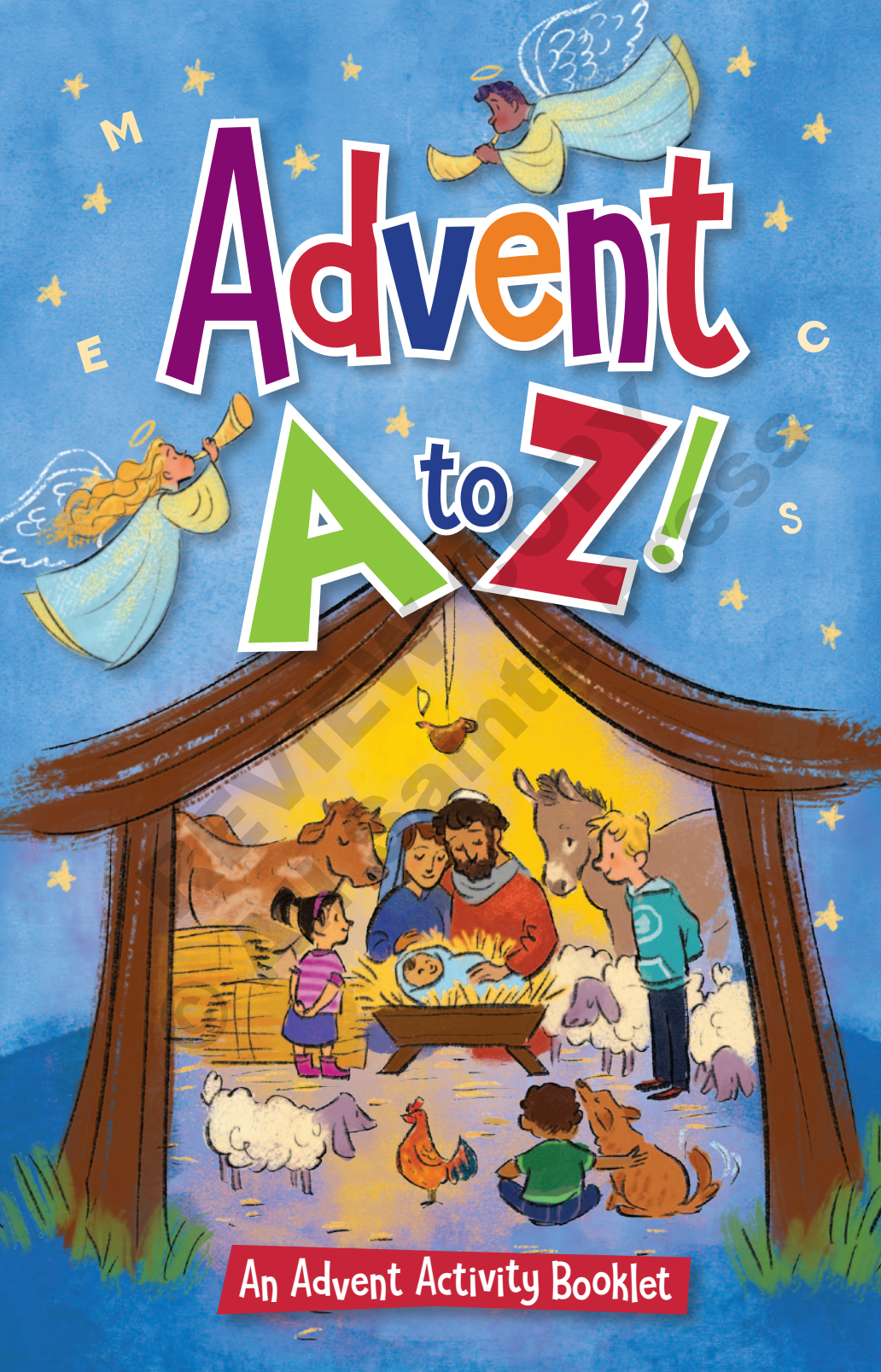


Advent

A to Z!



An Advent Activity Booklet

Advent A to Z!

