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# “Mary and Joseph”

## Advent Sunday School Lesson on Matthew 2

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[Heroes of the Christmas Story](#) (Celebrated and Lesser-Known)  
Sunday School Lesson on Mary and Joseph

There are a lot of great truths to take from the story of Jesus’ birth. There are also a great many clichés and worn-out elements of the Nativity narrative. In this series, we will encounter several characters and look at the story through the lens of various perspectives. Some of these figures are already well-known, but others will be among the unsung heroes, at least for many people. Lessons will highlight who they are and their significance to the life of Christ and to our lives today.

In this lesson, we highlight a couple of main “heroes” of the Nativity story, who hopefully are recognizable by anyone remotely familiar with it. This lesson explores Mary and Joseph, the stepparents of Jesus. Although they are key players in the life of Christ, it can still be easy to skip over details of who they were and what they did after the birth of the Messiah.

**Character focus:** Mary and Joseph, the earthly mother and father of Jesus. Both were rather simple people, but God chose them to be part of His eternal salvation plan. Mary was merely a (likely young) woman betrothed to Joseph, a carpenter. The couple took care of Jesus and raised Him. Although Joseph later fades out of Biblical mention, we know that Mary was present at Christ’s death, and was eager to spread the news about who He was and what He had done.

**Passage:** Matthew chapter 2, selected verses.

**Importance in the Nativity:** God appointed Mary and Joseph to be the parents of Jesus, long before either of them were on Earth. This is evidenced through genealogy descriptions in the gospels, as well as prophecies. Mary was willing to carry Christ in her womb and give birth to Him, and Joseph trusted God’s plan enough to take her as his wife and help in raising Jesus.

**Significance to us:** Mary and Joseph were not celebrities in their time. God used them in a remarkable and miraculous way, because He appointed them and they were willing to be part



of His plan. In the same way, we can be part of God’s plan, too! When we trust in Him, anything is possible.

**Materials Needed for this lesson:** Paper, decorative materials, toilet paper tubes, clothespins, popsicle sticks, shoeboxes, fabric or felt, Bibles, pictures, name labels.

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## Lesson Opening Game Activity

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**Lesson Opening:** Since we will be discussing the parents of Jesus, as well as following directions, try a couple of simple games that involve those themes:

- Who’s your daddy? (Or mother)...print pictures of several celebrities, and also print separate pictures of their parents. Have students guess which parents go with which famous people.
- How many ancestors? Test the students’ knowledge of their own family lineage by asking about ancestors. How many “great-grands” can students name of their families?
- Simon says/ “Mother may I”... play a classic game of listening and following directions, providing simple instructions that students can only follow given the appropriate introduction.

Explain to kids that they will be discussing some very important parents in the Bible. Christmas is fast approaching, and we have been learning about some key figures that accompany the Nativity story. This lesson will cover an extra special couple: Mary and Joseph!



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# Bible Lesson: Mary and Joseph

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Discuss with students who Mary and Joseph were. Sure, they are likely familiar with them as the parents of Jesus, but who were they exactly? We don't know all of the details, truth be told. But we know a little about them, and we can be certain that God chose those two to take care of His son. Family was an important thing in those days, and Joseph was part of King David's family line. We know this from Luke...

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*And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, <sup>5</sup> to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. <sup>6</sup> And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. <sup>7</sup> And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. -Luke 2:4-7*

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There are several "genealogies" in the Bible. Describe to students how these lists were God's way of reminding people of His plan. He knew who Joseph would be and where Jesus would be born. The events of His birth had been planned and foretold. In this passage, Mary is away from home, forced to have her baby in a barn. How did she come to be in this state??

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*And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born<sup>[e]</sup> will be called holy—the Son of God. <sup>36</sup> And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. <sup>37</sup> For nothing will be impossible with God." <sup>38</sup> And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word."  
And the angel departed from her. -Luke 1:35-37*

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Mary was told that she would give birth to a very special son. It might have been a little scary for her to consider that. She was probably confused and questioning what it all meant. But look at her reaction. At the end of it all, she agrees to do what God has asked, because she is His



servant. Mary was just a girl from a small town. But God used her because she was willing to do what He asked.

And what about Joseph? What do we know of him?

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*But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." <sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:*

*<sup>23</sup> "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel"*

*(which means, God with us). <sup>24</sup> When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, <sup>25</sup> but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus. -Matthew 2:20-25*

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Continue reading...

