

CONCORD BAPTIST  
CHURCH

ADUENT  
2015

GO  
TELL  
IT

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# AN INTRODUCTION TO ADVENT

It is that time of year again. Christmas music is on the radio, Christmas lights are popping up everywhere, and Christmas trees are going up. We're getting into the festive spirit as well, but our celebration is a little different. At Concord Baptist Church we're celebrating the season of the church year called *Advent*.

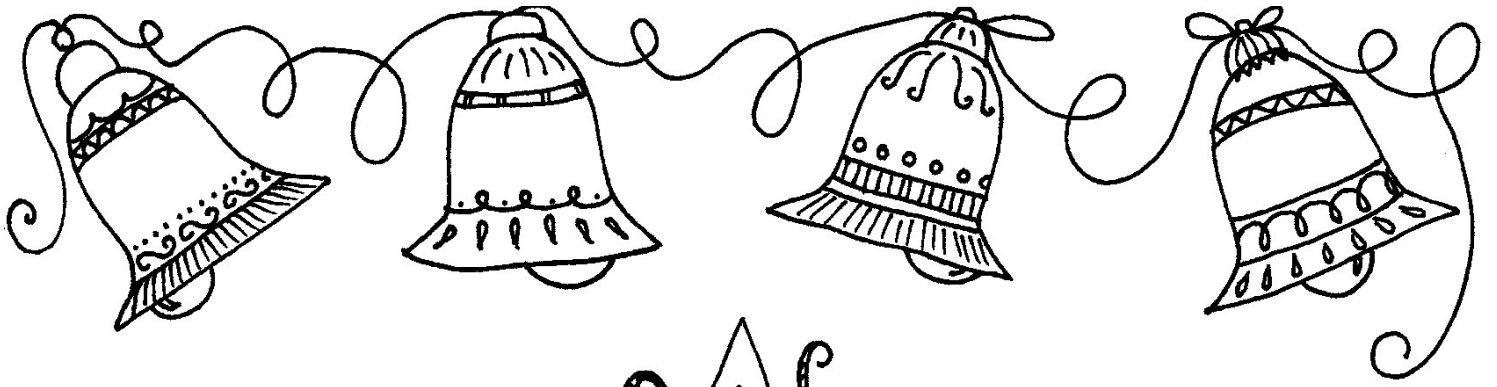
The questions are asked often enough. What is Advent? Where did the idea actually come from? The word Advent comes from the Latin *Adventus*, and it means "the coming of the Savior." Across the world, many churches celebrate Advent as a very holy time marking a period of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the Nativity of Christ, or Christmas. In many ways, it stands in contrast to the hustle and bustle, commercial, economic-driven version of the holiday season which seems to entangle our society.

Inside the church, we use the various decorations for more than just a change of scenery. The church is decorated properly with greenery everywhere, representing the evergreen hope, love, joy, and peace of the coming of our Lord. Among the items we see in Advent observances is the color purple which symbolizes great royalty in the coming of our lord. You will often see candles representing a journey. Each week, the journey brings us closer to Bethlehem.

We sing the songs of the season and of hope like "Oh Come, Oh Come Emmanuel", "O Come, All Ye Faithful" and many others. They are reminders of hope, something distinct to Christianity and so much a part of the life of every follower of Christ. Like many before us—the Hebrews entering the Promised Land and the shepherds who journeyed to Bethlehem to find the Christ child—we recognize our own journey. Through the message found in Scripture, we begin to focus our hearts on the little town of Bethlehem and the Baby in the manger. We have hope in God's promise of the One who would come and save His people. We have hope in Jesus, and we want to *Go and Tell It!*

We hope your family will join us as we tell our families, our community and ultimately the world about the birth of Jesus Christ and the love of God that came to us at Christmas. We hope you and your family will enjoy this Advent Guide and will find all of the hope, peace, love, and joy found only in Jesus Christ this Christmas!





Arise, shine, for your light has come!



**Being in Jesus Christ means we are never without hope.** Throughout Scripture, God promises to be with His people. Jeremiah prophesied of a child whose birth would testify to the faithfulness of God not to abandon His people. God promised His people, Israel, He would provide.

He promised Moses in Deuteronomy 31:6, "...it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you."

He promised Joshua in Joshua 1:5-6, "Just as I was with Moses, so will I be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you..."

David reminded his son, Solomon, in 1 Chronicles 28:20, "Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed. For the Lord God, even my God, is with you. He will not leave you or forsake you."

The Psalmist claims in Psalm 46:1-2, 11, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear...The Lord of hosts is with us..."

God reiterates the truth in Isaiah 41:10, "Fear not, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you with my righteous hand."

God has always given hope to the hopeless. He has always been about breaking into the darkness of fear and calming the storms of life. "Do not fear. Be strong. Be courageous. Be not dismayed." Why did God say those things? Because He was with them...all the way!

The same is true today. In every circumstance of life, God is with us. He is not removed from our moments of difficulty. He has not taken His hand off of you just because you are going through a challenging time. In the times which are hardest for us to cope with, it might be said that God has never been closer. There is no question for those who call upon His name. There is strength, courage, comfort and hope.

**The great message of hope in this ancient prophecy is Jesus Christ has come.** There is light for those who are walking in darkness. For the one who is afraid, Christ has come. For the one who is grieving today, Christ has come. For the one who is ready to give up, Christ has come. Jesus is Immanuel—God is with us. He is our light and our hope.

# O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL

## A Christmas Carol Devotional

Perhaps the key phrase in the lyrics of this great Christmas carol is “O come, let us adore Him”. Adoration—a word that is used often and used fittingly during the Christmas season—is the key thought expressed in that line. We probably spend more time thinking about Jesus, talking about Jesus and simply praising and adoring Jesus during the Christmas season than any other time of year. We will listen to songs on the radio, attend Christmas productions and find that more people go to church in December than any other month. We like to praise and honor the Lord especially at Christmas. Take a look at these lyrics:

O Come All Ye Faithful  
Joyful and triumphant,  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.  
Come and behold Him,  
Born the King of Angels;  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
Christ the Lord.

O Sing, choirs of angels,  
Sing in exultation,  
Sing all that hear in heaven God's holy word.  
Give to our Father glory in the Highest;  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
Christ the Lord.

All Hail! Lord, we greet Thee,  
Born this happy morning,  
O Jesus! for evermore be Thy name adored.  
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing;  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him,  
Christ the Lord.

While we faithfully praise and honor and recognize Jesus at Christmas, it is perfectly fine to adore Him at other times of the year as well. There are 11 other months in which we can act obediently, live faithfully and praise adoringly. The key to our faithfulness and obedience; however, is not that we sing carols or other songs to Him, but rather that we have a relationship with Him.

When we come to faith in Christ, we are saved from sin and from death and saved to a brand new life. That new life is filled with Christ—spending time with Him, reading His Word, praying to Him. Do you know Jesus? If you do, how are you spending time with Him? Find a way this Christmas to adore Him every day!