What does Advent mean? Why is the letter X important to Christmas? Who were the people and animals that got ready for the first Christmas more than 2000 years ago? Welcome to **Advent from A to Z**—everything we could think of to help you celebrate Advent with your family!

▶ Activity

In this Advent book, you'll find all kinds of games, puzzles, and brain teasers as you find the "A to Zs" of Advent! You'll read stories from all the years of waiting for Jesus and find plenty of ideas to get ready for Christmas.

Matthew 1:21
Luke 2:7



Luke 2:4

When we want you to find a specific **Bible 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/

(Note to parents: From that link, you can find any book or verse of the New American Bible!)



Help me find the Bible verse!

With your Bible in hand, let's start looking up a Bible verse with these steps listed below using your Bible (NAB).

You'll be able to find every special Advent word, from **A** to **Z**, in the Bible.

For example, try to find this verse: **2 Timothy 3:16**.

- **Can you find the Table of Contents?**

Write its page number here: _____.

- **Now look at the Table of Contents.**

Can you find the book of **2 Timothy**?

Is it in the Old Testament or New Testament?

Write its page number here: _____.

- **Now go to that page to find the book of 2 Timothy.**

(Remember which Testament it is in!)

Can you find **2 Timothy 3**? That's chapter 3.

See if you can find the big numbers 1, 2, and 3 in **2 Timothy**.

Write the page number for chapter 3 here: _____.

- **See the small numbers after the big number 3?**

Find the number 16. That's verse 16.

Write its page number here: _____.

This is how you can find every verse we use!





is for **Advent**

Coloring Activity

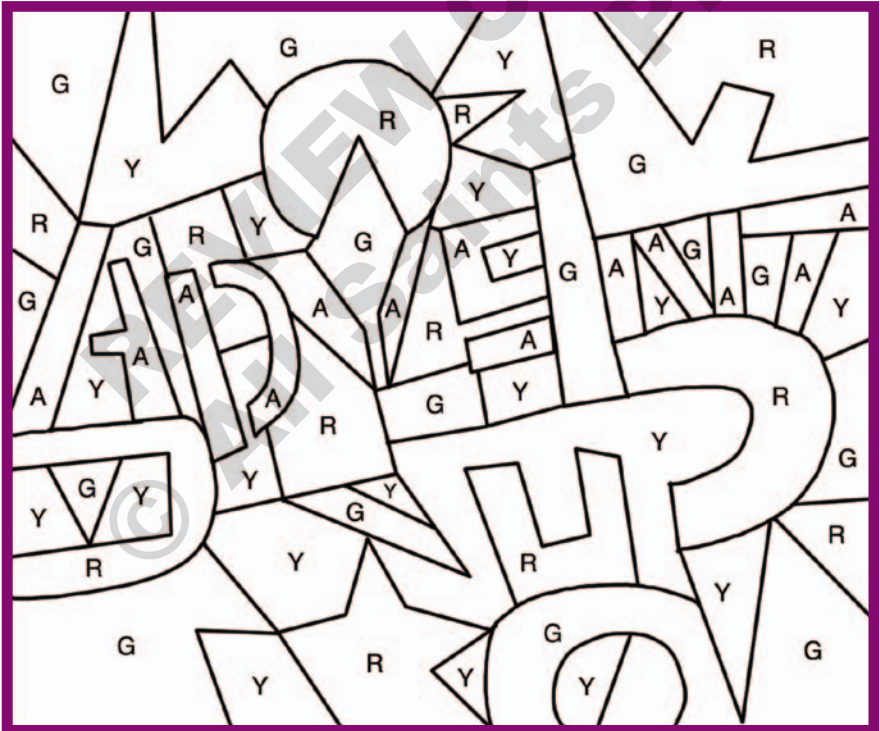
In Advent we get ready for great things! The word Advent comes from a Latin word venire, which means "coming." What's coming? That's what we'll find out in the rest of this book! When you go to Mass this Sunday, see if you can find what looks different in your church. Ask your family: how will our house start to look different during the season of Advent? Why?

Many churches use either **purple** or **blue** cloth in Advent.

In the puzzle below color every part of the puzzle that has the letter **A** with either **purple** or **blue**. (Choose just one above!)



