



## Session Overview

### Infants (Bubbles)

Tuesday 04 October 2011

### Angel's praise

**Series:** Christmas praise

**Bible passage:** Luke 2:8-20

**Session aim:** To join the angels and shepherds as they praise God for Jesus

**Preparation for you:** This Advent we prepare by joining in the songs of praise surrounding Jesus' entry into the world. Familiarity can easily blind us to the radical nature of the words we shall be reading. Although Mary's was earlier, we read Zechariah's song first to start with John the Baptist and then move on to Jesus. In Zechariah's song look for what he says about the character of God and the nature of God's promise. How is that promise about to be fulfilled?

Mary's song touches on similar themes. Look for the way she majors on the character of God. What emerge as the major themes? But Mary has also grasped the upside-down nature of what God is going to do in Jesus. He is good news for the lowly, the hungry and the dependent. But what does she say about the rich, the well-fed and those in positions of authority? What are the implications for us? Her song demonstrates her own faith and willingness to go with God's plan, however costly at a personal level. How do we face up to a similar challenge? The angels celebrate the goodness of God as they see the wonder of what he is doing. How might we recapture this joyful praise of the angels, this wonder at the birth of Jesus that we cover in a broad overview in the fourth week? Finally, Simeon's song shares with the others the ideas of promise and salvation. But Simeon has seen something else – Jesus is not just for Israel, but for all people. How can we recapture that vision of the great love and inclusive grace of God? How can we ensure that our churches and our groups are this open?

**Preparation for your group:** The focus for the sessions this Christmas is on the words of praise said, prophesied and sung by the various participants in the stories. Young children get very excited at Christmas time and this series will help them to focus their excitement on the nativity story rather than all the other trappings of Christmas. The children will find plenty of opportunities to thank God and celebrate the gift of his Son in these sessions. They can then join in, naturally, with the people in the stories, who want to praise God because Jesus is born.

The children will have the opportunity to praise God in dance, music, praise shouts, drama, craft activities, play activities and quiet worship as well as singing. Zechariah praises God that his son, John, will prepare the way for Jesus. Mary praises God that he has chosen her, a humble girl, to give birth to his son. The angels and shepherds praise God that Jesus has been born. Finally, Simeon praises God that one day, Jesus will save his people. What do the children want to praise God for this Christmas? How do they want to praise him?

Look out for Session 12, a special Christmas outline following a slightly different pattern, for this one occasion. Choose whether to keep your *Bubbles* children in their usual group or to join with other age groups and have a mixed-ages celebration: the flexible outline will give you plenty of tips and guidelines, whichever you decide. Happy Christmas!

**Downloads summary:** Bubbles Big Bonus Sheet C (pdf), Story words for 'Using Bubbles' (pdf), Christmas animation (zip), Bubbles Big Sheet 11 (pdf), Audio Bible Story 'A message for the shepherds' (mp3), Lettering for 'Shiny collage' (pdf)

## Activities

### Shiny Collage

**Why:** to join the angels in singing glory to God

**With:** a long length of paper, glue, glitter and shiny paper, bubble letters from below (optional), your choice of Christmas praise song

**Duration:** 5-10 minutes

**Description:** 1 Before the session, write the words 'Glory to God' on a large piece of paper (such as a strip of wallpaper) in 'bubble' letters (see )below.

2 Talk about what the angels say when they praise God: 'Glory to God!' What does this mean? Explain that it means that we love God and are telling him so.

3 Encourage the children to decorate the letters by gluing on the glitter and shiny paper to make the banner look beautiful.

4 When it is finished, all stand around the banner while you sing a praise song together.

**Resources:** Lettering for 'Shiny collage' (pdf)

**Themes:** Becomes human, Here with me

## Using Bubbles

**Why:** to hear about what the angels and shepherds say about Jesus and join them in praise

**With:** *Bubbles Big Sheet 11*, *Big Bonus Sheet C*, *The Big Bible Storybook* or see story below

**Duration:** 10 minutes

**Description:** 1 Recap on the story in the last session and tell the children that Jesus has now been born, just as the angel said. Give each child a copy of *Bubbles Big Sheet 11* and look together at the four-part photo story on the back.

