

JESUS

GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISE



JESUS

MONTHLY PREPARATION GUIDE

UNIT 12-ELEMENTARY

For the next several weeks, we will celebrate the Advent Season. Advent is the time when the Church stops to remember what it was like to wait for the coming Messiah. Each Sunday, we will look at a theme or word that helps us understand the meaning of Christmas

WEEK 1

LESSON MATERIALS: Puzzle Piece (1 per class), Branches (5-7 per child), Mason Jars or Small Vases (1 per child), *Jesse Tree Ornaments Activity Pages* (1 set per child), Cardstock, Scissors, Hole Punchers, Yarn or Ribbon (28 - 6" pieces per child), Crayons or Markers, Plastic Storage Bags (1 gallon size per child), *Jesse Tree Parent Guide Activity Page* (1 per child)

WEEK 2

LESSON MATERIALS: Phone and Speaker, Puzzle Piece (1 per class), *Elementary Name Game Cards Activity Page* (1 set for every 3-5 kids), Timer, *Peace Dove Activity Page* (1 dove per child), Scrapbook Paper (assorted colors and patterns), Pencils, Scissors, Hole Puncher, String or Ribbon (4' per child), Rectangular Blocks or DUPLOs (at least 5 blocks for every 2-3 children), Permanent Marker, Masking Tape (optional)

WEEK 3

LESSON MATERIALS: | 2 Colors of Post-It Notes (1 of each color per child), Puzzle Piece (1 per class), Candy Bars or Other Small Gifts (1 per child), Gift Wrap, Tape, Scissors, Baby Doll, Small Box (for baby doll), Small Blanket, Props and Costume Pieces for Bible Characters, Clipboard, Pen, *Scripture Verses Activity Page* (6 copies), Highlighter, Bibles, Shoe Boxes (1 per child), *Nativity Characters Activity Page*, Cardstock (1 per child), Crayons or Markers, Scissors, Glue, Additional Decorating Items (straw/hay, star stickers, construction paper, etc.), Soft Foam Ball or Inflatable Beach Ball

WEEK 4

LESSON MATERIALS: Puzzle Piece (1 per class), *Twelve Days of Christmas Relay Activity Pages* (1 set per team), Small Buckets (1 per team), Popsicle Sticks (5 per child), Craft Glue, Crayons or Markers, Ribbon or Yarn (6" per child), Additional Decorating Items (glitter, gems, stickers, etc.)

THE THRILL OF HOPE

BIBLE PASSAGE

Isaiah 11:1-5 (ICB)

BIG IDEA

God always keeps His promises.

FOCUS VERSE

"She will give birth to a son. You will name the son Jesus. Give him that name because he will save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21 (ICB)

LESSON MATERIALS

| Puzzle Piece | Branches | Mason Jars or Small Vases | *Jesse Tree Ornaments* Activity Pages | Cardstock | Scissors | Hole Punchers | Yarn or Ribbon | Crayons or Markers | Plastic Storage Bags | *Jesse Tree Parent Guide* Activity Page | Parent Guide |

GREET — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- What is your favorite Christmas tradition? (You may need to explain the word "tradition.")
- What is your favorite Christmas song?

WORSHIP — 10 MINUTES

Say, "This month, we are looking at what the Old Testament prophets said about the coming of the Messiah, Jesus. People looked eagerly to His arrival. We now celebrate this season and call it 'Advent' because we remember how the people of ancient Israel waited for their Great Rescuer. Those who believed and remained hopeful were called faithful. Let's sing and remember how amazing it must have been for those who had been waiting to finally see Jesus! **God always keeps his promises.**"



WE RECOMMEND THE SONGS "YES AND AMEN" BY CHRIS TOMLIN AND "OH, COME ALL YE FAITHFUL" BY LIFETREE KIDS FOR THIS UNIT. BOTH ARE AVAILABLE ON YOUTUBE.COM.

PRAY — 5 MINUTES

Say, "The Advent season is all about anticipation and expectation. Just like the faithful believers in Ancient Israel hoped and waited for the Messiah to come and make everything right, we are now waiting for Jesus to return."

SAMPLE PRAYER: "Heavenly Father, thank You for this season of lights and celebration. It is filled with joy and hope because You came and fulfilled Your promise. Thank You for sending us Jesus. Help us remember that just like the prophets of Israel pointed to Jesus' arrival, we should point to the hope You bring us. Amen."

REVIEW — 5 MINUTES**MATERIALS:** | Puzzle Piece |

BACKGROUND: Say, “For the next five weeks, we will celebrate the Advent Season. Advent is more than a calendar filled with chocolate treats. It is the time when the Church stops to remember what it was like to wait for the coming Messiah. Just as you can feel yourself getting more and more excited the closer it gets to Christmas, we want to use these next few weeks to consider how it must have been for the people of ancient Israel who were waiting for their Great Rescuer. They were waiting for the promise God made to be fulfilled.

“Each Sunday of Advent, we will look at a theme or word that helps us understand the meaning of Christmas. Some churches have a wreath and light a candle each Sunday; we will use our puzzle pieces to help us fit together all that we are celebrating this season. As we add these pieces to our wall, let’s remember this month’s Big Idea: **God always keeps His promises.** This week’s puzzle piece is *HOPE.*” Have a child put the puzzle piece on the wall.

TRANSITION: Say, “Do you know what time it is? Game time! Game time!”

ENGAGE — 10 MINUTES**MATERIALS:** | Small Branches |

IF YOUR CHURCH IS LOCATED NEAR A WOODED AREA, HAVE THE CHILDREN GO OUTSIDE AND GATHER A BUNCH OF SMALL BRANCHES. IF NOT, GATHER MATERIALS AHEAD OF TIME AND SPREAD THEM OUT FOR CHILDREN TO COLLECT.

Say, “Today, in God’s Word, we will hear about a special tree branch. So first, we’re going to go collect branches that we will use for a later activity. Let’s go!”

Take the children on a walk outside to either gather their own sticks or collect the ones you left for them. God tells us about Himself in His Word and in His world. As you walk and gather sticks and branches with the children, ask them questions like:

- What is something you see that God made?
- What can we learn about God by looking at His world?
- How does it make you feel to know that God created all that we see in nature?
- What do you like about the different seasons?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY: You will still need to provide branches for the craft if you choose this activity. If you cannot go outside for today’s activity, play *Christmas Tree Tag*. Choose 2-3 taggers and have them begin on one side of the room. Yell “Tree Tag!” to start. If a player is tagged, they immediately turn into a Christmas Tree (standing with feet apart and arms up with hands together above head). For a player to be untagged, another player must pretend to be a gift and go under the tree (crawl between their legs).

TRANSITION: Say, “You picked up a lot of sticks! I think you are going to really like the activity we will do later. First, let’s listen and learn about how **God always keeps His promises.**”

LEARN — 10 MINUTES

Say, "The theme for this week is *HOPE*. Hope means believing something will happen. What are some things you hope will happen? [Wait for responses.] Great!

"To help us understand what the prophet Isaiah is saying in today's Bible lesson, we need to know what was happening when he was writing. God had promised that He would create an everlasting kingdom through King David's family, but the people had to obey God and follow His commandments for that to happen. During King David and his son Solomon's reigns, Israel became powerful and rich, and the people turned their hearts away from God. They even started to fight each other. Finally, God's great nation split into two kingdoms: Israel and Judah.

"Isaiah was a prophet while these things were happening. Now, in ancient times, prophets like Isaiah served as advisors to the king. It was Isaiah's job to tell the king what God was saying. While Isaiah served the king, another powerful kingdom attacked and conquered Israel [the Northern Kingdom].

"How would you feel if you lived in a kingdom and an enemy's army destroyed it? Well, God's people were very discouraged. Things looked bad, and people began to lose hope, but then Isaiah heard from God and wrote the words we'll hear right now." Read Isaiah 11:1-5 (ICB).

¹ A branch will grow from a stump of a tree that was cut down. So a new king will come from the family of Jesse.

² The Spirit of the Lord will rest upon that king. The Spirit gives him wisdom, understanding, guidance and power. And the Spirit teaches him to know and respect the Lord.

³ This king will be glad to obey the Lord. He will not judge by the way things look. He will not judge by what people say.

⁴ He will judge the poor honestly. He will be fair in his decisions for the poor people of the land. At his command evil people will be punished. By his words the wicked will be put to death.

⁵ Goodness and fairness will give him strength. They will be like a belt around his waist.

Reread verse 1 and say, "Do you know who Jesse is? [Wait for responses.] Jesse was the father of King David! Remember that God promised to create an everlasting kingdom through King David. Even though things looked bad and the people were losing hope, God sent Isaiah to give them a message. The Lord had not forgotten them, and **God always keeps His promises.**"

TRANSITION: Say, "God never leaves His people. Sometimes we can't see Him working, but He is always with us. He always does what He says He will do. God is the perfect truth-teller and promise-keeper. He is faithful. Now, let's spend a few minutes talking about these words I read from Isaiah."

DISCUSS — 10 MINUTES

Say, "Are you ready to talk about the story?"

1. Who is the new King? (Reread verse 1.)

Response: Jesus is the King!

2. Why did God's people need to hear these words from Isaiah?

Response: They had waited for God to send His King for a long time. They were sad and worried. God wanted to remind them that He had not forgotten them.

3. What do you think makes a good king?

Response: Answers will vary.

