

My name is _____



Getting ready for Jesus!

Celebrating Advent and Christmas

A note for parents

Dear Parents,

Here comes Advent and Christmas! What a wonderful season to celebrate with kids. This little journal is based on a selection of the readings for each week of Advent and then Christmas. You will find some activities that are suitable for young children, others that are better for older ones and some things you can share together as a family. We pray that this helps make your family's Advent and Christmas journey even more rich as you prepare for Jesus birth in our hearts afresh. In putting this together we've also come across some lovely ideas for entering into the season with children, we've listed them below for you to use if you like. There's a lot here so don't feel overwhelmed, just pick the things that will work with your family, after all it's better to do a couple of things well than trying to take on too much! If there is something in particular that works well for you, or stories you want to celebrate as you journey through this season please pass them on to us as we'd love to share them with others. Also, if you have other ideas to add we'd love to have them too!

Many of the images used in this booklet are taken from happysaints.com resources. There are many other really fantastic resources created by this ministry so please check out their website.

May the joy of Christmas light up your hearts and homes!

The ekids team :)

- Create a sacred space or prayer table in your home with a bible, a cross, candle and symbols of Advent and Christmas.
- Make a Bible dress up box so that little ones can 'play' stories like the nativity. Raid the bins of a white goods store for a big box and make a stable for the kids to play in.
- Read, view or tell your children the Christmas story.
- A couple of websites with lots of activities for kids...
<http://catholicmom.com>
<http://catholicicing.com/>
- Holy Heroes is a great site with an online Advent Adventure including daily emails with resources for families to take the Advent journey... <http://www.holyheroes.com>
- The internet is literally jam packed with activities. Do a search for Christian Christmas colouring pages or games and see what you can find.
- <http://www.sparklebox.co.uk/australia/> is a website with lots of printables including Advent and Christmas activities for kids.
- Go exploring on youtube and see what clips you can find for your kids during Advent and Christmas.
- Lego 'bricktestament', lots of bible stories here:
http://www.thebricktestament.com/the_life_of_jesus/index.html
- Advent is a time for giving... engage your children in some acts of charity and service to those who are in need. Make a donation, volunteer to make a dish for the Blind-eye dinner and do it with your kids, go and purchase gifts for one of the many appeals. There are SO many ways to give!

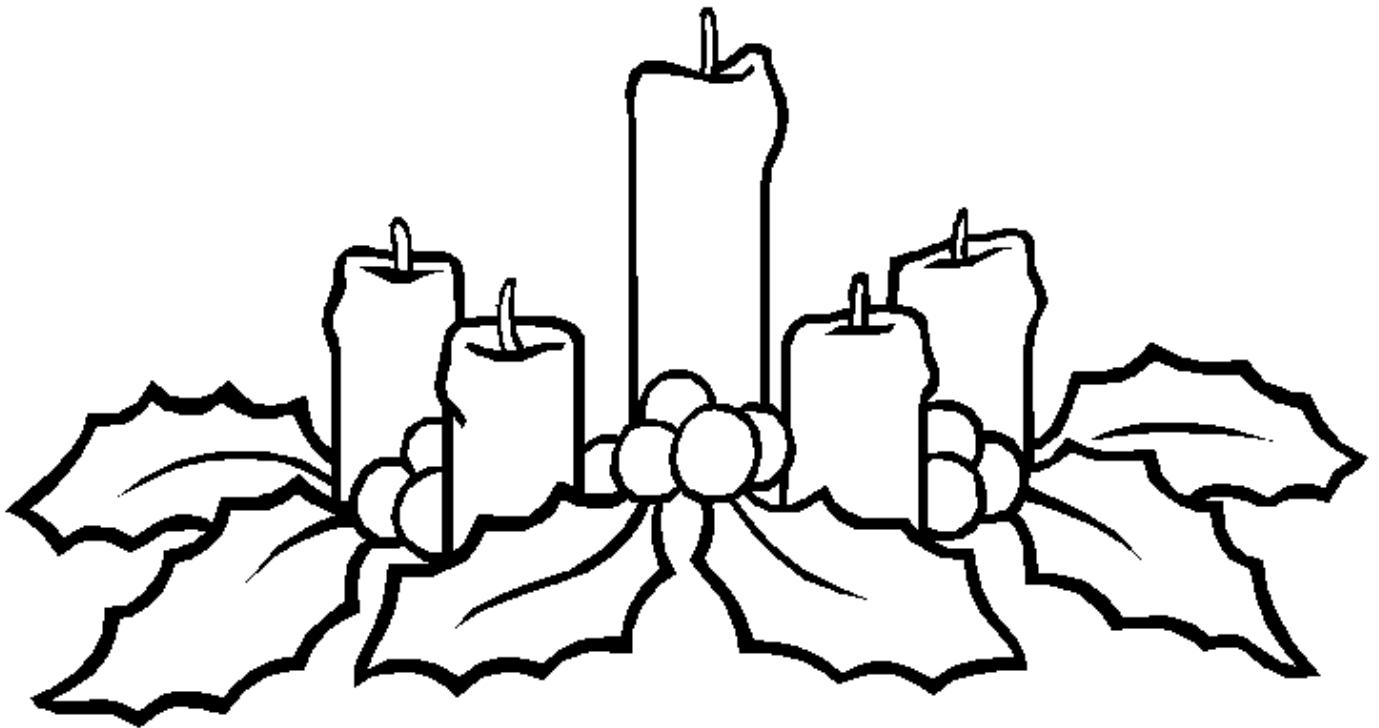


- You can make your own nativity scene! Be as creative as you like but there are also some great ideas online
- You can make one with toilet rolls and these free printables from Catholic Icing. <http://catholicicing.com/2009/12/diy-printable-nativity-for-kids/>
- There are also some great paper dolls for making a nativity at <http://www.makingfriends.com/>
- Some families like to place the characters in the Nativity story in different places around the house and move them each day as they journey towards Bethlehem and the birth of Jesus! This way the journey of Advent can flow through to Christmas, with the wise men arriving on the feast of the Epiphany!
- Once you've made it, you might like to pray this blessing of the nativity scene: http://www.usccbpublishing.org/client/client_pdfs/creche.pdf
- Make an Advent calendar to countdown the days to Christmas! There are so many ways to do this but a simple one to print, colour and cut - that doubles as a Nativity scene - can be found at <http://lds.about.com/od/visualmusicalaids/a/adventcalendar.htm>
- Making a Jesse Tree is a great way to journey through Advent. There is a good one to print with reflections at <http://www.eriescd.org/jesstree.htm>
- Make your own advent wreath for kids <http://catholicicing.com/category/advent-wreath/>
- Place some of your own Advent candles in your home, light them throughout Advent and pray with your family.
- The empty manger: Each child could have his own individual manger, or there may be one manger for the whole family. The idea is that when acts of service, sacrifice, or kindness are done in honor of Baby Jesus as a birthday present, the child receives a piece of straw to put into the manger. Then, on Christmas morning, "Baby Jesus" is placed in the manger. Encourage your children to make Jesus' bed as "comfortable" as possible through their good deeds. In the process, explain Christ's incomparable self-gift at Christmas and Easter that enables us to be part of God's family.
- Since Christmas is Jesus' birthday, why not give Jesus a present too? Wrap a box in brown paper, and write or draw on it something you want to give Jesus, or an area of your life you are going to change for Him. Tie up the box with a ribbon. You can do this yourself, or with your whole family.
- Set a place of honor for Jesus at your Christmas dinner table as a reminder of his presence. Make a place-mat or name holder that says 'Jesus', and set his place with a plate.
- For the centerpiece in the middle of your table on Christmas day, use your advent wreath, but add a white Christ Candle to the middle. Keep using your Christ Candle through the entire Christmas season.
- Make Jesus a Birthday Cake for your dessert! Why not sing 'Happy Birthday' to Jesus?
- Talk to other families about their Advent and Christmas traditions, we are a creative bunch and some have come up with some fantastic ways of helping their children enter into the mystery and wonder of Jesus birth.



The First Sunday of Advent

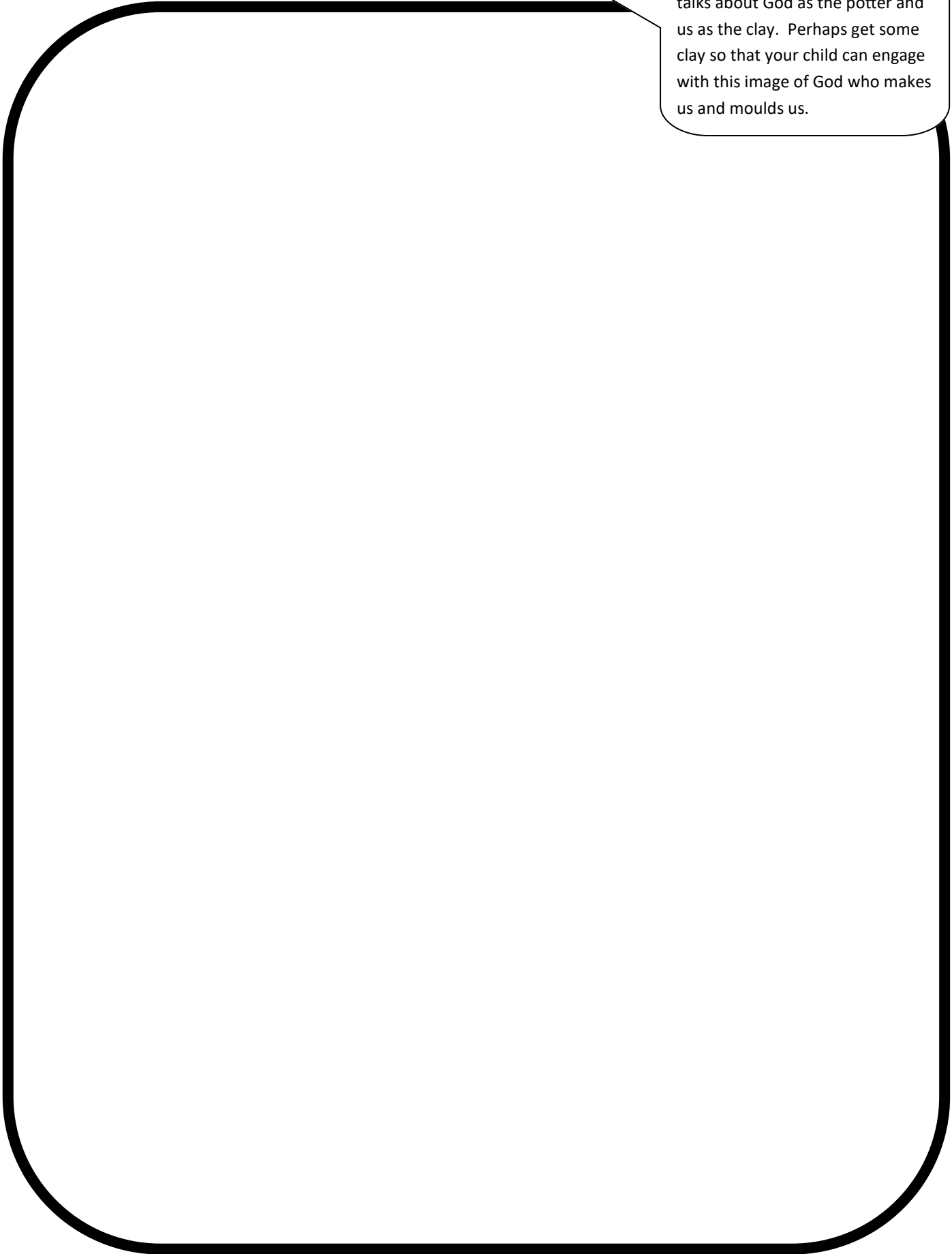
During Advent we light the Advent candles. Three of the candles are usually purple, one is pink and the middle candle is white. Colour these candles and draw a flame over one of the purple candles to mark the first week of Advent.



