

December Faith @ Home box
4 weeks of Advent

Boxes go to ALL members

Print:

110 of each, B&W, single sided on the attachments & double sided on the weekly activities

Please do not collate the attachments.

Please do the weekly activities on colored paper & staple them.

Scroll pg 11 - <file:///C:/Users/youth/Downloads/e-christmas-tree1-1.pdf>

Map - <https://i.pinimg.com/564x/cd/b6/4a/cdb64a61af2af13c12b8fd1bdaed9b54.jpg>

Manger pg. 5 - https://illustratedmin.s3.amazonaws.com/freebies/Nativity-Backgrounds.pdf?ck_subscriber_id=1043537117

Nativity story - <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%20:1-20&version=ICB>

Mary & Joseph silhouette

#AdventWord – last page (color)

ASLC Address List

All the coloring pages – 6 (#AdventWord, God With Us, & 4 advent reading pages – Kristin has these)

Supply list:

wreath form, *ordered from \$Tree*

candles (white – 4 each + Christmas eve candles), *Kristin ordered*
stamp

At church

ribbon x2, silver

red, green (x2), Blue, brown, yellow (1/2) and black (1/2) construction paper,
Christmas Cards

gems, flowers, bows, ribbon roses

Walmart

tea bags,

Two-inch cupcake liners

one-inch Cupcake liners,

jumbo craft stick x2

Four-inch doilies

Hobby Lobby

garland,

Silver, brown and black pipe cleaners,

3/4" white pompom,

December Faith @ Home box

4 weeks of Advent @ Home

Week 1: Prophet's Candle – Hope

Activity #1 – Making Your Advent Wreath

(adapted from Growingchristians.org)

Supplies: wreath form, garland, candles, ribbon, other items gathered from home (pine cones, ornaments, etc.)

One of my very favorite seasons of the year is Advent, which begins next Sunday. While most of the world around us is in a full-throttle Christmas tizzy, I love the idea of quiet and peaceful waiting – an antidote to hustle and bustle. What are some meaningful ways to ‘celebrate the season’ when you are, technically, still waiting? A short and simple answer soon made its way to us, and more directly, our dining room table: the Advent Wreath!

Now, there is a lot of information and minutia and ‘rules’ out there about Advent wreaths. There are certain candles, colors, and even prayers you can use for each Sunday. The depth to which you want to dive into the history and meaning is almost endless. But I’m not going to do that to you. Because frankly, when you’ve got a preteen on hand with only so much attention they’re willing to give a project, a toddler who is obsessed with fire, a dog looking to run off with the Light of Christ at a moment’s notice, you got to work fast. And if you are sheltering at home on your own, you work with what you have.

And so, if you want to mark Advent in a meaningful and minimum stress way, these are the supplies you’ll need: four or five candles, and a wreath of some sort. Sound simple enough? If you’re game, let’s get started!

The basic premise of an Advent wreath is to mark the four Sundays of Advent in an intentional way. The first Sunday you light one candle, the second Sunday two candles, the third Sunday three candles, the Fourth Sunday four candles. If you’d like to mark Christmas Eve, you light a candle in the center as the light of the coming Christ child. What I love about the tradition of the Advent wreath is that it gives an instant sense of reverence and specialness to the end of the day, and my family has always loved the process of making the wreath and then lighting the candles.

In that moment of lighting the wreath, the noise and rush of the day can settle into a soothing quiet. If you live with others, it’s a good way to start a conversation about what may have happened that day, to say a short prayer together, or share blessings. This small act of making an intentional time to observe Advent as a family not only brings the meaning of the season into focus, it is also an easy way to come together as a family during a busy time of year. If you live alone, you might want to find a friend to share a phone call, Facetime, or Zoom with as you both light your advent wreaths at home.

If you'd like to make a traditional Advent wreath, the traditional method is to use three purple candles, one pink candle, and a white center candle (if you're lighting a candle for Christmas Eve). Depending on a particular family or church's tradition, the candles can stand for 'hope, love, joy and peace' or "expectation, hope, joy and purity." The pink candle is always the third to be lit, which is a celebration of 'light overcoming darkness'—since more candles are now lit than are not. However – and please take this to heart – I am a big fan of working with what you've got – and what we've got this year is white candles. If you prefer colored candles you have on hand, or battery operated votives, go for it!

And what you make the wreath out of is the fun part! You can make it correspond to your décor—more classic or modern or country. You can use a metal frame with the candle holders already on it, or you can use a pre-made wreath from the craft store with the candles set around it.

There are also pieces of nature that are perfect for making the wreath if you keep your eye out for them. I've found that the best natural materials are the ones that will keep their color and not fall apart if they are taken inside for the next month. You could even make a wreath from a circle of stones, or collect greenery that will keep well when picked such as cedar or pine branches, boxwood, holly or magnolia leaves. Grab a pie cone from your yard. Collecting the bits that will become the family wreath is a fun project in of itself. One hint about using things from outdoors though – always put your greens in a bag and put it in the freezer overnight before using. That way no creepy crawlers unexpectedly come out of the Advent wreath in the middle of dinner!

However you choose to go about making your wreath, I hope you have fun. It's a project rife with fun – starting with collecting the pieces to make it, putting it together, and then taking part in the season-long tradition of lighting the candles.

Your Advent @ Home kit has supplies for a simple wreath – a metal frame, garland, candles, and ribbon. To make the wreath, simply wrap the garland on the frame. Thread the ribbon through, or tie it into bows – whatever you like. If you have additional items – beads, ornaments, pine cones, leaves – add them as well.

And, *please*, once you have finished your Advent wreath – take a picture – and email it to pastorkristin@allsaintsabq.org or faithformation@allsaintsabq.org. We may share the pictures in worship, or on Facebook, or in weekly emails – it's so fun to see what everyone is doing to celebrate Advent at home.

Activity #2 – Lighting of the Candle, Devotion & Coloring Page
(from Pastor Kristin Schultz)

Today the season of Advent begins. You might be thinking that you have heard that word, but you are not sure what it means. Advent is a Middle English term from a Latin term that means to “arrive.” Most notably, it is used to describe the waiting period of the church for the arrival of Christ that we celebrate every Christmas.

This Advent we are going to study the themes that shape Advent: Hope, Faith, Joy, and Peace. These are the words that help shape our idea of the Advent season and the anticipation of Christmas. The first candle in the advent wreath is the Prophets candle, and the theme is hope.

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 7:14 –

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

The prophets in the bible had two roles – to call the people of God to faithfulness, and to give them hope in times of struggle. Even during the exile in Babylon, prophets spoke words of hope and promise to the people of Israel. They foretold a Messiah, a savior who would come to care for God’s people – to be the king of the line of David God has promised long ago. The prophets always held out before the people the promises of a God they knew to be faithful and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.

Every Advent, we read the words of the prophet, particularly Isaiah, whose writings are filled with promises about the coming Messiah. George Frederic Handel picked up these words from Isaiah in his musical composition, Messiah, which was written as an Easter oratorio but which we often enjoy at Christmas. The words ring out with the joyful expectation of the one who will be for us Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.

We enter the season of Advent listening to the prophets, inviting us into a time of hopeful waiting and expectation for the gift of the Messiah who is coming into the world.