4. What does God's Word say this King (Jesus) will be like?

Response: Answers will vary, but refer the children back to verses 2-3.

5. What have you learned about God from today's lesson?

Response: **God always keeps His promises.** God is trustworthy. God loves His people. God never forgets us, etc.

TRANSITION: Say, "Isn't it neat to see how Jesus is the answer to God's promise? This lesson helps us remember that God had a great plan [Jesus] to save us from the very beginning."

RESPOND — 20 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Small Branches (from Engage Activity) | Mason Jars or Small Vases (1 per child) | *Jesse Tree Ornaments Activity Pages* (1 set per child) | Cardstock | Scissors (1 per child) | Hole Punchers | Yarn or Ribbon (28 - 6" pieces per child) | Crayons or Markers | Plastic Storage Bag (1 gallon size per child) | *Jesse Tree Parent Guide Activity Page* (1 per child)



BEFORE CLASS, MAKE 1 COPY OF THE *JESSE TREE ORNAMENTS ACTIVITY PAGES* FOR EACH CHILD ON CARDSTOCK AND 1 COPY OF THE *JESSE TREE PARENT GUIDE ACTIVITY PAGE* FOR EACH CHILD ON COPY PAPER.

Say, "When we read Isaiah 11, we are reminded that **God always keeps His promise!** You did a great job gathering sticks for our activity. Now, we are going to use them to make a Jesse Tree. Each of you will take your own tree home, and each night during Advent, you can hang a new ornament on your tree and read about how **God always keeps His promises!**"

INSTRUCTIONS:

Making the Ornaments:

1. Give each child a copy of the *Jesse Tree Ornaments Activity Pages*, scissors, and a gallon size plastic storage bag.
2. Allow time for children to color as many ornaments as they can. Then, help them cut out at least the first ornament.
3. Punch a hole at the top of the ornament. Then, string a piece of yarn or ribbon through the hole so the ornament can hang on one of the branches.
4. Place all ornaments and yarn or ribbon into the children's plastic storage bag. Be sure to put their names on the bags.

Assembling the Tree:

1. Provide each child with 5 to 7 sticks and one jar or vase. Place the sticks in the container.
2. Optional: Decorate the base with paint, ribbon, or stickers.
3. Help the children hang their first ornament on their tree. Read the first day's verse. The verses can be found on the *Jesse Tree Parent Guide Activity Page*.
4. Label the trees with the children's names
5. At the end of class, be sure to send each child home with their "Jesse Tree" in a jar, plastic storage bag, and a *Jesse Tree Parent Guide Activity Page*. Be sure to tell the parents that they are to complete the project at home during the Advent Season.

MEMORIZE — 5 MINUTES

Say, "Jesus is the Great Rescuer. He came to earth for a purpose, and our memory verse teaches us about that plan. Follow along with me as I show you the motions to help you remember this month's verse from Matthew 1:21."

"She will give birth to a son (Hold your arms like you are cradling a baby). You will name the son Jesus (Sign the name "Jesus:" middle finger taps the opposite palm, alternating once). Give him that name because (Open both arms out to the front with palms up, like giving a gift) he will save (hug yourself) his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21 (hold your hands out like a book)

CHALLENGE: When trying to memorize Scripture (or anything!), repetition is key! Have the children practice this month's verse several times.

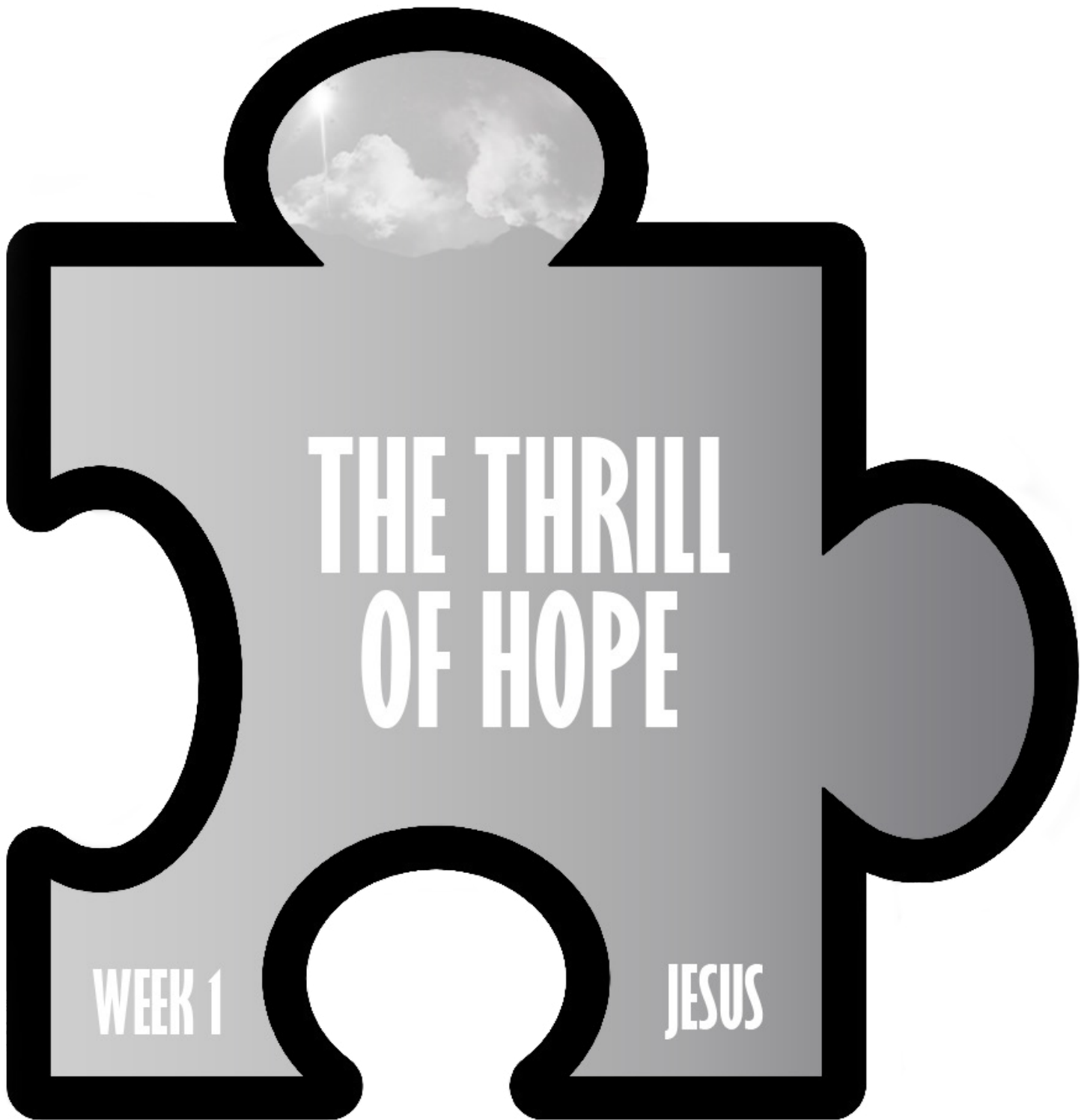
REFLECT — 5 MINUTES

Say, "Great job on your Jesse Trees! They will look amazing as we get closer to Christmas. Now that we know that Jesus is the reason we have hope, what are some ways you can share hope with others this week? [Wait for responses.] Those are great ideas! Let's pray and ask God to give us the boldness to share our hope because **God always keeps His promises.**"

SAMPLE PRAYER: *"Dear God, thank You for always keeping Your promises. You kept Your promise to the prophets by sending Jesus, and we can have the same hope that You will make all things new when You come again. Thank You for being with us. Please help us keep You at the center of all the fun we have this season. In Jesus' name, Amen."*

RELEASE —

If you have extra time, have the children continue coloring their ornaments or play *Christmas Tree Tag*. When parents arrive, please give them a copy of the 2022 Advent Calendar, Parent Guide and the kids *Jesse Tree* supplies from Engage.



Parent Guide

JESUS: GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISE

BIG IDEA:

God always keeps His promises.

VERSE:

"She will give birth to a son. You will name the son Jesus. Give him that name because he will save His people from their sins." Matthew 1:21 (ICB)

This month's Parent Guide will lead your family through an Advent activity called "The Jesse Tree." If your child was present for the first Sunday in December, they should have brought home their "tree." Additionally, they should have an envelope of ornaments to finish coloring. Each ornament coincides with a day in Advent, so your family can add a new ornament to the tree each day. (If your child was absent on the first Sunday, ask their teacher for a set of ornaments and instructions on how to make a Jesse Tree.)

The Jesse Tree has become a popular family tradition among Christians because it connects the Christmas tree with God's Old Testament plan to send Jesus, the King, to rescue His people from their sin. The Jesse Tree is based on Isaiah 11:1-16, where the Lord promises to bring forth our Savior from the kingly line of David

(or David's father, Jesse).

In addition to your child's Jesse Tree, you should have received an Advent calendar. Please read the daily Scripture and discuss the questions together as you place the new ornament on your family's Jesse Tree. We believe that practices like the Jesse Tree and the Advent Calendar reinforce God's truth and provide a deeper understanding of why Christians celebrate Christmas. May the Lord help us faithfully lead our families in worshipping King Jesus this December.