Fill in the other shapes with the colors shown here.



What did you spell?

A

B

is for **Baby**

A wonderful baby! In Advent we remember how the world waited for the birth of baby Jesus.

When a family gets ready for a baby, they think about what they will call the baby. They make sure there is a place ready for the baby. They gather everything they will need for the baby.

Ask your family:

How did you pick my name?

Where was I born?

What did you get ready for me before bringing me home?



Bible Activity

Mary and Joseph got ready for baby Jesus.

Look up these verses to find out how they got ready for Jesus!

Matthew 1:21

In this verse an angel tells Joseph what to name the baby.

Luke 2:4

In this verse Joseph and Mary travel to a different city where Jesus will be born.

Luke 2:7

In this verse what did Mary wrap baby Jesus in to keep him warm.



is for **Crèche**

Christmas is such a great day that we need all the days of Advent to get ready for it. One way we can get ready is by using a crèche to remind us of the people and animals who gathered around baby Jesus so long ago.

Does your family have a crèche set?

Can you find one to see at church?

You can make your own crèche set, too! Ask an adult to help you make this cornstarch clay recipe shown to the right.



Clay Crèche Recipe

- **Mix 1 cup corn starch**
- **2 cups baking soda**
- **1 1/3 cups water in a saucepan**

• Stir and cook the clay over medium heat until it looks like mashed potatoes.

• **IMPORTANT!** Keep your hands and wrists covered in thick kitchen gloves!

• You don't want the bubbling clay to burn you! (You can let the adult do just this part.) Let the clay cool all the way down. Store it in plastic containers.

• When you shape a figure from it, just leave it out in the air for a few days to dry. When your clay figure is dry, you can decorate it with markers or paint it.

Bible Activity

To find the people you need in a crèche set look up these verses. Who is named in each verse?



Luke 2:19

Matthew 1:24

Luke 2:8

Matthew 2:1

S

M

December 4

D is for **Donkey**

So how did Mary get to Bethlehem? There were no cars, planes or trains in biblical times so Mary rode a donkey to get from Nazareth to Bethlehem. The trip was a long one. With Joseph walking by Mary's side the journey took them about a week.

Activity

Now we need the animals for our crèche set. **Can you find them hidden in the picture?** After you find them, make their figures from the cornstarch clay you made on December 3!



Answer: donkey, sheep, chicken, cow

E

is for **Elizabeth**

Not all the good people in Mary and Joseph's life were at the crèche when he was born. When Mary found out that she would give birth to baby Jesus she ran to tell her beloved cousin, Elizabeth.

Elizabeth was much older than Mary. She was going to have a baby, too! When she saw Mary she said words that we still use in a favorite prayer.



Unscramble the Words

Can you unscramble the letters and words below?

HINT: You can find these words in

Luke 1:42



What is the name of this prayer? _____

December 6

F

is for **Face**



Drawing Activity

Can you find pictures of yourself as a baby? Your family was so happy to see your face the day you were born!

Everyone was glad to see the face of Jesus, too. The gospel of John teaches us that when we look at Jesus we see who God is and what God wants.



Draw the face of Jesus below.

You can draw Jesus as a baby or as an adult.

Now pick one of the three scripture verses below that uses the word **“face”** about God or Jesus. Write the words of the verse you picked in the frame.

Numbers 6:25

Psalms 27:8

Revelation 22:4

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is for Gabriel

How did Mary know that she would give birth to baby Jesus? God sent the angel named Gabriel to Mary. An angel is a messenger—God’s own messenger. God’s messenger Gabriel spoke words that we still say today.
(Remember Elizabeth? Her words are part of the prayer, too! See December 5.)

Activity

Ten angels are flying away with those words from Gabriel! **Can you put them in the right order?**



H

is for **Holy Spirit**






Mary was amazed at Gabriel's message. She asked the angel, "How can this happen? I'm not even married!"

Activity

But the angel told her that God himself would give this gift through the _____ .

Oops! That part is in code! Can you solve it?

You can find a clue in **Luke 1:35**. Use the codes below to solve the puzzle.

