CHRISTMAS SHAPES

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY: The Shepherds • Luke 2:8-20
The shepherds run to Jesus.

MEMORY VERSE: *"God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son." John 3:16 (GNT)*

KEY QUESTION: How do we know God loves us?

BOTTOM LINE: God gave us Jesus.

OPENING ACTIVITY: Herding Sheep

MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY: Verse RevEWE

CRAFT: Circle Ornament

CLOSING ACTIVITY: Shepherds in Action

OPENING ACTIVITY | Herding Sheep

What You Need:

- ☐ Cotton balls or white pom-poms
- ☐ Plastic decorative candy canes

WHAT YOU DO & SAY:

***Before the Activity*:**

- Scatter the cotton balls/pom-poms around the table. *Option: Copy "Allergy Alert Poster" on cardstock, list candy canes, and post at the door.*
- "Friends, join me over here at the table. Look at all these cotton balls. Let's pretend they're sheep and we are shepherds. Shepherds have staffs that help direct and gather their sheep. *(Hold up a candy cane.)* This candy cane looks a lot like a shepherd staff. We'll use these as our staffs to gather sheep."

During the Activity:

- Give each child a candy cane. If you have more children than candy canes, encourage children to gather two sheep, then pass the candy cane to another child and repeat until each child has a turn. Encourage children to pretend to be shepherds and use the candy cane as a "staff" to gather the "sheep." Gather all the sheep into the center of the table.
- "Okay, shepherds! Let's gather the sheep. Be gentle and kind and try to get your sheep in the middle of the table. *(Pause.)* Wow, you are good shepherds! Some of those sheep are tricky. Keep trying to gather them with your staff. *(Once the sheep are gathered, scatter again. Repeat as desired.)* That was so fun! You did a great job of being shepherds!"

After the Activity:

- "Today, in our Bible Story, we're going to hear about real shepherds who got some amazing news while they were in the field taking care of their sheep. Let's go hear our story!"

MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY | Verse RevEWE

What You Need: No supplies needed

WHAT YOU DO & SAY:
***Before the Activity*:**

- Gather with the children in an open area and say the Memory Verse with the motions.
- "Friends, come over here. Let's say our verse as we do the motions together. Ready? 'God *(flat hand with thumb to forehead, pull down)* loved the world so much *(cross arms over chest)* that he gave his only Son,' *(rock arms like a baby)* John 3:16. *(Open hands like a book.)* Fantastic!"

During the Activity:

- "I love our Memory Verse; it tells us that God loves us. Let's say it super-duper loud this time. 'God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son,' John 3:16. That was so loud! This time, let's say it's super soft. 'God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son,' John 3:16. Let's try to say it like a baby. *(Pause.)* Oh, that was funny. Now let's say our verse like a sheep. *(Pause.)* Yes, baaa, baaa that was so good baaa, baaa. I loved saying our verse in all the different ways and remembering that God loves us."

After the Activity:

- "Today in our Bible Story, the shepherds ran *(run in place)* to find baby Jesus. They knew baby Jesus was the best gift ever. **How do we know that God loves us? *[Bottom Line]* God gave us Jesus!"**

Christmas Shapes | Week 3 | December 21, 2025
Adapted by Niki P/Venture Church/Nov. 2025

CRAFT | Circle Ornament

What You Need:

- ☐ "Circle Ornament" Activity Page
- ☐ Crayons
- ☐ Small white pom-poms
- ☐ 3.94-inch clear refillable ornaments, one half per child
- ☐ Yarn
- ☐ Craft glue
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Hole punch

WHAT YOU DO & SAY:

Before the Activity:

- Punch a hole at the top of each child's paper. Cut yarn in 8-inch lengths, one per child. For each child, thread their yarn through the hole and knot the ends. Write each child's name on their paper.
- "Come to the table and let's create a super special Christmas ornament."

During the Activity:

- Encourage children to color their picture. Ask children to put a few pom-poms on their picture then trace the outline of the circle on their paper with glue. Help children align one ornament half on the glue. Set aside to dry.

- "We're going to make an ornament today that has a circle shape. This fun ornament will help us remember the part of the true Christmas story when the shepherds ran to see Jesus. Color your picture. *(Pause.)* I see Mary, Joseph, baby Jesus, and the shepherds. What animal do shepherds take care of? *(Pause.)* Sheep! That's right! These little pom-poms look like sheep. Let's count out three sheep. One, two, three! Great job! Put those to the side and we'll add them later. Trace the circle *(point)* with the glue. *(Pause.)* Put those sheep inside the circle, and now I'll help you add this circle on top of the glue. *(Position half of the ornament on top of the glue.)* We'll let these super cute circle ornaments dry, and then you can take them home."

