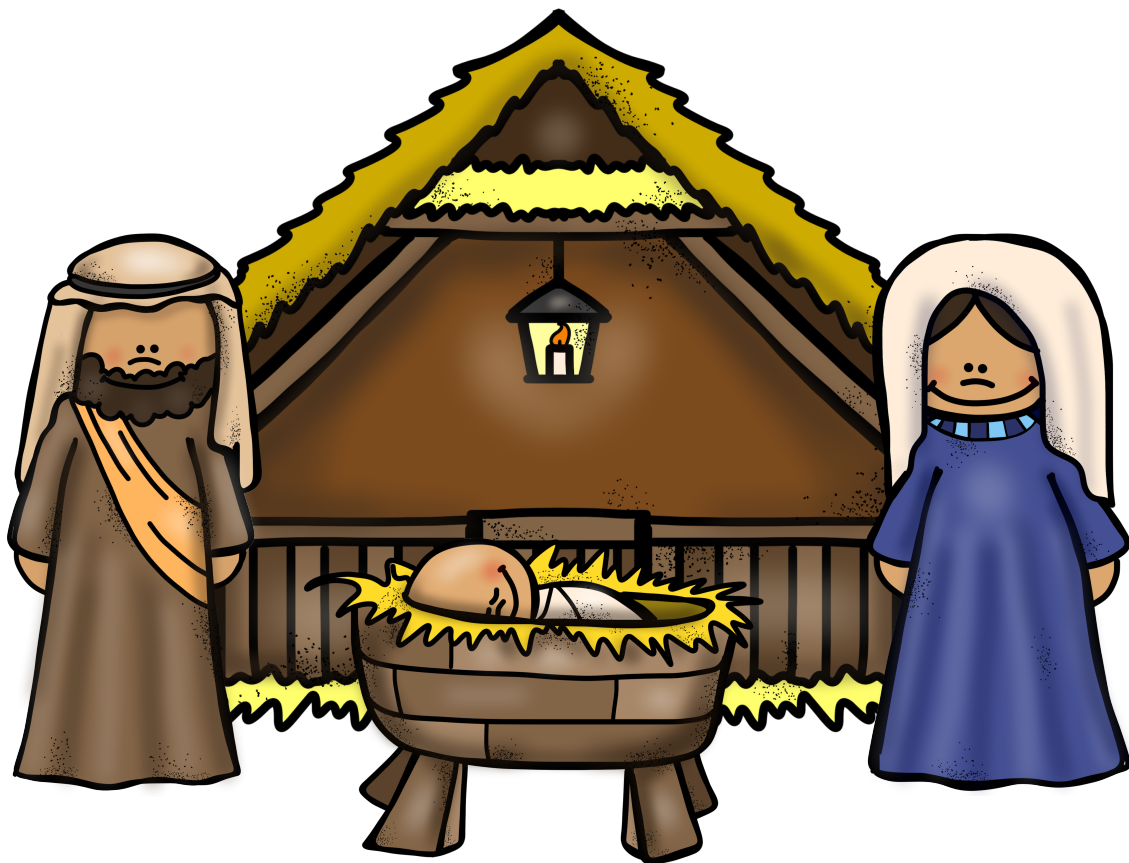


advent
for
little ones





Parents of Little Ones,

As Christians, we know the beginning of the story and the end of the story, but yet we live in the middle. God's people, before the birth of Christ, longingly awaited the Messiah. While we know the end of the story and know that Christ will return in glory one day, we long and wait, just as the early Christians, for that day to come. Advent is a special season that reminds us of this waiting and preparing for His return when the story will be complete.

Several years ago I was reading an Advent devotion by John Piper ("Prepare the Way" found on www.desiringgod.org) and while it shared several ways for us to prepare our hearts for Christmas, I was struck by the importance of building God-centered anticipation for Christmas in our homes for our children. John Piper writes, "If you are excited about Christ, they (children) will be too. If you can only make Christmas exciting with material things, how will the children get a thirst for God? Bend the efforts of your imagination to make the wonder of the King's arrival visible for the children."

The activities included in this packet are simple ways for you to gather as a family and prepare your hearts for Christmas. There are games, activities, and coloring sheets designed just for little ones. Let's make the arrival of the King visible for our children!

My prayer is that the kids in our church will grow in excitement and deep joy for Christ this Advent season.

