

ADVENT

JOY

Jesus
● Others
● You!



Activities for Advent

ADVENT JOY

Jesus
Others
You!

How do we spell joy? That's easy! **J-O-Y!**
Now let's try a new way to spell joy:

Jesus
Others
You!

What is joy?

It's not just happiness or fun, though we like to be happy. We like to have fun! But joy is even better. Joy is the goodness we have when we know we are right with God, right with the world, right with everyone else, and right with ourselves.

That's why we might know joy even when we do hard work. If we wash the dishes to help someone out, it might not be fun—but we might find joy.

Joy never stops with just one person. The better you know how to love Jesus, the better you know how to love others and yourself! That's how you'll find the most joy in life, by knowing and loving Jesus, Others and You. In this Advent book, we'll show you just how to do that, every day.

Activities:

We find joy all through the Bible, too. In this Advent book, you'll find games, puzzles, and brain teasers that show you how to find joy in the Psalms and joy in the Gospels. When we want you to find a specific verse, we hope you have a copy of the *New American Bible* on hand. If not, ask a parent to go to this website: www.usccb.org/bible/ (From that link, you can find any book or verse of the *New American Bible*!)

In Advent, we get ready:

We get ready for Christmas. We get ready to see our friends and family celebrate together. We get ready for Christmas gifts and Christmas music and Christmas cookies. But most of all? We get ready for Jesus: we get ready for joy.

This Advent, we are going on an Advent journey, looking every day for Advent joy. Each day you'll find new words from scripture to remind you that God wants you and all people to have great joy. Each day you'll find a new way to love Jesus, Others, and You. So get ready! Get ready for Advent joy.



Picture this!

Does your family use a Christmas creche? You can make one that hangs on a wall or refrigerator with a stack of colorful construction paper, scissors, and glue. Today just pick one sheet of paper in a favorite color for the background. Throughout the book, we'll tell you how to add one picture a day to make a colorful creche ready for Christmas!

December 1

Many will rejoice at his birth. Luke 1:14



Advent starts with an angel bringing joy to a young woman—and a young woman bringing joy to the whole world! The angel Gabriel came to a young woman named Mary. Mary loved God. Mary loved others! The angel said, “Don’t be afraid, Mary. God loves you and God wants you to be the mother of God’s own son. Your child will bring joy to the whole world.”

What did Mary say? She didn’t say, “I’m not good enough.” She didn’t say, “I’m not old enough or strong enough or smart enough.” No. Mary said, “YES!”

Activity: All these words are in the story of Mary and the angel. Can you find them in the puzzle?

MARY SON
FAVOR GOD
JESUS NAME
BEHOLD ANGEL
GABRIEL

(Remember to look up and down, side to side, or even diagonally for the letters!)

Can you find them in the Bible? Look at Luke 1:30-31.



Picture this!


















Make a picture of Mary to glue to your picture. What color will she wear?












December 2













*The morning stars sang together and
all the sons of God shouted for joy. Job 38:7*













The angels in the Bible often bring joy. We read that when God made the heavens and the earth—the first story in the Bible—the angels shouted for joy. Why? The secret is in Genesis 1:31! That’s at the end of the very first chapter of the Bible.












Activity: Can you break the creation code below and read that verse?

 = A	 = I	 = O	 = W
 = D	 = K	 = R	 = Y
 = E	 = L	 = S	
 = G	 = M	 = T	
 = H	 = N	 = V	

Picture this!

Cut out stars for the sky and add them to your picture.

December 3

I proclaim to you good news of great joy. Luke 2:10

Remember: we want to have joy with Jesus, Others, and You. Let's start with you! We just read that the angels shouted for joy as God saw that EVERYTHING that God makes is good. That means YOU! YOU...are made by God. That means you are good just the way God made you, no matter how big or small you are, no matter how fast or slow you are, no matter how sad or happy you are.

Good News About Me!

