

# WEEK 4

## LESSON GUIDE



### BIG IDEA

Jesus is God's love for everyone.

### BIBLE

**Angels Appear to Shepherds:**  
Luke 2:1–20; Hebrews 1:1–6

## LARGE GROUP TIME

What's up, everybody? Welcome to our final week of City of Angels! We've had a blast this month getting to hear all about the amazing messages about Jesus angels delivered to special people.

The message we'll hear about during this last week was given to an unlikely group, but just like everyone else, they played an important part in Jesus' story. Let's get into it!

### WHAT? What are we talking about today?

#### ACTIVITY | Angels We Have Hidden on High

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Get an angel tree topper (something [like this](#)) that you'll use every week this month like "Elf on the Shelf." Hide the angel in plain sight next to a candy cane. Have kids silently search the room and once they find the angel, have them return to their seats and make a "halo" by making a circle with their hands above their heads. Remind kids not to shout out the answer or point conspicuously so everyone can have the joy of finding it themselves!
- Okay, now that all of you have located the angel, **did anyone notice what the item closest to it is?** It's a candy cane!
- **Other than a sweet treat, what else does a candy cane look like?** If you said a shepherd's staff, you'd be right!
- We're going to find out something amazing that happened to shepherds in our story today.

#### ACTIVITY | Uncover the Art

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give each kid a copy of the printable printed on white cardstock paper on which you've already written the hidden message with white crayon. This week's message is "Love." If you have a large group, invite older kids to write the message themselves, or have them help you prep the printables beforehand. Set up watercolor stations so kids can paint over the wings to reveal the hidden message. Use colored pencils if watercolor isn't available.
- This may look like a simple picture of an angel's wings, but there's a secret message hidden on it that I want you to figure out!
- We'll use watercolor paints to decode this secret message.
- When you've discovered the message, don't tell anyone! We want to give everyone a chance to find it on their own.

- Once we're all done painting, on the count of three, we're going to shout out the angel's message!
- Hmm . . . I wonder what "Love" has to do with shepherds and angels?

**POLL | Angel Alert**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, divide the group into small teams and assign a leader with a cell phone to each team. The team has to come up with an answer to your questions and text it to you through their leader. Consider mirroring your device to a larger screen so everyone can see the responses that come in. You can also do this activity without cell phones and just have each group present their answers out loud.*
- In the stories we've heard all month long, angels were the main way God communicated with people. If Zechariah, Mary, and Joseph were living right now, God might have sent them a text message!
- Let's see what that might look like!
  - **What text do you think God would've sent to the angel, Gabriel, about going to talk to Zechariah and telling Zechariah that he, an old man, was about to have a baby?**
  - **What text do you think Gabriel sent to his angel friends after he delivered his message to Mary that she was about to become the mother of Jesus?**
  - **What text do you think Joseph sent to Mary after he woke up from his dream and learned that Mary was carrying Jesus in her belly?**
  - **If an angel could text one thing to the whole world, what do you think that angel would say?**
- Texting makes messages easy to send and receive. Wouldn't it be amazing if it were that easy to get the whole world to know God loves them?

*SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?*

**LESSON: | Luke 2:1–20 (Angels Appear to Shepherds)**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read aloud the Bible passage. Then, tell this week's Bible story from Luke 2:1–20 as a storyteller sharing history with young people in their town — assume a name or occupation that's familiar to your town (like an ice cream vendor, street performer, or a friendly elderly person like an "abuela."). Ask another volunteer to play the angel, Gabriel. You may choose to record this segment beforehand and show them as videos.*
- Hi, again! (*Introduce yourself as the storyteller character of your choosing.*) You're back for another story, aren't ya? Good! I love talking about these Bible stories that I first heard when I was a kid just like you.
- Now, you know it's truly the *City of Angels* because every story I've talked about so far all had an angel in it!
  - An angel appeared to Zechariah and told him he and his wife, Elizabeth, would have a son, who would be called John. The angel also told Zechariah John would grow up to help people believe in Jesus.
  - Then, the same angel appeared to Elizabeth's cousin Mary and told her that she, too, would have a baby and that baby was none other than Jesus.
  - Another angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him that everything happening to Mary was according to God's plan, so Joseph didn't need to hesitate about marrying Mary.
- I have one more angel story to share with you, but I think you might want to hear it from an angel directly, right? [*Call out a window or door.*] Hey, Gabriel! You around?
  - **Gabriel:** Hey! You called?
- Yeah! I think the kids wanna hear that other angel story, you know, the one with the shepherds.
  - **Gabriel:** Sweet, let's do it! Yeah, this was the one where, like, all my angel friends were involved. They had to be — Jesus was finally born!
- Wait . . . we're skipping ahead a little bit. So, Mary and Joseph did get married, and then not long after, they had to travel to Bethlehem. It was there that Jesus was born, right?
  - **Gabriel:** Right. I have to say, the place where Jesus was born was not the place I expected. Knowing who Jesus really is, I thought for sure Mary and Joseph would travel throughout Bethlehem and then be invited into the palace or something.
- That would've been something, for sure. But no, the city was crowded and there was no room to be found. So, Mary and Joseph ended up holing up in a space shared with animals. That's a shame.

