

# TRUTH in the TINSEL

AN ADVENT EXPERIENCE FOR LITTLE HANDS



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This book is dedicated to Lydia and Asa, my greatest treasures.

With much love to Les for thinking of me more highly than he ought, to Mama for reading the first copy, to Jason for being my only brother and to my Sisterchicks (namely, Staci) for coming up with the title.

And a very real and huge thank you to my readers and friends at [ohAmanda.com](http://ohAmanda.com)...

thanks.

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# forward

I have spent my life teaching the Bible to children. Thirty plus years ago I wish I had a resource like what you are reading to recommend to families! I am a huge Amanda White fan! God put her in my life many years ago. I have watched her grow from a help to her mother to a help to families throughout the Body of Christ! This is an amazing tool, that's why I wanted to be a part. If you use it I believe with all my heart it will change your family!

The true message of Christmas that this book teaches will change you as a person and a Christ follower, This message changed my life years ago, it changed me as a husband, a father, an employee, a minister and has changed the lens I view everything through. It began a journey I'm still on. I believe what's missing from so many families is an understanding of life from a Biblical worldview.

Telling a story is one thing, but involving that story and applying it to your life is another skill all together. This is what "Truth In The Tinsel" is all about! I hope this adventure during the Advent season spreads out to impact what you do the rest of the year to impact your child's faith!

Just like the church needs a fresh Biblical vision for reaching children so does the family. Have you ever asked God for what He wants for your family? God designed the family to put His Word into future generations; this is not just the responsibility of the church. So if God gives us the desires of your heart what are your desires and goals for your children? For me I wanted our family to be close. I wanted them to love the Lord with all their heart and love the Word. In fact I wanted them to love the Bible so much that it was what they based every choice in their life on. This could not happen if my wife and I did not commit the time needed to make this happen in our children. What about you, what's on your list?

The Bible is the benchmark of how we should view the world and how we live. My goal for my children as well as every child I have the opportunity to teach and pastor is for them to grow up to become a doer of the word. I realized early in my ministry that children couldn't live what they couldn't remember and they couldn't remember what they didn't understand. That's why I love this book!

There are lots of voices that speak into our lives that challenge a biblical worldview. As a parent and as a pastor I cannot block out every voice that speaks to my family and to my congregation nor should I but I have spent my life pointing out that God's Word contains truth and the truth of the Word is what will set us free. My prayer for you and your family is that you'll let the message of this book change your family and start a tradition that will shape the lives and choices of your children forever! Never forget...God's word is the filter we should view the world through!

## **Jim Wideman**

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**Truth in the Tinsel: An Advent Experience for Little Hands**   

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Book  
Experience the true story of Christmas with your kids this year! <http://truthinthetinsel.com/>

About  

# Introduction

When my daughter was just a year old, I bought her an Advent Calendar book. Each day, she'd open a tiny flap in the back and then we'd read the corresponding page in the book. The first day the book instructed us to make a Christmas ornament to go along with the story. We did (I think it was made out of construction paper and had some stickers slapped on it) and my daughter was in love! Every single day of December she wanted to make an ornament. However, the book didn't continue with ornaments each day, so we made some up ourselves! They were mainly made from paper, glue, markers and maybe a ribbon if I could scrounge one up.

We had so much fun making a little craft together during that Christmas season. What was even more fun is that my little bitty girl started understanding the Christmas story. She'd talk (or babble) about Mary, Joseph, and Jesus.

The next year, I heard about the Jesse Tree and decided I was going to do that for our advent celebration. But I wanted to make the Jesse Tree ornaments with my daughter to continue our tradition from the year before. We made it to Day 2 of the Jesse Tree before I realized it was too detailed and mature for her to understand. The rest of our December, I just read the Christmas Story from the Bible to her until we found something we could make an ornament from. It was a blast!

By the time my daughter was 3, I started getting excited about our next year of Christmas ornaments. I planned them a little more carefully and we were ready to go. What made our ornaments so successful is not that my daughter was understanding God-incarnate or the theology of angels but that she was getting the details of the story. She was meditating on the story for a whole month—and on specific passages of the story every single day. Last year, I decided to take a break from the ornaments. I wanted to try something different and have a new adventure for Christmas. We watched movies, made crafts, and lit a lot of candles. But when it was done, my daughter (4 at the time) said, "Mommy, can we please make ornaments next year? So we can teach Asa [her little brother] the Christmas Story?"

This book is the answer to her 4-year-old question. This is an adventure for families to learn the story together. It's an experience with the greatest story ever written and the greatest gift ever given—God's own Son, Jesus the Christ!

Amanda 2011

# How To Use This Book

This book is designed for kids my own children's ages—preschool to early elementary. Many of the crafts you'll see in this book are gussied up versions of previous ornaments I've made with my kids. But each day is lovingly prepared for you and your children to quickly and easily experience the Christmas story in a fun way! Each day consists of five parts:

## 1. The Clue

There are 24 picture and word clues available to download, print, and insert into your own advent calendar. Have your children open the calendar, pull out the picture, and wait for the story.

*Note: There are two versions of the clues. One is small picture clues you can cut and fold to put into your own advent calendar. The second is a printable paper chain for those of you who don't have a fill-able advent calendar!*

## 2. The Scripture

Tell your children to listen for the clue as you read the Scripture. Let them yell it out if they hear it while you read, if you want! Read the entire passage listed. You may only be focusing on one section or verse, but hearing the verse in context is important. You want your children to hear the Scripture as many times as possible—that's part of the meditation!

*NOTE: Each passage of Scripture is hyper-linked so you can easily read the Scripture online. However, I suggest using your own Bible so your children get acquainted to the actual Bible. Also, I suggest using a kid-friendly version like the NIV, which is on a 3rd grade reading level.*

## 3. The Ornament

After you've read the Scripture and the kids have recognized the clue, start making the ornament. These ornaments are simple crafts with simple supplies you should have around your home. You are not trying to make amazing ornaments to grace Macy's Christmas Tree. You are merely helping your kids meditate on a portion of Scripture by letting them make something with their hands.

## 4. The Talk

As you make your ornament use the "talk about it together" section to lead the conversation. Discuss the passage of Scripture and the event or the person you're making the ornament about. Not every single day will have an application or decision for your kids to make at the end. Sometimes your conversation will be pure speculation, "What do you think they felt like...?" or "I wonder what the sheep did...?"

Don't push conversation, but let your children discuss, think, and ask questions about the story. Feel free to read ahead, find parallel Scriptures, or look up other Scriptures to enhance and further the conversation.

## 5. More

This entire process shouldn't take more than 30 minutes. (I mean, it can if you want, too!) Just don't stress out about having a big heart-to-heart, special moment every single day. It's hard to do a craft or activity every single day, so anything you do is better than nothing! But if you'd like to extend the activity a little, I've added some small extras for you: additional Scriptures to look up, songs to download, DVDs to find and watch, a fun easy activity to do as a family, etc. Take them or leave them!

