

A vibrant, cartoon-style illustration of a nativity scene. In the center, baby Jesus lies in a wooden manger filled with yellow straw, wearing a blue robe and a glowing yellow halo. Mary, in a blue robe and white veil, and Joseph, in a blue robe, stand behind the manger, looking at the baby with joyful expressions. Several sheep, some white and some brown, are gathered around the manger. In the background, a town with red-roofed buildings is nestled on a hillside under a dark blue night sky filled with stars. A bright, multi-pointed star shines prominently in the upper right corner. A palm tree is visible on the left side of the image.

# Advent† BRINGS Joy

Daily Activities for Advent

# introduction . . . . .

## What is JOY?

Advent is a special time to get ready for Christmas—but not just with lights, presents, or cookies. We're getting our hearts ready too. This book will help you do that!

You might think joy means being happy or having fun—and that's part of it! But real joy is something even better. Joy is what you feel when you know you're doing what's right. It's the goodness inside you when you love God, help others, and take care of yourself.

That's why this book is all about **JOY**:

**J** is for Jesus

**O** is for Others

**Y** is for You

Each day during Advent, you'll learn something simple you can do to love Jesus, care for others, and be kind to yourself. That's what brings real joy—the kind that lasts longer than any gift under the tree!

Let's get started. Christmas is coming—and so is JOY!

### Activity...

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](http://www.usccb.org/bible)** (From that link, you can find any book or verse of the New American Bible!)



### 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!

**(see samples below)**



# 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

favor

Jesus

behold

Gabriel

son

God

name

Angel

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

**Can you find them in the Bible?**

Look at Luke 1:30-31.

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



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

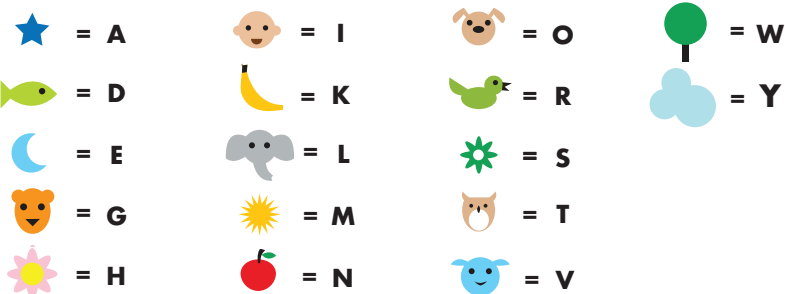


## December 2

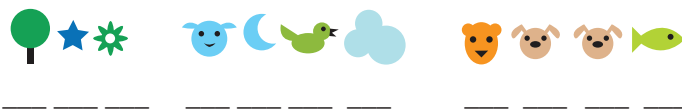
The morning stars sang together and  
all the sons of God shouted for joy. – Job 38:7

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?



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.

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 to the right with three good things you know about yourself—who you are, what you like to do, and what you like about yourself.



Cut out an angel to glue to your picture.

### **GOOD NEWS ABOUT ME!**

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## 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!

### Activity...

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?** \_\_\_\_\_

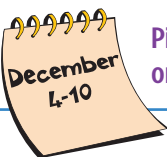
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**How do you choose when to go outside instead of spending more time with a screen?** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**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:** \_\_\_\_\_

### 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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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.

## December 5

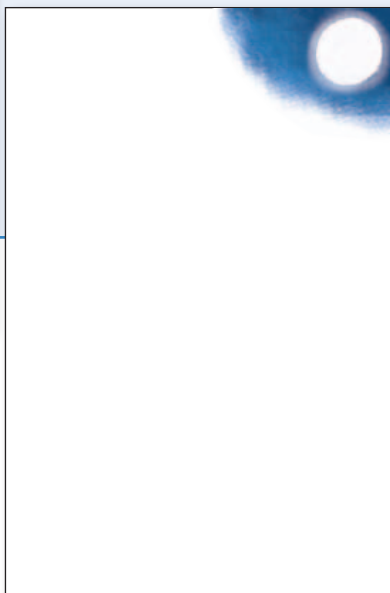
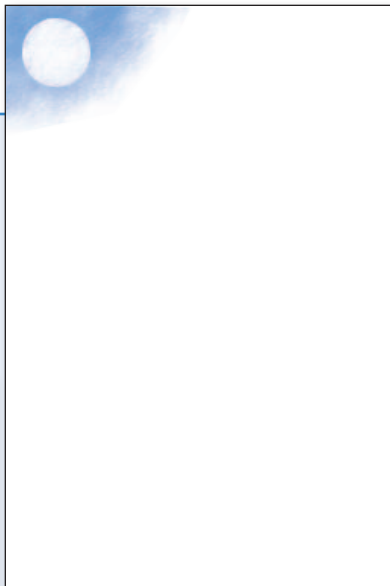
They cheer and sing for joy.

