December

Bible Verse, Bible Story, and Activities

Center #1

Bible Verse

"But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."
Luke 2:10–11

* Each week, go over the Bible Verse for the month with the children
* Print out Bible Verse Cards to send home with each child
* Print out Bible Verse Coloring Page to complete with the children or send home

Bible Story
(see Weekly Schedule below)

Jesus' Birth
(Journey through the Nativity)

Weeks 1–4

* Print out the Journey Through the Nativity Devotional
* Go through 3 "days" each week – or however you see fit

December
Center 2 Activity

New Testament Buckets

* Make Buckets
  * Gather 27 buckets or boxes that will stack
    * If you do not have the buckets, this can be done on the floor
  * Print out the New Testament Calling Cards
  * Tape a book of the Bible on each of the buckets

* Give each child a few of the buckets until all of the buckets are handed out
* Using the Books of the Bible Chart, have the children put the buckets in order, by forming a pyramid on the floor
* When they are finished, as a group, the children can say all of the books of the New Testament
* They can then, as a group, knock down the pyramid
* Have the kids pick up the buckets and try again (if time allows)

Object of the Game: The children will learn the books of the New Testament in order

December
Center 3 Activity

Week 1
100s Chart Nativity Coloring Activity

Week 2
CHRISTMAS Acrostic

Week 3
Christmas Trivia

Week 4
Christmas Activity Spinner

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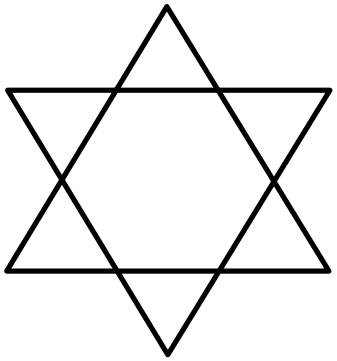

December

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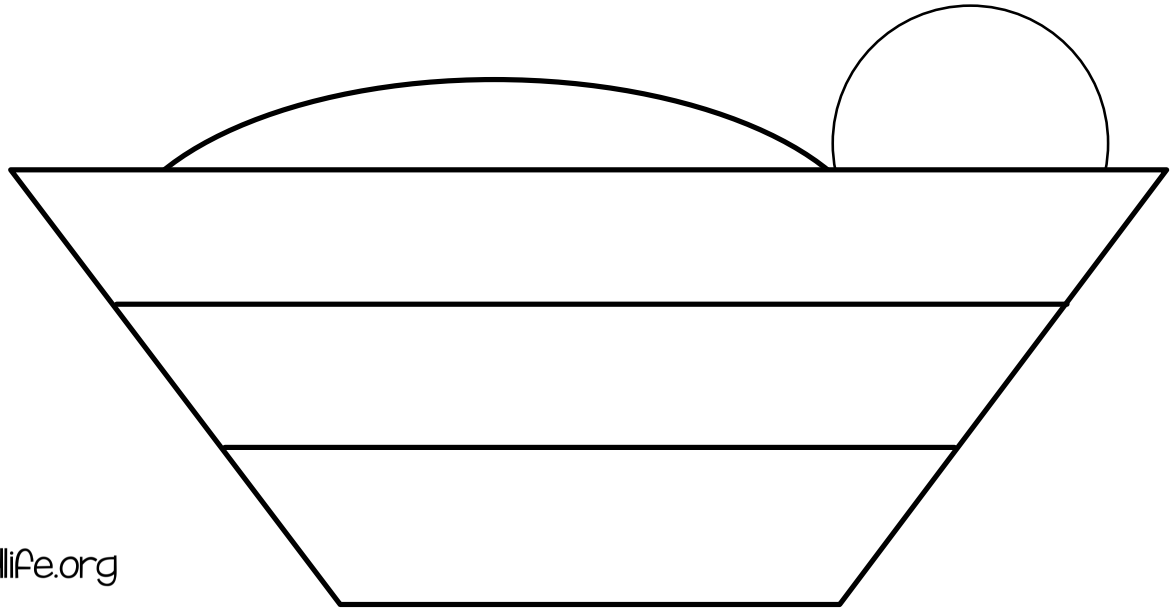

Journey Through the Nativity Family Devotional

A Closer Look At the Birth of Jesus

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Journey Through the Nativity Family Devotional
A Closer Look at the Birth of Jesus

I'm so glad that you have decided to come along with us as we "Journey Through the Nativity". This devotional has 12 mini lessons for you to do in a time frame that fits you and your family. If you want to do this straight through for 12 days, great! If you'd like to spread it out throughout the entire month of December, that's completely up to you. That's the beauty of this journey. Everyone will be at their own pace and it can work for everyone. You can do the devotional together as a family or have everyone do it alone and then come together to discuss. This really is adaptable to any situation and the various ages of children that you may have. Feel free to use it for how your family will get the most out of it. My goal is for every family to really grab a hold of what happened in this ever important event in history.

I stop short in calling Jesus' birth a "story" because too many times in our heads we see "stories" as not real. That really deflates the enormity of what really happened those 2000+ years ago. This "Journey Through the Nativity" will help us to see what happened, the people and places involved, as well as what was going on at that time in order to help us see the entire EVENT of Jesus' birth.

