

CELEBRATING JESUS

This month we are celebrating Jesus, and we are praising him for what he has done for us. Jesus came to Earth so that we could learn more about God and build a relationship with him, and he gave his life so that we can spend eternity with God.



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Using your Bible, follow this 7-day reading plan to learn more about the events that took place leading up, during, and after Jesus's birth.

ADVENT

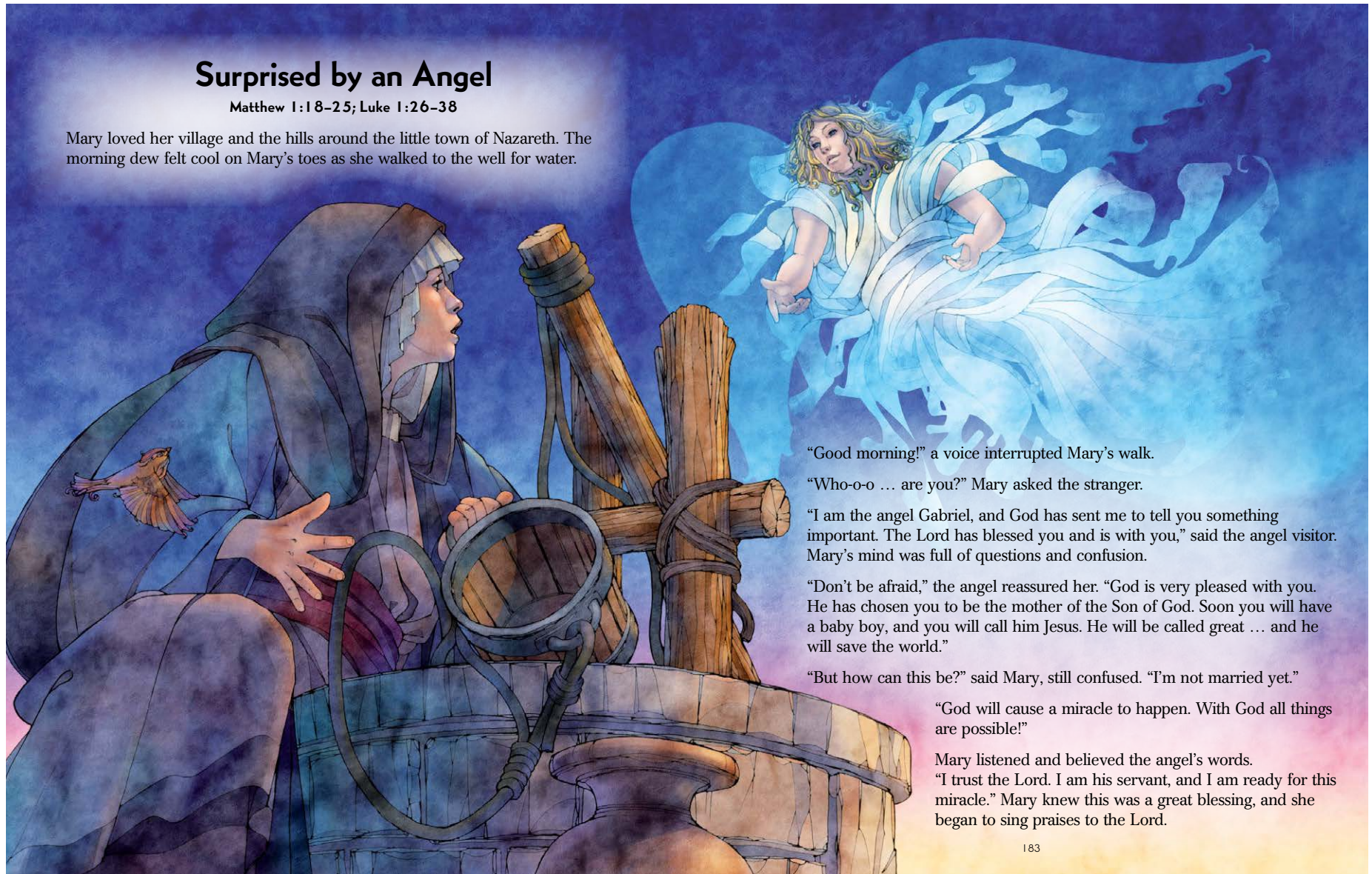
- DAY 1 Isaiah 7:14 & Isaiah 11:1-11 **Prophecy of Jesus**
- DAY 2 Luke 1:1-25 **Birth of John the Baptist Foretold**
- DAY 3 Luke 1:26-38 **Birth of Jesus Foretold**
- DAY 4 Luke 2:1-21 **Birth of Jesus**
- DAY 5 Luke 2:22-40 **Jesus Presented at the Temple**
- DAY 6 Matthew 2 **Wise Men Visit Jesus**
- DAY 7 Luke 2:41-52 **Boy Jesus at the Temple**

This is the story of how an angel told Mary that she would become the mother of Jesus our Savior.

Surprised by an Angel

Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38

Mary loved her village and the hills around the little town of Nazareth. The morning dew felt cool on Mary's toes as she walked to the well for water.



“Good morning!” a voice interrupted Mary’s walk.

“Who-o-o ... are you?” Mary asked the stranger.

“I am the angel Gabriel, and God has sent me to tell you something important. The Lord has blessed you and is with you,” said the angel visitor. Mary’s mind was full of questions and confusion.

“Don’t be afraid,” the angel reassured her. “God is very pleased with you. He has chosen you to be the mother of the Son of God. Soon you will have a baby boy, and you will call him Jesus. He will be called great ... and he will save the world.”

