

Bible Lesson: Keeping the Christmas Spirit in the New Year

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Main idea: As we welcome a new year, we can remember the Christmas message, that GOD IS WITH US!

Teacher preparation:

- Read Scripture references (below), Isaiah 63:7-9, Psalm 148:7-14 and Hebrews 2:10-18
- Spend time in prayer. Pray for your students. Many people get the “Christmas blues” this time of year, as the family festivities come to a close. We don’t need to let go of the anticipation and joy of Christmas. We can carry his message of salvation with us all year long as we remember that God came as a human baby, and God is with us through our every trial. What are some ways you can personally keep this message alive throughout the new year?
- Gather: Bible, dry erase board and markers, several plastic cups, tape, “Going on a trip” template, “paper doll” template, nativity pieces, scissors, crayons or markers
- download – [paper doll template PDF](#)
- download – [going on a trip printable PDF](#)

Scripture references:

- Matthew 2:13-23
- Proverbs 16:9
- Hebrews 2:18
- Joshua 1:9

Game: “Going on a trip.” Students will work in teams to build a tower with six cups. Before class, prepare several plastic cups for the game by printing off copies of the “going on a trip” game template. Cut out each piece and tape them onto plastic cups, so the bottom of the picture is near the mouth of the cup. This way, students can stack the cups with the opening on the floor and have the pictures facing up. You will need enough cups for each student to have one cup, with possibly a few extras. Arrange the cups on the floor at the far end of the room.

Divide your class into teams with six kids per team. There may be a couple of teams that have five, so those teams will have one person run the relay twice. Make sure no team has fewer than five kids. (Or, if you have a small class, divide up the class into teams of two or three, so you can have a few teams competing.)

Ask students to give examples of things they need to go on a long trip. (This list should include toothbrush, pillow, teddy bear, money, pajamas, and Bible, as these are the items on the cups.) Explain that for this game, they need to work as a team to collect items for a long trip. Each team will need six cups, and each cup has to have something different on it. No team should have two teddy bear cups, for example. This means they have to pay close attention to what their teammates grab before them. Have the teams line up on the opposite side of the room from the cups. When you say go, one member from each team will run across the room and grab a cup. They will then add this cup to their tower. Each tower needs to have three cups on the bottom row, two cups in the middle row, and one cup on top. The first team to complete a tower with six different cups wins.

Message: Open in prayer.

Say, you all did great with that game! Did everyone have a good Christmas? How many of you had family or friends travel to visit you for Christmas? How many of you travelled to spend the holidays with family? (Have kids share briefly.) Christmas can be a very exciting time, can't it? We bake cookies, share good food with people we love, open presents and celebrate Jesus' birthday. We look forward to Christmas all December long, sometimes all year long! Now that Christmas is over, we have another loooong wait until next Christmas. That's kind of a bummer, isn't it? Is anyone else a little sad that next Christmas is so far away? Me too. Christmas is a wonderful, special time, and sometimes people, even grownups, get sad that it is over. But I have good news for you today! Even though we will put away the Christmas tree and take down the Christmas lights and eat all the Christmas cookies, we do not need to stop being excited about Christmas. We can have Christmas spirit in January, February, March, April... all year long!

We all know the Christmas story. We have been learning about it for weeks now. A long time ago, a little baby was born and laid in a manger, a feeding trough, because there was no place for his family to stay in the inn. (Hold up the nativity piece of Jesus in the manger.) This little baby is Jesus, and the Bible says that Jesus is the son of God, and he came from heaven and grew up and never sinned or did anything wrong at all. He lived a perfect life, and then he died to save us from our sins. He took our punishment so we would not have to. He did that because he loves us so, so much.

God loves us so much, he became a human, and lived with us. GOD IS WITH US. He did the same sort of stuff you and I do. Jesus ate, he laughed, he cried, he had friends, went to school and loved God. Jesus was even tempted to do bad things, to sin, just like you and me, and he even went through some scary times in his life. After Jesus was born, all sorts of people visited him. Shepherds, (hold up a shepherd nativity piece,) and wise men. (Hold up a wise man.) One person who did not visit Jesus was King Herod. The wise men visited Herod on their way to meet Jesus, and then on their way home, they avoided Herod, because they did not want him to know where Jesus was. Let's read the rest of this story

straight from the Bible itself. If you would like, you can follow along in your own Bible. This is Matthew 2:13-23. If you would prefer, you can close your eyes and imagine being in this story yourself. Listen calmly as I read. (Read Matthew 2:13-23 as if you were telling a story.)

