



**Educate
+ Engage**



WHAT CHILD
IS THIS?



The Shepherds -
The Invitation of Hope

OVERVIEW

The birth of Jesus changed everything. His birth brought hope, transformed lives, and revealed God's presence with us. For those present, their view of this Emmanuel, God with us, shaped their faith and their future.

The shepherds teach us that hope is for everyone. Considered lowly in society, they were the first to receive the good news of Christ's birth. The shepherds help give clarity to the reach of the gospel. Hope is for everyone.

Scripture Passage

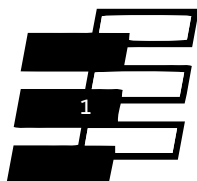
Luke 2:8-20 (NLT)

That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger."

Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying "Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased." When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. All who heard the shepherds' story were astonished, but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often. The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them.

EDUCATE

The gospel has no outer limits. It's a message of hope for everyone. In a nod to the mission of Jesus, the first to hear the invitation of hope were those who would have been considered outsiders.



Point 1: There is good news for all people.

In Luke 2:8–10 the angel brought “good news of great joy for all people.” The shepherds weren’t the elite. They were just regular people who knew the struggles of everyday life. Jesus brought hope to them. Isaiah talks about people who used to be walking in darkness but are now walking in light (Isaiah 9:2). The shepherds prove to us that God’s hope reaches even those who feel forgotten or unworthy.

Have you ever felt like you were not worthy of the gospel? Have you ever wondered if there was a place for you?

Point 2: We must seek Jesus for ourselves.

In Luke 2:15–16 we see that the shepherds had to seek Jesus for themselves. They weren’t just told about Jesus by the angels. They had to make the decision to seek Him for themselves. Jeremiah 29:13 explains: “You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all of your heart.”

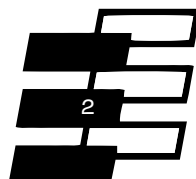
The gospel has always been a personal gospel. An invitation of hope should lead to an experience of hope. It would have been a miss for the shepherds to hear about Jesus on the hills and stay in the hills and never seek to see Jesus for themselves. The application for us is the same. Don’t just hear about Jesus, but experience Him for yourselves!

Point 3: Share the good news.

The gospel was never designed to be just a personal experience, but also an experience we share with others. The shepherds in Luke 2:17–20 took the message they had received, took the experience they had, and began to spread that message. It’s hard for people who have heard and experienced the gospel for themselves to not share the gospel. In Romans 10 Paul declared, “how beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.”

Closing

Just like the shepherds, each one of us is a candidate for the gospel. The invitation of hope the gospel presents is an invitation for everyone. Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. While the message is for everyone, the journey doesn’t stop with awareness; we are invited to experience the gospel. When someone has an experience with the saving gospel of Jesus Christ, the only thing left to do is to tell someone else about it.



ENGAGE

Where are you in the process? For some it's understanding that the gospel is for all of us. For others, it's taking the next step. There's always another step. There's always more of God that we can experience for ourselves. And at the end of the day, if we have a true knowledge of all that God has done for us, we should have a desire to see God do that for someone else. The gospel is an invitation of hope for everyone!

Let's close with prayer. Let's ask God to lead us to someone just like the shepherds that we can share the good news of the gospel with.