#### Weekly Bible Readings

Isaiah 7:14

Matthew 1:18-23

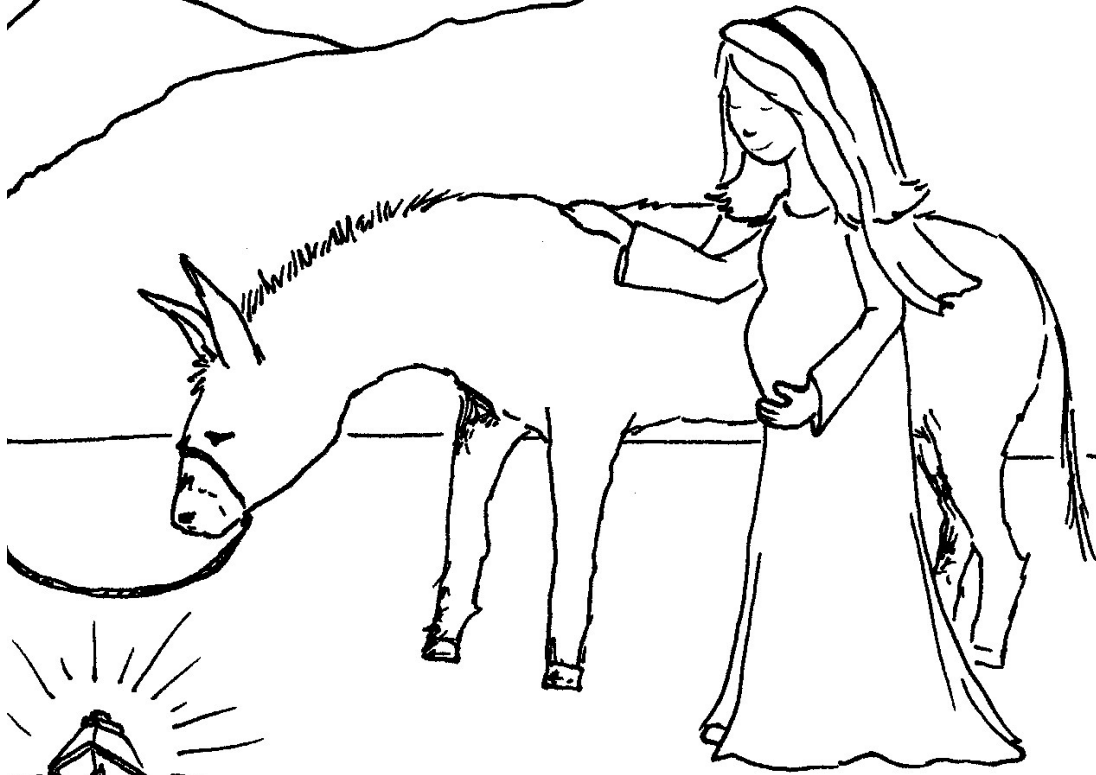
Isaiah 11:1-5

Isaiah 42:1-7

Isaiah 9:2-7

Luke 1:32, 33

Jesus  
· GIVES · US ·  
Hope



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# JAR OF HOPE

During this time of Advent leading up to the celebration of Christ's birth is a time for each of us to worship the Lord, spend time together with family, and share the love of Christ with others through acts of service. This year, plan to use the "Jar of Hope" as a tool to lead you as you serve others.

## Creating your Jar of Hope

### *Option 1 (Hard) — Glass Etching*

\*\*\* Please make sure you are in a well ventilated area and wear protective gloves. The glass etching cream is an acid and will affect anything it touches. Also, please read the manufacturer's instructions on your etching cream before getting started.

#### Supplies:

Mason jar or other glass container you'd like to etch

Armour Etch (or other etching cream)

Protective Gloves

Brush or popsicle stick

Stickers, stencils, or other adhesive template design

Ribbon

Service Sticks (see Service Stick instructions on following page.)



1. Position your stencil or sticker and smooth it onto your glass completely, making sure there are no loose edges or bubbles.
2. While wearing gloves, use a brush or popsicle stick to apply the etching cream to the exposed glass you would like to etch. Make sure you apply a generous amount of etching cream, but not so much that it runs or drips as this will alter the appearance of the final product and etch more of the glass.
3. After the 10 minutes is up, carefully wipe off the etching cream and then rinse it off with warm water. Repeat step 2 if more etching is required.
4. Immediately take off the stencil or tape to make sure there is no cream under the edges.
5. Tie a ribbon around the top of the jar.
6. Add your service sticks into the jar. (See Service Stick instructions on following page.)

### *Option 2 (Easy) — Decorating your Jar*

#### Supplies:

Mason jar, small vase, small bucket, or some kind of plain container to decorate

Stickers, Puff Paint, Spray Paint, Etc.

Ribbon

Service Sticks (see Service Stick instructions on following page.)

1. Use stickers, puff paint, spray paint, or other craft materials to decorate your "jar."
2. Tie a ribbon around the top of the jar.
3. Add your service sticks into the jar. (See Service Stick instructions on following page.)



# JAR OF HOPE—SERVICE STICKS

## Service Sticks

Supplies:

10 or more popsicle sticks

Pencil or pen

The service sticks are the most important part of your Jar of Hope as they will be an important part of helping you and your family become intentional about your acts of service during this Christmas season.

1. Choose at least 10 service ideas from the list below, or make up some of your own. Using a pencil or pen, write one service idea on each of the popsicle sticks.
2. Place all the Service Sticks in your Jar of Hope.
3. As you and your family go throughout the Christmas season pick a Service Stick out of your Jar of Hope every few days and complete the service idea on the stick.

Please pick service ideas that you know you and your family can accomplish. All service ideas will not work for every family. The Jar of Hope is designed to help you and your family share Christ's love through service to others. As you are talking with your family about the Jar of Hope and you come up with service ideas that work better for your family, please use them! Make this a new Christmas tradition. Don't forget to pray for those who are on the receiving end of your acts of service. You never know how a simple, heartfelt act can eternally impact someone's life.



# JAR OF HOPE—SERVICE IDEAS

## Service Ideas

1. Take the Candy Cane Challenge! See how many candy canes your family can distribute in your community during the month of December. Each sweet treat must be accompanied by a genuine smile, a thoughtful note, or audible kind wish from someone in your family. Or, attach the candy cane poem to each candy cane. Feel free to use the template on the following page.
2. Find a parking attendant in a cold garage and take him or her a hot chocolate and a fun puzzle book or magazine.
3. Go through the drive through at a local bank and give the bank teller a treat through the vacuum system.
4. Have your children write notes of thanks for police officers and or firemen and take by the station with something yummy to eat. Or, bring gift cards for them if your budget allows.
5. Leave an encouraging note in a friends driveway using sidewalk chalk.
6. Kidnap a mom's minivan and have your family take the time to wash, clean out, and organize it.
7. When you make dinner for your family one night, make double. Then share that extra meal with another family that could use the help.
8. Buy lunch or coffee for the car behind you in the drive-thru.
9. Thank the church volunteers who care for your kids each week. Give them heartfelt notes and donuts.
10. Find a widow and tell her she is loved. Send her a note of encouragement and find a way to help her tangibly.
11. Go on a trash walk and help clean up your neighborhood.
12. Mail a card with a hand written note to a relative you haven't seen in a while.
13. Deliver cookies or treats to the office staff of a local charity.
14. Deliver a hot chocolate mix or baking mix to someone who lives alone.
15. Fill up socks with necessities (like toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, etc.) and deliver to a homeless shelter.
16. Rake leaves, shovel snow, or sweep off the driveway for a neighbor.
17. Make cards and take them to a local nursing home.
18. Purchase a devotional book and give it to a friend.
19. Help an elderly person decorate their house for Christmas or decorate their tree. Don't forget to go back and help them take it all down.
20. Send a cheerful note and care package to a missionary family who is overseas.



Peace...defined by some as freedom from disturbance and by others as the freedom from or the cessation of war and violence is longed for across the world. It has been the goal of many people groups throughout the history of mankind. And yet it eludes us...why? The answer comes as we read in Micah 5:1-5.

***The people needed peace.***

As Micah comes to the ‘promise’ portion of his prophecy, he introduces a baby. He doesn’t say ‘baby’, but when someone ‘comes forth’ from an earthly location, they pretty much have to come forth as a baby. Then, he immediately establishes who this baby is and anyone reading this word knew about whom Micah was talking. Even the scribes of Herod’s day immediately quoted Micah 5:2 when Herod asked them where this ‘king’ could be found (Matthew 2:5,6). If Herod’s lackeys continued to read, then there can be no question as to why Herod was afraid of this infant of Bethlehem. Without pausing to take a breath, Micah takes the reader from visions of the baby of Bethlehem to a picture of the Ancient of Days delivering and ruling over His people in strength and majesty, and ushering in the age of peace.

While Micah talked about the misuse of authority and prophesied against the evil of the rulers, priest, and false prophets which would finally spell the fall of his nation, he also prophesied of the coming of Messiah who would bring justice and ultimate peace to the people.

By the time Jesus is born, God had not spoken through a prophet in several hundred years. In their midst, you could still find the less fortunate and they were still being mistreated—the sinners and the tax collectors, the shepherds, the sick, the poor, the captives, the widows, the orphans. Like they were generations before, they were still on the scene. The One—Jesus Christ—came to set them free and to bring peace into their lives.