*Note: December is a busy month, and it may be impossible to do all 24 of these crafts. See our additional schedules for when your holiday schedule gets crazy.*

The key to this entire advent celebration is to have a daily focus and meditation on God's greatest gift. Your children will learn the ins and outs of the story because you've facilitated a time to discuss, play, and create. And in those moments, God will speak to their hearts and yours.

The little Baby is no longer in the manger but alive and sitting on a throne—waiting to have a relationship with you and your children. Help your children get to know Him this Christmas!

# Full Supply List

Many of these items are interchangeable. If a craft calls for foam and you only have felt, use that! If it calls for sequins and you only have beads from a broken necklace, use those! If it's supposed to have embroidery floss and you've only got yarn, use that! If it says glue and you can't find yours—use tape!

The final product is really not the goal. The goal is to get to know the story!

## Basic Supplies:

- White Glue
- Clear Tape
- Glue Gun (hot or low-temp)
- Scissors
- Paintbrushes

## Grocery Store Supplies:

- one piece of fun-shaped pasta (shell, bow-tie, etc.)
- rice
- baby food jar (or other small clear container with top)
- 2 cups of flour
- 1 cup of salt
- 1 cup of ground cinnamon
- 1 cup of applesauce
- wax paper
- food coloring
- zippered plastic bag

## Recycled or Household Items (ie. Stuff You Should Have Around Your House):

- cardboard tube
- large plastic lid (oatmeal, raisins, etc.)
- one large bubble cut from bubble wrap
- old CD or DVD
- scrap fabric (an old blanket or t-shirt works great!)
- cotton balls
- old magazines or newspapers
- rubbing alcohol (or hand sanitizer)
- egg carton
- small sticks from outside
- cardboard
- cookie cutters
- wrapping paper

## Craft Supplies:

- black paper
- tissue paper (assorted colors)
- assorted sparkly decorations (sequins, beads, glitter foam, leftover confetti)
- yarn
- slotted wooden clothespin (2)
- felt (assorted colors)
- glitter glue
- permanent marker
- pop-dots - [click here to find online](#)
- flat marbles
- white cardstock
- pieces of glittery craft foam cut into small triangles, squares, etc.
- ribbon
- wide craft stick
- Mod Podge (or 1 part glue to 1 part water)
- 2 small marbles (or other small items)
- miscellaneous paints (including black)
- craft sticks
- small Christmas ball ornament
- yarn (white and another color if desired)
- wiggly eyes
- pipe cleaners
- buttons
- white feathers
- construction paper
- paper fasteners (2)
- embroidery thread
- glitter
- old (preferably sparkly or shiny) Christmas Card
- assorted beads
- ornament hooks (or string)
- jingle bell

## Optional:

- Drinking straw
- Xacto Knife
- Fork

## Templates:

- [Mary & Elizabeth Paper Dolls](#)
- [candle](#)
- [sun](#)
- [wisemen](#)
- [temple](#)
- [shepherd](#)

# daily supply list

## Day 1 - Light

candle template, black paper, assorted colors of tissue paper, glue, scissors or exacto knife

## Day 2 - Kingdom

cardboard tube, scissors, assorted sparkly decorations, paint, paintbrush, glue

## Day 3 - Zechariah

plastic lid, wiggly eyes, yarn, one piece of shaped pasta, one large bubble cut from bubble wrap, glue

## Day 4 - Gabriel

wrapping paper, jingle bell, glittery pipe cleaner, ribbon (optional), glue, tape

## Day 5 - Mary

clothespin, assorted colors of felt, glitter glue, glue, scissors

## Day 6 - Mary/Elizabeth

paper doll template, white cardstock, pop-dots, watercolors (or crayons, dot markers, etc.)

## Day 7 - Song

old CD or DVD, flat marbles (found in floral department)

## Day 8 - Sun

sun template, black paper, pieces of glittery craft foam cut into small triangles, squares, etc., glue

## Day 9 - Joseph

supplies used in Day 5

## Day 10 - Dream

3x5" piece of fabric, 2 matching pipe cleaners, cotton balls

## Day 11 - Jesus' Name

wide craft stick, Mod Podge (or 1 part glue to 1 part water), paint brush or sponge, old magazines/newspapers, scissors

## Day 12 - Census

rice, food coloring, rubbing alcohol (or hand sanitizer), plastic zippered bag, baby food jar (or other small clear container with top), 2 small marbles (or other small items), glue, permanent marker, ribbon

## Day 13 - Bethlehem

egg carton, scissors, miscellaneous paints (including black), paint brushes, ribbon

## Day 14 - Stable

3 craft sticks, small sticks from outside, glue

## Day 15 - Manger

2 cups of flour, 1 cup of salt, ¾ cup to 1 cup of water, paints

## Day 16 - Cloths

small Christmas ball ornament, small strip of fabric, glue, permanent marker

## Day 17 - Sheep

white yarn, scissors, fork, wiggly eyes, pipe cleaners, small piece of craft foam

## Day 18 - Angels

buttons, white feathers, glue, ribbon or yarn

## Day 19 - Shepherds

shepherd template, small piece of felt, construction paper, paper fasteners

## Day 20 - Temple

temple template, old (sparkly/shiny) Christmas card, permanent marker

## Day 21 - Star

cardboard, scissors, embroidery thread, glue or tape

## Day 22 - Wise Men

wise men template, construction paper, scissors, glue, glitter, ribbon

## Day 23 - Gifts

1 cup of ground cinnamon, 1 cup of applesauce, cookie cutters, ribbon, wax paper, drinking straw (optional)

## Day 24 - Cross

pipe cleaners, assorted beads  
daily supply list



# Day 1

# light

## Read it together:

Isaiah 9:2-7

## Make it together: Light Ornament

Supplies: [candle template](#), black paper, assorted colors of tissue paper, glue, scissors or Xacto knife

- Cut two candle patterns from black paper.
- Fold in half to cut out inside.
- Tear small strips of tissue paper.
- Glue to edges of black paper until it is entirely covered.
- Glue on 2nd black candle pattern.
- Trim tissue paper.



## Talk about it together:

Before Jesus was born, the world was in complete darkness. Not literal night-time darkness but inside-your-heart darkness. Sin, fear, selfishness and anger brought darkness to everyone's hearts. Think about being in complete darkness. It's not fun, is it? It's hard to see or do anything at all. God wants us to do all the great things He has planned for us. So, He sent us a Light. The Light of the World, Jesus as a little baby!

## Do more together:

Go into a closet or windowless room and observe the darkness. Then turn on a flashlight to see how a tiny light expels darkness! Think about how bright Jesus' light must be!

# Day 2

# Kingdom

## Read it together:

Isaiah 9:2-7

## Make it together: Crown Ornament

Supplies: cardboard tube, scissors, assorted sparkly decorations, paint, paintbrushes

- Cut about 2 inches from a cardboard tube.
- Use scissors to make a zig zag shape on one side.
- Paint.
- Decorate with sequins, beads, etc.



