

The Shepherds - couldn't keep quiet!

Luke 2: 1-21

We tend to think that Jesus' birth happened on a 'silent night', but in many ways Bethlehem was anything but silent. It's unlikely that Mary was quiet while giving birth – most women make quite a bit of noise when in labour; Jesus probably cried a bit; then there was that eruption of thousands (millions?) of angels praising God above the hills and finally a flock of shepherds rushing through the town trying to find a manger with a baby in it and then afterwards they *"spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told."*

They couldn't keep quiet about what God had done and neither should we!

The story is told in this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c018_TjhBNQ

1. Our twenty-second decoration for the Jesse Tree

This is an easy decoration. We're making a lamb, a little fluffy lamb, similar to, but different from Abraham's ram. Get a cork (or something similar), wrap two white pipe cleaners around the end of the cork and round the bit just before it thickens – these are the legs. Put glue all over the cork and cover with soft fluffy cotton wool. Trim the cotton wool over the wide end of the cork – the lamb's face – and draw a face on it. Stick on some ears and roll up a small amount of cotton wool to make a tail. Hang the lamb on the Jesse Tree.



2. Perform a family nativity play

On the other page is a short play that you might like to perform as a family, even if you don't have enough people (you could have Mary and Joseph acted by one person, the shepherd and the sheep by another, and Zadok and the cow by another!).

Discuss as a family who you can share the good news of Jesus with this Christmas.

How are you going to do it?

3. Make a flock of sheep for Christmas tea

On the other page is a recipe for rice krispie marshmallow sheep.

4. Shepherds' Journey

Help the shepherds to *"find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger"* on the maze on the other page.

Interrupted Nativity sketch - Stephen O'Rear

CHARACTERS

Mary	Shepherd	Zadok, a guest at the inn
Joseph	Sheep	Cow
Baby (Jesus)		

SCENE: *The manger, early morning. MARY, JOSEPH, SHEPHERD and SHEEP gaze lovingly upon the BABY. Gently hum "Silent Night" or "Away in a Manger" to help set a quiet Christmas mood.*

Zadok: *(shouting from outside)* Bashan! Time to wake up, beautiful.

(ZADOK enters noisily)

Zadok: Oh, sorry. I didn't know anyone else was up this early.

Joseph: That's OK. It's been a night full of surprises.

Shepherd: No kidding. I was out in the field, tending my sheep, when suddenly the sky filled with...

Zadok: *(interrupts)* I don't mean to be rude, but I have a long journey ahead. I'm just here to pick up my cow and . . . *(horrified)* is that a baby?

Mary: *(nodding)* His name is Jesus.

Zadok: Why did you put him in the feeding trough?

Joseph: There was no room in the guestroom.

Zadok: No room in the guestroom for a newborn baby? I really ought to speak to the manager.

(SHEEP baas lazily.)

Zadok: *(to SHEPHERD)* You seem to be missing a few sheep there, shepherd.

Shepherd: As I was saying, I was out in the field, when...

Zadok: *(interrupts again)* I don't want to tell you how to do your job, but leaving your flock seems like a pretty shaky financial strategy.

Shepherd: *(frustrated)* Ugh, if you'd just...

Zadok: And speaking of missing animals, where is my cow? Bashan!

Cow: *(offstage, lazily)* Moo.

Zadok: Ah, there you are. *(exits, cooing)* Did you have a rough night with that baby hogging your feeding trough?

Shepherd: I don't get it. An angel appears right above our heads, and then the sky fills with thousands of other angels singing praises in the heavens ...and all he cares about is his cow.

(SHEEP baas)

Shepherd: Oh, don't you start. You know there will never be a night like that ever again. "Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord." Who could go back to work after hearing what the angel said?

(ZADOK returns, along with COW)

Zadok: Well, I'm about ready to take off. *Mazel tov*, congratulations on the baby, you two.

Joseph: We'll pray for your journey.

Zadok: Hey, since I'm leaving, there's room in the inn now. You should get your child indoors; he doesn't belong out here.

Shepherd: Yes, He does. This is exactly where He belongs.

Zadok: What do you mean?

Shepherd: The angel said, "You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger." We were supposed to find Him here. God planned every detail!

Zadok: OK, but why do *you* need to be here? Why not just let this new mother get some sleep?

Shepherd: *(uncertain)* We came to worship.

Zadok: Hmm. Well, come on, Bashan. We've got a long way to go.

(COW moos as they exit)

Shepherd: *(to JOSEPH AND MARY)* He still doesn't get it. How can you let him leave when he doesn't see the truth that's staring him in the face?

Joseph: Only God can open his eyes. He isn't ready to understand what happened.

Shepherd: But the angel and the sky full of a heavenly choir...

Joseph: . . . were there for you. And the story you tell will be retold through the ages.

Mary: Who knows? There may come a time when he hears your story in some distant town and thinks back to this night.

Shepherd: And until then?

Joseph: We pray, we trust and we celebrate. For the Messiah has come!

(Hum the last two lines of "What Child Is This?" The scene goes silent as MARY, JOSEPH, SHEPHERD and SHEEP gaze at the BABY.)

After the shepherds had seen Him, they told everyone. They reported what the angel had said about this child. All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. Luke 2:17-18

This sketch originally appeared in the December 2011 issue of Focus on the Family Clubhouse Jr. magazine.

Edible flock of sheep

45g butter

300g mini marshmallows

180g rice krispies

Chocolate sticks

Icing in a tube, or make it yourself



1. Melt the butter in a large, heavy-based saucepan over a low heat.
2. Add the marshmallows and cook gently until they are completely melted and blended, stirring constantly.
3. Take the pan off the heat and immediately add the cereal, mixing lightly until well coated.
4. Roll the mixture into balls and add chocolate sticks for legs
5. When completely cool stand on their legs and add eyes, mouth, ears and tails.
6. Serve your flock of sheep at a meal for Christmas – that means don't eat them all!

SHEPHERD'S JOURNEY

Help the shepherd's find their way through the town so they can see the baby Jesus.