For more about Advent and the connection with the prophets, you can view the video “What is Advent” from Concordia Publishing House on YouTube:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v8_lah83UY0

Activity #3 – Isaiah Scroll (from daniellesplace.com)

Supplies: Printed scroll, tea bags, ribbon, red & green construction paper, paper towels, glue

Did you ever have to wait for something you really wanted? Maybe there is something you really want now that you heard about on TV. Maybe you asked your parents for something for Christmas. Is it hard to wait for something you really want? Maybe you've wanted something for a long time, but so far your parents haven't gotten it for you. The people in our story had been waiting a long time for something. The Israelites had been waiting so long that most of them forgot about what they were waiting for. God told them through his prophets that he was going to give them a Messiah, a Savior, or King. The Prophet Isaiah had told the Israelites about 700 years earlier that Jesus would be named Immanuel. Open your Bible and read Isaiah 7:14, "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

Long ago the scriptures weren't written in a book like they are today. People wrote on stone or clay tablets. The Ten Commandments were written on stone tablets. In the time of Isaiah the Prophet, they used animal skins and papyrus (plants). They didn't make books out of the skins and papyrus with many pages; instead they would fold them or roll them up into tubes. We are going to make our pieces of paper look like old manuscripts to remind us that God told everyone through the prophets hundreds of years earlier that he was going to send a Savior

Activity:

1. Tear apart the scroll pattern (attached). (Don't worry about the edges being even because you want the edges to look old and worn.)
2. Wrinkle up your paper and then flatten them out. Then do it again. Make concentrated tea to paint lightly over your piece of paper. Wipe of any excess water and place them on paper towels to dry.
3. Roll up the ends as shown in the picture. Cut out or pick some decorations such as holly leaves, bows, etc. to glue to the scrolls. Help them glue on a ribbon to hang the scroll.



Family Devotions for the Week (from Spirit & Truth Publishing)

Sunday—Read Daniel 6:6-27

Here we see hope in the midst of the lions' den. People today are persecuted for their beliefs. Make a lions' den out of a clean food can. Place loose strips of paper inside. Remove one paper (rescue) from the den each time a prayer is said for the persecuted.

Monday—Read Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14

These are Daniel's visions of judgment. After reading, how do you imagine God? Allow ten minutes for each family member to go to a different room and imagine. Then come back and share.

Tuesday—Read Daniel 9:1-6

This is Daniel's prayer for the people. Rewrite this prayer for modern times. The focus can be on the individual, the family, the church, the school, or the nation.

Wednesday—Read 2 Timothy 4:16-18

This Scripture tells of God protecting Paul, standing by him and giving him strength. Take turns standing by and protecting another family member while a rolled up sock is tossed (gently) in your direction. Each time the sock is blocked, thank God that God protects us.

Thursday—Read Psalm 7:1-5

This Psalm is a prayer for protection from our enemies, but the writer's own heart is also examined. List those who you might consider your enemies. After praying for deliverance from them, pray for them. Brainstorm for ways that you can bless your enemies and plan to carry them out.

Friday—Read Joel 1:1-12

This passage is Joel's lament at the thought of judgment for unrepentance. Pray for our nation, that it would not turn its back on God. Pray that we can set an example.

Saturday—Read Joel 1:13-14; 2:1-2, 15-16

This is a call to repentance and prayer. It's about being truly sorry for sin. As part of mourning their sin and returning to God, the people were supposed to fast. Choose a meal where your family will eat a thin soup and pray about being right with God.

Week 2: Bethlehem Candle – Faith

Activity #1 – Hanging of the Greens

Service on Zoom 12/6 at 10:30 a.m. (adapted from ChurchofChrist.org)

Supplies (from your home) Your Advent wreath, greens (either provided and/or some from outside or home), a wreath, a poinsettia, and a crèche – whatever you use to prepare your home for the season of Advent and Christmas

1. Join us for worship at 9:30
2. Make yourself a cup of coffee, hot chocolate, tea or cider
3. Come back – or join in – on Zoom after church as we discuss the tradition of hanging of the greens, share music and decorate a small corner of our homes.

Hanging of the Greens is a traditional Christian ceremony of decorating the church for the Advent and Christmas season, often celebrated on the first Sunday of Advent or during a separate evening service.

Some churches have a Hanging of the Greens service on a Sunday afternoon, the week before the first Sunday of Advent. Others have a workshop-style event the day before the first Sunday of Advent, where families come and learn about the significance of our Christmas decorations and help prepare the church for the new season.

Still others plan a traditional service of readings and music to do as the worship service on the first Sunday of Advent.

Today, in 2020 during Covid-19, we will present scripture, song, and symbols in each other's homes as we prepare our hearts to make room for the Messiah.

Activity #2 – Lighting of the Candle Devotion & Coloring Page (from Pastor Kristin Schultz)

Last week we talked about The Prophets Candle and how it symbolizes the Hope of Advent. Today we look at the second candle, which we call The Bethlehem Candle, that symbolizes Faith.

Scripture Reading: Luke 2: 1-7 –

“In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while[a] Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem to take part in the census of Roman rule and while there gave birth to Jesus. It was challenging for them to travel while Mary was pregnant with Jesus. It was challenging for them to have Jesus arrive while they were far from home. But in the biblical story, it was important for Jesus to be born in Bethlehem. Just as the prophet Isaiah had promised a messiah born of a young woman, who would be called the Prince of Peace, so the prophet Micah had foretold that the Messiah would come from the town of Bethlehem. The people of Israel could expect their new King to come, not from a great city center of political and economic power, but from a small and humble town.

Jesus’ humble beginnings prepare those who wait for him for a different kind of king – a king who will care for the poor, the outcast, those who live on the margins. A king who will wield power, not for his own sake, but for the sake of all who need him – which is all of us. A king whose power will not be power to use and control others, but the power of love, mercy and kindness. We wait for a savior who will forsake the power of God and come to live as a human being, as a powerless baby ~ God-with-us. He will come to meet us in our need, in our lowest places, to walk with us and show us new ways to live.

Today we journey, along with Mary and Joseph, on our way to Bethlehem. Our journey, like theirs, is one of faith – faith that, even though we don’t see the outcome ahead of us, we trust God will see us through. We journey in faith towards Bethlehem, and towards our Lord Jesus, who we know will come to meet us there.

Bible Project has a great video of the birth of Jesus narrative in Luke - It’s called “The Birth of Jesus – The Gospel of Luke Ch 1-2” by BibleProject
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OLezoUvOEQ>

Activity #3: Mary and Joseph Silhouette (from StJohnBloomington.org)

Supplies: Blue, green, brown, yellow and black construction paper, silhouette template, scissors, glue, and the MAP of the journey

All of life is a journey, and just as Mary and Joseph were greatly affected by the journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, so we are often changed dramatically by a journey or journeys in our lives. Before Jesus was born, Mary and Joseph had some major hurdles to overcome. Theirs is a tale of courage in the face of immense challenges. The roots of the Christmas story have nothing to do with trees, elves, presents or gift wrap. Mary is from an obscure village in the northern part of Galilee. Here take a look at the map. It was under Roman rule and still subject to taxation and reprisals for any unrest to the rule of the conquerors. Bethlehem was a sleepy town of about 1000. The name in Hebrew (bait lehk hem) means "house of bread" because of the wheat fields and the likelihood that they provided much of the bread for Jerusalem. What else is Bethlehem known for? We know the story well - but now let's turn to the trip itself and talk about some of its details. Look at the MAP.

1. Why do Joseph and Mary have to leave Nazareth in Galilee and travel almost 90 miles to the Judean hills and the city of Bethlehem?

Caesar Augustus commands a census and all males and their families must be counted in the city of the family's origin - which is Bethlehem through the line of King David.)

2. There are two possible routes from Nazareth to Bethlehem: 1) straight south from Nazareth through Samaria and the hills of Ephraim. And 2) southeast to the Jordan River valley and then south to Jericho and then across the desert to Bethlehem. Which route do you think the couple took? Why?

It is believed that they took the longer but safer route along the Jordan River Valley. They wanted to avoid the mountains - the Samaritans - and the brigands along the road. Also it is likely they joined up with a caravan and most Jews would avoid Samaria because of them being outside of the faith and considered unclean. It may have taken up to 10 days while 8 1/2 months pregnant. But they arrive to Bethlehem.

3. What happened when they arrived in Bethlehem - What was happening there?

Think about a long trip that you have taken before - with long hours of travel or even days of travel - What is the LONGEST trip you have taken?