Parent Guide

JESUS: GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISE

BIG IDEA:

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VERSE:

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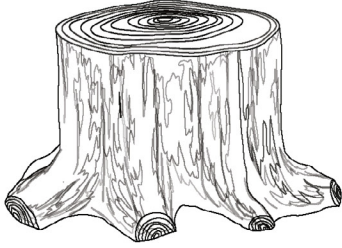
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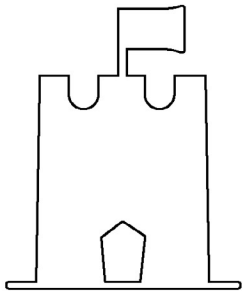
Isaiah 11:1-9

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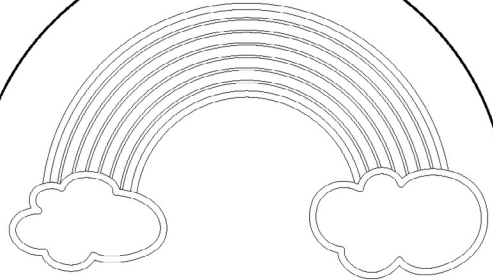
Genesis 3:1-19

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Habakkuk 2:1-4

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**Genesis 6:11-14,
7:17, 9:8-16**

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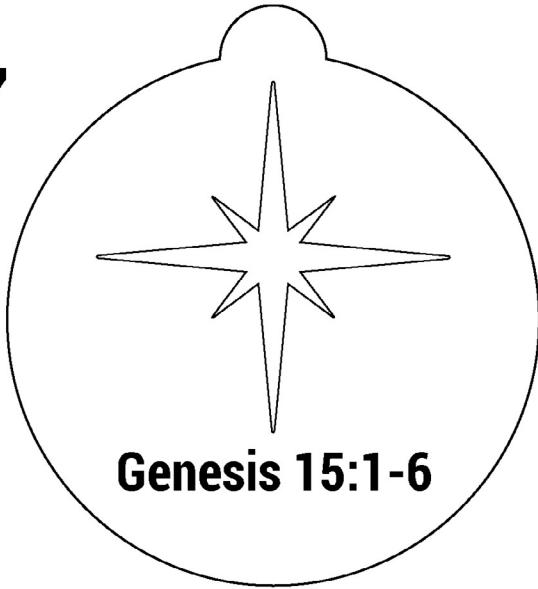
Genesis 1:26-31

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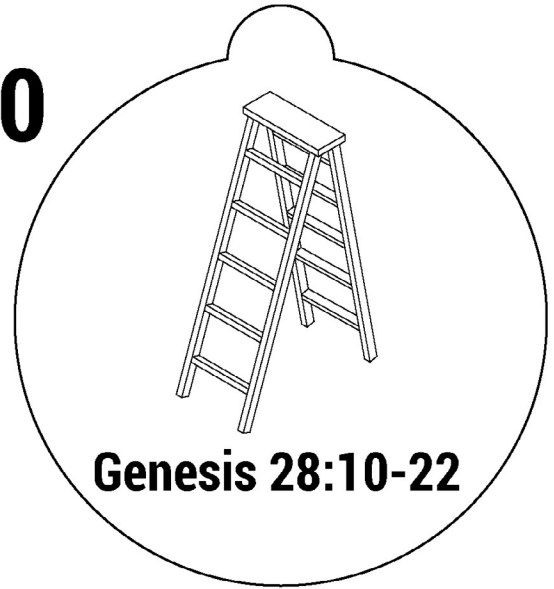


Genesis 12:1-7

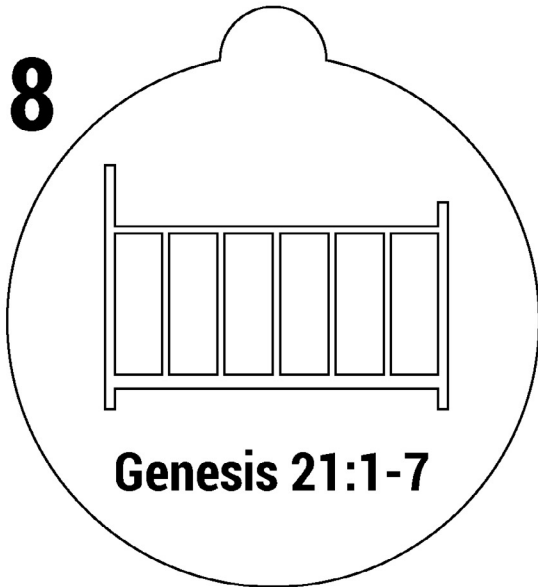
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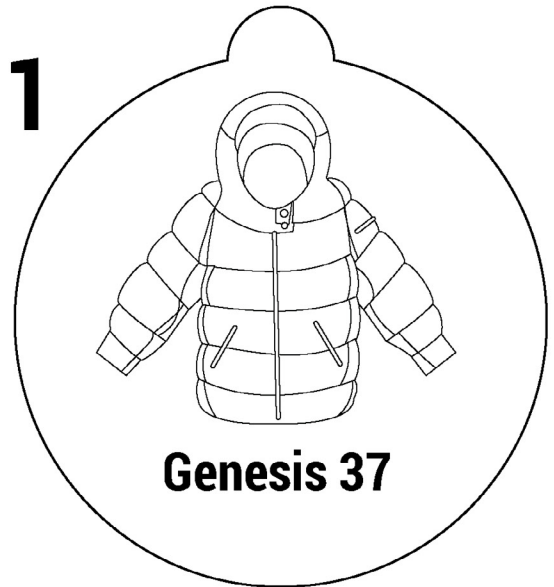
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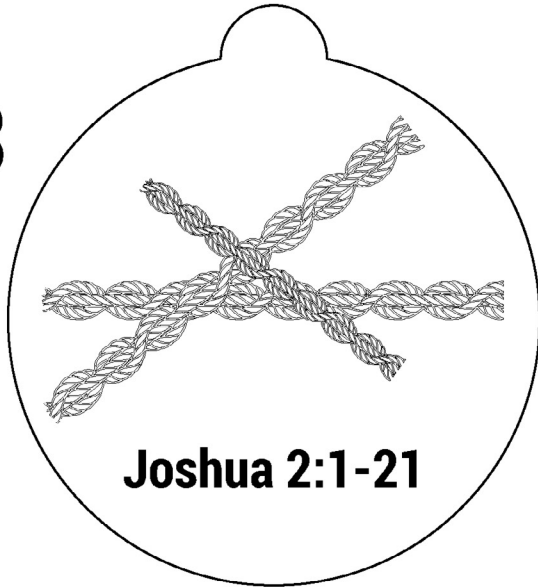
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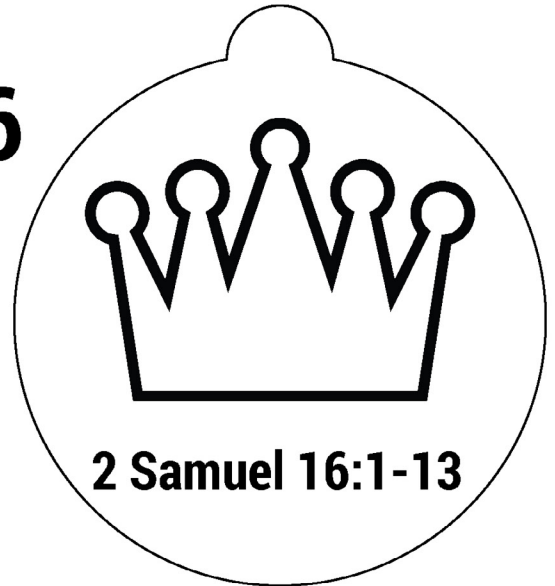