Here's how this devotional works:

* We will start with the verses to be read aloud - this is the basis for our study.
* Then we will dive into the verses to discuss the people, places, and events happening in that leg of the journey.
* After the discussion we will have questions to review that part of the journey as well as to make it personal for each of us.
* At the very end, there will be a story for you, the parent, to tell your children. Children love to hear stories of their parents and this will be something that your children look forward to each day as you move through this journey.

With that said...Let's Get Started!

Luke 1:26-29 - Gabriel

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was.

Luke states that it's the sixth month. The sixth month of what? Well, if you look in the Bible before verse 26, he is talking about Elizabeth (who we will get to later in this journey) and that she has become pregnant. It is the sixth month of her pregnancy.

We are introduced to the angel Gabriel who was sent by God to Nazareth. I can see it now. God is sitting on His throne and summons in Gabriel, His most trusted messenger. Can you imagine it? Can't you just hear their conversation?

"Gabriel?"
"Yes, sir?"
"I need you to go to Nazareth. You are going to give a young girl a message for me."
"Nazareth, sir? What's in Nazareth?"
"You'll see."

So Gabriel goes to Nazareth, which is in the region of Galilee east of the Sea of Galilee, to see a young girl named Mary. She is to be married to a man named Joseph who comes from the line of King David. She is engaged to him, so they have not known each other intimately.

Gabriel goes in to wherever Mary is at and says "hello". Well, he says more than "hello". He calls her "favored one". Wow! To be called "favored one" from an angel of God! Mary was surprised and shocked at what he said to her. She's trying to figure out what is going on and why he was saying that to her. First of all to have an angel of the Lord speaking to you would be enough, but to be called "favored one"? What a beginning to our journey!

Questions:

1) Who was the angel that God sent to Mary?
2) Where was Mary living at that time?
3) Mary was called "favored one", what would you have felt like if you were called that?

Parent Story - Tell of a time that you were sent on a really important assignment, like Gabriel was.

AND/OR

Tell of a name that you were called that really meant a lot to you. Why was it special?

Luke 1:30-31 - Mary

The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.

So here we are, in our journey through the nativity, with one of the most important statements of the entire Bible. Gabriel gives Mary, a young teenage girl, the beginning of his message from God. What is that message, you ask?

First of all, he tells her not to be afraid. Have you noticed throughout the Bible that a lot of God's angels start out their messages with, "Do not be afraid." or "Fear not!" I don't know about you, but when someone tells me not to be afraid, that's most likely my reaction - instant fear. Not like Mary wasn't already feeling that way. I mean, she was being visited by an angel of God with a message for her after all, so I'm sure that she was already a little frightened. But, I think that Gabriel was trying to alleviate some of that fear to let her know that he was there with a message of hope.

He then tells her that she has found favor with God. Found favor with God?! Isn't that what we are all looking for? I can't wait to hear the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant." (Matthew 25:21) How wonderful to be told that from an angel of God! I'm sure that put her at ease a little, knowing that God is pleased with her.

He starts his message - the message that God had sent him to give. She was going to have a baby! Stop the presses! What?! She was going to have a baby? He doesn't stop there, though. He tells her that her baby will be a boy and that she is to name Him Jesus. We might ask why God is telling her what her baby's name should be, but, there is so much information in that name, JESUS. Jesus in the New Testament is the same name as Joshua in the Old Testament. The name, Jesus, means "savior". Parents had called their children Joshua and Jesus during that time, but GOD was telling her what to call her child. God was telling Mary that she her baby boy was going to be the Savior of the world. This was THE Savior that she had grown up hoping for and she was going to be His mother. Wow! What a thought! If she wasn't afraid before, maybe she is now!

Questions:

1) What was the first thing that Gabriel said to Mary?
2) What was his message to her?
3) What was she to name her baby?
4) What would you have felt like if you were told a special message from God, like Mary?

Parent Story - Tell your children the story behind your name.

OR

Tell your children the stories behind their names. Why did you name them what you did?

Luke 1:32-33 - Kingdom of David

"He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end."

In this leg of our journey, Gabriel continues to give Mary her message from God. He tells her that her baby is going to be great. Let's stop right there. I think most of us just keep on reading and don't stop to think about the enormity of an angel of the Lord telling you that your baby is going to be "great". This is one of those times that I would want to SEE the word. It's not just "great" it's "GREAT!!!" There needs to be emphasis on that word in order for us to understand the scope of what it is. Some other words that we could use are: stupendous, tremendous, considerable, huge, colossal, etc. What about "life-changing"?

Gabriel continues to talk about Jesus, saying that He will be called the "Son of the Most High". Well, who is the "Most High"? Look up Psalm 47:2, Psalm 57:2, and Psalm 78:35. Did you figure it out? The "Most High" is God. So Mary's baby was going to be called the "Son of God"! Not only that, but Gabriel continues to tell her that God will give Jesus the throne of "His father David". How can He be called the "Son of God", but also say "His father David"? At this point in history, David has died. "Father", as we know the term father, wasn't what was meant here. It simply means that Jesus comes from the birth line of David.