	= i		= p		= y
	= H		= S		= r
	= l		= t		= o



December 9

I

&

J

are for **Immanuel** and **Jesus**

I is for Immanuel—and just like the letter **J, it's also for Jesus!** (Immanuel is sometimes spelled Emmanuel instead, but Immanuel is how it was spelled long ago.)

Why? In the Latin alphabet there was no letter "J". Jesus was spelled IESUS. J is the newest letter of the English alphabet—we've only used it for about 400 years. So I is for IESUS and J is for JESUS, too!

Immanuel was one name for Mary's

baby: it means "God with us." That's who Jesus is! God with us!

Jesus is another name, the name we know best of all! The name Jesus comes from a Hebrew name meaning "God saves." God is with us. God saves us. That's what we know about Jesus.

We use other names for Jesus, too, from Bible stories about Jesus or from Bible stories before Jesus was even born.



Bible Activity

Look up this verse from the prophet Isaiah: **Isaiah 9:5**. Isaiah tells us that a child is born to us, a son is given to us. And then there are special names for the child who comes.

Can you write 4 names from Isaiah on the tags?



K

is for **King**

Other names for Jesus tell us more about who Jesus is. We call Jesus our king but God's king is not like the rich or powerful kings in fairytales. Jesus didn't live in a castle or mansion. Jesus was rich only in goodness. Jesus didn't have armies or weapons. Jesus trusted only in the strength of God. Jesus was born as a poor baby to show that God's power had nothing to do with money or weapons.



Talk this over with your family:

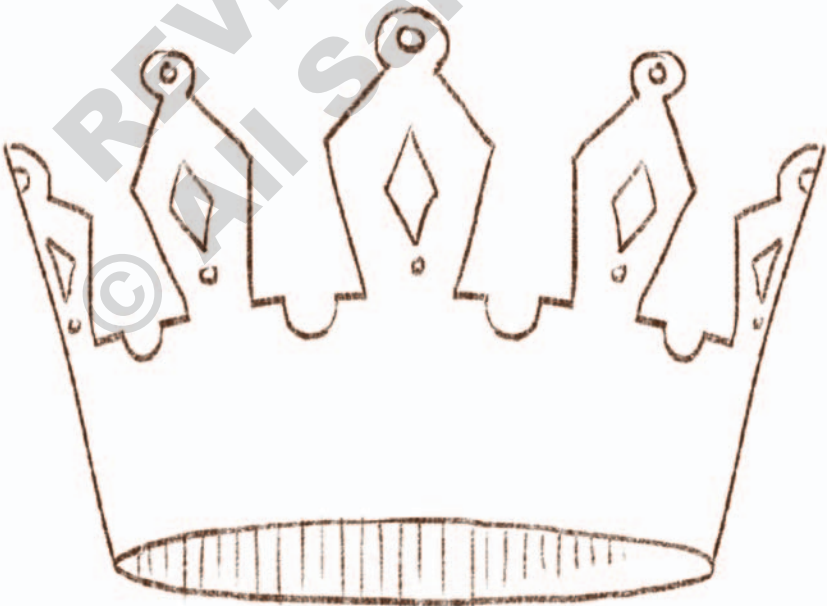
How do people choose money instead of what God wants?

How do people choose conflict instead of what God wants?



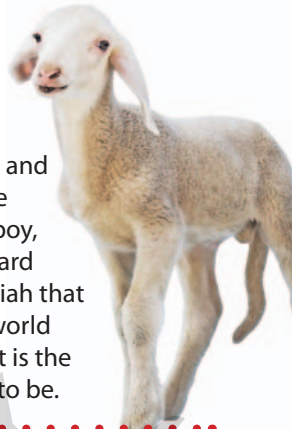
Activity

On the crown below draw or write one way that the world would be different if all people chose to follow the ways of King Jesus instead of the ways of money or power.



L

is for **Lamb**















One more name for Jesus is lamb: the Lamb of God. We hear this name for Jesus when John the Baptist calls him that. He sees Jesus and says to his friends, "Behold the Lamb of God. He will take away sins and sorrows for the whole world." (You can find the story in **John 1:35-39**.)

Jesus loved sheep and shepherds and the baby lambs. As a boy, he would have heard this verse from Isaiah that tells us what the world will be like when it is the way God wants it to be.

