



Advent

PREPARING THE WAY

This Advent guide has been developed with the intention of encouraging all members of the Rileyville Baptist Church family to spend quality time preparing their hearts and family for the celebration of the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus.



What is Advent? Advent is a four-week season dedicated to reflective preparation for the arrival, "advent", of Jesus at Christmas time. During this important event on the church calendar, each week of Advent focuses on a different theme - hope, peace, joy, and love. The word "Advent" is derived from the Latin word *adventus*, which means "coming" or "arrival". Churches and homes may have an advent wreath with either four or five candles, 3 purple, 1 pink, and 1 white. The First week, we light a purple candle which represents **Hope**. The Second week, we light another purple candle, this one represents **Peace**. The third week we light a Pink candle which represents **Joy**. The fourth week we light a Purple candle that represents **Love**. We light the white candle on Christmas Day to represent the birth of the Jesus.

How do I use this guide?

Some families have Advent calendars they use as a countdown to Christmas. You don't have to use one of those fancy Advent calendars you can buy anywhere. Small paper bags, small gift bags, little boxes, or even jewelry boxes can be used. A fun thing to do is to wrap up little gifts like a DVD along with popcorn and hot chocolate packets. Put a number on the package and put a corresponding number in the Advent calendar bag/drawer for that gift at some point during Advent. When you get to that day, you'll get a note saying something like "open gift #1". Gift #1 will be opened and it's instantly movie night! Just make sure you have time to watch the movie that night! You can even wrap up your Nativity figurines, number the packages, and schedule when they will be opened. That will give you an opportunity to focus on who and what figurine is included in the nativity. Of course, leave Baby Jesus for Christmas Eve!



This guide is organized to include four weeks of daily devotion. Some include activities.

- ❖ **Sundays** will introduce the theme of the week and the song of the week. You will be able to scan a QR code to learn the story behind the song. They are all very inspiring.
- ❖ **Mondays** will be a focus on missions. The first Monday will focus, of course, on Lottie Moon since the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering is a special offering all SBC churches participate in this time of year.
- ❖ **Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays** are simply devotions and prayer time.
- ❖ **Friday Night** is MOVIE NIGHT, Pastor David has selected two movies he recommends for viewing as a family. Pop some Popcorn, drink some hot chocolate, get all comfy in your PJs and watch these wonderful movies together. December 20th is a very special Movie Night! But I'm not going to tell you what it is here... you'll have to wait!
- ❖ **Saturdays** are for family fun! Either cooking a recipe from the country of our Mission focus or a craft also related to that county.



We hope and pray that you will use this guide in addition to your current family traditions. And that working through the devotions and Bible readings as a family will enhance your experience and heighten your openness to the Holy Spirit leading you at this time to a better understanding of exactly what Christmas is celebrating. It's not just the birth of a baby. It is celebrating the birth of Emmanuel, "God with Us".



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Ten Things to Pray for Missionaries:

1. **Protection and Safety:** Pray for the physical safety and well-being of the missionary and their family, asking for God's protection in their travels, daily activities, and interactions with people in unfamiliar environments.
2. **Guidance and Wisdom:** Pray that the missionary would have clarity and discernment in their decision-making, as they navigate cultural differences, language barriers, and various challenges in their mission work.
3. **Spiritual Strength:** Pray for the missionary's spiritual resilience and growth, asking that they would remain steadfast in their faith, find strength during difficulties, and be filled with the Holy Spirit to effectively carry out their mission.
4. **Favor and Open Doors:** Pray for favor and open doors for the missionary to connect with the local community, government officials, and influential individuals who can support their mission and provide opportunities for impact.
5. **Language Acquisition:** Pray that the missionary would quickly learn and understand the local language, enabling effective communication and the ability to share the gospel with clarity and cultural sensitivity.
6. **Relationships and Connections:** Pray for the development of deep, meaningful relationships between the missionary and the local people, that they may be able to build trust, establish connections, and effectively share God's love.
7. **Provision and Resources:** Pray for God's provision of financial resources, necessary supplies, and logistical support for the missionary's needs, ensuring they have what they require to carry out their mission effectively.
8. **Healing and Restoration:** Pray for the physical, emotional, and spiritual healing of the people the missionary encounters, asking for God's transformative power to bring hope, restoration, and salvation.
9. **Unity and Cooperation:** Pray for unity and cooperation among the missionary team, local believers, and other ministries involved, that they may work together harmoniously, supporting and encouraging one another in their mission efforts.



Read Isaiah 9:2-7

Theme of the week

Song of the Week: *Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus* by Charles Wesley



151 Come, Thou Long-expected Jesus

(FIRST TUNE)

Charles Wesley, 1744

HYFRYDOL: 8. 7. 8. 7. D.
Rowland Hugh Prichard, 1855

1. Come, Thou long - ex - pect - ed Je - sus, Born to set Thy peo - ple free;
2. Born Thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, Born a child and yet a King,

From our fears and sins re - lease us; Let us find our rest in Thee.
Born to reign in us for - ev - er, Now Thy gra - cious King - dom bring.

Is - rael's Strength and Con - so - la - tion, Hope of all the earth Thou art;
By Thine own e - ter - nal Spir - it Rule in all our hearts a - lone;

Dear De - sire of ev - ery na - tion, Joy of ev - ery long - ing heart.
By Thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it Raise us to Thy glo - rious throne. A - MEN.

JESUS CHRIST: HIS ADVENT

[138]

The Story behind the Song:

“Come, thou Along Expected Jesus” is a hymn written by Charles Wesley in 1744. Wesley wrote the hymn with the intent for people to remember Advent and Christmas as commemorating the Nativity of Jesus and preparing for the Second Coming. Wesley considered Haggai 2:7 and looked at the situation of orphans in the areas around him, as well as the class divide in Great Britain, when writing the hymn.

For the full story, scan this QR Code:



CHINA – Lottie Moon



Lottie Moon was a missionary to China. A missionary is someone who travels to another place to tell people about Jesus.

Growing up in Virginia, Lottie Moon and her siblings chose to rebel against Christianity. She wasn't always dedicated. On the contrary, as a child she was called a "devil" because of her defiant attitude.



Lottie's father was a well-to-do cotton merchant when she was born in Viewmont, a Virginia plantation in 1840. But he died when she was thirteen. Lottie did not like to go to church. But because of a friend, she agreed to attend a missionary meeting. At that meeting the Holy Spirit showed her how ugly her spirit was. After praying all night, she confessed her bad behavior to God and to others. At 18, Lottie followed Christ and was baptized. A good student, Lottie worked hard and graduated with her master's degree. She was considered the best educated southern woman for her time. When she was 33, she sailed to China as a Southern Baptist missionary. She saw firsthand the world's greatest problem – LOSTNESS. Lottie went to China on a ship in 1873 to tell the Chinese people about Jesus. Arriving in China on this day, October 7, 1873, she began work in Tonchow, Northern China.

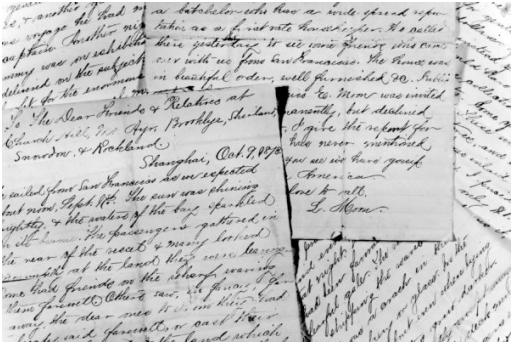
The Chinese did not respond well to her overtures at first. They called her a "foreign devil" because she didn't look like them and she came from a place they had never heard of. When she offered them home-baked cookies they refused them, thinking they were poisoned. But, later the children tried the cookies and liked the cookies! Then, the mothers invited Lottie into their homes, and she told them about Jesus. The children called Lottie "the cookie lady." Gradually, she broke down barriers. She used her knitting and sewing skills to interest Chinese women. She also worked hard to stop the Chinese practice of binding girls feet which crippled them for their entire life.