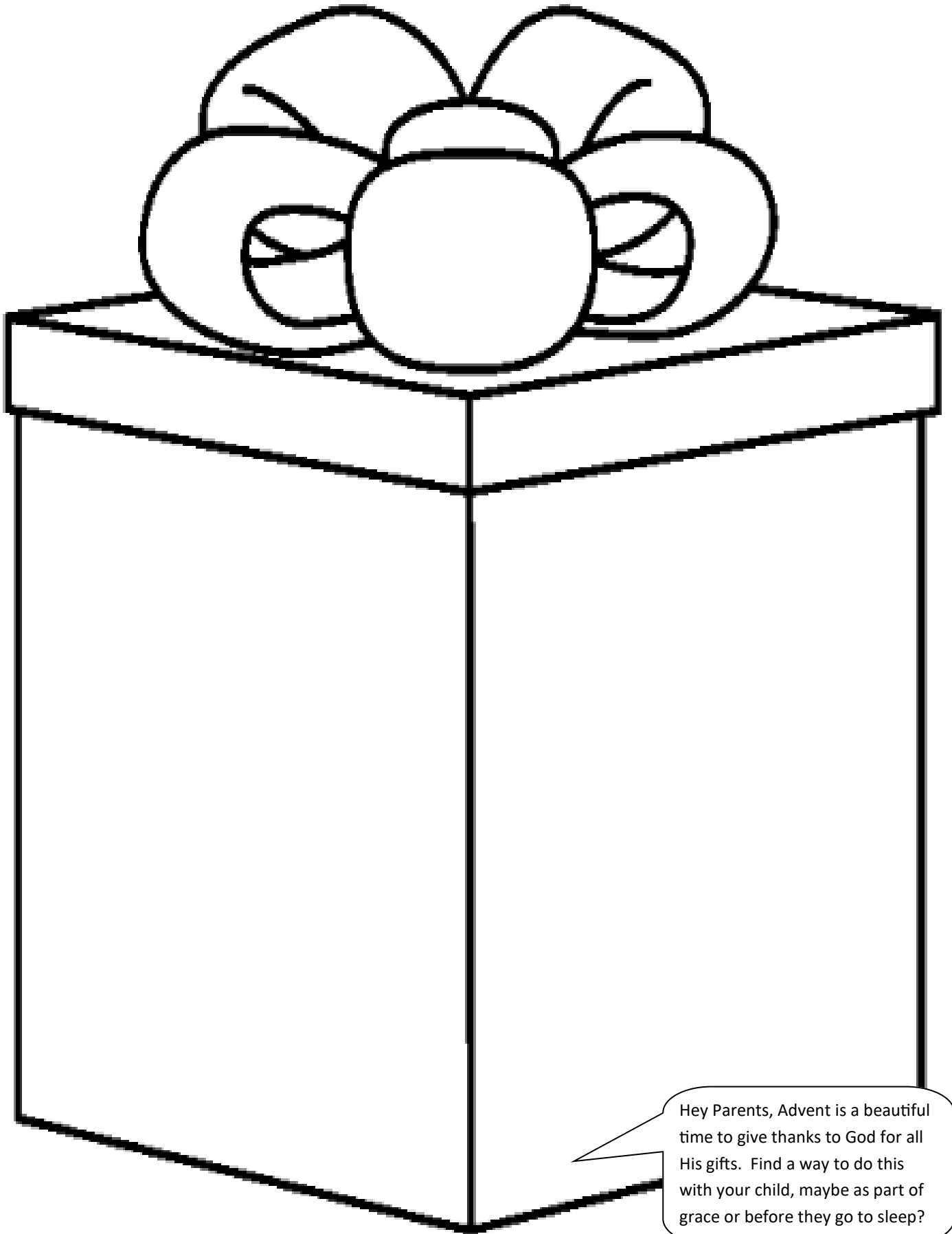
Advent is a time for getting ready because Jesus is coming. In Lent we make some promises to follow Jesus more closely. You could make some Advent promises too. Write down some things you would like to do to follow Jesus more closely this Advent.

The first reading this Sunday is from Isaiah (Isaiah 63:16b-17, 19b; 64:2-7). This reading reminds us that God is like an amazing father who loves us. In the space below, draw a picture of you with your father, grandfather or godfather. How do they remind you of God the Father?

Hey Parents, This reading also talks about God as the potter and us as the clay. Perhaps get some clay so that your child can engage with this image of God who makes us and moulds us.



1 Corinthians 1:3-9 is all about saying thank you for all the ways God blesses us and keeps us close to him. Write or draw some of the special things God has given to you - special things that you want to say 'thank you' to God for—on the present below.



Hey Parents, Advent is a beautiful time to give thanks to God for all His gifts. Find a way to do this with your child, maybe as part of grace or before they go to sleep?

Jesus reminds us to always be ready for Him to come. The Gospel (Mark 13:33-37) is all about being alert and ready for when Jesus comes. Find the words in the word search below which mean the same and 'alert' and 'ready'. Find other words that give us some ideas about what we can do that will help us to be ready for Jesus.

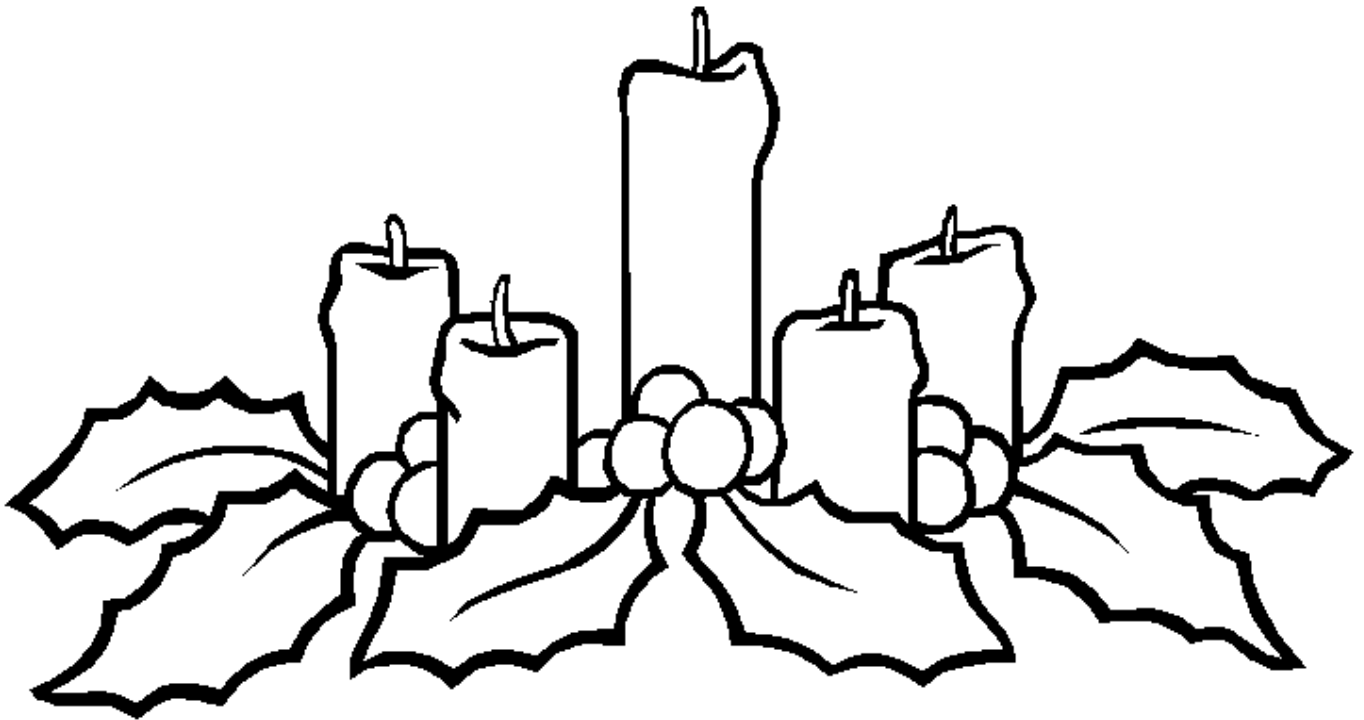
N E X T H R E T P C
F V D P S D C O R S
J O S Z I D F P E E
T L U F Y O J Y P R
J R J R R I E D A V
D L E G P K S A R E
F Y I L A H V E E K
H V A W A R E R D J
E Y A R P A M L C L
N F E F H E L P C Y

ALERT
AWAKE
AWARE
FORGIVE
HELP
JOYFUL
LOVE
PRAY
PREPARED
READY
SERVE
SHARE



The Second Sunday of Advent

During Advent we light the Advent candles. Three of the candles are usually purple, one is pink and the middle candle is white. Colour these candles and draw a flame over two of the purple candles to mark the second week of Advent.