***Their need for peace is our need as well.***

Micah wrote (5:3, 4) about a people who needed peace and today we find our nation, our culture, our world in the same position. We find in the Bible, Israel had made some choices which negatively affected their relationship with God, and God left them to the consequences of their actions. What happened to the people was necessary in order to ready them for the coming of the Christ which came at just the right time.

Don’t misunderstand what God is doing with the people. They have messed some things up, and they need God to fix it. We’re in the same boat. We have messed some things up, and we need God to fix them. As God is with us—as we experience Christ in our lives—we come to know his peace. He is the authority. He possesses the greatness to heal and the power to take what is broken and to make it whole again.

We can see God at work. We can look at our lives and know God is using the circumstances of our lives to accomplish His purposes for us. God will sometimes even “demolish” certain aspects of our lives so that we can experience His peace.

***In Messiah—Jesus Christ—we find our peace with God.***

There have always been powers of evil united against the people of God. In verse 5, we find the Assyrians are coming, and they will take the people into captivity. The people were taken into physical captivity, but in a very real sense they were in a spiritual captivity already. Each one—just like you and me—had risen up against God. Darkness and sin have been master over us, and we were at war with God.

But “...when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him; having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him” (Colossians 2:13-15). Jesus has delivered us, not counting our transgressions against us, and by the shedding of His own blood He has won us back to God. Jesus is *our* peace.

On Christmas Day 1863, the great American poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow penned the words to the poem, “Christmas Bells” which would later become the song “I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day” recorded by many including the one we heard today by Johnny Cash.

Few people know that Longfellow wrote the poem after losing his wife in an accidental fire, and after hearing the news that his oldest son Charles had been severely wounded in the Battle of New Hope Church in Virginia. In his grief, Longfellow claimed the truth that wrong would fail and right would prevail and of peace on earth goodwill to men. He found the truth that Jesus Christ is *our* peace with God. Our hope is found in the One who breaks into our lives with the peace that passes beyond our understanding.

***Think About This.***

More than 700 years before Jesus was born, God inspired the prophet Micah to foretell the coming of a “peace-child”. The One who had been with God eternally would come into the world of time and space to carry out His Father’s purposes.

Micah’s prophecy reminds us that God’s ways are different from the ways of the world. God’s “peace-child” would be born in Bethlehem, the small hometown of his ancestor David—not in a large important city. He would not come as a warrior like other kings. Instead, He would rule as a shepherd-king, guarding and guiding His flock. His people—the flock—would know security and peace in and through Him. Centuries later, during His earthly ministry, Jesus called Himself “the good shepherd”. He said in John 10:11, “I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.”

How grateful we can be that God acted, when the time was right, to more than fulfill the prophecy of Micah. He came ultimately to die for us—to be our peace. Do you have this peace known only through a relationship with Jesus Christ?



# SILENT NIGHT

## A Christmas Carol Devotional

Early in the “war to end all wars”, or World War I as it would later be known, German soldiers found themselves deeply entrenched. It was Christmas Eve, 1914, and although the soldiers expected to be home for Christmas, celebrating victory with their own families in the warmth and comfort of their own homes, they were living in trenches filled with all the horrors of war—mud, cold and death.

December of 1914 saw soldiers in trenches all along the 200 mile front. It was brutal and deadly. That Christmas was especially cold, but the near frozen trenches found a small glimmer of warmth on December 24. The soldiers, both British and Scottish, heard a sound on the Western Front they never expected to hear. Though the words they heard were unknown to them, the tune was unmistakable. They were hearing the German soldiers sing “Silent Night”, or as it was heard in German, “Stille nacht, heilige nacht”.

Though they were surprised by the song, they welcomed it. As the moments passed along, English soldiers began to sing along. The volleys of bullets and gunfire traded by the soldiers only hours earlier gave way to the trading of peace-filled melody. Soldiers raised bayonets with candles on them and Christmas trees were raised up instead of rifles. As “Silent Night” was sung on both sides, soldiers made their way to “no man’s land” in order to bring gifts and tidings of good cheer to each other. They sang, traded items from their packs, and buried their dead.

Take a moment as a family and sing “Silent Night” together. You may want to listen and sing along to your favorite recording. As you sing, take a moment to reflect on the events of December 1914.

Silent night, holy night!  
All is calm, all is bright.  
Round yon Virgin, Mother and Child.  
Holy infant so tender and mild,  
Sleep in heavenly peace,  
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night!  
Shepherds quake at the sight.  
Glories stream from heaven afar  
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia,  
Christ the Savior is born!  
Christ the Savior is born.

Silent night, holy night!  
Son of God love's pure light.  
Radiant beams from Thy holy face  
With dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth.  
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth.

When they stopped the fighting to sing “Silent Night”, they stopped to sing a song of which they were familiar. They were even more familiar with Jesus Christ and yet those soldiers and many others were engaged in the battle of the ages. In the midst of that horrific time, peace on earth and goodwill to men prevailed.

That peace—all peace—is ultimately from the Lord. True peace—peace with God—is what this world needs. In fact, we all need it and it can be yours today. If you are willing to put your faith and trust in Christ alone, if you will call upon His name, you can be saved. He can bring peace to you and your life and He will if you simply call out to Him. Talk to Him today!

#### Weekly Bible Readings

Micah 5:2-5a

Luke 1:31

Luke 1:46-55

Luke 1:39-45

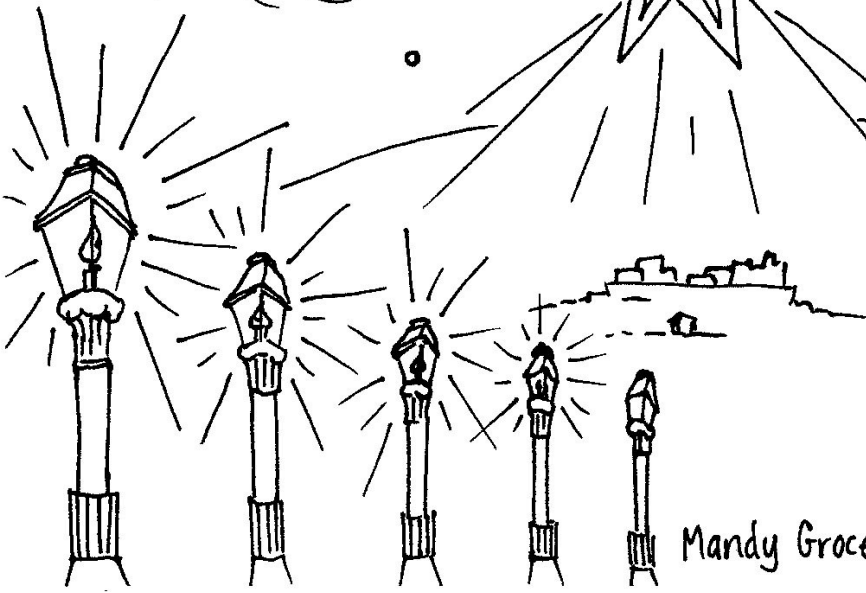
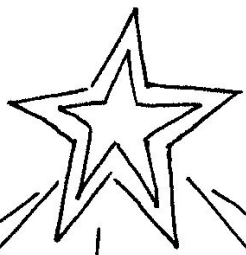
Luke 1:57-80

Isaiah 1:18

Jesus

IS OUR

Peace



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[ministry-to-children.com](http://ministry-to-children.com)

# ANGEL PAPER CHAIN CRAFT

Supplies:

Construction Paper

Markers

Yarn or String

Scissors

Stapler or Tape



How to Make Paper Chain Angels:

1. Print out the pattern and use it to cut out angels so that one word from the scripture Luke 2:11 can fit on each angels plus a few extras just in case. (*Pattern is on the following page.*)
2. Hand out the angels, and assign a word of the scripture to each child. Have the children write their words on the angel's skirt then color the angel and add a face or anything you like to decorate the angel.
3. When the children are finished with the front of their angels, tell them to think of a word that describes Jesus. You can do this as a class for the younger children and write them on the board. Then have each child pick a word from the list to write on the back of their angels. Some examples are: Savior, Promised One, Messiah, Lord, Most High Christ the Lord, Bread of Life, Friend, True Vine, Judge, The Way, Good Shepherd, Light of the World, King of Kings, etc.
4. When everyone is done, staple or tape the angels onto a piece of yarn or string in the correct order to make a paper chain. Hang it up in your home as a reminder during the Christmas season.