Lottie and other missionaries started schools, even schools for girls who weren't normally afforded an education. Lottie had taught in the American South prior to moving to China, so transferring her skills to the mission field was a natural inroad into the lives of the people of China who also valued education. Interaction with the students' families afforded Lottie a wide audience for sharing the gospel that she might not have had otherwise. Throughout her thirty-nine-year missionary career, depending on her health and circumstances, she alternated between teaching and doing full-time evangelism work.

Eleven years after coming to China she prepared for a much-needed furlough. As she was about to leave for the United States, men from Pintow arrived on foot, pleading with her to come work in their city where many were eager to hear the gospel. Lottie

immediately abandoned her plans for a rest, moved to Pintow, and led many people to know the Jesus who had changed her own life. During her forty years in China, she took only three furloughs.



Lottie also wrote lots of letters home to the United States. She wanted people to pray for the Chinese people. She also wanted more people to go to China to tell people about Jesus. Because of Lottie's letters, Southern Baptists began collecting an offering every year for international missions.

When she was in her seventies, China suffered severe famine.

Lottie would not eat because her people had nothing to eat. Naturally she became ill. She was put on boat to return to America but died of starvation when the ship reached Kobe, Japan. She may not have given a thousand imaginary lives for China but she gave the one she had.

Lottie Moon died on Christmas Eve, 1912. Every year, Southern Baptist churches collect an offering to send Southern Baptist missionaries to countries around the world where they tell people about Jesus. The offering is called the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering®.

This year, the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering goal for Southern Baptists is \$205 million! That's a lot of money, but it helps support nearly 3,600 missionaries and their 2,880 children who are telling people about Jesus! Thank you for giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering!

RBC's Goal is \$17,500 Let's see how far we can exceed that!



"If I had a thousand lives, I would give them all for the women of China,"

Lottie Moon

Read John 1:9-14

The lights of Christmas can be one of the most beautiful aspects of how we decorate for the season. Fragrant evergreens strung with twinkling strands, front porches blinking red and green in the cold nights, candles gently flickering at the dinner table—these sights are so warm and inviting. Jesus is the “great light” referred to in Isaiah 9:2, and seen here as the “true light” in today’s scripture. “Great” and “true” suggest that there are small and false lights that can mislead us in this world. This can happen when we set our hope for salvation on people or things that often disappoint us. The scripture makes a distinction that Jesus’ light to draw and redeem us as Gods’ children is a truth we can get excited about. As the season unfolds, if you are a follower of Christs’ light, know that the grace and power to believe is a gift of God to you. While the same tree that shines brightly today can frustrate you tomorrow when the middle half goes out unexpectedly—you can get your hopes up about the Light of Christ! It blazed bright all those years ago, and still shines as a beacon to guide and affirm our belonging to God today.

Discussion Starter: *What is your favorite Christmas decoration and how does this tradition help you to remember Jesus?*

Week 1: **The Promise of HOPE**

WEDNESDAY

December 4, 2024

Read John 8:12; Matthew 5:14-16

Not wanting to rush the season, but Christmas Eve candlelight service is such a special time! The dim lights, the advent account retold, and at the end a very powerful symbol of todays scripture lived out. We light candles and sing the gospel. In a way, this is the image Jesus is communicating to his followers. Jesus is all our Hope in this dark world. When we hold out His light, like a candle glowing, to our friends and family who are lost and struggling in this world of sin—we are bringing the hope of the gospel in view. As believers this is not a passive holding of a seasonal candle one night a year, but a command to “let your light shine before others” all of our days. Why? Because God is worthy of glory. He is worthy of our lives spent as lights reflecting the “true Light” this Christmas and beyond. Shine bright church!

Discussion Starter: *How do you see God using your “light” to point others to Jesus?*

DON'T FORGET! Tonight, at 6:30pm is the first night of a special Equip. We will be studying the *Three Gifts of Christmas*. Tonight, the gift of *Gold*

Read Hebrews 6:19-20

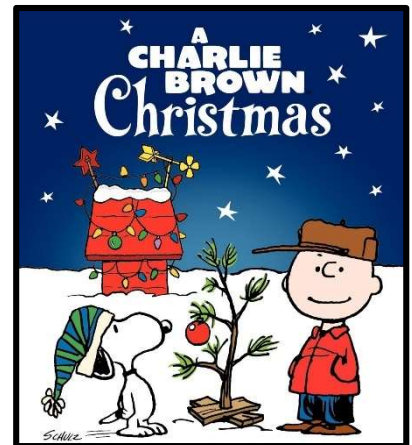
Christmas time fills our hearts and minds with many hopeful wishes. “I hope I get what I asked for!” “I hope everyone is home this year.” “I hope I make it through the season without losing my mind!” I think a lot of us would admit that when we think of “hope”, we tend to think of it as a “fingers crossed” situation. Like so many long-shot dreams and desires, hope gets lumped in with the silly things we should out grow. However, today’s scripture reading offers a better understanding on what hope actually is. Because Jesus, who is God, has secured our salvation for us completely, as His people we now have confidence that He loves us and is for us. Hope is a promise kept. Jesus willingly came at Christmas to BE hope for us. Our hope in Jesus is a sure thing. We can count on and trust in Jesus today because we are anchored in Him.

Discussion Starter: *What are some things you are “hoping” for this Christmas? How can the hope that Jesus offers point us to something better?*

Read Hebrews 10:23; 1 Peter 1:3-5

Movie Suggestion: A Charlie Brown Christmas

Do you ever stop and consider just how amazing it is that God became a human baby? I think we get so use to the nativity account, that maybe we can move past this point too quickly. Jesus, who was completely sufficient and glorious, left his throne next to the Father and became like us—small, smelly, and in great need. He put himself in this position so that you and I could be “born” as well. Not the birth you celebrate each year on your birthday, but one that Jesus secured for us through His death, burial and resurrection. This “second birth”, our salvation, opens up what today’s reading calls our “living hope”. This hope is our eternity with Jesus. Our hope began in a manger cradle, but it didn’t stay there. Hallelujah! Jesus lives and if we place our faith in Him, He is faithful to bring us to where he is now—with the Father in eternity.



Discussion Starter: *When you imagine Jesus as a baby, what are some things you think of? What does it mean to you that Jesus was willing to be born into this broken world?*

Read Matthew 1:20-21

Lottie Moon Tea cake recipe

PLAIN TEA CAKE
(As made by Lottie Moon)

- 3 teacups of sugar
- 1 teacup of butter
- 1 teacup of sour milk
- 4 pints of flour
- 3 eggs, well beaten
- ½ teaspoon of soda

Flavor to taste. Roll thin.
Bake in a quick oven.

PLAIN TEA CAKE
(Adapted recipe for today’s cooks)

- 2 Cups of flour
- ½ cup butter
- 1 heaping cup of sugar
- 1 well-beaten egg
- 1 Tablespoon cream

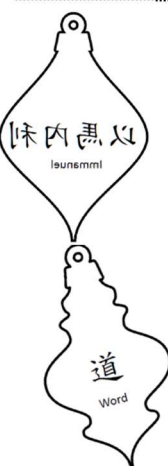
Cream the butter and sugar. Add the egg and mix well. Add the flour and cream. Dust a board with flour. Roll the dough very thin. Cut cookies with a round cookie cutter. Place a buttered or nonstick cookie sheet. Bake at 475 degrees for about 5 minutes.

LOTTIE MOON

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

MISSIONARY CHRISTMAS SALVATION
 SACRIFICE CHARLOTTE TEACAKES
 OFFERING BAPTIST EDMONIA
 CHINA JESUS PRAY

In case you’re wondering what or who Edmonia is...She is Lottie Moon’s sister.



CRAFT ACTIVITY: The next two pages are Christmas Tree Ornaments with the different names for Jesus written in English and Chinese (Cantonese dialect). Color and/or decorate the ornaments and use them on your Christmas tree to remember all the people in China who need to know Jesus!

In addition to the ones you create for your Christmas tree, please also color a few to put on the Advent Display trees at church! Be sure to write your name on the back of the ornament you bring so everyone can see who the fantastic artist is.
THE MORE THE MERRIER!