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*Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? <sup>56</sup> And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" <sup>57</sup> And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own household." <sup>58</sup> And he did not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief. -Matthew 13:55-58*

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Joseph was a simple carpenter. He was engaged to Mary, but he didn't know about kings and Messiahs. Yet, like Mary, He trusted in God's plan and was willing to listen to the angel's announcements. And Joseph raised Jesus to grow in wisdom and stature. Now, Joseph sort of fades out of the picture in the life of Jesus. But Mary remains prominent. We see her at the wedding in Cana, asking Jesus to help with the wine shortage situation. And more importantly we see her at the end of Christ's life, at the foot of the cross:



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*but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. <sup>26</sup> When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" <sup>27</sup> Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home. -John 19:25-27*

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Jesus loved His mother, as we can see from His request that John take care of her. He wanted to make sure that she was loved and looked after. And Mary remains a powerhouse of faith, even after the ascension of Jesus. She worked with the disciples to continue establishing the church and spreading the Gospel to others:

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*All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers. -Acts 1:14*

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Mary and Joseph were more than mere figures in the Nativity. They were people who loved and served God, and displayed willingness to do whatever He asked. Because of that, He used them in amazing ways to raise Jesus and to establish the kingdom of God. You know what is especially remarkable about that? We can do the same! We might think we are just simple kids (or adults), nothing too special. But when we give our lives to God and allow Him to do His will, spectacular things can happen! Would you like that? All it takes is faith. Pray, stay in the reading of the Bible, and love others. You never know what God has planned!

**Close** the lesson with prayer and thank God for loving us and coming to die for us. Ask for strength to trust and obey His will in our lives, whatever we may do.



An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Matthew 2:13



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# Nativity Scenes Craft Ideas

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Tidings of Joy! Unto us a Child is Born!

Nativity scenes can be as full of unique variety as tea sets. With so many options and variations, why not try your hand at making your very own? True, we may not know exactly what the historical stable looked like, and sometimes a creche can be cliché. But it's Christmas, and any scene like this can serve as a beautiful reminder of the season's joy and genuine meaning.

Here are a few methods for creating a nativity scene. The bonus here is that you can attach string or pipe cleaner and transform your Nativity "characters" into hanging Christmas ornaments!

## Verses or Captions to Consider...

*O Come Let us Adore Him*

*O Holy Night*

*"Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" -Luke 2:14*

*Hip Hurray! Let's Celebrate Jesus's Birthday!*

*And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths  
and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. -Luke 2:7*

Watch the [demonstration of these Christmas Crafts](#) on our YouTube Channel.

Don't miss all our [Christmas Sunday School Lessons](#) and [Christmas Crafts](#)



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# Craft one: “Stable Scene”

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## You will need:

- Decorative markers or crayons
- Shoebox (or any sort of cardboard box)
- Construction paper
- Scissors
- Tape or glue
- Hay, popsicle sticks, stickers... Depends how elaborately you care to decorate.



## Procedure:

1. Decorate the box, gluing hay, writing or gluing a caption, or adding stickers.
2. Add a manger in the center, if desired. This can be done using a toilet paper tube cut down the middle, a clothespin, popsicle sticks, or part of a paper cup.
3. Cut construction paper and add on top of the box, tenting in the middle to make a “roof”.
4. Use glue or tape to secure all items, and add Nativity characters as desired!



