



JOURNEY TO
Bethlehem

AN ADVENT CHAIN & ACTIVITY BOOK



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JOURNEY TO Bethlehem

For many years (all the way back to the time of Adam and Eve) many people had been watching and waiting for God to keep his promise and send his Son. They knew that God seemed very far away at times. But they also knew that God promised to come very close some day and reveal his Son to the world.

Through the years these people remembered God's promises. Some of them even spoke with God, while others were messengers, announcing God's great plan. And that's what this Advent Chain is all about. For the next twenty-four days we are going to take a trip to celebrate Christmas. On the way we will visit with some of the people who pointed out the way to Bethlehem. Some of them even went to Bethlehem themselves. They will form the chain that will link us to Jesus. And we will discover that we are links in the chain too, leading the way to Jesus.



The Bible Story

This is story of Jesus' birth as written in Luke Chapter 2 verses 1-20. Come back and read this on Christmas Eve (or anytime!).

At that time Emperor Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the Roman Empire. When this first census took place, Quirinius was the governor of Syria. Everyone, then, went to register himself, each to his own hometown. Joseph went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to the town of Bethlehem in Judea, the birthplace of King David. Joseph went there because he was a descendant of David. He went to register with Mary, who was promised in marriage to him. She was pregnant, and while they were in Bethlehem, the time came for her to have her baby. She gave birth to her first-born son, wrapped him in cloths and laid him in a manger—there was no room for them to stay in the inn.

There were some shepherds in that part of the country who were spending the night in the fields, taking care of their flocks. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the



Lord shone over them. They were terribly afraid, but the angel said to them, “Don’t be afraid! I am here with good news for you, which will bring great joy to all the people. This very day in David’s town your Savior was born—Christ the Lord! And this is what will prove it to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” Suddenly a great army of heaven’s angels appeared with the angel, singing praises to God:

“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom he is pleased!”



When the angels went away from them back 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.”

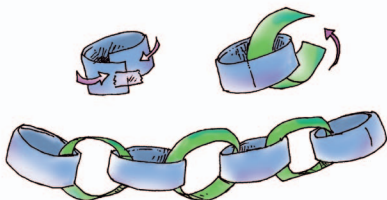
So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and saw the baby lying in the manger. When the shepherds saw him, they told them what the angel had said about the child. All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said. Mary remembered all these things and thought deeply about them. The shepherds went back, singing praises to God for all they had heard and seen; it had been just as the angel had told them.

HOW TO USE THIS

Advent Chain

Each day, as you read about an event from the story of Jesus' birth, cut off the appropriate numbered strip from the end of your page. The strips are titled with the subject of each day, plus each strip has a number (1-24) printed at the bottom to make it easy to identify. Each page has two strips so make sure you cut off the correct strip for each day.

On December 1st, as you cut off your first strip, loop it into a ring and fasten it with glue or tape. The next day cut off the second strip and insert it through the loop from the first day, making another loop, and fasten with glue or tape. You should now have a small, two-chain link. Continue adding links until you reach Christmas Day with 25 links in your chain! Place it on your Christmas tree to remind you about the birth of Jesus.



DECEMBER 1

Adam & Eve

This chain begins with Adam and Eve. They were once very close to God. But after they sinned they looked forward to the time when God would come close again.

Activity

Advent means “coming.” During Advent we look forward to Jesus’ coming at Christmas. Throughout history many people have looked forward to Jesus coming. Fill in the blanks:

Adam and _____ looked forward to a time when they could once again be close to God. God came close to us when, _____ the Savior, was born.

With a solemn oath to our ancestor Abraham, God promised to rescue us from our enemies and allow us to serve him without fear. —Luke 1:73-74

ADAM & EVE

DECEMBER 2

Abraham

You can read about Abraham in the book of Genesis. God chose him as the special person who would start the whole nation of Israel. Thousands of years later Jesus was born in Abraham's nation.



Activity

Matthew 1:1-17 tells us that Abraham was Jesus' distant grandfather. Do you know the names of your grandparents?

Write them below:

ABRAHAM

2

"She will have a son, and you will name him Jesus—because he will save his people from their sins." —Matthew 1:21

DECEMBER 3

Jacob

Jacob once had a dream in which angels were going up and down a stairway to heaven, Years later Joseph, Jesus' father, had a dream which said that Jesus was coming down from heaven.

Activity

After you wake up tomorrow morning try to remember your dreams. What happened in them? Do you have a favorite dream? **Search for these words and circle them:**

**JESUS, JACOB, DREAM,
HEAVEN**

B A N M P J U L
O N L Y A C S D
C N E V A E H T
A J E S U S R O
J W O R K W U D

“Let us praise the Lord, the God of Israel:
He has come to the help of his people and has set them free.” —Luke 1:68

JACOB

DECEMBER 4

Moses

God chose Moses to lead the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt. (Remember, Israel is the nation that began with Abraham.) God set all people free through Jesus.