When you know and love yourself, you learn to know and love others, too, and the whole good world that God makes. Remember the angel who brought good news to Mary? Imagine the angel came to your household to bring good news about YOU! What would the angel tell others about you?

Activity: Fill in the web page above with three good things you know about yourself—who you are, what you like to do, and what you like about yourself.

Picture this!

Cut out an angel to glue to your picture.

December 4

You will be full of joy. Deuteronomy 16:15

When Mary said YES to God, she chose to give a gift to God and to the whole world. That was Mary at her best!

Now let's look at you at your best. Think about an ordinary day. How do you choose what snack to eat?

How do you choose when to go to bed?

How do you choose when to go outside instead of spending more time with a screen?

Do you think you could make just **ONE** choice in the next week that would be even better? How?

Pick a day to try it out—and write it down on a calendar, or right here:

One of the most important joys God gives to you is the joy God gave to Mary: you can make choices that nobody else can make! Look for ways to make these choices tomorrow and every day as we get closer to Christmas.



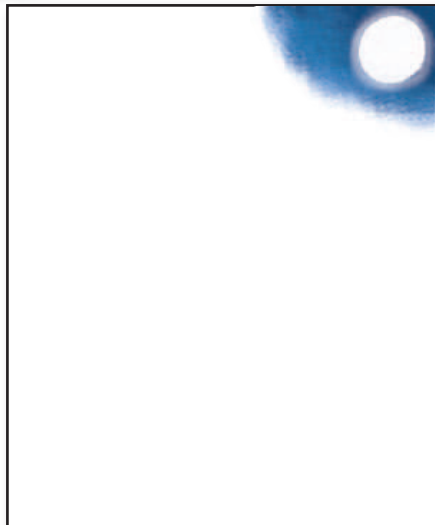
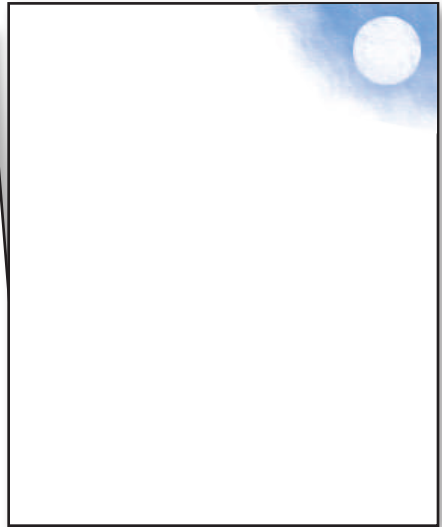
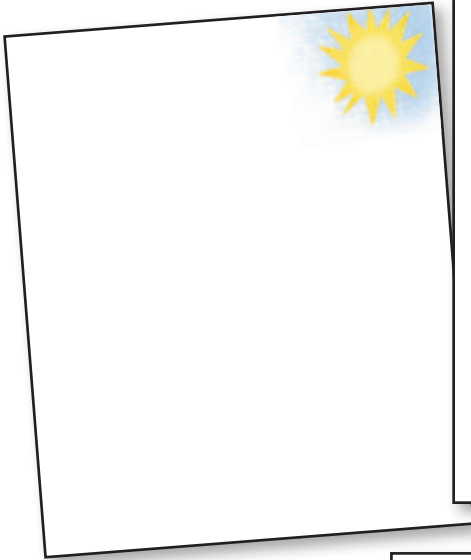
Extra!

What do you like to make? A story? A dance? A picture? A game? A song? Pick a day this week to make what YOU like to make. Write down what you did on the same calendar or below.

December 5

They cheer and sing for joy. Psalm 65:14

Jesus, Others, You: that makes JOY! What would you do on your best day alone? Fill in the cartoon blocks below to show what you would do on a day you spent alone, morning to night. Now imagine Jesus with you. How would that change the picture?



Picture this!