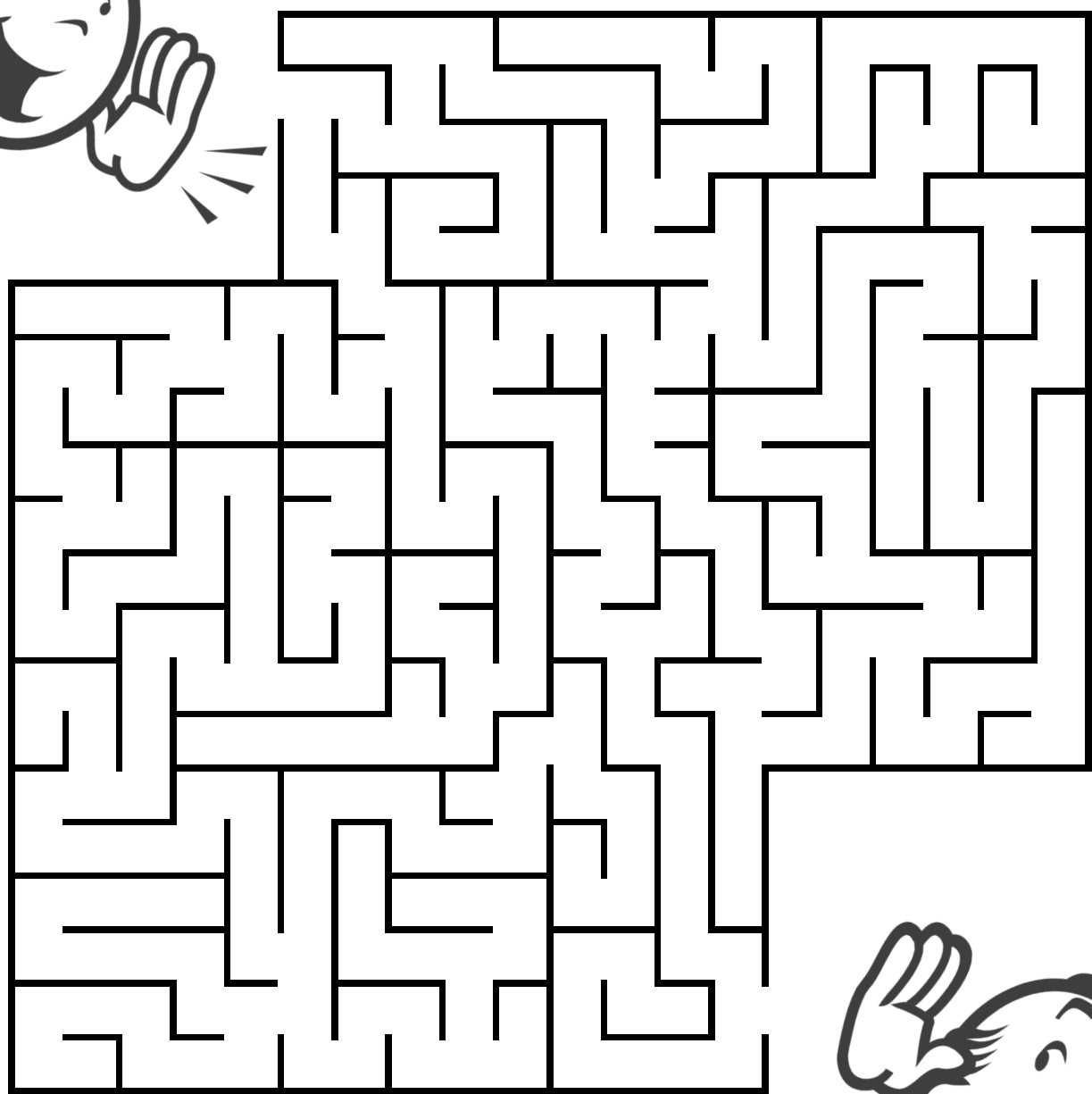
The week is all about HOPE! It's about remembering all the good things God has given us and the promises He has made! Psalm 126 says "The Lord has done great things for us and we are filled with joy!"

Make a list of the great things God has given you... Ask Mum and Dad to help if you want.

THANK YOU

The first reading from Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11 this week is about good news. It's about listening for the good news and being people who share the good news with others. But what IS the GOOD NEWS? Ask Mum and Dad what they think. In the maze below, help the message find it's way to the listener by finding a way through the maze.

Hey Parents, Give each other some 'good news', play a game of leaving loving messages of appreciation for one another.



The Gospel reading this week is about John the Baptist who came to tell everyone to get ready for Jesus! "Repent and be Baptised!" He said. Colour the picture of John below which is from happysaints.com. If you want to ask Mum or Dad if you can light your Baptismal candle and say a prayer to Jesus. Mark 1:1-8

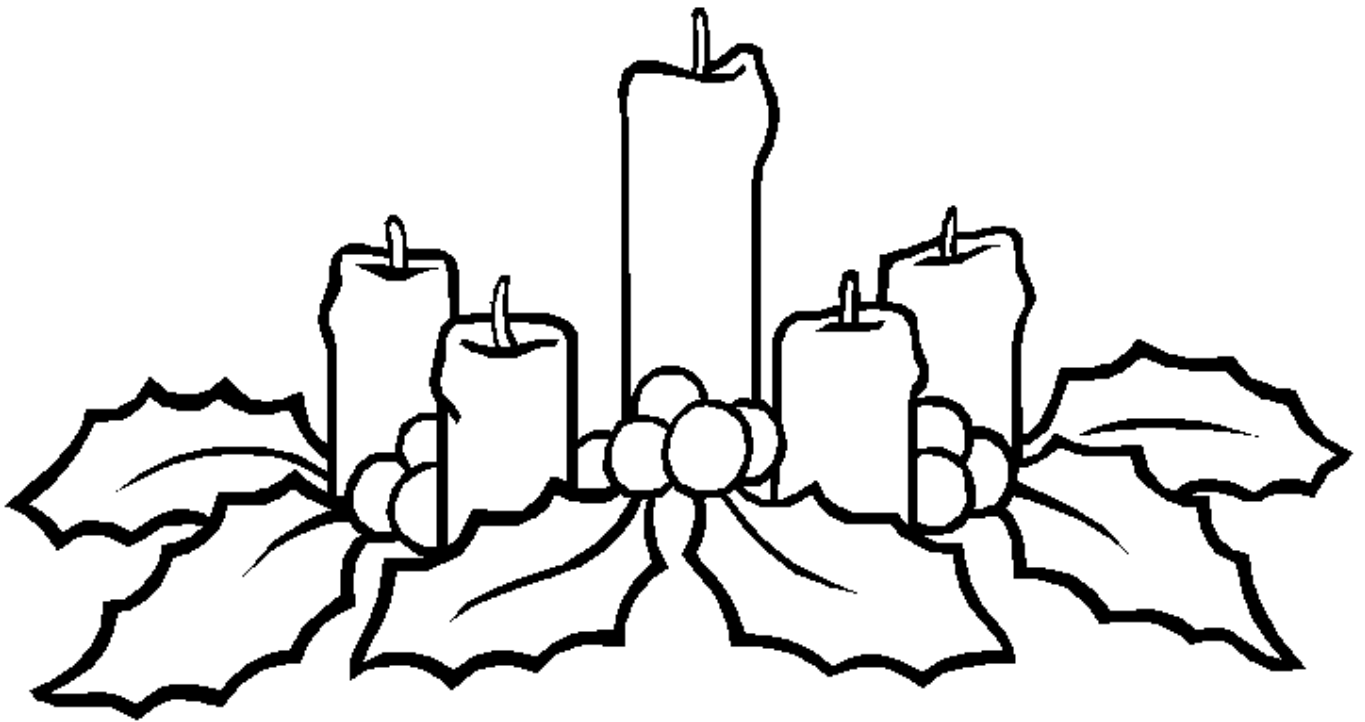
Hey Parents,

This is a great chance to pull out some memories of your child's Baptism and remind them of their special day!



The Third Sunday of Advent

During Advent we light the Advent candles. Three of the candles are usually purple, one is pink and the middle candle is white. Colour these candles and draw a flame over the first two purple candles and the pink candle to mark the third week of Advent. The pink candle reminds us that we are half way through Advent and that our waiting will soon be over!

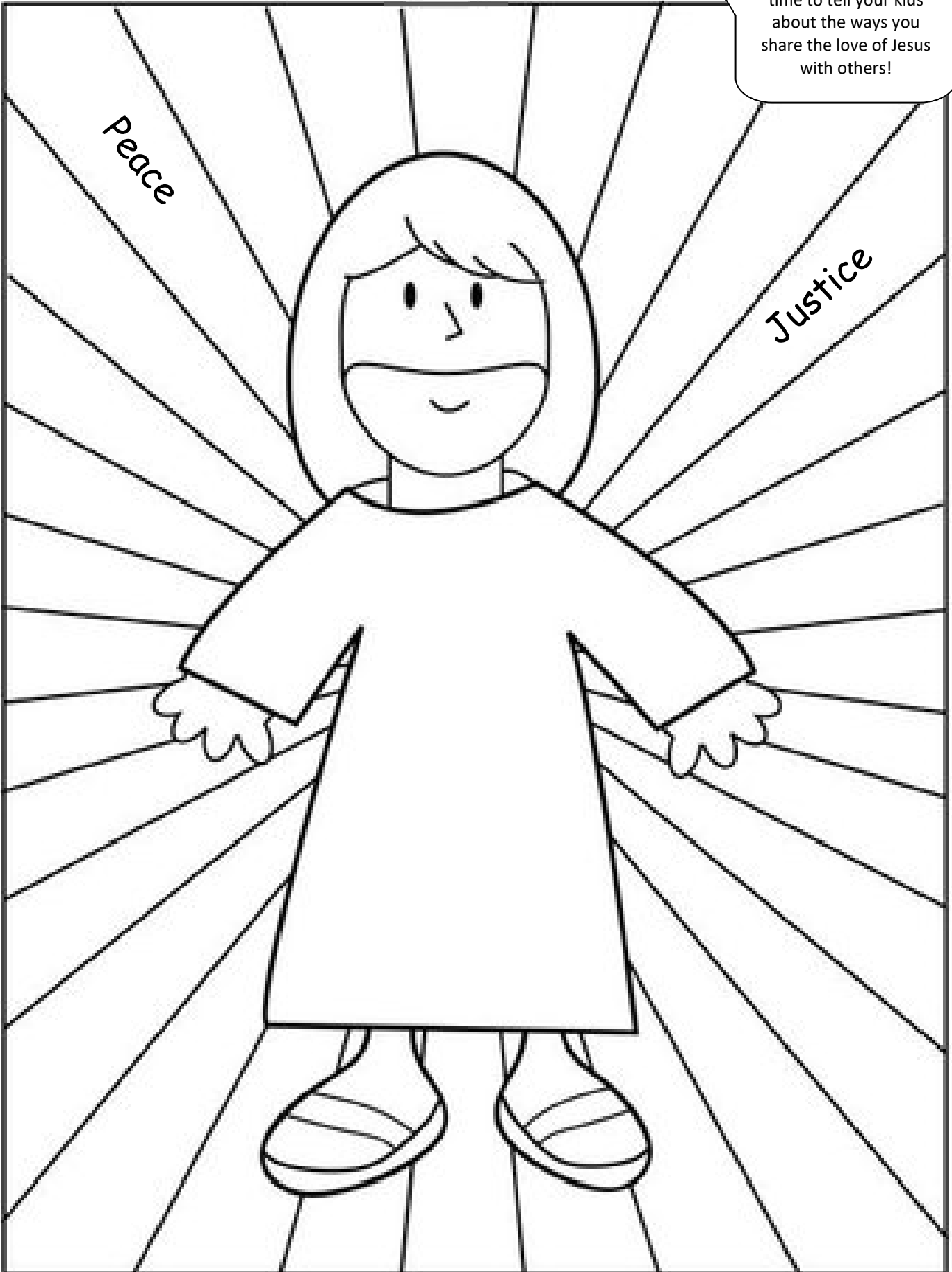


This week is all about JOY! Jesus is coming soon!! Sing and dance for joy" Ask Mum or Dad to put on some joyful music, have a dance and sing joyfully because Jesus is coming! Decorate the word JOY in the most colourful design you can!