Activity

Have you ever been stuck somewhere you didn't want to be? Who helped you get "unstuck?" **Unscramble these words.** You can find each of them on today's Bible reading on the chain:

SIERPA _____

RDLO _____

LEARSI _____

LPHE _____

LEPPEO _____

EERF _____

MOSES

4

"He will be the king of the descendants of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end!" —Luke 1:33

DECEMBER 5

Ruth & Naomi

Ruth and Naomi? That's right! Ruth and Naomi once took a trip to Bethlehem, and Ruth even had a baby there. That baby's name was Obed, the grandfather of King David, and an ancestor of Jesus.



Activity

Ruth was Naomi's daughter-in-law. She was also the wife of Boaz and the mother of Obed. **List some of the ways you are related to those around you.**

He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God. The Lord God will make him a king, as his ancestor David was. —Luke 1:32

RUTH & NAOMI

DECEMBER 6

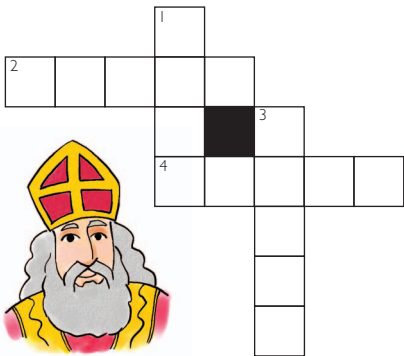
David

David was a great king in the nation of Israel, God promised David that someone from his family would be king forever. God kept that promise by sending Jesus—your King and mine!

Activity

Do this crossword:

1. A male monarch.
2. Jesus' ancestor. A King.
3. Your King and mine.
4. David was a ___ king.



DAVID

6

Joseph went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to the town of Bethlehem in Judea, the birthplace of King David. Joseph went there because he was a descendant of David. —Luke 2:4

DECEMBER 7

Prophets

Prophets were people who told others about God. They announced the message that God would come to earth. That promise came true when Jesus was born.



Activity

Prophets told others about God and spoke the word of God. **List some of the people who have told you about God.** Have you talked to anyone about Jesus lately?

This happened in order to make come true what the Lord had said through the prophet, "A virgin will become pregnant and have a son, and he will be called Emmanuel." —Matthew 1:22-23

PROPHETS

DECEMBER 8

Isaiah

Isaiah was a prophet with a special message. He told how Jesus would be born. Isaiah's special name for Je-



sus was Emmanuel, which means "God is with us."

Activity

Isaiah called Jesus "Emmanuel." The Bible is filled with different names for Jesus. How many names can you think of? Unscramble these words. You can find them on today's Bible reading on the chain:

OLDR _____

ROEPHP _____

GRNVI _____

MMEANLEU _____

ISAIAH

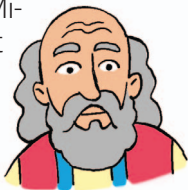
8

He promised through his holy prophets long ago that he would save us from our enemies, from the power of all those who hate us. —Luke 1:70-71

DECEMBER 9

Micah

When the wise men wanted to find Jesus they looked in the book that the prophet Micah wrote. Micah wrote that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem. Micah was right.



Activity

Find Bethlehem on a map (your Bible may have one). Search for these words and circle them:

MICAH, PROPHET,
WISE, MEN

M E N W P V T R
N O L K E C S E
P R O P H E T S
A H A C I M R I
F U N R G W U W

"I am Gabriel," the angel answered. "I stand in the presence of God, who sent me to speak to you and tell you this good news." —Luke 1:19

MICAH

DECEMBER 10

Gabriel



God sent many messages to many people through prophets. The message of Jesus' birth was so exciting that it needed a special messenger. Gabriel, the angel of the Lord, was that messenger.

Activity

Send a message to someone you love. Send it in a special way. It could be a card, or a picture. What are other ways of sending special messages? **Complete the message below:**

_____ was an angel who brought a special message from _____. The message said that _____ was going to be born.

GABRIEL

DECEMBER 11

Zechariah

For Zechariah the news that he would soon have a son was so wonderful that it was unbelievable! To prove that God's message was true, Gabriel took away Zechariah's voice for a while.

