***Lesson 3: A Christmas to Remember (Make Your Own Nativity):***

 ***The Animals at the Manger***

**Advent Scripture:** But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” (Luke 2: 10-12)

**Lesson #3: What can we learn from the Sheep at the Manger?**

**Leader:** Welcome! We are spending Advent learning from the animals who were there on the night Jesus was born! Let’s begin with a very special song!

(Play or sing the song *The Friendly Beasts.)*

**Leader:** And now (get out a microphone)… welcome to the News!!

**Interviewer:** My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Today we have a special guest who was present in Bethlehem when Jesus was born.

This guest is a SHEEP.

I’m going to find out WHY SHEEP were important at the time Jesus was born.

Please put your hands together and Welcome our guest, a SHEEP.

(Children clap for the SHEEP.)

(SHEEP COMES OUT WITH SHEPHERD.)

Welcome to our show, (Miss or Mr.) SHEEP.

**SHEEP:** Thank you. I’m glad I could be here with my Shepherd.

You know us SHEEP don’t go anywhere alone.

SHEEP tend to wander off and get lost. So I have to have a Shepherd with me at all times.

**INTERVIEWER:** (Turns to Shepherd) Thanks, Shepherd, for bringing Mr. SHEEP here.

You must take good care of him.

**SHEPHERD:** Yes, I do. Being a SHEPHERD is a full-time job.

 I look out for the SHEEP day and night.

 I use this STAFF to keep them together.

 I lead the SHEEP to water, and I keep wild animals like lions and bears away from them.

 I take care of SHEEP because they are very important to us.

**INTERVIEWER**: (Back to SHEEP) So Mr. SHEEP, you are fortunate to have a Shepherd take of you, but what makes SHEEP so important?

**SHEEP:** I am important for several reasons.

One is you can shear my wooI to make clothes.

My wool is woven into comfortable material for people to wear.

Another reason SHEEP are important is that SHEEP are used to make food. One food they make from SHEEP Milk is SHEEP CHEESE.

Have you ever tasted SHEEP CHEESE? It is delicious!

**INTERVIEWER:** That is interesting. You were used for FOOD and CLOTHING.

That was very important to the people in Jesus’ day.

**SHEEP:** Not only that, but did you know that SHEEP are the only animal mentioned over 700 times in the Bible?

That makes SHEEP super special!

**INTERVIEWER:** You were mentioned over 700 times in the Bible!

You ARE really important!

But tell me, Mr. SHEEP, what made you important at Advent, when Jesus was born?

**SHEEP:** Well, we SHEEP were grazing (that means eating grass) out in the field that night, and suddenly all these ANGELS appeared in the sky.

 This scared me a little at first. But the Angels looked so beautiful in the night sky, I couldn’t take my eyes off them.

And what they said made us all so happy.

They said A **child was born in a manger** **in Bethlehem**.

The Angels told us that his name was **Jesus**.

And He would rule the world fairly.

That was wonderful news because our people had been treated to badly by the Romans.

The Angels called him **THE MESSIAH**, which means **God’s Son**.

We were so excited!

Our Shepherd herded us together and we hurried to the manger to see baby Jesus.

**INTERVIEWER:** So you were SPECIALLY invited to be at the birth of Jesus.

Mr. SHEEP, you are truly an important Animal of Advent to get a special invitation from ANGELS!

**SHEEP:** The Shepherd herded us to Bethlehem as quickly as he could.

Being there with baby Jesus was born was the BEST day of my life.

**INTERVIEWER:** What an amazing experience.

I wish I could have been there.

But now I am going to move to a hard question for you.

Some people say SHEEP are **docile**.

I thought **docile** meant LAZY.

Is that true? Mr. SHEEP, are you LAZY?

**SHEEP:** That is a good question!

I’d like to clear that up right now.

**Docile** means we are **easy to teach** and we **follow directions**.

We learn quickly and do what our Shepherds tell us to do.

So **docile** is a good thing when you are talking about SHEEP. We really trust our shepherd!

**INTERVIEWER:** Shepherd, would you like to follow up on that?

**SHEPHERD**: Yes, I would. I love my sheep and they love me and that is why they trust me and follow me!

I love leading my SHEEP.

**INTERVIEWER:** (Miss or Mr.) SHEEP, one last question – What ADVICE do you have for the children listening to this interview?

**SHEEP:** My advice to EVERYONE is to always follow your shepherd! Your good shepherd will teach you, and take care of you and guide you!

**INTERVIEWER:** SHEEP, you are an amazing animal. And so wise! I hope I and all of the children will always follow our Good Shepherd, Jesus, just like you followed your shepherd to the manger where Jesus was born!

**SHEEP:**

Let’s give SHEEP and his SHEPHERD a big hand for being on our show.

(Children clap)

Thank you for being a part of our Morning News Show.

**Scripture and Reflection:**

**Scripture**

**Leader:** It is now our sacred time.Let’s light our candle and set it in the stable. This represents the light of God. Now let’s get still … breathe in, breathe out. Listen to our Advent Scripture**.** *But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.**Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.**This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”* (Luke 2: 10-12)

**Question of the Day:**

**Leader:** The sheep follows the Good Shepherd. Let’s take a moment to be very still and think about our Good Shepherd and how much He loves us! Let’s breathe in his love and then relax in his love, as we breath out. Let’s do this three times.

**Craft:** (Cut out the sheep, dove, and angel. Add them to the nativity.)

Remind the children that the sheep followed the shepherd and when they look at the sheep in the nativity they should think of Jesus, their Good Shepherd!