JOY

The first reading from Isaiah is a reading that Jesus read when he went to the temple. He is the anointed one Isaiah is talking about. What are all the things Jesus brings? Write them in the sunrays around Jesus below and colour the picture. There are a couple to get you started.

Hey Parents, Take some time to tell your kids about the ways you share the love of Jesus with others!



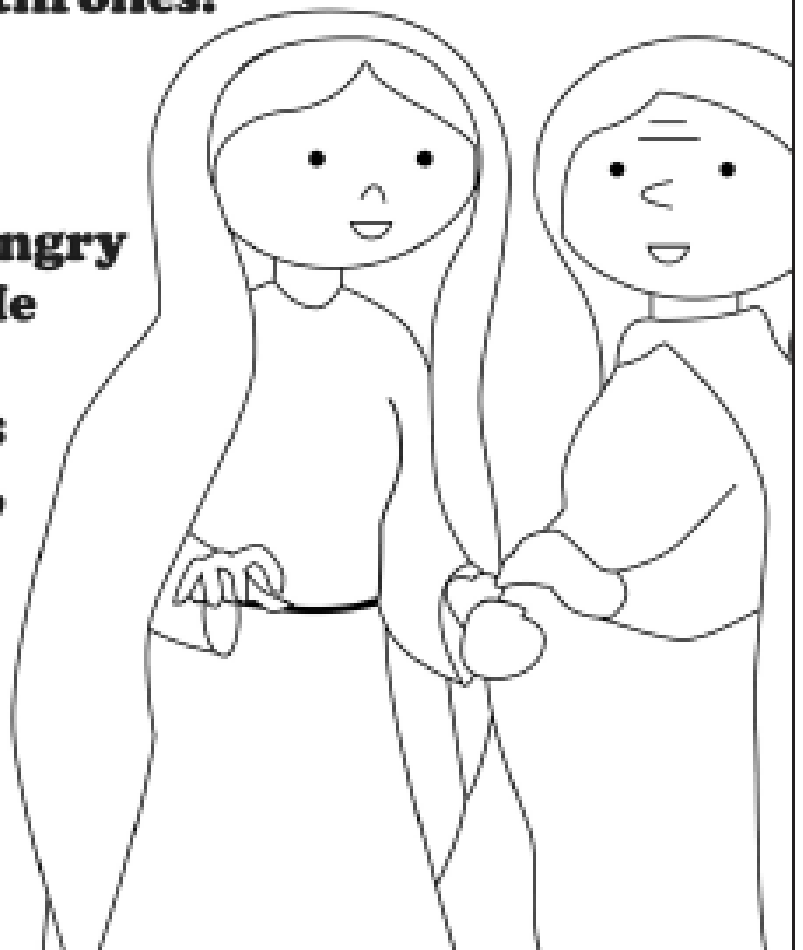
Mary's song! The angel Gabriel came to tell Mary that she was going to have the most special baby of all... Jesus! Mary goes to visit her cousin Elizabeth to share the good news. The psalm today is the song which Mary sang, it is called the Magnificat. She is singing for joy because of the wonderful thing that God is doing in her. Colour the picture below and ask Mum or Dad to help you read the Magnificat below (from happysaints.com).

The Magnificat

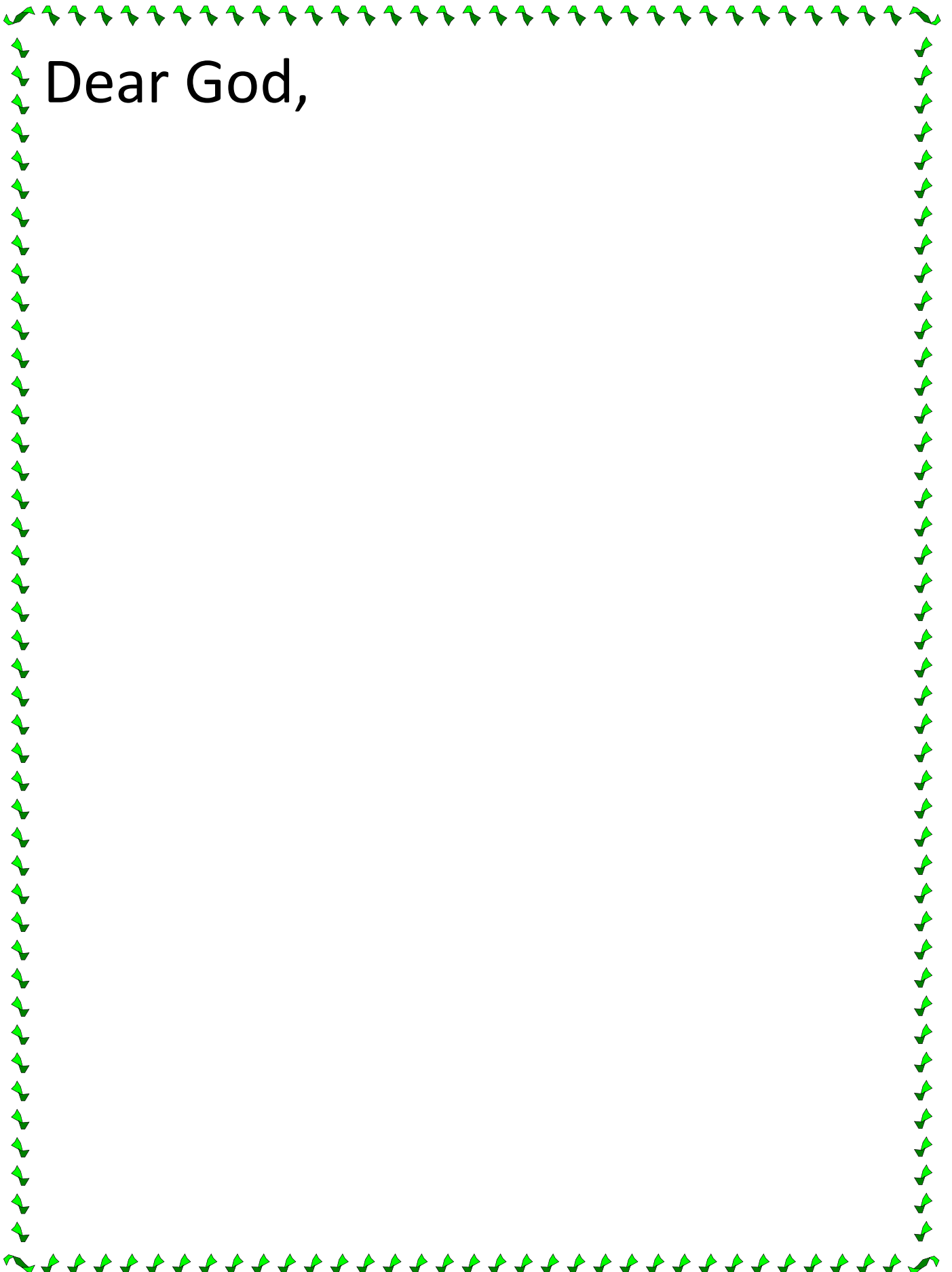
My soul magnifies the Lord. My spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior, for He has looked at the humble state of His servant. For behold, from now on, all generations will call me blessed. For He Who is mighty has done great things for me. Holy is His Name.

His mercy is for generations of generations on those who fear Him. He has shown strength with His Arm. He has scattered the proud in their hearts. He has put down princes from their thrones. And has exalted the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things. He has sent the rich away empty. He has given help to Israel, His servant, remembering His mercy, As He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his offspring forever.



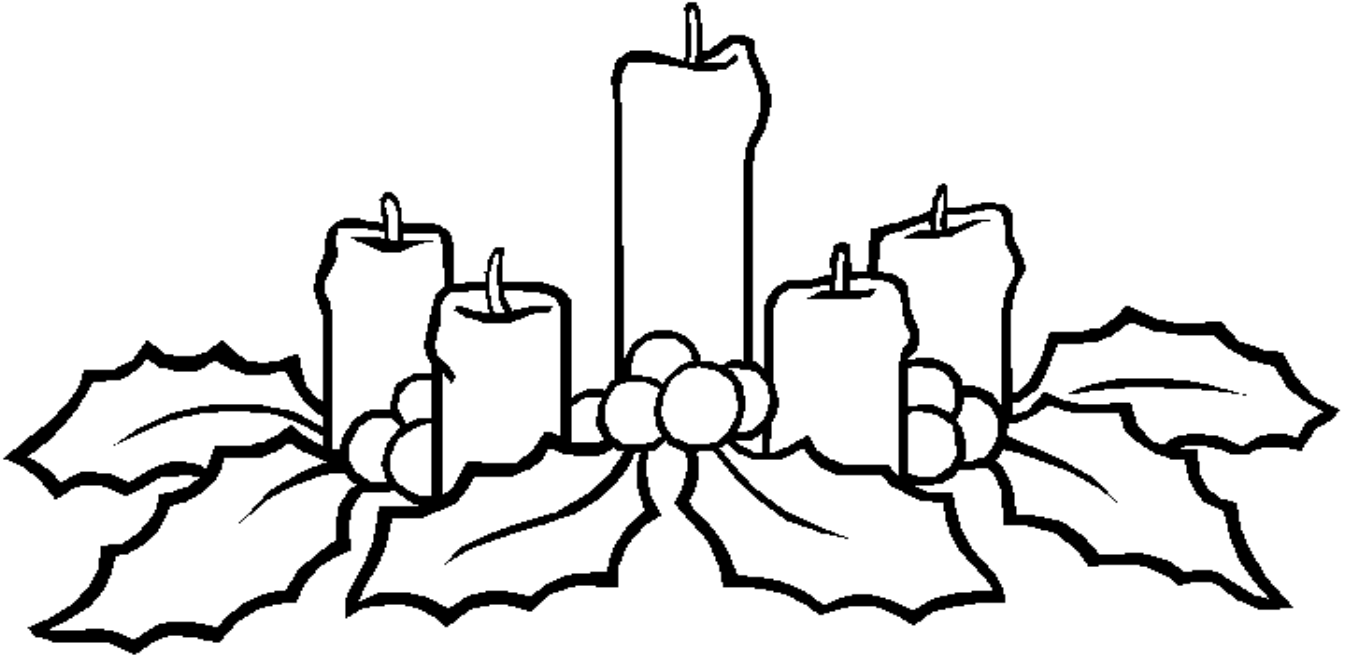
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 says 'rejoice and pray'. God loves to listen to you! Write or draw a prayer below, you could tell him how good he is (just like Mary did in the Magnificat) or ask Him for some of the things you need.