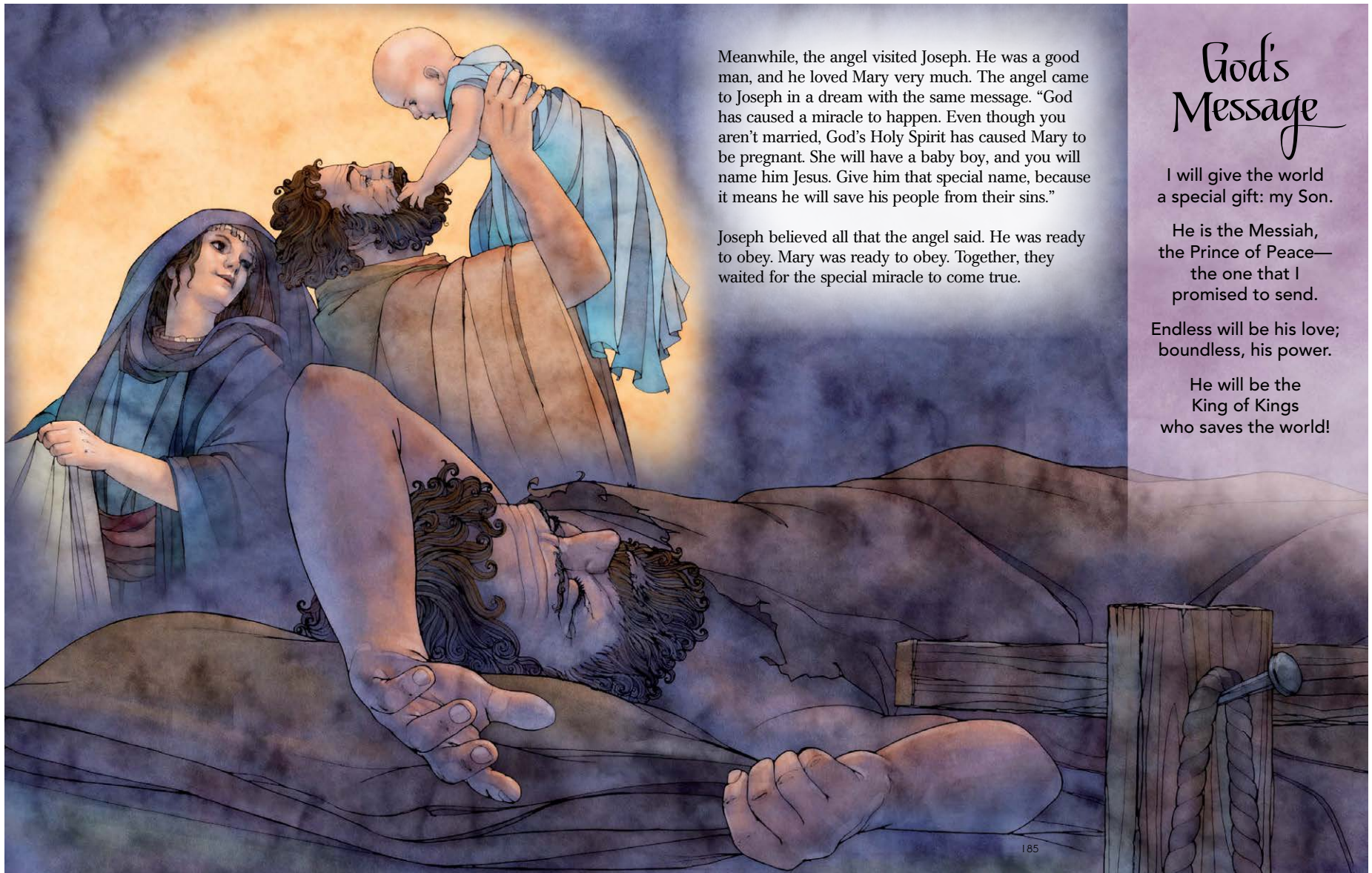
“But how can this be?” said Mary, still confused. “I’m not married yet.”

“God will cause a miracle to happen. With God all things are possible!”

Mary listened and believed the angel’s words.

“I trust the Lord. I am his servant, and I am ready for this miracle.” Mary knew this was a great blessing, and she began to sing praises to the Lord.

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Meanwhile, the angel visited Joseph. He was a good man, and he loved Mary very much. The angel came to Joseph in a dream with the same message. “God has caused a miracle to happen. Even though you aren’t married, God’s Holy Spirit has caused Mary to be pregnant. She will have a baby boy, and you will name him Jesus. Give him that special name, because it means he will save his people from their sins.”

Joseph believed all that the angel said. He was ready to obey. Mary was ready to obey. Together, they waited for the special miracle to come true.

God's Message

I will give the world
a special gift: my Son.

He is the Messiah,
the Prince of Peace—
the one that I
promised to send.

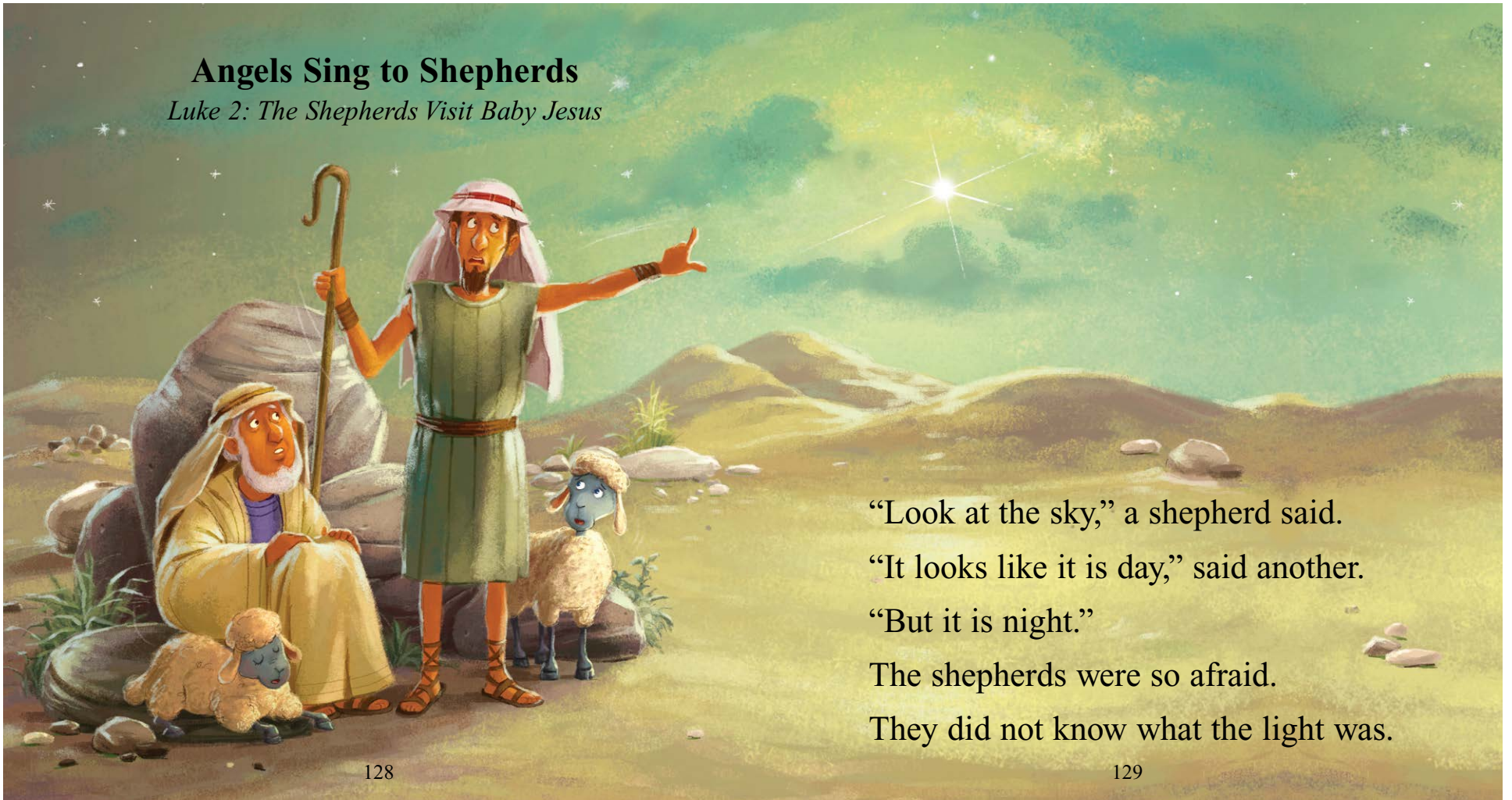
Endless will be his love;
boundless, his power.