# NAMES OF JESUS WORD ART

Supplies:

Computer

Paper

Color Printer

Directions:

1. Go to [www.wordle.net](http://www.wordle.net) and click Create.
2. Type in a variety of the different names of Jesus. (Note: the more frequently a word occurs, the larger it appears in the final product.)
3. Click Go and see the design.
4. Change the font, color, and design if you want.
5. Print and display.

# BLOCK LETTERS

Supplies:

Paper & Markers

Directions:

1. Draw the letters J-E-S-U-S in large block letters.
2. Have your child use markers to fill them in with different shapes and different colors.
3. As your child colors talk about the different names of Jesus.







Take a moment and read Isaiah 9:6-7 together as a family. We know the angels sang it, and we have repeated it—the good news of God’s great joy brought to mankind on Christmas Day—Joy to the World!

### **God gives us joy through Jesus**

The reason for the great joy among the people was the birth of a child. In the case of the child, Isaiah is most likely referring to a new king—perhaps Hezekiah—coming to the throne. The fact that he refers to that same child as a son is a reference to Psalm 2:7 where the day David ascended the throne, he became the son of God by adoption. Notice the tense of these statements is the present tense—a child *has* been born. That child is living and ruling in the here-and-now, but God has used the text of Isaiah to help us understand the One who would come—Jesus—is also all of these things and more.

The names or titles bestowed on the King have new meaning for us as we see them as names of the anointed Jesus Christ who is the source of joy. This Son will hold our attention by at least four titles describing the character of His ability to rule:

- ◆ Wonderful Counselor—This title expresses the wisdom required of the king to guide and direct his people.
- ◆ Mighty God or Mighty Warrior—This title refers to the power and the fullness of God and reveals the King’s ability to defend and protect his people.
- ◆ Everlasting Father—This title refers to the king as the one who guided his people with fatherly love in the same way God loves and cares for his people.
- ◆ Prince of Peace—The title reflects the king as the one who brought wholeness to everyone, leading them to their destiny in the fullness of God.

Ultimately, Jesus is the ideal king and is the fulfillment of the prophesied Messiah.

### **Our complete joy will be fulfilled in Jesus**

This Prince of Peace, Isaiah affirms, will have no end to his kingdom. Peace is forever established and he will uphold it with justice and righteousness. “The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish” the increase of His government and of His peace.

This Child—the King—is no ordinary king for His “government” and the “peace” brought by it will never end. The government and peace which He ushers in will never cease and will be invincible. The reign of this Child will be upon an already established throne in Israel...that of David. Thus the child will be from the tribe of Judah. Thus David’s kingdom will not end.

It is this intense devotion which was the catalyst for what God has done in His great plan to redeem His creation—including you and me—to bring us Joy, unspeakable Joy!

**In Jesus, we have joy in living now.**

Jesus said, “I have come that you might have life—and have it more abundantly” (John 10:10) and in John 16:33 He said, “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” That’s joy for today!

**In Jesus, we have joy which is to come.**

In John 11:25-26 Jesus said, “I am the resurrection & the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives & believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?” He went on to say in John 14:6, “I am the way, the truth, & the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

We know that we belong to Him and that we already have our joy—what we have been given through Christ—and that we have not yet seen it in its fullness.

***Think About This***

Do I know Him and His joy? Ask yourself, who is He in my life and do I have that joy every day?

**Jesus—*The Wonderful Counselor***

The One with the best and brightest word for living faithfully in a fallen world.

The One who repairs relationships, builds the church and brings peace and joy to our homes.

**Jesus—*The Mighty One***—who defeats all enemies, who shields and shelters the weak and saves those who draw near to God through His name.

**Jesus—*The Everlasting Father***—the author of everlasting life and happiness who rules all things with love, mercy and kindness...the perfecter of our faith.

**Jesus—*The Prince of Peace***

The One who creates joy and preserves peace in His Kingdom.

The One who while we were enemies with God made peace with His Father for us, by dying on a cross.

The One who brings ultimate peace, who will bring an end to sin, suffering and Satan

This One—**Jesus**—do you know Him? Do you want to know Him? Are you living in His hope, peace, joy and love?

# JOY TO THE WORLD

## A Christmas Carol Devotional

In some ways, Isaac Watts' opening line "Joy to the World the Lord is come" makes this carol extraordinary. It echoes Psalm 98 and definitely deals with Christmas, but the first stanza is the only one that relates to Christmas or the birth of Christ. There is no mention of a star, shepherds, or a manger or Wise Men. Yet, it is most definitely a Christmas carol.

The other stanzas are appropriate in any other season of the year, but why? The first word of the song would seem to answer the question—joy! Joy and praise of Jesus is timely and fitting no matter what time of year. Consider the lyrics of the song:

Joy to the World , the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her King;  
Let every heart prepare Him room,  
And Heaven and nature sing,  
And Heaven and nature sing,  
And Heaven, and Heaven, and nature sing.

Joy to the World, the Savior reigns!  
Let men their songs employ;  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow,  
Nor thorns infest the ground;  
He comes to make His blessings flow  
Far as the curse is found,  
Far as the curse is found,  
Far as, far as, the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace,  
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of His righteousness,  
And wonders of His love,  
And wonders of His love,  
And wonders, wonders, of His love.

When we worship the Lord, we are in one sense "in rehearsal" for eternity. Those who have put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ will one day "repeat the sounding joy" forever. Is your joy in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? May you find comfort and encouragement through the joy of a relationship with Jesus Christ!