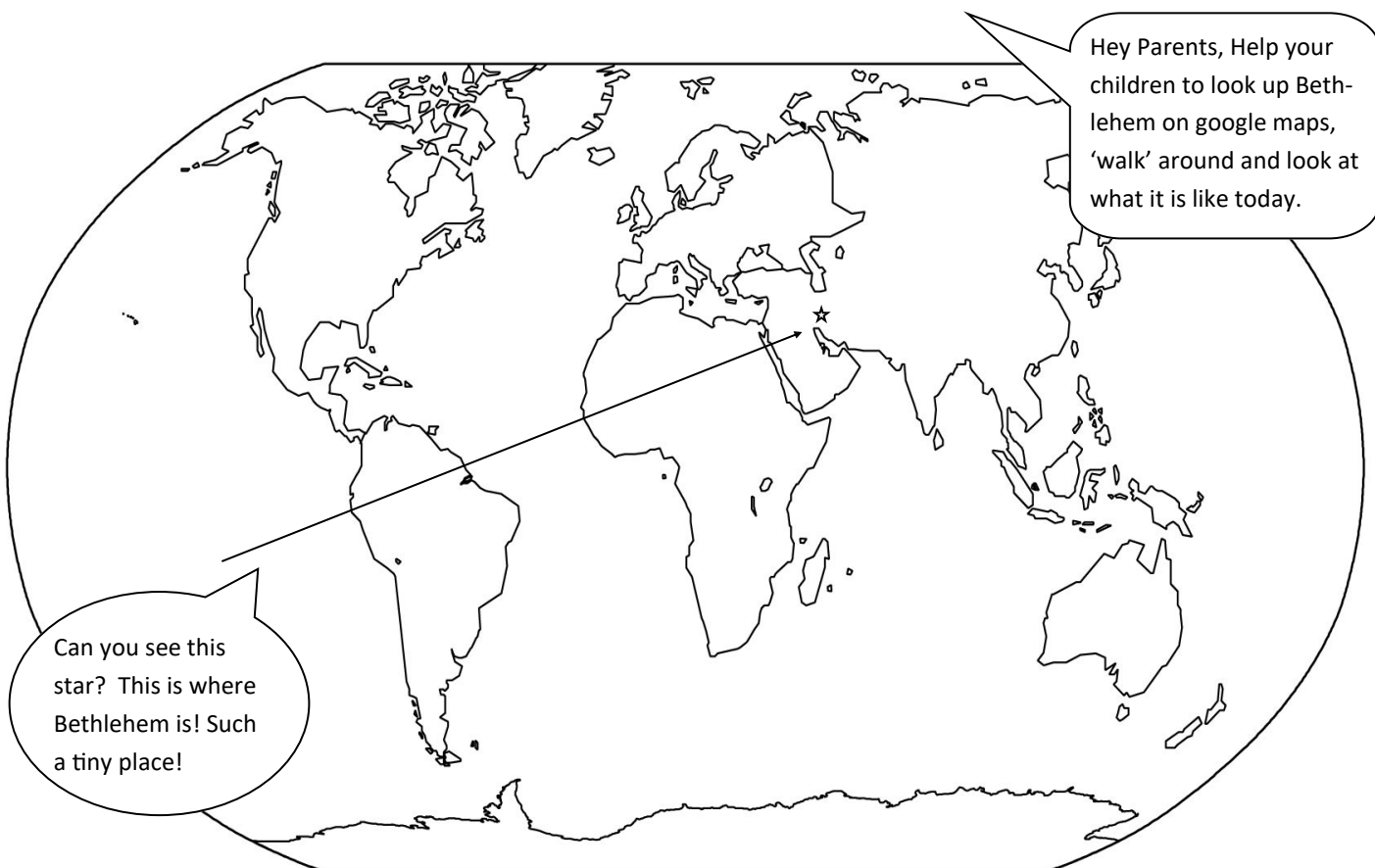
Dear God,

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

During Advent we light the Advent candles. Three of the candles are usually purple, one is pink and the middle candle is white. Colour these candles and draw a flame over all the purple candles and the pink candle to mark the fourth week of Advent.



This week is all about BELIEVING! Micah 5 1-4 says that even though Bethlehem is so small that is the place where the Saviour will be born and His greatness will reach to the ends of the earth! Look at the map of the world - see Bethlehem? It's so small! Now colour the whole world to show how far Jesus greatness will reach!



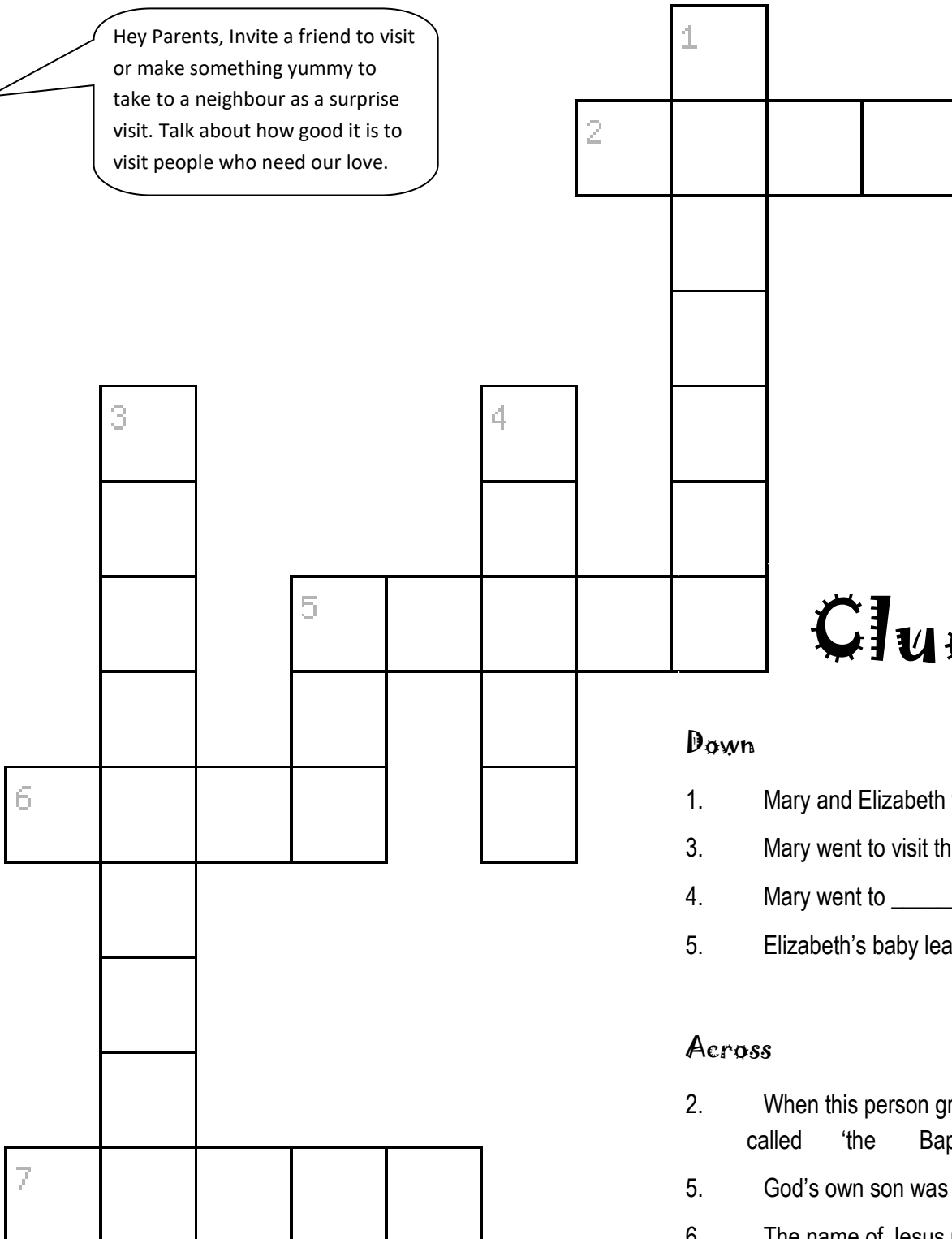
This week the Gospel tells us the story of how the angel comes to visit Mary (Luke 1:26-38). Mary believes in the promises of God! Here is a picture of Mary but the angel Gabriel is missing! Draw the angel into the picture!



Christmas is coming!

Mary goes to visit Elizabeth. "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? Lk 1: 39-45 Answer the questions to find the missing words in the crossword below.

Hey Parents, Invite a friend to visit or make something yummy to take to a neighbour as a surprise visit. Talk about how good it is to visit people who need our love.



Clues

Down

1. Mary and Elizabeth were _____.
3. Mary went to visit this person.
4. Mary went to _____ Elizabeth.
5. Elizabeth's baby leapt for _____.

Across

2. When this person grew up he was called 'the Baptist'.
5. God's own son was called this name.
6. The name of Jesus mother was _____.
7. Mary stayed with Elizabeth for _____ months.

Finally the time comes for Elizabeth and Zachariah's baby to be born. Zachariah writes the baby's name on a tablet... his name is John. Everyone is amazed and wonder who this special baby will grow up to be!