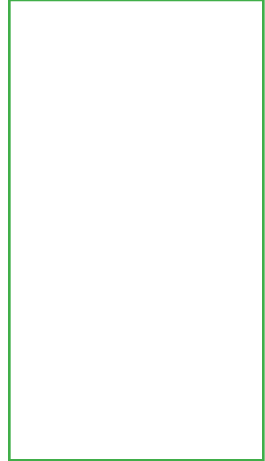
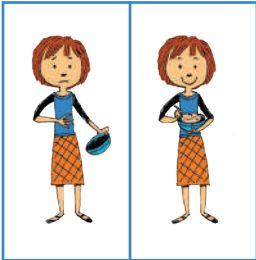
Cut out a picture of YOU doing what you love best and glue it to your picture.

December 6, St. Nicholas Day

I have told you this so that my joy may be in you. John 15:11

Today is St. Nicholas Day! The joy of St. Nicholas taught the whole Church a lesson about joy. Legend tells us that St. Nicholas loved the poor and their children most of all. This is what the Church learned: we are to prefer the poor, too. When we share what we have and make a better world for all people, we bring joy to ourselves, to others, and to Jesus most of all.

Activity: Put the Church in the picture! What could change the first picture on the left for the better picture on the right? Draw your answer.



Picture this!

Can you add a favorite saint to your picture?

You could choose Nicholas!

December 7

Share your joy with me. Philippians 2:18

Do you ever make a list of what you want for Christmas? Make a list like that today—only don't put any "things" on it like toys. Instead, think about this: what would make Christmas morning a good Christmas morning for you? Hugging each member of your family? Singing your favorite carol? Playing with a pet or family member?

Choose 3 things that will make this Christmas a good Christmas.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Activity: In the picture below can you find what made the very first Christmas a good Christmas? Can you find a shepherd? A mother? A baby? An angel?



Picture this!

Add a shepherd to your picture. Maybe you would like a sheep or two!

December 8

God...will sing joyfully because of you. Zephaniah 3:17

Advent joy keeps going with a man who took care of others.

Remember: loving Jesus, Others, You is how we spell JOY.

The story of Joseph is the story of a man who found joy when:

1. He listened to God.
2. He said yes to God.
3. He cared for others, just as God asked.

Just as an angel came to Mary, so did an angel from God come to Joseph to tell him that Mary would have God's own son. The angel told Joseph not to be afraid but to take good care of Jesus and Mary.

Activity: The angels below are so overjoyed they are carrying away the story's end! Can you unscramble the words to read what Joseph did? You'll find clues in Matthew 1:24.



Picture this!

Make a picture of Joseph to glue to your picture. What color is his hair? Does he have a beard?

December 9

There was no room for them. Luke 2:7

One of the first ways Joseph had to care for his family was to travel with Mary from Nazareth, near the waters of Galilee, to a town called Bethlehem, in Judea. Even today, it takes ten days for tourists to walk as best as they can a trail similar to what Mary and Joseph traveled. The trail today is called The Jesus Trail, and you ask an adult to read to you about it on this website: Jesutrail.com

Activity:

Nowadays there are restaurants, guides, and hotels to help out hikers. Not so in the days of Mary and Joseph!

Can you help Joseph find his way from Nazareth in the north to Bethlehem in the south?



Picture this!

At Bethlehem, Joseph found a cave or stable for Mary and him to rest in. Can you add one to your picture creche? You can glue a few narrow strips of paper to show the outlines of the stable.

December 10

Two are better than one. Ecclesiastes 4:9

Remember: we want to have joy with Jesus, Others, and You. Like Joseph, let's take a look at making joy for others!

We learn to love others first by learning from people who love us! Jesus knew how to love everyone, and he can teach us to do that, too. But when we're kids, we start with loving those we can trust. Knowing how to love others we haven't met yet? That's like being in high school. Learning how to love others who are mean to us and hurt us? That's like being in college!

Activity: So start by thinking of people you know who know how to make you feel good. Can you think of someone you trust? Can you think of more than one "someone" who loves you? The kids below are sharing 2 ideas each about things that people do to make them feel good.

Can you add 2 ideas of your own?