### Weekly Bible Readings

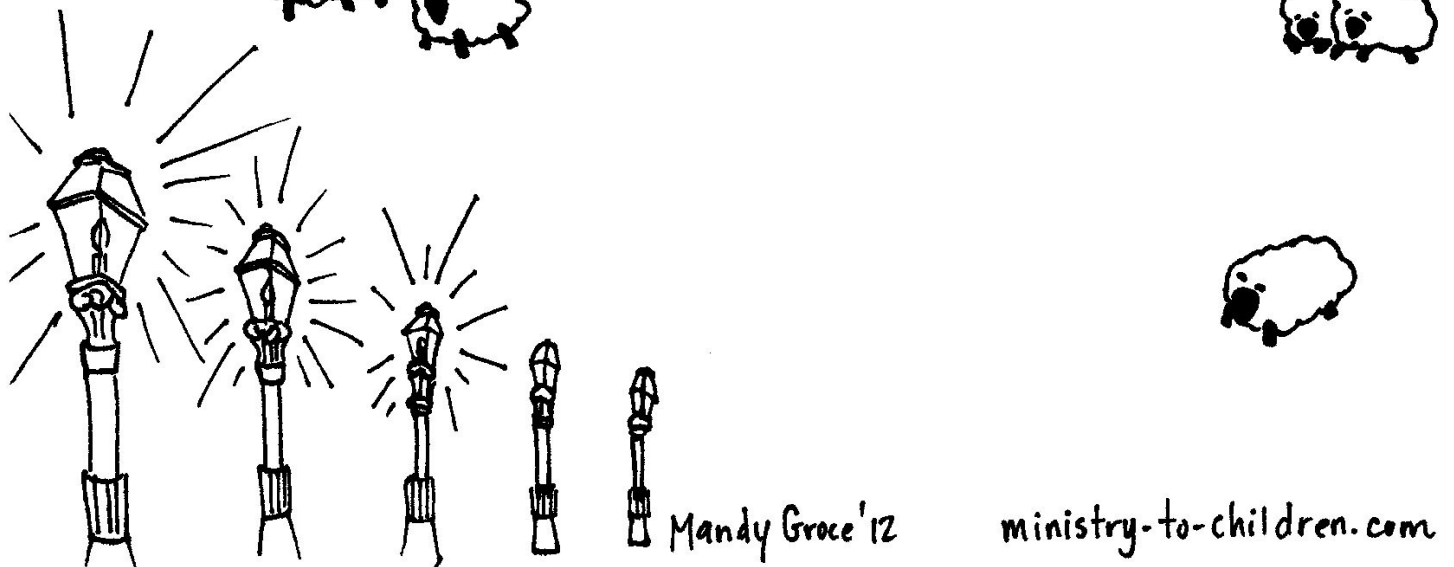
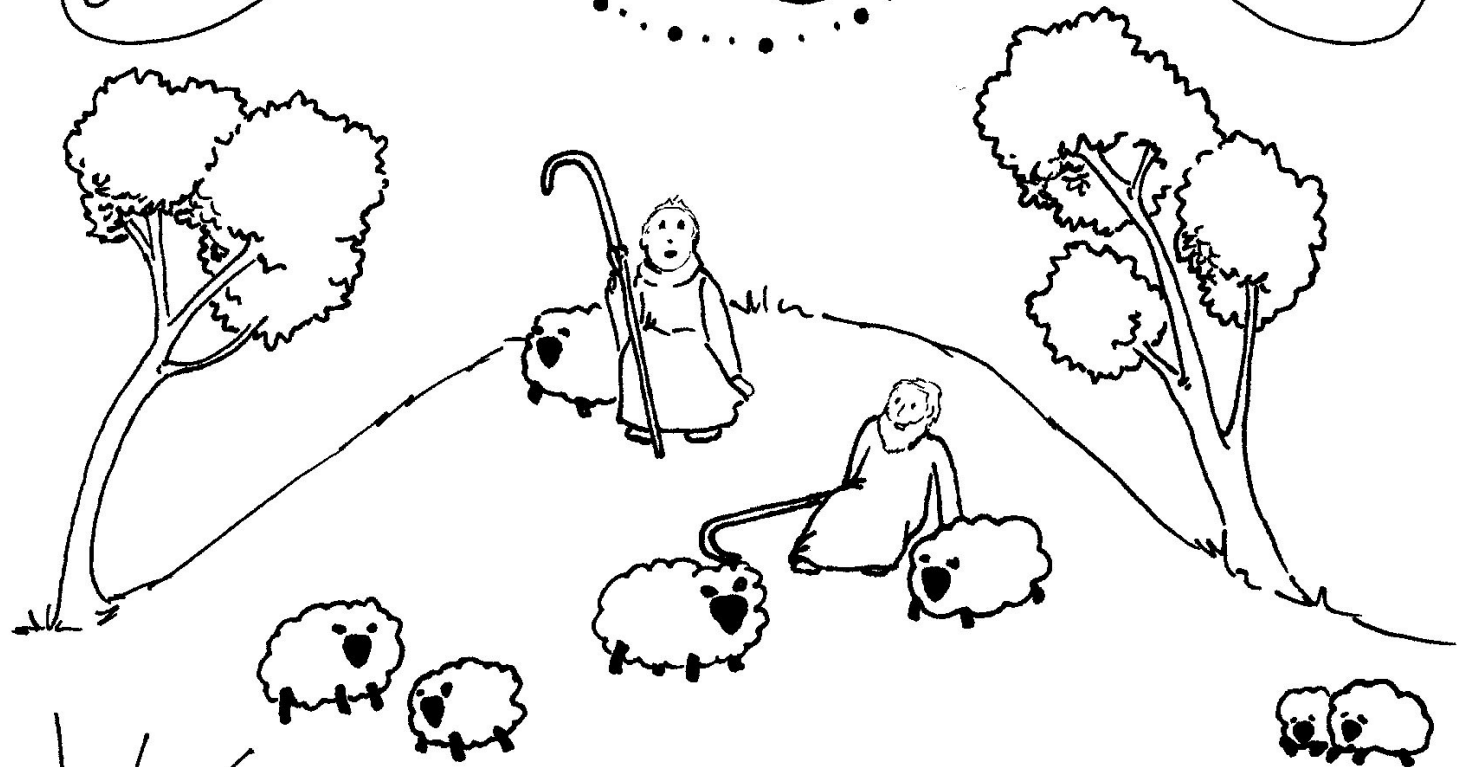
Luke 2:1-5

Luke 2:15-18

Luke 2:6, 7

Isaiah 52:7

Luke 2:8-14



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# JOY IN A JAR

## Supplies:

Small Jar  
Large Jar  
Dish Soap  
Food Coloring

## Directions:

1. Place a little water and some dish soap in the small jar.
2. Shake the jar until it's full of bubbles.
3. Fill the large jar with water and add food coloring
4. Slowly pour the colored water into the jar of bubbles.

What happened to the bubbles? When you poured in the colorful water, the bubbles tumbled out the top. We're like the jar, and the bubbles are like fear. When we pray and ask God to be with us, He pours His joy inside us and our fear comes tumbling out.

# NATIIVITY POPSICLE STICK PUPPETS

## Supplies:

9 Popsicle Sticks (3/4" wide)  
Glue or Tape  
Scissors & Exacto Knife  
Gold Pipe Cleaner  
Sharpie  
Velcro

## Directions:

1. Cut out shapes. (*Pattern is on the following page.*)
2. Parents, use the exacto knife to cut along the dotted lines.
3. Slide the 3/4' popsicle stick into slits. Glue or tape in place.
4. Break a popsicle stick for the baby Jesus.
5. Use a small piece of Velcro to attach the baby Jesus to Mary and to attach the sheep to the shepherd.
6. Use the gold pipe cleaner to make a halo for the angel.
7. Draw a face on each stick. Embellish as desired.



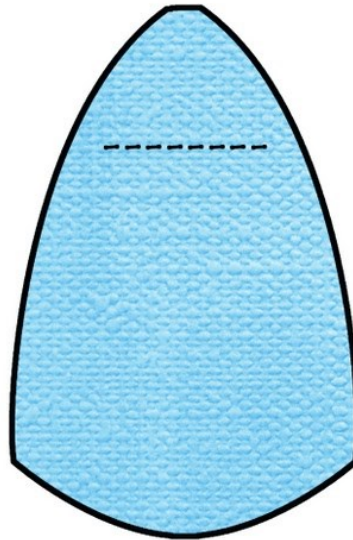


# Nativity Popsicle Stick Puppets

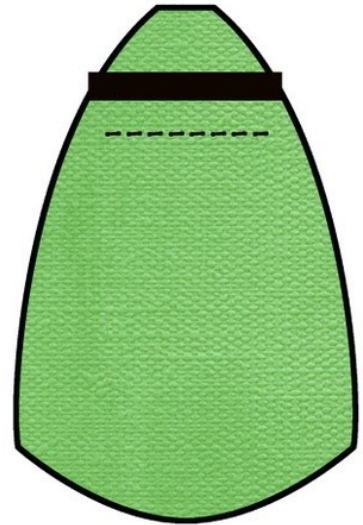
supplies: 9 popsicle sticks (3/4 inch wide), glue, scissors, gold pipe cleaner, sharpie, velcro