Names are very important... write your name here... ask Mum and Dad to tell you what it means and how they

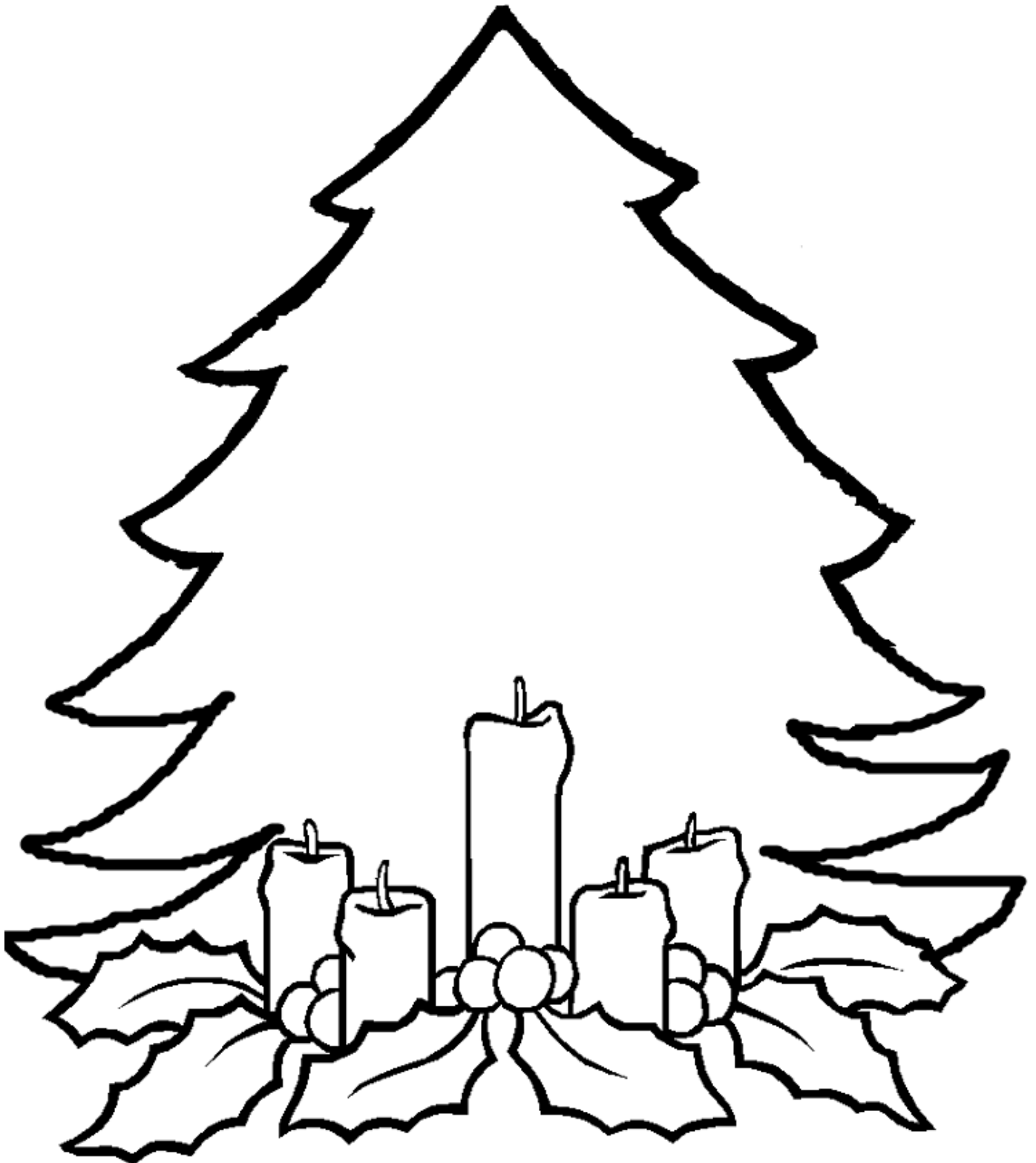
John the Baptist is born and his father Zachariah gives glory to God for His faithfulness! He prophesies over John and says "You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way". What do you want to do when you grow up? What do you think you might do to help Jesus and the world? Draw a picture here, or write about it if you want.

Hey Parents, Take this opportunity to affirm the gifts you see in your kids. Say a prayer with them asking God to help their gifts grow!

A large rectangular area for drawing or writing, bounded by a dotted line. The area is mostly empty, with a few small squares at the top left corner.

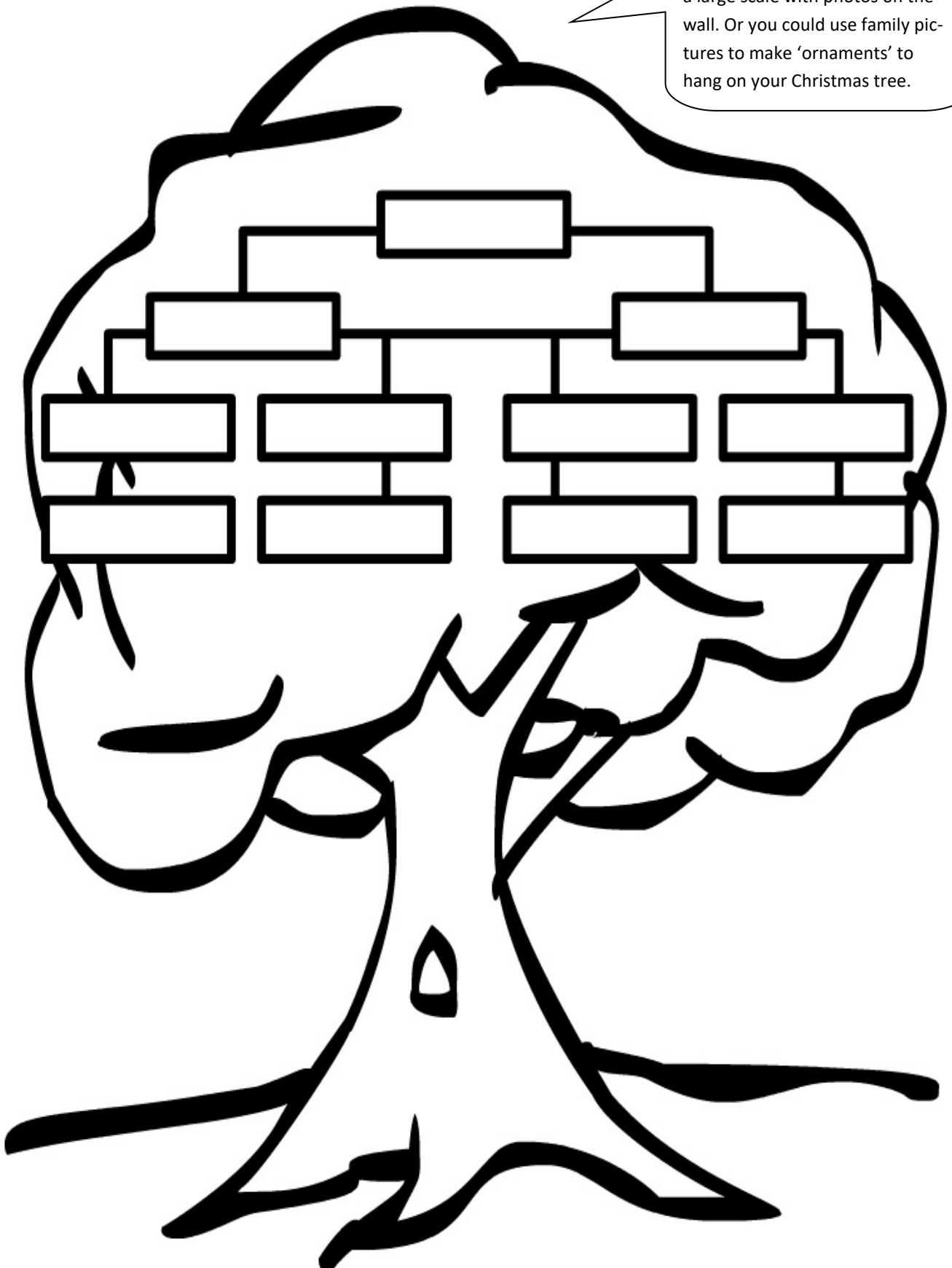
Christmas

During Advent we light the Advent candles. Now that it is Christmas we light the Jesus candle - the white one in the middle. Colour these candles and draw a flame over all the purple candles and the pink candle to mark the fourth week of Advent. Draw a flame over the white candle also to mark Christmas day. Decorate the tree also.

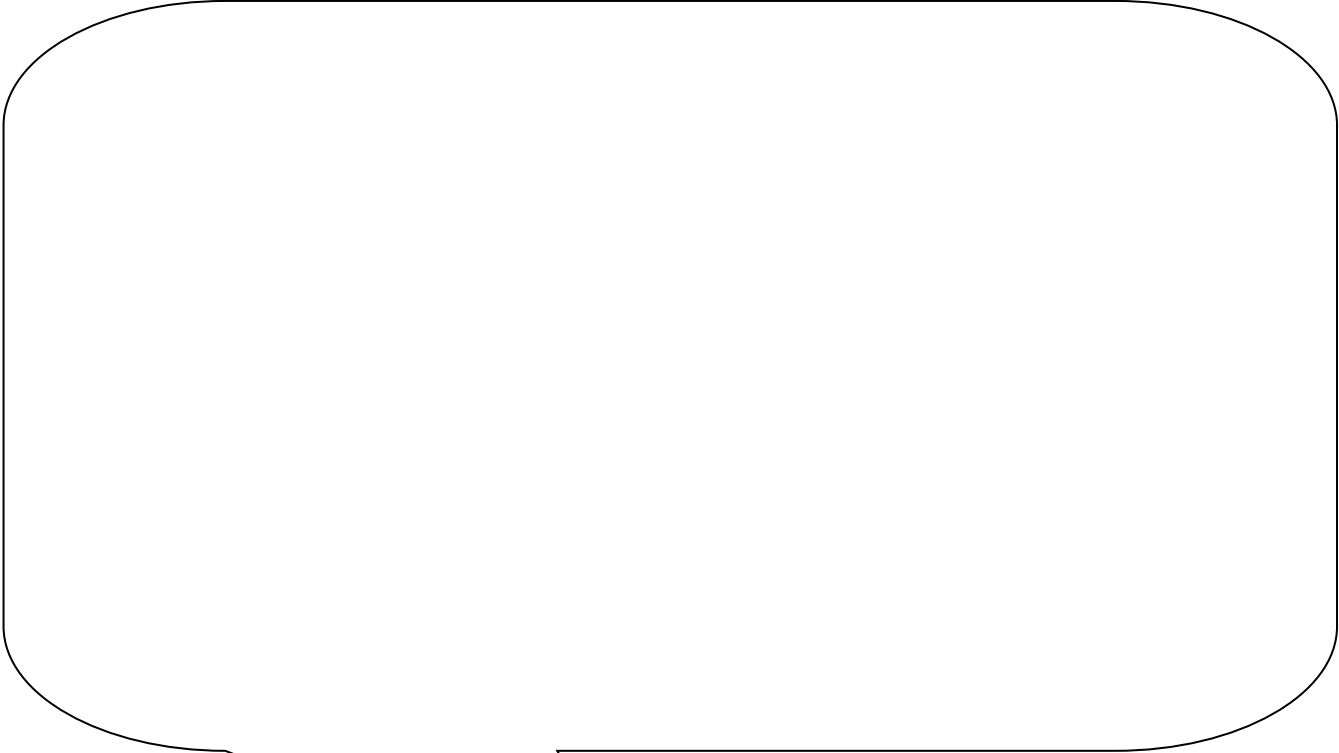


When there is Good News everyone is excited to tell it and in the Gospels the good news of Jesus coming is told a little differently in each book. The writer of Matthew's Gospel wants us to know that Jesus is the Messiah promised by God, the one who would come from the line of King David. So, Matthew's Gospel tells us all about Jesus family tree. Who is in your family tree? Fill in the family tree below.