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Joshua 2:1-21

16



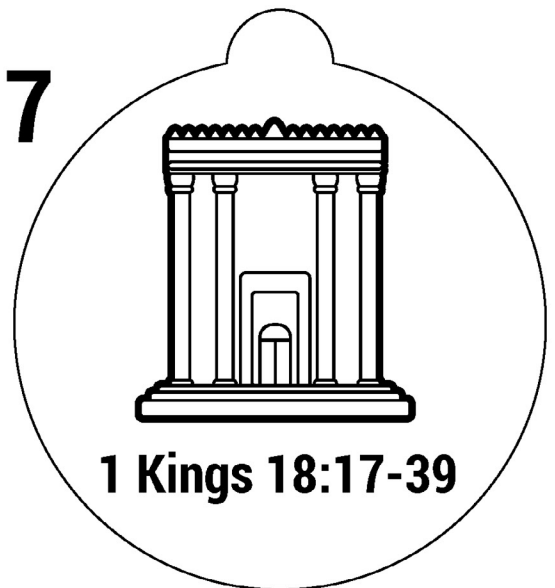
2 Samuel 16:1-13

14



**Ruth 1:15-2:3,
4:9-14**

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1 Kings 18:17-39

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Genesis 22:1-14

18



Esther 4, 5:2

19



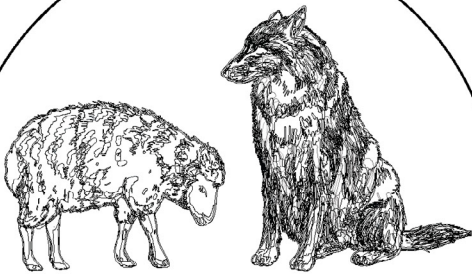
Isaiah 11:1-7

22



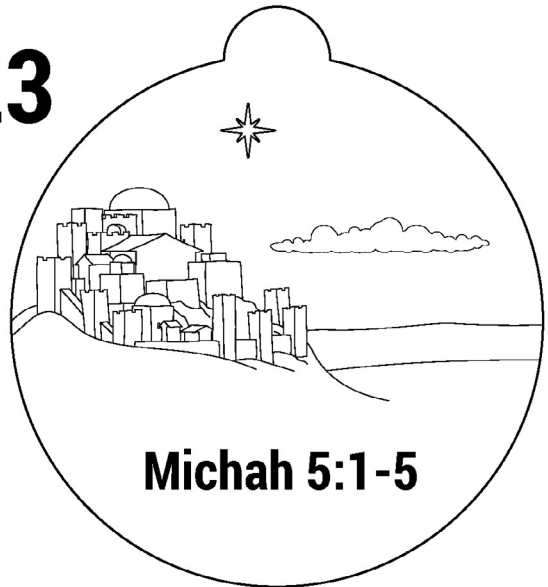
Daniel 6

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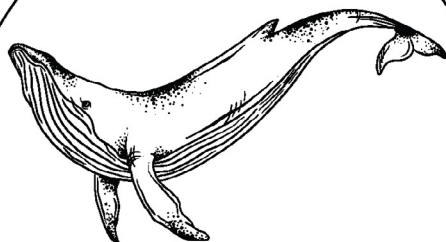
Isaiah 11:6-9

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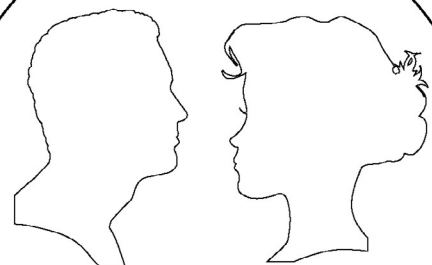
Michah 5:1-5

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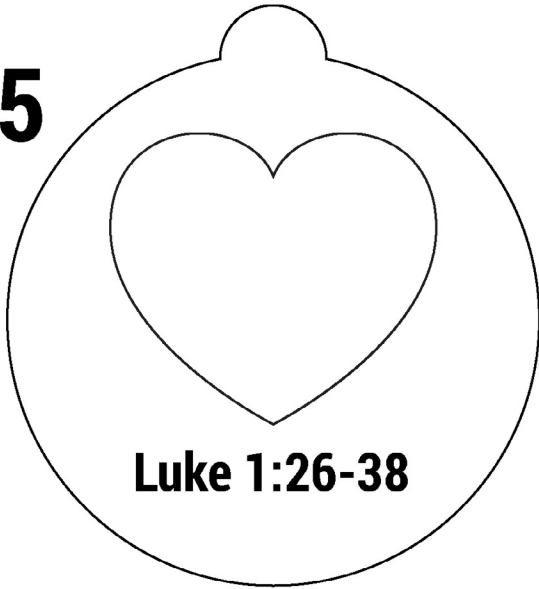
Jonah 3:1-5

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Luke 1:5-25

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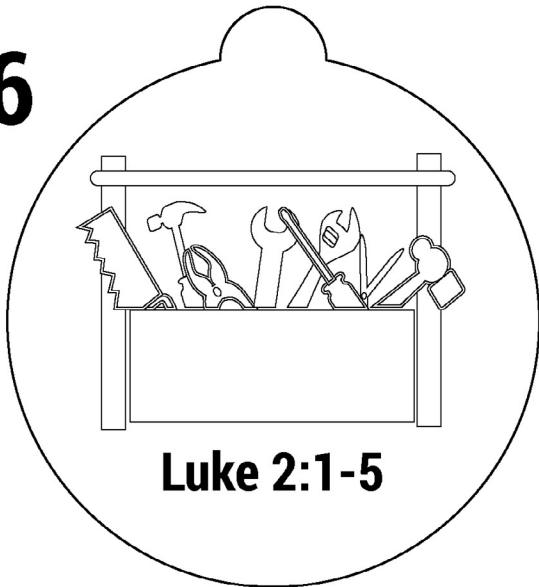
Luke 1:26-38

28



Luke 2:6-21

26



Luke 2:1-5

27



Matthew 3:1-6

JESUS

GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISE



PEACE ON EARTH

BIBLE PASSAGE

Isaiah 9:2-7 (ICB)

BIG IDEA

God always keeps His promises.

FOCUS VERSE

“She will give birth to a son. You will name the son Jesus. Give him that name because he will save his people from their sins.” Matthew 1:21 (ICB)

LESSON MATERIALS

| Puzzle Piece | Phone and Speaker | *Elementary Name Game Cards* Activity Page | Timer | *Peace Dove* Activity Page | Scrapbook Paper | Pencils | Scissors | Hole Puncher | String or Ribbon | Rectangular Blocks or DUPLOs | Permanent Marker | Masking Tape (optional) |

GREET — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Phone and Speaker |

As children are arriving, play *Handel's Messiah*, “For Unto Us a Child is Born.” (You can find it on YouTube.)

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- What do you think about the song that is playing? Do you like it? Have you heard it before today?
- Does the music give you any hints about today's lesson? What do you think we'll be learning?



PROVIDE ACTIVITIES FOR THE CHILDREN TO DO AS THEY ARRIVE EACH WEEK. FOR EXAMPLE, GIVE THE CHILDREN COLORING SHEETS AND CRAYONS OR COLORED PENCILS TO HELP THE CHILDREN SLOW DOWN AND MENTALLY PREPARE FOR YOUR TIME TOGETHER. IF YOU HAVE YOUNGER CHILDREN, CONSIDER SETTING UP MULTIPLE SENSORY TABLES FOR QUIET PLAY. AS CHILDREN ENTER, DIRECT THEM TO THE TABLE(S).

WORSHIP — 10 MINUTES

Say, “How did the music make you feel as you arrived? [Wait for responses.] It made me feel calm and worshipful. It made me peaceful. Sometimes when we worship, we jump and shout and dance around, but other times worship can be quiet and calm. Either way, when we sing to God, we are worshiping Him. And He is so worthy to be praised! Let's sing together now.”



WE RECOMMEND THE SONG “YES AND AMEN” BY CHRIS TOMLIN AND THE ALBUM *SONGS OF THE CHRISTMAS STORY* BY LIFETREE KIDS FOR THIS UNIT. BOTH ARE AVAILABLE ON YOUTUBE.COM.

PRAY — 5 MINUTES

Gather the children for prayer.

SAMPLE PRAYER: “Dear Jesus, sometimes I wonder if the shepherds and wise men who visited You at Your birth asked, ‘What child is this?’ I wonder if they understood how amazing You are. Please help us know how to show You we believe You are Christ the King! In Your name we pray, Amen!”

REVIEW — 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Puzzle Piece |

BACKGROUND: Say, “Now, let’s examine the theme of Advent that we learned last week: For our first week, we talked about *HOPE*. We learned of the prophets’ hope that God would keep His promise and give them a King from the line of David. This week, we’re going to explore the theme of *PEACE*.” Have a child put the puzzle piece on the wall.

TRANSITION: Say, “But first, who’s ready for an activity?”

ENGAGE — 10 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | *Elementary Name Game Cards Activity Pages* (1 set for every 3-5 kids) | Timer |



PRIOR TO CLASS, COPY AND CUT ENOUGH OF THE *ELEMENTARY NAME GAME CARDS ACTIVITY PAGES* FOR EACH TEAM (3-5 KIDS) TO HAVE 1 SET.

Say, “Today, our lesson is all about names, so we are going to play *The Name Game*! Let’s get started!”

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Divide the children into teams of 3-5 people.
2. Have a stack of cards ready. Set the timer for 45 seconds.
3. Teams will take turns. Each round, one member from every group will lead their teammates in naming as many of the words on the cards as possible before the timer runs out. They will do this by providing clues about the word on their card(s). However, they may not use a part of the word from the card when giving clues.
4. Each time a team names the word on the card, sit that card aside. At the end of the round, count the correct answers for each group.
5. The team with the most correct answers wins.

TRANSITION: Say, “Congratulations, winners! You did a great job coming up with all of those names. Now, let’s find a seat, and I want you to see if you can figure out why we played an activity called *The Name Game*.”

LEARN — 10 MINUTES

Say, “When you entered the room, some special music was playing. Did you recognize it? [Wait for

responses.] What was familiar about it? The man who wrote that music was inspired by the exact words of Scripture we'll be learning about today. I'm going to read those verses from the Bible now." Read Isaiah 9:2, 6-7 (ICB).



CONSIDER READING ISAIAH 9:2, 6-7 IN KJV AS WELL TO ALLOW THE CHILDREN TO HEAR THE EXACT WORDING OF *HANDEL'S MESSIAH*, "FOR UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN."

² Now those people live in darkness. But they will see a great light. They live in a place that is very dark. But a light will shine on them... ⁶ A child will be born to us. God will give a son to us. He will be responsible for leading the people. His name will be Wonderful Counselor, Powerful God, Father Who Lives Forever, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Power and peace will be in his kingdom. It will continue to grow. He will rule as king on David's throne and over David's kingdom. He will make it strong, by ruling with goodness and fair judgment. He will rule it forever and ever. The Lord of heaven's armies will do this because of his strong love for his people.