“After the wise men were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. ‘Get up! Flee to Egypt with the child and his mother,’ the angel said. ‘Stay there until I tell you to return, because Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.’ That night Joseph left for Egypt with the child and Mary, his mother, and they stayed there until Herod’s death. This fulfilled what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: ‘I called my Son out of Egypt.’ Herod was furious when he realized that the wise men had outwitted him. He sent soldiers to kill all the boys in and around Bethlehem who were two years old and under, based on the wise men’s report of the star’s first appearance. Herod’s brutal action fulfilled what God had spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

‘A cry was heard in Ramah—
weeping and great mourning.
Rachel weeps for her children,
refusing to be comforted,
for they are dead.’

When Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt. ‘Get up!’ the angel said. ‘Take the child and his mother back to the land of Israel, because those who were trying to kill the child are dead.’ So Joseph got up and returned to the land of Israel with Jesus and his mother. But when he learned that the new ruler of Judea was Herod’s son Archelaus, he was afraid to go there. Then, after being warned in a dream, he left for the region of Galilee. So the family went and lived in a town called Nazareth. This fulfilled what the prophets had said: ‘He will be called a Nazarene.’”

This passage is full of scary stuff. Joseph and Mary did not have time to pack anything when they escaped with Jesus to Egypt. Can you imagine going on a long trip, even moving to a new country, without so much as your toothbrush? They must have been very unsure about what the future would hold. But above all of that, one thing stands out in this story. God protected Jesus. God cares for us and guides our every step. (Proverbs 16:9). When God guides us, he will never lead us into sin or bad situations. As our excitement for and looking forward to Christmas faces, we still hold on to what Christmas means. Christmas means **GOD IS WITH US.**

Isn’t it comforting to know that God is always with us? We just celebrated Jesus’ birthday. He came to earth as a little human baby and grew up and was tempted and went through tough times, just like us. Since he has gone through all the things we will go through, he is able to help us. Let’s have a sword drill to see this idea in the Bible. Take out all bookmarks

and hold your Bible above your head. When I say go, look up Hebrews 2:18. Go! (Read or have a student read this verse.) “Since he himself has gone through suffering and testing, he is able to help us when we are being tested.”