Then Gabriel tells Mary that Jesus, her son, will "reign over the house of Jacob" Who is Jacob? Jacob was the son of Isaac and the grandson of Abraham in the Old Testament. Jacob had 12 sons who were the 12 tribes of Israel. It was from these 12 tribes that God grew the Hebrew nation. So God is putting Jesus as head of all Israel. He also says, "His kingdom will have no end." Who's kingdom lasts forever? No kingdom here on earth, that's for sure. All kingdoms here on earth have to end some time, but not in heaven. Jesus' kingdom is a heavenly kingdom, not an earthly one.

So, to recap Gabriel's message to Mary:

1) She will have a baby boy and she is to call Him Jesus
2) He will be GREAT!!!
3) He will be called the Son of God
4) He will come from the line of David
5) He is head of all of Israel
6) His kingdom will never end

Questions:

1) Who does "Most High" refer to?
2) What would you be thinking right now if you were Mary?

Parent Story: Tell about what people told you when you were going to be a parent.

Luke 1:34-35 - Holy Spirit

> Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God."

Welcome to the next part in our journey! I hope that you are enjoying going through the details of this very special event in history that effected the entire world for eternity. In our last part of this journey, we heard God's message to Mary, delivered by Gabriel.

In this section, Mary speaks for the first time. We actually see her first response to the tremendous information that she has been given. She asks a simple question. "How?" She could have asked many other questions. She could have asked why. She could have asked when. Her simple response was actually quite profound. You see, she didn't question IF God could do it. Her faith in God is evident in her question. She simply asked HOW it was going to happen.

Gabriel answers her and here's where we meet the third part of God. God is 3 in 1. We call it the trinity. He is 1) the Father, 2) the Son (Jesus), and 3) the Holy Spirit. All three of these parts of God work together. God the Father sent Gabriel to tell Mary about the Son and this was going to happen by the Holy Spirit. Are you following me? I hope so. It can get kind of confusing. Just know this: the Holy Spirit is God, just like Jesus is.

Gabriel tells her that the Holy Spirit will come upon her and that the "Most High", God, will overshadow her. What does that look like? Look up Matthew 17:5. This tells of the transfiguration of Jesus. It talks of a cloud that overshadowed Jesus, Peter, James, and John. We can conclude, then, since this is the same concept of "overshadowing", that's what it looked like. Mary would have been completely covered by the Holy Spirit. Wow! What a experience !

Questions:

1) Who did God send with His message?
2) What was the message?
3) What would you have asked Gabriel?

Parent Story - Tell of a time that you knew that you needed to do something, you had a lot of questions or concerns, but you did it anyways trusting in God to get you through it.

Luke 1:36-38 - Elizabeth

"And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. For nothing will be impossible with God." And Mary said, "Behold, the bond slave of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Today, we look at the end of God's message to Mary. Even though this is the final portion of God's message to Mary, it doesn't mean that this is lacking in information for us. Last, but not least, definitely fits in here!

We are introduced to a new person in our journey. Her name is Elizabeth and she is a relative of Mary. The King James Version states that they are cousins, in fact. Either way, we know that Elizabeth is older. Read Luke 1:5-7. Luke states that Elizabeth was barren and was advanced in years. To be barren meant that she was unable to have children. Now that she is advanced in years, meaning that she old, they really didn't have any hope of having children.

As Gabriel continued his message to Mary, he let her know that Elizabeth was going to have a son. In fact, she was now in her sixth month. Read Luke 1:24-25. These verses talk about once Elizabeth did become pregnant she finally felt as if the disgrace that she received from others was finally lifted. You see, in Biblical times when a couple didn't have children, it was blamed on the wife. People would look down on her as if there was something wrong with her. Some even felt as if it was a curse from God. So Elizabeth had been dealing with this disgrace from others for many years now. Now that God had made it possible for her to have a child, that disgrace was going to be gone. What a relief for Elizabeth! Can you imagine carrying such a heavy load and now it was lifted?

Gabriel ends his message strong. He states that "Nothing will be impossible with God!" Let's just take a moment to ponder that statement. Did he say that most things will be possible with God? No! He said that NOTHING is impossible with God. You see, there was no physical way that Elizabeth should have been able to have a child, but with God NOTHING is impossible. In other words, EVERYTHING is POSSIBLE!

Our journey is not complete for today. There's still more! If learning about Elizabeth wasn't enough, now we have Mary's response. Gabriel has completed his message and Mary speaks again. If it were me, I would be asking more questions, wanting more details of what's to come. Not Mary. She simply agrees to what she is to do. Not only that, she states her position, a bond slave or servant, of God. She is extremely humble even though she was just told that she would be the mother of the Savior. Once Mary accepted God's will for her, Gabriel left. In all actuality, it was a very simple conversation, but that simple conversation changed the world forever.

Questions:

1) Who was Mary's relative that was also going to have a son? Why was that so unique?
2) What was Mary's response to God's message for her?
3) What would your response have been if you were Mary?

Parent Story: Tell about a time that you did something that you didn't think you could (something really difficult).

Luke 1:39-40 - Zacharias

Now at this time Mary arose and went in a hurry to the hill country, to a city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth.