Read Micah 5:1-5

Song: Hark the Herald Angels Sing



Charles Wesley

7 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
 Charles Wesley Mendelssohn

1. Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King, Peace on earth, and
 2. Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ, the ever-lasting Lord: Long desired be-
 mer-cy mild; God and sinners, rec-on-ciled." Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
 Hold Him come, Finding here His humble home. Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
 Join the triumph of the skies; With angel-ic hosts proclaim "Christ is born in
 Hail thine incarnate De-i-ty! Pleased as man with men to dwell, Je-sus our Im-
 Beth-le-hem!"
 mar-u-el." Hark the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King."

The Story behind the Song:

The Christmas carol “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” was originally a 10-stanza poem called “Hymn for Christmas Day” written by Charles Wesley in 1739. The poem celebrates the birth of Jesus and weaves together biblical phrases from the prophets, the Gospels, and the epistles. Over the years, the lyrics underwent changes, and it was eventually settled by Reverend George Whitfield. The work “Hark” means to listen, emphasizing the importance of paying heed to the angelic message proclaiming a Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem.

For the full story, scan this QR code:





Windswept Academy is one of RBC's Partner Missions

Windswept Academy
Eagle Butte, South Dakota

Mission Statement

The mission of Windswept Academy is to provide our students with a Christ-centered, quality, academic education in a Biblically directed learning environment that prepares them for leadership and Christian service in the community and the world.



Vision Statement

In a Christ-centered environment, students of Windswept Academy will acquire wisdom, knowledge, critical thinking skills, and a Biblical worldview as demonstrated by a lifestyle of Christian discipline, character, leadership, worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry and evangelism.

Our History

Windswept Academy began its first school year on August 27, 2009, with 12 students in grades Kindergarten through Second, at the home of the First

Baptist Church of Eagle Butte, South Dakota. Our second year began in August 2010 with 19 children enrolled in Kindergarten through Sixth grade.

Due to our rapid expansion, we outgrew our first home and moved to a new location at 332 Cedar Street in Eagle Butte. Our third year began in August 2011 with 29 students and by the start of our fourth year in 2012, we had 40 students attending.

By May 2013, we had outgrown our building and in August 2013 we began building a new multi-purpose building on our campus to handle our new growth. In September 2013, the school began its fifth year with 50 students. Our new building, located at 121 Cedar Street, was completed in September 2014 and it ushered in 67 students as we entered our sixth year!



Want to know how to say “Merry Christmas” in Lakota Sioux:

Winyan Winyan, Kadota

(wee-yahn wee-yahn, Kah-doh-tah)

Windswept Academy has continued to see steady growth. We had over 70 students in our 7th year, over 80 students in our 8th year, over 90 students in our 9th year and 98 students as we began our 10th year in 2018.

Most of the kids who attend Windswept Academy are from the Lakota Sioux Tribe. They live on the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation in Eagle Butte, South Dakota

Look closely at the pictures and try to figure out what the kids who attend school at Windswept Academy have in common with the kids from RBC KidZone! Do you see a similarity? If you don't see one, we'll give you a hint... take a look at what the Craft is on the Page for Saturday.



Pray for their Current Needs

- Student uniforms
- New computers or laptops
- Working musical instruments
- Ductless Heating & Cooling – Mini-Split System
- Financial donations for nutritious meals and educational field trips

Current Praises

- New playground equipment
- Two new 15 passenger vans
- Elementary library books have been flooding in from across the US!
- We plan to have several mission teams working all summer to prepare our classrooms and teacher housing for the school year.



Read John 10:10-15

Today's verse centers around Jesus being our Good Shepherd. Those who have a nativity set displayed in their homes this time of year don't need a lot of help imagining shepherds and what their job entails. Hardworking, often dirty, living outdoors with the flocks, solitary, outcast—in other words, some of the lowest members of society. It is to these that the angels of heaven announce the Saviors birth. To these that Jesus identifies with. Jesus is our defending, gentle, correcting, faithful Shepherd. He knows His flock and He knows how to call and rescue them. He even lays down His own life when the wolves come so that His flock will have life in abundance. What amazing love!

Discussion Starter: *As a family or on your own, look up the duties of a shepherd in Jesus' day. Talk about the difficulty and how wonderful it was that they were the first to hear that Jesus was born.*

Read John 16:33

We sing a lot of songs about peace this time of year. Lullabies of baby Jesus sleeping and snow gently falling. But the *pace* we keep at Christmas time looks anything but peaceful. The world we live in is constantly in turmoil. Turning on the news we find wars raging, people suffering, and the cause of Christ often misunderstood and rejected. In these verses, we see Jesus promising **not** an easy and peaceful life, rather peace amidst the way things are. Because Jesus came and has dwelt among us, he has kept his promise of lasting peace for those who believe. Because He lives today, we can rest easy even when the season is crazy, lonely and hard. He has overcome the world for you! Peace is ours because we have Jesus this Christmas and always.

Discussion Starter: *What is a tradition you can do as a family or on your own to usher in His lasting peace today?*

DON'T FORGET! Tonight, at 6:30pm is the second night of the study on the *Three Gifts of Christmas*. Tonight, the gift of *Frankincense*

Read Romans 5:1-5

Imagine Mary, tired and worn out from travel and childbirth, trying to soothe a crying baby Jesus. As she was attempting to give him peace, He would one day bring her peace—and the whole world. Not just a quiet night of peace, or even a life void of conflict. We saw from yesterday's verse that this world is a place of trouble and it is to be expected. No—we need a deeper Peace that gets at the heart of the issue of all of our unrest. We need the power of sin, that separates us from God, to be destroyed. Our verse today says that the work of Christ for our salvation has brought us peace with God. Before, we were God's enemy, and we were unable to please Him or stand before Him. Now, we are able to know God and to rejoice in the life He has saved us for. We are able to choose holy and good things that bring us peace instead of the sin that hurts and enslaves us. Thank you Lord!

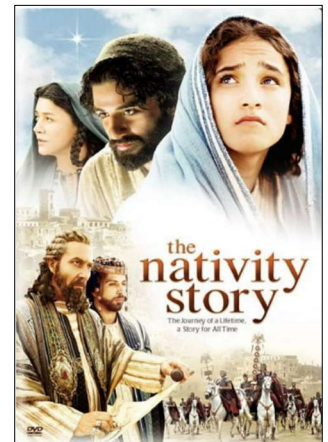
Discussion Starter: Do you have a “Baby's First Christmas” ornament on your tree? If you do, take them down and talk about what makes them so special (kids ask an adult for help with the ornaments.)

Movie Recommendation: The Nativity Story

Read 1 Peter 5:6-7

Everything about Jesus' first arrival was anything but glorious. Born into a conquered people, to parents who were living in poverty, and coming into the world surrounded by animals in what we would equate to a barn today. His first visitors weren't family or friends, but worn out shepherds and their mewing flocks. Jesus came in the lowest way to show us a better way to live—in humility. Today's scripture reflects this in how we are able to come to a place of peace and trust with our Father who loves us. Life can be hard even when it's not a busy Christmas season, but for today and in this moment, God's word is calling you to humbly come to Him, declaring that He is bigger than anything you are facing. God cares for you so much that He is asking you to give Him your worries. The presents not bought, the stress of finances, the hurt and loneliness, the heartache over missed family and friends, your desire that time would just slow down enough to catch your breath. All of it. Give your anxieties to the One who can hold them rightly, and let His peace fill all the cleared-out space left behind.

Discussion Starter: What are some things that God is bringing to your mind that He is calling you to “cast” on Him this Christmas season? Pray as a family or on your own that you would let these things go in exchange for His lasting peace.



Read Isaiah 9:6

(The last time RBC sent a team out to Windswept Academy on a mission trip, the team was served Fry Bread Tacos for lunch! So, for this activity, we're going to try to recreate those delicious Fry Bread Tacos! Have fun!)