Hey Parents, You could do this on a large scale with photos on the wall. Or you could use family pictures to make 'ornaments' to hang on your Christmas tree.

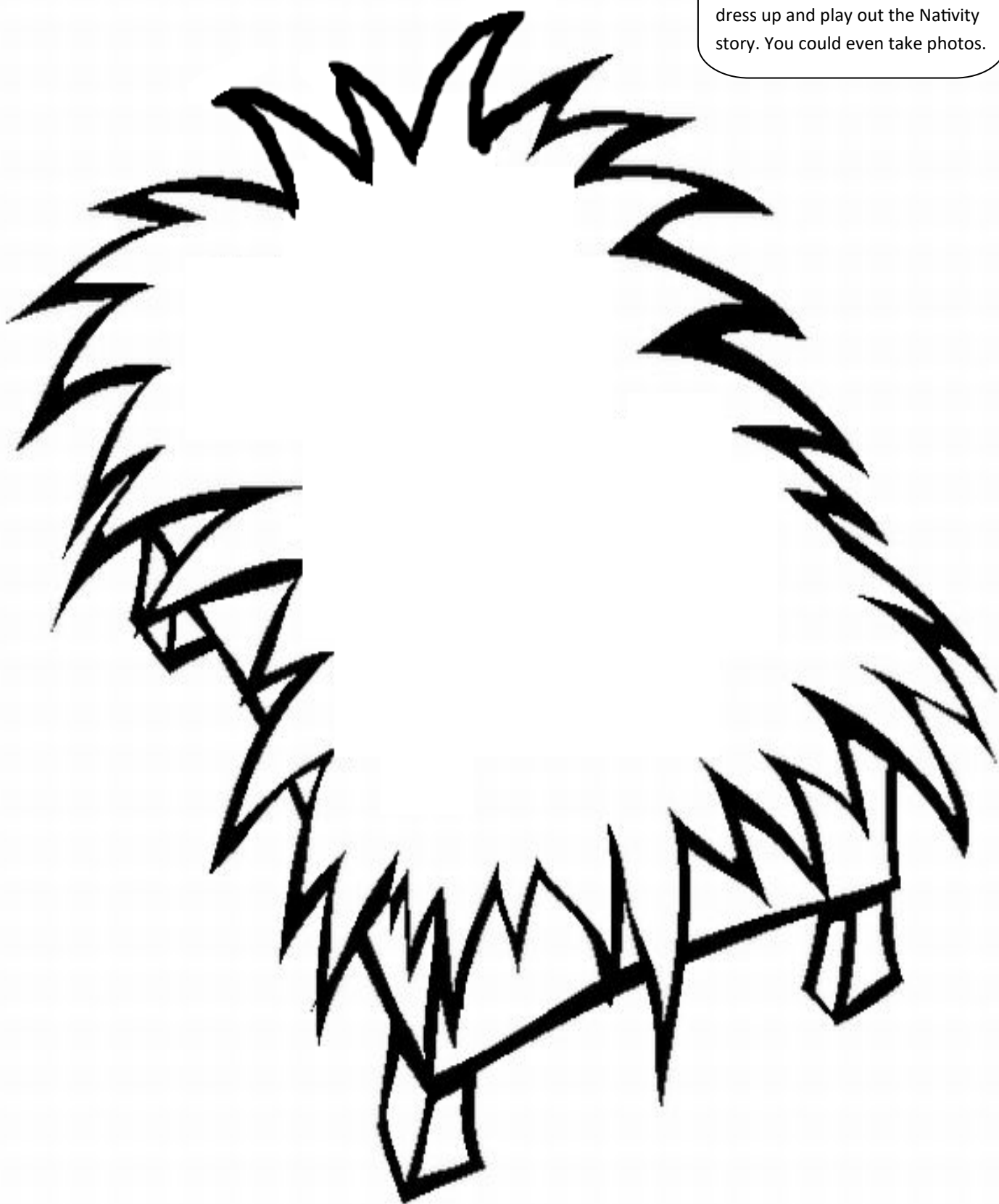


Matthew tells us that when Joseph heard that Mary was pregnant, he was worried but an angel came to him in a dream and told him not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife. Look up the scripture from Matthew's Gospel (Matthew 1:18-25) that tells us the words the angel said, write them in your own words in the speech bubble below.

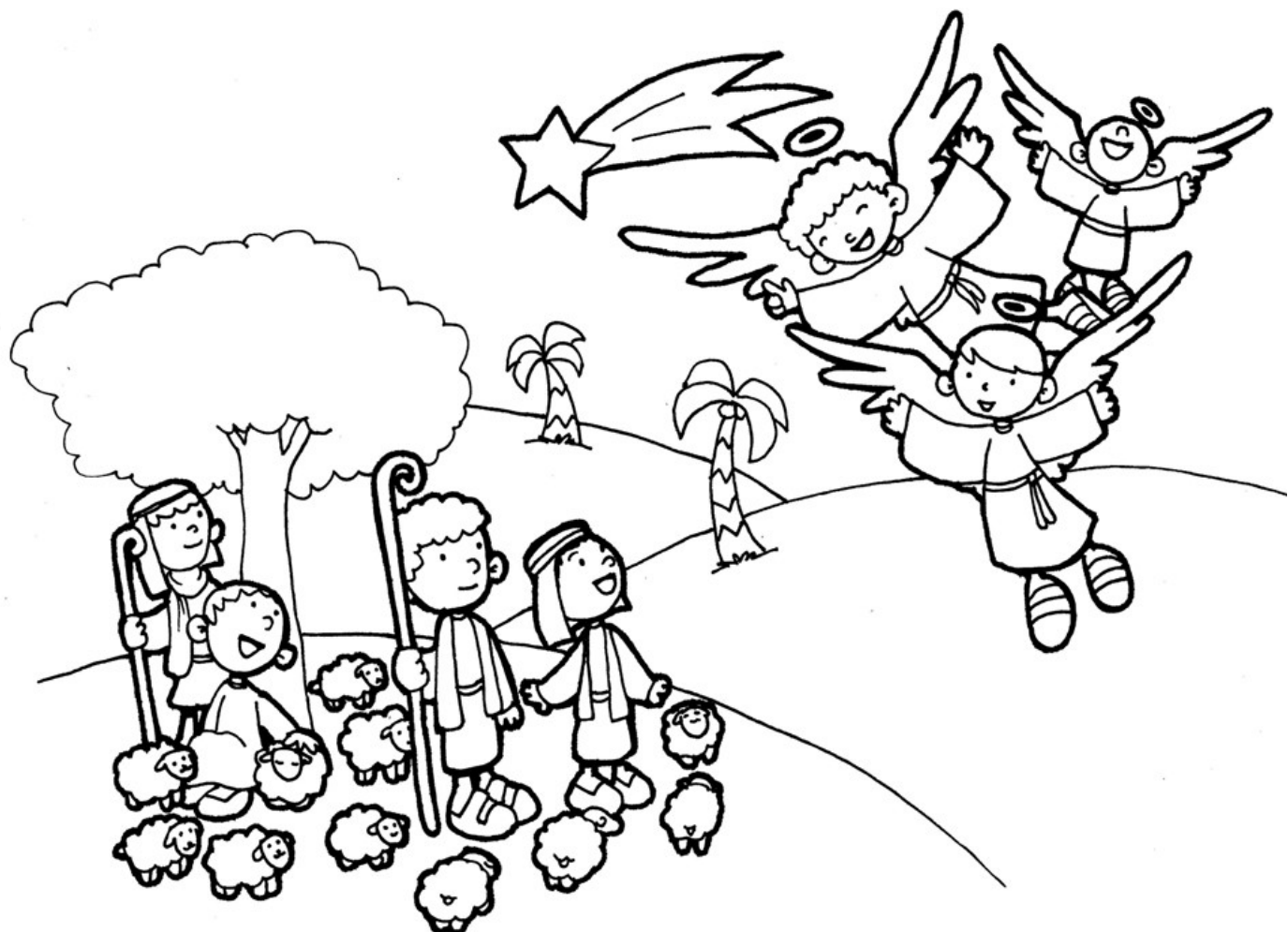


Luke's Gospel tells us the story from a different perspective. The writer of Luke tells us about the angel visiting Mary, their journey to Bethlehem and of Jesus birth in the stable. Draw baby Jesus in the empty manger below.

Hey Parents, If you have little children, make stable with sheets (like a cubby) and a manger with a box. Your children might like to dress up and play out the Nativity story. You could even take photos.



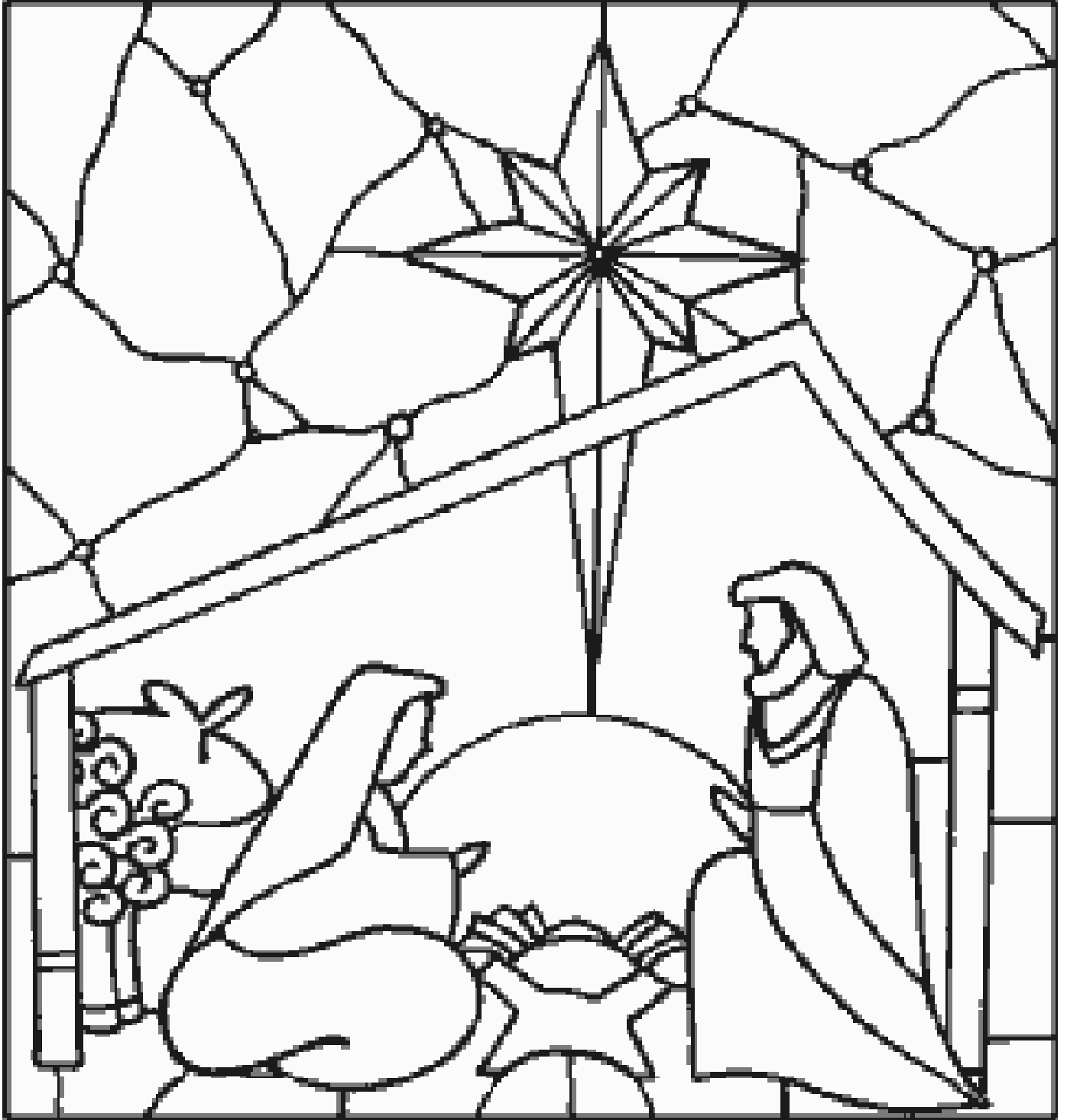
Luke's Gospel tells us the story from a different perspective. The writer of Luke tells us about the angel visiting Mary, their journey to Bethlehem and of Jesus birth in the stable. and the shepherds who heard the Good News and came to see him. Do the cryptogram below to find out what the angels said to the shepherds.