2 Read the story of 'A message for the shepherds' on page 126 of *The Big Bible Storybook* or 'Angels' praise' from *Big Bonus Sheet C* or see below. Encourage the children to point to the relevant pictures as you read the story.

3 Ask the children (as Kris does) which part of the story they like best. Let them point to the appropriate picture for that part of the story. Can the children say why they like that bit best?

4 Notice what Cara is saying. Can the children make up a tune and sing the words that the angels say? Alternatively, sing this song to the tune of 'Frère Jacques', either all together or as an echo:

Angels singing; angels singing,  
Praise to God, praise to God. Praise to God in heaven. Praise to God in heaven.  
Peace on earth. Peace on earth.

5 What would the children sing or say if they heard that God's Son had been born? Get excited as you 'realise' that this is what Christmas is all about. God's Son, Jesus, has been born and we are enjoying his birthday.

**Resources:** *Bubbles Big Bonus Sheet C* (pdf), *Story words for 'Using Bubbles'* (pdf), *Bubbles Big Sheet 11* (pdf), *Audio Bible Story 'A message for the shepherds'* (mp3)

**Themes:** Becomes human, Here with me

## Bible story with puppets

**Why:** to join with the shepherds and angels as they say wonderful things about Jesus

**With:** Shepherd and angel Template from below, crayons, paper, sticky tape

**Duration:** 10 minutes

**Description:** 1 Before the session, copy template below for each child, on to card if available. Cut out the shepherds and angels.

2 Let the children colour in the figures and add a looped paper strip at the back for the child's hands.

3 Sit with the children and the puppets in a circle. Remind the children of the Bible story last time. An angel had come to Mary to tell her she would have a special baby. Now the baby has been born.

4 Ask everyone to put their shepherds in the centre. Begin the story:

It was night time. The shepherds were looking after their sheep. Suddenly, an angel appeared and the shepherds were amazed! The angel said, 'I've got some good news for you. Today, in Bethlehem, baby Jesus has been born. God has sent him to you.' Suddenly, the whole sky was filled with angels. (*Ask the children to wave the angels in the air.*) The angels all began to sing wonderful words of praise to God. 'Praise to God! Peace to everyone!' The shepherds looked at each other in amazement. 'Let's go and find the baby,' they said. (*Ask the children to pick up their shepherds and 'walk' them.*) The shepherds found Jesus with Mary and Joseph in a stable. They saw at once how special he was. They went home praising God. (*Move the puppets again.*)

5 Ask the children what they think the shepherds might have said. Perhaps they said thank you to God for sending Jesus. Perhaps they told God how much they loved him. Suggest you do the same.

**Themes:** Becomes human, Here with me

## The Christmas story

**Why:** to discover the story of the first Christmas

**With:** The Christmas Animation, a PC or laptop, a projector (optional)

**Duration:** 10 minutes

**Description:** 1 Watch the animation beforehand so it is familiar to you. The story is based on Matthew 1:18–25; Luke 2:1–21.

2 Settle the children where they can see the screen. Begin the animation and read the words:

### The Christmas Bible Storybook

*A Bible Friends Bible story*

Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem. There was nowhere for them to stay.

Mary was going to have a baby soon.

A kind man said that Mary and Joseph could stay in the animal shed by his house.

Very soon, the baby was born. Mary and Joseph called him 'Jesus'.

Some shepherds saw an angel. The angel said, "God's Son has been born."

Lots more angels appeared. They sang, "Praise to God. Peace to everyone."

The shepherds went to see the baby. "Angels told us about him," they said.

The shepherds went home, very happy because they had seen Jesus, God's Son.

A long way away, wise men saw a new star in the sky.

"A new baby king has been born," they said. They set off to find him.

The star showed them the way. At last, they found Mary, Joseph and Jesus.

They saw Jesus and kneeled down. They gave him wonderful presents.

The wise men went home, very happy because they had seen Jesus, God's Son.

3 Which part of the story did the children enjoy most? Can they remember all the people who saw Jesus? Would the children have liked to be there?

[This story is available as a board book: [The Christmas Bible Storybook](#), published by Scripture Union at £3.99 ISBN 978 1 84427 291 4]

**Resources:** Christmas animation (zip)

**Themes:** Becomes human, Here with me

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