# FINDING CHRISTMAS

## LESSON SNAPSHOT

**BOTTOM LINE:**
Jesus loves everyone!

**OBJECTIVE:**
Kids will come up with things they can do to help others in need before Christmas.

**KEY PASSAGE:**
Luke 2:1-20, The Shepherds

**MEMORY VERSE:**
*"She is going to have a son. You must give him the name Jesus. That's because he will save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21 (NIRV)*

**SUMMARY:**
The sea is filled with all kinds of creatures great and small. Kids will learn that people are all different, but Jesus came for all of us and loves everyone the same.

**SIMPLE PRAYER:**
*Dear God,*

*Help us to show everyone that you love them.*

*In Jesus' name,*
*Amen*

# MEMORY VERSE

*"She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21 (NIV)*

*"She is going to have a son. You must give him the name Jesus. That's because he will save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21 (NIRV)*

**LARGE GROUP:**
Choose four kids who think they know the verse. Line them up on stage. Have the kids recite the memory verse, with each kid saying one word, starting left to right. When you get to the kid on the right, go back to the kid on the far left. Keep going until they get through the whole verse.

**SMALL GROUP:**
Give each kid one word or a few words of the verse on a note card. See if they can arrange the cards and get the verse right. Then read the verse aloud with the kids.

# FINDING CHRISTMAS

## SKIT

**ALL SEA CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL**

**ITEMS NEEDED:**
The angelfish costume, a shepherd's costume

**CHARACTER BREAKDOWN:**
3 M or F

**CHARACTERS:**
The Narrator
The Angelfish
A Shepherd

*The Narrator enters.*

NARR: The story so far. Once there was an angelfish who went to visit a little tetra named Mary.

*The angelfish enters.*

ANGEL: Oh good, lucky me, I get to wear this costume again.

NARR: Mary the tetra had a guppy that she named Jesus. She laid him to sleep in a manger in a coral reef, because there was no room for him in the inn.

ANGEL: A coral reef? Really? Aren't we taking this under the sea theme a little too far?

NARR: I think the kids are enjoying it.

ANGEL: The kids don't have to dress up like a goofy angelfish!

NARR: They love your costume!

ANGEL: Yeah? Where's Mary and her costume? I mean this is her baby, right?

NARR: Guppy! He's a guppy.

# SKIT

ANGEL: You know what I mean!

NARR: Mary's in the reef with Jesus. But that's not important right now. Right now, it's time for you to go and spread the good news of Jesus' birth to all the creatures of the sea.

ANGEL: All of them?

NARR: Yes!

ANGEL: Even the octopus?

NARR: Jesus came to be the Savior of the whole world! So in under the sea terms, yes. Jesus came to save the octopuses—

ANGEL: Octopi.

NARR: Along with the sea urchins, the sharks, the crabs, the lobsters, the dolphins, the whales—

ANGEL: Whoa, the mammals too?

NARR: And even the sheepshead fish.

ANGEL: The sheepshead fish? Oh, I get it. Because of the shepherds, right?

NARR: Yes! This is the part of the story where you visit the sheepshead fish.

ANGEL: Good deal. So where are they?

*The shepherd enters.*

ANGEL: Oh come on!!!! Why isn't he wearing a fish costume?

SHEPHERD: Fish costume? Why aren't you dressed like an angel?

ANGEL: You know what? Let's just do this thing so I can get out of this ridiculous outfit!

SHEPHERD: I don't know, I think it looks kind of cool.

ANGEL: You do?

SHEPHERD: Makes me hungry for Long John Silver's!

# SKIT

ANGEL: Cut that out!

NARR: The angelfish said to the shepherds…

ANGEL: Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tides of great joy. For unto you in the coral reef is born this day, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.

NARR: The angelfish sang, Glory to God in the highest! And on Earth, peace, goodwill toward fish.

ANGEL: Thank you for not making me sing that!

NARR: The sheepshead fish raced into the reef and found the guppy, just as the angel said.

SHEPHERD: I can't believe the angels came to see us. I mean we're just shepherds.

ANGEL: Sheepshead fish.

SHEPHERD: You know what I mean.

NARR: That's how God wanted it. By announcing the birth of Jesus to some lowly shepherds, God showed us that Jesus had come to save the whole world.

ANGEL: All the creatures of the sea.

SHEPHERD: Including the octopuses?

ANGEL: Octopi!

SHEPHERD: Wow. God must love us an awful lot.

NARR: He certainly does!

# OBJECT LESSON OR KIDS SERMON

**ITEMS NEEDED:**
An aquarium filled with community fish (or a picture of one)

*Start this lesson by asking if the kids can identify the different fish inside the tank.*

If you go into a pet store, you'll find there are three different kinds of fish. These are all community fish. They are non-aggressive, they're not territorial, and they get along with just about everyone else in the tank. You can mix these guys all day, and they won't care. They're one happy family.