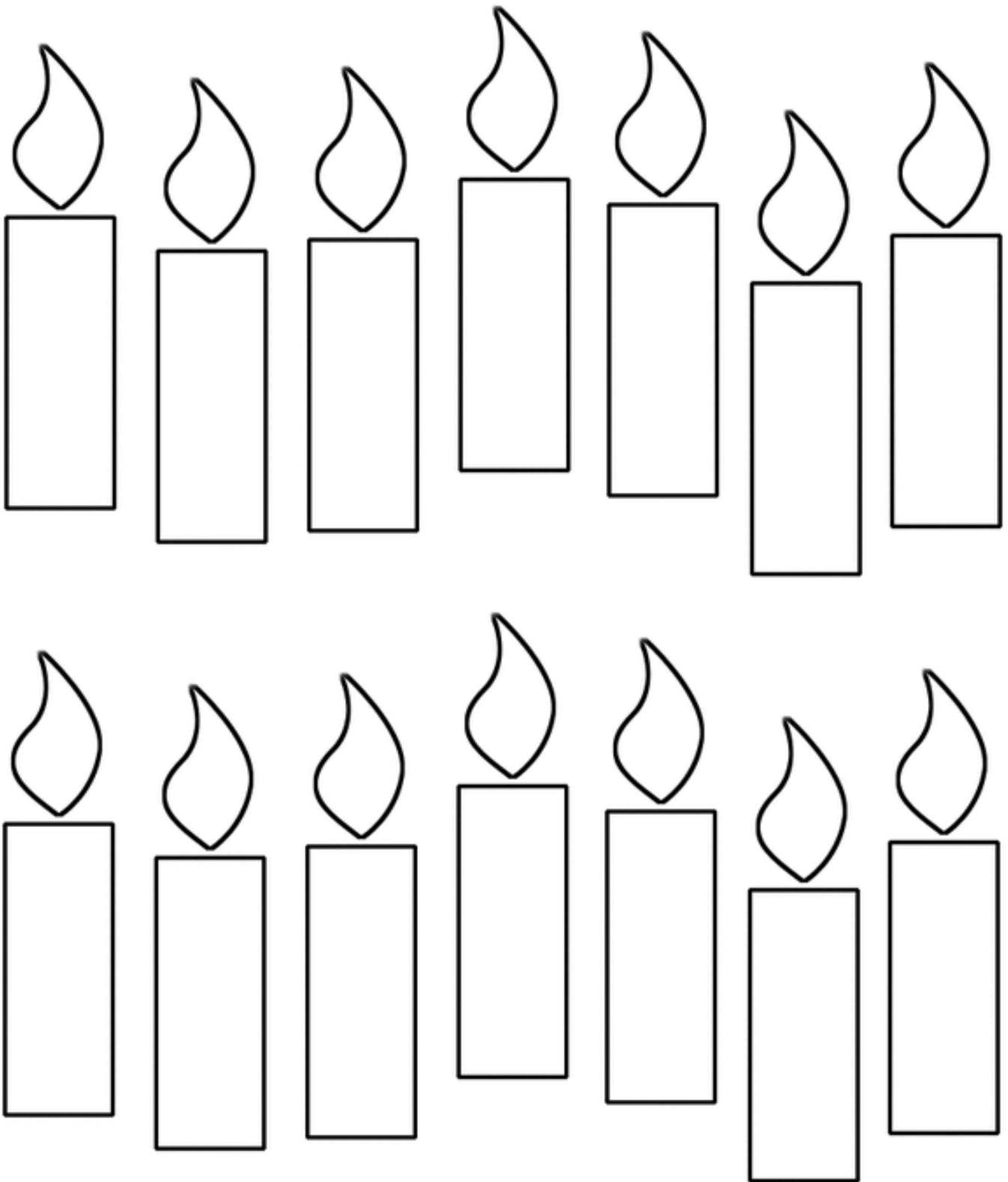
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
22				3				2						19							11				

O O O I E I E
 8 18 19 1 23 6 19 8 19 13 2 21 6 7 3 7 2 8 7 3 24 6
 A E A E O I E O E O
 22 21 13 5 3 22 4 3 6 19 7 2 24 5 3 19 5 18 3 19 21
 E A !
 3 22 1 6 7

The shepherds went to see the new born King, Jesus and they found him just as the angels had said they would. Colour this picture from happysaints.com of the amazing sight they saw.



In John's Gospel it's told differently again... John doesn't tell us about angels or shepherds, he tells us that Jesus is the WORD, God's most precious WORD. John also tells us that Jesus is God's LIGHT and that the darkness can never put it out. Jesus teaches us to share his light with the word. In the candles below, write down some of the ways you can share the light of Jesus with others.



The feast of the Epiphany remembers the visit of the wise men who followed the star in search of the new born King. Solve the cryptogram to find out what gifts they brought for Jesus.

Hey Parents, One way to share the light of Jesus is to pray. As Catholics we have the tradition of lighting a candle to pray. Go to lightaprayercandle.bne.catholic.edu.au to light a virtual candle and say a prayer.



A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
9				3				5						19						11					10

 O A I E E A Y
 16 19 24 13 18 7 9 12 25 5 12 2 3 12 2 3 9 12 13 23 10 7 7 17

The Christmas mandala below shows all of the people who came to visit Jesus. As you colour the images, thank God for the most precious gift of Christmas. On the next page you will find a little book to make all about the Christmas story cut it out and fold it into the mini book (the folding instructions are on the back of the mini book).



God sent an angel. The angel told Mary she would have a son. "Name him Jesus, he will be great," the angel said. "Praise God!" Mary said.



Happy Birthday Jesus



Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem to be counted in the census. It was a long, hard journey. Mary rode on a donkey, and Joseph walked.



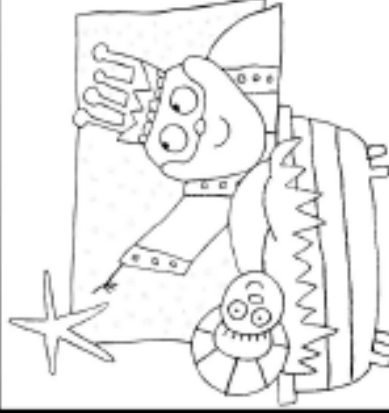
When they got to Bethlehem it was very dark. There was no place to sleep. A kind man let Mary and Joseph sleep in his barn with the animals.



Mary gave birth to Jesus in the stable with the animals. It was cold outside, so she wrapped him up snug in a blanket and put him in the soft hay.

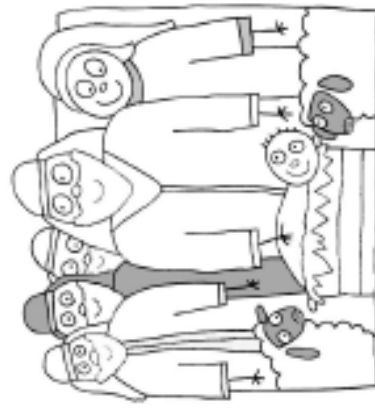


God put a special star in the sky. The wise kings saw the star and knew what it was for. They brought gifts to baby Jesus.



He is Christ the Lord!

God sent more angels to tell the shepherds about Jesus. "A savior has been born" the angels said. The shepherds went to go see the savior in the manger.



Free Bible Activities from
Christian Preschool Printables

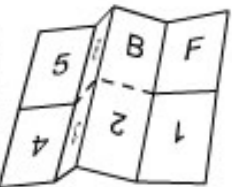
www.ChristianPreschoolPrintables.com

Folding Instructions

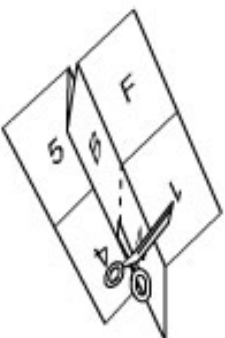
Note: All folds should be to the lines printed on the paper, and not to the actual edges of the page.

F	1
B	2
5	3
5	4

1. Start with front page at top left

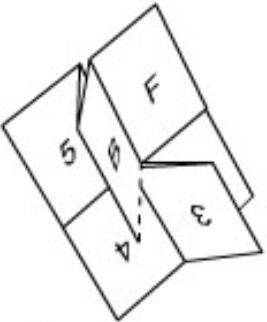


2. Fold in halves

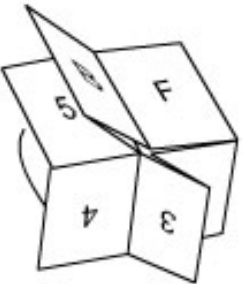


3. Cut at dotted line in center

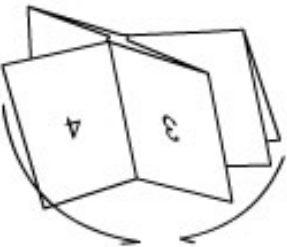
4. Fold to opposite ends.



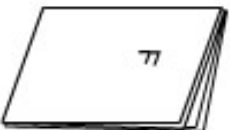
5. Fold in half vertically



6. Fold in half horizontally



done, enjoy!



HAPPY
BIRTHDAY
JESUS!