## Talk about it together:

Hundreds of years before Jesus was even born, God spoke to the prophet Isaiah and gave him this promise about Jesus. This Scripture describes a king who will rule forever. Look at the descriptions of the king—wonderful counselor, mighty God, everlasting Father, Prince of peace. Does that sound like a good king? Jesus didn't come to earth to stay a little baby but to rule and reign in our lives forever!

## Do more together:

As you decorate your crown, make up some more descriptive names for Jesus. Maybe Awesome Creator? Strong Healer?

Day 3

Zechariah

Read it together:

Luke 1:5-25

Note: As you read this passage, explain that the baby foretold by Gabriel is not Jesus, but his cousin, John. Explain that the birth of John and Jesus go together and it's important to know the whole story!



Make it together: Zechariah Ornament

Supplies: plastic lid, wiggly eyes, yarn, one piece of shaped pasta, one large bubble cut from bubble wrap, glue

- Decorate lid with yarn for hair, wiggly eyes and pasta for nose.
- Glue bubble on for the mouth.



Talk about it together:

Zechariah was visited by Gabriel, an angel that stands in God's presence! But did Zechariah believe what Gabriel said? No, he couldn't understand how his wife could get pregnant when she was so old. What did Gabriel do to Zechariah for not believing in the miracle God was going to give him? That's right, he made him unable to speak until the baby was born! So, let's pop that bubble on Zechariah's mouth to remind us that he couldn't speak. Zechariah will also help us remember to believe the things that God says, even if they sound unbelievable!

Do more together:

Use your mouth for good today. Say, "I believe what God says!" while standing on one foot. Now say it while spinning around. See if you can say the verse while holding your tongue between your fingers!

# Day 4

## Gabriel

### Read it together:

Luke 1:26-38

### Make it together: Angel Ornament

Supplies: jingle bell, wrapping paper, pipe cleaner, ribbon (optional)

- Twist pipe cleaner into figure 8.
- Slide into bell.
- Glue if necessary.
- Fold wrapping paper like a fan. Tape at top.
- Insert into slot of jingle bell.
- Embellish if desired.



### Talk about it together:

We heard about Gabriel yesterday, remember? He told Zechariah that his wife Elizabeth would have a son. Now, Gabriel is delivering another message. This time to Mary, to tell her that she would have a baby, too. Gabriel stands in God's presence and does what God tells him to do. If Gabriel visited you, would you listen to him and do what he said? Would you be like Zechariah and not believe? Or like Mary and believe?

### Do more together:

Read Psalm 34:7, Psalm 91:11 and Hebrews 1:14 to see what other kind of jobs angels have.

# Day 5

# Mary

## Read it together:

Luke 1:26-38

## Make it together: Mary Ornament

Supplies: slotted clothespin, assorted colors of felt, glitter glue, glue

- Cut a dress from felt.  
(A simple triangle or rectangle will do!)
- Glue onto clothespin with rounded ball on top.
- Use glitter glue to embellish clothes.
- Use ribbon (or other felt) to embellish hair/headress.



## Talk about it together:

Mary was a young girl with no husband. Do you think she might have been surprised and afraid when Gabriel told her she was going to have the Son of God? She probably was, but did she obey God anyway? Yes, she did. She told Gabriel she was the Lord's servant. How can you serve God and your family today?

## Do more together:

Use your Gabriel ornament from yesterday and your Mary ornament from today to act out Luke 1:26-38.

Day 6

Mary/Elizabeth

Read it together:

Luke 1:39-45

Make it together: Mary & Elizabeth

Supplies: paper doll templates, pop-dot, watercolors, paintbrush, scissors

- Print Mary and Elizabeth paper dolls.
- Color or paint with watercolors.
- Let dry, then cut out dolls, clothes and tummies. Use pop-dot
- to attach pregnant tummies to clothes.



Talk about it together:

Mary and Elizabeth were relatives and were both going to have special babies from God! What did Elizabeth's baby do when Mary entered their house? He jumped for joy! Why was Elizabeth so excited to see Mary? Elizabeth knew that Mary was carrying God's Son {verse 43} and excited that Mary believed what God would do {verse 45}. How exciting it must have been for them to be together and talk about what God was going to do with their sons!

Do more together:

Help your children find a picture of you when you were pregnant. Or talk to someone who is currently pregnant. Talk about what it felt like and what you thought about when you knew your children were about to be born.

Day 7

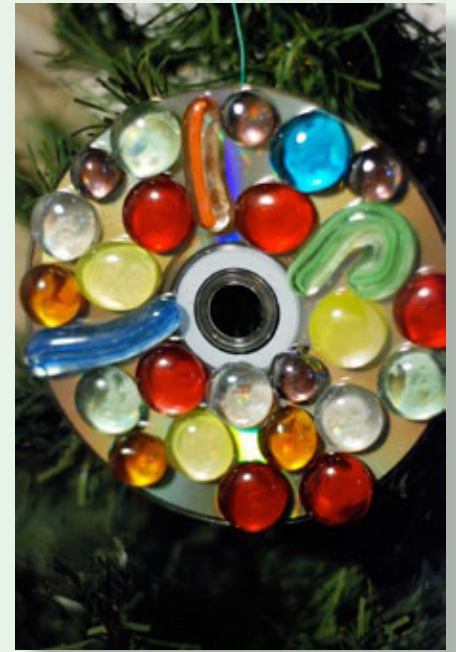
song

Read it together:

Luke 1: 46-56

Make it together: Mary's Song

Supplies: old CD or DVD, flat marbles, glue  
Glue marbles on shiny side of CD/DVD.



Talk about it together:

Mary was so encouraged when she went to visit Elizabeth that she started singing! She sang a beautiful song to God. Read the song again and find three reasons she worshiped God.

Do more together:

Turn on your favorite worship song and sing it to God!

Day 8

SUN

Read it together:

Luke 1: 57-80

Make it together: Sun Ornament

Supplies: sun template, black paper, pieces of glittery craft foam cut into small triangles, squares, etc., glue

- Cut sun template from black paper.
- Glue foam pieces like a mosaic to decorate the sun.



Talk about it together:

When Elizabeth has baby John (one day called John the Baptist), Zechariah tells us that God gave him an important job. Did you hear what it was? To be a prophet and to prepare the way for Jesus! Zechariah then describes Jesus as the “rising sun” coming from heaven to “shine on those living in darkness”. Where have we heard that same description about Jesus being a light in the darkness before? That's right! Our candle from Isaiah! Jesus is the Light of the world!

Do more together:

Read John 8:12. How is this verse similar to Luke 1:76-79 and to Isaiah 9:2?



# Day 9

# Joseph

## Read it together:

Matthew 1:18-24

## Make it together: Joseph

Supplies: slotted clothespin, assorted colors of felt, glitter glue, glue

- Decorate a Joseph clothespin to match your Mary ornament.



## Talk about it together:

This scripture tells us that Joseph was a righteous man. That means he loved God and obeyed His Word. God chose righteous parents for Jesus so they could be a good example to him. How do you think Joseph felt when he found out he would be the earthly father to Jesus?