Activity

Can you solve this rebus?

Hint: **Isaiah 11.6**

The  shall  a guest
of the , & the  shall
lie  with the young  ;
The calf  & the young  shall
browse  together, with a little
   +d them.

Answer: The wolf shall be a guest of the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat; the calf and the young lion shall browse together, with a little child to guide them.

M

is for the **Mass**

Jesus comes to us every day in the Mass. In Advent, we remember how Jesus comes to us. We remember his birth so long ago when we celebrate Christmas. We hope for his coming again to make God's world new.

But Jesus didn't just come to us hundreds of years ago. He comes to God's

People every day in the Mass. In fact, the word mass is part of the word Christmas: Christ's mass! When we share God's bread and God's cup Jesus comes to each one of us.



Activity

Jesus loves to share this meal with us. **Can you draw yourself sharing a special meal with Jesus? Who else can be at the special meal?**





is for **Nativity**

Nativity means “birth.” The Christmas story is the story of a birth, so we also call it the nativity story.

Ask a family member to read you the Bible’s nativity story in **Luke 2:4-7**.

Now ask your family to tell you the story of your nativity.



Where were you born?

Who was there?

How did they keep you warm?

How is the story of your nativity like the story of Jesus’ nativity?

How are those stories different?

Activity

Can you write the good news of Jesus’ nativity in the newspaper shown below? Try to include words from Luke 2:4-7 in your story!





is for O Immanuel



The days of Advent are full of joy as we wait for the birth of Jesus. We light candles on the Advent wreath at church or at home. We sing songs. The Church even has 7 special songs to sing as we get closer to the day of Christmas.

We call these songs the O antiphons (or anthems) because each one starts with the letter O! You might know one we sing often: O come, O come Emmanuel. (As we said on December 9, this can also be spelled Immanuel.)

Activity

Can you unscramble the names on each of these wreaths that look like the letter O? You'll find a symbol inside each wreath to go with the special name.



P

is for **Psalms**

Activity

Nativity means “birth.” The Christmas Psalms—another kind of song. Some psalms are sad. Some psalms ask questions. Some psalms praise God. Some psalms remind us that the People of God have waited thousands of years for the coming of God’s new world. Those are the psalms that Christians use to welcome the coming of Jesus.

You can find one of these Advent and Christmas psalms below:

Psalms 98. But some of the words are floating away on the music!



Can you put the right words from above in the right place to finish the song below? *Hint: look at Psalm 98:6-9*

With _____ and the sound of the horn
shout with _____ to the King, the Lord.

Let the sea and what _____ it resound,
the _____ and those who dwell there.

Let the _____ clap their hands,
the _____ shout with them for joy,

Before the _____ who comes,
who comes to govern the _____,

To govern the world with justice
and the _____ with fairness.



is for Questions

Mary asked the angel Gabriel a question: "How will these things be?" Elizabeth asked a question. "Why does the mother of my Lord come to see me?" The wise men asked a question: "Where is the baby king?" These great questions are all part of our Advent story.

Here are 3 questions for you to ask your family:

1. What are you doing to get ready for Christmas?
2. What's your favorite part of Christmas?
3. What's your favorite part of the Christmas story?



Activity

What are 3 questions you would like to ask your family about Christmas? Write them here!

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____



R

is for **Rejoice**



R is for the best instruction we hear from the Bible: Rejoice! Be joyful! In **Philippians 4:4-5** we read, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I say it again: rejoice! Your kindness should be known to all. The Lord is near."

Activity

The Lord is near to us all our whole lives long. That's one good reason to rejoice! **Can you think of others? See if you can find one reason to rejoice for each letter here:**



R



E

J

O

I



C

E



S

is for **Shepherds**

S is for the shepherds, the first people of God who heard the news of Jesus' birth. Angels filled the sky and said, "To you this day is born a Savior: Christ the Lord."

Shepherds did not live in town. They lived out in the fields where they watched over their sheep.

They took good care of their sheep! They fed them and found them water. They scared away dangerous animals. They found the sheep if one of them got lost.