Native American Fry Bread Tacos Recipe

Native American Fry Bread (12 Servings)

- 3 Cups flour All Purpose
- 2 teaspoon Baking Powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 ½ cup hot water
- Oil for frying



Instructions

1. In a bowl add flour, baking powder and salt and stir to mix evenly
2. Add hot water and stir with a spoon. You can also mix with your hands. The dough will be sticky
3. Form into a ball and allow to sit covered for 45 mins
Separate dough into 12-16 balls
4. Using the palms of your hands and fingertips, press each dough into a circle and work with your fingertips to a thin round circle about 4-5 inches in diameter
5. Heat oil in Fry Pan on stove over medium/high heat OR Instant Pot on Sauté until it reads "hot"
6. Add one piece of bread at a time in hot oil and allow to cook until golden brown and then flip. About a minute on each side *variable for how hot oil is heated
7. Remove from oil and allow to drain on paper towels

Toppings:

Make Navajo Tacos with Indian Fry Bread. Add Taco Meat, lettuce, tomato, avocado, cheese, and sour cream.

Notes:

Other toppings: Powdered Sugar, Honey, Fruit, Whipped Cream, Ice Cream, and more for your sweet dessert.

Store cooled Fry Bread in a sealed container. Freeze for up to 3 months



Hand Bell Craft:

Supplies Needed to Make DIY Christmas Bells

- Terra cotta pots
- Paint
- Jute twine or baker's twine
- Jingle bells
- Paint brush



Step 1: Paint Clay Pots

Paint your clay pots the color of your choice with craft paint. This may take several coats. Be sure to allow them to dry between each coat.



You will also want to paint the inside as well as the outside. Multiple coats may be required here as well.

Step 2: Add Jingle Bell To Baker's Twine

I used baker's twine on my terra cotta bells but you can use jute twine or any twine you have on hand. Be sure the twine you choose will fit through the hole in the bottom of the planter pot.



Add your jingle bell to the twine and tie a knot where the bell will hang just below the lip of the clay pot.

Step 3: Create Hanger For DIY Christmas Bells

String through the hole in the planter pot and tie at the top to hang on your tree.



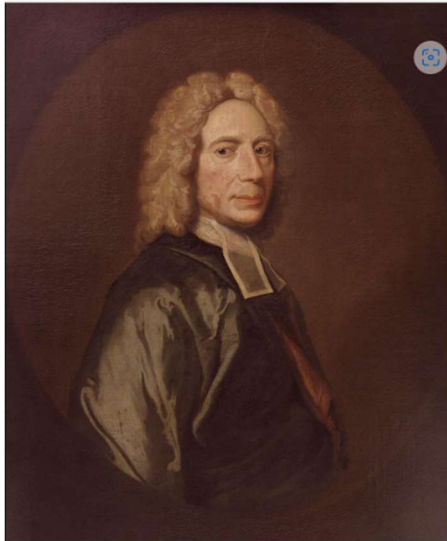
Once you have made your hanger, you are ready to add these fun DIY clay pot Christmas ornaments to your tree!

RBC FAMILY: Please make one extra bell for the Advent Display trees. Put your family name on it with "2024"



Read Isaiah 61:1-3

Song: Joy To The World



Isaac Watts

The Story behind the Song:

The Christmas song "Joy to the World" was originally an apocalyptic paraphrase of Psalm 98. It was written by Isaac Watts in 1719 as part of his collection of poems based on Psalms. Watts interpreted Psalm 98 as a celebration of Jesus' role as King, rather than His birth. Over a century later, in 1836, Lowell Mason set the hymn to music, and it became associated with the holiday celebrating the birth of Jesus'.

17 Joy to the World!
 Isaac Watts. *Antioch. C. M.* George F. Handel.

1. Joy to the world! the Lord is come; Let earth re-
 2. Joy to the earth! the Sav - for reigns; Let men their
 3. No more let sins and sor - rows grow, Nor thorns in-
 4. He rules the world with truth and grace, And makes the

ceive her King; Let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare Him room,
 songs em - ploy; While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
 fest the ground; He comes to make His bless - ings flow
 na - tions prove The glo - ries of His right - eous - ness,

And Heav'n and na - ture sing, And Heav'n and na - ture
 Re - peat the sound - ing joy, Re - peat the sound - ing
 Far as the curse is found, Far as the curse is
 And won - ders of His love, And won - ders of His
 And Heav'n and na - ture sing, And

sing, And Heav'n, and Heav'n and na - ture sing.
 joy, Re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
 found, Far as, far as the curse is found.
 love, And won - ders, and won - ders of His love. A - MEN.
 Heav'n and na - ture sing,

For the full story, scan this QR code:



We are Anthony and Melissa Conner. We serve with the IMB in Puebla, Mexico. We are from Littleton, North Carolina. Before coming to the field we served in pastoral ministries for 10 years. We served in Bumpass, VA for five years.

Serving the Master,
Anthony and Melissa Conner
IMB
Mexico

Our focus Missionary family is the Conner Family. They are serving in the Mexican city of Puebla, Mexico. Puebla is south east of Mexico City. As you can see if you read the email to the left, they are a “local” family! Hopefully we will receive more specific information about their ministry in Puebla in the days to come.

So please pray for Anthony and Melissa during your quiet time today.



Another Mexico Mission in the North of the country:

Juvenal and Maria Gonzalez have been church planting missionaries in Tijuana, Baja California since 2006. Before moving to Tijuana, they pastored the First Baptist Hispanic Church of Lumberton, North Carolina for 15 years. They felt God’s call to the mission field and after attending a WMU MissionFest in Tijuana in 2005, they decided to obey the Lord and move with their three kids, Sarai, Neftali and Ismael. Since their arrival to Tijuana, 45 churches have been planted in various neighborhoods of the city with the partnership of the San Diego Southern Baptist Association and other Baptist Churches on both the US and Mexico side. For the past 3 years the Gonzalez’ have been working with Baptist churches in Tijuana to shelter migrants arriving in Tijuana and other border cities such as Ciudad Juarez and Laredo. They share what started out as a plan to house them for a couple weeks became something much greater than they expected. Hundreds of migrants who have come through the city of Tijuana have been tended to with food, shelter, and the Gospel since October 2016.



Central Shalom Centro Shalom, as a church, exists to glorify God by sharing the good news of the gospel to those who are ignored and marginalized. We strive to embody God’s grace and love while pointing people to the true peace and plentitude that only God can give. At Centro Shalom, we have a very special calling to children and teens, while understanding that a strong church is made of strong families. We know that God has put us strategically in neighborhoods with enormous economic need, yet with a more profound spiritual need. We embrace this calling as an honor and a privilege. We prepare our hearts to diligently study the word of God, to practice the word of God and to teach the word of God (Ezra 7:10) so that God can cause an immediate and permanent impact on lives that will radiate in our communities through changed individuals and families.

Pastor Salvador Chava Suazo

Visit the website: <http://centroshalomtijuana.com/>



In Mexico, the Christmas season officially starts on December 12th, with the observance of Lady of Guadalupe, and runs until Three Wise Men's Day, or Dia de Reyes on January 6th.



Mexico has its roots in Christian beliefs, it is predominantly Catholic, although Protestantism is growing more prevalent every day. However, the way Mexicans celebrate Christmas is deeply influenced by indigenous customs and Spanish traditions. They have three major celebrations:



Las Posadas – a nine-day celebration leading up to Christmas eve. This celebration commemorates the journey of Mary and Joseph seeking shelter. Throughout the nine days, people will attend Posada. Posadas are traditional gatherings that take place every evening. Literally meaning “Shelters”, they are lively parties filled with candle-lit processions, Villancicos (Spanish Christmas carols), warm fruit *ponche*, *piñatas*, and the reenactment of the Holy Family seeking and finding shelter in Bethlehem. During this time, the streets and paths are lined with Luminaria, (see Saturday for craft for a description) which are placed there to help Mary and Joseph to find their way to Bethlehem.

Nochebuena – translating to “Good Night” Noche Buena is celebrated on Christmas Eve after Midnight mass. This is the main celebration during the season.

