

Keeping Watch by Night

Luke 2:1–20 · This week: We Have Waited for Him, and He Will Save Us, Christmas

In the manual: **Come, Follow Me lesson 52, “We Have Waited for Him, and He Will Save Us,” on Gospel Library**



Tonight is Christmas Eve. Many families read Luke 2 tonight, and this lesson prints the part about the shepherds.

START

On the night Jesus was born, the first people to hear the news were shepherds “keeping watch over their flock by night” (Luke 2:8).

READ TOGETHER

Caesar Augustus had ordered everyone to be taxed, so Joseph took Mary, who was about to have a baby, to Bethlehem, the city of David (Luke 2:1–5). There was no room in the inn, and Mary laid her newborn son in a manger (Luke 2:7).

LUKE 2:8–11

⁸ And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. ¹⁰ And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

LUKE 2:13–14

¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,
¹⁴ Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

WHAT IT TEACHES

Shepherds were ordinary working people, out in the fields at night. The angel’s first words to them were “Fear not” (Luke 2:10). The news was “good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.”

President Dallin H. Oaks taught why the shepherds may have been chosen. “The shepherds were probably chosen to receive these good tidings because they were meek and humble. Thus, they were uniquely receptive to the message of heaven, which they verified by visiting the newborn.”

President Dallin H. Oaks, “Good Tidings of Great Joy,” First Presidency Christmas devotional, December 2022

The angel called the baby “a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11). Shepherds in Bethlehem cared for lambs, and this baby would become the Lamb of God (John 1:29). He would also be the Good Shepherd who gives his life for the sheep (John 10:11).

The shepherds came “with haste,” found the baby, and then told everyone what they had seen (Luke 2:16–17). Mary “kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart” (Luke 2:19).

TALK ABOUT IT

The shepherds hurried to Bethlehem and then told everyone. Mary kept these things and pondered them. Which one are you more like, and what will you do with the Christmas story this year?

TAKE TO CHURCH

The first people to hear of the Savior’s birth were shepherds working at night. The good tidings of great joy are for all people, and that includes every ordinary family.