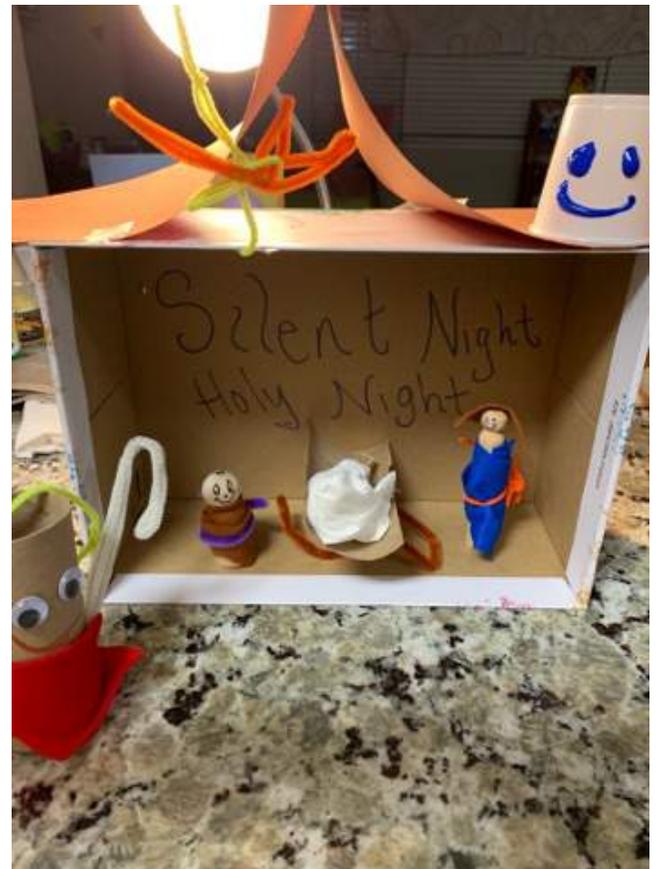
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# Craft Two: “Nativity scene three ways”

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## You will need:

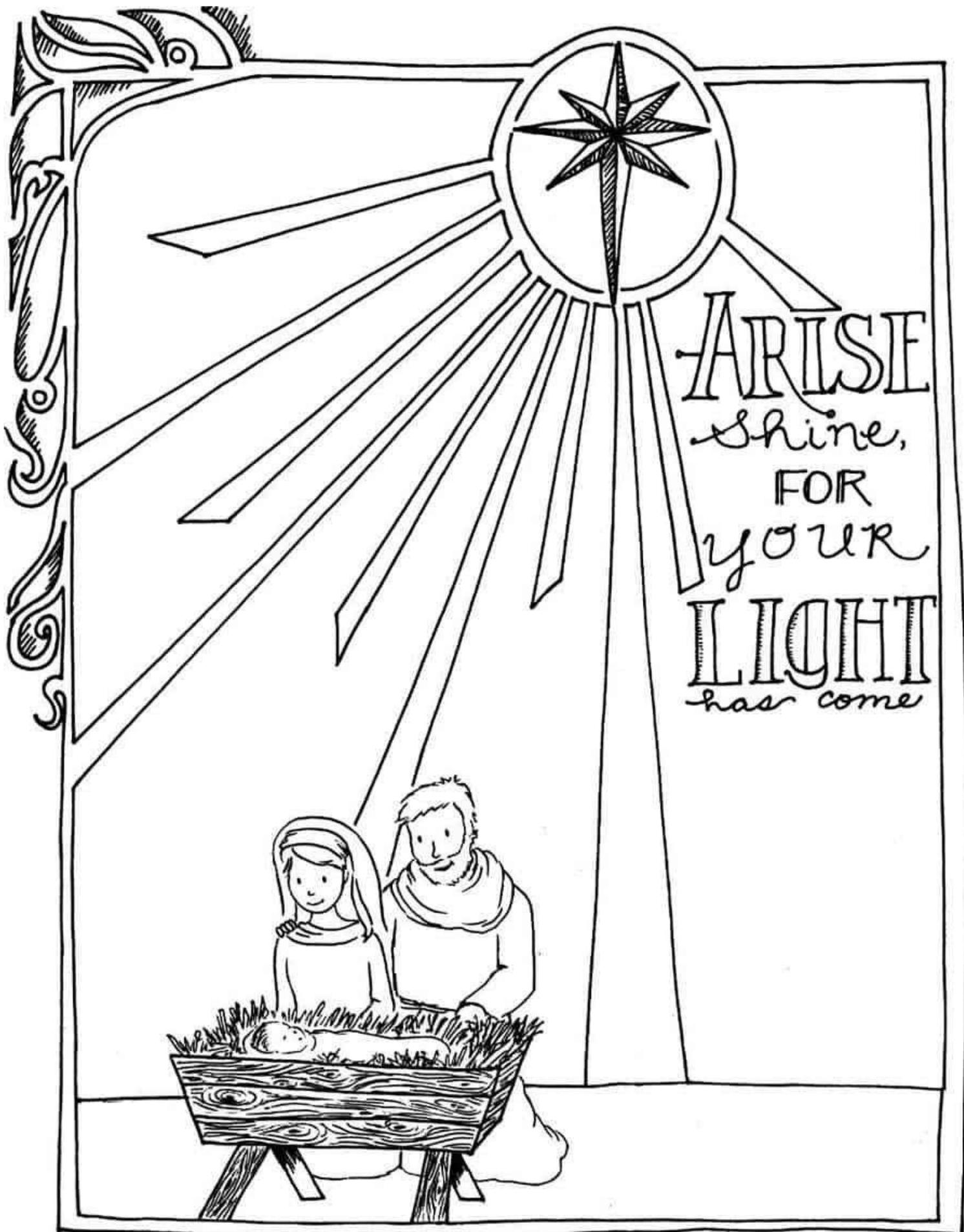
- Paper or Styrofoam cups
- Tape, glue, or stapler
- Scissors
- Decorative materials (markers, fabric paint)
- String, pipe cleaners (optional)
- Paper towel or toilet paper tubes
- Popsicle sticks or clothespins
- Felt or Fabric
- Google eyes



