speeds, and character integration are all great ways to help commit the Scripture to memory. For longer verses, approach the verse one section at a time, increasing what the children repeat back each week.

REMEMBER VERSE

**Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has
come to his people and redeemed them.**

Luke 1:68

REMEMBER VERSE DEFINITIONS

redeemed: bought back. Jesus paid the price of our sin so we can have eternal life.

REMEMBER VERSE MOTIONS

Praise: Hold hands up in the air and wiggle all fingers.

be to the Lord: Use right hand to make an L with index finger and thumb at left shoulder. Cross over front of body and end on right hip.

the God of Israel: Extend right hand in front of body with palm facing to side. Bring hand to rest fingertips just below

chin.

because he has come to his people: Hold out both arms at sides of body and pull inward to hug chest.

and redeemed them: Place palms together in prayer motion.

Wardrobe of Wonder

Storyteller/Host/Worship Leader

SUPPLIES

- [Wardrobe of Wonder intro clip and image \(see Resources\)](#)
- [What'slt: Baby Doll \(see optional image in Resources\)](#)
- Wardrobe of Wonder
- Small stools or chairs (2)

What'slt: Baby Doll

The Promise of God was presented to the world in the form of a human baby. The Promise was the Son of the Most High God—Immanuel, God with us.

RELATE

Tech: Cue the *Wardrobe of Wonder intro clip and image*. Invite a child volunteer to “spy” on the What'slt by peeking into the wardrobe. Each time the wardrobe door opens, cue the *Wardrobe of Wonder sound effect*. Have him whisper the identity of the What'slt in your ear to ensure he knows what it is.

Invite your assistant to sit on the stools with you. Then lead the group in asking the assistant yes-or-no questions about the What'slt. Once the children have guessed correctly, ask your assistant to retrieve the What'slt from the wardrobe and bring it to you. Thank your volunteer and encourage him to sit with his small group.

ASK

(Insert child's name), **what do you think a baby doll is doing in the Wardrobe of Wonder?** Allow volunteer to give you some suggestions. If she's having difficulty, invite all the children to give suggestions. **We've been talking a lot about The Promise God said He was going to send ... I wonder if the What'slt has something to do with God's Promise! Friends, what do you think? Let's find out!**

The Big God Story

Luke 2:8–20

Jesus Is The Promise

Storytelling Technique: Volunteer Participation for Dramatic Recitation/Presentation

SUPPLIES

- [The Big God Story intro clip and image \(see Resources\)](#)
- [What'slt: Baby Doll \(see optional image in Resources\)](#)
- Optional: [Storytelling video](#) (see Resources)
- [Sound effects: Angel Announcement, Sheep Bleating, Snoring](#)
- “Hallelujah” audio clip from Handel's *Messiah* (see iTunes)
- Bible
- Volunteers (2)
- Props: stool, binder (black), shepherd's staffs (2)

- Shepherd costumes

PREPARE AHEAD

Invite two adult or teen volunteers to play the parts of the shepherds. Give them copies of The Big God Story ahead of time and encourage them to memorize their lines, if possible. You will play the part of the Narrator, so make a copy of The Big God Story for yourself and place it in the binder. Go over the tech cues with your tech volunteer. Gather items for the Shepherd's costumes. Suggestions: robes or smocks, large squares of cloth tied around head with twine, rope for belts, sandals.

SET UP

Place the narrator's stool downstage right or left.

RELATE

Tech: Cue The Big God Story intro clip and image. Start downstage center. As you begin storytelling, move downstage right or left—wherever Narrator's stool is placed. **Hello, friends! It's so good to see you today! Before we jump into The Big God Story, let's stop and ask God to teach us. Let's quiet our voices and rest our hands and feet as we close our eyes and talk to God.** Lead children in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds.

The last time we were together, we learned about an angel telling Mary and Joseph about a very special baby.
Tech: Cue Wardrobe of Wonder sound effect. **Oh! I think we've found what a baby has to do with today's part of The Big God Story! Now, this wasn't just any baby. There was something extra special about this baby. Do you remember? Allow children time to respond. This baby would be named Jesus, and He would be the Savior for all people. Because of Jesus we can know God and live with Him forever.**

This was exciting news to Mary and Joseph! They knew the words of the prophets from long ago. The message God had given the prophets was coming true! Soon after the angel gave Mary and Joseph the news, they had to take a trip to the city of Bethlehem. A man named Caesar, who was the ruler of the land at that time, wanted to count all the people. While Mary and Joseph were in Bethlehem, the time came for baby Jesus to be born. There were so many people in town for the census and every home was filled with guests. So, Mary and Joseph stayed in the only place that was left—the place where people kept their animals at night.

Well, not long after they settled in, Mary gave birth to the baby boy. God showed Mary and Joseph The Promise—baby Jesus. Mary wrapped Him in large strips of cloth. Then she placed Him in a manger. What is a manger? Children will answer. Yes, a manger is a container filled with food for animals. And that's where baby Jesus slept.