- **Gabriel:** I thought so, too. Jesus. Our Jesus was born and placed inside a manger. Surrounded by animals and animal smells. But you know, I learned that wasn't important. What matters was Jesus was in the world and it was all according to God's plan.
- So, how did the world find out about Jesus?
  - **Gabriel:** Oh, that's where my angel friends come in. God told them to make the announcement to a few shepherds who were watching sheep in the middle of the night.
- Interesting. Why them, though?
  - **Gabriel:** I'm not entirely sure. But God never does anything on accident. So, to the shepherds, my buddies went.
- What did they say?
  - **Gabriel:** "Don't be afraid." I guess they could've started out by saying hi or something, but we angels tend to be a little awkward in social gatherings.
- I'll say. If they popped up out of nowhere like you did, they were probably a little scared.
  - **Gabriel:** But it's okay, they got over it real fast. The first angel that showed up told the shepherds right away that they were coming to them with good news and the good news would bring great joy for everyone.
- They probably never got news that way before.
  - **Gabriel:** Yup! The news that Jesus, the savior of the world, was born in the town of Bethlehem? Delivered by angels? Then, followed up by a whole bunch of angels singing and praising God? Yeah, that's on a whole different level right there.
- Such an amazing message to give and an amazing way to deliver that message to people who weren't rich or famous, but were ordinary like you and me. Well . . . me. You're an angel, so you don't count.
  - **Gabriel:** Yeah, I guess God had the angels talk to shepherds to show that this good news was meant for everyone!
- I like that! God thinks of everything! Thanks for telling us this story, Gabriel!

**BIG IDEA** | Jesus is God's love for everyone.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *On a large piece of bulletin board paper, write this week's Big Idea somewhere on it, and then roll up the paper. You'll be adding to this wall art every week, so conserve space when writing the Big Idea. You might want to recruit a volunteer to write it using [mural lettering](#) or graffiti art (or look up tutorials like [this one](#) to do it yourself). This week, invite kids to add their names and other art to this "wall" and put it up somewhere in your space.*
- *[Unroll bulletin board paper to reveal what it says.]*
- **Jesus is God's love for everyone!**
- This is so true. No matter what you look like, where you come from, or what you've done, God loves us through Jesus!
- To help us remember that, everyone come up to the front and add your name and a drawing to this Big Idea wall!

**MEMORY VERSE** | Luke 2:10 (NIV)

- "But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people!'"
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Get a long playground [jump rope](#) and invite two leaders to turn the rope. Have kids jump the rope one, two, or three at a time, syncing each jump with a word from the memory verse. See who can make it all the way through the verse! To level it up, challenge some of the kids to try [double dutch jump rope](#)!*

**WEDNESDAY NIGHT MATERIAL...**

## RECAP Lesson (above) for those that were not there on Sunday.

### VIDEO | City of Angels, Episode 4

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play this week's episode of [Grow TV](#).

### IMAGE | God Loves Different

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Display an image (like [this one](#)) that includes a lot of different people. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)
  - **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Include images of people that kids with special needs can see themselves in, including those with physical limitations.
- Everyone, take a look at this picture. We'll study it for about one minute without talking.
- **What did you notice first, what's different about each person or what everyone has in common?**
- There are more than seven billion people in the world! And each person is unique. That's a lot of different people!
- For us, when we come across someone who is different from us or disagrees with us about something, we tend to not like them as much. We'd rather hang out with people who look like us, think like us, and like the same things we do.
- But God loves different and God loves in a different way than we do.
- God sees different people — all seven billion of them — and loves them all the same. And God wants to have a relationship with every last person. Isn't that so cool?
- But that's not all. God sent Jesus to make that possible. That's how we know that **Jesus is God's love for everyone!**