1. _____
2. _____



Picture this!

Make a picture of someone who loves you to add to your creche.

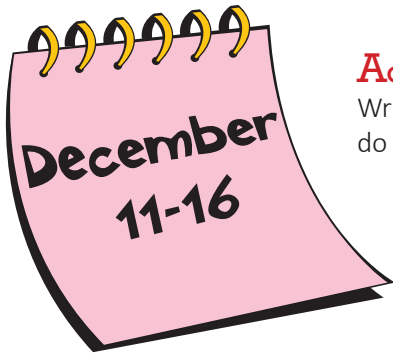
December 11

I rejoice and share my joy with all of you. Philippians 2:17

Take a look back to December 3. What did you say you like to make? That's a gift God gave to you: your joy when you do what you like to do!

Now think of someone who would love to share that gift with you this Christmas. You might:

1. Dance for your mom on Christmas morning.
2. Draw a picture for your brother or sister and wrap it up.
3. Make a game for your whole family to play on Christmas morning.



Activity:

Write down what you plan to do on a calendar or right here:

December 12, Our Lady of Guadalupe


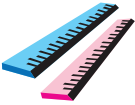






My spirit rejoices in God my Savior. Luke 1:47

There are special days for our Mother Mary during Advent. December 8th is a great feast in honor of her Immaculate Conception. But North Americans—those who live in the United States or Mexico or other parts of North America can celebrate with special affection her appearance to the poor man Juan of Guadalupe.

As Mother of the Church, Mary teaches us always to put the poor first. In fact, when she found out she would be the mother of Jesus, she ran to her cousin Elizabeth and sang a song about the great deeds of God. Can you figure out how to read these words from the song she sang? They will tell you how God—and Mary—love the poor.

Activity:

Can you read the message?

He has thrown  the  from their 
but  +ed  the lowly. He has 
the hungry with good things, but the rich he has
  away.

Picture this!

We often see pictures of Guadalupe with beautiful gold decorations. Can you add gold decorations to your creche?

Solution: He has thrown down the rulers from their thrones but lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, but the rich he has sent empty away.

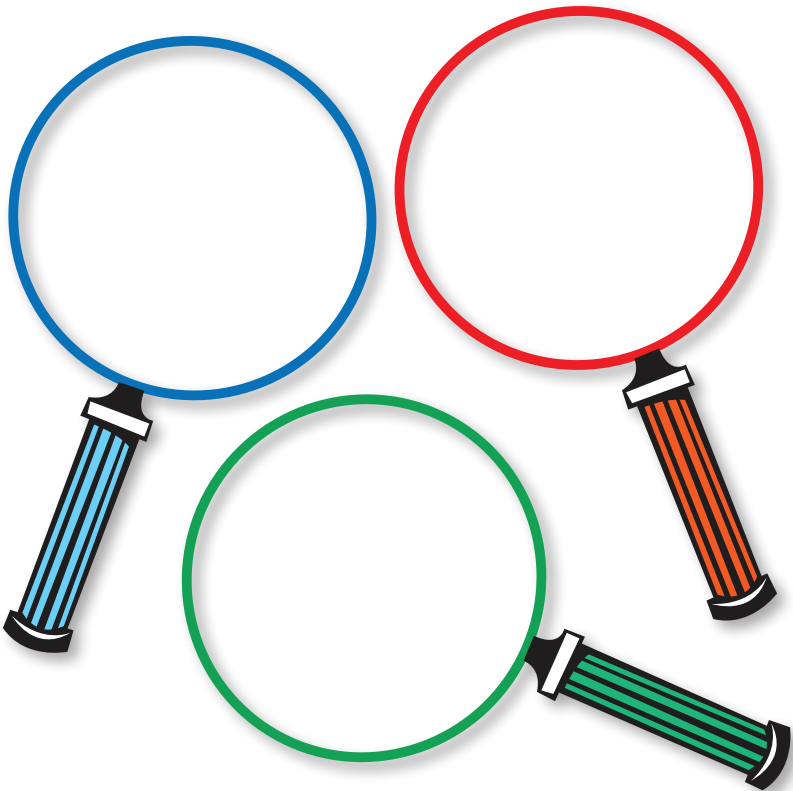
December 13

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness...
Galatians 5:22

Jesus, Others, You: that makes JOY! Now look back on December 5. What did you say you would do on your best day alone? We usually know what makes us happy! But we don't always know what makes others happy—until we use our detective skills! Ask three people who you see most days, “What would make you happy this Christmas?”