Joyfully,

Beth Pearson
Early Childhood Director
Cahaba Park Church

Week 1: Mary and Joseph

Stories To Read:

Jesus Storybook Bible: "He's Here"

Rhyme Bible Storybook: The Special Baby

"He's Here" Jesus Calling Bible Storybook

Baby Jesus and the Good News: Read Aloud Bible Stories Volume 3

Discussion Questions:

- Ask: What gifts do you want for Christmas?
- Say: All of those gifts sound great, but the greatest Christmas gift of all is Jesus. That's what we're celebrating at Christmas - the birth of Jesus as a tiny baby!
- Instead of being born in a castle, where was Jesus born?
- What did Jesus' bed look like?

Activity 1:

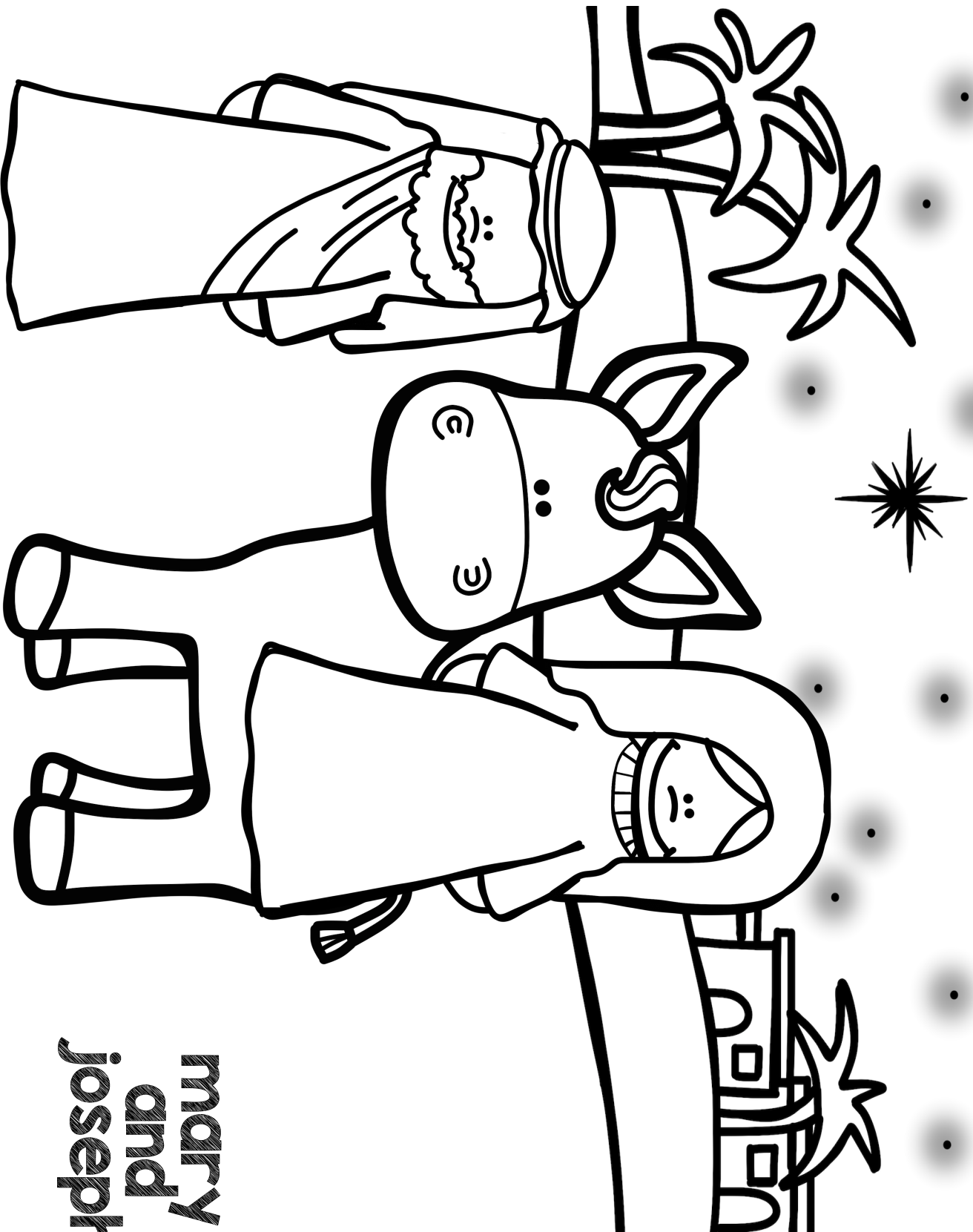
Wrap a baby doll in blankets and lay him in a "manger" (use a cardboard box, plastic storage bin, etc.). Explain that a manger was a feeding trough for animals in the barn. Jesus, God's son, was born in a barn and placed in a feeding trough! Have members of your family pretend to be various farm animals and take turns looking at the baby.