Joseph



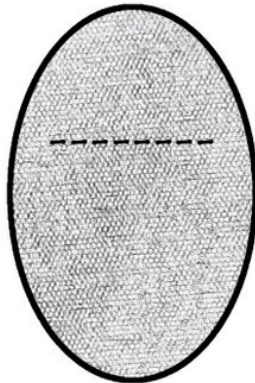
Mary



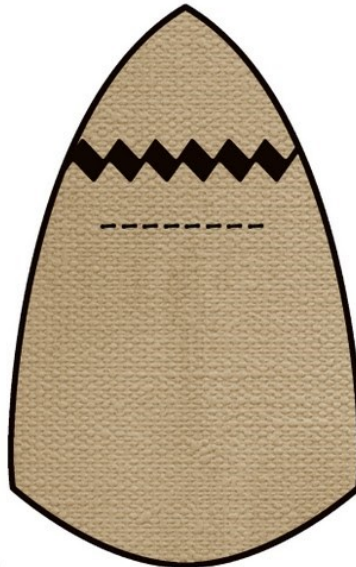
Inn Keeper



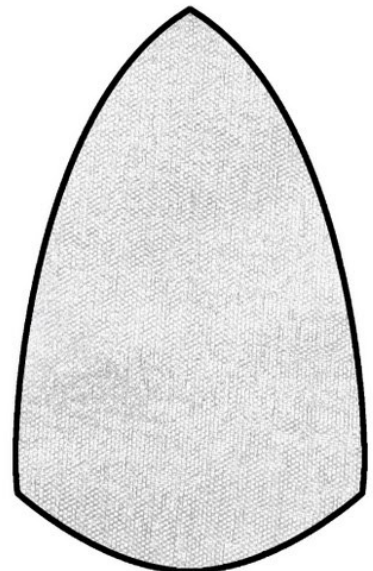
Wisemen



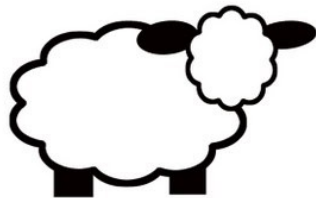
baby  
Jesus



Shepherd



Angel



Cut out shapes. Cut along the dotted lines with an x-acto knife.  
Slide a 3/4 inch popsicle stick into slits. Glue in place.  
Draw a face on each stick. Embellish as desired. Break a popsicle stick  
for the baby Jesus.

like a pretty petunia...

# TWINE WRAPPED ORNAMENTS

## Supplies:

Star Shaped Cookie Cutters

Twine

Hot Glue

## Directions:

1. Start with a long piece of twine. Add a dab of hot glue to the cookie cutter and attach the twine.
2. Start wrapping the twine around the cookie cutter. Add additional hot glue when you feel like it is needed to help the twine stay in place, like at the tips of the star.
3. If you run out of twine, just get a new piece and use hot glue to add it to the cookie cutter. Continue wrapping.
4. Once you are finished wrapping, cut a small piece of twine, form a loop for hanging and tie with a knot.







The Bible describes Jesus as God's indescribable gift. It's how He showed His love for us. How do you measure the value of God's gift to you? Let's look at three things we should value with regard to His gift from 1 John 4:9-11.

***God's gift to you is measured by its USEFULNESS.***

What is the usefulness of His gift to us? John says that it's useful that "we might live". Jesus said it this way in John 10:10, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (NKJV). What a promise that is! Not just life – not just existence – but life which means something. Life that has worth! Abundant life!

Our lives have purpose, value, meaning because of the One who made us. Since God made us, what we do with that life has both eternal consequences and eternal benefits. Not to sound like Bob the Tomato from Veggie Tales, but God really has made you a SPECIAL PERSON for a SPECIAL PURPOSE. Ephesians 1:4 reveals, "He chose us – actually picked us out for Himself as His own – in Christ before the foundation of the world; that we should be set apart for Him..." The Bible actually refers to us as His masterpiece set aside for His purposes (Ephesians 2:10, NLT).

We were created in order to bring glory to God. The Westminster Shorter Catechism reminds us "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." Psalm 86:9 echoes the sentiment, "All nations whom *You have made* shall come and worship before You, O Lord, And *they shall glorify Your name.*" (NASB) If we are here to bring God glory, then our purpose must be related to that end. Our lives must magnify the Lord. We need to edify or encourage each other and support fellow Christians. We must use our time, treasure and talents to help others and to let the world know there is Good News—the Gospel—that Jesus has made a way and saved us from our sins. God's gift of salvation to us is useful to give our lives meaning, purpose and value in order that we glorify Him.

***God's gift to you is measured by its COST.***

Most families have one thing to look forward to after they've celebrated Thanksgiving. It's a hallmark of that event—leftovers! Leftovers are really good, but there comes a time when leftovers get old and you're sick of them. God doesn't want our leftovers. He wants our very best—every time and all the time. David reminds us in 2 Samuel 24:24 "I will not offer to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost [me] nothing" (HCSB). David could have taken whatever he wanted—he was the king. David knew, however, if he was going to offer something to the Lord, that sacrifice would need to be the best he could give. It would need to have value. It would cost him.

God has done that for you and for me. It's not that we once upon a time loved God, but that He loved us and sent a sacrifice to us—Jesus (1 John 4:10). When He looked at mankind and the mess we were in, God knew what had to be done. God knew the price to be paid, and He knew what it would cost. He sent Jesus Christ, born as a child for the salvation of the world. Romans 5:8 puts it another way, "God demonstrated His love for us in that while we were sinners He sent His Son to die for us." God's gift is very valuable...it cost Him greatly. If He was willing to give His only Son for you and for me, should we really be placing limits on what we are willing to give Him?

***God's gift to you is measured by its EFFECTIVENESS.***

We have so many advances in technology, so many new devices and gadgets. The age old question though is, "But what does it do?" Toasters...what do they do? They make toast. Coffee pots make coffee. And we measure it all by their effectiveness. How good is the toast? How good is the coffee? Does that thing do what it was intended to do?

What is the love of God intended to do? If God loved us with His kind of love, then we certainly *must* love each other. The emphasis is on the need to love. God continues to love the world through you and through me. Jesus said in Matthew 6:14-16, "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (NKJV).

***Think About This***

Has God's gift made a difference in your life? It has value. It's useful, but it came with a price. It's valuable and makes us effective if we're open to what God wants to do in and through us because of His great love. The most famous statement in the Bible is Jesus' explanation of why God sent him to earth is John 3:16. It's the best news in the world. God loves you! God is with you! God is for you!

If you're open to that love and willing to share it with others, then some things in your life are going to be different. God's love changes people. It affects their behavior—what they do and what they say. It affects the way we do life because it changes us into loving compassionate people who care for the needs of those who are around us. Are you willing to be a part of what God wants to do through you to love others?

# LOVE CAME DOWN AT CHRISTMAS

## A Christmas Carol Devotional

The theologian, Augustine once said, “God loves each of us as if there were only one of us.” The saddest part of sin—and the world that came into being because of sin—is that it keeps us from having a relationship with the One who loves us more than we can imagine. All of that makes His heart ache! So God, who is love, made plans to bring us back to where we belong—in a close relationship with Him.

There’s a song, recently record by Jars of Clay, “Love Came Down at Christmas”, which speaks clearly to that truth. The song which came from a poem by Christina Rossetti was published in 1885 and in 1893 under the title “Christmastide”. “Love Came Down at Christmas” has been recorded many times over the years but the original message remains:

*Love came down at Christmas,  
Love all lovely, Love Divine,  
Love was born at Christmas,  
Star and Angels gave the sign.*

*Worship we the Godhead,  
Love incarnate, Love divine;  
Worship we our Jesus:  
But wherewith for sacred sign?*

*Love shall be our token,  
Love be yours and love be mine,  
Love to God and all men,  
Love for plea and gift and sign.*

Christmas is about love. A love that God demonstrated for us in that while we were still sinner, He sent His only begotten Son, Jesus, to do for us what we couldn’t do for ourselves. The love we needed is the love that is an expression of His character because God is love (1 John 4:8). What does this say about God’s love for us?

When we celebrate that love, we celebrate Immanuel—God with us. We celebrate what God has done in coming from heaven to earth to show us—to light the way—that we might have a relationship with God. How can you show love in a meaningful way this Christmas season?

### Weekly Bible Readings

Colossians 1:16-17, 19

John 1:1-3.