Mary and Joseph were not the only people who saw God's Promise that night.

Shepherds enter.

Shepherd 1 (walking and talking): **I'm telling you, Fluffy is a great name for a sheep.**

Shepherd 2: **I don't know why you bother. They never come when you call them.**

Shepherd 1: **Is that so? Well, let's just give it a try.** (Calling to sheep in the distance) **Fluffy, come here, Fluffy.** (pause) **Fluff ...** (throwing arms up and sitting downstage center) **Oh, you're right. Let's just sit here for a minute while they eat.**

Shepherds begin to fall asleep leaning on one another.

Narrator: **As I was saying, there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby. It was night, and they were looking after their sheep.**

Shepherds begin to snore, making quite a bit of noise. *Tech: Cue Snoring sound effect.*

Narrator (clearing throat and pausing to get the shepherds' attention): **I said, it was night, and they were looking after their sheep.**

Shepherd 2 (waking up, nudging the other shepherd): **Hey, hey, wake up. It's night, and we're supposed to be looking after our sheep.**

Shepherd 1 (sleepily): **I'm awake, I'm awake.**

Narrator (shaking head): **Just then, an angel of the Lord God appeared to them.**

Tech: Cue "Hallelujah" sound effect.

Narrator: **And the glory of the Lord shone around them. They were terrified!**

Tech: Turn lights up to 100% on shepherds. Shepherds grab onto one another and stare up at sky, looking frightened.

Narrator: **But the angel said to them ...**

Tech: Cue Voice-over track: "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy. It is for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ 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."

Narrator: **Suddenly, a large group of angels 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!" The angels left and went into heaven. Then the shepherds said to one another ...**

Shepherd 2 (awestruck): **Did you just see that? That ... was ... amazing!**

Shepherd 1 (shaking the other shepherd as he himself begins to stand): **Come on, come on, let's go! We have to go into Bethlehem!**

Shepherd 2 (standing up): **You're right! We have to go see all the things the angels told us about!**

Shepherds exit stage through center of room, walking through kids in a hurry. They speak excited exclamations as they leave.

Shepherd 1 (acknowledging kids while walking through them): **We have to get to Bethlehem in a hurry. Excuse me, I beg your pardon.**

Shepherd 2: **Yes, yes, we really are in a hurry. You see, we need to see The Promise that God told us has arrived!**

Narrator (rising off stool and sitting downstage center—closer to children): **So, they hurried off. When they reached Mary and Joseph they found the baby just as they had been told. He was wrapped in long strips of cloth and lying in the manger. The shepherds were amazed. God had shown them The Promise. God had shown them Jesus!**

Mary thought about everything that had happened over and over again. She thought about the angel delivering the message to her. She thought about the angel who had announced His birth to the shepherds in the field. And she thought about the beautiful baby, Jesus. He is The Promise God showed the world. Mary kept all these things like a special treasure in her heart—so she would always remember.

After the shepherds had seen Jesus, they left and told everyone everything the angel had said about this child. All the people who heard were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. The shepherds gave glory and praise to God. Everything they had seen and heard was just as they had been told. God had shown them The Promise.

Wonder Questions

Small Group Enhancements, coloring pages, and discussion questions help your group go deeper into today's portion of The Big God Story.

SUPPLIES (per small group)

- [Wonder Questions coloring pages \(see Resources\)](#)
- [TruWonder Small Group Enhancements timeline and images \(see Resources\)](#)
- Crayons

RELATE

This week in The Big God Story, we heard how God was ready to show us The Promise. He sent angels to share His message and tell the shepherds where they would be able to see Jesus, The Promise for the whole world.

I wonder ... What do you think the angels' voices sounded like?

I wonder ... What do you think the shepherds told the people about The Promise and all they had seen?

I wonder ... What would you do after you saw The Promise?

Small Group SECTION

BLESS::: 5 min.

Small Group Leaders

Children receive a blessing from their leaders and sometimes one another. A blessing may be a prayer of commission, a portion of Scripture, or words to encourage and guide.

SUPPLIES

- [Remember Verse cards \(see Resources\)](#)

RELATE

Invite children to worship God together through a call-and-response prayer. You'll read a prayer of blessing over the kids, and they'll respond by saying, "Jesus is The Promise." Give children a chance to practice saying this sentence a couple of times before beginning the prayer.

I pray that you will always know that God loves you so much He sent Jesus to be our Savior.

(Children respond.) **Jesus is The Promise.**

I pray that God will give you the opportunity to share the good news of Jesus with someone this Christmas.

(Children respond.) **Jesus is The Promise.**

I pray that you will know that Jesus is with you, always.

(Children respond.) **Jesus is The Promise.**

I pray that God will fill you with peace and joy as you celebrate Christmas.

(Children respond.) **Jesus is The Promise.**

In Jesus' name, amen.

Corporate blessing: **Children, may you know God has shown you and given you The Promise, Jesus.**