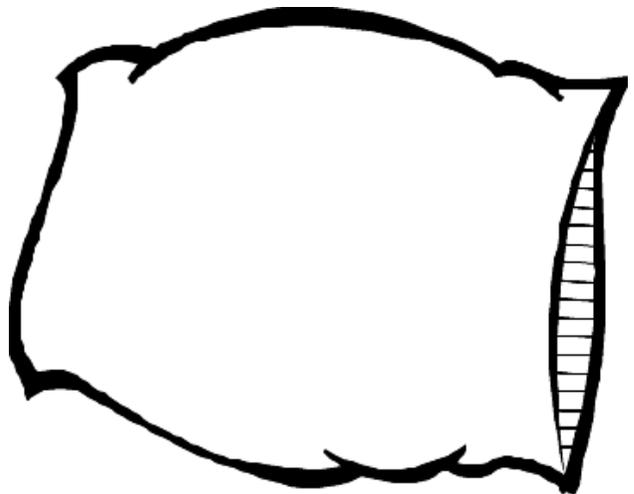
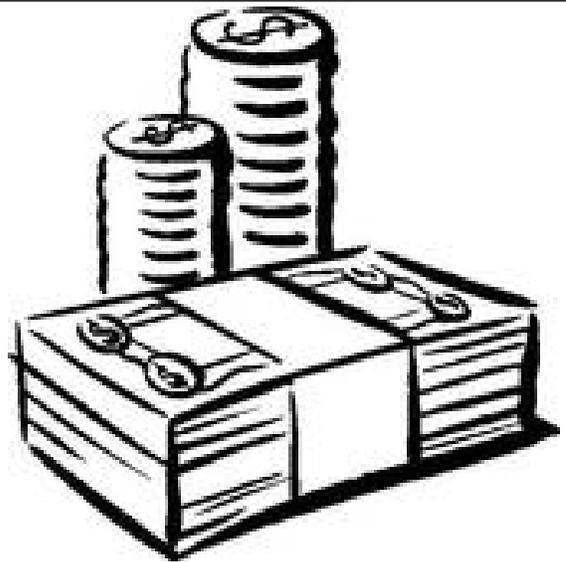
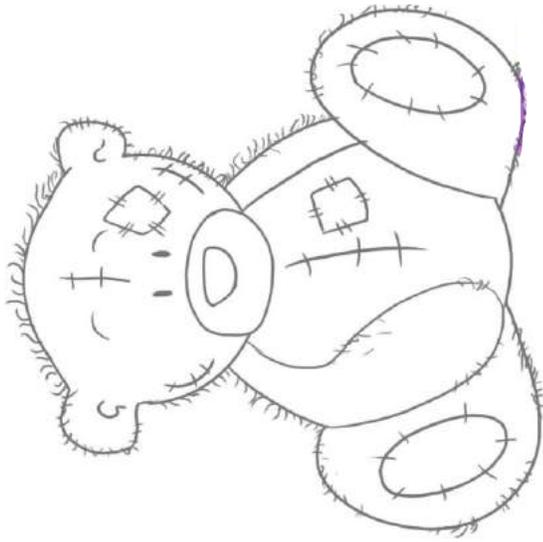
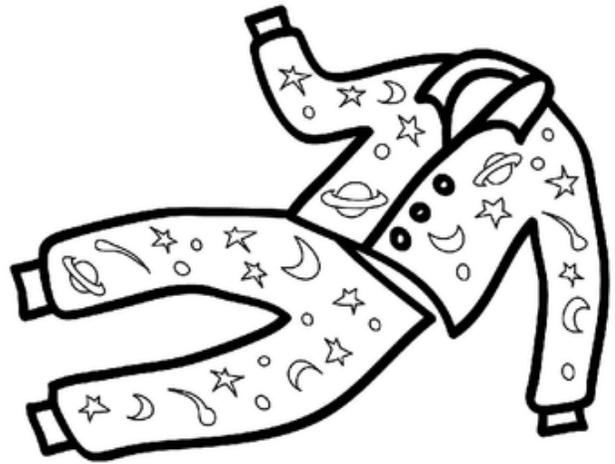
Let’s brainstorm together some ways we may suffer or sin or be tempted or tested. (On a white board or chalkboard, list some child-appropriate sufferings and sins. For example, a pet running away, failing a test, cheating on a test, not honoring parents, lying, getting sick, etc. Spend only a minute or two on this exercise. Write big enough that most of the board is covered.) This is a pretty sad list, isn’t it? You know, this time of year, with a new year right around the corner, you hear a lot of people talking about a clean slate, a fresh start, a “do-over.” A new year offers us a chance to grow and do better things than we did the year before. Without Jesus, it is impossible to do better. But Jesus can forgive us of our sins and give us a clean slate, a do-over. When we ask him to forgive us of our sins, it’s like he erases it from our lives. (Erase the board.) This year, we can have a fresh start when we ask Jesus to forgive us of our sins and live in our hearts.