He will be the
King of Kings
who saves the world!

This story tells us about the first people who were told about Jesus' birth and how they reacted to the news.

Angels Sing to Shepherds

Luke 2: The Shepherds Visit Baby Jesus



“Look at the sky,” a shepherd said.

“It looks like it is day,” said another.

“But it is night.”

The shepherds were so afraid.

They did not know what the light was.



“Don’t be afraid,” an angel said.
“I have something to tell you.
There is a new baby in town.
You should go see him.
He is God’s Son.”

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Then more angels came.
They filled the sky.
The angels sang about God.
Then they went away.

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“Let’s go into town,” the shepherds said.
 “Let’s go see God’s Son.”
 The shepherds ran into town.
 They found baby Jesus in a barn.

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The shepherds were so happy
 to see God’s Son!
 They wanted to tell others about Jesus.
 They told all the people they could find.

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Read John 3:16-18 from your Bible before reading this devotional, which teaches us about the gift God has given us through Jesus.

JOHN 4

1303

Jesus Talks With a Woman From Samaria

4 Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard about him. They had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John. ²But in fact Jesus was not baptizing. His disciples were. ³So Jesus left Judea and went back again to Galilee.

⁴Jesus had to go through Samaria. ⁵He came to a town in Samaria called Sychar. It was near the piece of land Jacob had given his son Joseph. ⁶Jacob's well was there. Jesus was tired from the journey. So he sat down by the well. It was about noon.

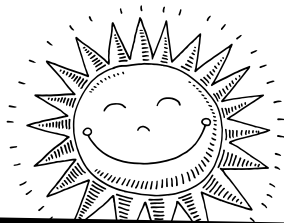
⁷A woman from Samaria came to get

some water. Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" ⁸His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.

⁹The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew. I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" She said this because Jews don't have anything to do with Samaritans.

¹⁰Jesus answered her, "You do not know what God's gift is. And you do not know who is asking you for a drink. If you did, you would have asked him. He would have given you living water."

¹¹"Sir," the woman said, "you don't have anything to get water with. The well is deep. Where can you get this living water?" ¹²Our father Jacob gave us



MONDAY

"God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life" (John 3:16).

TODAY'S BIBLE READING: John 3:16–18

OPEN YOUR PRESENT

It's Christmas. Your dad wraps up a big present and puts it in front of you. You look at the present. You pick it up and rattle it. Then you shake your head. "No, I don't want it, Dad," you say. "Take it back."

Would you ever refuse a gift? That would be crazy!

Your heavenly Father has a great Christmas present for you too. But you can't just pick it up and shake it. You have to open it. You have to accept it.

That present is Jesus. He is the best Christmas present ever. Will you believe in him? Will you open up your heart and let him in?

Open your present from God—today!

I have read this devotion.

For your next reading, turn to page 1307. If you want to read more, see 1 John 4:7–12 on page 1564.

ASK

YOURSELF

What did God give to you?
Will you accept God's gift to you?

This devotional and activity reminds us to always search for Jesus, just as the Wise Men searched for him using the star God placed in the sky.



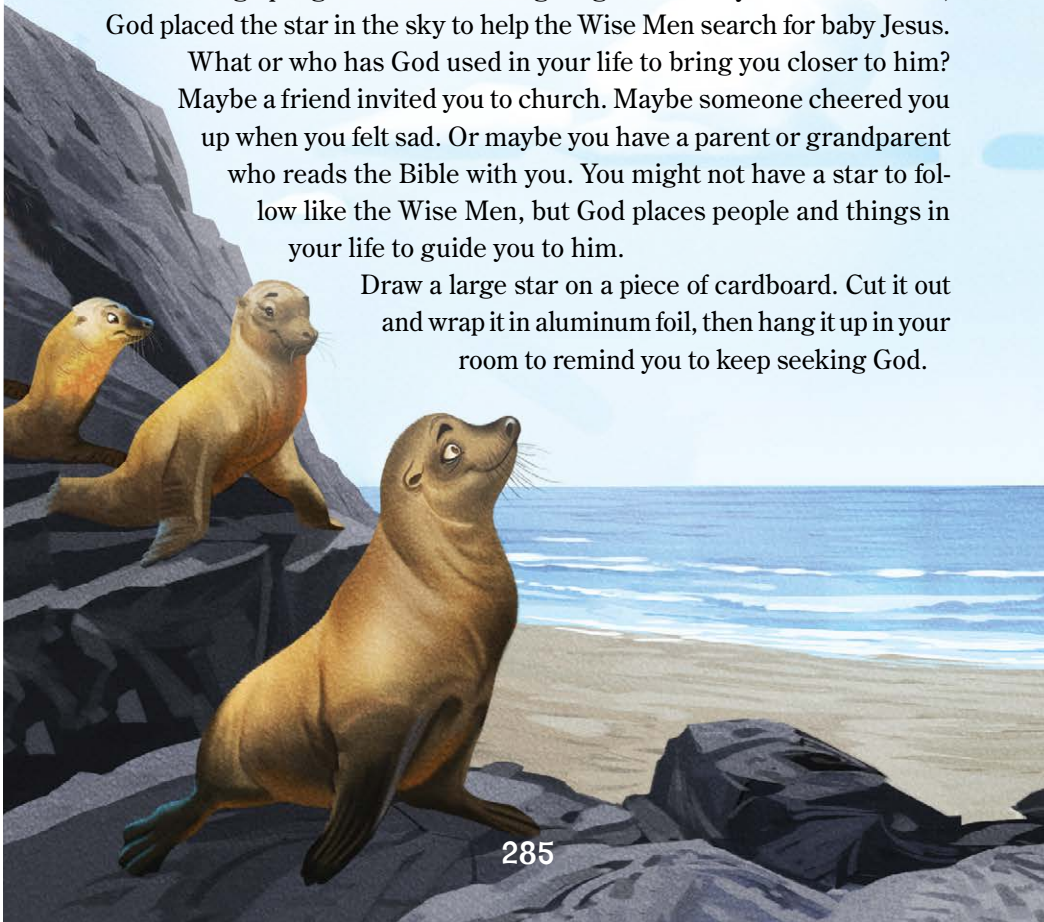
When They saw The star, They were filled with joy. The Wise Men went To The house. There They saw The child with his mother Mary. They bowed down and worshiped him.

