



It's easy to relegate the Christmas season to a cute nativity cliché. So here's a 20-30 minute exercise with a nativity passage you can do with students (or send to students) to keep the truth of Jesus' birth fresh and transforming.

● **Materials Needed**

- Each student will need a Bible or Bible app and paper/pen for journaling.

● **Intro**

- After your group has gathered, ask your students to discuss this question:

What's the best news you've ever delivered to someone?

● **Insight**

- After discussing that question for a few minutes, explain to your group that in ancient times (Jesus' day and before) there was a word the Greeks used to describe the act of announcing good news. The word was *eu-angelizo* (pronounced you-ang-ghel-EEed-zoe). It was used to announce things like:
 - victory in battle (this was the most common use)
 - an approaching wedding
 - the birth of a child

Share that in most cases, the use of this word was reserved for those times when people had been waiting a long time for the news. And it actually described the act of *shouting* or intentionally announcing the good news.

● **Digging In (God, Show Me!)**

- Have students read Luke 2:1-14 in solitude and pay attention to the shepherds. They may want to write on a piece of paper everything they learn about the shepherds, including what was told to them.

● **Taking It Inward (God, Teach Me!)**

- After students have read the passage and noted some info about the shepherds, spend a few minutes discussing the shepherds using these questions:

What can you speculate about their social and economic status? (This answer will require some "reading into.")

What can you speculate about their faith background? (Again, some "reading into" required.)



These shepherds would have been very aware of messengers bringing good news to villagers about battle progress and probably knowledgeable of the word used to describe that (*euangelizo*), which is the word the angel used here when saying “I bring you good news of great joy.”

What is significant about the use of this word in this instance?

How does this scene between the angel and the shepherds parallel the scene between a battle messenger and villagers?

Seek to draw out the following conclusions and observations:

- **Jews were an oppressed people in the Roman empire, and shepherds were low status even among these oppressed people.**
- **The shepherds were probably Jewish and thus, with all other Jews, waiting on the Messiah.**
- **It had been a long time since they had heard from God.**
- **The angel said that a savior had been born to them and that this savior was Christ the Lord. This sounds pretty personal.**
- **The angel and the heavenly hosts mentioned that this would bring peace to men on earth. This sounds pretty worldwide.**

Putting Into Practice (God, Change Me!)

- Use these questions, divided into “personal” and “worldwide” categories, to help students apply the truth of this passage and to bring the scene between the angel and the shepherds into their lives.

Personal

Since you were born, your soul has been longing to get back to its intended state: a relationship with God. Meanwhile it’s been in turmoil, eagerly waiting for some good news that peace may come. Have you accepted the Good News and given your soul what it longs for?

Like the shepherds, have you felt like it’s been awhile since you’ve heard from God? If so, picture the angel speaking the very words to you that were spoken to the shepherds. In fact, write them word-for-word just as if God is speaking them to you. Because He is.

Worldwide

The word we’ve been talking about, *euangelizo*, conveyed the idea of *announcing* or even *shouting* the good news simply because it was news worthy of shouting. So the question is, how can you announce this news to the world around you?