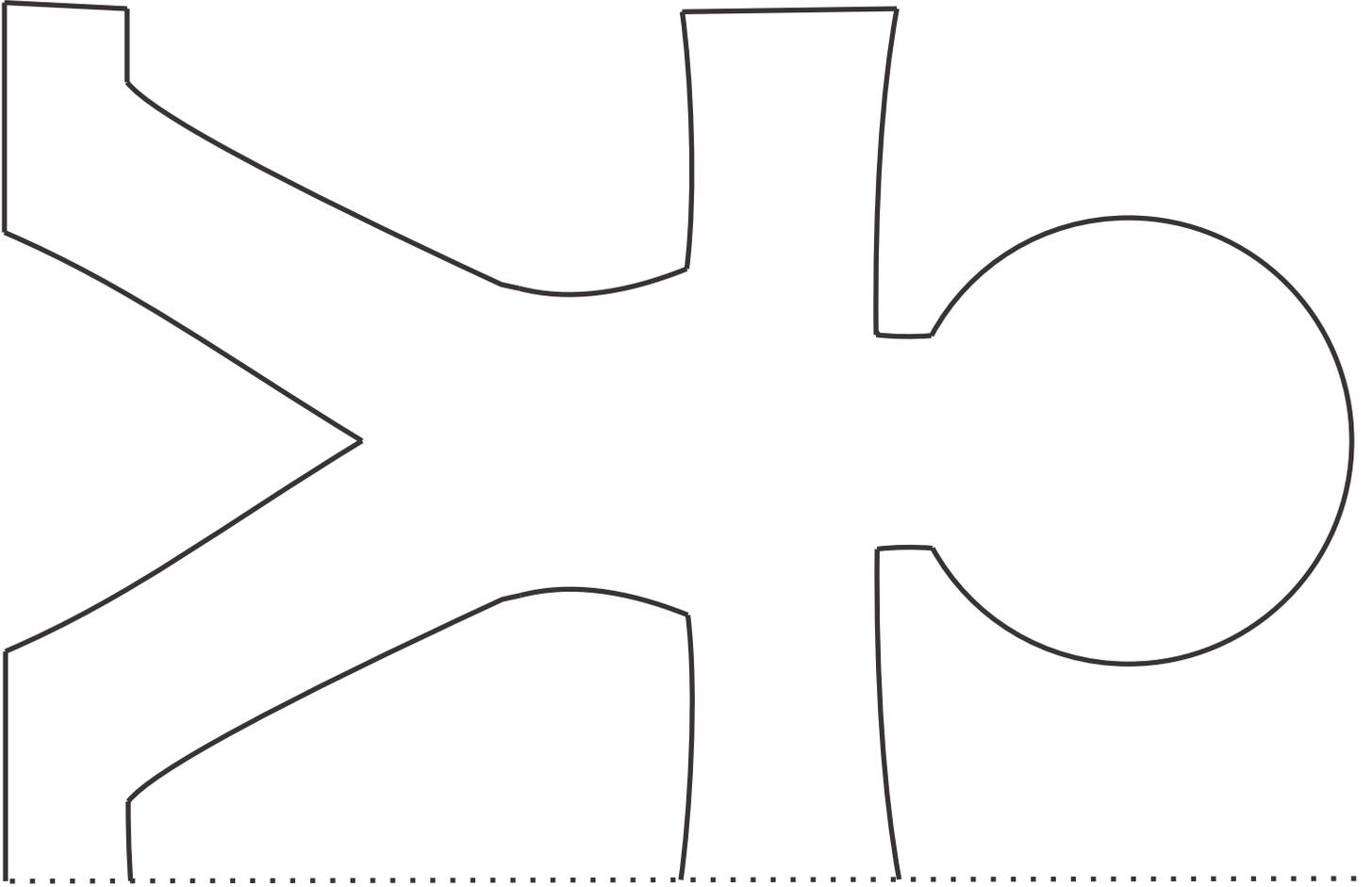
This year, we can fill our lives with good things because GOD IS WITH US! One thing we can fill this new year with is prayer. (Write prayer on the board in big letters.) What are some other good things we can fill our new year with because GOD IS WITH US? (Fill the board with the children’s answers.) That is a great list. This new year, we don’t have to be nervous or afraid of anything that may happen. We can hold onto the joy and excitement of Christmas all year long because, say it with me, GOD IS WITH US! Before we pray and start our craft let me share with you one last Bible verse. (If you want, do a sword drill with this verse.) Joshua 1:9 says, “This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

End in prayer.