## Do more together:

Give the dads (uncles, grandpas, etc.) in your life a call, email or text today to say thank you for being a good example to you!

Day 10

dream

Read it together:

Matthew 1:18-25

Make it together: Joseph's Pillow

Supplies: scrap of fabric (about 3"x5"),  
2 pipe cleaners, 1-3 cotton balls

- Fold fabric in half.
- Use scissors to make slits on the edges of the folded material.
- Lace pipe cleaner through slits and fold down to close.
- Stuff pillow with cotton balls.



Talk about it together:

Joseph didn't know what to do when he found out Mary was pregnant. So, God sent an angel to tell him what to do. This time, though, the angel came to Joseph in a dream! The angel told Joseph to do two things. Do you remember what they were? That's right, don't be afraid to marry Mary and name the baby Jesus. Joseph obeyed the angel right away, just like Mary did. We should be quick to obey, too!

Do more together:

Do a [Joseph Obstacle Course](#) with your kids!

## Day 11

## Jesus' Name

### Read it together:

Matthew 1:18-25

### Make it together: Jesus Name Collage

Supplies: wide craft stick, Mod Podge (or 1 part glue to 1 part water), paintbrush, magazines, scissors

- Cut out several names (small enough to fit on the craft stick)
- from magazines.
- Glue onto craft stick.
- Brush Mod Podge on top.
- Find the letters J-E-S-U-S in letters bigger than the previous names.
- Glue JESUS right in the middle of the craft stick.
- Brush Mod Podge on top. Let dry.



### Talk about it together:

God told Joseph to name the baby, Jesus. Matthew also tells us that a prophesy about Jesus said His name would be Immanuel. The name Jesus means, "God saves" and Immanuel means "God with us." His name shows us why He came to earth as a baby—to be with us and to save us!

### Do more together:

Find out what your name means. Does your name's meaning give you an idea of something good you can do?

# Day 12

## CENSUS

### Read it together:

Luke 2:1-7

### Make it together: "I Spy Mary & Joseph" Jar Ornament

Supplies: rice, food coloring, rubbing alcohol (or hand sanitizer), plastic zippered bag, baby food jar (or other small clear container with top), 2 small marbles (or other small items), glue, permanent marker

To dye rice:

- Pour 1 cup of rice into a plastic zippered bag.
- Add about a tablespoon of rubbing alcohol or hand sanitizer.
- Add a few drops of food coloring.
- Seal bag. Move rice around in bag until it is uniform in color. Spread rice out on cookie sheet or paper towels to dry.

Ornament:

- Fill baby food jar  $\frac{3}{4}$  full of dyed rice.
- Draw a smiley face on each marble. Add to jar.
- Put glue on the inside of the baby food jar lid. Screw on tight.
- Tie ribbon around mouth of jar and add loop on top.

### Talk about it together:

The government made a law that everyone had to travel back to their hometown for the census—to be counted. Every town was filled with travelers and visitors just like our jar is filled with rice. Mary and Joseph were just two little people among many in the town. But they were two special people, because God had a big plan for them! Try to find the marbles inside your jar and think about what it was like for Mary and Joseph to be in a new town full of other people.

### Do more together:

If you have any extra marbles count them, too. You could even add some marbles to your jar—maybe count the same amount of marbles as there are people in your family!



Day 13

Bethlehem

Read it Together:

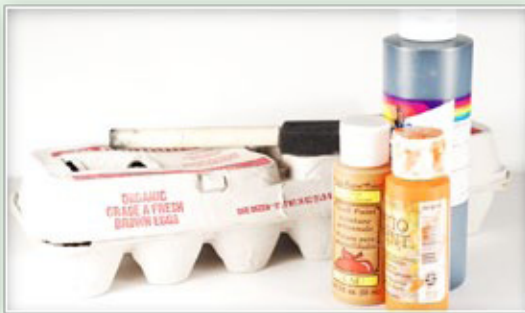
Luke 2:1-7

Make it Together: Bethlehem Ornament

Supplies: egg carton, scissors, miscellaneous paints (including black), paintbrushes

Cut out two sections of the egg carton.

- Paint. Let dry.
- Use black paint to add details of doors and houses.  
(The end of a brush handle makes a perfect circle when dipped in paint!)



Talk About It Together:

Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Bethlehem means “house of bread”. Did you know that Jesus also calls himself, “the bread of Life” in John 6:35? How is Jesus like bread in our lives? Do you think Jesus was born in the “house of bread” to remind us that He is in fact our bread of life?

Do more together:

Sing “O Little Town of Bethlehem” together and really listen to the words!

# Day 14

## stable

### Read it Together:

Luke 2:1-7

### Make it together: Stable Ornament

Supplies: 3 craft sticks, small sticks from outside, glue

- Break one craft stick in half and glue together at broken points in the shape of a "V".
- Glue additional craft sticks to open ends of the "V" to form a house or barn shape
- Glue small sticks on craft sticks.



### Talk about it together:

Did you hear the word stable as we read? No. The Bible doesn't say that Jesus was born in a stable. But it does tell us there was no guest room for Him and that Jesus was placed in a manger. Mangers (animal feeding troughs) are usually found in stables or barns. Jesus wasn't born in a hospital, or a comfy room. He was born somewhere with stinky animals! If the people in Bethlehem had known that Jesus was going to be born that night, do you think they would have made room for Mary and her new baby?

### Do more together:

Download and listen to "No Room in the Inn" by the Donut Man. Will you have room in your heart for Jesus?

Day 15

manger

Read it together:

Luke 2:1-7

Make it together: Jesus in the Manger

Supplies: 2 cups of flour, 1 cup of salt,  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup to 1 cup of water, paints, paintbrush

- Mix flour and salt.
- Slowly add water. Mix well to form dough.
- Use dough to form small manger, head of baby Jesus and straw.
- Bake at 325 for about 25-30 minutes or until hardened.
- Paint (when cooled).



Talk about it together:

Do you remember your baby bed? What color was it? Was it soft? Comfy? Warm? Jesus didn't have a bed when he was a baby. After He was born, His mom and dad had to lay Him in an animal's feeding trough. How do you think Jesus felt laying in the manger? How did Mary and Joseph feel?

Do more Together:

Check out [The Tale of the Three Trees](#) by Angela Elwell Hunt or [The Legend of the Three Trees](#) by Catherine McCafferty from your local library. It's a beautiful story that showcases the manger.

Day 16

cloths

Read it together:

Luke 2:1-7

Make it together: Sleeping Jesus in Blanket

Supplies: small Christmas ball ornament, small strip of fabric, glue, permanent marker

- Glue fabric around ball so half of ball is showing.
- Draw a sleeping face on the ball.



Talk about it together:

After Jesus was born, Mary wrapped him tightly in blankets. This was very important because as we'll find out tomorrow, this would be how the shepherds would recognize him!

Do more together:

Read Mark 15 (especially verse 46) to see another time when Jesus was wrapped in cloths. Why is something so insignificant like cloth mentioned twice in Jesus' life? Do you think God wanted to remind us, even when Jesus was born, that the reason He came was to die for us?