—Psalm 65:14

Jesus, Others, You: that makes  
JOY! What would you do on your  
best day alone?

### Activity...

Fill in the cartoon blocks 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?



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...

What could change the first picture on the left for the better picture on the right? Draw or write your answer in the space below.



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?

**List 3 things that will make this Christmas a good Christmas.**

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### 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?**



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 above 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.**



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: [Jesustrail.com](http://Jesustrail.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?**



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 start by learning to love the people who love and care for us—like our family and friends. Jesus is the

best teacher of love, and he helps us grow in kindness every day. As we get better at loving, we learn to care for people we don't know. And even though it's hard, with Jesus' help, we can learn to love people who are unkind to us.

### 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.

My mom gets me to soccer on time. My dad makes us both pizza later.

My grandpa makes me laugh. My teacher makes me feel smart, not dumb.

I can tell my best friend anything and he always listens. He likes to play my favorite game, too.



**Can you add 2 ideas of your own?**

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

## December II

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

Take a look back to December 4.  
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:

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## December 12, our Lady of Guadalupe

My spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

—Luke 1:47


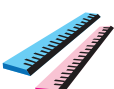






There are special days for our Mother Mary during Advent. December 8th is a great feast in honor of her Immaculate Conception. But North Americans—those who live in the United States or Mexico or other parts of North America can celebrate with special affection her appearance to the poor man Juan of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



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

Answer: 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

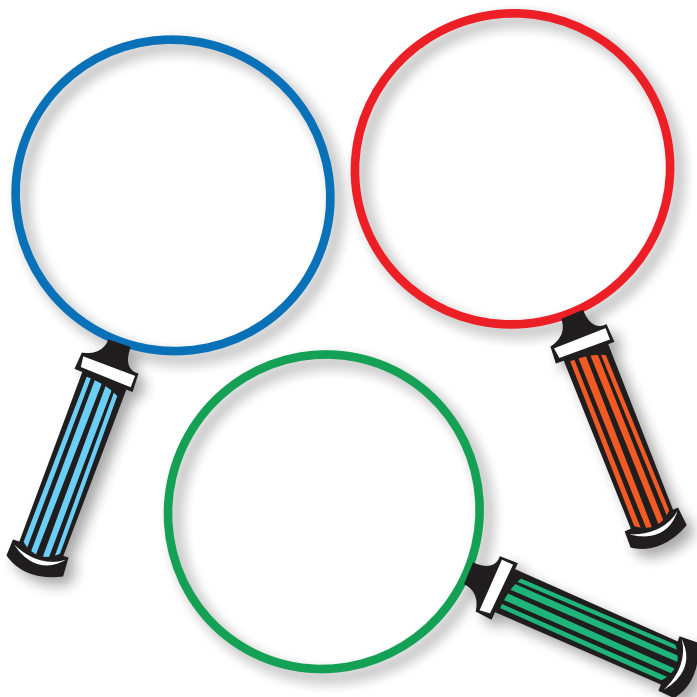
**The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy,  
peace, patience, kindness... –Galatians 5:22**

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!



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.



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. 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:**

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

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

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### 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:**

    E      
22   14   14   26   13   6   22   15

**Messiah**  
**Light of the world**  
**Prince of peace**  
**Son of God**  
**Emmanuel**



Which of these names above listed for Jesus is your favorite? Can you add the name to your picture creche?



## December 16

**Prepare the way of the Lord.**  
—Luke 3:4

What does the word **prepare** mean? It means to do what we have to do to get ready! What do you think Mary and Joseph did to get ready for

baby Jesus? (Ask a grownup what they did to get ready for you!)

Right now many of us prepare (or get ready) for Christmas.

**What does your family do to get ready for Christmas?**

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Add one way your family is getting ready for Christmas 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.**