Some fish don't get along with others as well. Some are called semi-aggressive, and others are called aggressive. That means that you need to be careful how many you put in a tank, and who you put them in a tank with. Some fish would be okay with the ones we have here; they just don't get along well with others. Some species are dangerous, and they would quickly devour all the fish in the tank.

What I love about this fish tank is how it gives us a glimpse at God's family. When God sent the angels to the shepherds and not to royalty, he made it clear that everyone is welcome. Jesus came to save everyone from their sins, regardless of who they are or where they are from. We are all welcome.

But this is just a small glimpse of God's family. If we were sea creatures, this tank would include not only community fish, but the semi-aggressive and even aggressive fish! Not only can Jesus save everyone, he can change our hearts and welcome us into his family.

The Christmas story is for everyone. The love of Jesus is for everyone. Let's all do something this week to show God's love to the people in our life, especially those who may not know how much Jesus loves them.

# LARGE GROUP GAME

**GOLDFISH TOSS**

**ITEMS NEEDED:**
Goldfish crackers

**INSTRUCTIONS:**
Choose two teams of two for this game. Have the partners stand ten feet apart. One partner will get a bag of Goldfish crackers. The other will attempt to catch the Goldfish in their mouth. The two teams will race to see who can be first to toss and catch five Goldfish. The first to complete this task wins a prize.

**VARIATION:**
Instead of catching Goldfish with their mouths, you can have the players try to catch them in a plastic cup.

**WHAT'S THE POINT?**
God's love is for all the "fish" in the sea. (God love's everyone.)

# FINDING CHRISTMAS

## LARGE GROUP LESSON

**BOTTOM LINE:**
Jesus loves everyone!

**OBJECTIVE:**
Kids will come up with things they can do to help others in need before Christmas.

**KEY PASSAGE:**
Luke 2:1-20, The Shepherds

**INTRO:**
We've had a lot of fun in this series with the Christmas story. We've taken the story of a carpenter and his wife who had a baby in a stable two thousand years ago, and we've placed it deep beneath the sea. Instead of an angel, it was an angelfish who brought the message of Jesus to Mary. Instead of a star, a starfish guided the Magi to find the baby Jesus. And instead of King Herod, a ruthless shark attempted to find and murder the guppy Jesus.

Today we're reading the story about the shepherds. Most people know the shepherds were the first visitors to see the baby Jesus, and in keeping with our theme, we could have chosen a sea creature like the sheepshead fish to represent them. But the story of the shepherds isn't just about a group of men who tended sheep. This story has a message for everyone.

The shepherds could have been fish. They could also have been eels, or dolphins, or sea urchins, or seahorses. They could have been crabs, lobsters, clams, oysters, or jellyfish. They could have been giant blue whales, killer whales, or even the giant squid. But if this story really took place in the ocean, my guess is they would have been the simplest, plainest, least remarkable fish in the entire sea.

God had a specific purpose in sending his angels to talk to the shepherds. Let's read the story, and then let's discover what message God really sent on that starry night in Bethlehem.

**READ LUKE 2:1-20**

# LARGE GROUP LESSON

**MAIN POINT:**
If you remember last week's lesson, the wise men who traveled from the East with their expensive spices and gold went first to the home of Herod. They expected the king of Israel to know where this newborn king might be, even if it wasn't his own son.

It's only natural to assume that if something important has happened, important people will be the first to know about it. So why did God send an angel to visit shepherds? These men were not rich or famous or even important. They were probably poorly educated and had very few possessions of their own. They were the lowest, simplest, poorest people in the area.

And that's why God sent the angel out into the fields. God was sending a message, not just for the shepherds, but for the whole world. Jesus has not come to be a king in a palace. He has not come to appear on every magazine cover. He hasn't come to be a superstar. Jesus has come to save the whole world!

If this story took place under the sea, God would have sent the angelfish to visit the sea urchin, the fiddler crab, or just a plain, dull fish. God would have sent the angelfish to a simple fish because God wanted every creature to know that Jesus had come to save every fish in the sea!

**DRIVE IT HOME:**
The Bible tells us that every one of us is made in God's image. No matter where we are from, how much money we have, what kind of family we have, or what nationality we are, we are all made in God's image. Every one of us, regardless of race, color, or how much money they have, was created to be a child of God!

The Bible also tells us that we are all sinners. We have all fallen short of God's best, and we all need a Savior. There is nothing we can do to "earn" salvation or pay the price for our own sin. We need someone to save us!