Day 17

sheep

Read it together:

Luke 2:8-20

Make it together: Sheep Ornament

Supplies: white yarn, scissors, fork, wiggly eyes, pipe cleaners

- Wrap yarn several times around fork.
- Tie a piece of yarn tightly around the yarn the opposite way.
- Cut edges.
- Puff and fluff!
- Add foam face, wiggly eyes and legs to make a cute sheep!



Talk about it together:

The shepherds were outside the night Jesus was born, doing what they always did— watching sheep! The Bible says the shepherds were terrified when the angels appeared. Do you think the sheep were scared, too?

When Jesus grows up, He describes Himself as a Shepherd to us, his little lambs. Jesus' first visitors were a picture of how Jesus would later take care of us!

Do more together:

Read John 10 to find out more about Jesus the Shepherd!

Day 18

angels

Read it together:

Luke 2:8-20

Make it together: Angel Ornaments

Supplies: buttons, feathers, glue, small ribbon or yarn

- Glue button into middle of feather
- Glue ribbon in loop on top.
- Make several to form an angel choir!



Talk about it together:

The Bible says the shepherds were terrified when the angels appeared. The angels must have been pretty amazing to see! We don't know what they look like, but we do know what they sounded like. After the angel announced Jesus' birth all the angels started singing to God! What do you think an angel choir sounds like?

Do more together:

Sing "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" or make up your own worship song to Jesus!

Day 19

shepherds

Read it together:

Luke 2:8-20

Make it together: Shepherd Ornaments

Supplies: [shepherd template](#), construction paper, paper fasteners, felt

- Cut template of shepherd.
- Attach arms with paper fasteners.
- Embellish with felt.



Talk about it together:

After seeing Jesus, the shepherds didn't just go back to their sheep. They spread the word about what they had seen and they started praising God. Make your shepherd put his arms out to the side, like he's telling other people what he saw. Then have him put his hands up like he's worshipping God.

Do more together:

Think of one new thing you've learned about Jesus' birth. Then tell someone about it! After you've done it, praise God like the shepherds did!

Day 20

temple

Read together:

Luke 2:21-40

Make it together: Temple Ornament

Supplies: temple template, old (sparkly/shiny) Christmas card, permanent marker

- Cut out temple pattern from Christmas card.
- Fold in half to cut out windows.
- Draw Mary and Joseph (add Ann and Simeon, too if you want!) with permanent marker.



Talk about it together:

When Jesus was 8 days old, His parents took Him to the temple to have him dedicated to the Lord. While they were there two different people approached them and recognized Jesus for who He really was—God's Son. Simeon and Anna both listened to God's voice and then praised God when they saw that God had kept His promise by sending Jesus.

Do more together:

Read Simeon's prayer in verses 29-32 again. Did you notice the part about the light (verse 32)? What else have we learned about Jesus being the light?

Day 21

star

Read it together:

Matthew 2:1-12

Make it together: Star Ornament

Supplies: cardboard, scissors/xacto knife, embroidery thread, glue or tape

- Cut cardboard into a circle.
- Make small slits around edges of circle.
- Wrap thread around and around making your own star pattern. When finished, glue or tape end of string to back.



Talk about it together:

God not only sent angels on the day Jesus was born, He also sent a star! This was a huge bright star that stayed right above the place where Jesus lived. The wise men had followed this star so they could see the newborn King of Kings. They wanted to worship him. And when they saw the star, the Bible says they were filled with joy!

Do more together:

Look at your Christmas tree and other Christmas decorations to see how many stars you can find. Every time you find one, jump up and down and yell, "JOY!"

Day 22

Wise Men

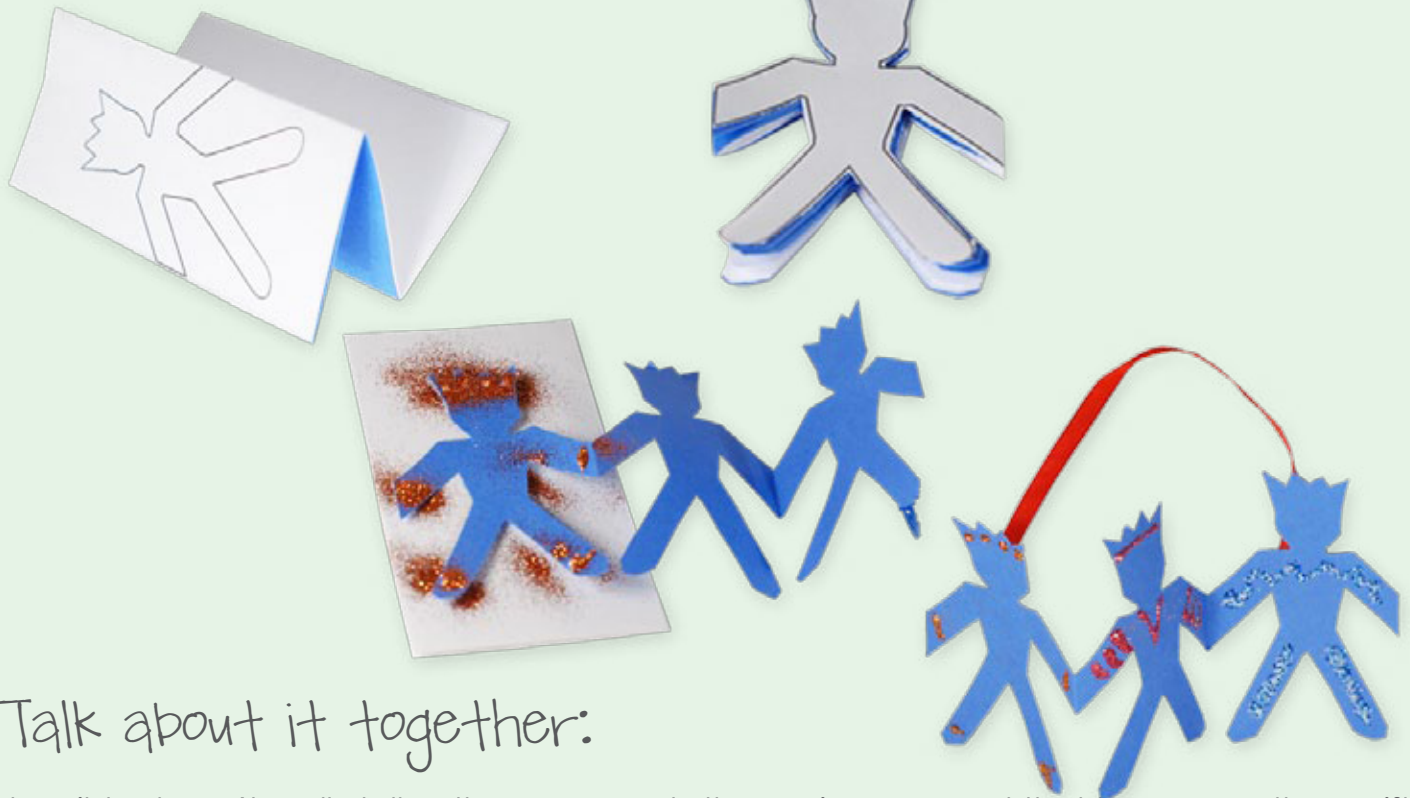
Read it together:

Matthew 2:1-12

Make it together: Wise Men Paper Doll Ornament

Supplies: wisemen template, construction paper, scissors, glue, glitter

- Use template to cut out Wise Men.
- Use glue to decorate.
- Pour on glitter. Remove excess. Let dry.