How did you feel once the trip was finally completed? (Tired - relieved - ready to get cleaned up!)

What happened to Mary and Joseph?

Think about all the hardships Mary and Joseph had to endure:

- the scorn and judgements of neighbors and friends back at home
- the unwanted forced trip of 90 miles and 10 days to Bethlehem
- The hardships of that trip and with Mary being pregnant.
- And now a crowded and indifferent Bethlehem.

It is clear that this story is not as easy as we read about and see in the retelling every Christmas. Joseph & Mary endured a lot - showed great fortitude - resilience - courage and love. Their love for each other got them through it. But more importantly was their love and TRUST and FAITH in God.

Whatever burdens we are carrying right now - whatever hectic schedule we are living in at the moment - whatever stress we feel - IF WE CAN live into the nativity story as it really was we can find comfort.

Life is HARD - but there is great joy in the journey when we do it with friends and loved ones - and when we trust and love and have faith in our creator God!

Activity:

Use your blue paper as the background.

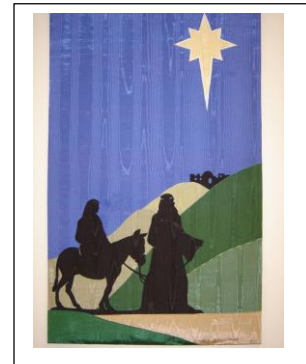
Use the green and brown paper to make mountains.

Use the yellow paper to create a star.

Cut out the attached silhouette to create Mary & Joseph on the donkey.

Use the black paper to make a city of Bethlehem.

Glue all the pieces onto the blue paper to create a picture of the journey to Bethlehem.



Family Devotions for the Week (from Spirit & Truth Publishing)

Sunday—Read Joel 2:12-13, 28-29

Joel's prophesy of hope includes a call to repentance. After a quiet time of silent confession, pour glasses full of your favorite beverages and enjoy them while you talk about the love of God.

Monday—Read Psalm 51:1-12

This is a prayer for cleansing. Using a sink that everyone can reach, take turns washing your hands. Then ask God to wash your hearts by forgiving your sins.

Tuesday—Read Acts 2:14-21

Peter addresses the crowd's reaction to Pentecost. Quoting Joel, he confirms the fulfillment of the prophesy of pouring out the spirit on flesh. Play a game of "Say and Do". Each family member says they will do something before the day is over. Each one follows through.

Wednesday—Read Joel 3:1-2a, 17-18

These passages are the promise that God will restore Judah after the judgment. Eat a snack of dry bread and water. Discuss the devastation of judgment. During a full favorite dinner discuss what it would be like to go from total devastation to a brand new beautiful city.

Thursday—Read Amos 9:11-15

This references the restoration of David's kingdom. Scatter toy blocks and rebuild a little city as you read and discuss this passage.

Friday—Read Micah 5:2-4

This passage is about the coming Messiah, the ruler from Bethlehem. Hang some Christmas decorations to prepare for celebrating the Messiah's birth.

Saturday—Read Isaiah 40:1-5

In this passage, God's people are comforted by the promise of a Messiah. Get comfortable in blankets or with pillows and share with each other the things about Jesus that bring you comfort.

Week 3 – Shepherd's Candle - Joy

Activity #1 – Share the Joy of Advent with Others

Supplies: Christmas Card, stamp, and address

Today marks the third Sunday in Advent, and in worship we light the “joy” candle in the advent wreath, which symbolizes joy at the soon-coming of Jesus. The joy candle is often pink and is also referred to as the Shepherds’ Candle. This week we see a shift from the more somber prior weeks of Advent, to a more joyous atmosphere of anticipation and expectancy. The angels’ message to the shepherds was one of “good tidings of great joy.” It serves as a reminder that the Christmas message is one of rejoicing.

For most of us, “rejoicing” is not a word we use frequently in our vocabulary, let alone an action we embrace as a daily discipline. All too often, joy is confused with its cousin, happiness. And although related, they are not the same. In short, happiness tends to be linked to external circumstances, while joy springs deep from within, and isn’t fazed by external conditions.

How can you share joy or happiness with someone else? We have enclosed a Christmas card for you to send to someone who would appreciate a joyous greeting. If you don’t have someone in mind, we have also included a name/address of someone in the congregation.

We have also included a candy cane to symbolize the shepherds. Hopefully this brings some joy/happiness to you 😊

Activity #2 – Lighting of the Candle, Devotion & Coloring Page
(from Pastor Kristin Schultz)

Over the last two weeks we've covered different parts of the Advent season using the Advent candles as our guide. Our first lesson was about Hope symbolized by the Prophets' Candle and the second was on Faith symbolized by the Bethlehem Candle. Today we will focus on the third candle, called the Shepherds Candle – the candle which symbolizes joy.

Have you ever sung the song that goes "I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart!"? When you hear the word Joy, what comes to mind? We spend a lot of time in our culture focused on the "pursuit of happiness," but what about Joy?

Scripture Reading: Luke 2: 8-20 –

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

*"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."*

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

The Bible has a lot to say about Joy. Just as the shepherds rejoiced at the coming of Jesus, we too rejoice in his coming. Just as the shepherds were moved by joy to share the good news, we too can share with our family and friends what it means to us to have Jesus in our lives. What does Christmas mean to you, as a Christian who puts your faith and hope in the coming of Jesus? How can you share that faith, hope and joy, even in the midst of the challenging times we are living in today?

The Bible gives witness to how the people of God have lived in hopeful expectation and in joy, even in difficult times. In its word study video on Joy, the Bible Project offers

many examples of joy in the Bible. *The rest of this reflection uses quotations and material from the Bible Project video.*

In Genesis 1, God says the world is very good and so we can find joy in creation.

Psalm 65:11-12 ~ “You crown the year with your bounty; wagon tracks overflow with richness. The pastures of the wilderness overflow, the hills gird themselves with joy”

When the Israelites are freed from slavery, they sing in joy, even while they are still in the wilderness and their future is uncertain.

Psalm 105:43 ~ “So the Lord brought his people out with joy, his chosen ones with singing.”

The joy of God’s people is not determined by their struggles, but by their future destiny. When the people of Israel are in exile in Babylon, the prophets continue to offer hope and joy in the expectation of their salvation by God.

Isaiah 51:11 ~ “So the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”

While the Israelites waited, they chose joy to anticipate their future redemption.

The birth of Jesus is announced as something joyful for all the world,

Luke 2:10 ~ But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people’

The first believers were known for their joy, even in the midst of suffering and persecution.

Acts 13:52 ~ “the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.”

Paul’s letter to the Philippians is full of joy, even though he is writing from prison. He is joyful because of his faith and the love of the community which supports him. In his second letter to the Corinthians he writes,

2 Corinthians 6:4,10 ~ “as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: ... as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.”

When you believe that Jesus love has overcome death itself, then joy becomes reasonable even in the darkest of circumstances. ... Christian joy is a profound decision of faith and hope in the power of Jesus own life and love, and that’s what biblical joy is all about. This sort of biblical joy – joy that is dependent not on our circumstances, but on our faith and trust in God – is what we need now in the midst of a pandemic and the deep challenges we face in this country. It is not a simple optimism that things will get better, or even trust in ourselves and one another to make it better – but a deep trust and hope in the faithfulness of God. We trust God to enter our lives and our world to make a way where there is no way, and offer hope when we feel most desperate and afraid.

The joy of Advent is the joy of faith, love, and hope – the joy that lives deep in our hearts because we know that Jesus is with us and for us, always.

If you are able, watch the video, called "Joy" by BibleProject, on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qvOhQTuD2e0>

Activity #3: - Shepherd Craft Made from cupcake liners (scottcfrazier.com)

Supplies: Two-inch and one-inch Cupcake liners, 3/4" white pompom, brown and black pipe cleaners, glue, jumbo craft stick, paper. markers and colored pencils.

