

SHEPHERDS & ANGELS

Faith Quest - St. Mary's Anglican Church, Regina

KING'S THEATRE: Praising Puppets

Scripture: Luke 2: 8-20

Memory verse: Luke 2: 15 “When the angels had left them...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.”

Concepts:

God cares for people no matter what their job or social position.

God communicates with people through messengers (angels).

We are all helping to fulfill God’s plan – no matter our age or station in life – as long as we listen to Him.

Materials:

People puppets (approx. 10)

Gold pipe cleaner for halos, strips of fabric and elastic band for shepherd headdress

Stable background = drawn picture of a stable scene with Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus.

Puppet theatre

William Kurelek’s “A Northern Nativity” (available from the Schroeder family)

Bibles

LESSON:

Welcome and Introductions:

1. Greet the children and introduce yourself. Do attendance, collect offering, pray.
2. Tell the children that today they will use the puppets to learn more about the shepherds and angels in the Christmas story.

Scripture:

1. Read Luke 2:8-20

2. Discuss shepherds and angels with the children including the following ideas:

· Review what a shepherd did and that being a shepherd was not a prestigious job. It was a lonely job that was not well respected among the leaders of that day.

· Ask the children to imagine that Jesus was to be born in modern times. Ask them what jobs modern “shepherds” might or might not have. Examples of jobs that would not be equivalent to Biblical shepherds are doctors, college professors, government officials, wealthy businesspeople, etc. Examples of modern jobs that would be similar to a Biblical shepherd are trash collectors, road construction workers, janitors, other cleaning people,

etc.

- Further discuss the story by talking about the angels. Ask questions such as “How many angels do you think there were?” “What do you think the angels looked like?” Help the children understand that even though we often think of angels as white-winged creatures wearing a halo that the Christmas story in the Bible gives no description of the angels.

- Older Children: Help the children see that the angels were really messengers from God. What do you think about this idea? Are there ways that people can be God’s messengers? “Do you think an angel could be a person like a teacher, friend, someone in your family?” See if they can tell you some of the other occasions in which angels have appeared to people (see background notes).

- Some additional discussion questions are: “How do you think the shepherds felt when they saw the angel?” “Do you think the shepherds believed the angel? Why or why not?” “Do you think the shepherds believed that Jesus was a special baby? Why or why not?”

3. End the discussion when you feel the children understand these points:

- The shepherds in the Christmas story were ordinary people that God chose for a special task.

- Angels are messengers from God.

- Modern “shepherds” and “angels” might not look as we imagine them from the Bible story.

Application:

1. Pass out the people puppets to children. Ask the children to treat the puppets gently.

Do some warm up exercises:

- “Show how your puppet looks when it is speaking quietly.”

- “Show how your puppet looks when it is speaking loudly.”

- “Show me a listening puppet.”

- “Show your puppet praying.”

- “Show your puppet looking surprised.”

- “Show your puppet looking afraid.”

2. Divide the class into four groups. Designate the groups as Angel 1, Angel 2, Shepherd 1 and Shepherd 2.

3. Tell these groups they will be acting out their part of the story while you read from the Bible. **NOTE:** Since you will not be using puppets for Mary, Joseph and Jesus, you might want to draw or have pictures of them as a background. The shepherds could walk from where the angels greet them to the “stable” where your picture or drawing of the nativity is located.

4. Have groups Angel 1 and Shepherd 1 come to the stage with their puppets. Angel 2 and Shepherd 2 will be the audience this time. Reread Luke 2:8-20 aloud slowly and with expression while Angel 1 and Shepherd 1 act out their parts of the story. Remind the

children to show the emotions of the shepherds and angels such as the shepherds' surprise and the angels' reassurance.

5. Switch groups and repeat.

Wrap-Up:

Following the presentations have a brief discussion with the children using questions such as “Would it matter if our angel puppets did not have halos?” “Does it matter that our shepherd puppets look different than Biblical shepherds”? Use this discussion time to reinforce the points made in the introduction to your lesson about the shepherds and angels. Show the children prairie artist William Kurelek's “A Northern Nativity” and talk about how the artist has imagined Mary, Joseph and Jesus in a caboose, an igloo etc.

Reflection:

In their journals: ask the children to draw a picture of a modern shepherd or angel. This will help reinforce the idea that ordinary people today can be used by God to carry messages or to help with God's work in the world.

Closing Prayer:

End with a simple prayer thanking God for sending Jesus and for the part the shepherds and angels played in Jesus' birth. Ask God to help us be a part of God's work in the world now—maybe as a modern shepherd or angel.

Lesson adapted from Kirk of Kildaire Presbyterian, North Carolina