In this part of our journey, we are going to be traveling. Mary decides to go from her home in Nazareth to visit Elizabeth. Elizabeth lived in a city in the region of Judah. We don't actually know the name of the city or how far it was from Nazareth, so we don't know how far Mary would have to travel in order to visit. The only information is that it was in the hill country. We can, however, assume that Elizabeth lived somewhat close to Jerusalem, since her husband Zacharias was a priest and would have to travel there often. Jerusalem is about 90 miles from Nazareth, so we can assume that it wasn't a quick journey to Elizabeth's home, and Mary took this journey by foot!

As Mary was getting ready for her trip, it doesn't say that she took a long time packing, buying travel sized containers of shampoo, or picking out her clothes for the trip. The Bible states that she went "in a hurry" to visit her. Why would she be in a hurry. Well, Mary was just told that she was going to have a baby boy. Elizabeth is also going to have a baby boy. Both events were supernatural events. Neither woman was physically able to have a baby, but yet here they both are, about to give birth six months apart from each other. If that doesn't bring you closer to someone, what would?

Now in this part of the journey, I would like to take a flashback. I want to go back in the Bible, chronologically, in order to learn about Elizabeth's husband, Zacharias. We find him back at the beginning of Luke 1. Read Luke 1:8-13 & 18-23. These verses tell about how Zacharias was told that he and his wife Elizabeth were going to have a son. Gabriel actually came to him and told him, just like he told Mary. Unlike Mary, who asked how it was going to happen, Zacharias asked Gabriel how he could be certain that this was going to happen. As a result of that question, Gabriel made him mute, meaning he couldn't speak, until everything that Gabriel had said came true. Why did Gabriel do that? Zacharias didn't believe that it could happen. He questioned God's ability in making it happen.

Read Luke 1:13-17 & 1:57-66. These verses tell about the details of the birth of John the Baptist, Elizabeth and Zacharias' baby. Zacharias is told that John will be the forerunner of Jesus. What does that mean? He will come before Jesus to get the people ready for Jesus' message.

Questions:

1) Who was Elizabeth's husband? What was his job?
2) What was Zacharias' response to Gabriel's message from God?
3) Would you have questioned Gabriel in the same way that Zacharias did? Why or Why Not?

Parent Story - Tell about any traveling that you did while you were pregnant or waiting to have a child.

OR

Tell about a time that you visited someone while pregnant or waiting to have a child.

Luke 1:41-45 - Mary's Visit

> When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. And she cried out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed *are* you among women, and blessed *is* the fruit of your womb! And how has it *happened* to me, that the mother of my Lord would come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed *is* she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord."

Here we are more than half way through our journey, with a continuation of our last session together. We are going to talk more specifically about Mary's visit with Elizabeth as well as the baby that Zacharias and Elizabeth are going to have.

Mary greeted Elizabeth in the last section of our journey. In this portion, Elizabeth greets Mary. Does she just wave and say "Hi!" No! She "cries out with a loud voice". She gives Mary compliment after compliment as she welcomes her into her home. She states that Mary is blessed among women, the fruit of her womb is blessed, she is astonished that the mother of our Lord has visited her, the baby in her womb has leapt at the sound of her voice, and that Mary is blessed because she believed what Gabriel told her would come true. That is quiet a welcome! Let's take a closer look at each of these statements.

"Blessed are you among women" - Elizabeth is raising Mary up above all women because she was chosen to be the mother of Jesus, our Savior. Mary must have been a righteous woman, full of character, and a worthy person in order to be chosen of God. Does this mean that we should worship Mary? No. She is not to be worshipped, but she should be someone that we look up to and model ourselves after.

"Blessed is the fruit of your womb" - Elizabeth knows that Mary is going to have a baby boy and that He will be her Lord. She knows that Jesus is coming to save the world.

"How has it happened to me, that the mother of my Lord would come to me?" - Elizabeth is humbled that Mary, the mother of their Lord, even though she is related to her, would come to visit her. This shows Elizabeth's character of humbleness.

"Blessed is she who believed..." - This is another wonderful compliment to Mary. Elizabeth recognizes that Mary believes what God wants of her and that she has fully accepted it.

Now let's get back to what happened with Elizabeth's baby when Mary spoke. The baby leapt. Let's imagine for a moment what that would look (or feel) like. Elizabeth is about 6 months or so along in her pregnancy. That means, she is in her last trimester and only has a few months left. The baby is fully formed and is now just getting bigger every day. Once Elizabeth heard Mary's voice, the baby leapt inside of Elizabeth and she was filled with the Holy Spirit. Read the bottom of Luke 1:15. It says that John will be filled with the Holy Spirit while he was in his mother's

womb. Here's where that is fulfilled. John is filled with the Holy Spirit, and because of that, he knows who is near him - the one whom he will be the forerunner for!

Questions:

1) Who did Mary visit?
2) What did Elizabeth's baby do once Mary spoke?
3) How do you feel when someone gives you compliments?

Parent Story - Tell of the first time you felt your baby move.

OR

Tell of any visitors that you had while you were pregnant or waiting to have a child.

Luke 2:1-3 - The Census

> Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city.