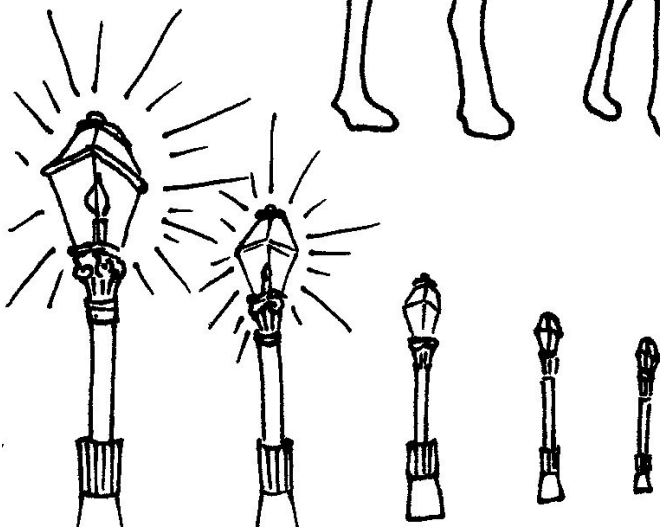
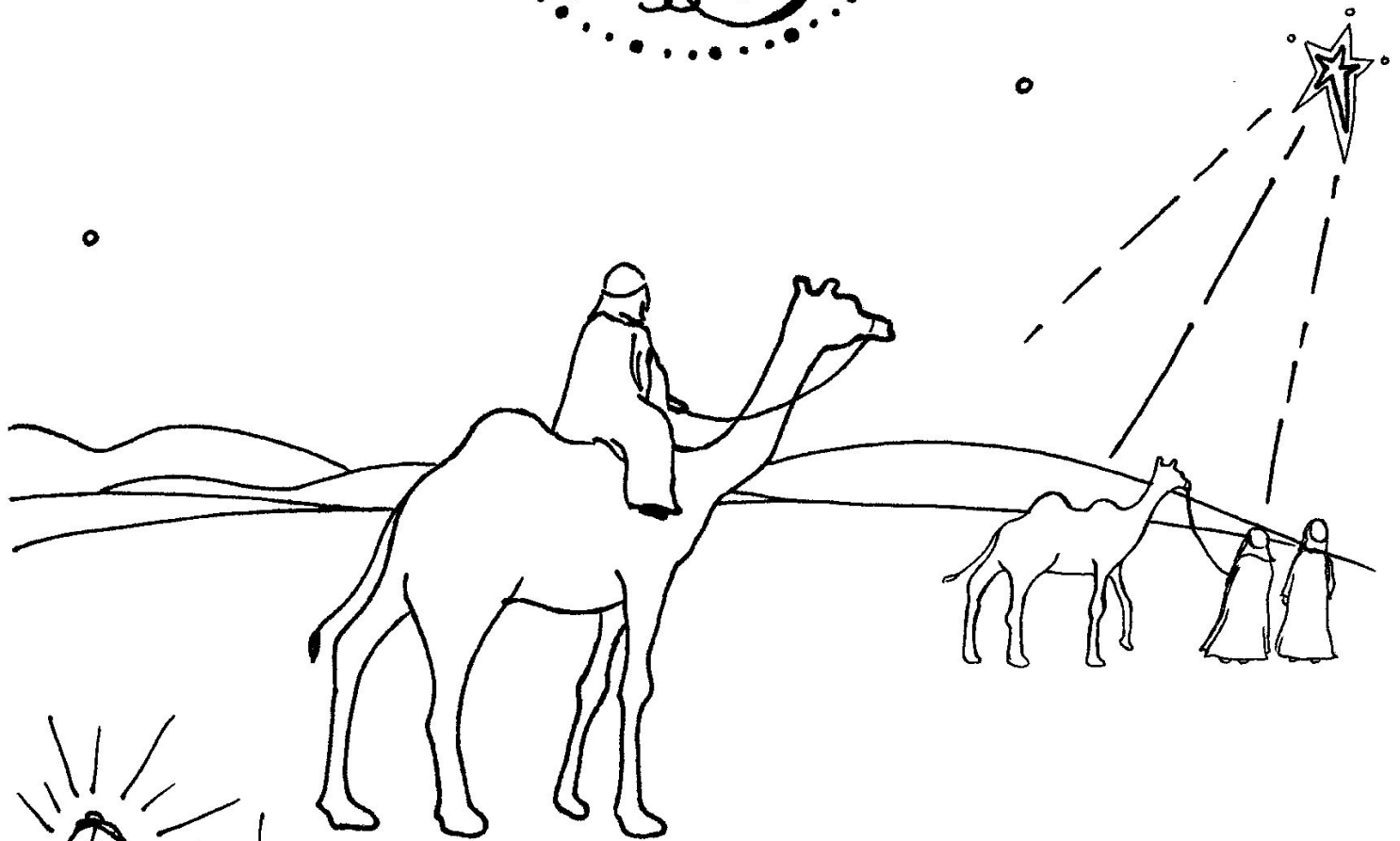
Luke 1:30-35

John 1:14, and Philippians 2:5-8.

Matthew 1:21, John 1:12, and  
Colossians 1:20-22



Jesus  
IS OUR  
Way



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# POPSICLE STAR ORNAMENT

## Supplies:

Wood Craft Sticks (5 for each star)  
Sequins, Gemstones, Jewels, Buttons  
Hot Glue Gun  
Colored Yarn  
Ribbon

## Directions:

1. Glue the craft sticks together to form a star shape.
2. Glue the sticks together, one at a time, until you finish the star.
3. Glue a ribbon loop to the back of the star so you will be able to hang it on your Christmas tree. Or, loop the ribbon through one of the star points and tie a knot to hang on the tree.
4. Decorate the star using the various decorative items, or wrap yarn around the star.



# CHRISTMAS LIGHT SCAUVENGER HUNT



Get the family together, pile into your vehicle, and take a drive around your neighborhood or around town and look at all the Christmas lights. If you want to start a new tradition, put the kids in their pajamas, pack a snack and some hot chocolate before you leave. See how many of the following items you can find as you drive.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nativity Display                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Angel                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wrapped Presents                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Decorated Lamp Post      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blinking Lights                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Star                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> House Decorated in all White Lights | <input type="checkbox"/> Wreath on Door           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Christmas Tree            | <input type="checkbox"/> House with Icicle Lights |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Animated Christmas Decoration       | <input type="checkbox"/> Inflatable Carolers      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Candy Cane Decorations              | <input type="checkbox"/> The Word "Joy" or "Noel" |

Make it a race! Have mom and dad drive separately, or get together with another family or two and see who can find the all the items first. If you have a time restraint, set a time and see who can find the most by that specific time. *(Be sure to drive carefully!)* Be sure to take pictures with your camera or phone as you check off each item. You'll need proof of your findings!

**BONUS ROUND!** If there's time, try to find the following for extra points. Again, don't forget to take pictures.

- Inflatable Snow Globe
- Lighted Christmas Card
- Nutcracker / Soldier
- Star of Bethlehem



### ***Jesus Christ, Immanuel—God With Us***

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, it was in the midst of a time of great longing, a time of great waiting. Think again about something you longed for. It could be a gift you knew you were getting, a special day like a vacation or birthday, or to see a family member or friend you love. The longing was hard, but what was it like when you finally received what you were waiting for?

Read Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:21-23. Explain that God made His people a promise a long time ago to send someone to save them. (Note: Immanuel is also spelled Emmanuel, but it is the same word.)

In Matthew 1:21-23, God is reminding His people of that promise and telling them that Jesus is the fulfillment of it. Think about receiving something you've waited a long time for, like what we talked about above. After waiting for so long, how do you think the people waiting for Jesus must have felt when He finally came?

Read Matthew 1:21 again. What does it say that Jesus came to save His people from? What is sin? Why do we need to be saved from it? How can we be saved?

### ***Christmas Presence—A Family Devotional***

At Christmas, many people give each other gifts and other presents. Talk about a favorite gift you've been given. We don't remember this sometimes, but the reason we give gifts is to celebrate and remember that God gave us the greatest gift ever when He gave us Jesus. He literally gave us Himself...*Christmas Presence*.

Christmas is a great time to celebrate by giving gifts, being with family, and having fun together. But the most important reason to celebrate, and the reason we do all those other things, is to remember that Jesus came to save us from our sins.

What are some things that will help us remember that Jesus came to save us? What are some fun ways that we can celebrate? What are some things we can do to remind others that Jesus came to save them, too?

Close with prayer. Parents and kids, ask how you can pray for each other. Who are you praying for by name, asking God to save? Pray for those people together as a family.

# GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN

## A Christmas Carol Devotional

Dr. John W. Work III took a song his father had written and harmonized those stanzas giving us the great carol, “Go Tell It on the Mountain”. It is said that he could recall his early days as a child on the Fisk University campus, where his father worked, as being pleasurable. He enjoyed Christmas morning the most as he would watch students gather early before sunrise. As was the custom, the students would walk together from building to building singing, “Go tell it on the mountain, Jesus Christ is born.”