Ask, "Have you figured out why we played *The Name Game*? [Wait for responses.] Right! Because today's Bible passage is about some of the names of God: Wonderful Counselor, Powerful God, Father Who Lives Forever, and Prince of Peace.

"Let's take a look at the meaning of each name. Will you tell me what you think they mean?"

- *Wonderful Counselor*: God helps us know the right things to do. We can trust Him to lead us.
- *Powerful God*: God gave Himself this name when He talked with Abraham. He is God above all other gods, and He can do anything.
- *Father Who Lives Forever*: God is our good and loving protector who lives forever.
- *Prince of Peace*: God will bring an end to war, bring well-being to His people, and ensure that everyone has all they need. Because of God, we are safe.

"The Old Testament prophets told us so much about Jesus hundreds of years before He was born! For example, they taught us that the Messiah would come from Jesse and King David's family and that He would be born in Bethlehem. Here, God speaks through Isaiah to teach us that Jesus will bring peace to His people. In a time where God's people are in turmoil [not at peace], God wanted to make sure they knew He would bring them peace. Not just peace between them and their enemies, but peace between them and God. That's what Jesus did for Israel and that's what Jesus does for us. What a powerful name, the 'Prince of Peace.'

"The King [Jesus], who God promised, is greater than any king who ever lived. Jesus is wise, good, and loving. He brought peace between God and His people. Jesus came to Earth and was God in the flesh. The faithful people waited for this King and believed that He would make everything new."

TRANSITION: Say, "They had hope because **God always keeps His promises.**"

DISCUSS — 10 MINUTES

Say, "Are you ready to talk about the story?"

1. Who always keeps His promises?

Response: **God always keeps His promises.**

2. Do you know the meaning of your name?

Response: Answers will vary.

3. Do you think the meaning of names is important? Why or why not?

Response: Answers will vary.

4. Sometimes, our names don't mean anything significant about us, but God's name is important.

Which of God's names from today's passage do you like best? Why? (Review the names.)

Response: Answers will vary.

5. What have you learned about God today?

Response: **God always keeps His promises.** God wants us to know Him. God is wise. God is powerful. God is our Father. God brings peace, etc.

TRANSITION: Say, "The names Isaiah uses to describe Jesus are promises to us. Jesus is our wise counselor who stands before God and supports us. Jesus is fully God and fully man. Because Jesus rose from the grave, He lives forever. And Jesus will return to make everything right that was wrong. That is His promise, and **God always keeps His promises!**"

RESPOND — 20 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | *Peace Dove* Activity Page (1 dove per child) | Scrapbook Paper (assorted colors and patterns) | Pencils | Scissors | Hole Puncher | String or Ribbon (4' per child) |

Say, "God promised His people that the special King He was sending them would bring peace, and He did! He brought peace between God's people and Himself. Did you know that because of Jesus, you can be friends with God? That's one of the reasons Jesus is known as the 'Prince of Peace.' Did you also know that in the Bible, a dove often represents peace? To help us remember that Jesus is the 'Prince of Peace,' we're going to make Peace Dove Garland. Let's get started!"

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Give each child one dove from the *Peace Dove* Activity Page, a pencil, and scissors.
2. Allow them to select 2-3 pieces of scrapbook paper.
3. Have children trace the dove template onto the paper and cut out the doves. Encourage them to fit as many doves on the paper as possible.
4. Have children cut 4' pieces of yarn or ribbon.
5. Punch a hole on the right and left sides of the doves' bodies and string yarn or ribbon through the holes.

TRANSITION: Say, "You did a great job making Peace Dove Garlands! I love the colors and patterns you chose. Now, you can take this home and hang it up as a reminder that Jesus is our 'Prince of Peace.'"

MEMORIZE — 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Rectangular Blocks or DUPLOs (at least 5 blocks for every 2-3 children) | Permanent Marker | Masking Tape (optional) |

Say, "Today, we've talked about the names of God from Isaiah 9 [Wonderful Counselor, Powerful God, Father Who Lives Forever, and Prince of Peace]. However, this month's memory verse tells us about another important name of our King: Jesus. 'Jesus' means 'The Lord will save us.' Isn't that awesome? Let's practice our verse."

"She will give birth to a son (*Hold your arms like you are cradling a baby*).
You will name the son Jesus (*Sign the name "Jesus:" middle finger taps the opposite palm, alternating once*). **Give him that name because** (*Open both arms out to the front with palms up, like giving a gift*) **he will save** (*hug yourself*) **his people from their sins."** **Matthew 1:21** (*hold your hands out like a book*)

CHALLENGE: Before class begins, use the marker to write the following phrases on the blocks (or DUPLOs): (If you plan on reusing the blocks, place masking tape on the side and write the memory verse phrases on the tape.)

**She will give birth to a son.
 You will name the son Jesus.
 Give that name because
 He will save his people from their sins.
 Matthew 1:21, ICB**

Divide the children into groups of 2-3 and provide each team with a set of blocks. Then, have them put the blocks in order and read the verse back to you. Make the activity more challenging by writing shorter phrases on the blocks (2-3 words each).

REFLECT — 5 MINUTES

Say, "This time of year gets so busy and full of fun activities. However, Advent helps us slow down and reflect on who we are celebrating. What are some ways you can remember the things we learned about Jesus today? [Allow for responses] Those are great ideas! Now, let's pray and ask Jesus to help us remember the true reason for Christmas."

SAMPLE PRAYER: *"Dear Jesus, this time of year can be so busy and noisy. There is much to do and see. It can be hard to hear Your voice. Help us slow down and think about You, even when we are busy. Thank You for always being with us, thank You for bring us PEACE, and thank You for keeping Your promises. We love You. In Your name we pray, Amen!"*

RELEASE —

If there is additional time, sing some of the songs you have chosen for this unit or let the children make more doves to extend their Peace Dove Garlands. Be sure to ask the parents to have their children bring in an empty shoebox for next weeks craft. (See next week's RESPOND activity for details.)





CHRISTMAS

TREE

CROSS

CANDLE

WREATH

SONG

ANGEL

BABY

SHEEP

SHEPHERD

GIFT

COLD

LIGHTS

JESUS

CANDY

CHURCH

MANGER

COOKIE

DONKEY

SNOWMAN

KING

STAR

SNOW

FAMILY

JESUS

GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISE



JOY TO THE WORLD

BIBLE PASSAGE

Luke 2:1-20 (ICB)

BIG IDEA

God always keeps His promises.

FOCUS VERSE

“She will give birth to a son. You will name the son Jesus. Give him that name because he will save his people from their sins.” Matthew 1:21 (ICB)

LESSON MATERIALS

| Post-It Notes (2 colors) | Puzzle Piece | Candy Bars or Other Small Gifts | Gift Wrap | Tape | Scissors | Baby Doll | Small Box | Small Blanket | Props and Costume Pieces for Bible Characters | Clipboard | Pen | *Scripture Verses* Activity Page | Highlighter | Bibles | Shoe Boxes | *Nativity Characters* Activity Page | Cardstock | Crayons or Markers | Scissors | Glue | Additional Decorating Items | Soft Foam Ball or Inflatable Beach Ball |

GREET — 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | 2 Colors of Post-It Notes (1 of each color per child) |

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- Name one thing you have done to prepare for Christmas.
- What is one thing you haven't done but plan to do before Christmas?

Then, give each child two Post-it notes - one of each color. On one color note, have them write their answer to the first connection question and use the second color to write their response to the second question. (Make sure all the children use the same color for the same question.) When everyone has finished writing, have them post the notes and share their Christmas preparations with one another.



SLOWLY BUILD A CLASSROOM LIBRARY. PURCHASE A FEW BOOKS AT A TIME, ASK FOR GENTLY-USED DONATIONS OR CREATE AN AMAZON WISH LIST TO SHARE WITH THE CONGREGATION. HAVING BOOKS IN THE ROOM GIVES THE CHILDREN SOMETHING QUIET TO DO WHEN THERE IS EXTRA TIME. FOR A LIST OF RECOMMENDED CHILDREN'S BOOKS, CHECK OUT OUR FREE PRINTABLES AT [HTTPS://IPH.C.ORG/DISCIPLESHIP/PRINTABLE-RESOURCES/](https://iphc.org/discipleship/printable-resources/).

WORSHIP — 10 MINUTES

Say, “Look at all that you have done to prepare for Christmas! It’s such a fun time, but it can be busy, too. It’s important that we also prepare our hearts to celebrate and we can do that by singing. Each week, we

have sung a different Christmas carol, and today, we are going to sing one that I think you will know. Are you ready to praise the Lord?" Sing "Joy to the World."



WE RECOMMEND THE SONG "YES AND AMEN" BY CHRIS TOMLIN AND THE ALBUM *SONGS OF THE CHRISTMAS STORY* BY LIFETREE KIDS FOR THIS UNIT. BOTH ARE AVAILABLE ON YOUTUBE.COM.

PRAY — 5 MINUTES

Ask the children if they have needs they'd like you to pray for, and encourage them to pray for one another.