When Jesus grew up, he called himself a shepherd, too, though he didn't take care of animals in lonely fields. Instead he took care of God's people. He came to look for all people and bring them close to God.


Activity

The sheep are munching all the letters **s** and **e** in the verse below. **Can you put the letters **s** and **e** in the right spaces?** You'll finish a verse that Jesus spoke when he called himself a shepherd.

Hint: you'll find this verse in **John 10:11**



I am th_ good _ h_ ph_ rd.

A good _ h_ ph_ rd lay_

down hi_ lif_ for th_ _ h_ _ p.



T

is for giving **Thanks**

Did you celebrate Thanksgiving a little while ago? Did you know we celebrate a different kind of Thanksgiving at every Mass? The priest gives thanks for bread and shares it with us. It reminds us to give thanks to God for all the "bread" of our daily life: our food, our clothing, and our homes. It reminds us to share these good things with others.

The priest gives thanks for wine. It reminds us to give thanks to God for our families and friends and all the joys of our lives. It reminds us to share these good things with others.

Talk this over with your family:

For what good things do we give thanks this Christmas?

How can we share these good things with others?

GIVE THANKS!

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Activity

Make a Christmas list of good things you want to thank God for. Then circle one that you can share with others.



U is for Unto Us

The first words of many carols: Unto us a child is born...

The words come from **Isaiah 9:5**:
For to us a child is born, to us a son is given. Christians hear these words and think of Jesus, the child of God given to us—to all people!



Activity

Make an Advent chain that celebrates all the people Jesus came to help and to love.

Advent Chain:

- Cut colorful construction paper into strips one inch wide.
- On each strip write the name of a person. Start with family members and friends.
- You can think of neighbors, classmates, or people you see when you play.
- You can add the names of people you've never met: the President or any name from a newspaper story.
- How many links in the chain can you make? Join them together in a chain for your room.



Samuel

ALEX

MADDIE

William

V

is for **Visits**

Do you have family or friends coming to visit this Christmas? Will you travel yourself to make a Christmas visit?

When the shepherds heard the angels message (see December 18),

they decided to visit Jesus right away! In **Luke 2:15** we read them say to one another, "Let us go, then, to Bethlehem to see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us."

Activity

Can you help the shepherds find their way to baby Jesus?





is for the **Wise Men**

They came to visit baby Jesus, too. The Bible doesn't say how many wise men came to visit Jesus but most creche sets show 3 people, because the story does tell us that the wise men brought 3 gifts: gold and frankincense and myrrh. Gold is still a precious metal and the other gifts were fragrant perfumes.

We can bring gifts to baby Jesus, too. When we help a family member with a chore, that's a gift to Jesus. When we give our time to play with a younger brother or sister, that's a gift, too.



Activity

On the gift boxes below write or draw 3 gifts you plan to give to Jesus this week.





is for **Xmas**

Do you ever see Christmas written this way: Xmas? It's still pronounced Christmas! The letter X in our alphabet usually comes at the end of a word, as in ox. (Was there an ox in the stable? Maybe!) But the gospels were written in Greek. In Greek, the letter X stands for "CH". So the name Christ began with the Greek letter X.

You know how we write Mr. for Mister? People began to write X for Christmas. So Xmas was the same as our Christmas. We don't use it very much in our day, but Christians began using this short way of writing the name of Christ more than 1400 years ago. Sometimes people used the X as part of a special symbol for Christ. They crossed it with the letter P. In Greek this is an R sound, not a P! This is what it looks like:



Activity

Imagine you are making a brand new symbol for Jesus Christ. **What designs could you use? Draw your ideas on the Christmas ornaments here!**



Y

is for You

Why? We've read about so many people, places, and things that get us ready for Christmas. Now never forget one of the most important Christmas people of all: you. God sent us Jesus because God loved us so much. If you were the only person in the world--God would have sent Jesus just for you. Look up **John 3:16** to see what we mean!



:

:

•••

Activity

So now finish getting ready for Christmas by telling Jesus about you. List 3 things that you want Jesus to know about most of all:

1. _____



2. _____



3. _____



December 24

& **Z** is for **ZZZ**

And finally Z is for ZZZ. It's time to get some! When you wake in the morning, it will be Christmas Day.



