

# Shepherds Visit the Newborn Savior (Luke 2:8-20)

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**Guidelines (For Groups):** Protect confidentiality and follow the leader's prompts.

**Ignatian Meditation Process:** Ignatius chose this Gospel reading for Week 2 of *The Spiritual Exercises*. Read the introduction and then "Ask for the grace". Then quietly read the passage by using your imagination to enter into the story, sensing and feeling what's going on. Don't analyze the passage or seek insights — *experience yourself as a character in the story*. After the second reading have a "colloquy" (short, personal conversation) with the Lord. You can use the prompts and questions at the bottom to guide your prayer time and journaling (and sharing with others).

**Introduction:** It's late at night and a few shepherds are straining to stay awake to watch over a herd of sheep and protect them from wolves. It's difficult labor for low wages. People look down upon them. They're a lonely group. Yet, it's to them that God sends a choir of glorious angels singing his royal announcement of the birth of his Son! What astonishing news that the baby Messiah is lying in a manger! And that he is not only the Savior of Israel, but of the whole world! It's no wonder they take off running, wild with excitement! They arrive and there he is with the animals, their newborn Savior. Everybody who hears the shepherd's story is amazed. But Mary is more than amazed, she treasures her newborn Savior.

**Ask For the Grace:** Lord Jesus, I ask for the grace I desire: to know you more intimately, to love you more intensely, and to follow you more closely.

## **Imagine Yourself in the Gospel: Luke 2 (MSG)**

8-12 There were shepherders camping in the neighborhood. They had set night watches over their sheep. Suddenly, God's angel stood among them and God's glory blazed around them. They were terrified. The angel said, "Don't be afraid. I'm here to announce a great and joyful event that is meant for everybody, worldwide: A Savior has just been born in David's town, a Savior who is Messiah and Master. This is what you're to look for: a baby wrapped in a blanket and lying in a manger."

13-14 At once the angel was joined by a huge angelic choir singing God's praises:

Glory to God in the heavenly heights,  
Peace to all men and women on earth who please him.

15-18 As the angel choir withdrew into heaven, the shepherders talked it over. "Let's get over to Bethlehem as fast as we can and see for ourselves what God has revealed to us." They left, running, and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. Seeing was believing. They told everyone they met what the angels had said about this child. All who heard the shepherders were impressed.

19-20 Mary kept all these things to herself, holding them dear, deep within herself. The shepherders returned and let loose, glorifying and praising God for everything they had heard and seen. It turned out exactly the way they'd been told!

**1st Reading:** Visualize yourself in the Gospel story. Don't seek intellectual insights — stay with the imagery. Use your senses to see, touch, feel, and hear. What part of the story are you drawn to? Which character do you identify with or are you a bystander?

**2nd Reading:** Experience the story in the role of the character God led you to. Then talk with the Lord. What do you feel? How does this relate to something in your life today? What is God saying to you?