Activity

Have you ever kept a secret (like a surprise gift or a surprise party)? Was it hard to keep the news quiet? Unscramble these words. **You can find them on today's Bible reading on the chain:**

RPEYAR _____

HONJ _____

PPYAH _____

HTEBAZILE _____

NBRO _____

Elizabeth said to Mary, "Why should this great thing happen to me, that my Lord's mother comes to visit me?" —Luke 1:43

ZECHARIAH

DECEMBER 12

Elizabeth

Elizabeth has two reasons to be happy. First, she was finally going to have the baby she had wanted. Second, her relative Mary was going to give birth to Jesus, the Savior of the world!



Activity

Elizabeth had many reasons to be happy. You probably have many reasons to be happy too. **Can you list some of those things?** Start with these: *God loves me, Jesus came to earth.*

ELIZABETH

12

“God has heard your prayer, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son. You are to name him John. How glad and happy you will be, and how happy many others will be when he is born!” —Luke 1:13-14

DECEMBER 13

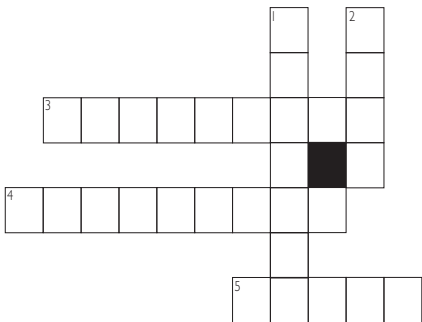
John the Baptist

John was the son promised to Elizabeth and Zechariah. When he grew up, John told people that Jesus was coming, and told them how to prepare for the coming King!

Activity

Do this crossword:

1. ___ for the coming King.
2. Son of Elizabeth.
3. Zechariah's wife.
4. John's father.
5. John told people ___ was coming.



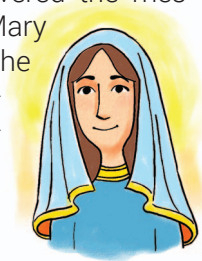
"I am the Lord's servant," said Mary. "may it happen to me as you have said."
And the angel left her. — Luke 1:38

JOHN THE BAPTIST

DECEMBER 14

Mary

When Gabriel, the angel of the Lord, delivered the message that Mary would be the mother of Jesus, Mary believed God's message and was happy.



Activity

The news that the angel gave to Mary changed her life. How has Jesus' birth changed your life? Unscramble these words. **You can find them on today's Bible reading on the chain:**

TNAVRES _____

RYMA _____

GANLE _____

OLDR _____

MARY

14

"You, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High God. You will go ahead of the Lord to prepare his road for him." —Luke 1:76

DECEMBER 15

Caesar Augustus

Far away in the city of Rome, the Emperor Caesar Augustus was involved in God's great plan to bring Jesus into the world. He gave the order that led Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem.



Activity for Today

Find these words taken from today's Bible verse:

AUGUSTUS CENSUS
EMPIRE SYRIA
REGISTER HOMETOWN

R E G I S T E R S S
S U T S U G U A U Y
E M P I R E M G S R
N W O T E M O H N I
M E K I J T F K E A
R B P H X D R R C J

Joseph went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to the town of Bethlehem in Judea, the birthplace of King David. Joseph went there because he was a descendant of David. —Luke 2:4

CAESAR AUGUSTUS

DECEMBER 16

Joseph



Joseph listened and obeyed. When God told him to marry Mary, Joseph did it.

When Caesar told him to go to Bethlehem, Joseph did it. By listening and obeying, Joseph was serving God.

Activity

Read John 15:12. Can you obey Jesus commandment to love one another? **Search for these words and circle them:**

JOSEPH DAVID OBEY
GALILEE

W D I V A D Y R
G A L I L E E K
E R O P H E B S
O F H P E S O J
R E T E P N H O

JOSEPH

16

At that time Emperor Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the Roman Empire. When this first census took place, Quirinius was the governor of Syria. Everyone, then, went to register himself, each to his own hometown. —Luke 2:1-3

DECEMBER 17

Animals

Even the animals in the stable at Bethlehem helped during Jesus' birth. They gave up their manger (that's a fancy word for a feedbox) so that Jesus could sleep.

Activity

Draw a picture of a manger and put it near your dinner table for the rest of Advent. When you pray before your meals ask Jesus to be with you and your family. **Fill in the missing words below:**

Jesus was wrapped in _____
and laid in a _____
because there was no _____
in the _____.



The angel said to them, "Don't be afraid! I am here with good news for you, which will bring great joy to all the people. This very day in David's town your Savior was born—Christ the Lord!" —Luke 2:10-11

DECEMBER 18

Angel

“Good News! Great News!” the angel said. “Finally, after all of God’s planning Jesus is born. Bethlehem is ready, go and see!”