Activity

Color before you go to bed tonight.



Merry Christmas!

Merry Christmas! Now that Christmas is finally here, invite your family to join you on an **A** to **Z** scavenger hunt.



Write one item you find that begins with each of the letters of the alphabet. You can look at the pictures on Christmas cards or sing a carol to find an item!

A

B

C

D

E

F

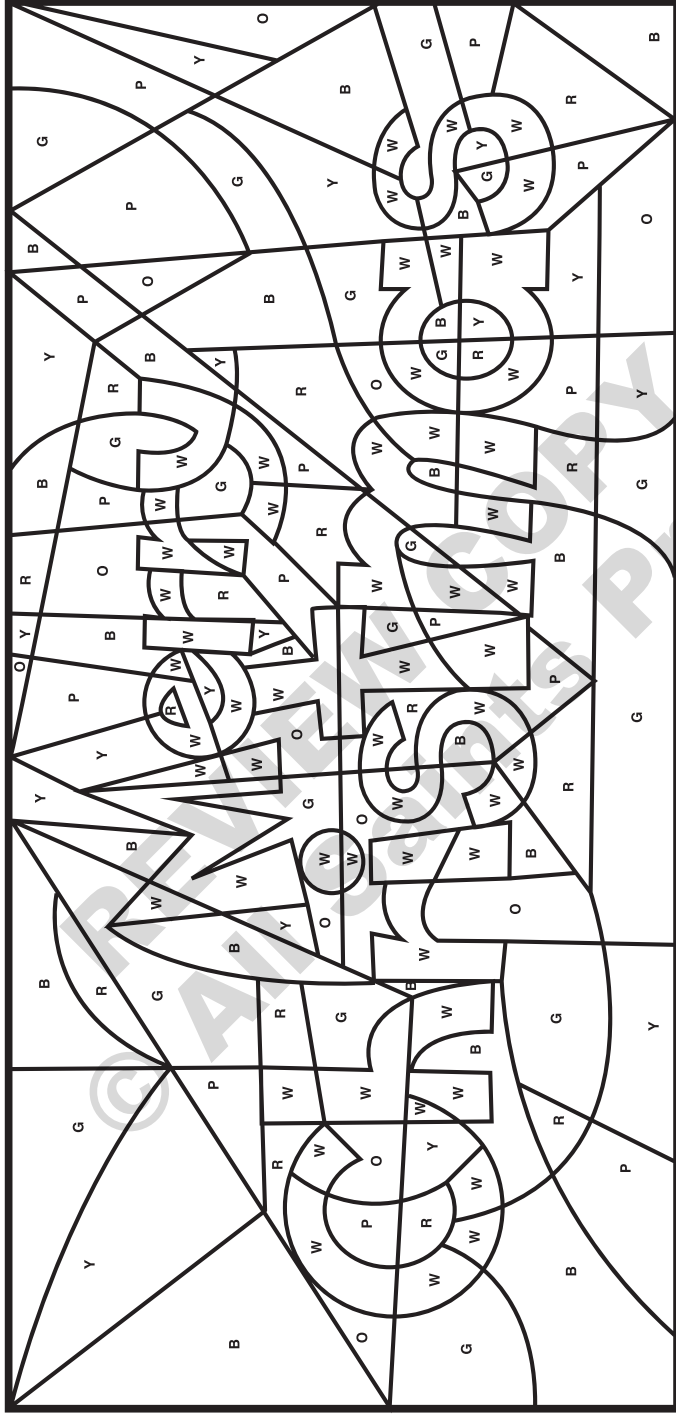
G

H

I

J

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Activity

And here is one final puzzle. What message do we have for you today? Color it in to find out!

W=leave white

Y=yellow

G=green

B=blue

R=red

O=orange

P=purple

Away in a Manger

Away in a manger, no crib for His bed
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head
The stars in the bright sky looked down where He lay
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay

The cattle are lowing, the poor Baby awakes
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes
I love Thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the night sky
And stay by my side till morning is nigh

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever, and love me I pray
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care
And take us to Heaven to live with Thee there