Talk about it together:

The Bible doesn't really tell us there were only three wise men. Just that there were three gifts. Regardless of how many were there, we know that they had been on a long journey to find Jesus. Imagine not knowing where you were going and following a star, just so you could find a little baby. Their dedication in looking for Jesus shows how amazing it is that God's Son would come to earth as a baby for us!

Do more together:

Watch "[The Very First Noel](#)" to see a fabulous fictionalized version of the Wise Men's story.

Day 23

gifts

Read it together:

Matthew 2:1-12

Make it together: Scented Ornament

Supplies: 1 cup of ground cinnamon, 1 cup of applesauce, cookie cutters, ribbon, wax paper, drinking straw (optional)

- Mix cinnamon and applesauce.
- Pour onto wax paper, then cover with another piece of wax paper. Roll to make it smooth and even.
- Cut with cookie cutters.
- Make a small hole at top with finger or drinking straw.
- Bake at 200 degrees for about 2 hours.
- Add ribbon to hang.



Talk about it together:

The wise men brought Jesus precious gifts. One was gold which reminds us that Jesus is king! The second gift was frankincense, which is like a beautiful smelling and healing incense. Myrrh is a spice used to making healing oils and lovely perfumes. As you smell your ornaments today, remember the precious smelling gifts the wise men brought to Jesus.

Do more together:

Talk about what kind of gift you could give to Jesus this Christmas. Obeying your parents? Giving a gift to someone in need? Letting your brother play with your toys?

Day 24

Cross

Read It Together:

Philippians 2:6-8

Make it together: Cross Ornament

Supplies: pipe cleaners, assorted beads

- Cut pipe cleaner into two pieces.
- Lace beads on longest pipe cleaner first, folding pipe cleaner down at ends to secure beads.
- Twist smaller pipe cleaner in between beads. Repeat lacing.



Talk about it together:

Jesus was born just like everyone else, as a little baby. But he didn't stay a baby. He grew to be a man and eventually was put to death on a cross. The Bible tells us in this verse that He humbled himself and became obedient to death on the cross.

Why did he have to die on a cross? For our sin. The Bible says He took all of ours in sins and sicknesses on the cross with Him. So, that we would not have to carry them anymore. So we could be pure in the eyes of God and have relationship with Him. After Jesus died He came back to life, conquering death and the grave. (see Romans 6:23, Isaiah 53:4-6, Isaiah 43:25, Revelation 1:18)

That's really what Christmas is about—that Jesus would love us enough to come to earth in order die in our place. Jesus' birth is a celebration and reminder of what He would do for us on the cross.

Hold your cross and read Philippians 2:6-8 again. Pray together and thank Jesus for coming to earth as a baby with one goal in mind—to die for us.

Do more together:

Use this time to discuss salvation and if your child is ready, pray with them to ask Jesus to be the Lord of their life!



# Alternate Schedules

December can be the busiest month of the whole year with parties, vacations, trips to the mall and wrapping presents! If you can't take time to do a daily advent activity, try one of these abbreviated schedules. Do them every Sunday as a time of worship, all in one day as a big Christmas celebration or just whenever you can carve out a few minutes.

## Just the Basics

These six activities give a basic overview of the Christmas story, covering all the traditional Christmas passages.

Day 1: Light  
Day 5: Mary  
Day 9: Joseph  
Day 16: Swaddling Clothes  
Day 19: Shepherds  
Day 24: Gifts

## By Book of the Bible

Here are the days divided by passage of scripture. You could tackle one passage at a time and make as many or as few ornaments from it as you like. This would be great if you had more than one child. You could read the passage and let each child make a different ornament from the passage.

Days 1 & 2 Isaiah  
Days 3-8 Luke 1  
Days 9-11 Matthew 1  
Days 12-19 Luke 2  
Days 20-23 Matthew 2  
Day 24 Philippians

## Characters

If you'd like to introduce your child to the people (and heavenly beings!) of the story, these 10 days will showcase all of them! If you make all these ornaments, you'll have almost a full nativity scene for kids to play with and act out the story!

Day 3 Zechariah  
Day 4 Gabriel  
Day 5 Mary  
Day 6 Mary and Elizabeth  
Day 9 Joseph  
Day 15 or 16 Jesus  
Day 18 Angels  
Day 19 Shepherds  
Day 20 Temple (Simeon & Anna)  
Day 22 Wise Men

## Prophecy

The Christmas story is full of prophecy and foreshadowing of Jesus' future ministry. To dive into these passages, focus on these 7 activities. These would be great conversation starters for older kids.

Day 1 Light  
Day 11 Jesus' Name  
Day 13 Bethlehem  
Day 16 Swaddling Clothes  
Day 20 Temple  
Day 23 Gifts  
Day 24 Cross



## about the author

Amanda White is mom to Lydia and Asa; wife to Les. She also blogs at [ohAmanda](#). And that about sums up her life! But before all that, she lived and breathed children's ministry. She was on puppet and drama teams in Middle and High School, she was a CILT graduate in a camping ministry, she interned at a premiere Children's Ministry in Tulsa, she and her husband were special guest speakers at kids camps and churches during college. Later they helped start a church in Celebration, FL then moved to Birmingham, AL to be the elementary pastors at a mega-church there.

But after becoming a mother, she moved her children's ministry skills onto her children. She likes making every day activities point to God and His laws and love. And she also pops M&Ms and dreams of Disney World in her spare time.