—MATTHEW 2:10-11A

Have you ever wondered about the star the Wise Men followed to find baby Jesus? Scientists think it could have been a comet or a supernova, which is an explosion in the sky that slowly fades from sight over several weeks or months. The star could also have been the planets Jupiter and Venus lining up together to form a bright light in the sky. Whatever it was, God placed the star in the sky to help the Wise Men search for baby Jesus.

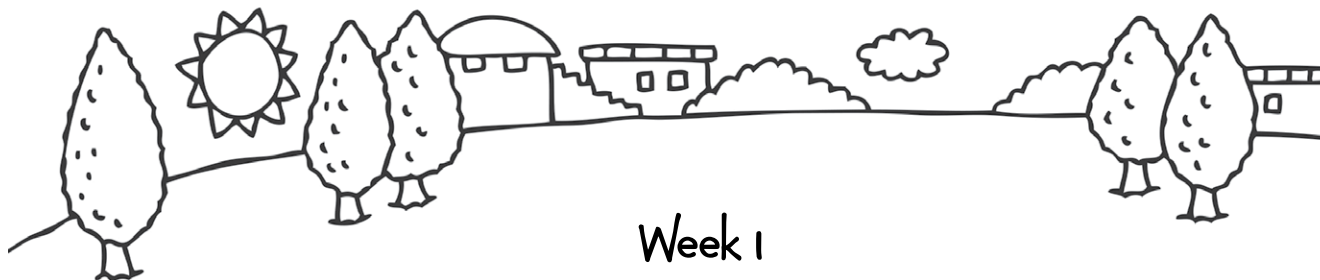
What or who has God used in your life to bring you closer to him? Maybe a friend invited you to church. Maybe someone cheered you up when you felt sad. Or maybe you have a parent or grandparent who reads the Bible with you. You might not have a star to follow like the Wise Men, but God places people and things in your life to guide you to him.

Draw a large star on a piece of cardboard. Cut it out and wrap it in aluminum foil, then hang it up in your room to remind you to keep seeking God.



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Mary obeys the message from God and Jesus was born.



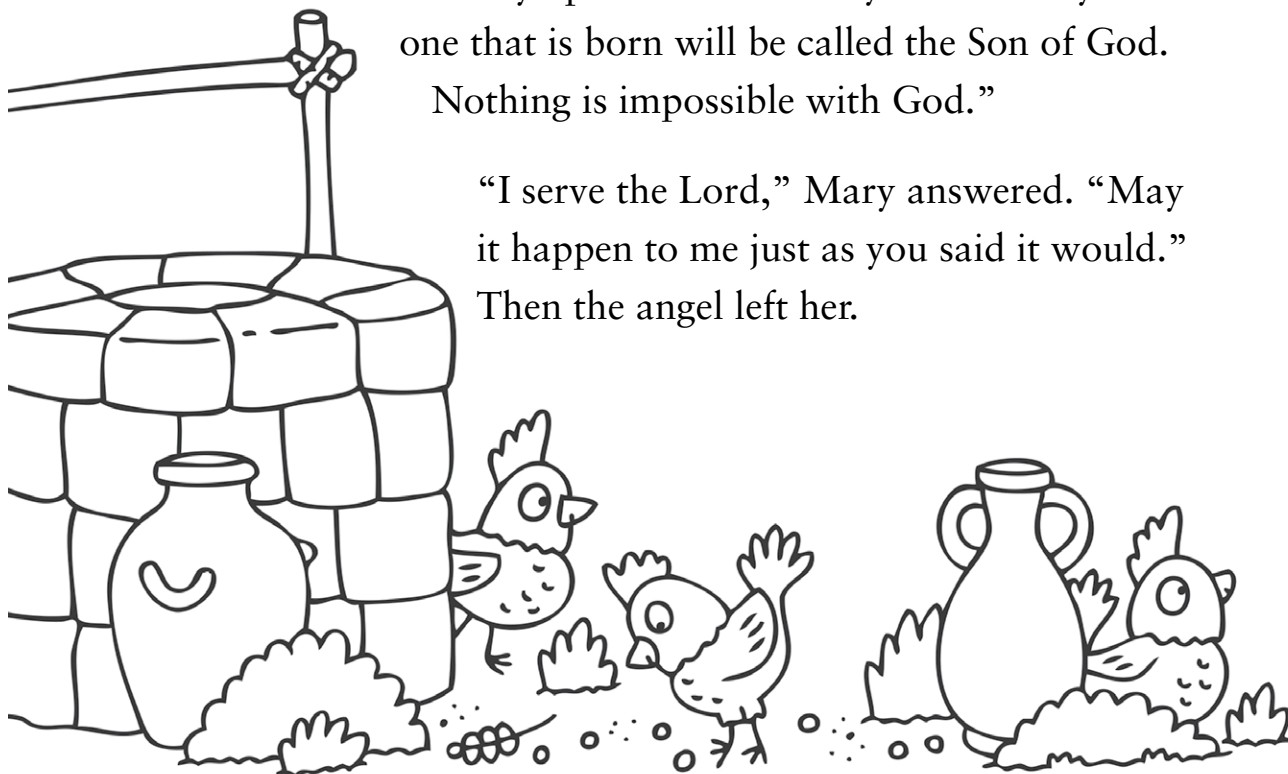
Week 1

Angel Visits Mary and Jesus is Born

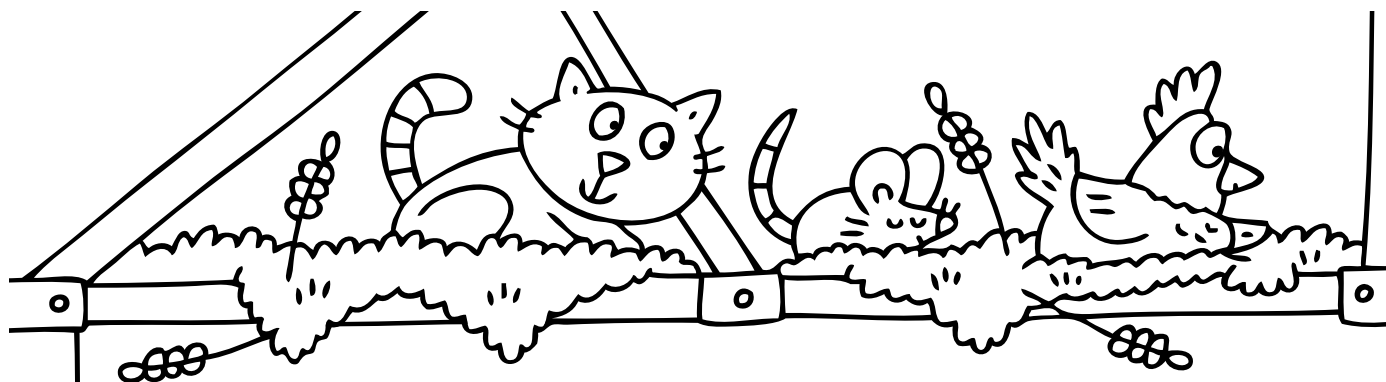
God sent the angel Gabriel to a virgin. The girl was engaged to a man named Joseph. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel said, "The Lord is with you." Mary was very upset. But the angel said, "Do not be afraid, Mary. God is pleased with you. You will give birth to a son. You must name him Jesus."