Activity 2:

Explain that Mary and Joseph had to go on a LONG trip to Bethlehem, but it was too far for Mary to walk so she had to ride on a donkey. Use a toy horse or donkey and go on a "long journey" around your house. Walk around your house, holding the toy horse, and talk about how tired you are from traveling, stop and pretend to rest/sleep, etc. Then at last, arrive in Bethlehem!

Activity 3:

Color the following coloring sheet and use the time together as a family to talk about how scared Mary and Joseph must have been and the faith that God gave them.



mary
and
joseph

Week 2: Shepherds and the Angels

Stories To Read:

"The Shepherds" in the Rhyme Bible Storybook

"The Light of the Whole World" Jesus Storybook Bible

Discussion Questions:

- What is a shepherd?
- What does the Bible say the Shepherds did when they heard the news of Jesus from the angels?
- Why did God put the bright star in the sky? (It was like a spotlight, shining on Jesus to announce his birth.)
- What's your favorite song? Why do people sing? Why did the angels sing at the birth of Jesus?

Activity 1:

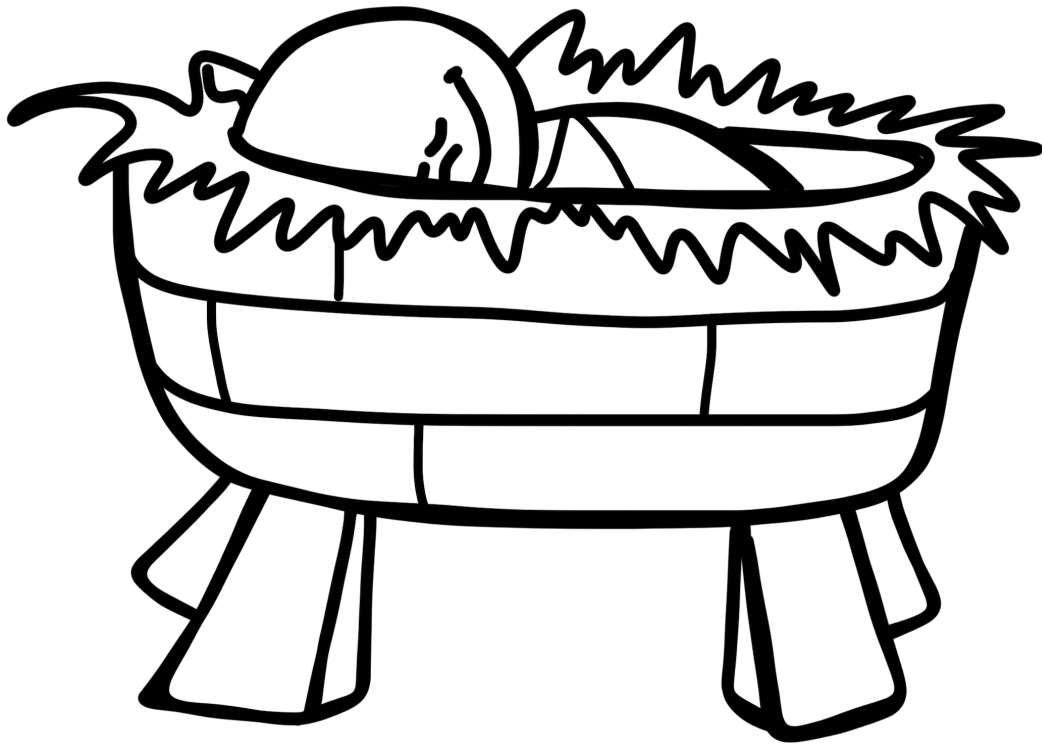
Color the attached picture of baby Jesus and then take turns hiding it around your house. As you are looking for baby Jesus, explain that this is what the shepherds had to do! They were looking for baby Jesus! After each time you find the picture of baby Jesus, stop and ask one of the discussion questions above.