Activity

Have you ever had news so good it had to be shouted? Maybe it was a great report card, or going to Disneyland. List some great news that has happened to you:

ANGEL

18

She gave birth to her first son, wrapped him in cloths and laid him in a manger —there was no room for them to stay in the inn. —Luke 2:7

DECEMBER 19

Heavenly Party

A party! The angels had a party, with singing and shouting and praising. They were having a birthday party for Jesus! And they invited everyone!



Activity

Imagine a birthday party for Jesus. Who would be invited? Search for these names of people that were at Jesus' birth and circle them:

JOSEPH MARY MAGI
SHEPHERDS

S H E P H E R D S Y
M D J O S E P H R V
S K C N U I G A M O
P E O A P C M D I S
O K M A Y F O E O M

When the angels went away from them back 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." —Luke 2:15

DECEMBER 20

Shepherds

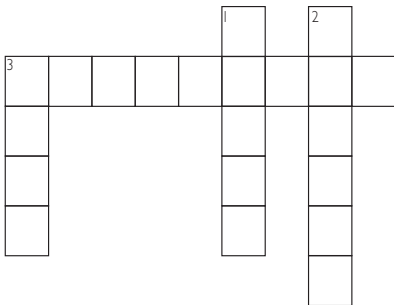
"Let's go to Bethlehem!" That's what the shepherds said. The Lord had given the shepherds exciting news. And God has told us something exciting too! Jesus is born!



Activity

Do this crossword:

1. _____, the Savior is born.
2. The angels went back here.
3. (across) "Let's go to_____."
3. (down) Jesus is_____!



SHEPHERDS

20

Suddenly a great army of heaven's angels appeared with the angel, singing praises to God: "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom he is pleased!" — Luke 2:13-14

DECEMBER 21

Wise Men

The Wise Men followed a star to Bethlehem. They had been told that the Savior had been born and came with gifts for the newborn Jesus.



Activity

Look at the stars tonight. Imagine what it was like for the wise men to follow the star to Bethlehem. **Unscramble** these words in today's Bible verse.

NIKG _____

RATS _____

WIES _____

ENM _____

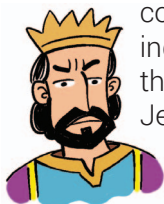
MELASUREJ _____

When King Herod heard about this, he was very upset, and so was everyone else in Jerusalem. He called together all the chief priests and the teachers of the Law and asked them, "Where will the Messiah be born?" "In the town of Bethlehem in Judea," they answered. —Matthew 2:3-5

DECEMBER 22

Herod

When King Herod heard about Jesus he was afraid. Herod thought that Jesus would be-



come king by declaring war. However, the angels said that Jesus would bring “peace on earth,” not war.

Activity

When you pray today call Jesus by one of his other names—the Prince of Peace. Search for these words and circle them:

HEROD, ANGELS, WAR,
PEACE

S L E G N A T D
Y O C X E C O F
P R A P H R W S
A H E C E K R I
J U P H G W A R

HEROD

22

Wise men came from the East to Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the baby born to be the king of the Jews? We saw his star when it came up in the east, and we have come to worship him.” —Matthew 2:1-2

DECEMBER 23

You

The good news that the angels brought was for all people—that includes you! That makes you part of the chain of people who point the way to Bethlehem and Jesus.



Activity

You are part of the chain that leads to Jesus. Who told you about Jesus? Whom will you tell about Jesus?

*O holy Child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in,
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
the great glad tidings tell:
Oh, come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Emmanuel!*

“This very day in David’s town your Savior was born—Christ the Lord!”
—Luke 2:11

YOU

DECEMBER 24

Jesus

Jesus is one of the last links in our chain. He is the reason we started on the road to Bethlehem. Jesus is born! God's promises always come true!



Activity

Do you recall all of the people on our chain? **Unscramble** some of the names you have seen:

OJCBA _____

HOEPSJ _____

CIMAH _____

MSEOS _____

URHT _____

JESUS

24

But the angel said to them, "Don't be afraid! I am here with good news for you, which will bring great joy to all the people."—Luke 2:10

DECEMBER 25

Emmanuel

This very special name for Jesus means "God is with us." It not only announced the birth of the baby Jesus but told everybody in the world the good news that God is with us. The word "Emmanuel" is also spelled "Immanuel" in some Bibles.



Activity for Today

Jesus has many names. Find and circle some of these names:

WONDERFUL, COUNSELOR,
MIGHTY, EVERLASTING, PRINCE

I C R K U Y Z H I X I
B J S F Y T H G I M D
G N I T S A L R E V E
R O L E S N U O C X T
P R I N C E C B X E Q
G F L U F R E D N O W
V P K R N G U V N I E

EMMANUEL

“A virgin will become pregnant and have a son, and he will be called Emmanuel” (which means, “God is with us”). —Matthew 1:23

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Refrain:

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.



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