After the Activity:

- "Today's true story from the Bible begins with some shepherds who were out in a field taking care of their sheep. One night, God sent an angel to give the shepherds a message. The angel said, "Don't be afraid! I bring you good news of great joy! God's Son, Jesus, has been born! Then more angels came and praised God and said: "Glory to God in the highest!" (Luke 2:14 NIV) The shepherds were so excited, they ran and found baby Jesus in a manger just like the angel had said. They were so happy that the shepherds told EVERYONE that Jesus, God's Son, was born! Everyone who heard the good news about Jesus was amazed. The shepherds praised God because ***[Bottom Line]*** **God gave us Jesus! How do we know God loves us?** ***[Bottom Line]*** **God gave us Jesus!"**

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BIBLE STORY

Open Bible for children to see, then set it down.
"Today's true story is found in the book of Luke, and it begins with shepherds.

"Do you know what shepherds take care of? *(Listen.)* Shepherds take care of sheep. But not just one sheep! Shepherds take care of a lot of sheep.

"Let's pretend we are sheep. Everyone, say, "Baa!"

CHILDREN and LEADER: "Baa! Baa! Baa!"

"Good baa-ing! Now, I need you to listen carefully, because I've got something special to tell you.

"One night, there were some shepherds watching their sheep. They were in the fields outside the town of Bethlehem. *(With quiet excitement, like you are telling a secret.)* The shepherds didn't know it yet, but God's Son, Jesus, was born!

"God wanted EVERYONE to know about it. So, God sent a very special messenger to the shepherds. God sent an angel!

"The shepherds were so surprised … and afraid! Can you make an afraid face? *(Make an afraid face.)*

"Yes, the shepherds were afraid!

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news. It will bring great joy for all the people" (Luke 2:10 NIrV).

"The angel told them that Jesus had been born and that the shepherds would find Him in a manger.

"Then, even more angels appeared. The angels praised God and said:

'Glory to God in the highest!' (Luke 2:14 ESV).

"Let's say that together. Ready?"

CHILDREN and LEADER: "Glory to God in the highest!"

CHILDREN and LEADER: "Glory to God in the highest! Glory to God in the highest!"

"Great job! The angels praised God because Jesus was born. ***[Bottom Line]* God gave us Jesus!**

"After the angels left, the shepherds were so excited that they ran to find baby Jesus.

"Let's pretend to be the shepherds and run in place to find baby Jesus. *(Hold up your fingers as you count.)* One … two … three … stand up and run in place! *(Lead children to run in place.)*

"Whew! It's time to sit. *(Hold up your fingers as you count.)* One … two … three … sit down with me! Let's see what happens next.

"The shepherds ran to find baby Jesus, and just like the angel said, the shepherds found baby Jesus in a manger. They were so happy that the shepherds told EVERYONE that Jesus, God's Son, was born!

"Everyone who heard the good news about Jesus was amazed, and the shepherds praised God.

"Friends, God loves you and ***[Basic Truth]*** **God loves me** so much that ***[Bottom Line]*** **God gave us Jesus. How do we know God loves us?"**

CHILDREN and LEADER: ***[Bottom Line]*** **"God gave us Jesus!"**

LEADER: "Yes, ***[Bottom Line]*** **God gave us Jesus.**

(Pick up and close Bible.) "Our story time is over, but we're not through. Let's talk to God because God loves you!"

PRAYER - Dear God, thank You for giving us Jesus. We know You love us because You gave us Your Son. Help us tell everyone about Jesus, just like the shepherds, so they will know that You love them too. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

CLOSING ACTIVITY | Shepherds in Action

What You Need:

- ☐ White mylar balloons
- ☐ Plastic straw
- ☐ Black permanent marker

WHAT YOU DO & SAY:

Before the Activity:

- Pair children in groups of two. Assign each pair a "sheep" balloon. Insert the straw in the opening of the balloons and inflate with air. Draw simple sheep faces on each mylar balloon.
- "Hello friends! Does anyone remember what a shepherd is? (*Pause for responses.*) That's right! A shepherd watches over sheep. There were shepherds watching over their sheep in our story today."

During the Activity:

- Model and encourage each pair to face each other, stretch their arms straight out in front of them, and lock their forearms with their partner. This will create a safe "pasture" for catching seep. Once all pairs are ready, a leader will toss a "sheep" balloon into the air above the pairs. Their job is to catch the sheep using only their locked arms, not their hands. Once caught, the sheep can be gently tossed back to the leader for another round. Repeat as desired.
- "Let's play a fun game where we pretend to be shepherds watching our sheep! You'll work with a friend to gently guide the balloon, our sheep, so it doesn't get away. Are you ready, shepherds? Lock your arms with your partner and get ready to catch the sheep. *(Toss the sheep in the air over each of the groups.)* You're doing a great job keeping your sheep safe! Keep working together just like the shepherds worked to take care of their sheep. Great teamwork!" *(Repeat as desired.)*

After the Activity:

- "In our story today, the shepherds were watching over their sheep when they heard the good news that Jesus was born. They were so excited that they ran to find Jesus and told everyone that Jesus was born! God loves us so much that ***[Bottom Line]*** **God gave us Jesus! How do we know God loves us?** ***[Bottom Line]*** **God gave us Jesus.**"

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