Navidad (Christmas) itself is more of a lazy day to sleep in after the long, busy night the night before. They reheat the food leftover from Nochebuena, watch movies and possibly stay in their pajamas!

Día de Los Reyes – This celebration takes place on January 6th. Día de Los Reyes means Three Kings Day. This is a celebration of the arrival of the three kings to visit Jesus in the stable. Bring their gifts of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh. It's also wouldn't be complete without the Rosca de Reyes, a sweet bread ring with a tiny baby Jesus figure hidden inside.

Did you know that Poinsettia's are a native of Mexico?



Read Luke 1:46-55

Today's reading is Mary's song of praise! Otherwise known as the Magnificat. That is a big biblical word that means "to make great" or to "celebrate". Wasn't it just so! Scripture tells us that Mary was traveling to spend time with Elizabeth, her cousin who was pregnant with John the Baptist. Before Mary is even able to tell Elizabeth about her own pregnancy, Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit and declares to her that Mary is blessed because of the child she carries. She even exclaims that her baby, John, jumped for joy when he heard Mary's voice. Everyone is jumping for joy here, both women and babies in the womb! What is more amazing is that despite Mary's difficult circumstance of being found with child before she was married (which was an offense punishable by death), she still rejoiced. I am certain she had her days of worry, but Mary understood that God was worthy of her service and that celebrating the life that was growing in her was worship. In the same way, we are called to rejoice in suffering because God is worthy to be praised. Our hearts are refreshed when we respond in Joy!

Discussion Starter: *What favorite Christmas song brings you joy to sing? Re-read Mary's song of praise—it is kind of like the first Christmas hymn!*

Read Luke 15:1-10

How frustrating is it to lose things? Maybe a favorite toy, car keys, an important message someone sent, your mind (just kidding). That panic and annoyance of searching the same places over and over again and wracking your brain to remember where it might be can be a roller coaster. But then, the relief of uncovering it! When lost things are found, we celebrate. Even if it's just a fist pumping "Yes!", or a "Praise the Lord!". We run and tell whoever is in the next room that the hunt is over. We want others to share in our elation. Today's scripture displays the heart of our Father over all His lost children. Jesus coming to earth was a search and rescue mission and this plan of recovery had been in the works since before time began. Jesus came to find the ones who were lost and to show them the Father's heart. Like a shepherd searching for the one lost sheep and the woman who diligently sweeps the house for a missing coin—we are of much more value than these passing things. God loves and celebrates us when we are found in Him.

Discussion Starter: *Have you ever misplaced a Christmas present you bought ahead of time? Did you find it months later or right in the nick of time? How good does it feel when you find something precious that has been lost?*

DON'T FORGET! Tonight, at 6:30pm is the third night of the study the meaning of the *Three Gifts of Christmas*. Tonight, the gift of *Myrrh*

Read Psalm 30:5

Mary and Joseph would have been raised to know the sacred texts of their faith. Mighty accounts of their forefathers and the wonders of God, shaping and straightening their resolve to keep going in trying times. Their songbook would have been the Psalms and one can't help but wonder—do you think they sang out to God on that long night in Bethlehem? Maybe they sang Psalm 30 as a cry for protection and comfort as Mary's labor pains ebbed and flowed. Today's verse is short and powerful. Our discomforts, pains, worries, and fears are like a restless night of sleep. Now, it may seem like an eternal night, but it is not going to last forever. God's people are promised that "joy comes with the morning". When Jesus came that first advent, lasting joy came with the dawn. We can hold onto this promise when we are struggling and in need.

Discussion Starter: Read all of Psalm 30. How can joyful worship help us when we are troubled?

Read John 1:29-30, Revelation 5:11-14

It's Movie Night! But in this case, it's actually **"Meet-us-at-the-church-for-a – "Behold the Lamb"-Concert-by-Andrew-Peterson"** Night!

Today's reading is connected with the Movie event later this evening at the church. If you are able to attend this gathering—please don't miss it!! The story of Jesus, which takes the whole bible to tell, is spun together as a concert. The music and message is sure to bring you joy and center your heart for the coming days. The use of a "lamb" as a symbol of Jesus is first seen in the account of Exodus as the delivered people celebrate Passover. When God saved them as death "passed over" their homes in Egypt after they obediently painted lambs blood on their door frames. By the blood of the lamb, they were spared. By the blood of Jesus, we are saved. Jesus is the Passover Lamb, and in Revelation, we see Him mighty and worshiped as he rightly deserves. This is the culmination of what Christmas is really about. God's people, brought back in and saved by the blood of Christ. Hallelujah! What a Savior! Thank you for saving us! Thank you for being the brave little boy who came!

Discussion Starter: How is your heart wanting to thank Jesus for coming to save us? Pray together or on your own, thanking Jesus, our Lamb of God.



Read Luke 2:8-14

Authentic Mexican Marranitos (Molasses Gingerbread Pigs)

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 ¼ Cups brown sugar
- ¼ Cup vegetable shortening
- 1 ½ teaspoons baking soda
- 1 ½ teaspoons cinnamon
- 1 ½ teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup unsulphured molasses
- 1 egg
- ¼ cup milk
- 6 cups all-purpose flour

EGG WASH

- 1 egg

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. In a large mixing bowl, stir together brown sugar, shortening, baking soda, cinnamon and vanilla until the mixture forms a firm paste.
3. Add, mixing after each addition until blended, the molasses, egg and milk.
4. Gradually add the flour, mixing to form a dough; roll dough out to about ¼ inch thick; cut with a large pig-shaped cutter; Place each marranito on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper
5. In a cup or small bowl, beat egg; Using a pastry brush, paint tops of marranitos lightly with beaten egg.
6. Bake for 15 to 17 minutes, or until browned.

Mexican Christmas Cookies

Ingredients

- 3 cups sifted flour
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp ginger
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 6 ounces pitted dates, cut fine (about 1 1/8 cups)
- 1 cup chopped pecans
- 1 cup butter
- 2 cups sugar
- 3 eggs
- 3 Tbs milk
- 1 tsp baking soda



Instructions

Mix flour, salt, and spices; add dates and nuts and mix. Cream butter, add sugar gradually until fluffy. Add well-beaten eggs and mix. Add milk in which the baking soda has been dissolved, mix well. Add flour mixture gradually and mix well. Form dough into rolls, about 2 inches in diameter, wrap in waxed paper and freeze or chill thoroughly in refrigerator. Slice thin and bake on ungreased baking sheets in preheated 375 degree oven for about 12 minutes. Store in covered container.

(Note from Suzy)

I have a confession to make. I chose Mexico Missionaries to focus on this week for purely selfish reasons. Mexico has a tradition of putting out Luminaria on Christmas Eve. They were to guide Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem or to welcome the Baby Jesus. When my family moved to Pittsburgh, the local Girl Scout troop sold Luminaria kits at Christmas time. We had no idea what they were, but being good neighbors, we bought a kit from them. That Christmas Eve, our street turned into something from a beautiful dream. Every house put out their Luminaria.



Something so simple, a brown lunch bag, a couple cups of sand and a candle

transformed our nothing spectacular neighborhood into something absolutely beautiful. One year the weather was so bad, and my dad was so determined that our Luminaria would light that he used an acetylene torch to light the candles. It didn't work, but he tried.



So, tomorrow at Church, be sure to pick up your Luminaria Kits from the Advent stand. We have provided 20 brown paper bags, and 20 Tea light candles. You'll have to provide the sand or stones to hold the candle and bag in place.

How To assemble:

- 1: fold over the top of each bag
- 2: pour at least 2 cups of sand into the bottom of the bag (However much you need to hold the bag in place and hold the candle)
3. Place your candle snugly into the sand
4. Line your sidewalk, driveway, or front of your property (wherever you've decided to place your Luminaria) with the bags. On Christmas Eve, after sundown, go out and light your candles. They will be there lighting your way home after the Christmas Eve service at RBC!

PLEASE SEND US PICTURES OF YOUR LUMINARIA!

Joy to the World

WORD SEARCH

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

MESSIAH

SAVIOR

BORN

TODAY

WHO

CITY

YOU

DAVID

LORD

Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you,
who is the Messiah, the Lord.

