



# The Shepherds Visit

## Lesson Overview

### 1. Guess

Identify the story we will learn about today.

### 2. Watch a Video

Watch **part of** *The Gospel of Luke* online at [bit.ly/GCEDShepherds](http://bit.ly/GCEDShepherds) (6min 35sec).

### 3. Read and Discuss

The Word is the story of ourselves. Look at the characters in the story and consider how they relate to your own life. What are our “sheep”, “shepherds” and the miracle of the Lord’s birth in ourselves?

## New Church Concept Good Shepherd

I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. And I lay down My life for the sheep.... My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. John 10, excerpts



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## FaithBuilder 1 | Lesson 12 | Christmas

### Guess

Read the following words to students one word at a time. Students will guess what topic they will discuss. (Note: *Phrases in ( )— are to help the teacher understand how the words relate to the lesson theme. They are not to be shared!*)

1. Evil (*Shepherd protects from evil*)
2. Lead (*Shepherd leads to safety and good pasture*)
3. Visit (*Angel visits shepherds; shepherds visit the Lord*)
4. Protect (*Shepherd protects his sheep*)
5. Angels (*Angels announce the good news*)
6. Return (*Shepherds return glorifying and praising God*)

### Watch a Video

Watch part of *The Gospel of Luke-Film-Visual Bible in HD Very Rare Version* (4hrs 12min 03sec). **Start the video at 17:54 and end at 24:22. Watch time 6min 35sec.** (Enter link in the web browser search bar at the top of your screen.)

### Read and Discuss

One of the features of the Word is that when we see its spiritual meaning, all of its characters are parts of ourselves.

Mary = affection for true ideas

Joseph = understanding of true ideas that support a good life in us

Jesus born into the world = the Lord becoming a real part of our life

Angels (messengers) = insights that flow in from the Lord

King Herod = a wish to control things for our own advantage

Sheep = good feelings, innocent affections; things that make a happy and good life

Shepherds = those who teach and lead to useful service

1. What part might shepherds represent in us ? Keep in mind the job of a shepherd.
2. What were the shepherds doing when the angels appeared?

3. Look at what sheep are in us (on the previous page). Why would our love for good things need to be taken care of? What might threaten our good loves? (*Hint*: Think about why sheep need tending. What dangers threaten sheep? What related spiritual dangers do innocent affections face?)
4. How do shepherds (and the community where they live) suffer if shepherds do not manage their sheep—a source of food and clothing—well?
5. Shepherds care for sheep so the sheep provide meat and wool. Sheep and wool are the useful products of their hard work. Why is connecting what we know with what we love *to produce good things* important for leading a healthy life? (See sidebar on right.)
6. What are the “spiritual shepherds” in us?
7. How can the true ideas we know from the Word give us a sense of direction and purpose? How can true ideas lead us to have a positive impact on the world?
8. The angels came to the shepherds at night, when most people were sleeping. Most did not see or hear the angels—but the shepherds did. What is it in us that can see and receive the Lord—even when during times of great darkness?
9. After witnessing the miracle of the Lord’s birth, the shepherds returned, “glorifying and praising God.” What impact does seeing the Lord in our own lives have on us?
10. What is it to glorify and praise God?
11. Do we have a responsibility to share the Good News of the Lord’s coming with others?

Thanks to Rev. Grant Odhner for ideas from “The Shepherds: a Talk.”

‘For thus says the Lord God: “Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land; I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, in the valleys and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in good pasture, and their fold shall be on the high mountains of Israel. There they shall lie down in a good fold and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down,” says the Lord God. “I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick.” Ezekiel 34:11-16

I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. And I lay down My life for the sheep.... My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. John 10, excerpts

Love and wisdom come into and remain in existence in service; and service consists in performing the tasks of one's calling faithfully, honestly and diligently. The love of service and thus diligence in service concentrates the mind and keeps it from wandering, and absorbing all the desires which pour in from the body and the world through the senses, causing the truths of religion and morality with the kinds of good they produce to be scattered to the four winds. But the earnest devotion of the mind to service keeps them together and binds them, disposing the mind so as to receive wisdom coming from those truths. Then it banishes to one side or the other the mockery and folly of falsities and vanities. See *Marriage Love* 16.3

When a person is performing a service, his mind has a circle drawn around it, within which it is by stages arranged to become a truly human form. From this it can see desires outside itself, and is brought by soundness of reason to banish them. The opposite is true for those who are idle. In their case the mind is unbounded and uncircumscribed, and so a person allows into it all the empty and absurd ideas emanating from the world and the body, and causes it to love them. See *Marriage Love* 249