Activity 2:

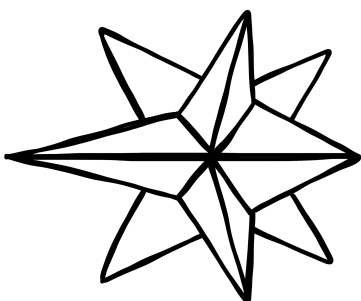
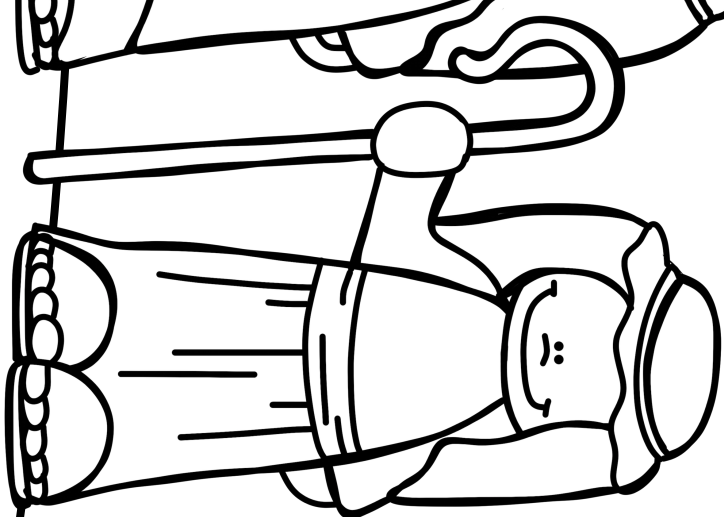
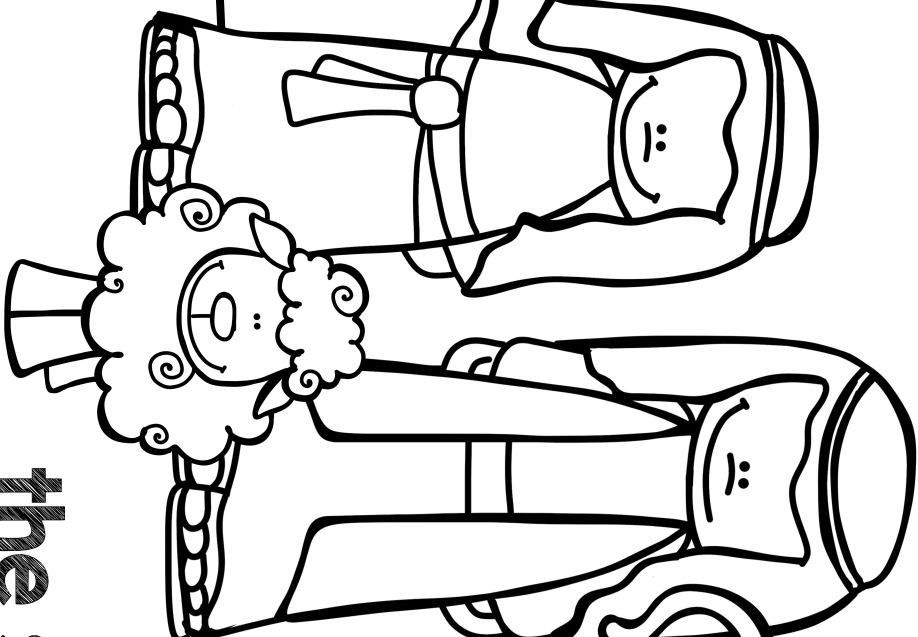
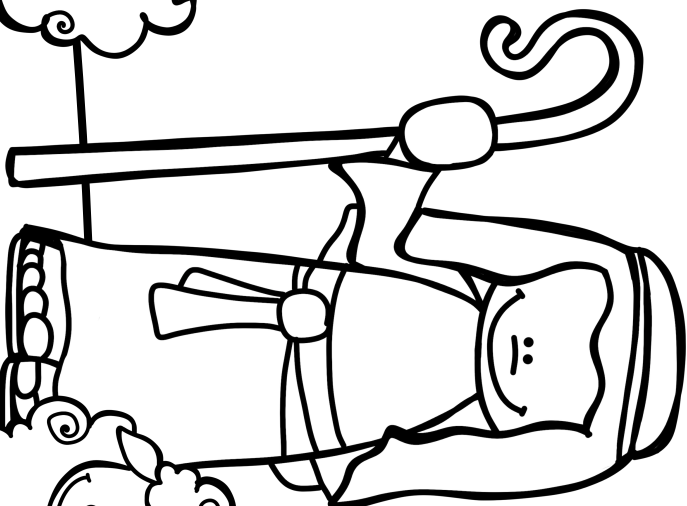
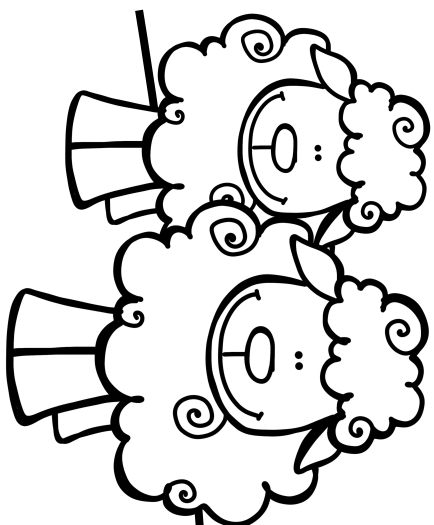
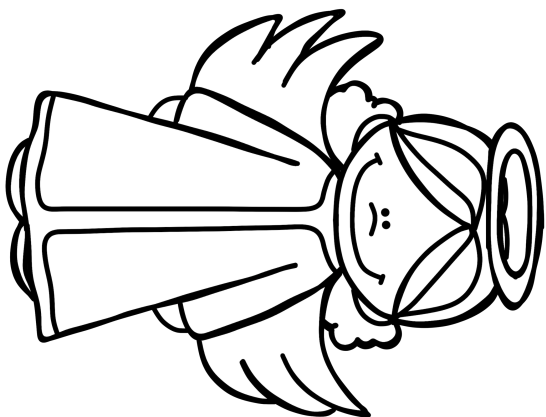
After reading the "Shepherds" in the Rhyme Bible Storybook, act out what the shepherds did when they heard the good news about Jesus. Ask your child/children, "why did the shepherds respond in this way?"