LUKE 2:11



Read Romans 5:6-8,
Matthew 1:21-23

Song: Angels From the Realms
of Glory



James Montgomery

Story Behind the Song:
"Angels From the Realms of
Glory" is a Christmas carol
written by James Montgomery
in 1816. The song is a call to
major participants in the story of
the birth of Christ, including the
angels, the shepherds, and the
sages¹. The hymn has a sense of
urgency and excitement, with
imperative verbs throughout,
especially in the refrain: "Come
and worship". Montgomery's
life was interesting, and he was
passionate about caring for the
needy. The carol was first
printed in the Sheffield Iris on Christmas Eve 1816 and began to be sung in churches after its reprinting in
other collections⁴. Few know the story of the man behind this great Christmas hymn

Angels, from the Realms of Glory

Trad.

An - gels from the realms of glo - ry, Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Shep - herds, in the fields a - bi - ding, Watch - ing o'er your flocks by night,
Sa - ges, leave your con - tem - pla - tions, Brigh - ter vi - sions beam a - far;
Saints be - fore the al - tar ben - ding, Watch - ing long in hope and fear,
Sin - ners, wrung with true re - pen - tance, Doomed for guilt to end - less pains,

5

Ye who sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry, Now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth:
God with man is now re - si - ding, Yon - der shines the in - fant Light;
Seek the great de - sire of na - tions, Ye have seen His na - tal star;
Sud - den - ly the Lord, des - cen - ding, In His tem - ple shall ap - pear:
Jus - tice now re - vokes the sen - tence, Mer - cy calls you, break your chains:

9

Come and wor - ship, Come and wor - ship, Wor - ship Christ, the new - born King!

Sheet music from 8notes.com © Copyright 2016 Red Balloon Technolgy Ltd

For the full story, scan this QR code:



Senegal, Africa

95% of the population of people in Senegal are Muslim. Even though Senegal is one of the hottest part of the world, this time of year you'll find decorated snowmen, Christmas trees with cotton snowballs, and traditional masks covered with Christmas light.

This week's mission focus is on the **Stayer Family** who serve in West Africa. Did you get a

chance to meet the Stayer's when they were here at RBC last month? Jesse and Martha Stayer and their children David, Judah and Esther. They are currently on sabbatical from Senegal, but they are anxious to return. While they were visiting RBC, we asked them if they would be willing to share how Christian people they serve in Senegal celebrate Christmas. We recently received this email from Martha Stayer.



Hi Suzy!

I hope this email finds you well and this email goes through. I reached out to colleagues about your great idea as well. There are few Christians in Senegal and country wide, Christmas is viewed as a “kids” holiday with Santa and New Years Eve is the bigger celebrated holiday. That’s carried over into the churches as well with churches placing emphasis on prayer and worship services all night to bring in the New Year. However, there are more Christians in the southern portion of the country, so I reached out to a colleague who works there. She mentioned believers there enjoy all night prayer parties and potlucks! Sounds like a great tradition ;).

Have fun with all night prayer and potluck!

Thanks for everything,
Martha Stayer



Even though Senegal is a mostly Muslim country, they love celebrating Christmas. Although, to them Christmas has no religious connection. They celebrate with Santa Claus, Christmas Trees, and all the commercial parts of Christmas.

Teranga—that’s the cornerstone of Senegalese society. Senegalese people are known to be extremely warm and welcoming to each other and to strangers. It is something they highly value as a society. In addition to that, they respect other people’s cultures and way of life even if it’s contrary to theirs. In the streets of Dakar, you will see women in small shorts or

mini-skirts alongside other women in Hijab. No one will bat an eyelid. Your way of life will be respected and in turn you should also respect their way of life.

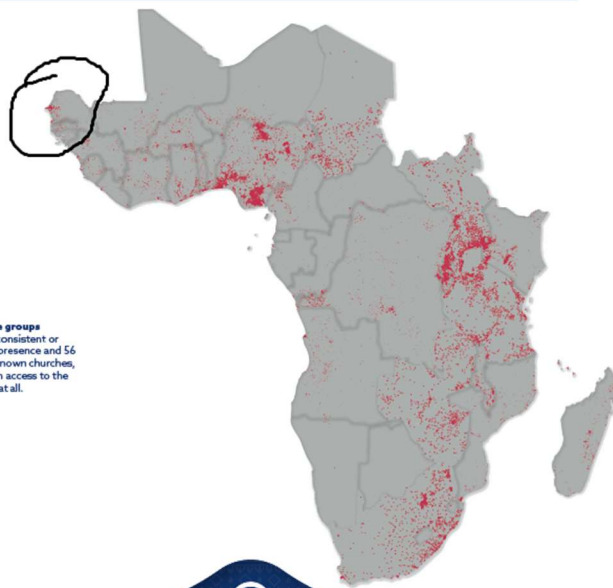


- Pray that the people of Senegal will have open hearts and minds to hear the Good News!
- Pray that the Stayer family can return as soon as possible
- Pray for the kid's education and maintained good health of the family



2024 FAST FACTS

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN PEOPLES



463 people groups do not have a consistent or significant gospel presence and 56 of those have no known churches, believers, or even access to the gospel at all.



INTERNATIONAL MISSION BOARD



SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN HIGHLIGHTS

134,700 people heard the gospel
8,539 new believers
1,199 baptisms
34,145 individuals disciplined
7,681 leaders trained

LEARN MORE AT IMB.ORG/FAST-FACTS



There is HOPE! Thank you, Stayer family, for caring about the Senegalese people!

Read Romans 3:23-24



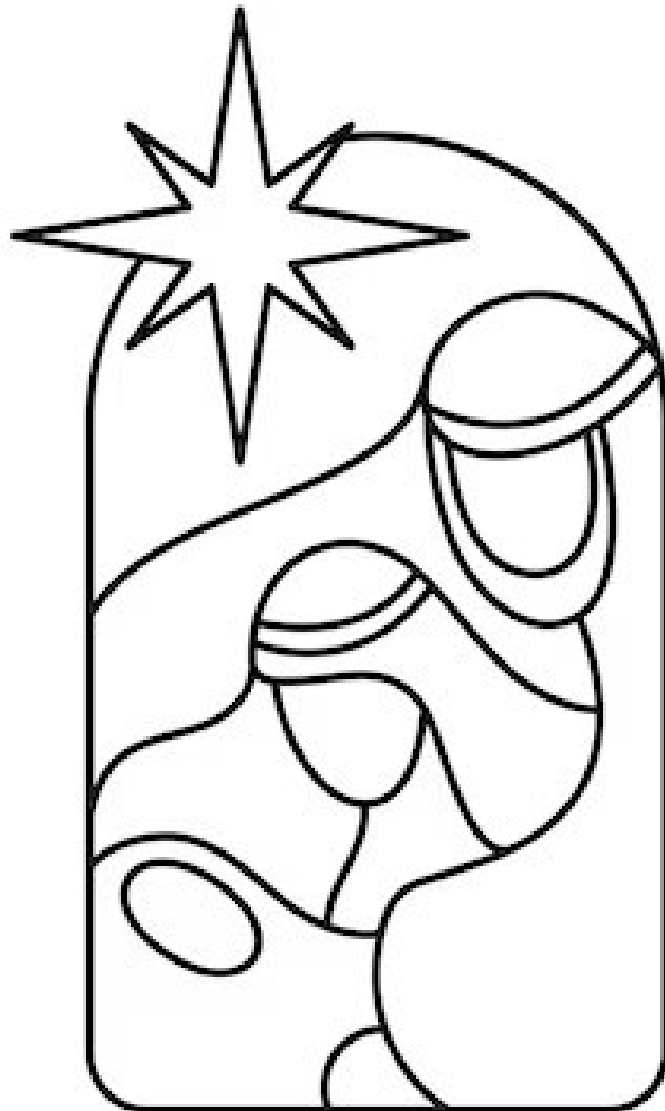
*Please come tonight for the
Christmas Eve Service
6:30pm*