"How can this happen?" Mary asked. The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come to you. The holy one that is born will be called the Son of God. Nothing is impossible with God."

"I serve the Lord," Mary answered. "May it happen to me just as you said it would." Then the angel left her.





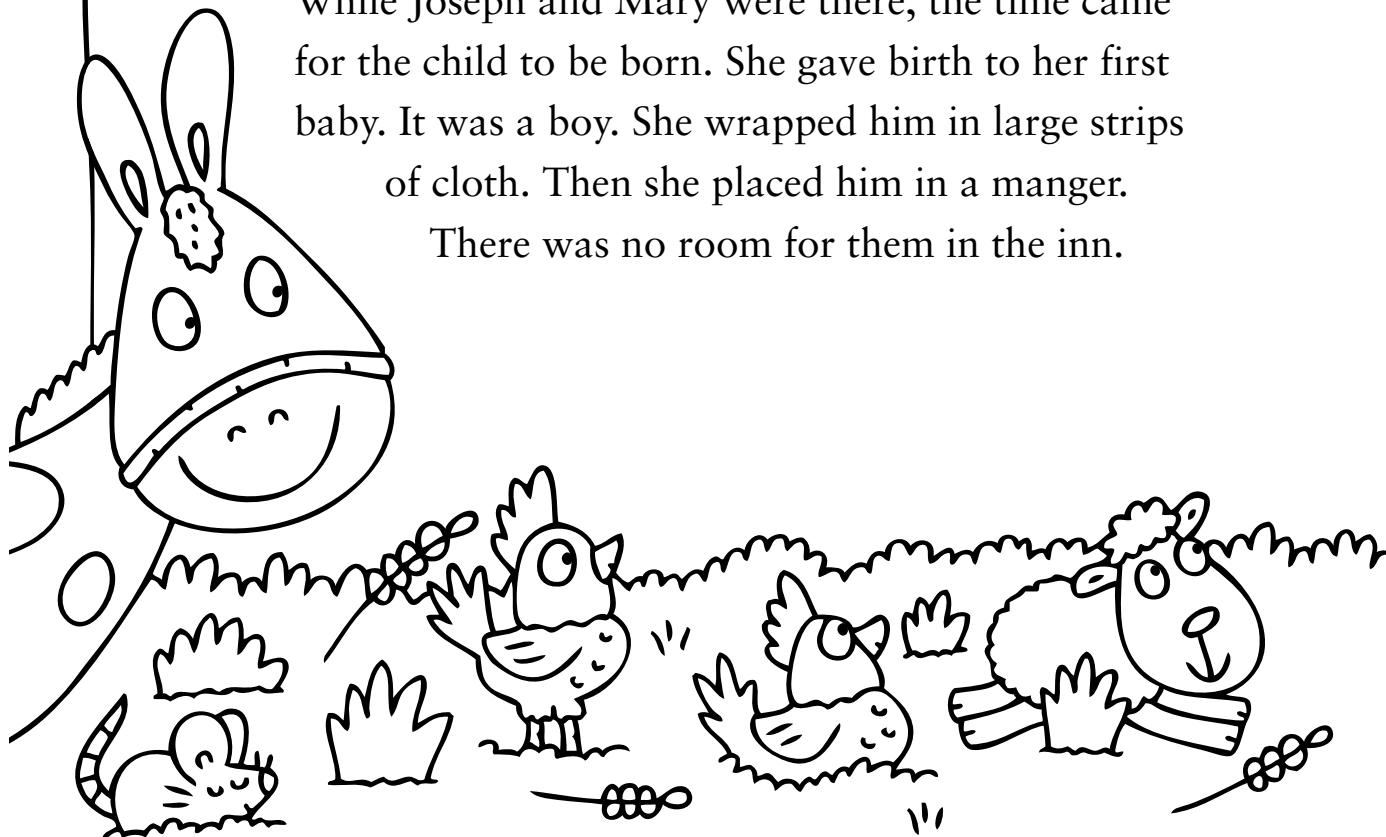


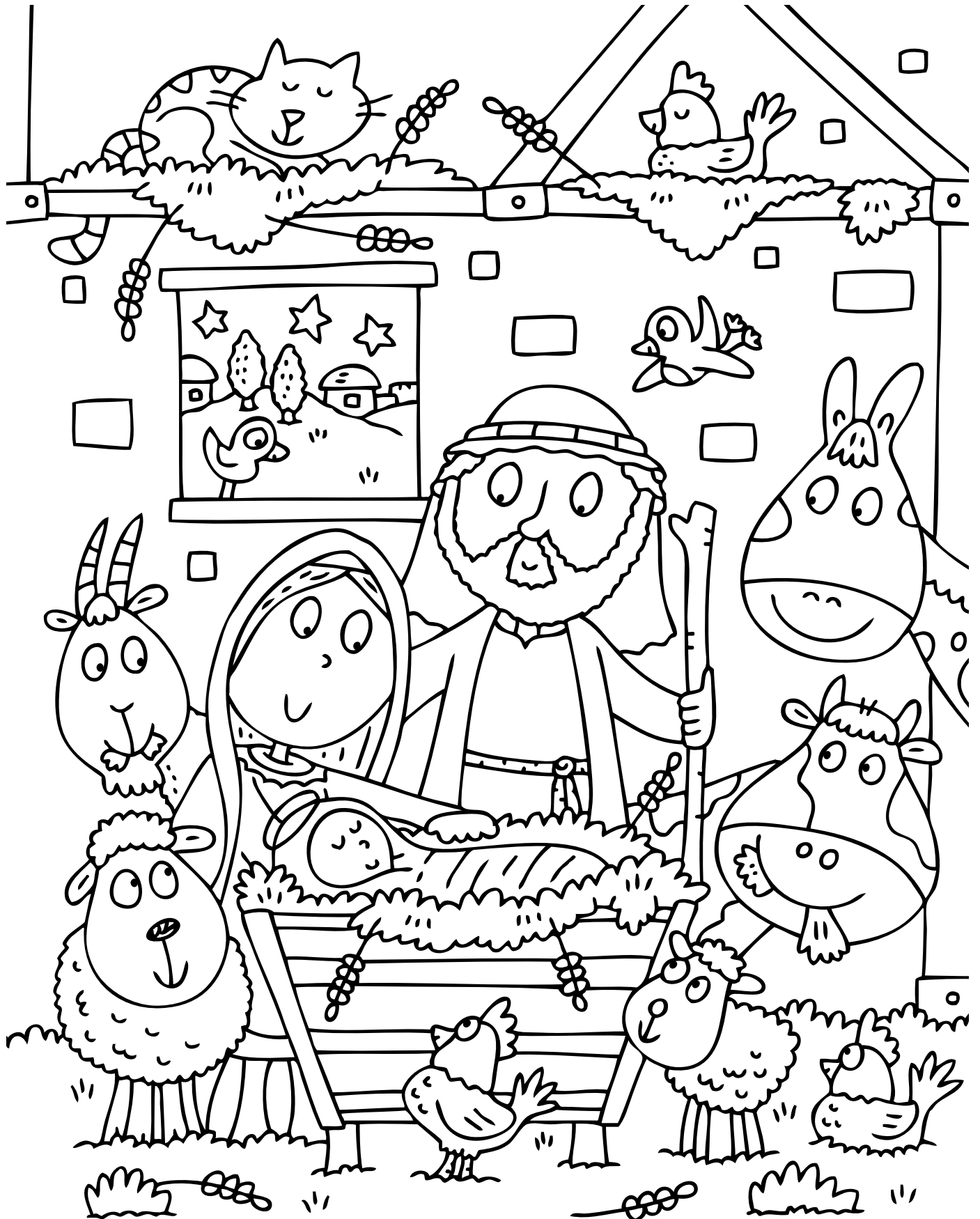
Caesar Augustus required that a list be made of everyone in the whole Roman world. All went to their own towns to be listed.