**Clue:** Who talks to Mary in *Luke 1:30*?

gnale= a \_ \_ \_ \_

**Clue:** Whose throne did God give in *Luke 1:32*?

vaiDd= \_ \_ \_ \_

**Clue:** What will be filled in *Luke 3:5*?

leavly=  \_ \_ \_ \_

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

esJus=  \_ \_ \_ \_

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

zNhaatre=  
 \_ \_ \_ \_

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

f+niian= \_ \_ \_ \_

**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!

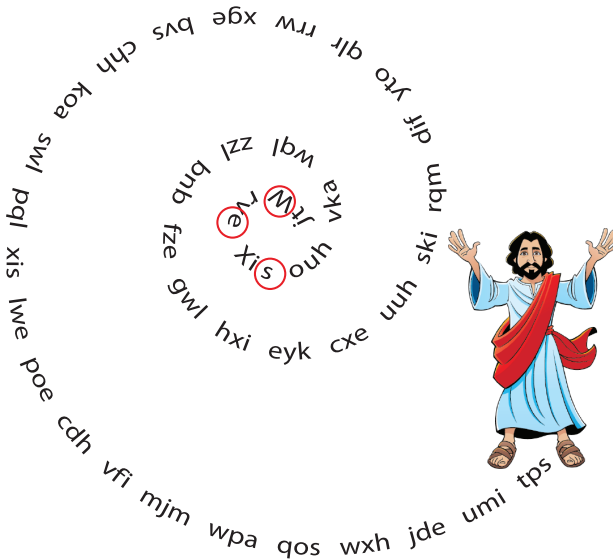
Why does coming close to Jesus bring joy to us and others? Because when we come close to Jesus, we

become more like Jesus. We become the men and women, the boys and girls, that God wants us to be.

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?

### Activity...

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*.



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 4 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 and put it 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:

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## 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 above. With Jesus in the picture, how many things are different! Can you spot these differences?

Use your Bible to answer the questions below:

- **1. What was the problem they faced?** (See Luke 9:13)

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- **2. How many people were hungry?** (See Luke 9:14)

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- **3. How does Jesus help?** (See Luke 9:16)

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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?

Answer: 1. Not enough food. 2. About 5000. 3. Jesus blessed the food and it fed everyone.



## 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?**

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

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- **Does anyone seem to need help today?**

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

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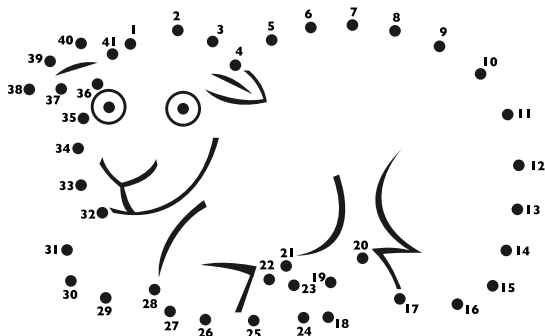
We know God always listens to us when we pray. Can you write a prayer word or sentence on your picture creche?

## December 21

Here is your God!  
—Isaiah 40:9

### Activity...

Connect the dots in the picture below! What did you find?



Now write the first 7 words from *Isaiah 40:11*. Those words tell us how Jesus cares for all God's people.

“ Like

- 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?



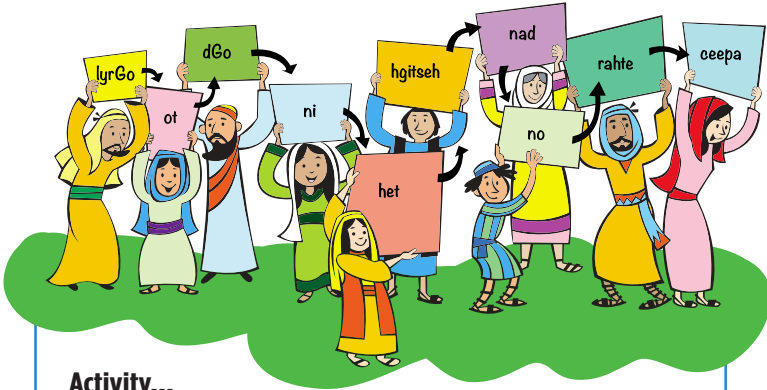
Add a picture of Jesus or Others or You caring to your picture creche! We are almost there: Christmas JOY!

## 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 unscramble the words and put them in order to hear what the angels sing?

See *Luke 2:14* for clues!

Glory

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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.

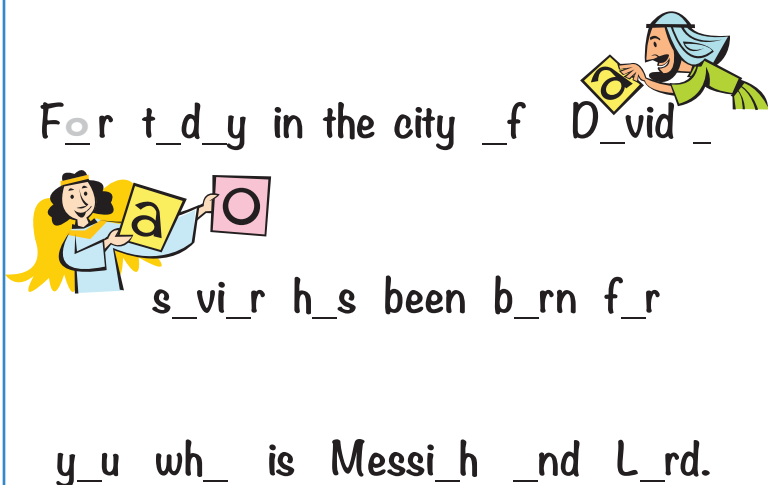
### Activity...