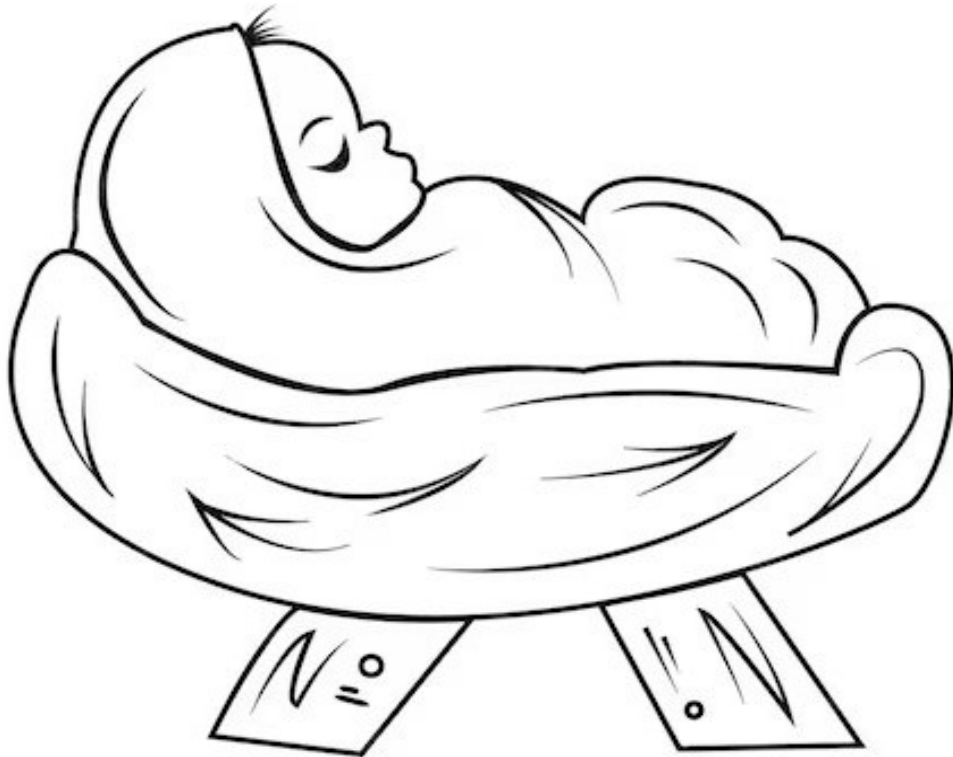
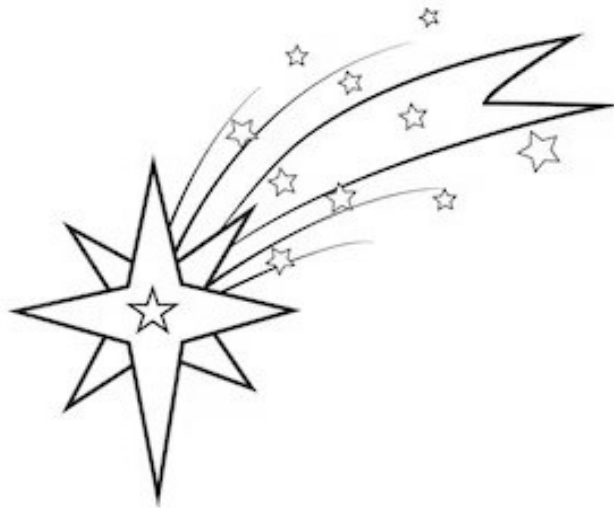
Read Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 2:1-21

Christmas



Coloring Pages



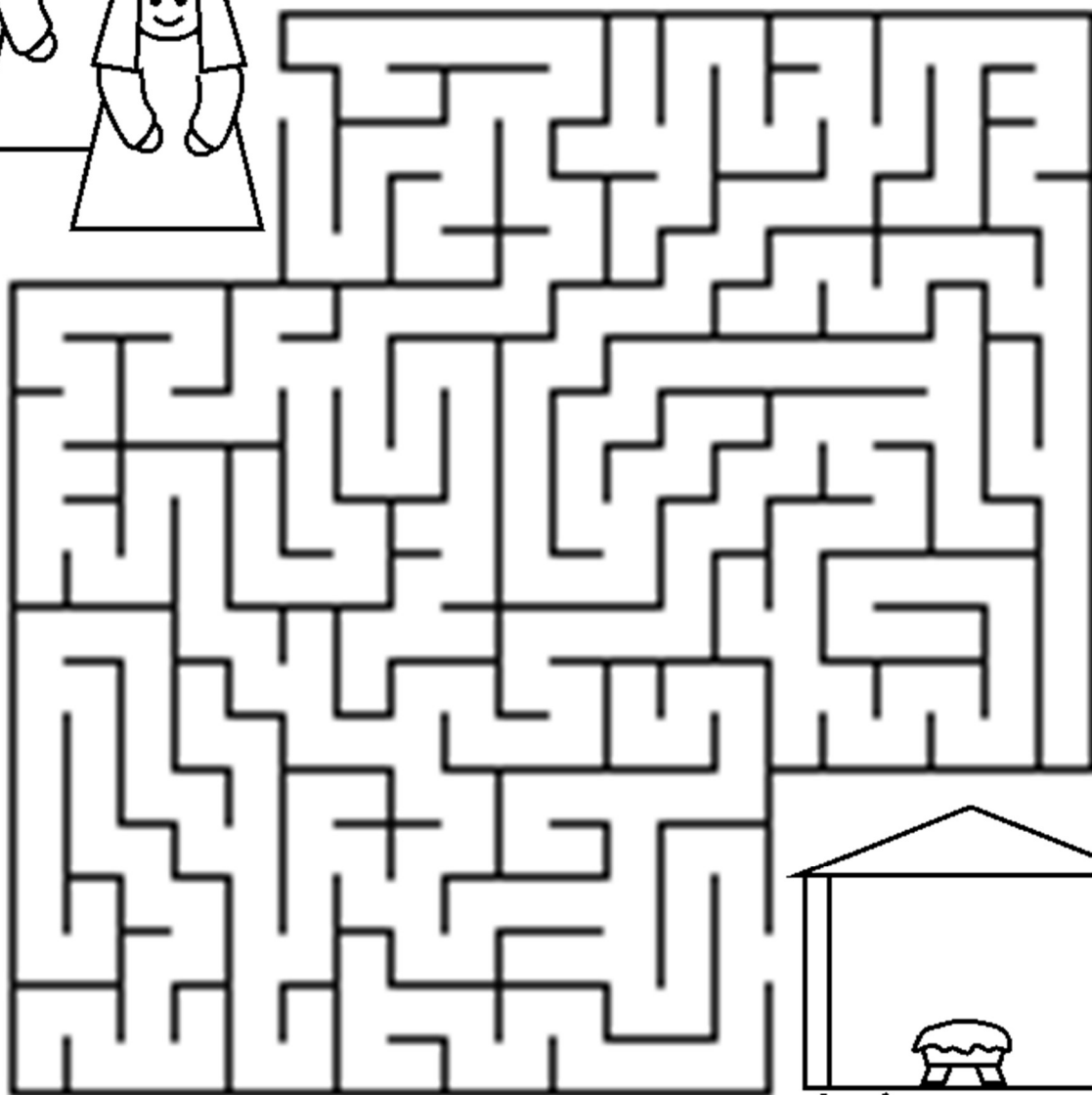
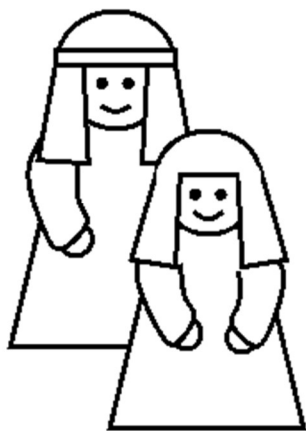




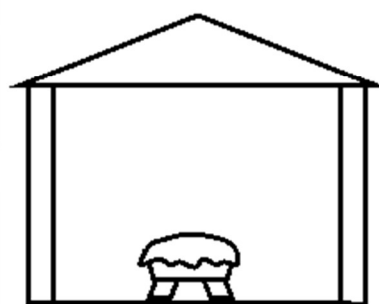
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Help Mary and Joseph get to the stable.