Connect with Amanda:

[ohAmanda.com](#)

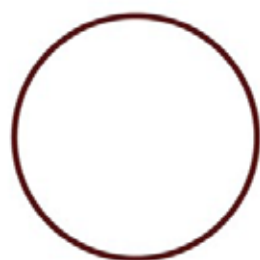
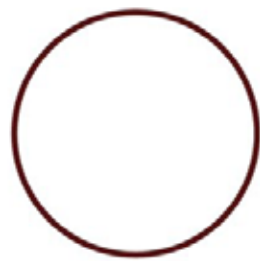
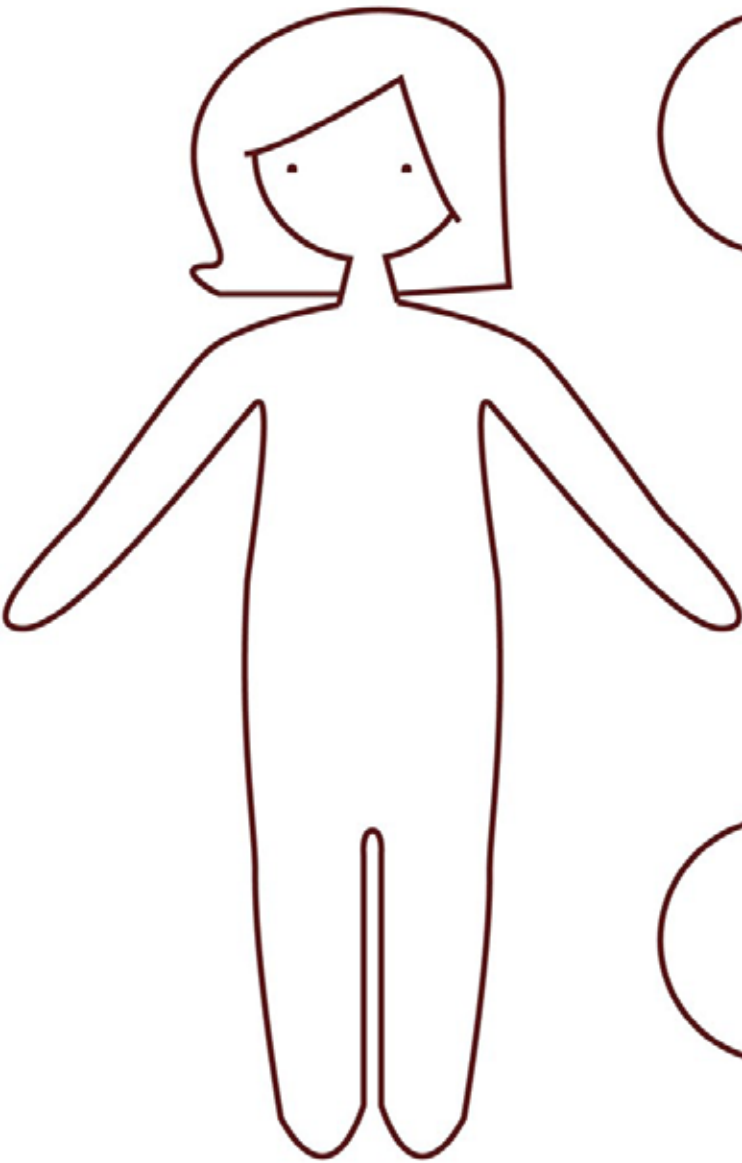
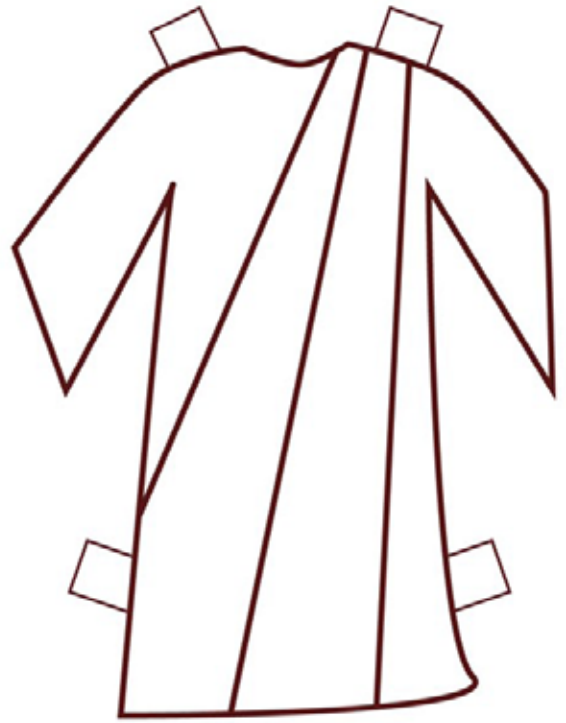
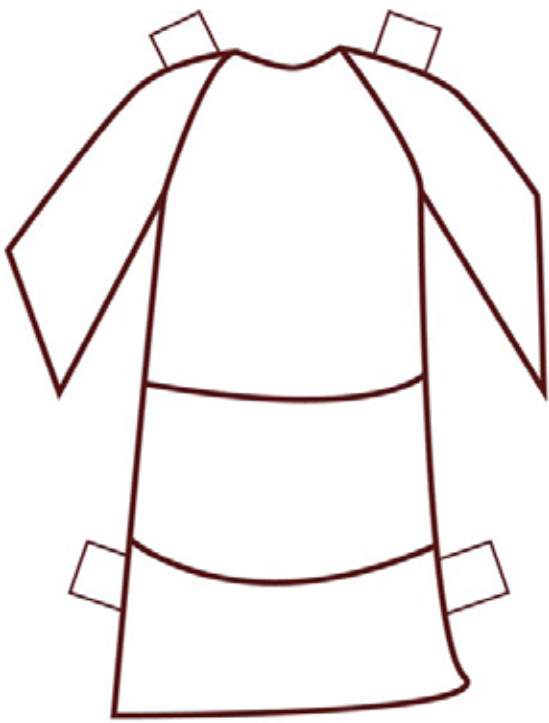
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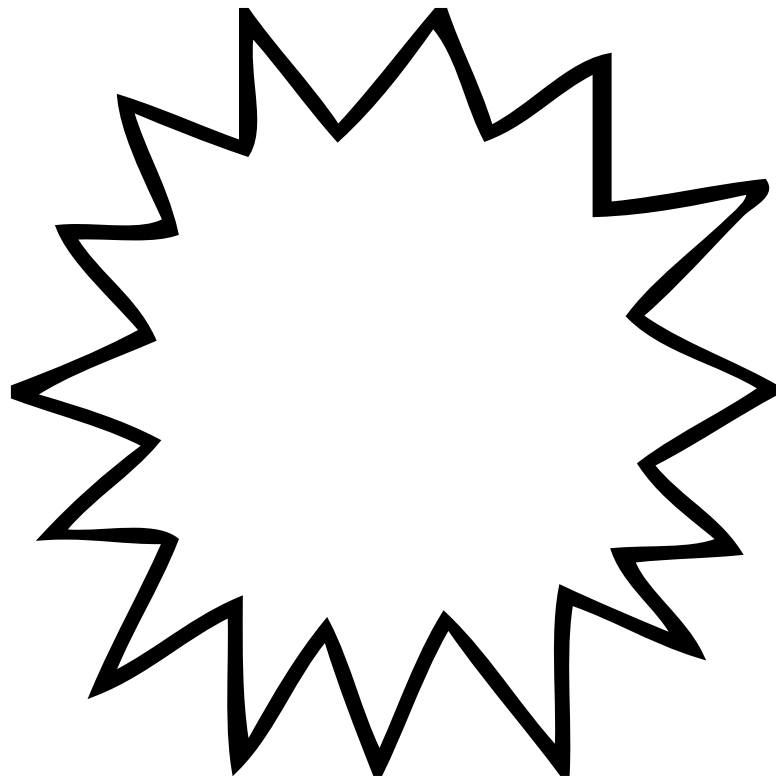
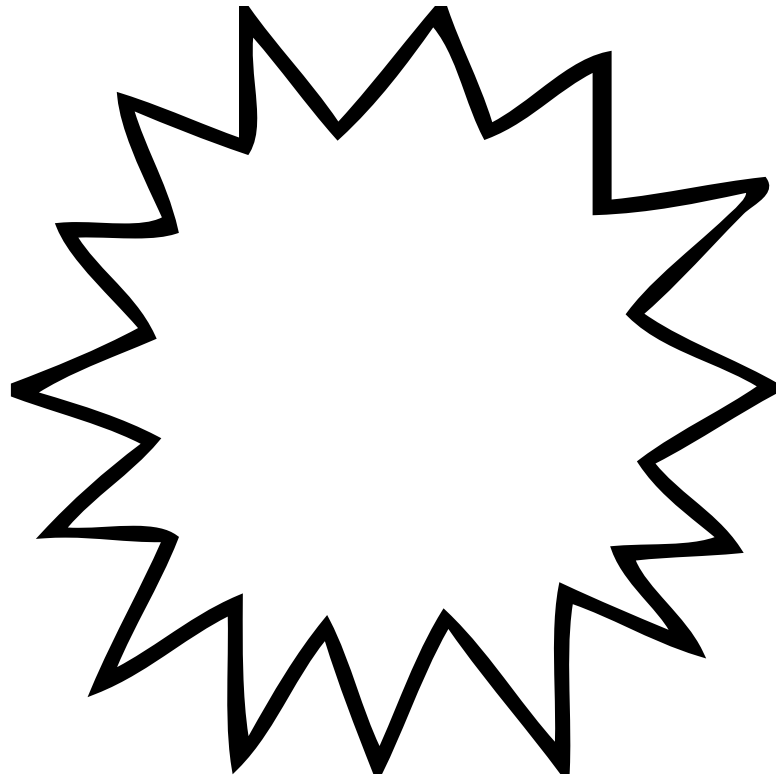
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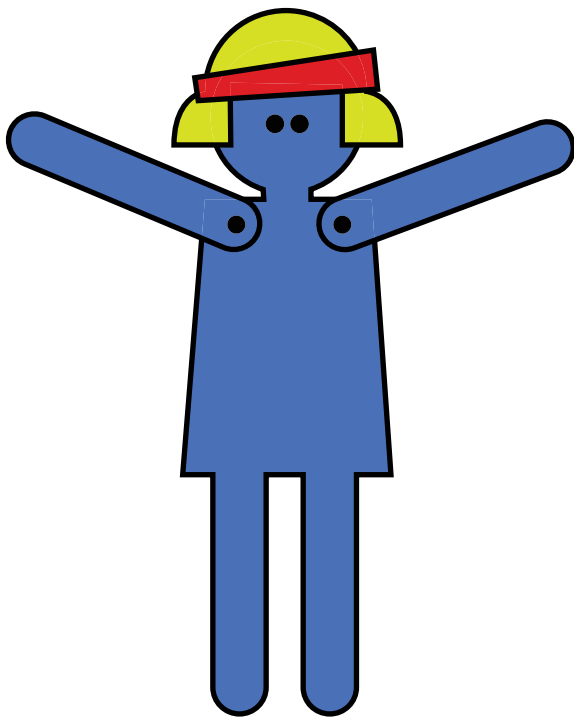
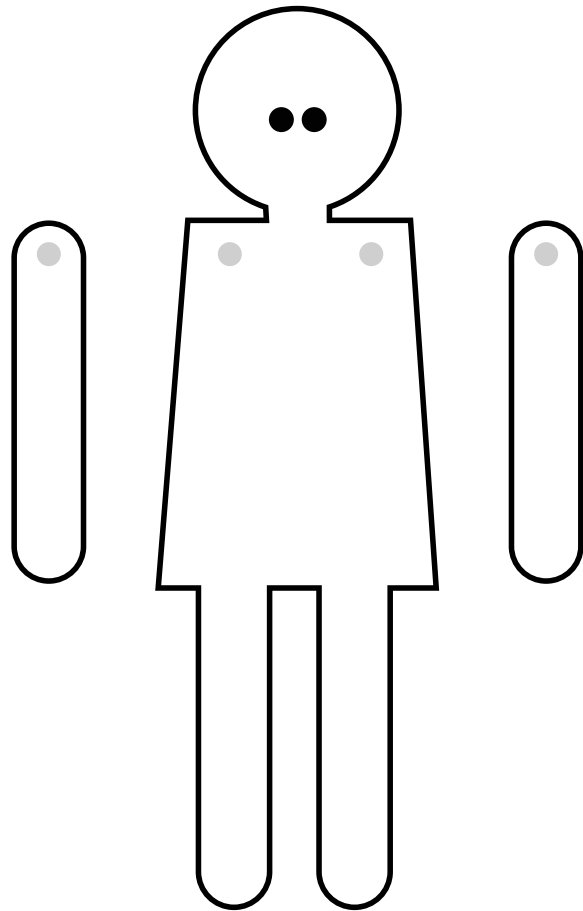
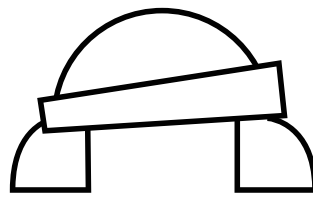
day 1 candle template