Here we are moving along from Luke 1 to Luke 2. In the portion that we missed, Mary has gone back to Nazareth after her 3 month visit with Elizabeth (Luke 1:56) and John has been born (Luke 1:57). We are now going to start looking at the details surrounding Jesus' birth. During this leg of our journey, we are going to look at a major event that occurred that caused the other details of the birth to happen.

The verses above state, "in those days". In what days? In the days when Caesar Augustus was ruling the land. Here's a little history for you. Caesar Augustus (Gaius Octavius) was the great nephew of, none other than, Julius Caesar. Julius Caesar has put in his will that Gaius Octavius was his adopted son and heir. He, Marcus Lepidus, and Marc Antony ruled Rome as the Second Triumvirate. They divided the Roman Republic among themselves to rule. The Second Triumvirate eventually split because they all wanted total control over the entire Roman Republic. Marcus Lepidus was driven into exile, while Octavius defeated Marc Antony, supported by Cleopatra, at the Battle of Actium. Does that help with placing the event from the Bible? The same Caesar Augustus who issued a decree in the Bible was the same guy who defeated Marc Antony and Cleopatra in order to be emperor of all of Rome.

So Caesar Augustus issues a decree. What is a decree? A decree is an authoritative order having the force of the law. So this was a legal decree that was illegal to disobey. What was the decree that he issued? He issued a decree that a census should be taken. What is a census? Basically, a census is a counting all of the people under your control. Why would he have a census? A census was, most of the time, for the reason of taxation. He needed to know how many people he was ruling over so he knew what taxes he should be getting.

Luke also states that this was the first census while Quirinius was the governor of Syria. That means that Quirinius was in charge of Syria (and probably of the census) and that there were other census that happened while he was ruler of Syria.

Look at the last verse above, "And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city." This was part of the census as well as Jewish custom to go to the home town of where your family is from not necessarily where you are currently living. We will look more at this in the next part of our journey.

Questions:

1) What was the event that happened during this portion of our journey?
2) Explain how Caesar Augustus fits into history.
3) What do you think the people went through in order to follow the laws of the census?

Parent Story - Tell of a time that you had to follow the "laws of the land" even if you didn't agree with them.

Luke 2:4-5 - Joseph

Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child.

In the last section, we were told of the census and because of that we are introduced to the next character in our journey, Joseph. Joseph is the man that Mary was engaged to. Since everyone had to go to "his own city" in order to register, Joseph had to go to the city of his family, which happened to be Bethlehem.

We find out a little about Joseph's family line here in theses verses. We find out that Joseph comes from the line of David. You know, King David, right? David was the one who, as a young boy, killed Goliath with a single stone and then later took over the kingdom from the first king of Israel, Saul. Before David did all of that, though, he was a shepherd for his family in the little city of Bethlehem. So, since King David was from Bethlehem, it was then called the city of David. Joseph was from the family line of David, so he had to travel to Bethlehem for the census.

Joseph had to leave Nazareth, which is in the region of Galilee, to travel to Bethlehem, in the region of Judea, which happens to be about 100 miles away. He didn't go by himself, though. Mary went with him. She was engaged to be married to him. They had to travel about 100 miles, by foot, not to mention all while Mary is in the last portion of her pregnancy with the Son of God. No big deal, right?

I want to back up just a bit to learn a little more about Joseph and what type of man he was. Read Matthew 1:18-25. These verses are Matthew's version of the birth of Jesus. Matthew tells us a little more about Joseph and what kind of man that he was. Joseph found out about Mary being pregnant and decided to divorce her quietly. This tells us that he was a man of character and decency. He could have made a big deal about her, but he wasn't going to do that. Matthew also tells us that he was visited in a dream by an angel of the Lord. The angel tells Joseph that the baby that Mary is carrying is of the Holy Spirit and that he shouldn't be afraid to take her as his wife. He followed what the angel told him and took Mary as his wife and called the baby Jesus.

Questions:

1) Who was Joseph engaged to be married to?
2) What type of man was Joseph?
3) What would you do to Mary if you were him?

Parent Story - Tell about a difficult choice that you have had to make in your life. What was the result of your decision?

Luke 2:6-7 - Jesus is Born

> While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Ok! We've arrived! We are here at the climax of our "Journey Through the Nativity". We have learned so much so far. Let's recap a bit: Gabriel, an angel of the Lord, came to a young girl named Mary to tell her that she was going to have a baby boy and that baby boy was going to be the Son of God and the savior of the world. She was to call Him Jesus. Mary was engaged to be married to a man from the line of David, named Joseph. He was also visited by an angel of the Lord to take Mary as his wife and to call her baby, Jesus.

So here we are, in the city of Bethlehem, because of the decree from Caesar Augustus. Joseph and Mary travel there, while she's at the end of her pregnancy, in order to be registered for the census. They get there and she's run out of time. She's about to give birth and they have no place to stay. It's a busy city, especially because of the census. The town is full because of all of the people that have had to come there to register. Why is it full by the time that Joseph and Mary get there? Maybe they left later than others. Maybe they had to go a little slower and take more breaks because of Mary's condition. We don't really know, but what we do know is that there wasn't any place for them to stay, at least not a "usual" place to stay.