Shepherding is a job that will never be viewed as glamorous, desirable or even respectable. But being a shepherd is no small task. If you've ever watched a shepherd, you know the incredible ability they have to watch, guide, and lead their flock. I saw this most clearly in the mountains in western China. I would stumble upon a flock of sheep and at first not even see the shepherd. It was only if I watched for a while, and I saw a sheep begin to wander off, that I would realize the shepherd was there the whole time. From the shade of trees or rocks nearby I'd hear the shepherd's whistle, call or gesture. Immediately the sheep would return to the flock. The shepherd understands the sheep need to stick together, he keeps watch for danger that may come, and the sheep depend on him even when they don't realize they are. It is clear in Scripture that the role of the shepherd is one that teaches us more about who God is and how we should serve others. For King David, it was being a shepherd that gave him confidence to strike down both lions and bears, and what gave him confidence that God would deliver him from evil. Psalm 23 shows us that God is our shepherd, and in John 10 Christ calls himself the Good Shepherd.

It's no coincidence that it's shepherds that the angel appeared to on Christmas night as they "watched their flock." He called these men to seek Christ, worship Him, and tell others of the Savior that was here. From the moment Jesus was born, He wanted people to understand that He was more like a shepherd than successful politician, a rich lawyer, or a famous celebrity. His influence wouldn't come from power or fame; it would come from humility. One can only hope that these shepherds someday heard Christ's words from John 10. "I am the Good Shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep...my sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." This advent fight to put yourself in these shepherds' place as the angel appeared to them. On what was just another night for them, an angel appeared. In what was most likely a more powerful vision from God than we will ever experience, the shepherds witnessed an angel announce his birth, and then saw the skies fill with heavenly hosts praising their Savior. When you long for a savior today, fight to remember that He has come, and that He is a Good Shepherd with you in every moment. Keeping you safe. Guiding you. Leading you. And when this leads you to worship, remember that every time we sing praise to our Savior today, we are joining in with a multitude of heavenly hosts, praising the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the Good Shepherd. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased."

Prayer: Father, you are the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep. Thank you for leading, feeding, guiding, and protecting me. You are my shepherd and I shall not want. You lead me beside still waters, restore my soul, and lead me in paths of

righteousness. Following you, I can know that goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in your house forever. Amen.

Activity (from www.daniellesplace.com)

1. Flatten a 2- inch cupcake liner. Tape or glue a jumbo craft stick in the center of one of the flattened cupcake liners. (If you don't have cupcake liners, you can use 4 1/2" circles cut from patterned paper.)

To make the shepherd's robe fold one side of the cupcake liner over the jumbo craft stick as shown in the diagram. Glue it to the stick.

2. Fold the other side over the jumbo craft stick overlapping the first fold and glue it down.

3. To make the arms flatten another matching 2-inch cupcake liner and cut it into quarters. (If you don't have cupcake liners, you can just use 4 1/2" circles.)

4. Fold the sides of the cupcake liner quarters in on both sides to make the arms (See diagram). Cut tan Chenille stems a little longer than the arms and glue them inside the arm pieces.

5. Glue the arms onto the body piece.

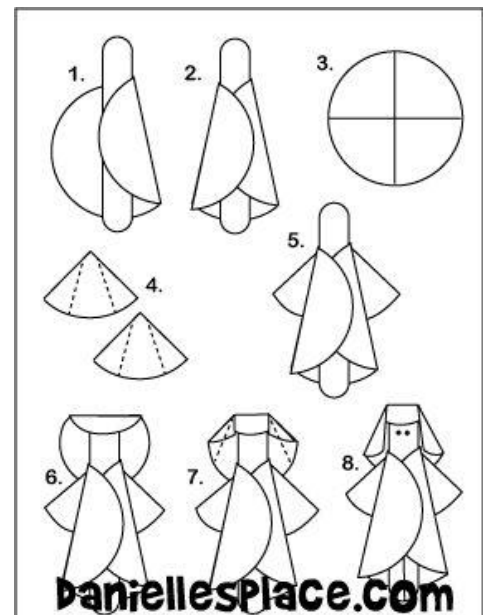
6. To make the head covering flatten a one-inch cupcake liner and tape or glue it behind the top of the jumbo craft stick. (If you don't have one-inch liners, you can use a 3" circle.) Fold down about 3/4" to cover the top of the jumbo craft stick.

7. Fold in both sides as shown in the diagram.

8. Fold in the sides again so that the folds meet the sides of the craft stick.

9. To make the sheep draw a sheep head on a piece of paper and cut it out. Glue the head to a white pompom and then glue on pieces of black Chenille stems for the legs.

10. To finish draw on the legs, sandals, and face features with markers and colored pencils.



Family Devotions for the Week: (from Spirit & Truth Publishing)

Sunday—Read Isaiah 61:1-11

This reading is one that brings good news. It is Isaiah's prophesy of hope and deliverance. Find all of the active or doing words (verbs) in this passage. What do they tell you about God?

Monday—Read Leviticus 25:8-12

The year of jubilee set people free. Modify the card game of Crazy Eights to play a game of Jubilee Sevens.

Tuesday—Read Genesis 1:1-5

In the beginning, God created light. Use a flashlight to look under the bed or in a closet. Thank God for creating light and for being light, making a way through the darkness.

Wednesday—Read Isaiah 42:1-9

Jesus is a light to the nations. Close your eyes and list the dark things in our world (sin, war, etc.). Open your eyes and talk about the love of God being brighter and stronger than the darkness, making a light for us.

Thursday—Read Zechariah 9:9-17

Our God and king will save humanity. Using bathrobes, jewelry, scarves, etc. dress up like kings. Read the passage and talk about the contrast. Jesus would be humble and ride on a donkey. He would be about love and deliverance, not about riches and glitz.

Friday—Read Luke 1:5-24

Zechariah was skeptical when the birth of John the Baptist was foretold. God can do surprising and miraculous things that are hard for the human mind to grasp. What things do you think are impossible? Each time someone shares an idea, the others say, "With God, all things are possible." (from Matthew 19:26).

Saturday—Read Luke 1:57-80

John the Baptist, who would prepare the way for Jesus, is born. Look through a photo album reading it like a family tree. Who came first? Then who? Who joined with who to prepare the way for which children to be born?

Week 4 – Angel Candle - Peace

Activity #1: Nativity Story (from dtlk-kids.com)

Supplies: Nativity Stickers, manger, crayons or markers

- Color your manger with crayon, colored pencils or markers.
- Read the story below (for kids) or the attached story of the nativity (Luke 2:1-20).
- As you read the story, place the stickers on the manger scene.

The Birth of Jesus

In those days the government decided that they should count everyone that lived in that area of the world. So Joseph had to take Mary to his town, Bethlehem to register. It took Mary and Joseph a long time to get to Bethlehem. They didn't have cars back then, so it probably took them a lot longer to get there. This was very tiring for Mary because she was soon going to have a baby.

When they reached the town, all the hotels were full and there was nowhere that they could stay. Finally, someone felt bad for them, and offered them a place to stay. The Bible doesn't say for sure where they stayed but most people think that they stayed in a small barn where animals were kept. In any case, doesn't it seem strange that Jesus, the King of the Jews wasn't born in a fancy palace or even a hospital? Mary and Joseph were thankful that they at least had a place to lay down. It was warm, and there was plenty of straw to lay on.

That night an exciting, wonderful thing happened. Mary and Joseph had a baby! But it wasn't just any baby, it was Baby Jesus! The creator of the whole world, the King of Kings, the one who would save the world.

The little baby boy fell asleep in Mary's arms and she wrapped him in cloths and laid him in a manger on some clean straw.

Mary and Joseph soon fell asleep; they were so glad to have this special baby join their family.