SAMPLE PRAYER: *"Jesus, we have joy because You came to the world. We are grateful that we can celebrate with all of heaven that You are Lord and Savior! Please help us to keep our hearts focused on You, especially as the excitement for Christmas builds. We thank You and praise You for all You have done. Amen!"*

REVIEW — 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Puzzle Piece |

BACKGROUND: Say, "Today, is the third Sunday of Advent, and we are talking about 'JOY!' Who remembers the themes we have emphasized during this Advent season? [Wait for responses.] The first week, we looked at the 'HOPE' of the Old Testament prophets and learned that the Messiah would come from the family of Jesse [King David's father]. Then, last week, 'PEACE' was our theme, and we looked at the names of the Messiah. We saw that He would be a ruler who brought peace to the world. God promised to send a rescuer, and **God always keeps His promises!**"

TRANSITION: Say, "Today, we will hear about what a 'JOY' it must have been to finally meet the promised Messiah. Who would like to put up the puzzle this week?" Have a child put the puzzle piece on the wall.

ENGAGE — 10 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Candy Bars or Other Small Gifts (1 per child) | Gift Wrap | Tape | Scissors |



BEFORE CLASS BEGINS, PREPARE FOR THIS ACTIVITY BY PLACING A SMALL GIFT OR CANDY BAR INSIDE A BOX. WRAP THE GIFT WITH A FEW MORE LAYERS THAN THERE ARE CHILDREN IN YOUR CLASS. MAKE MULTIPLE BOXES IF YOU HAVE A LARGE GROUP.

Say, "How many of you love opening presents? When I was a kid, I loved it! I even wanted to open other people's gifts! Well, today, we are going to get some practice opening up a gift. But to play this game, it will take patience. Are you ready?"



IN ADDITION TO WHAT YOU NEED FOR THE GAME, YOU MAY WANT TO PURCHASE AS MANY SMALL GIFTS OR CANDY AS CHILDREN IN THE CLASS. THIS WILL ALLOW EACH CHILD TO HAVE A PRIZE AT THE END OF THE GAME.

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Have children sit in a circle.
2. Have a leader be the music-keeper; this person is responsible for turning the music on and off, so everyone has a turn unwrapping.
3. Have the children pass the parcel around the circle while the music is playing.
4. When the music stops, the player holding the parcel unwraps a layer
5. Continue until the parcel is completely unwrapped.

TRANSITION: Say, "It's fun to open presents, isn't it? That has to be one of the most exciting things about Christmas. However, the best gift God ever gave was His Son, Jesus. And now, we're going to hear about His birth!"

LEARN – 15 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Baby Doll | Small Box (for baby doll) | Small Blanket | Props and Costume Pieces for Bible Characters | Clipboard | Pen | *Scripture Verses Activity Page* (6 copies) | Highlighter | Bibles |



BEFORE THE LESSON, PRINT 6 *SCRIPTURE VERSES ACTIVITY PAGE*, 1 FOR EACH CHARACTER AND 1 FOR YOU. (SHEPHERD AND ANGELS MAY SHARE.) HIGHLIGHT THE DIFFERENT CHARACTERS' VERSES ON EACH OF THE COPIES.

Say, "You all have been such good listeners these past couple of weeks, but I think I am going to need assistance with this lesson. Who wants to help me?"

Select children to play Joseph, Mary, a Roman guard, the shepherds, and the angels. (These children need to be able and willing to read the Scripture verses.) Give out the props or costume pieces to help differentiate the characters. Place the baby doll in a box with fabric remnants. Give the Roman Guard the clipboard and pen. Distribute the *Scripture Verses Activity Page* with the verses highlighted to the appropriate actor.

Say, "Okay, let's look at Luke 2:1-20 (ICB) for our lesson. My actors will read their verses and tell us the story. I'm so excited because this lesson brings us great joy! Are you ready?"

When your actors are ready, have them stand in front of the class and read the *Scripture Verses Activity Page* together.

After the actors have read the *Scripture Verses Activity Page* say, "Can we give our actors a hand? Great job, everyone! Today's Advent theme is 'JOY!' What from this story brings you joy? [Wait for responses.]

"During Advent, we have looked at two Bible passages in the Old Testament that point to the coming of Jesus. Now, we have read the story of Jesus' birth. Can you think of some things you heard in previous weeks that you also heard about in today's story?" Give children a chance to look up the passages from previous weeks to help them remember. (Potential answers include: Jesus was born in Bethlehem. The angel said Jesus was born in David's town. The angels talked about peace, etc.)

TRANSITION: Say, "Can you imagine the joy Joseph, Mary and the Shepherds must have felt? We've learned over the past couple of weeks that God's people waited and waited for Him to send the King [Jesus]. And today we've read that He finally arrived! What an exciting time!"

DISCUSS — 10 MINUTES

Say, "Are you ready to talk about the story?"

- 1. If you had been a shepherd that night, what do you think you would have been thinking and feeling when the angels announced that the Messiah had come?**

Response: Answers will vary.

- 2. Why do you think God chose to tell the shepherd (and not someone rich or powerful) about Jesus' birth?**

Response: Answers will vary.

- 3. What is your favorite part of this story?**

Response: Answers will vary.

- 4. Did you know that this is a story for you? Why do you think that is?**

Response: Answers will vary.

- 5. What do we learn about God from today's story?**

Response: **God always keeps His promises.** God takes care of us. God is amazing! God loves us very much, etc.

TRANSITION: Say, "Did you know that shepherds were not considered very reliable? Most people thought they were better than shepherds, but God chose them to announce His Son's birth. Isn't that amazing? I think God wants people to know that Jesus came to save everyone, even people who others don't think are important."

RESPOND — 20 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Shoe Boxes (1 per child) | *Nativity Characters* Activity Page | Cardstock (1 per child) | Crayons or Markers | Scissors | Glue | Additional Decorating Items (straw/hay, star stickers, construction paper, etc.)



BEFORE CLASS, MAKE 1 COPY PER CHILD OF THE NATIVITY CHARACTERS ACTIVITY PAGE ON THE CARDSTOCK.

LAST WEEK, YOU ASKED THE PARENTS TO BRING SHOEBOXES FOR THE RESPOND ACTIVITY TODAY. BRING IN A FEW EXTRA SHOEBOXES IN CASE YOU HAVE NEW KIDS. IF YOU DON'T HAVE ENOUGH BOXES FOR EVERYONE, HAVE THE CHILDREN WORK TOGETHER IN GROUPS OF TWO OR THREE TO CREATE THE SCENE.

Say, "We are creating Nativity scenes!! Our nativity scenes will tell us about Jesus' birth! Let's try to capture the joy everyone must have felt on Jesus' birthday! Let's get to it!"

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Provide each child with a *Nativity Characters* Activity Page, scissors, and a shoebox. Make the remaining items available to the whole class.
2. Have the children color and cut out the characters.

3. Then, have the children decorate the inside of the boxes and glue the characters into place to create a nativity scene.
4. Allow the boxes to dry before sending them home. If your kids worked in teams, find places to display them around the classroom.

TRANSITION: Say, "It is true, **God always keeps His promises!**"

MEMORIZE — 5 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Soft Foam Ball or Inflatable Beach Ball |

Say, "What's this month's theme? [Wait for responses.] Right! **God always keeps His promises.** Let's take a few minutes to practice the memory verse that reminds us of the best promise God ever made."

"She will give birth to a son (Hold your arms like you are cradling a baby). You will name the son Jesus (Sign the name "Jesus:" middle finger taps the opposite palm, alternating once). Give him that name because (Open both arms out to the front with palms up, like giving a gift) he will save (hug yourself) his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21 (hold your hands out like a book)

CHALLENGE: Say, "Let's play a game that will also help us practice our memory verse." Instructions: Toss a foam or inflatable ball to a child. Have them say as much of the verse as they remember. When they say as much as they can, have them toss the ball to another child. The next child will try to finish the verse. If the child completes the verse, have the child who caught the ball restart the process. Repeat until everyone has had a chance to play.