Joseph went to Bethlehem, the town of David. He went there with Mary. Mary was engaged to him. She was expecting a baby.

While Joseph and Mary were there, the time came for the child to be born. She gave birth to her first baby. It was a boy. She wrapped him in large strips of cloth. Then she placed him in a manger.

There was no room for them in the inn.





Why did Jesus come to us, and why is he special? This section features a devotion and activities that help us understand the importance of Jesus' life and what he did for us.

Week 46, Day 1

Read About It

God gives us joy no matter how bad things get.



PHILIPPIANS


When the school year is almost over, don't you look forward to summer vacation? Maybe you and your family will travel somewhere. Maybe you'll be able to go to the beach or to the pool. You'll be able to hang out with your friends. You know it's going to be great! But until the school year is over you still have homework to finish. And you still have to go to school. All of that can be hard work! But even while you're working hard in school, you know that summer vacation is still coming! That makes the work not so hard.

That's like what the apostle Paul is telling the believers in this letter to the Philippians. He tells them that they might have to do things that are hard. People might be mean to them just because they believe in Jesus. They might even be put in prison just like Paul was. But Paul tells the believers that they can still have joy. They can have joy even while all of those hard things are happening to them! That's because God's promises to them are true. They are his children no matter how bad things get. And you are God's child too when you believe in Jesus. He has wonderful things in store for you in the future! Remembering that can help you during hard times.

What kind of work feels hard to you? What kind of work gives you joy?

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LUKE **Week 39, Day 2**
Think About It

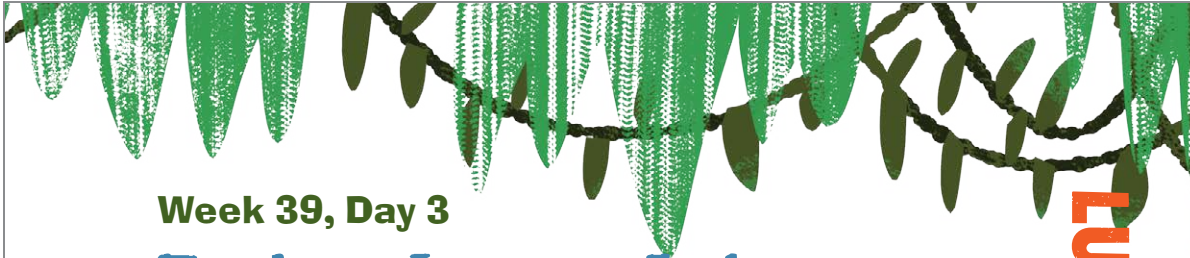
Each line in the activity below has several words in it. Only one of the words in each line is found in a sentence in Luke 19:10. When you think you have found the word, put a circle around it. Then write it on the lines below. When you have the right words, the sentence will tell you what Jesus came to do.

1. thethenthattaskturnstake (3 letters)
2. servesavesongsonsuresoup (3 letters)
3. adgotooofmymeman (2 letters)
4. moomarkmassmanmore (3 letters)
5. camecorecratecraft (4 letters)
6. onoveruptoinatmake (2 letters)
7. lamelakeslooklastlives (4 letters)
8. foldfactfunfumefer (3 letters)
9. thatthethistherethose (3 letters)
10. lostlastleastliveleftlead (4 letters)
11. awayactaddandaidealso (3 letters)
12. sickssadssupersavesacksink (4 letters)
13. thosethesethemtheirthishat (4 letters)

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ANSWER KEY The Son of Man came to look for the lost and save them. (Luke 19:10 NIRV)



Week 39, Day 3

Finding Jesus in Luke

LUKE

What Luke wanted us to know about Jesus is clear. Jesus is the cure for sin! That's because Jesus was the only human being who wasn't infected by sin. So only Jesus could seek out sin and save people from it. Jesus died to provide the final cure for sin. And his cure is so effective not even death has power over him! And death has no power over those who believe in him either!

When we believe in Jesus, he makes us spiritually healthy again! And Jesus brings his cure for sin into every part of our lives. He brings it to our thoughts, our feelings, and our actions. Anyone who believes in Jesus will receive this cure for their sin. Our relationships with God and with one another can be healthy again. All we have to do is ask Jesus for the cure!

Think of some things that need to be cured in your life. Write these things on the lines next to Hearty's doctor bag. These are all the things that Jesus will cure in your life.

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LUKE

Week 39, Day 4

Write About It

Jesus came to save people from the sickness of sin. It doesn't matter who you are or what you've done! When you are sorry for your sin and believe in Jesus, he will cure you! Then you will have a healthy relationship with God again! Write how knowing this makes you feel.

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.....

Luke 15:10 says, "There is joy in heaven over one sinner who turns away from sin." That happens when a person believes in Jesus and receives the cure for their sin. They're spiritually healthy again. There's a celebration in heaven! Write how knowing that makes you feel.

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Week 39, Day 5

Pray About It

LUKE

Dear God,

You are so great and powerful. You have power and authority over everything. Thank you that your son, Jesus, came to seek and to save what was lost. He gave his life to provide a cure for my sin and to give me new life. Thank you so much for saving me and giving me that new life. Now I know that my relationship with you is healthy again! I pray this because I believe in Jesus.

Amen.

Study the words from Luke 5:31–32. Try to memorize these words that Jesus said. Maybe put the words to music. Or write the words over and over to help you remember them.



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LUKE

Week 39, Day 6

Do Something About It

Jesus came to seek and to save what was lost! This activity is a treasure hunt that you will design. You will be the guide and give the clues. First you need to make the treasure. Write Luke 19:10 (written below) on a piece of paper. Wrap this paper around your favorite piece of candy or other fun surprise. Decide where you'll hide the treasure. Put it there while no one is looking.