For more creative learning ideas check out
www.makinglearningfun.com



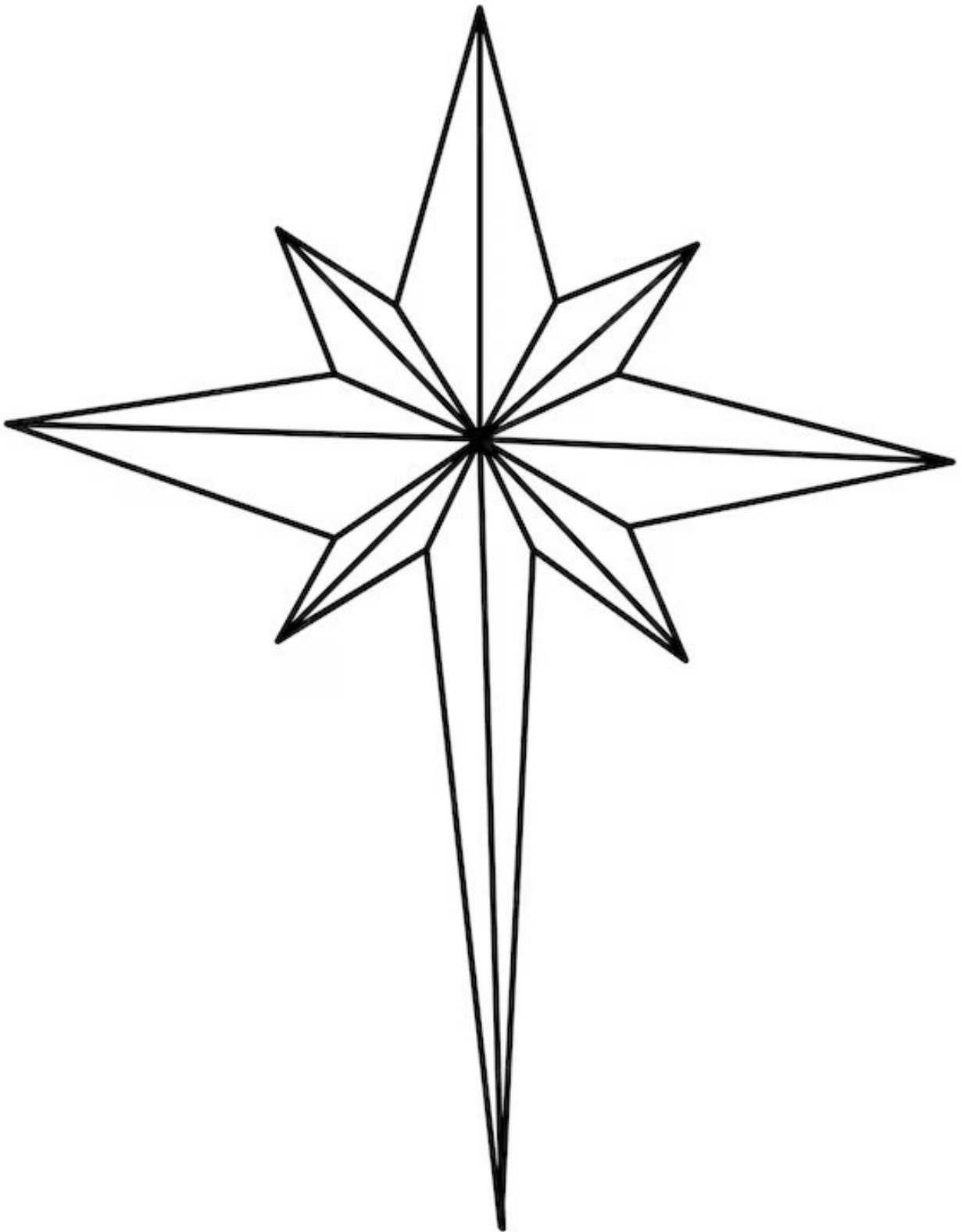




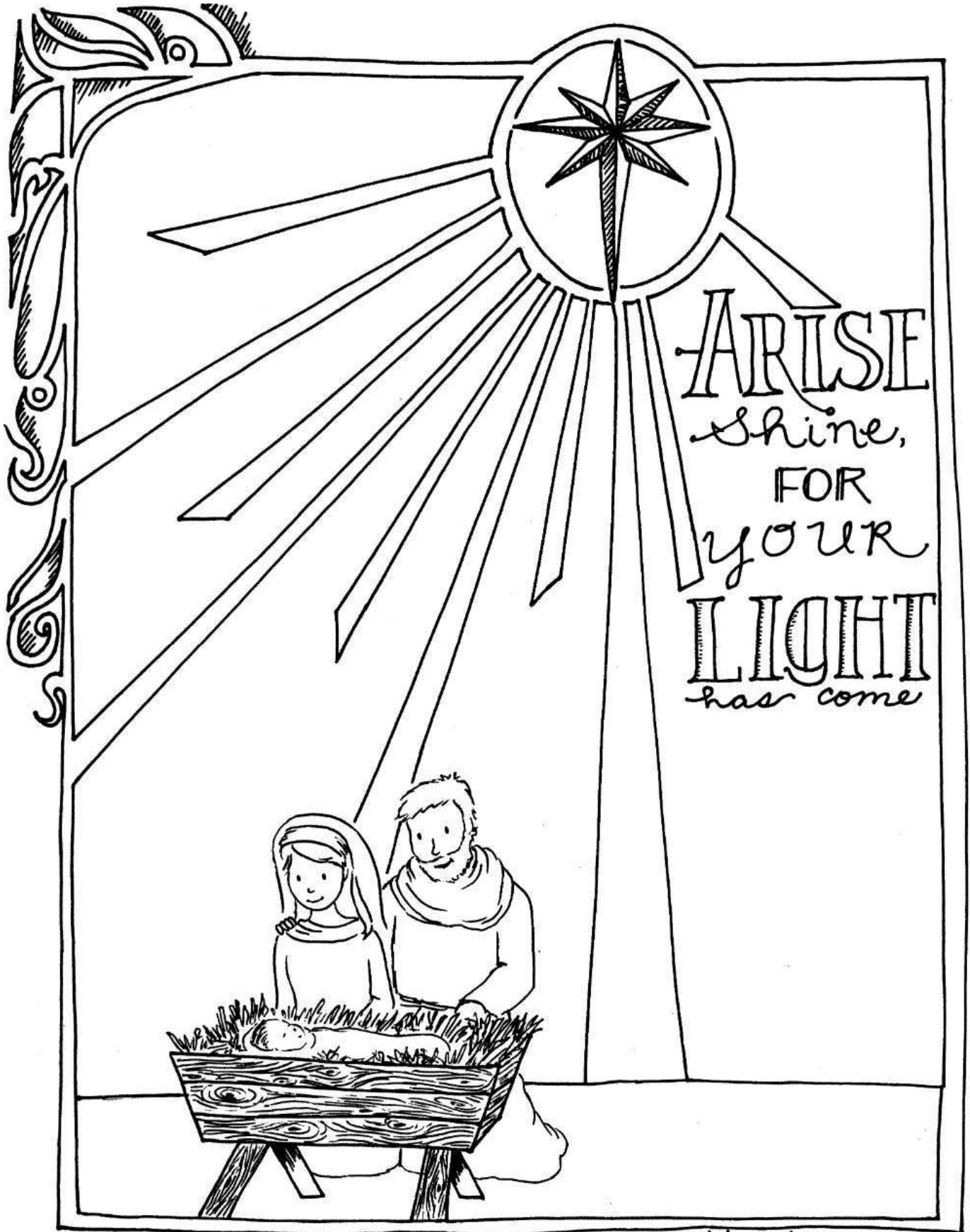












ARISE
Shine,
FOR
YOUR
LIGHT
has come

Mandy Groce '14

ministry-to-children.com