God sent the angels to the shepherds to let us know a Savior has come, not for the rich and powerful, but for everyone who believes. And Jesus lived that mission by going not to the rich or powerful, but to the poor, the sick, the disabled, the diseased. He went to the sinners, the people who needed him most, the ones everyone thought least likely to be saved. He made sure everyone knew they were welcome in his family.

God's love is for everyone. Jesus' love is for everyone. And God wants us to do our part to make sure others know Jesus loves them. We can share God's love this Christmas season by giving to others. We can give money, food, clothing, toys, and other items that people need. We can also share the story of Christmas by telling it to our friends or even inviting them to church.

# LARGE GROUP LESSON

God didn't announce the birth of Jesus to the big name celebrities. He announced it to the shepherds, so that all would know they are welcome in the stable. Let's do our part this week to make sure all are welcome here and in God's family. Let's share the love of Jesus as we share the story of Christmas.

**CLOSE WITH A SIMPLE PRAYER:**
*Dear God,*

*Help us to show everyone that you love them.*

*In Jesus' name,*
*Amen*

# FINDING CHRISTMAS

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (K-2ND)

**ICEBREAKER:**
If you were telling an under the sea version of the Christmas story, whom would you send the angel to visit?

**MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY:**
**Matthew 1:21**
Give each kid one word or a few words of the verse on a note card. See if they can arrange the cards and get the verse right. Then read the verse aloud with the kids.

**SMALL GROUP GAME/ACTIVITY:**
Have the kids create a skit, using the idea they came up with in the icebreaker, to tell an "under the sea" version of the shepherd's story.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**
**Read Luke 2:1-20**

Whom did the angel visit after Jesus was born?

What did the angel tell the shepherds?

What did the shepherds do when they heard about Jesus?

Why did God send the angel to tell the shepherds about Jesus?

What can we do to show God's love to others this week?

**SIMPLE PRAYER:**
*Dear God,*

*Thank you for your amazing love!*

*In Jesus' name,*
*Amen*

# FINDING CHRISTMAS

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (3-5TH)

**ICEBREAKER:**
If you were telling an under the sea version of the Christmas story, whom would you send the angel to visit?

**MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY:**
**Matthew 1:21**
Give each kid one word or a few words of the verse on a note card. See if they can arrange the cards and get the verse right. Then read the verse aloud with the kids.

**SMALL GROUP GAME/ACTIVITY:**
Have the kids create a skit, using the idea they came up with in the icebreaker, to tell an "under the sea" version of the shepherd's story.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**
**Read Luke 2:1-20**

Why did God send the angel to tell the shepherds about Jesus?

Why do you think God didn't invite the king or someone more famous than the shepherds?

Is there anyone who can't be saved by Jesus?

What are some things we can do to show God's love to others this week?

Is there someone you can invite to church next week as well?

**SIMPLE PRAYER:**
*Dear God,*

*Thank you for your amazing love!*

*In Jesus' name,*
*Amen*

# POWERPOINT REVIEW GAME

**TRUE OR FALSE**

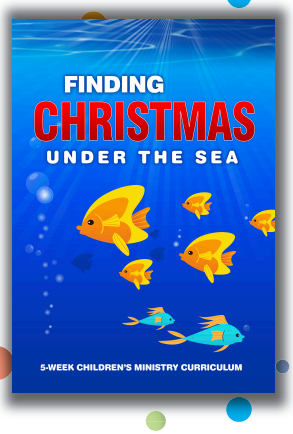
God tried to invite the rich people of Bethlehem to see Jesus, but no one would listen.
FALSE

God sent the angel to the shepherds to invite them to see the baby Jesus.
TRUE

God's love is for everyone, no matter who they are.
TRUE

The only way we can show God's love is by telling other people about him.
FALSE

We can show God's love through giving as well as talking about Jesus.
TRUE




# MAKE IT STICK

**5 Simple Ways You Can Make This Lesson Stick With your Kids**

# Finding Christmas Lesson 4

## THIS WEEK'S LESSON: WE FISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS



**IN THE CAR:**

Ask your child what they learned about this week on the drive home:
The sea is filled with all kinds of creatures great and small. Kids will learn that people are all different, but Jesus came for all of us and loves everyone the same. Luke 2:1-20



**HANGING OUT:**

Make this week's lesson real:
Make a point to do some giving this week, through money or donations or work, with your kids. Pray for those who your giving will help as a family, and ask God to use your family to share his love with others.



**AT DINNER:**

Here are some great discussion starters:
- Why did God send the angel to the shepherds and not to more powerful people?
- Is there anyone who can't be saved by the love of Jesus?
- What can we do to share God's love with others?