Activity:

Write what you find out in the detective magnifying glasses below!



Picture this!

Add one thing you found out to your creche. You can add someone's favorite Christmas food, or words from their favorite carol!

December 14

Rejoicing in the LORD is your strength! Nehemiah 8:10

We come closer every day to Christmas J-O-Y, joy for Jesus, Others, You. Look at the list you made on December 7. Today you will add 3 new items to your Christmas list. Don't put any "things" on it like toys. Instead, use what you found out on December 13 to add ideas that will make Christmas morning a good Christmas morning for others.

Maybe your dad wants help with cleaning up from Christmas breakfast. Maybe your kid brother or sister wants someone to play with. Maybe a grandparent wants a Christmas morning phone call.

Activity:

Choose 3 more things that will make this Christmas a good Christmas.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



Picture this!

Some of the "others" at the first Christmas were animals! We don't know which ones shared the stable or cave with Jesus, but there might have been goats or doves or sheep. Which animals can you cut out and glue to your creche picture? (Is your picture getting too crowded? Tape a new sheet to each side. Glue cardboard cut from empty boxes to each sheet. Now you have a 3-part creche picture that can stand up!

December 15

For a child is born to us. Isaiah 9:5

Remember: loving Jesus, Others, You is how we spell JOY. This week, let's look at ways to draw closer to Jesus!

The People of God waited eagerly for God to send a Chosen One who would save God's People. Long ago a prophet named Isaiah had spoken these words to God's People about the One who would come:

*They name him Wonderful Counselor, God-Hero,
Father-Forever, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:5*

Talk this over with your family:

GOD-HERO

- **What do these names tell us about who Jesus is?**

- **What do these names tell us about what Jesus came to do?**

Father-Forever

**Wonderful
Counselor**

Activity:

Here's one more name for Jesus you might not know! It means "God is with us!" When we come close to Jesus, we come close to God. To find out what that name is, solve the puzzle.

A=26	E=22	I=18	M=14	Q=10	U=6	Y=2
B=25	F=21	J=17	N=13	R=9	V=5	Z=1
C=24	G=20	K=16	O=12	S=8	W=4	
D=23	H=19	L=15	P=11	T=7	X=3	

All the other letters follow this pattern! Can you solve the code?

Write the letters of this name for Jesus here:

22 14 14 26 13 6 22 15

Picture this!

Which of these names for Jesus is your favorite? Can you cut out the letters to add to your picture creche?

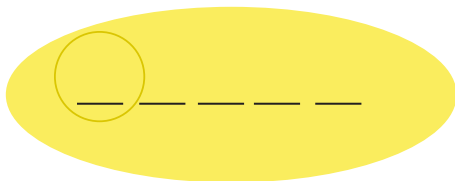


Activity: God prepared us for Jesus! Before Jesus was born, he sent the prophets. After Jesus was born, he sent another prophet, John, who told people that Jesus was coming. Solve this word jumble to find out what we call the time when we get ready for Jesus to come to us. Unscramble each word, then read the letters in the circles from top to bottom to find out the answer.

GNALE =

Clue:

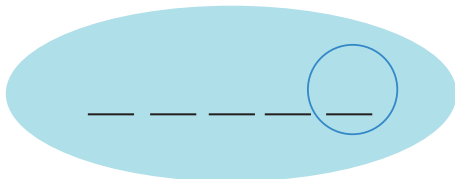
Who talks to Mary in Luke 1:30?