It doesn't actually say that Jesus was born in a stable, or a barn, but we know that He was because once He was born, Mary wrapped Him in cloths and laid Him in a manger. What is a manger, anyways? A manger is a feeding trough of animals. Yes, the Son of God, the Savior of the world, was born in a barn and His crib was a feeding trough for animals. Really regal and majestic, right?

We don't want to forget another important fact from the verses above: Jesus was Mary's firstborn. That seems obvious, but what we sometimes forget that Mary had other children with Joseph. Jesus had brothers and sisters that He grew up with.

Jesus was born in a very humble situation: born in a stable, away from home, placed in a feeding trough. Can't get any more simple than that.

Questions:

1) What city was Jesus born in?
2) What were the details of His birth?
3) If you were a "fly on the wall" what would it have been like in the stable?

Parent Story - Tell the story of your children's births. What was special about each one?

Luke 2: 8-12 - Shepherds

> In the same region there were *some* shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. This *will be* a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

The next leg in our journey has us "in the same region". In the same region as what? Well, since this is a continuous timeline of the event of Jesus' birth, the shepherds would have to be in the same region as Mary and Joseph and the newly born Jesus. So the shepherds are in the fields of Bethlehem. It is night time and they are watching over their sheep.

Let's stop a moment and talk about shepherds. Being a shepherd was not the most sought after job position in the city of Bethlehem. They smelled like sheep, which is not like a fragrant perfume, their clothes were simple and used to keep them warm and dry, and they were always "on duty" protecting their flock, keep them together, and making sure that they are getting enough food and water. The shepherd in each family was usually the youngest, see I Samuel 16:11. As the younger child became old enough, the older child would pass on the duties of being the shepherd so they could do the more "important" jobs otherwise needed in the family. Shepherds were disregarded and looked down upon by society.

As these lowly shepherds were taking care of their sheep at night, an angel of the Lord came to them. Imagine it. It's dark out. There are no street lights or car lights yet, so the only light was coming from the moon and the stars that night. It's dark and then the "glory of the Lord shone around them". Remember when Moses was speaking with God in Exodus 34:29-35? Imagine that lighting up the night sky from an angel. Blinding! They were frightened! I would be too. You don't know what's going on. You're minding your own business and suddenly an angel of the Lord appears in the sky with this bright light shining.

The first words that the angel says to them are, "Do not be afraid." There are those words again. Listen to the next part of the the angel's message: "I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all people." That's a huge statement! The good news that the angel is bringing is for all people! Not just for the Jews. Not just for the rich. The Good News was for ALL people and the shepherds were the first to hear of it!

What was the good news? The angel continues by saying that in the city of David (and we all know that is Bethlehem, now, right?), the Savior has been born. They will find the right baby by finding Him in a manger wrapped in cloths. Do you see another reason, among others, why Jesus was born in such a humble situation? No other baby was going to be in a feeding trough. That was the sign for the shepherds. The Savior would be in a manger.

Questions:

1) What region were the shepherds in?
2) What was the good news from the angel?
3) What do you think about the good news being for everyone? That means that it was for you!

Parent Story - Tell about what it was like when you heard the "good news" that you were going to be a parent.

Luke 2:13-16 - Angels

> And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased." When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds *began* saying to one another, "Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us." So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger.

Here we are, on our last leg of our "Journey Through the Nativity". We are still in the fields with the shepherds while an angel of the Lord just gave them the good news of the Savior's birth. Now we have a "multitude of heavenly host". What exactly is that? Well, a multitude is a large crowd, while "heavenly host" are angels. So, not only are the shepherds visited by an angel with the glory of the Lord shining around them, they are now visited by a large group of angels.

The first angel came to tell the good news of Jesus' birth. Why are all of the other angels there? They came to praise God! Jesus' birth was a celebration in heaven and they came to bring it here on earth. What did their message mean? The first part is a praise to God; they are honoring God. The second part is talking about us here on earth. They are praying for "peace" which actually means "salvation". What greater peace is there than knowing that you are saved by the grace of God and will live eternally with Him? Is that salvation for everyone? Yes, but we each, individually, have to choose it for ourselves - that's what "among men with whom He is pleased" means. He is "pleased" with those who choose to follow Him and choose to receive His salvation.

After the angels are finished praising God there, they leave and go back to heaven. What do the shepherds do? I think, if it were me, I would need a moment to comprehend what just happened. Their whole world just changed. They were the first to hear of the news that the Savior has been born. They don't need long to decide that they want to go to Bethlehem to see what the angels were talking about.

They hurried over to Bethlehem to see the new born Savior, Christ the King. Can you imagine the trip over there? Were they all silent contemplating what they had seen and heard? Were they giddy with excitement? Everyone reacts differently to the news of the Savior. Some of us are giddy with the excitement that the Savior of the world came to save us, while others of us are more contemplative with all of the emotions that are running through us at the thought that God loves us so much that He sent His Son, for me. Whatever the trip was like, I'm sure their feet just couldn't get there fast enough!