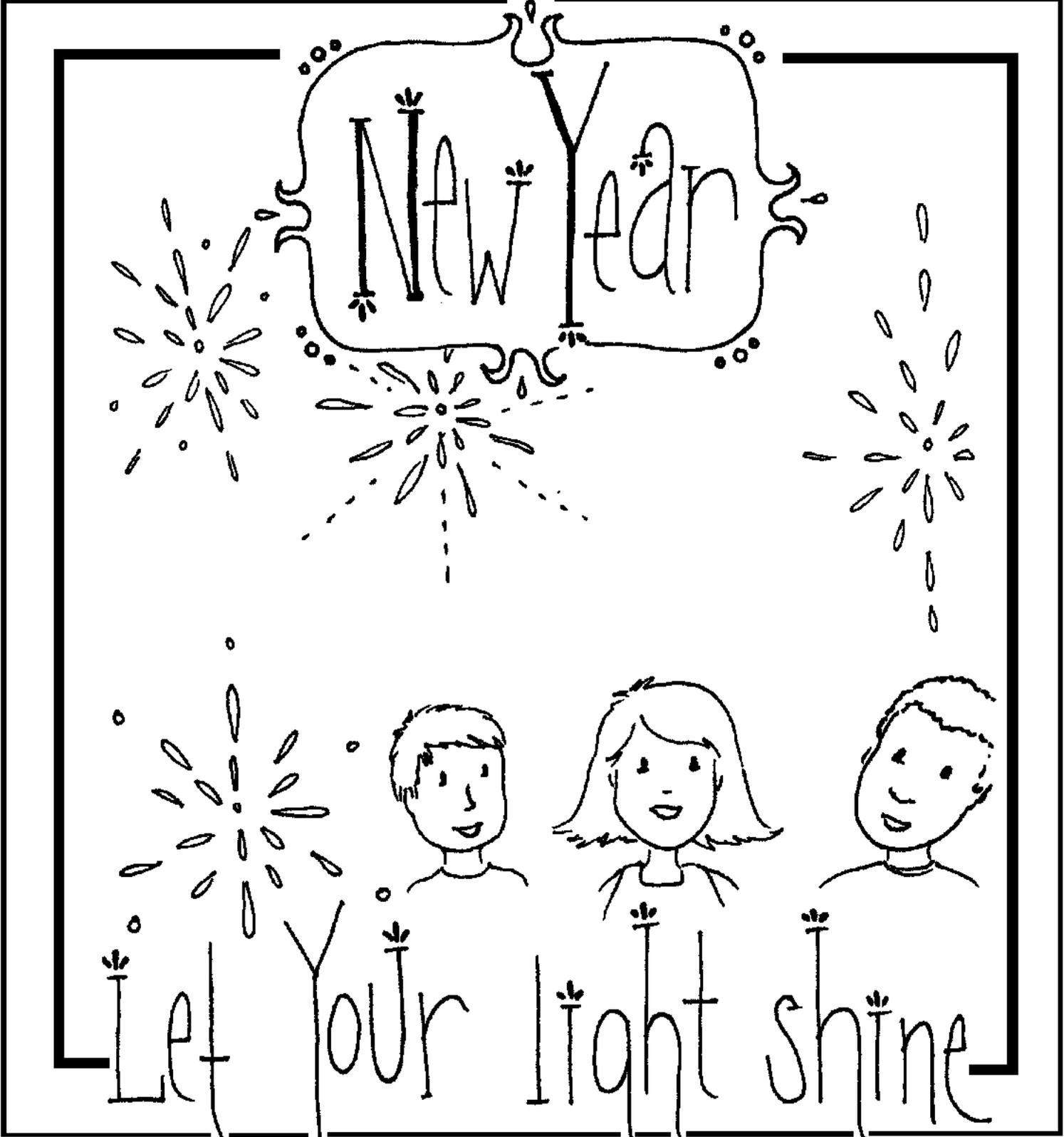
Craft: Jesus and Me paper chain doll. Pass out a “paper doll template” to every student, along with a pair of scissors. Fold along the dotted line so you can still see the person on one side. Cut along the solid lines, being sure not to cut off the fold. Unfold, and you will have two people holding hands, with feet touching. Instruct the children to color one person to look like them and the other person to look like Jesus. Across the bodies, have them write “GOD IS WITH ME!” Older children could write out Joshua 1:9, or at least the reference.

Vote Saved



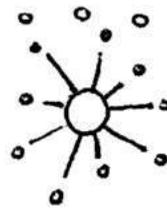
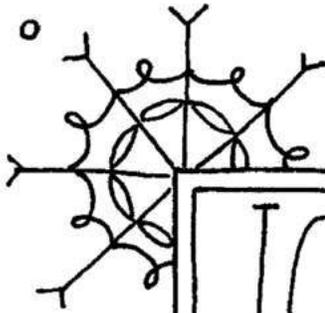
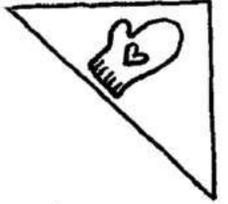
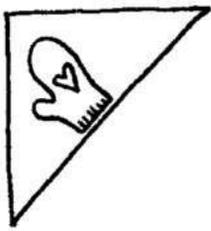


God Bless OUR

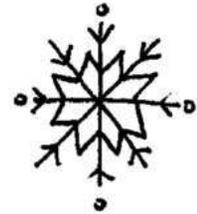




MY NUMBER ONE
FOR THE NEW YEAR



JANUARY



Bless us Lord, this JANUARY
Set our thoughts on You.
Let us serve you joyfully
In everything we do!



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