



Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

By Deborah Wassenberg

Introduction:

'Hark! The Herald Angels Sing' is a Christmas favourite. It was written by Charles Wesley in 1739 and adapted by George Whitefield in 1758. William Hayman Cummings adapted it to Mendelssohn's music from Festgesang in 1855. This lesson uses the well-known hymn to teach children about angels and the important job they do for God.

YouTube Lyric Video Suggestion:

- Hark! The Herald Angels Sing (Christmas Songs and Carols – Love to Sing)

Bible Lesson: Jesus' Birth in Bethlehem

Bible References: Matthew 1:18-25; 2:1-23; Luke 1:26-38;
2:1-20

Visuals You Will Need:

1. The heavenly host and the shepherds
2. Angels in the Old Testament
3. Gabriel and Mary
4. Michael the Archangel
5. Cherub with an 'X' through it
6. People sharing a meal at a table
7. Child praying + heavenly host

Words:

1. At Christmas we sing the hymn, 'Hark! The Herald Angels Sing'.
What does the word **hark** mean?
It's an olden-days word that means 'listen'.
What is a **herald** angel?
It's an angel bringing an announcement.
What is a **heavenly host**?
A 'heavenly host' is a multitude, or huge army, of angels.
When the angels came to the shepherds to announce the birth of Jesus, they filled the sky!
The glory of the Lord shone around them so they would have been very bright.
No wonder the shepherds were afraid!

The Bible doesn't say the angels were singing but they sure were praising God.

Although, angels can sing.

The Apostle John heard them. (*Revelation 14*)

Angels are constantly around God's throne, worshipping and shouting His praises. (*Psalms 148:1-2; Isaiah 6:3; Hebrews 1:6; Revelation 5:8-13*)

When the angels came to announce the birth of Jesus they were praising God because they knew who Jesus was!

They were excited.

'WOW! Do you realise Who has come to you?

Do you realise the gift you've been given?

We've been worshipping Him in the glory of Heaven,

and He has come as a human to save you.

Glory to God in the highest!'

2. The word angel means 'messenger' (*in Hebrew and Greek*).

The angels were sent by God to announce the news of Jesus' birth.

But you'll read about angels throughout the Bible.

Angels are spiritual beings created by God.

They live in Heaven with God and belong to Him.

Their job is to do what God commands.

Sometimes it is helping people. (*Acts 27:23-24*)

Sometimes it is to protect people. (*Acts 12:7*)

Sometimes it is to warn people. (*Genesis 19:1*)

And sometimes, it's giving announcements or passing on messages from God.

3. Do we know the names of any angels?

Gabriel is named as the angel who visited Mary.

He said, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and give birth to a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.'

4. Michael is called an archangel or chief angel. (*Jude 1:9*)

He is also called 'a great prince who stands guard over Israel'. (*Daniel 10:10-14*)

He is a military commander over angels who will fight Satan

(a fallen angel previously named Lucifer) and his demons one day.

We can read about that in the Book of Revelation.

5. Most angels appear as tall, handsome young men with shining faces and wearing simple robes.

Only some angels have wings. (*The Seraphim, Cherubim, and the Four Creatures*).

And there are no baby angels because angels don't marry and have babies!

(*Matthew 22:30*)

Angels are warriors who are ready for battle.

'Mighty ones' who do God's Word. (*Psalms 103:20*)

They go where they are sent at a specific time for a specific task because they don't know everything, only God does.
So don't worship or pray to them.
They would hate that! (*Colossians 1:16; 2:18-19*)

6. Angels are spiritual beings so we don't usually see them.
In the Book of Hebrews, it says, 'Don't neglect hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.' (*Hebrews 13:2*)
But sometimes God will open people's eyes so they can see them when they need to.

7. The angels were so excited when Jesus arrived on earth.
But there are other times when angels are excited and have a celebration.
Jesus told His disciples about it.
'...I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.' (*Luke 15:7*)
The angels celebrate when you give your life to Jesus because you are someone God loves!
You are precious and your life is priceless.
The angels rejoice because you have responded to God's plan, the plan they announced:
 'Glory to God in the highest,
 And on earth peace among people of good will.'

Ministry to the Children:

You're no angel but you can be a herald! You can announce that God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but so that the world might be saved through Him. (*John 3:16-17*)
Everyone is precious to God and Christmas is the perfect time to tell people how much God loves them and why Jesus came!

Memory Verse: Luke 15:10

In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

Hark! What's that Hymn? (Name that tune!)

Write the words of the Memory Verse and the reference out, two or three words per card.

Divide the children into teams with one child as the designated spokesperson.

Play a snippet of a Christmas hymn or carol.

Each team confers to think of what hymn or carol the snippet is from, but only the spokesperson can raise their hand and then give an answer. The first spokesperson to raise their hand gets to guess. If correct, the team wins a word of the Memory Verse. The team who wins the most words may get a small prize. When every word

of the Memory Verse has been won the teams work together to put the cards in the correct order and read the verse aloud together.

Christmas Hymns and Carol Suggestions:

- Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
- Do You Hear What I Hear?
- Angels We Have Heard on High
- Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee
- Silent Night
- O Holy Night
- O Come All Ye Faithful
- We Three Kings
- Away in a Manger
- Oh Come Let Us Adore Him
- Joy to the World
- O Little Town of Bethlehem
- It Came Upon a Midnight Clear
- The First Noel
- O Come O Come Emmanuel
- Mary's Boy Child
- The Little Drummer Boy
- What Child is This
- Hallelujah Chorus
- Mary, Did You Know?
- Go Tell It On the Mountain

Game: Pass It On (Over Under Relay)

You will need:

- Red and green balloons

What to do:

- Children line up behind one another in groups of 6 to 10 one arm's distance apart.
- The children pass back the balloon over their heads or under their legs, alternating methods with each child.
- When the last child gets the balloon, they must run (or skip or jump) to the front of the line and pass the balloon back again.
- The line will have moved up with each new start or number of turns.

Craft: Heralding Paper Horn

You will need:

- Plain coloured A4 paper
- Felt pens, stamps, stickers
- Tinsel or foil streamers
- Sticky tape

What to do:

- Children decorate one side of the A4 paper and then turn the paper over
- Sticky tape tinsel or foil streamers across the top left-hand corner, making sure the tinsel or streamers are draping past the paper so they hang outside the end of the horn
- Roll the paper from the bottom right-hand corner so the decorative side of the paper is on the outside of the horn
- Secure with sticky tape

Older children may like to insert the blowing piece from party blowers, the type that uncurl and made a noise, to the mouth of their paper horn so they can make some noise!