Some shepherds who lived near Bethlehem, were out at night in their fields watching over their sheep. They were worried a bigger animal might come and hurt the sheep, so that sat on a hill visiting and watching their sheep together.

Suddenly there was a bright light. Now this wasn't just any bright light The light was so bright that they had to close their eyes for a minute because the light hurt their eyes. When they opened their eyes to see what was going on, a beautiful angel was standing in the air just above them with his arms opened wide.

The shepherds looked at each other in disbelief, but realized it must be real, because they were all seeing the same thing. All at once they were very afraid, but they didn't run because they were too stunned.

Then the angel spoke to them. "Do not be afraid. I'm here to bring you good news for all people. Today in Bethlehem a baby has been born, He is the one that will save the world. You will know the baby because He will be wrapped in cloths, and laying in a manger."

Suddenly, just as quickly as the first angel came, there were a large group of angels, and they said together, "Glory to God, and peace to all people on earth." After they spoke, they floated away.

The shepherds were amazed and excited, did everyone know this news, or just them? They had to go see this baby the angels were talking about.

They ran as fast as they could, and soon found Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus. The shepherds fell to their knees when they saw Jesus, they were filled with joy that they had found the Lord.

During the time when Jesus was born there was a very mean king who ruled the land. His name was King Herod. Remember his name, because we will talk about him later. Soon after Jesus was born, wise men were traveling on their camels. One night they noticed a very strange star in the sky. They knew that this star meant that the King of the Jews, the One who would save the world had been born.

When the mean King... (What was his name again?) Herod heard this he got very worried.

He called a meeting with all the other important people in the area and asked them where this special baby had been born. The people replied, "In Bethlehem." They knew this because they heard that one day a special person would come from there and take care of all the people.

Then King Herod called the wise men to a secret meeting and found out from them exactly where they saw the star. He then told them, "Go and find this child. As soon as you find him, tell me, so that I can go and worship him."

After they had spoken to the King, the wise men left to find the baby. They didn't know exactly where the baby was, but at night they followed the star in the east. They followed the star until it hung right over the very place where Jesus was.

Since it took the wise men a while to get to baby Jesus, they probably didn't arrive the day Jesus was born but sometime later. When they finally had arrived they were very excited and happy. They found Jesus laying in Mary's arms, and they bowed down and worshipped him.

They opened the gifts they had brought Jesus. The gifts were gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These were very expensive gifts. Gifts that you would give to a King, not to a baby.

The story of Christmas is special, full of miracles and strange visitors all coming to visit a King and someday the Savior of the world.

What do you wonder about this story? Come up with stories to answer your wonderings.

Activity #2: Lighting of the Candle, Devotion & Coloring Page
(from Pastor Kristin Schultz)

On this last Sunday in Advent, we focus on something we truly need in our world and in our lives – peace. Specifically the peace of God, which is not simply the absence of conflict or struggle, but the sense of calm deep in our hearts – the peace we have only in Christ.

Scripture Reading: Luke 2: 13-14 –

*Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel,
praising God and saying,*

*“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”*

The Jewish people had long waited for the prophesied Messiah to arrive. The Hebrew people believed this Messiah would bring about Shalom—peace—to their people. Shalom is more than “peace” as we usually think of it. It means wellness, wholeness, and harmony. For the people of Israel, the hope of God’s peace meant the redemption of the world – the arrival of God’s vision of peace and harmony, freedom and justice, and abundance for all.

The angels announcing to the shepherds “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards all” was the proclamation that this child born in Bethlehem was indeed the long-awaited Messiah. This baby would be the Prince of peace, offering a new reconciliation and connection between God and God’s people.

Advent is a time of reflection. As you reflect, consider where you see shalom or peace in your life? Where do you see it in the world? We know we are not all at peace; there is much that is at conflict and broken in our world—and at times it can seem so daunting. But Christ has said, “My peace I give to you.” We can know a peace that passes understanding, a peace that lives in our hearts even in the midst of worry, doubt, confusion, or sadness. It is the peace of trusting our lives to God in Jesus.

Peace—Shalom— isn’t something that just happens but something we make happen. Jesus taught, “blessed are the peacemakers.” As you reflect this Advent season, consider ways you can be a peacemaker. How can you be someone who helps to bring restoration and healing to the world? What does it mean bring peace into your life? To bring peace and hope to others?

Hillsong Worship has an album of music for Advent and Christmas called “The Peace Project,” which you can listen to on Spotify, Apple music, or on YouTube
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HDAUPz2RohU&list=PLTnuUe-aRkQ5z8k-3Eq6bTXn9w5dIm_DE

The BibleProject again has a lovely video on YouTube about peace, which is called “Shalom”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oLYORLZOaZE>

Activity #3: Doily Angel

(from faithchangeseverything.com)

Supplies: Four-inch doilies, jumbo craft sticks, glue, decorative items such as gems, flowers, bows, ribbon roses, etc., silver pipe cleaners, silver ribbon for hanging, and scissors

Angels fill the Christmas story. One appears to Mary. Another meets with Zacharias in the temple. Joseph sees an angel of the Lord in his dreams. Even the wise men presumably see an angel; at the very least, they hear the voice of God in a dream. Angels are everywhere, and yet they seem most fully present when they appear to the shepherds. One angel arrives, urging the shepherds to not be afraid. A multitude—a countless host—then joins the angel in a celebration of Jesus' birth. And it is a celebration. The angels aren't mere messengers; the passage in Luke says they praise God. They, like the shepherds and wise men, glorify God for what is taking place: God is here, among men.

The angels sing out in response. They can't help it. The angels must rejoice. They have to shout God's triumph. And we get to join them this Advent season. We sing, "Let angels shout the triumph, as mortals raise their voice. Behold, the Son of heaven and earth, the King of Kings is born."

Activity (from daniellesplace.com)

1. Cut a jumbo craft stick to make it 5 inches.

2. Tape or glue a jumbo craft stick in the center of a 4-inch doily. Fold one side of the doily over the jumbo craft stick. Fold the other side over the jumbo craft stick overlapping the first fold.

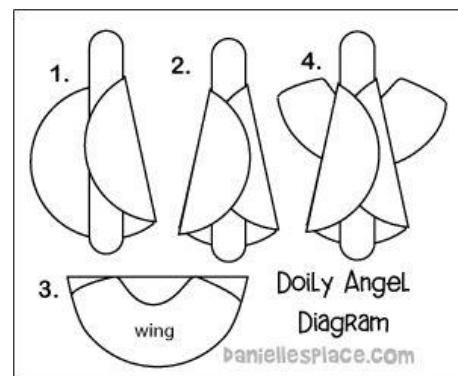
3. Cut another doily in half. Use one half of the doily to make the angel's wings. Round off the corners and cut a dip in the center to form the wing shape.

4. Glue the wings to the back of the angel.

5. Draw a line in the center of the craft stick for legs. Draw on the face. Add decorative items to the angel.

6. Cut a piece of silver Chenille stem to make the angel's halo. Form it into a circle and glue it to the head.

7. To finish glue a ribbon to the back to hang the angel.



Family Devotions

Sunday—Read Luke 1:26-45 [46-56]

Although Mary hoped for the Messiah, she never expected to be the mother of Jesus. Take turns sharing something nice that you hope a family member will do for you. Write each person's name on a slip of paper. Draw names. Later, when least expected, do what that person hoped for.

Monday—Read 1 Samuel 1:9-18

Hannah wanted a baby boy and promised to dedicate her son to God when her prayers were answered. Lay hands on each of the children, one at a time, and say prayers that dedicate them to God. Ask them to talk about what that was like for them.

Tuesday—Read 1 Samuel 2:1-10

Hannah honored and praised God when her prayers were answered. Make a list of everything you know about God and about what you think God is like. Add a few words from the list to your table grace and some to your bedtime prayers, thanking God for being God.