Now make a map for each treasure hunter. The map should have at least five clues to solve before the treasure can be found. The clues should lead the treasure hunters to several places indoors and outdoors. Include at least one place that's hard to get to.

The hunt is over when someone finds the treasure. That person gets to read the verse and keep the treasure. But then celebrate with everybody. The celebration will remind you of the celebration in heaven when someone finds Jesus.

"The Son of Man came to look for the lost and save them."

—LUKE 19:10



In this activity, you'll create ornaments to hang on your Christmas tree to celebrate Jesus' birth.

CHRISTMAS TREE ORNAMENTS

STUFF YOU NEED:

- Clear glass ornaments (or plastic if you can find some that have removable tops)
- Bottles or tubes of acrylic paint (CAUTION: have children wear old clothes and smocks as this paint will stain)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Carefully remove the top of the ornament. Pull the top off a little. Then pinch the two wires together to pull the top the rest of the way off.
2. Let children pick out their paint colors. Two or three usually work best.
3. Let child squeeze paint in the ornament. You can add all of the colors at once because the paint won't mix.
4. Have children turn the ornaments being careful not to turn them completely upside down so the paint can spill out. Keep turning until paint covers the entire inside of the ornaments.
5. Let the paint dry for an hour or so before putting the top back on the ornaments for your children.

The shepherds were the first to hear the news of Jesus' birth, and they couldn't wait to see their new King and to tell others about him. This fun activity reminds us that we should also be excited to share the news of Jesus.

MARBLE MANGER RELAY

STUFF YOU NEED:

- Six or more people
- Marbles
- Construction paper (one sheet per person)
- Masking tape

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Use the masking tape to mark start and finish lines across the room from each other.
2. Split the group into 2 or more groups with each group having at least 3 people.
3. Give each player a sheet of construction paper.
4. Show how to fold the paper in half lengthwise two times to create a crevice that looks like a manger.
5. Remind children that in the Bible story (Luke 2:8-20), the angels brought good news to the shepherds, the shepherds ran off to Bethlehem to see the good news—Jesus in the manger—and then the shepherds told everyone they could find about the good news of a Savior. Your job is to pass the good news (the marble) across the room by rolling it from one manger to another.
6. Players stand next to each other, feet touching, and pass the marble from his manger to the next person's manger.
7. Once a player passes the marble from his manger to the next person's manger, he or she can run to the head of the line and be ready to receive it, then pass it again.
8. If someone loses control of the marble and it falls to the floor, everyone on that team goes back to the start line.
9. The first team to make it to the finish line, wins!

This activity reminds us that Jesus came to earth as both God and a human being so that he could die for our salvation.



JOHN

Week 40, Day 2

Think About It

In the gospel of John, we learn that Jesus is two things at the same time.

There are two words given at the beginning of each sentence below. These words are examples of things that can be two things at the same time. These two words are somewhere in the sentence that follows them. When you find the two words, underline or highlight them. You'll have to search because they might be parts of other words.

- brother/son Hey bro, the room is on fire!
- mother/wife She sold him other flowers for his wife.
- star/sun He never spreads his tar on Sunday.
- sister/friend My sis terrifies her friendships.
- parent/teacher Apparently, the feet of Kate ache really badly.
- dirt/mud His dirty hands smudged the window.
- tomato/fruit I saw Tom at one of the fruit stands.
- seat/chair By the sea, the beach air was salty.
- dad/farmer He purchased a dog from a far merchant.



ANSWER KEY

John, Think About It

on page 21

Hey bro, the room is on fire!
She sold him other flowers for
his wife.

He never spreads his tar on
Sunday.

My sis terrifies her friendships.
Apparently, the feet of
Kate ache really badly.

His dirty hands smudged the
window.

I saw Tom at one of the fruit
stands.

By the sea, the beach air was
salty.

He purchased a dog from a far
merchant.

Read about the birth of Jesus in Luke 1:26—2:20 and Matthew 1:18—2:12.
Then complete this word search about the nativity story.

THE NATIVITY STORY

Can you find all the words in this word search?