Then, they made it. They found where Mary and Joseph were staying. Then there...they see Him. Jesus. As He lay in the manger, they knew in that instant their lives would never be the same. They were the first, after Mary and Joseph, to see the newborn Savior, the Christ child. What thoughts were going through their minds at that time? Here are a bunch of lowly shepherds, the first to hear of the good news, were looking eye to eye with the Savior, their Savior. It gives my goosebumps thinking about it. What I would't give to have been there.

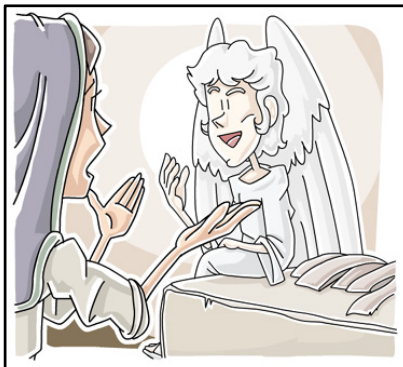
Questions:

1) Who comes to the shepherds after the angel tells them of the good news?
2) What do the shepherds decide to do?
3) What would you have done if you were the shepherds?

Parent Story - Tell of the first time that you saw each of your children for the very first time.

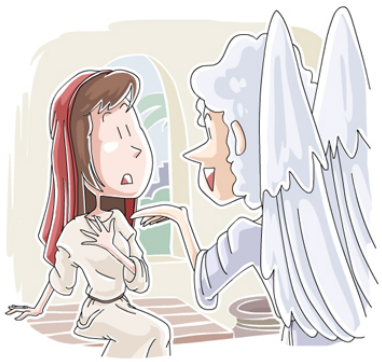
Or

Tell of when you chose to accept God's gift of salvation.



Gabriel

Luke 1:26-29



Mary

Luke 1:30-31

Kingdom of David

Luke 1:32-33

Holy Spirit

Luke 1:34-35

Elizabeth

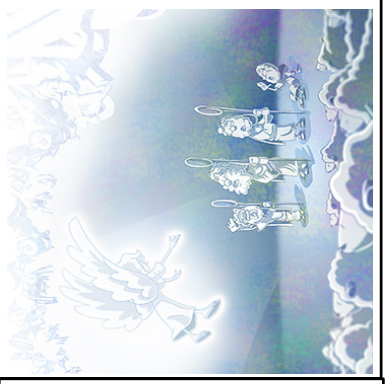
Luke 1:36-38

Zacharias

Luke 1:39-40

Angels

Luke 2:13-16



Mary's Visit

Luke 1:41-45

The Census

Luke 2:1-3

Shepherds

Luke 2:8-12

Joseph

Luke 2:4-5

Jesus is Born!

Luke 2:6-7

Journey Through the Nativity

Gabriel

Mary

Kingdom of David

Zacharias

Holy Spirit

Elizabeth

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The Census

Joseph

Mary's Visit

Jesus is Born!

Shepherds

Angels

New Testament Cards

Matthew	Romans
Mark	1 Corinthians
Luke	2 Corinthians
John	Galatians
Acts	Ephesians

New Testament Cards

Philippians	2 Timothy
Colossians	Titus
1 Thessalonians	Philemon
2 Thessalonians	Hebrews
1 Timoty	James