Activity 3:

Color the shepherds and angels and use the time together as a family to talk about how the shepherds responded when the angels appeared to them.



PICTURE OF BABY JESUS FOR ACTIVITY IN WEEK 2.
COLOR AND CUT OUT.



the shepherds

Week 3: The Wise Men

Stories To Read:

"The Wise Men" in the Rhyme Bible Storybook

"The King of All Kings" Jesus Storybook Bible

Discussion Questions:

- How did the wise men know that a baby king had been born?
- Why did the wise men make the long journey? (To worship Jesus.)
- What did the wise men do when they found Jesus?
- What do we do to show that we know Jesus is king?

Activity 1:

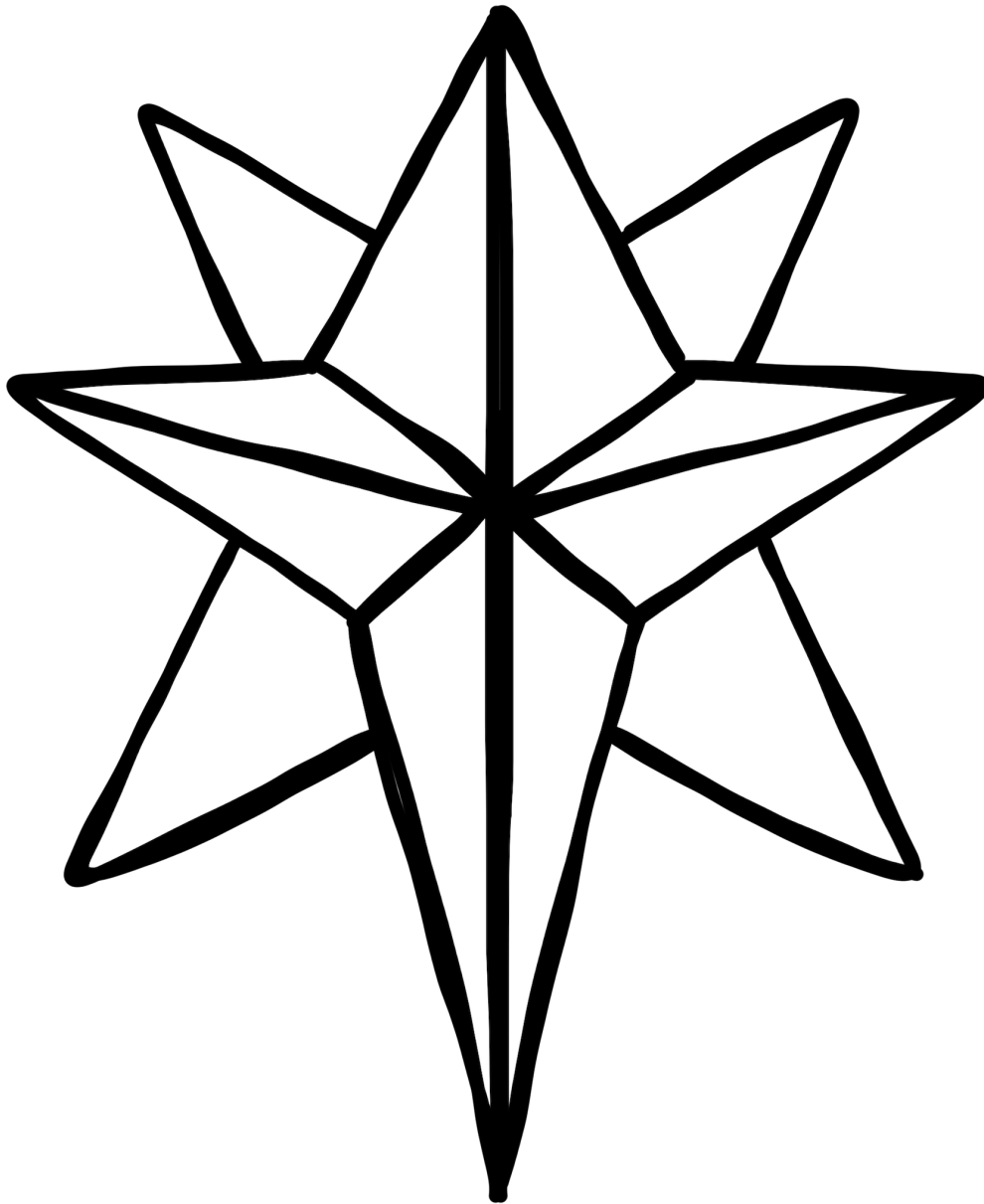
Cut out the included star on the next page and let your child/children color it. Explain to your children that the wise men traveled for a LONG time and they had to sleep out in the desert while they were traveling. Have your children pretend to go to sleep and then place the star somewhere in the room. Shine the flash light on the star and then say "Wake up, wise men! It's time to find the star!" Have the kids run to where the star is. Ask one of the discussion questions above and then repeat as long as the children are interested.