Wednesday—Read Genesis 18:1-15

God had special plans for Abraham and Sarah. They were surprised by God's promise to give them a son. What are your detailed plans for today (or tomorrow) from when you get up until you go to bed? How would you respond if God changed those plans for new plans?

Thursday—Read Isaiah 7:13-17

Isaiah tells of a sign of Immanuel. Put on your coats and shoes. This is a sign that you are going out. Take off your coats and shoes. This is a sign that you are staying home. We can tell what is going to happen by looking and listening.

Friday—Read John 1:1-13

Jesus is the Word that became flesh. Use rope or string (or shoe laces) to loosely attach one person's wrists to another's. Stay like that for a while. Talk about how what one person did, the other had to do too. God and Jesus do things as one.

Saturday—Read Luke 2:1-7

We celebrate the birth of Jesus. Wrap a doll in a towel and rest it in a box. Jesus did not have a nice crib or fancy blankets. The Son of God was born in a manger. What can you do for God that is simple but that shows great love? Do it.

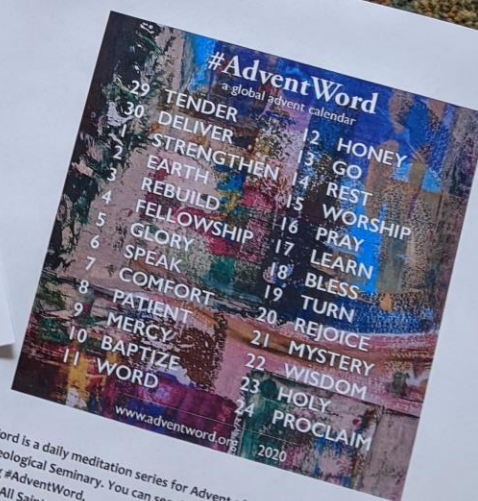
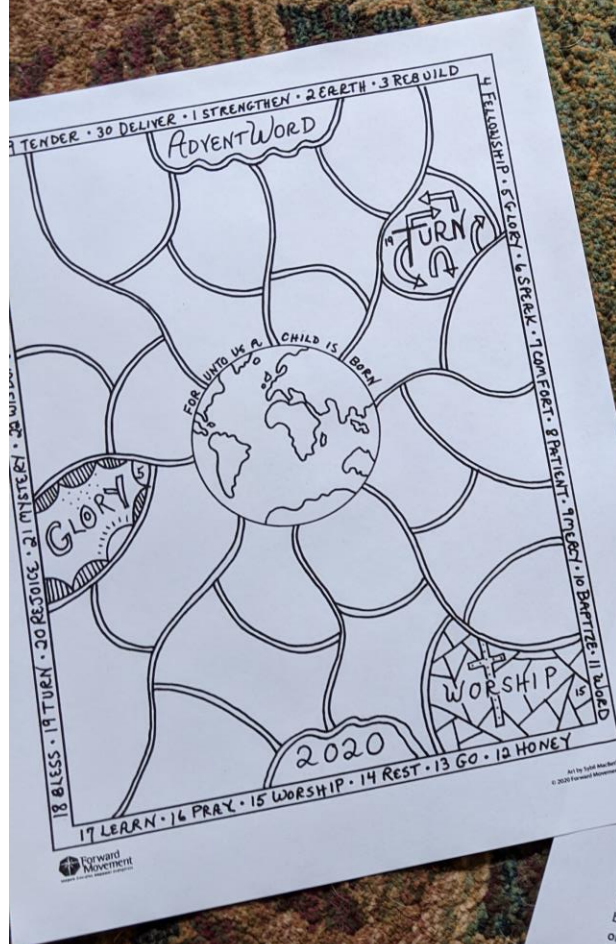


#AdventWord is a daily meditation series for Advent offered by Virginia Theological Seminary. You can see daily posts on Facebook by following #AdventWord, or following All Saints ABQ (use the QR code to the right to find us on Facebook). Or you can go to <https://adventword.org> to sign up for devotions by email or on Twitter.



Attached is a template for doing a “doodle prayer” with each day’s word, created by *Praying in Color* author Sybil MacBeth. You can read more about doodle prayer on her website, <https://prayingincolor.com/praying-in-color-praying-in-black-and-white>

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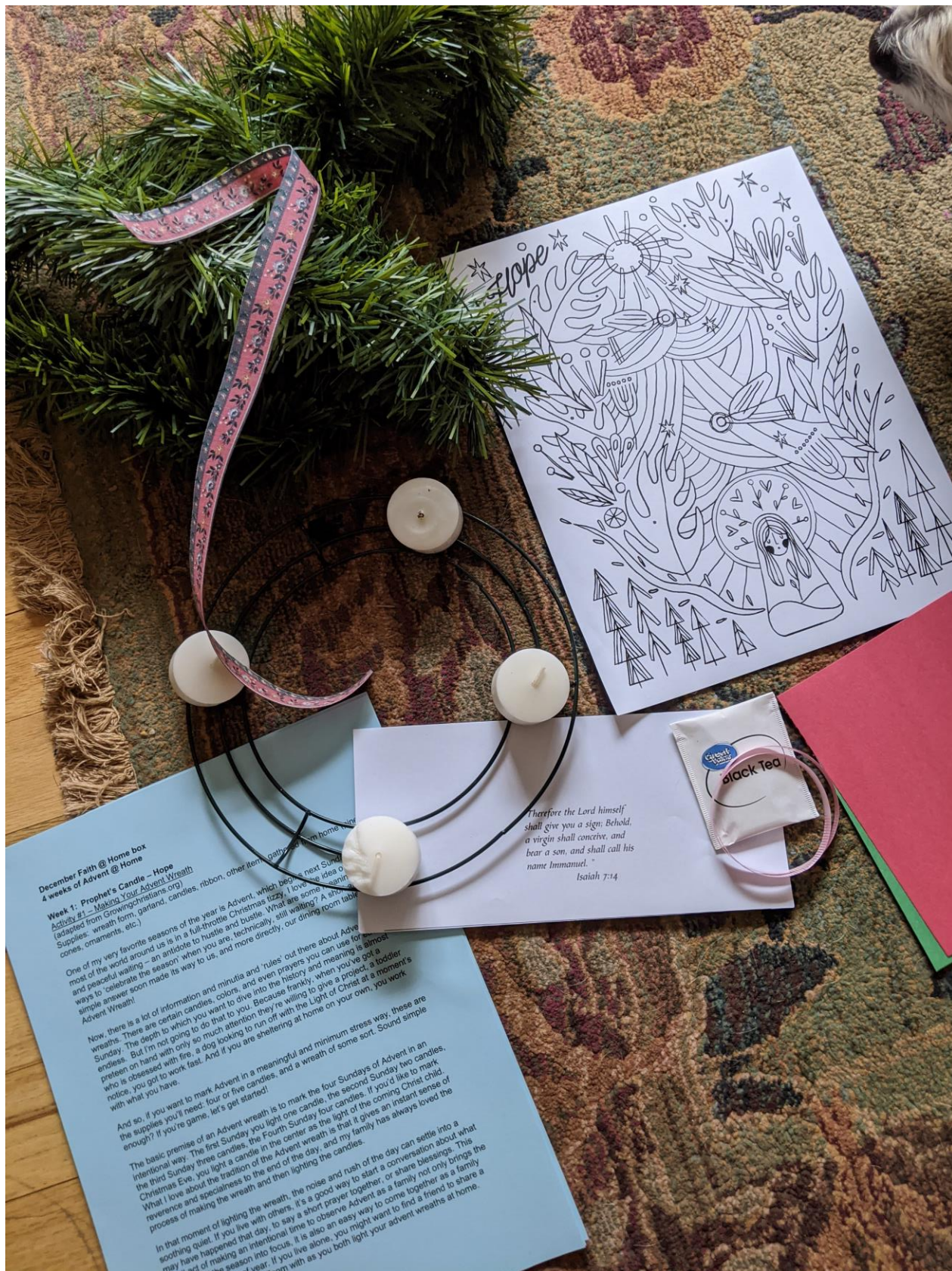
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A square QR code located in the bottom right corner of the page, which likely links to the Adventword website mentioned in the text.