VAIDD =

Clue:

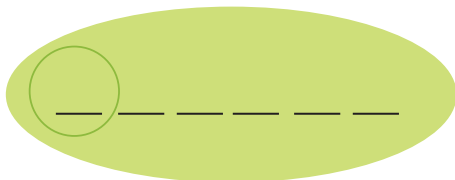
Whose throne did God give in Luke 1:32?



LEAVLY =

Clue:

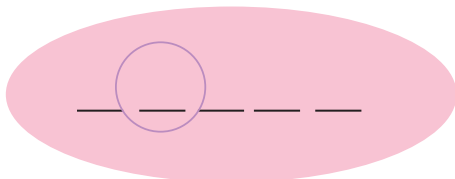
What will be filled in Luke 3:5?



ESJUS =

Clue:

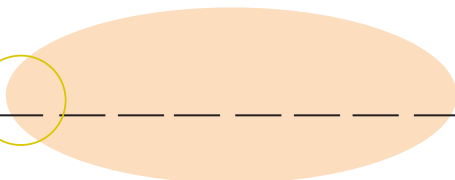
What did the angel say to name the baby in Luke 1:31?



ZNHAATRE =

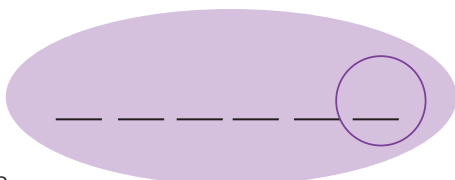
Clue:

Where did Mary live in Luke 1:26-27?



FTNIAN =

Clue: What sign, wrapped in swaddling, is given in Luke 2:12?



Answer: _____

December 17

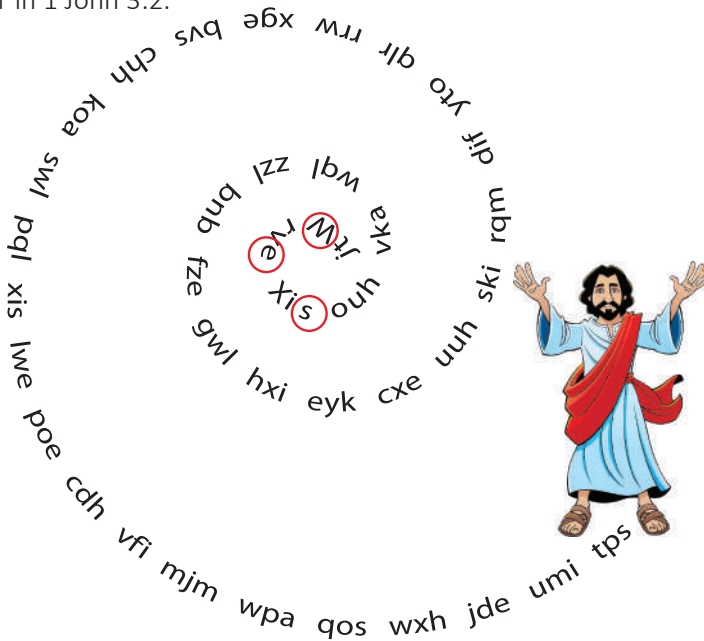
Those who counsel peace have joy. Proverbs 12:20

Remember: we want to have joy with Jesus, Others, and You. Jesus had close friends who loved him and helped him—and he still has close friends today. Jesus wants to be close to each of us!

Why does coming close to Jesus bring joy to us and others? Because when we come close to Jesus, we become more like Jesus. We become the men and women, the boys and girls, that God wants us to be.

Activity:

How do you think the world would be different if everyone in it came close to Jesus? If everyone in the world loved God, themselves, and others? You can find one answer to those questions by solving the puzzle below. In this puzzle, circle every 3rd letter in the spiral to find out how scripture says the world would be different! You'll find the answer in 1 John 3:2.



Picture this! Add to your picture creche a cut out of how the world would be better if everyone came close to Jesus.