## Procedure:

1. Decorate your chosen materials. Color with markers or add google eyes or fabric paint to make features pop more prominently.
2. Add “clothing” by wrapping around felt or fabric and securing with glue.
3. If desired, punch a hole near the top or wrap a string around the characters to create hang-able ornaments or decorations.
4. Characters to create include Mary, Joseph, Jesus, Shepherds, Magi, angels, and animals.





ARISE  
Shine,  
FOR  
your  
LIGHT  
has come

5. Hang your Nativity as a decoration or place your characters in the diorama-style “stable.”



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## *Help you tell kids about Jesus!*

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We don’t ask for money, but we do need your help. Please consider the following:

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2. Link to us from your blog or church website.
3. Share our posts on Pinterest or Facebook.
4. Tell a friend to google “[Ministry to Children](http://Ministry to Children).”
5. Add me (and our team) to your personal prayer list.

Our website now has over 4,000 free resources for your children’s ministry. Each month we’re adding even more! Here are a few popular sections:

Over 300 Printable [Bible Coloring Pages](http://ministry-to-children.com/bible-coloring-pages/) -- [ministry-to-children.com/bible-coloring-pages/](http://ministry-to-children.com/bible-coloring-pages/)

Over 700 [Bible Lessons](http://ministry-to-children.com/lessons/) and Complete [Sunday School Curriculum](http://ministry-to-children.com/sunday-school-lessons/)

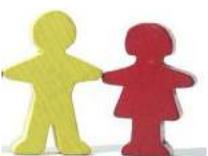
[ministry-to-children.com/lessons/](http://ministry-to-children.com/lessons/) -- [ministry-to-children.com/sunday-school-lessons/](http://ministry-to-children.com/sunday-school-lessons/)

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[Sunday School Games](http://ministry-to-children.com/kids-sunday-school-games/), [Bible Crafts](http://ministry-to-children.com/music/), and [Worship Songs for Kids](http://ministry-to-children.com/music/)

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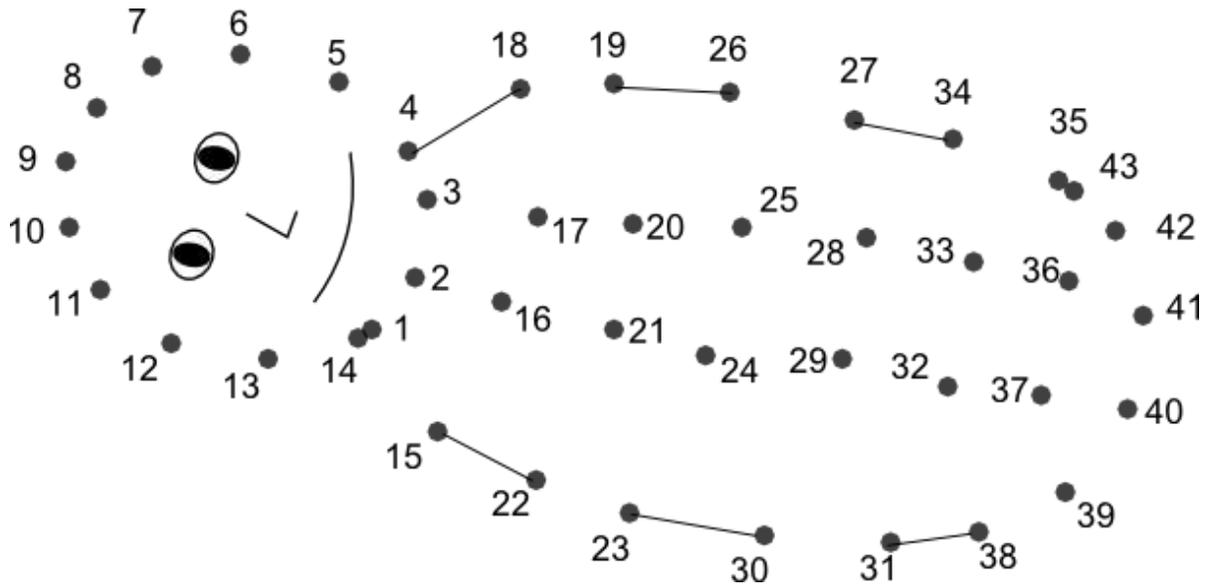