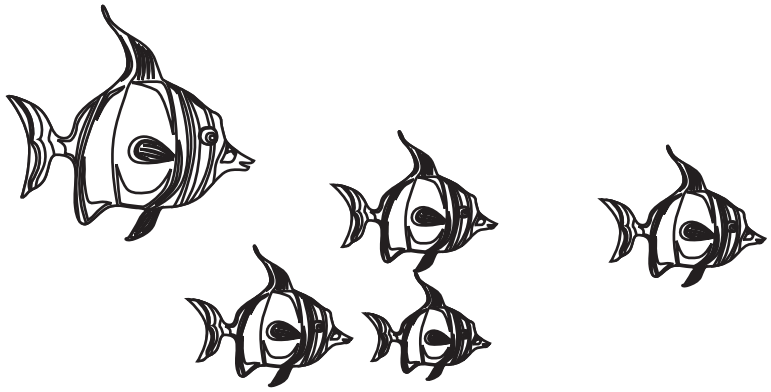
**AT BEDTIME:**

Quiz your child on this week's memory verse:
*"She is going to have a son. You must give him the name Jesus. That's because he will save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21 (NIRV)*

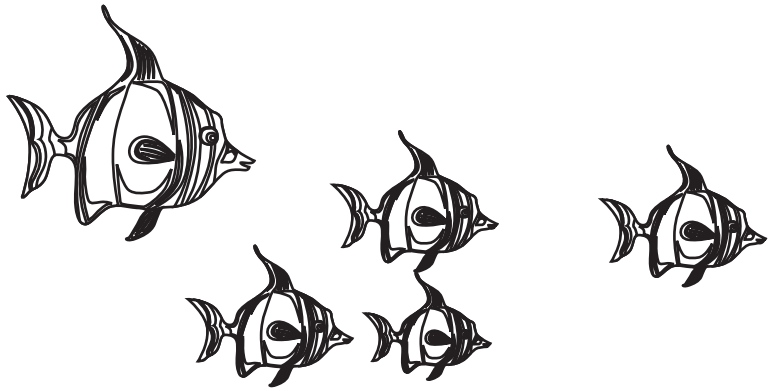


**PARENT TIME:**

What you need to know:
God's love is for everyone. That's why God sent the angels to the shepherds, so that we would understand that all are welcome in his family. Pray that God will use you and your kids to share the good news of Jesus in words and actions this week.



"She is going to have a son. You must give him the name Jesus. That's because he will save his people from their sins." - Matthew 1:21 NIRV



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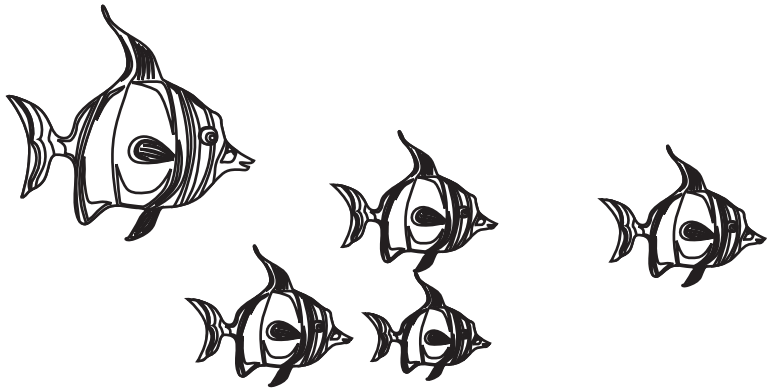

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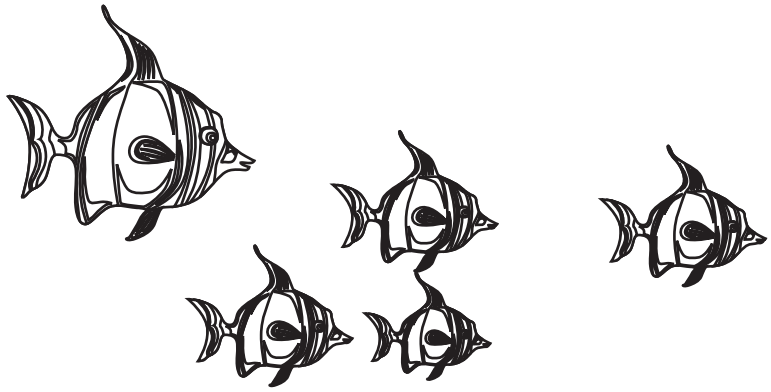

"She is going to have a son. You must give him the name Jesus. That's because he will save his people from their sins." - Matthew 1:21 NIRV

CUT ON DASHED LINE

## CRAFT ACTIVITY

Let the kids make invitations for their friends to come to church next week. Make the invitations fish shaped with the message, “We fish you a Merry Christmas” written on them, along with service info. Or let them decorate the included coloring page and write or print your service info on the back of the page.

We Fish You A Merry Christmas!