December 18

I love the LORD. Psalm 116:1

Take a look back to December 3 and December 11. First you decided what you like to make or do: that's a joy God gives to you! Then you chose a way to share that gift with someone else on Christmas. That's a joy God gives to others through you.

Now think of a way to share your gift with Jesus on Christmas day! Whatever you decide will be your way of coming closer to Jesus.

You might:

1. Sing a song for Jesus on Christmas morning—whether anyone else sees you or not.
2. Draw a picture for Jesus. You can place it at the family creche or wrap it up and label it for Jesus, to put under the tree.
3. Remember to stop three times during Christmas morning to say "Thank you!" to Jesus: for the people you love, for the gifts that make you and others happy, or for the food you like to eat.



Activity:

Write down what you plan to do on a calendar or right here:

December 19

Come to the feast. Matthew 22:4

When we come close to Jesus, we become more like Jesus. Let's take a look at who Jesus is, and who we can be. With a friend or family member, read the story in Luke 9:12-17.

Activity:

Now look at the two pictures below. With Jesus in the picture, how many things are different! Can you spot these differences? Look especially for these differences:

- Jesus listens. What difference does listening make? *(See Luke 9:13)*

- Jesus cares. What does Jesus do first? *(See Luke 9:14)*

- Jesus helps. What difference does helping make? *(See Luke 9:16)*



Picture this!

Jesus was born in Bethlehem, a name that means “house of bread.” Can you add a cut-out picture of your family’s favorite bread to your creche?

December 20

I will listen to what God, the LORD, has to say. Psalm 85:9

Jesus, Others, You: that makes JOY! If we learn to listen and help as Jesus does, we will know a new joy that only coming close to Jesus can give.

Let's try to learn to listen better! Who listens carefully to you? What do they do so you know they are listening?



Activity:

Now choose a time to day when you can be quiet—like a bird or mouse!—and listen to the people in your house for 15 minutes.

Write or draw your answers to these listening questions:

- Who's talking?

- Does anyone who is talking give a clue as to how they're feeling today?

- Does anyone seem to need help today?

- Is there someone who would be glad that you are listening today?

Picture this!

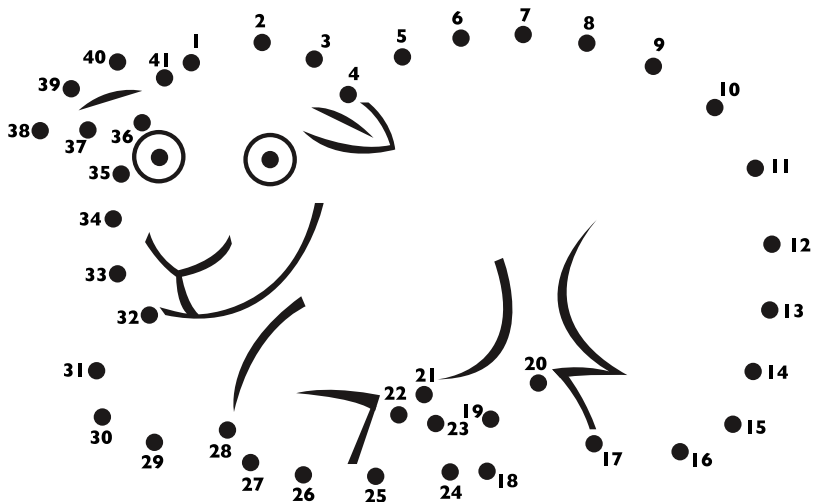
We know God always listens to us when we pray. Can you write a prayer word or sentence on your picture creche?

December 21

Here is your God! Isaiah 40:9

Activity:

Connect the dots in the picture below! What did you find? Now underneath the picture, write the first 7 words from Isaiah 40:11. Those words tell us how Jesus cares for all God's people.



How did Jesus care for God's people?

In your house, who cares for you? How?

In your house, what do you care for? A pet? A plant? A sibling? Your toys? How do you do that?