It’s the same for us today. We can proclaim those words even as Scripture proclaims “Unto you a child is born.” The words that came to the outcast shepherds in the hill country of Bethlehem are words of hope, peace, joy and love for everyone. We were outcasts as well but God didn’t leave us that way. He sent us Jesus!

Such is the beauty of the gospel. Many people would say, “Give me the rules so I can follow them—I can work to be good enough to save myself.” The gospel says, “No you can’t... But God, rich in mercy, has done it for you.”

So, we cannot take credit for what God has done and we must understand that the only way to come to Him is by His grace and through faith alone.

Ephesians 2:8-9 puts it this way, *“For by grace you have been saved through faith, not of yourselves, it is a gift of God; not a result of works so that none can boast.”*

Faith is putting our full trust in Jesus as the Son of God, who lived the perfect life of righteousness, died a sacrificial death as the perfect sacrifice, and was resurrected as the risen savior. When we believe and trust in Jesus, we receive Him and the full, eternal life He brings to us—all because of His righteousness!

*“That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved”* [Romans 10:9]... for, *‘Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved’* [Romans 10:13].

Jesus said, *“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me”* [Revelation 3:20].

This is the gospel, **the good news that God saves sinners**, doing for us what we could never do for ourselves, in spite of ourselves. It is a gospel of contrasts. Where simple meets profound. Where good news meets bad news. Where wrath meets love. Where grace meets justice. Where self-sufficiency meets self-surrender. Where death meets life and where God meets us, without compromising His holy character. This is the gospel of Jesus Christ, the best news you could ever hear. **Have you received it?**

Because of Jesus

We have a Savior!

Luke 2:11



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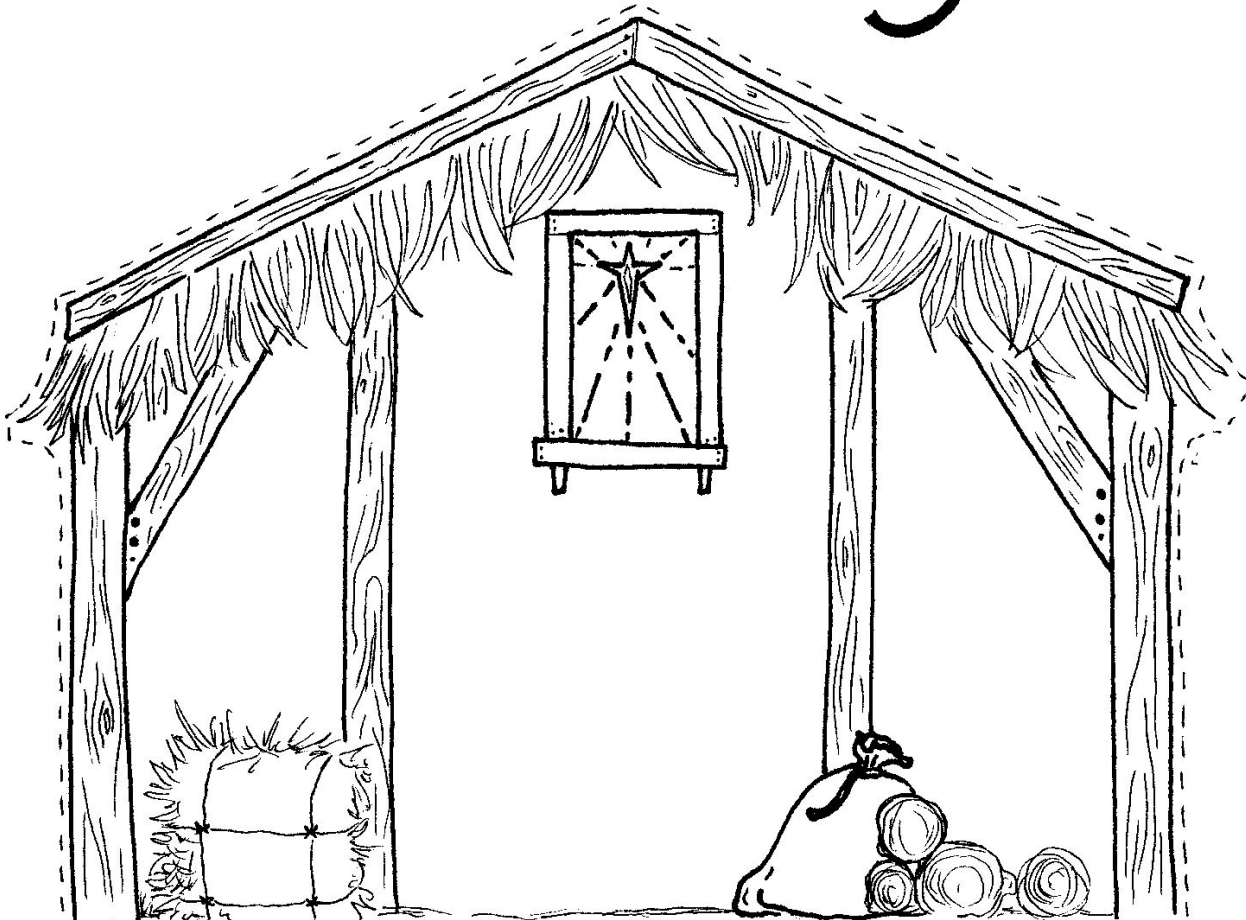
Color, cut, attach to foam core or cardboard to stiffen.



printable

# ★ nativity ★

playset



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# DECORATE A MEMORY MUG

## Supplies:

Cheap Ceramic Mug

Oil Based Sharpie Paint Pens

## Directions:

1. Wipe surface of mug with rubbing alcohol. After wiping the mug, do not touch the drawing area with your hands as the oil in your hands will affect how the “paint” adheres to the mug.
2. Use the Oil Based Sharpie Paint Pens to decorate your mug. Be creative with a verse, saying, or other decoration. (*Be sure to **only use an oil based paint pen** as these will adhere better to the mug and not flake off.*)
3. Let the mug dry for 24 hours. After the 24 hours, place mug (*upside down to prevent the mug from falling over*) in cold oven. Once you have put the mug inside the oven, turn the oven on to 350°. When the oven has reached 350°, bake the mug for 30 minutes. Turn off oven, but leave the mug in the oven to completely cool.
4. Fill mug with your favorite hot beverage and enjoy. Hand washing is preferred.

# MEMORY MAKING ACTIVITY

Create a new family tradition. Make the hot chocolate recipe below together (or warm up apple cider or just make instant cocoa). Then gather around the Christmas tree or light several candles. Take a couple minutes to remember happy times, funny times, maybe even sad times.

I remember when...

My favorite Christmas memory was when...

## Hot Chocolate Recipe

### Supplies:

4 c. Milk

1/2 c. Chocolate Chips

1 c. Marshmallow Crème (not marshmallow topping)

1 tsp. Vanilla

Sprinkles or Crushed Candy Canes

Malted Milk Balls (optional)

### Directions:

1. Heat the milk in a saucepan until it barely starts to bubble around the edges. Remove from heat.
2. Add chocolate and marshmallow crème and whisk together. Add the vanilla.
3. Pour into mugs and top with an additional spoonful of marshmallow crème.
4. Sprinkle with crushed candy canes or sprinkles, and top with a malted milk ball. Serves 4.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## FESTIVAL OF LIGHT

DEC 11TH AT 7 PM

DEC 12TH AT 3 PM & 7 PM

DEC 13TH AT 7 PM

## BATHROBE NATIVITY

DECEMBER 20TH AT 6 PM

## CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

DECEMBER 24TH AT 4 PM & 6 PM

## SUNDAY

WORSHIP, CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL,  
ADULT GROUP BIBLE STUDY

9:15 AM | 10:45 AM | 6:00 PM

## WEDNESDAY

PRAYER MEETING, CHOIR, GROUP STUDIES  
& CONCORD KIDS

6:00 PM



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