Activity 2:

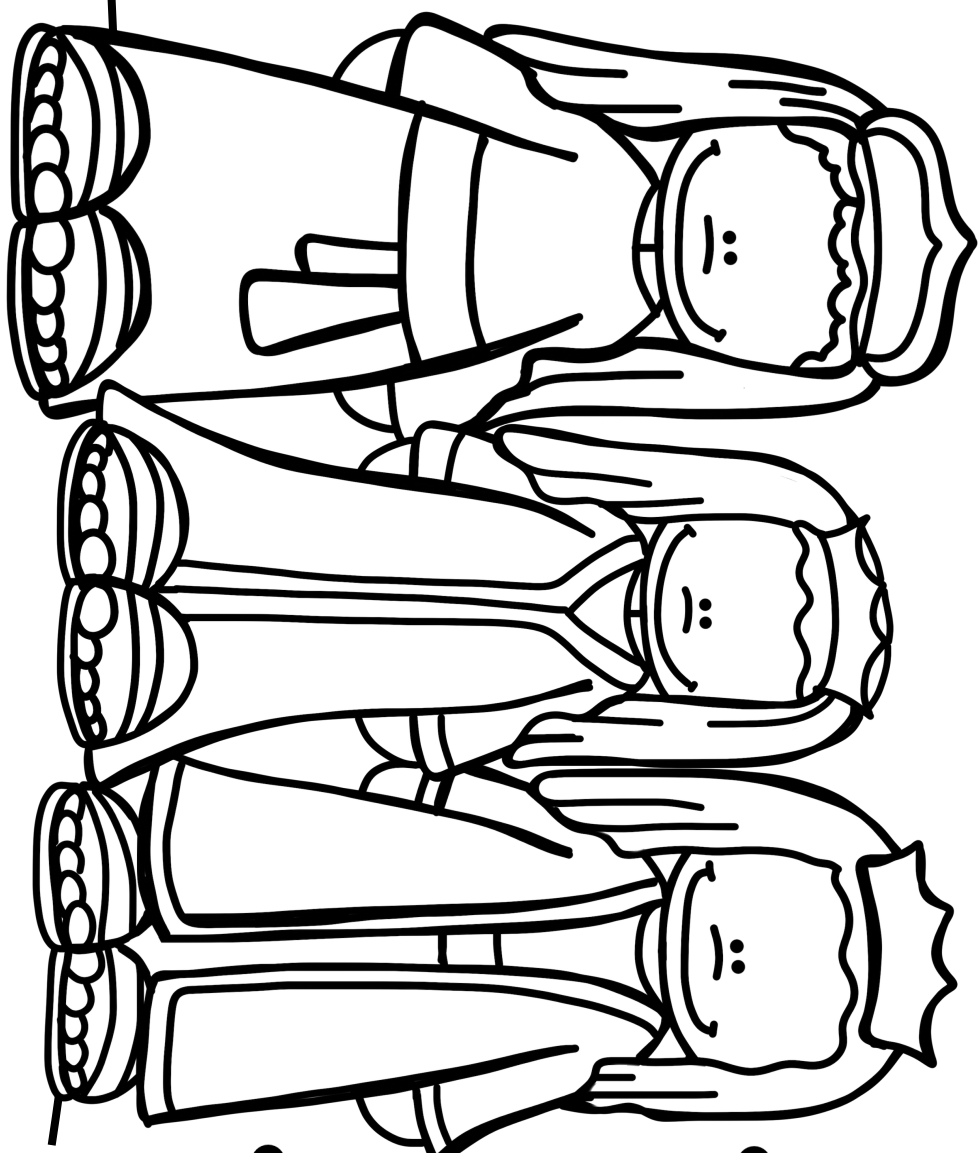
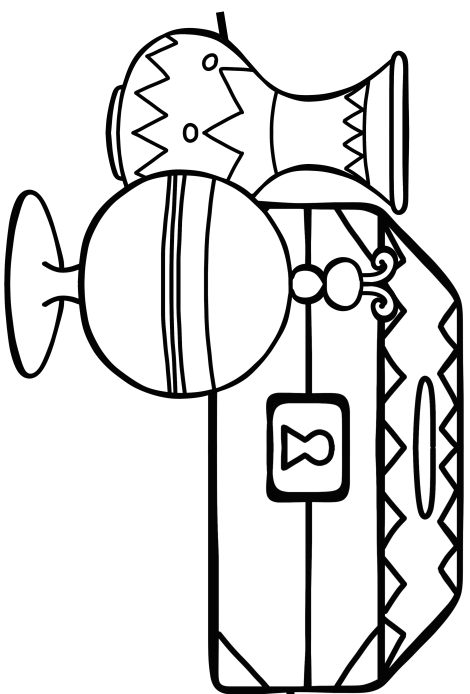
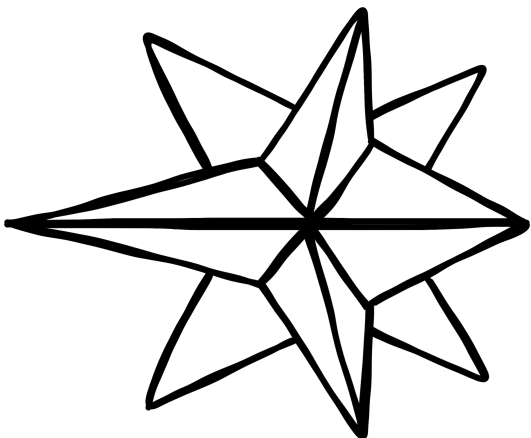
The wise men brought gifts to baby Jesus. Gather perfume, cologne, essential oils, and gold coins. Have the kids smell and touch the objects. Explain that the objects are very valuable and even more so to the wise men many years ago. These were gifts given to kings and the wise men brought them to Jesus because He is the King of Kings! Have your kids pick something out from around your house that they would want to bring as a gift for Jesus. Ask them why they chose that item.

Activity 3:

Create a crown using construction paper and let your child/children decorate it using whatever craft supplies you have on hand. Explain that the wise men traveled to worship Jesus because He is the King of Kings! Read the story of the wise men from one of the children's Bibles listed above and have your children wear the crowns as they act out the story.



STAR FOR ACTIVITY IN WEEK 3.
COLOR AND CUT OUT.



the wise men

Week 4: Christmas Celebration

Stories To Read:

Jesus Storybook Bible: "He's Here"

Rhyme Bible Storybook: The Special Baby

"He's Here" Jesus Calling Bible Storybook

Baby Jesus and the Good News: Read Aloud Bible Stories Volume 3

"The Wise Men" in the Rhyme Bible Storybook

"The King of All Kings" Jesus Storybook Bible

Discussion Questions:

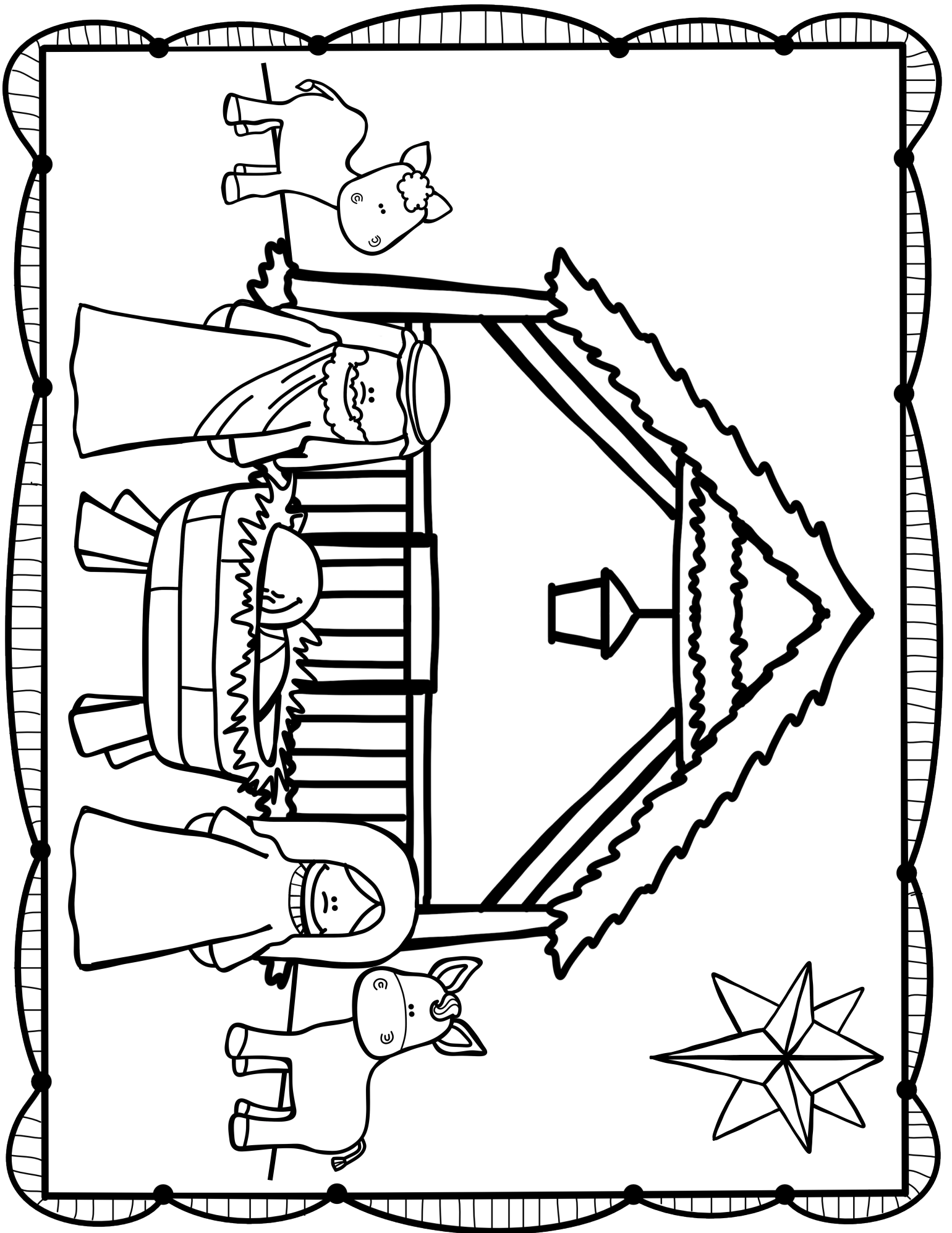
- What are we celebrating this week?
- What are some of the names for Jesus in the Old Testament? (Rescuer, Prince of Peace, King, etc.)
- The name Jesus means "Yahweh Saves" (it comes from Joshua in the Hebrew). Share with your children how you chose their names and what those names mean.

Activity 1:

Explain to your children that on Christmas we're celebrating Jesus' birthday. The week leading up to Christmas, have your kids help blow up balloons, hang streamers, etc. to decorate for the party. Build the anticipation for the party, just as you would for the birthday party of your child. As Christmas Day draws closer, have your children help bake a cake and decorate it. Then on Christmas, light a candle and sing "Happy Birthday" and enjoy the cake together!

Activity 2:

Watch Sony Pictures "The Star" on Netflix or "He's Here" by The Jesus Storybook Bible on Youtube as a family.



Additional Resources