Picture this!

Add a picture of Jesus or Others or You caring to your picture creche! We are almost there: Christmas JOY!

December 22

There was a multitude of the heavenly host. Luke 2:13

An angel came to Mary, to tell her that she would be the mother of God's own son. An angel came to Joseph, to tell him to take good care of Jesus and Mary.

Activity: When Jesus was born the sky filled with angels to bring good news to poor shepherds, living outside with their sheep! Each of the shepherds hears a word. Can you put them in order to hear what the angels sing? See Luke 2:14 for clues!



l y r G o

o t

d G o

n i

h e t

h g i t s e h

n a d

n o

r a h t e

c e e p a.

Picture this!

What Christmas song could you add to your picture creche?

December 23

Peace to those on whom his favor rests. Luke 2:14

Why did the angels sing? Because they knew a great secret about the joyful birth of Jesus. The first angel told the shepherds, “I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.”

That was the secret! The joy wasn’t just for the shepherds. The joy wasn’t just for Mary and Joseph. It was for all the people. The joy of Jesus is for all the people in the world today, too. When we turn to God—when you love Jesus, Others, You—you receive the joy that filled the sky with angel song so long ago.

Activity:

There’s more to the angel’s good news to the shepherds! Read what they said below—but first you’ll have to find the missing letters. Only 2 letters are missing, but they are missing in more than one place. Look at Luke 2:11 for clues!



F _ r t _ d _ y in the city _ f D _ vid _



s _ vi _ r h _ s been b _ rn f _ r

y _ u wh _ is Messi _ h _ nd L _ rd.

Picture this!

Add 2-3 people from around the world to your picture.

Answer: For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord.

December 24

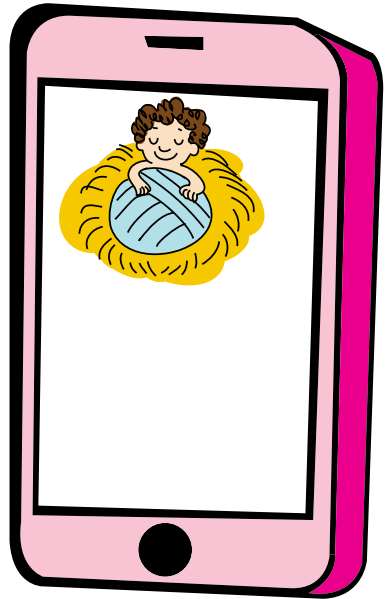
You will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes. Luke 2:12

All Advent we've learned about JOY: how to love and know Jesus, Others, and You. There's one final thing to know about joy. It grows when we share it! We don't give away our joy and then not have any left! No, when we share joy, there's even more joy to go around.

In Luke 2:15-20, the shepherds who hear the angels sing about Jesus decide to go see this joyful news for themselves. Imagine if they had cell phones in those days! What would they write to their friends about baby Jesus? What picture of themselves with Jesus would they take?

Activity:

In the two cell phones below, take a "selfie" with baby Jesus—one for a shepherd and one for you. Then write a message about what joy was found in the visit.



Picture this!

We need two more cut outs for the picture creche! Make a box of straw to be a bed for baby Jesus.

December 25

Now we must celebrate and rejoice. Luke 15:32

Merry Christmas!

Don't forget your Christmas plans this morning:

- Look back at the plan you made on December 7.
Can you give Christmas joy to YOU today?

- Look back at the plan you made on December 11.
Can you give Christmas joy to OTHERS today?

- Look back at the plan you made on December 18.
Can you give Christmas joy to JESUS today?

Picture this!

Today is the day to finish your picture creche. Make a picture of baby Jesus to place in the bed of straw. Where can you put your finished creche? Near the tree? On a wall in your room? Christmas lasts for 12 days so from now until January 6, don't forget to sing carols to Jesus near your creche. And don't forget to share your Christmas JOY!

ADVENT JOY

Jesus
Others
You!