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

Jesus
 Shepherds
 Manger
 Star
 Gold

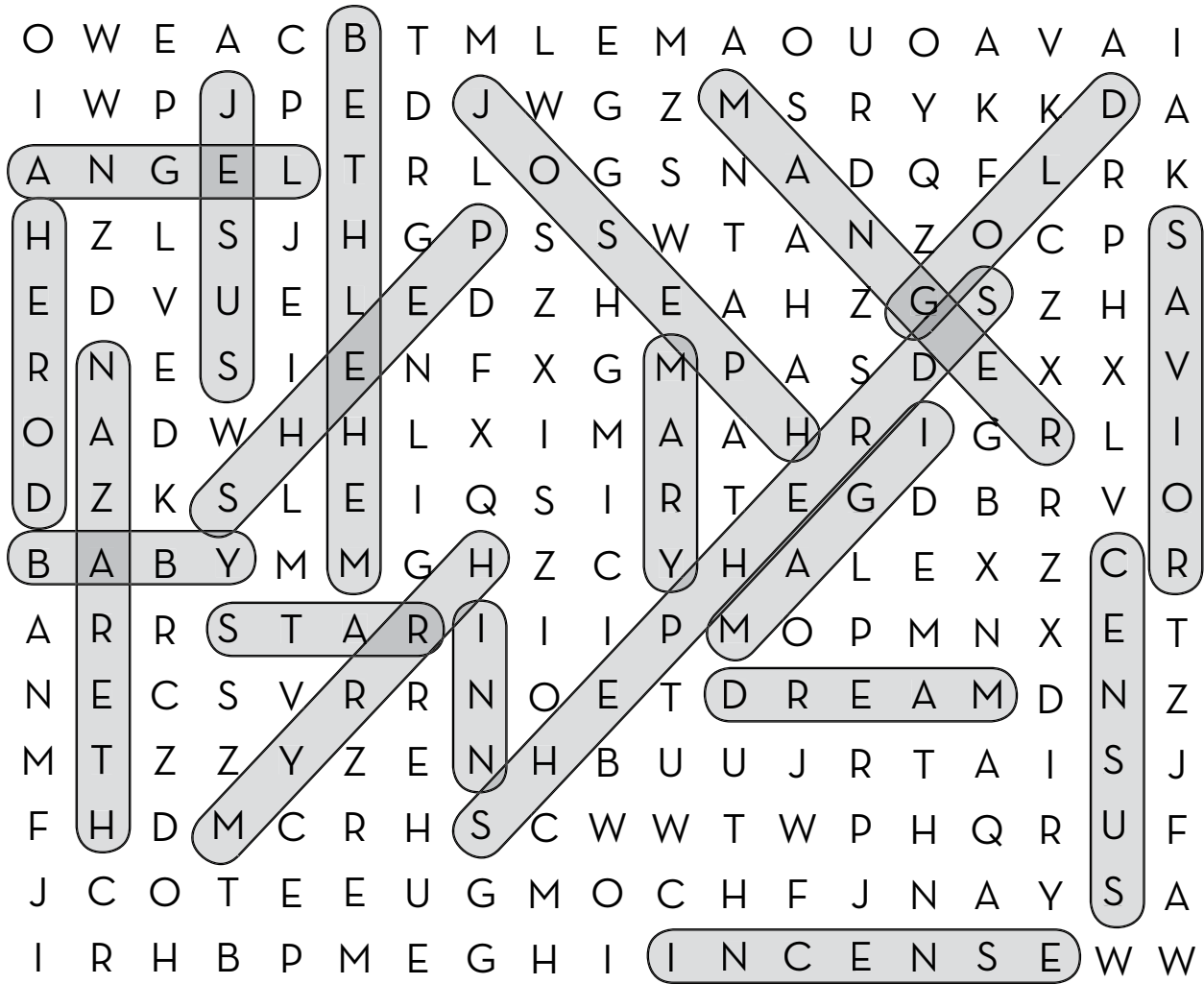
Mary
 Magi
 Census
 Baby
 Incense

Joseph
 Sheep
 Bethlehem
 Herod
 Myrrh

Savior
 Inn
 Angel
 Dream
 Nazareth

THE NATIVITY STORY *Answer Key*

Can you find all the words in this word search?



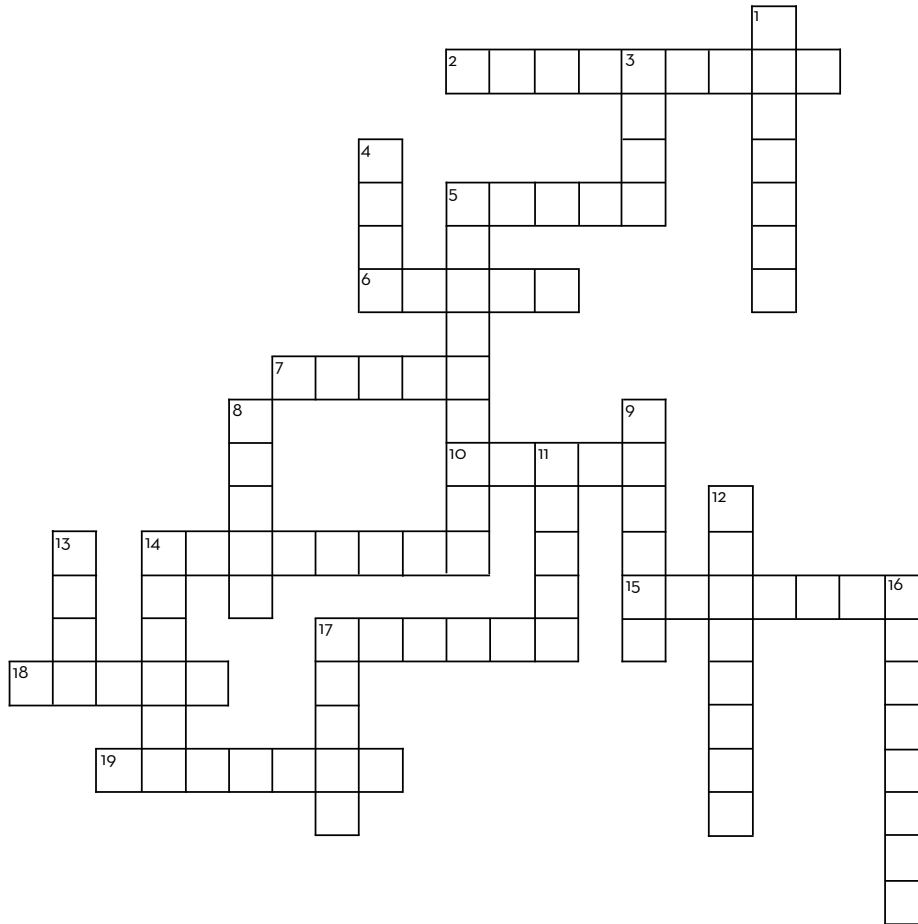
Jesus
Shepherds
Manger
Star
Gold

Mary
Magi
Census
Baby
Incense

Joseph
Sheep
Bethlehem
Herod
Myrrh

Savior
Inn
Angel
Dream
Nazareth

Use your Bible to look up the verses to help solve this crossword puzzle. Along the way, you will learn about Jesus's life.



JESUS'S LIFE

Can you figure out the crossword puzzle?

ACROSS

2. Jesus was born in the town of _____ (Luke 2).
5. Forty days after he rose from the dead, Jesus went back up to heaven, and a _____ hid him from the disciples' sight (Acts 1).
6. In the desert, Jesus fasted for _____ days before the Devil began to tempt him (Matthew 4).
7. When Jesus was transfigured on the mountaintop and some of the disciples saw his glory, his clothes became dazzling _____ (Mark 9).
10. While Jesus was on trial, Peter disowned him _____ times, saying that he didn't know Jesus (Mark 14).
14. At the Last Supper, Jesus and his disciples gathered in an upper room to share a special meal called the _____ (Luke 22).
15. After his friend _____ died, Jesus raised him from the dead (John 11).
17. Jesus was baptized in the _____ River by his cousin, John the Baptist (Matthew 3).
18. To escape from King Herod, Jesus's parents took him to _____ (Matthew 2).
19. Peter said that Jesus was the _____ (which means "the anointed one") and the Son of God (Matthew 16).

DOWN

1. Jesus performed his first miracle at a _____ in the town of Cana, where he turned water into wine (John 2).

3. Jesus taught that the most important command is to love the _____, and the second most important one is to love your neighbor (Mark 12).
4. When some men with a paralyzed friend could not get into a crowded house to see Jesus, they dug a hole through the _____ (Mark 2).
5. Joseph, who raised Jesus as his son, was a _____, and Jesus became one too (Matthew 13; Mark 6).
8. Jesus told his disciples that he was going away to prepare a place for them in his Father's _____, (John 14).
9. When Jesus was twelve years old and his parents were looking all over for him, they found him in the courts of the _____ (Luke 2).
11. When the women went to Jesus's tomb on Sunday morning, an angel told them, "He is not here; he has _____" (Matthew 28).
12. After King Herod died, Jesus's parents took him home to _____, and he grew up there (Matthew 2).
13. As Jesus was crucified, the sign above him read, "This is Jesus, the _____ of the Jews" (Matthew 27).
14. When Jesus called some fishermen to be his disciples, he told them, "From now on you will fish for _____" (Luke 5).
16. During a terrible storm, Jesus was _____ in the back of the boat; then he calmed the wind and the waves (Mark 4).
17. One of Jesus's disciples, named _____, betrayed him by guiding soldiers and officials to a garden so they could arrest him (John 18).

JESUS'S LIFE

Answer key