December Faith @ Home box
4 weeks of Advent @ Home

Week 1: Prophet's Candle - Hope
Activity 1: Making Your Advent Wreath
(adapted from Growing Christians.org)

Supplies: wreath form, garland, candles, ribbon, other items (optional) from home (e.g. cones, ornaments, etc.)

One of my very favorite seasons of the year is Advent, which begins the next Sunday after the most of the world around us is in a full-throttle Christmas lizzy. I love the idea of and peacefully waiting - an antidote to hustle and bustle. What are some meaningful ways to 'celebrate the season' when you are, technically, still waiting? A simple answer soon made its way to us, and more directly, our dining room table.

Advent Wreath!

Now, there is a lot of information and minutia and 'rules' out there about Advent wreaths. There are certain candles, colors, and even prayers you can use for each Sunday. The depth to which you want to dive into the history and meaning is almost endless. But I'm not going to do that to you. Because frankly, when you've got a preteen on hand with fire, a dog looking to run off with the Light of Christ at a moment's notice, you got to work fast. And if you are sheltering at home on your own, you work with what you have.

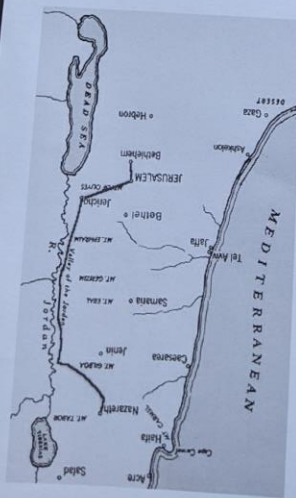
And so, if you want to mark Advent in a meaningful and minimum stress way, these are the supplies you'll need: four or five candles, and a wreath of some sort. Sound simple enough? If you're game, let's get started!

The basic premise of an Advent wreath is to mark the four Sundays of Advent in an intentional way. The first Sunday you light one candle, the second Sunday two candles, the third Sunday three candles, the fourth Sunday four candles. If you'd like to mark Christmas Eve, you light a candle in the center as the light of the coming Christ child. What I love about the tradition of the Advent wreath is that it gives an instant sense of reverence and specialness to the end of the day, and my family has always loved the process of making the wreath and then lighting the candles.

In that moment of lighting the wreath, the noise and rush of the day can settle into a soothing quiet. If you live with others, it's a good way to start a conversation about what may have happened that day, to say a short prayer together, or share blessings. This act of making an intentional time to observe Advent as a family not only brings the season into focus, it is also an easy way to come together as a family and share a moment of peace. If you live alone, you might want to find a friend to share a candle with as you both light your advent wreaths at home.

Therefore the Lord himself
shall give you a sign; Behold,
a virgin shall conceive, and
bear a son, and shall call his
name Immanuel.
Isaiah 7:14





Week 2: Bethlehem Candle – Faith

Activity #1 – Hanging of the Greens

Service on Zoom 12/6 at 10:30 a.m. (adapted from ChurchofChrist.org)

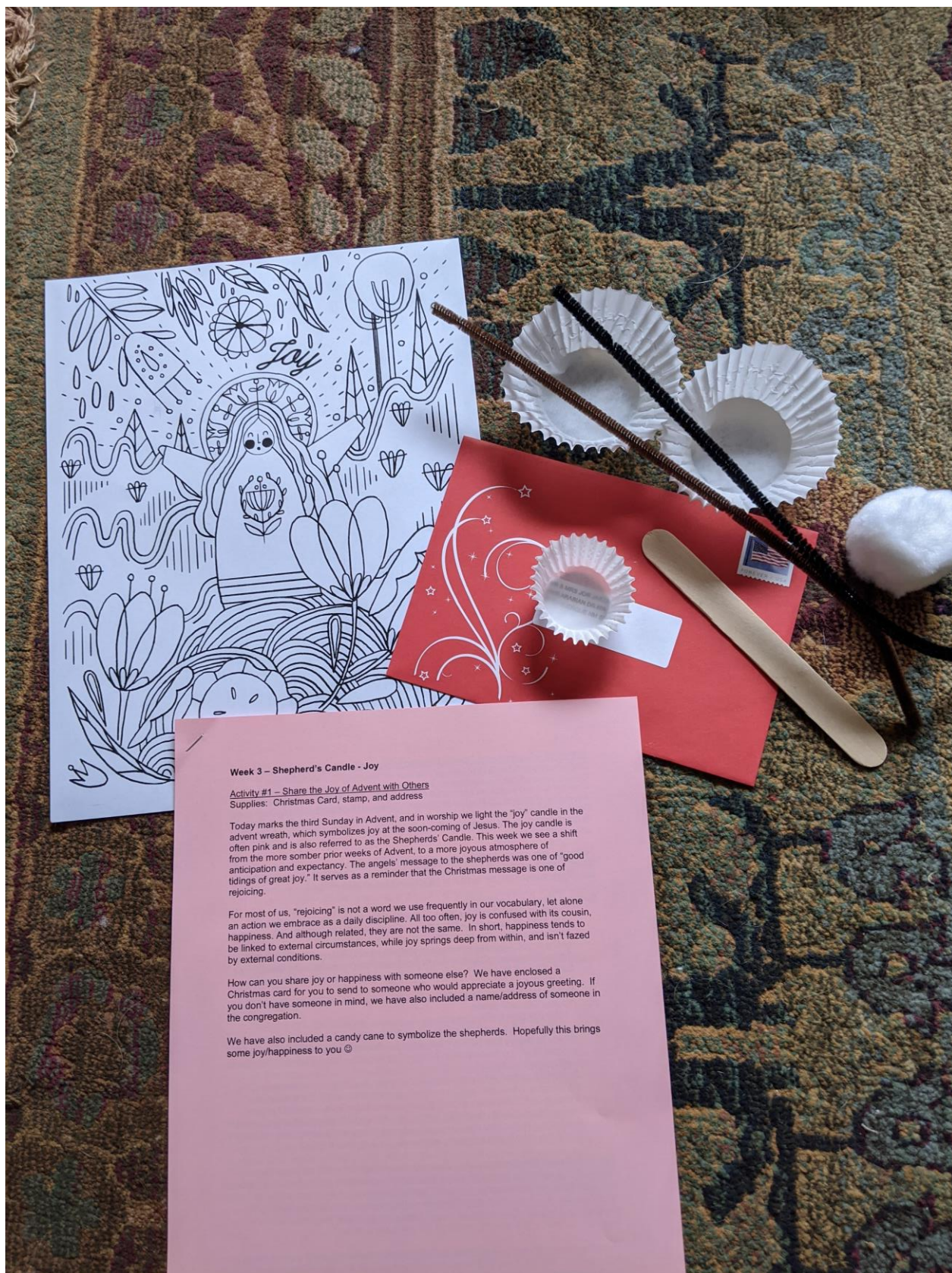
Supplies (from your home) Your Advent wreath, greens (either provided and/or some from outside or home), a wreath, a poinsettia, and a crèche – whatever you use to prepare your home for the season of Advent and Christmas

1. Join us for worship at 9:30
2. Make yourself a cup of coffee, hot chocolate, tea or cider
3. Come back – or join in – on Zoom after church as we discuss the tradition of hanging of the greens, share music and decorate a small corner of our homes.

Hanging of the Greens is a traditional Christian ceremony of decorating the church for the Advent and Christmas season, often celebrated on the first Sunday of Advent or during a separate evening service.