New Testament Cards

1 Peter	Jude
2 Peter	Revelation
1 John	
2 John	
3 John	

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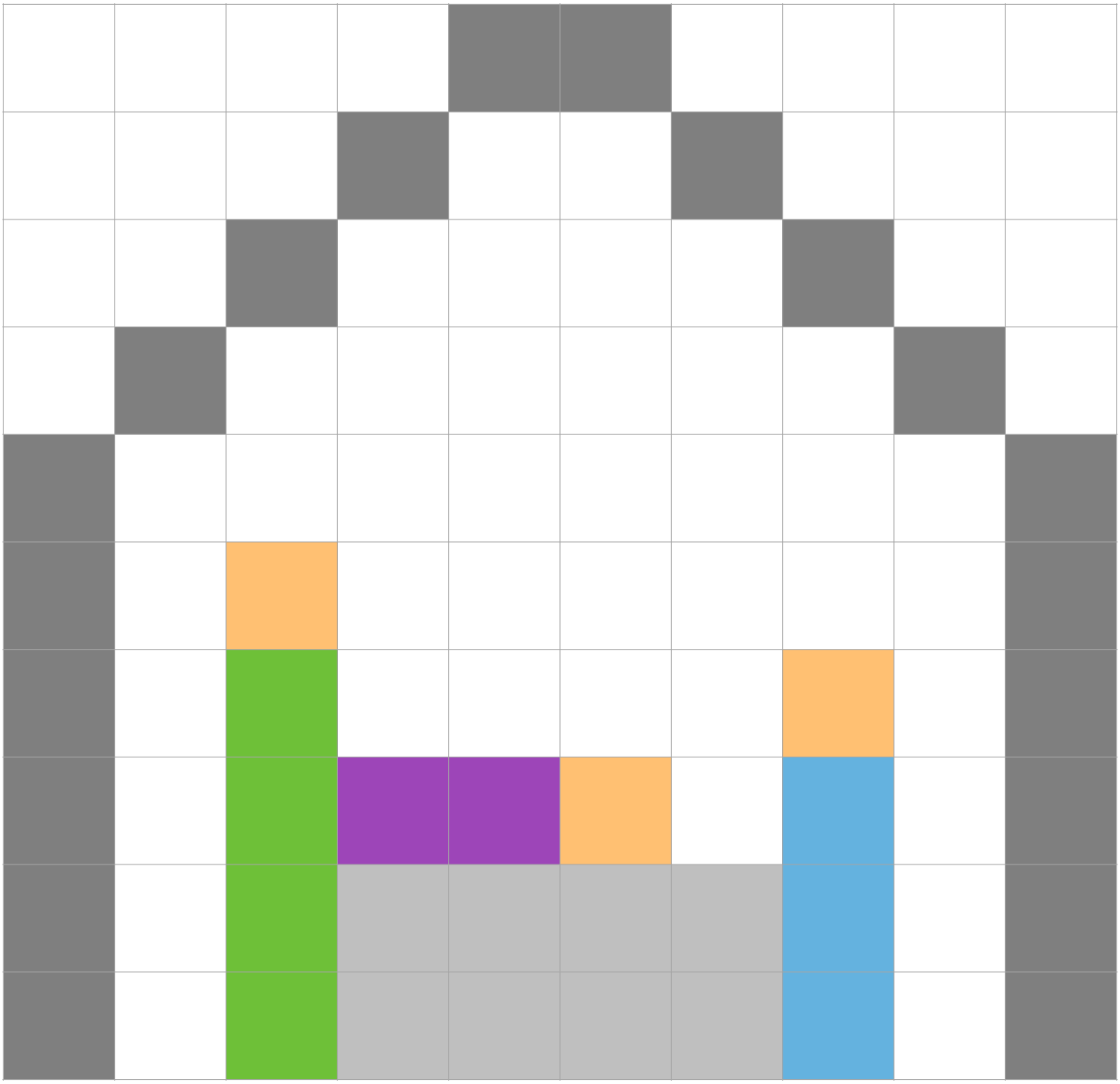
100s Chart Nativity

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100

Color:
Black/Brown - 5, 6, 14, 17, 23, 28, 32, 39, 41, 50, 51, 60, 61, 70, 71, 80, 81, 90, 91, 100
Green - 63, 73, 83, 93
Blue - 78, 88, 98
Gray - 84, 85, 86, 87, 94, 95, 96, 97
Peach/Brown - 53, 68, 76
Purple - 74, 75

100s Chart Nativity



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31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
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Purple - 74, 75

JESUS

Jehovah

Isaiah 26:4
Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord *Jehovah* is everlasting strength:

Eternal

1 Timothy 1:17
Now to the King *eternal*, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever.

Son of God

1 John 4:15
Whoever confesses that Jesus is the *Son of God*, *God* abides in him, and he in *God*.

Undenial Truth

John 14:6
Jesus said to him, "*I am the way*, and *the* truth, and *the* life; no one comes to *the* Father but through Me."

Savior

Luke 2:11
for today in the city of David there has been born for you a *Savior*, who is Christ the Lord.

JESUS

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I N A HOLY PLACE

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Christmas Trivia

How many days in the song "12 Days of Christmas"? 12
It's round and hangs on the Christmas tree. bulb/ornament
Jesus was born in a _____. manger
Jesus' earthly father. Joseph
Mary and Joseph rode on a _____ to Bethlehem. donkey
Jesus' Heavenly Father. God
How many wise men were there? 3
They were standing out in the field. shepherds
Spell Jesus. J-e-s-u-s
How many la's in the song "Deck the Halls"? 8
What color are Santa's boots? black
The wise men followed a _____? star
What does Santa ride in? sleigh
What month and date is Christmas on? December 25th
Why did Joseph have to go to Bethlehem? census
What did Mary wrap baby Jesus in? swaddling clothes
What do we put up on the outside of our house at Christmas? lights
There was no room at the _____ for Mary and Joseph. Inn
Jesus was born to be our _____. Savior
What do we give each other at Christmas? gifts
What does Santa fill? stocking
What color is Santa's beard? white
Who helps Santa at the North Pole? elves
Santa Claus is married to _____. Mrs. Claus
Where does Santa live? North Pole
Where does Jesus live? heart/heaven
What do we put on top of our Christmas tree? star/angel
What kind of sleigh is in the song "Jingle Bells"? one horse open sleigh
What is round and we hang it on our door? wreath
What season is Christmas in? winter
Who is Jesus' mother? Mary
What is the Christmas scene called? nativity
Who has a red nose and leads Santa's sleigh? Rudolph
What is the night before Christmas called? Christmas Eve
What plant has green leaves and red berries? holly
How many reindeer are there with Rudolph? 9
What is green, grows, and we put it up at Christmas time? tree
Who stole Christmas? Grinch
What is white and falls from the sky in some towns at Christmas? snow

Sing your favorite Christmas song

Tell your favorite Christmas tradition

Tell the Christmas story

Name your favorite part of Christmas

Name a character of the Christmas story and what they did

Spin Again

Tell how your favorite Christmas goodie is made

Tell your favorite Christmas book