### ACTIVITY | Gift Wrap Relay

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Divide kids into teams no larger than eight. Have two stations set up at opposite ends of the room. One station is for a team member to wrap a gift quickly however they can — the only rule is that the item must be completely covered. Once "wrapped," they run the gift to the second station where their teammate is ready to unwrap the gift quickly. Once those two are done, they cheer on the rest of their team completing the stations. The winning team gets all of their items wrapped and unwrapped first. Items to wrap can include anything you have around your space — just make sure there's an even number of items per team.
  - **PRETEEN HACK:** Have preteens work in teams to wrap another kid or a leader in a race. You can judge the winners based on fun categories like speediest wrapping job and most nicely wrapped!
  - **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Instead of using wrapping paper, fill a decorative box with a lid with as many treats as kids you have. Then play "Hot Potato" accompanied by a Christmas song. Whoever is holding the box when the music stops gets to open the box and take out a treat. Keep playing until everyone has a gift!
- Today, we're going to conduct a relay race! Just like in the last few days before Christmas, we're frantically buying and wrapping gifts. Let's use that same energy to win this race!
- Although we had many items to wrap and unwrap, we know Jesus is the best gift of all. Not only is Jesus a personal gift for each one of us, Jesus is also a gift to the whole world!
- **Jesus is God's love for everyone.**

### SCRIPTURE | Hebrews 1:1–6

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Hebrews 1:1–6.
- God speaks to us in different ways.
  - Back in the Bible days, it was through prophets like Isaiah who listened for God's messages and delivered them to God's people. Isaiah made these prophesies way before Jesus was even born on Earth.
  - All throughout *City of Angels*, we learned God sent messages through angels.
  - Today's Bible passage tells us that now, God speaks to us through Jesus. And what message is that? It's that God loves us!

- From all we know about angels, I think we could agree they're pretty cool. They can pop up out of nowhere, they can communicate to people in person or in dreams, and I'm pretty sure they can fly.
- But no angel, not even the angel, Gabriel, is anywhere near as powerful and beloved as Jesus is. We know this because Hebrews 1 tells us that even the angels worship Jesus.
- God didn't send an angel to save us. God sent the very best of heaven, Jesus, to Earth for us. If you needed any more proof that **Jesus is God's love for everyone**, well, there you go!

*NOW WHAT? What does God want us to do about it?*

**REFLECTION** | One Word Project

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Pass out blank Christmas cards or postcards and have kids write one word that will help them remember today's Bible story. Encourage them to decorate the card and make it colorful.
- The Bible tells us God loves the world, but we often forget how big that love is. God's love covers everyone from kings and queens living in palaces to shepherds working in the fields.
- God's love is so big, it includes everyone in this room, everyone in this building, in this city, in this country, and in this whole world!
- **What one word will help you remember this week's Bible story?**
- Keep this word with you throughout the week to remember the angel's message and what it meant for the whole world.

**ACTIVITY** | Christmas in the City

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Have kids create Christmas messages for different people in their city, like the neighborhood mail person, the grocery store clerk, a teacher, doctors and nurses, and police officers and firefighters.
  - **PRETEEN HACK:** Create little business-card-sized papers that have a simple message like "God loves you" or "You are loved" and go out with kids to a public place in your town and pass them out to random passersby.
- Today, we're going to make Christmas messages for people we may not know. This will be our kind way to pass God's love to others.
- Some things you can write:
  - Happy holidays
  - Merry Christmas
  - You are loved
  - Thank you!
  - Hope you have a great winter season!
  - Stay warm!
- Keep this note with you and when you see the person you wrote the card to, give it to them or put it in a place they'll see it.

**MEMORY VERSE** | Luke 2:10 (NIV)

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**PRAYER**

- Dear God, we are so happy we get to celebrate Jesus being born. We're grateful that sending Jesus to Earth is a clear sign of how much you love and care for us. Help us to show kindness and share the good news with others because Jesus and your love is for everyone. Amen.

**SMALL GROUP TIME**

**DISCUSSION**

- Who were the first people who got to hear the good news about Jesus' birth?
- How did they react when they saw the angel?
- What did the angels do after they delivered the message?
- Read Hebrews 1:6. How do we know that Jesus is greater than angels?
- If the angels were to deliver a message from God today, where in the city do you think they'd go? Why?
- The angels and the shepherds worshiped when they heard Jesus was born. How do we worship today? Are there any new ways we can worship?
- What's one thing you can do to show God's love is for everyone?

**ACTIVITY** | Be the Hands and Wings

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Provide kids with cardstock paper and various colors of craft paint. Give each kid a paper plate and allow them to mix and swirl the colors on their plate however they'd like. Afterward, have them stamp both their hands on the plate then on their paper, arranging them to resemble angel wings. Allow them to be creative with how their wings look. [Here's](#) a basic idea of what it might look like.*
- All month, we've heard how angels delivered lots of messages to show **Jesus is God's love for everyone**. We can deliver that message, too, in the way we treat others.
- Let's make an art piece that will remind us that we're God's hands and feet — and maybe even wings — to let the world know how much God loves them!