Some churches have a Hanging of the Greens service on a Sunday afternoon, the week before the first Sunday of Advent. Others have a workshop-style event the day before the first Sunday of Advent, where families come and learn about the significance of our Christmas decorations and help prepare the church for the new season. Still others plan a traditional service of readings and music to do as the worship service on the first Sunday of Advent.

Today, in 2020 during Covid-19, we will present scripture, song, and symbols in each other's homes as we prepare our hearts to make room for the Messiah.



Week 3 – Shepherd's Candle - Joy

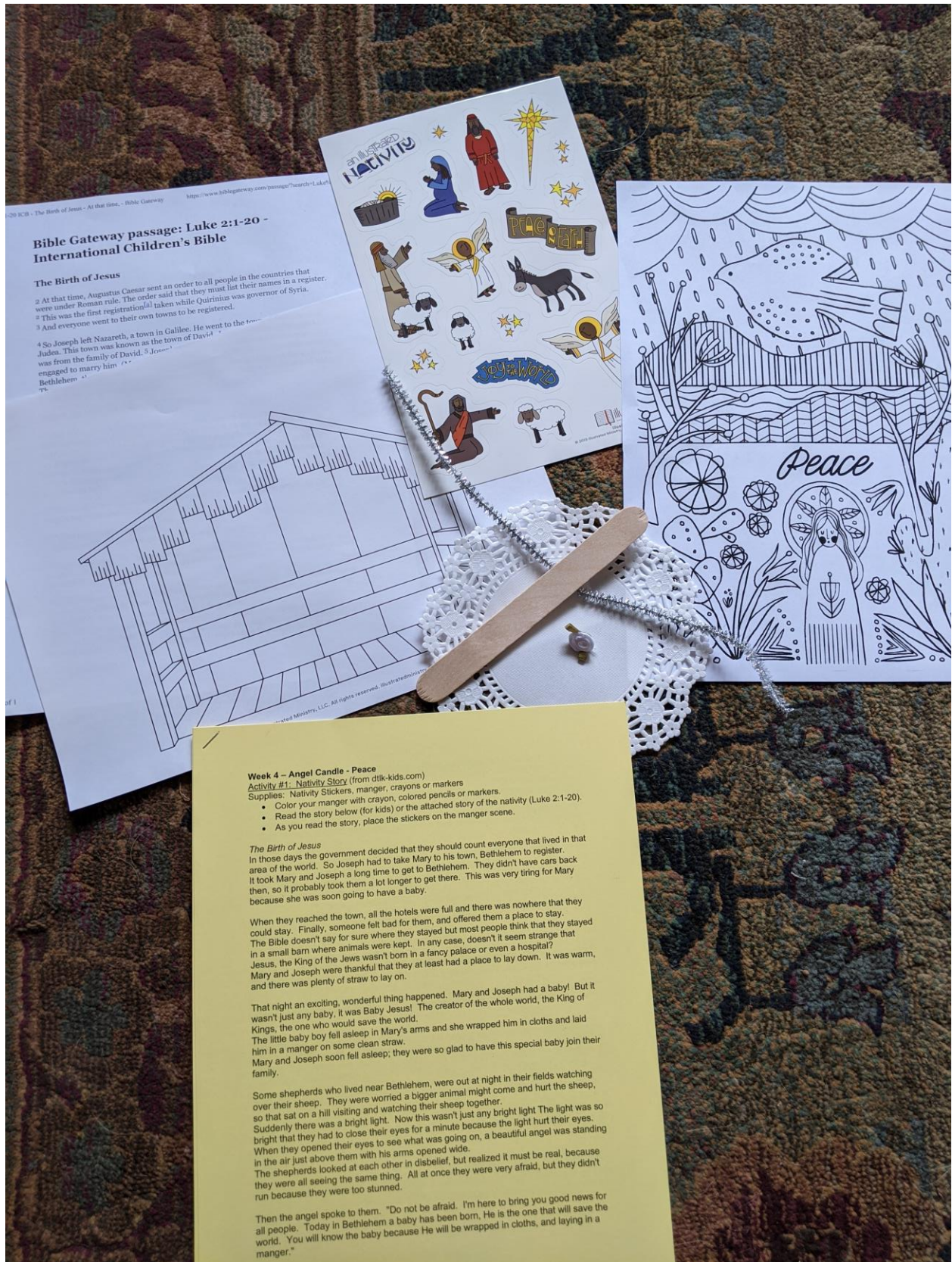
Activity #1 – Share the Joy of Advent with Others
Supplies: Christmas Card, stamp, and address

Today marks the third Sunday in Advent, and in worship we light the "joy" candle in the advent wreath, which symbolizes joy at the soon-coming of Jesus. The joy candle is often pink and is also referred to as the Shepherds' Candle. This week we see a shift from the more somber prior weeks of Advent, to a more joyous atmosphere of anticipation and expectancy. The angels' message to the shepherds was one of "good tidings of great joy." It serves as a reminder that the Christmas message is one of rejoicing.

For most of us, "rejoicing" is not a word we use frequently in our vocabulary, let alone an action we embrace as a daily discipline. All too often, joy is confused with its cousin, happiness. And although related, they are not the same. In short, happiness tends to be linked to external circumstances, while joy springs deep from within, and isn't fazed by external conditions.

How can you share joy or happiness with someone else? We have enclosed a Christmas card for you to send to someone who would appreciate a joyous greeting. If you don't have someone in mind, we have also included a name/address of someone in the congregation.

We have also included a candy cane to symbolize the shepherds. Hopefully this brings some joy/happiness to you ☺



Bible Gateway passage: Luke 2:1-20 - International Children's Bible

The Birth of Jesus

2 At that time, Augustus Caesar sent an order to all people in the countries that were under Roman rule. The order said that they must list their names in a register.

3 This was the first registration¹ taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.

3 And everyone went to their own towns to be registered.

4 So Joseph left Nazareth, a town in Galilee. He went to the town of Bethlehem in Judaea. This town was known as the town of David².

5 Joseph was from the family of David. So Joseph engaged to marry him³.

6 Bethlehem

Week 4 - Angel Candle - Peace

Activity #1: Nativity Story (from dtk-kids.com)

Supplies: Nativity Stickers, manger, crayons or markers.

- Color your manger with crayon, colored pencils or markers.
- Read the story below (for kids) or the attached story of the nativity (Luke 2:1-20).
- As you read the story, place the stickers on the manger scene.

The Birth of Jesus

In those days the government decided that they should count everyone that lived in that area of the world. So Joseph had to take Mary to his town, Bethlehem to register. It took Mary and Joseph a long time to get to Bethlehem. They didn't have cars back then, so it probably took them a lot longer to get there. This was very tiring for Mary because she was soon going to have a baby.

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That night an exciting, wonderful thing happened. Mary and Joseph had a baby! But it wasn't just any baby, it was Baby Jesus! The creator of the whole world, the King of Kings, the one who would save the world. The little baby boy fell asleep in Mary's arms and she wrapped him in cloths and laid him in a manger on some clean straw. Mary and Joseph soon fell asleep; they were so glad to have this special baby join their family.

Some shepherds who lived near Bethlehem, were out at night in their fields watching over their sheep. They were worried a bigger animal might come and hurt the sheep, so that sat on a hill visiting and watching their sheep together. Suddenly there was a bright light. Now this wasn't just any bright light. The light was so bright that they had to close their eyes for a minute because the light hurt their eyes. When they opened their eyes to see what was going on, a beautiful angel was standing in the air just above them with his arms opened wide. The shepherds looked at each other in disbelief, but realized it must be real, because they were all seeing the same thing. All at once they were very afraid, but they didn't run because they were too stunned.

Then the angel spoke to them. "Do not be afraid. I'm here to bring you good news for all people. Today in Bethlehem a baby has been born. He is the one that will save the world. You will know the baby because He will be wrapped in cloths, and laying in a manger."