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\_o\_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.



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

## December 24

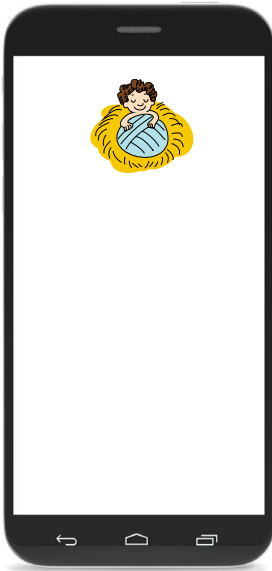
**You will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes.**  
—Luke 2:12

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 text 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.



Make a box of straw to be a bed for baby Jesus and add it to your picture creche.

## 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?**

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

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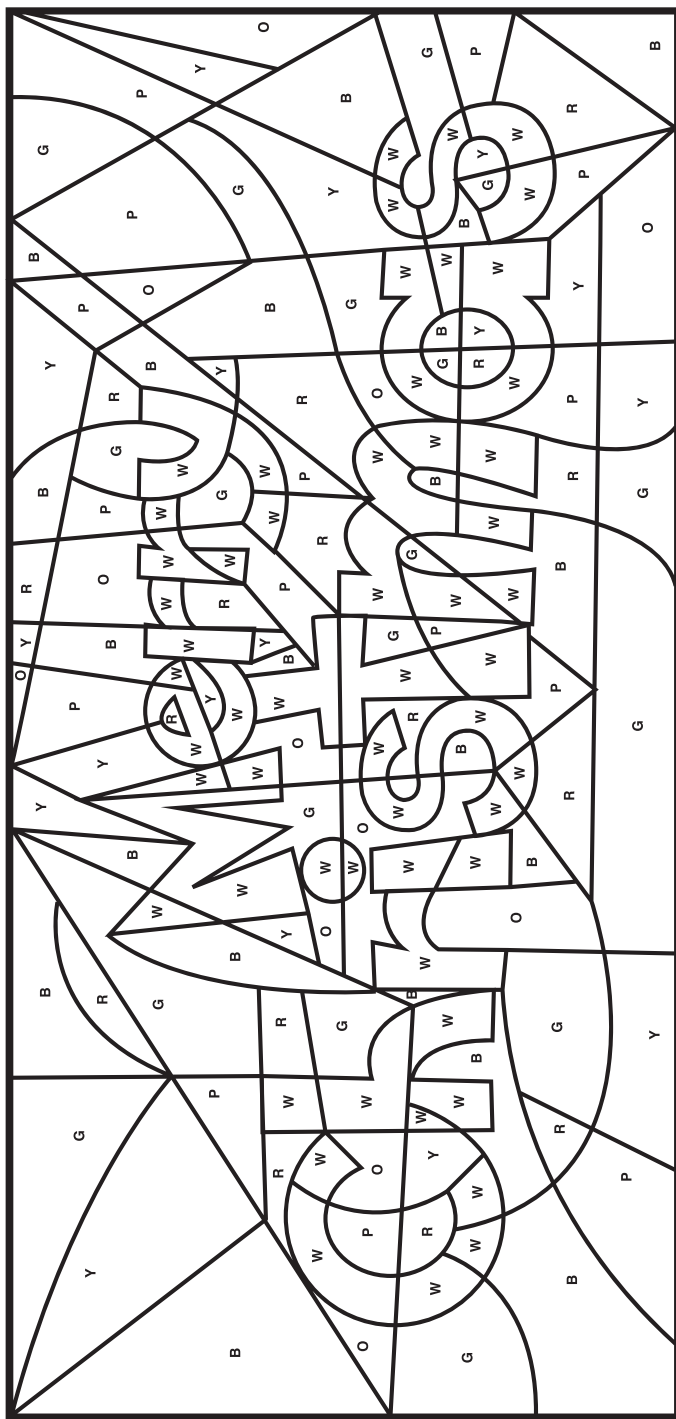
- **Look back at the plan you made on December 18.**  
**Can you give Christmas joy to JESUS today?**

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**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!**



**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

# Silent Night

Silent night, holy night  
All is calm, all is bright  
Round yon Virgin, Mother and Child  
Holy Infant so tender and mild  
Sleep in heavenly peace  
Sleep in heavenly peace

Silent night, holy night  
Shepherds quake at the sight  
Glories stream from heaven afar  
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia  
Christ the Savior is born  
Christ the Savior is born

Silent night, holy night  
Son of God, love's pure light  
Radiant beams from Thy holy face  
With the dawn of redeeming grace  
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth  
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth