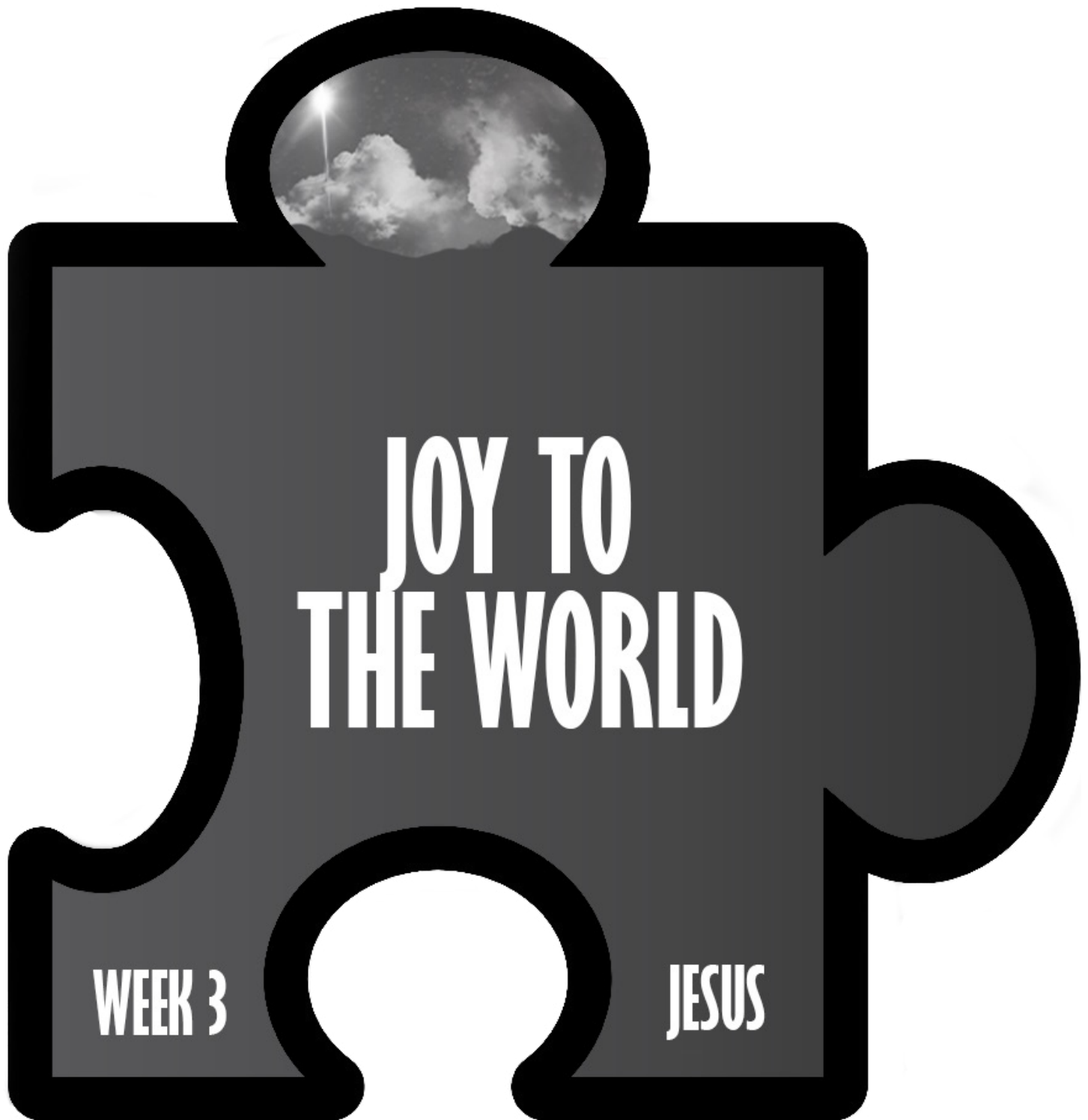
REFLECT — 5 MINUTES

Say, "**God always keeps His promises!** Can you imagine what it must have been like for the people who heard about Jesus' birth? They had waited their whole lives for a Savior, and they got to experience the fulfillment of the promise. We know that not everyone believed that Jesus was the promise, but those who did pleased God and experienced His peace."

SAMPLE PRAYER: *"Heavenly Father, thank You for fulfilling Your promise through Jesus. You always keep Your promises, and Your promise is Jesus. Please help us share the joy and peace we receive from You with others and help us make You the center of our celebration! In Jesus' name we pray, Amen!"*

RELEASE —

As children leave, wish them a Merry Christmas. Remind them of any upcoming church events that may be happening this week.



Scripture Verses

Roman Guard: "At that time, Augustus Caesar sent an order to all people in the countries under Roman rule. The order said that they must list their names in a register. This was the first registration taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And everyone went to their own towns to be registered."

Joseph: "So Joseph left Nazareth, a town in Galilee. He went to the town of Bethlehem in Judea. This town was known as the town of David. Joseph went there because he was from the family of David. Joseph registered with Mary because she was engaged to marry him, and she was going to have a baby."

Mary: "While Joseph and Mary were in Bethlehem, the time came for her to have the baby. She gave birth to her first son. She wrapped the baby with cloths and laid him in a box where animals are fed."

Shepherd 1: "That night, some shepherds were in the fields nearby watching sheep."

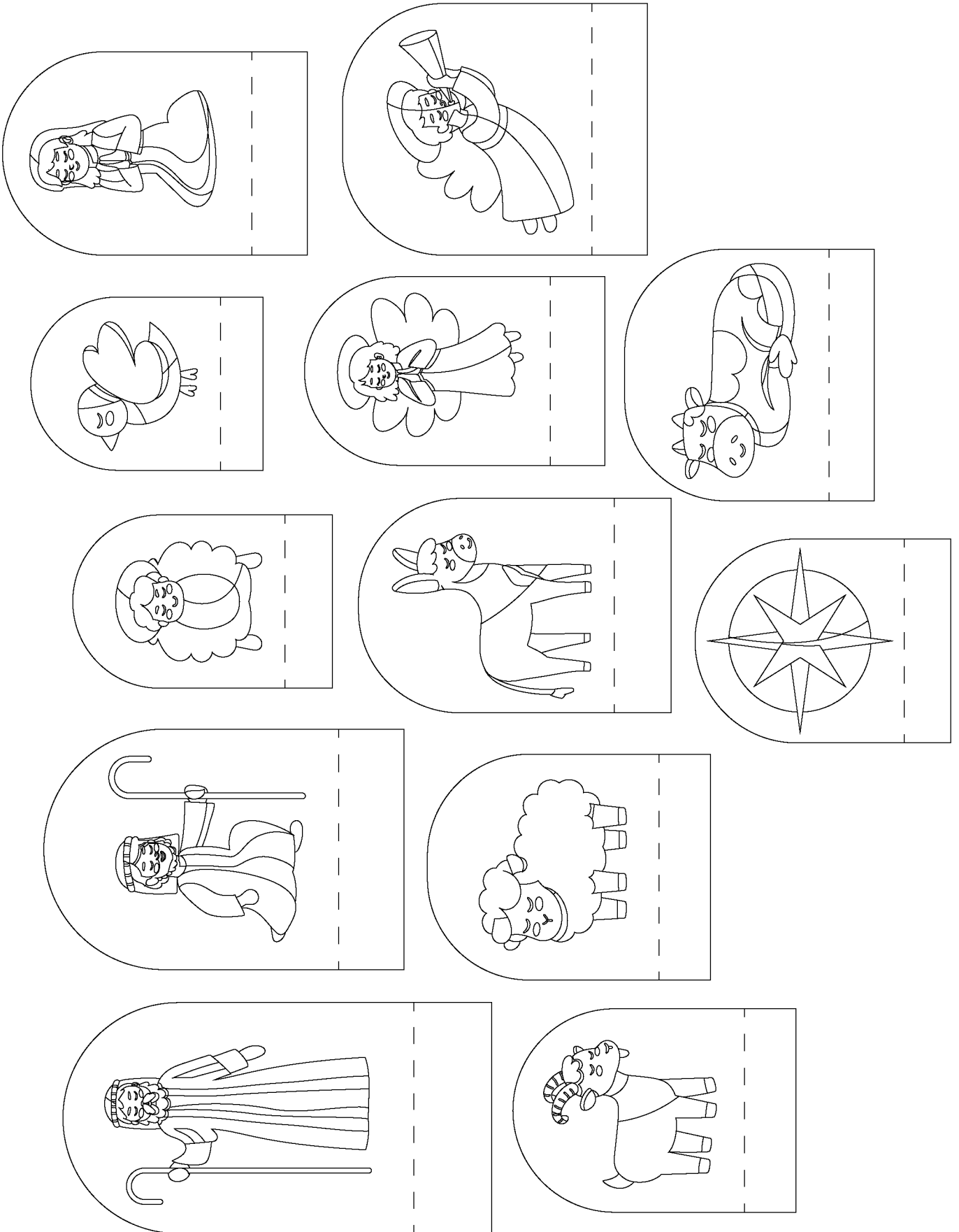
Shepherd 2: "An angel of the Lord stood before them. The glory of the Lord was shining around them, and suddenly they became very frightened."

Angel 1: "The angel said to them, 'Don't be afraid, because I am bringing you some good news. It will be a joy to all people. Today your Savior was born in David's town. He is Christ the Lord. This is how you will know him: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a feeding box.'"

Angel 1, 2, 3: "Then a very large group of angels from heaven joined the first angel. All the angels were praising God, saying: Give glory to God in heaven, and on earth let there be peace to the people who please God."

Shepherd 1: "Then the angels left the shepherds and went back to heaven. The shepherds said to each other, 'Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened. We will see this thing the Lord told us about.'"

Teacher: "So the shepherds went quickly and found Mary and Joseph. And the shepherds saw the baby lying in a feeding box. Then they told what the angels had said about this child. Everyone was amazed when they heard what the shepherds said to them. Mary hid these things in her heart; she continued to think about them. Then the shepherds went back to their sheep, praising God and thanking him for everything they had seen and heard. It was just as the angel had told them."



JESUS

GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISE



LOVE COME LET US ADORE HIM

BIBLE PASSAGE

Matthew 2:1-12 (ICB)

BIG IDEA

God always keeps His promises.

FOCUS VERSE

“She will give birth to a son. You will name the son Jesus. Give him that name because he will save his people from their sins.” Matthew 1:21 (ICB)

LESSON MATERIALS

| Puzzle Piece | *Twelve Days of Christmas Relay* Activity Pages | Small Buckets | Popsicle Sticks | Craft Glue | Crayons or Markers | Ribbon or Yarn | Additional Decorating Items (glitter, gems, stickers, etc.) |

GREET — 15 MINUTES

Connection questions to ask as the children arrive:

- Would you rather eat figgy pudding or fruit cake?
- Would you rather have chestnuts roasting on an open fire or Jack Frost nipping at your nose?
- Would you rather ride in a one-horse open sleigh or rock around the Christmas tree?