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# Jesus is Born

A Christmas activity worksheet from [ministry-to-children.com](http://ministry-to-children.com)

Connect the dots to see who was born in Bethlehem.



Finish the story with the words at the right.

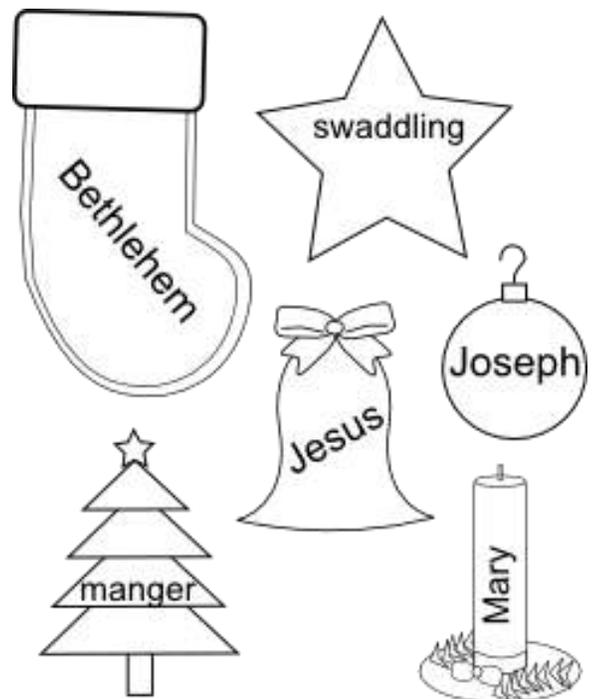
M \_\_\_\_\_ and J \_\_\_\_\_ traveled to  
B \_\_\_\_\_.

M \_\_\_\_\_ had a baby and named him

J \_\_\_\_\_. He was God's Son.

She placed J \_\_\_\_\_ in a m \_\_\_\_\_,  
which was a place for animals to eat.

He was wrapped in s \_\_\_\_\_  
clothes, which were strips of cloth.



## Why Did Jesus Come?

Unscramble the words to complete the Bible verse and learn why God sent Jesus.

The \_\_\_\_\_ sent his \_\_\_\_\_ to be the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_.

A E H T R F                      O N S                      R A S O I V                      D R O W L

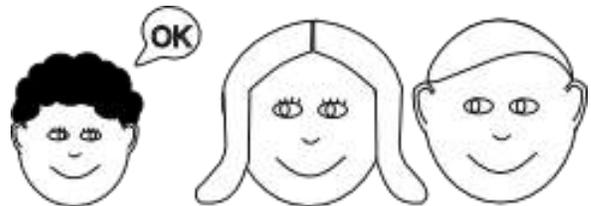
1 John 4:14

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God showed his love for us by sending Jesus. How can you show God's love to other people? Put a check mark by each thing you will do.



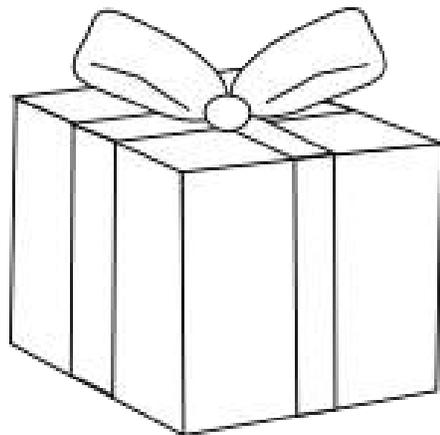
tell a friend about Jesus



obey your parents



send a card



give a present