WORSHIP — 10 MINUTES

Say, “Hearing your answers to those ‘would you rather’ questions was a lot of fun! Christmas is a happy holiday with so much to celebrate. But the most wonderful thing about this season is the joy it brings because we get to celebrate Jesus’ birth. Let’s sing some of our favorite Christmas songs as we worship Christ!”



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PRAY — 5 MINUTES

Ask the children if they have needs they’d like you to pray for, and encourage them to pray for one another.

SAMPLE PRAYER: “Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Your Son to save us from our sins. We come faithfully and joyfully to worship You. Please give us eyes to see and ears to hear what You have for us to learn today. Amen.”

REVIEW — 5 MINUTES**MATERIALS:** | Puzzle Piece |

BACKGROUND: Say, “Let’s take a look at our puzzle wall. Each week, we have had a new theme for Advent. Who would like to tell me what the first puzzle piece says?”

Select a child and have them read the Advent puzzle pieces aloud. Ask the children to tell you what they learned each week. Some children may need help remembering the lessons. Gently give them hints of the key ideas throughout the month.

Say, “The big idea we learned this unit was that **God always keeps His promises**. Today, we are going to learn how we should respond when we meet Jesus. Who would like to post our puzzle piece for today?” Have a child put the puzzle piece on the wall.

TRANSITION: Say, “Before our lesson, let’s play a little relay!”

ENGAGE — 10 MINUTES**MATERIALS:** | *Twelve Days of Christmas Relay* Activity Pages (1 set per team) | Small Buckets (1 per team) |

Say, “Later today, we will read the story of the Wise Men who brought special gifts to Jesus. To get us thinking about these men and their special presents, we’re going to play a game about some other famous gifts. We’re going to play the *Twelve Days of Christmas Relay*. Are you ready?”

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Divide your group into equal numbered teams. (No team should have more than twelve children.) Have each team form a line on one side of the classroom.
2. Add a set of relay cards inside each bucket. Place the buckets on the opposite side of the room from the children.
3. When you say “Go!” the first child from each team will run to the opposite side of the room, look through the bucket to find the first card (Day #1). Once they have chosen their card, they should run it back to their team, place it on the floor, and tag the next child.
4. Then, the next child will run to the bucket to find the second card (Day #2), bring it back to the team, and place it beside the first card. If a child chooses the wrong card, they must return to the bucket, replace the card with the correct one, and run back to their group.
5. The first team to have all of their *Twelve Days of Christmas Relay* Cards in order wins.

TRANSITION: Say, “You did a fantastic job with the *Twelve Days of Christmas Relay*! Which of those gifts would you most like to receive? Some of these would be strange gifts, wouldn’t they? Well, now we’re going to hear about some special gifts Jesus received. Let’s find our seats so we can listen to God’s Word.”



LAMINATE THE CARDS TO MAKE THEM STURDIER FOR THE GAME. ALSO, SOFTLY PLAY “THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS” SONG IN THE BACKGROUND TO ADD TO THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT!

LEARN — 10 MINUTES

Say, “The lesson for today is from the Gospel of Matthew. Here, we find the story of the Wise Men. Even though they were from a different part of the world than God’s chosen people, Jesus was the king they had been waiting on too. I’m so grateful **God always keeps His promises**. Let’s read Matthew 2:1-12 (ICB).”

¹ Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem in Judea during the time when Herod was king. After Jesus was born, some wise men from the east came to Jerusalem.

² They asked, “Where is the baby who was born to be the king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east. We came to worship him.” ³ When King Herod heard about this new king of the Jews, he was troubled. And all the people in Jerusalem were worried too. ⁴ Herod called a meeting of all the leading priests and teachers of the law. He asked them where the Christ would be born. ⁵ They answered, “In the town of Bethlehem in Judea. The prophet wrote about this in the Scriptures:

⁶ ‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, you are important among the rulers of Judah. A ruler will come from you. He will be like a shepherd for my people, the Israelites.’” Micah 5:2

⁷ Then Herod had a secret meeting with the wise men from the east. He learned from them the exact time they first saw the star. ⁸ Then Herod sent the wise men to Bethlehem. He said to them, “Go and look carefully to find the child. When you find him, come tell me. Then I can go worship him too.”

⁹ The wise men heard the king and then left. They saw the same star they had seen in the east. It went before them until it stopped above the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When the wise men saw the star, they were filled with joy. ¹¹ They went to the house where the child was and saw him with his mother, Mary. They bowed down and worshiped the child. They opened the gifts they brought for him. They gave him treasures of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² But God warned the wise men in a dream not to go back to Herod. So they went home to their own country by a different way.

Say, “Just like God’s people, Israel, waited for the King to arrive, these wise men were in search of the King as well. On their journey, they stopped in Herod’s kingdom. Herod and the other powerful people in Jerusalem were worried that someone would come and take away their power. So, when the Wise Men arrived talking about a new king, Herod wanted to know everything he could about this baby.

“Just like the prophet Micah said, Jesus was born in Bethlehem, the town of David! Herod asked these wise men questions, like when they had first seen the star. He told them to go and look for the child but to come back and tell him when they found Him. He said he wanted to worship Jesus, but do you think that was true? [Wait for responses.] No, I don’t think so either.

“But the wise men, they truly wanted to worship the King. The star then led them to the town of Bethlehem and it stopped right over Jesus’ house. They were filled with joy and bowed down to worship

Jesus! They brought Him gifts that you would give a king:

- Gold – a gift for kings. This showed that Jesus was a rightful ruler.
- Frankincense – an incense for worship. The priests in Israel mixed frankincense with oil and offered it to God. It showed that Jesus was the great High Priest.
- Myrrh – a spice used when someone died. What a strange gift to give a baby. However, this gift points to the main reason Jesus came: to die for our sins.”

“Jesus was the King they were searching for. God loved us so much that He sent His only Son Jesus to this world to be our Savior and King. Shouldn’t we LOVE and adore and worship Him just like the Wise Men did?

TRANSITION: Say, “The Bible doesn’t tell us how many wise men there were or if they understood who Jesus really was. However, we do know that they worshiped Jesus when they saw Him. They knew He was extraordinary and worthy to be worshiped.”

DISCUSS – 10 MINUTES

Say, “**God always keeps His promises**, but things don’t always look the way we think they should. Let’s talk about how God’s ways are often different than ours. We can start with where Jesus was born. The best place to be born was in a big city because that’s where most of the important people lived. And yet, God sent His Son to the small town of Bethlehem.”

1. Where did Herod live?

Response: Jerusalem.

2. Why would God have His Son be born in a small town?

Response: Bethlehem was the place where King David lived. God wanted His people to remember the promise He made that an everlasting King would come from David’s family and David’s town.

3. What gifts did the wise men give?

Response: Gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

4. Why were those gifts significant?

Response: These were gifts given to kings. They pointed to who Jesus is: King, Priest, and Savior.

5. Can you think of anything else that is surprising about Jesus’ birth?

Response: Answers will vary.

6. What have you learned about God from today’s teaching?

Response: **God always keeps His promises.** God’s ways are different from our ways. God sent His Son Jesus to save us. God loves us, etc.

TRANSITION: Say, “Great job paying attention!! Now let’s use our creativity to build something!”

RESPOND – 20 MINUTES

MATERIALS: | Popsicle Sticks (5 per child) | Craft Glue | Crayons or Markers | Ribbon or Yarn (6” per child) | Additional Decorating Items (glitter, gems, stickers, etc.) |

Say, "Today, we are going to make stars to remind us of the star the Wise Men followed to find Jesus. My prayer is that you will hang these stars up at home to remind you to worship our King Jesus just like the Wise Men did."

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Provide each child with 5 Popsicle sticks and 6" piece of ribbon or yarn. Make the remaining items available to the whole class.
2. Have the children glue the craft sticks together to form a star.
3. Then, have the children decorate their stars using the additional decorating items.
4. Help the children tie the ribbon or yarn around the star so it will hang.
5. Allow the stars to dry before sending them home.

TRANSITION: Say, "It is true, **God always keeps His promises!**"

MEMORIZE — 5 MINUTES

Say, "This is our last lesson in the unit. Does anyone have this month's verse memorized? If so, would you like to share it with us?" Give children an opportunity to stand and share the memory verse with the corresponding hand motions.

"She will give birth to a son (*Hold your arms like you are cradling a baby*).
You will name the son Jesus (*Sign the name "Jesus:" middle finger taps the opposite palm, alternating once*). **Give him that name because** (*Open both arms out to the front with palms up, like giving a gift*) **he will save** (*hug yourself*)
his people from their sins." **Matthew 1:21** (*hold your hands out like a book*)

REFLECT — 5 MINUTES

Say, "This month, we learned that **God always keeps His promises**. God told Old Testament prophets that He would send a king to make everything right, and He did. Just like the wise men bowed down and worshiped Jesus when they saw Him, our response to Jesus should be worship too. Our response to God's amazing LOVE should be LOVE in return."

SAMPLE PRAYER: *"Dear Jesus, we worship You because You are our faithful King. As we look to the new year ahead, help us remember that You always keep Your promises and that we can trust You! In Your name we pray, Amen."*

RELEASE —

If you have extra time, the children can replay the relay game, finish their stars, or display them around the room. As parents arrive, invite them to look at what the children accomplished.