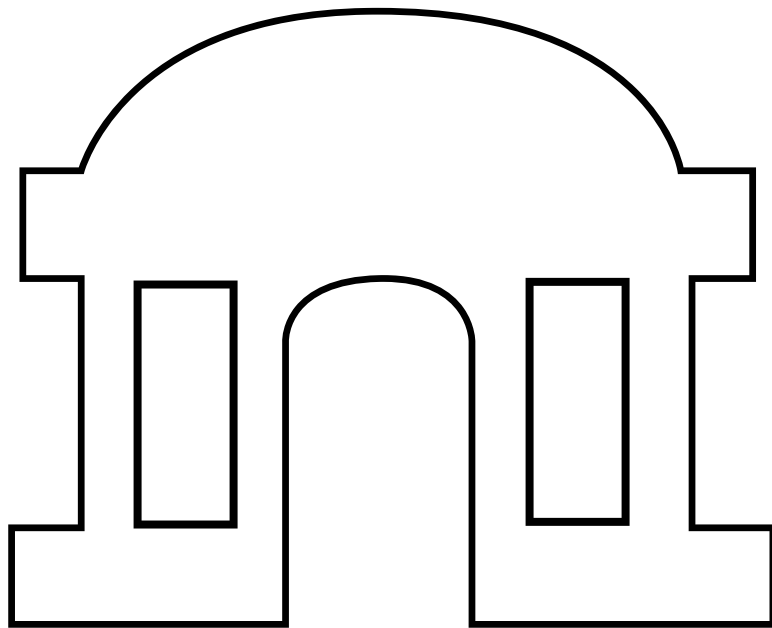
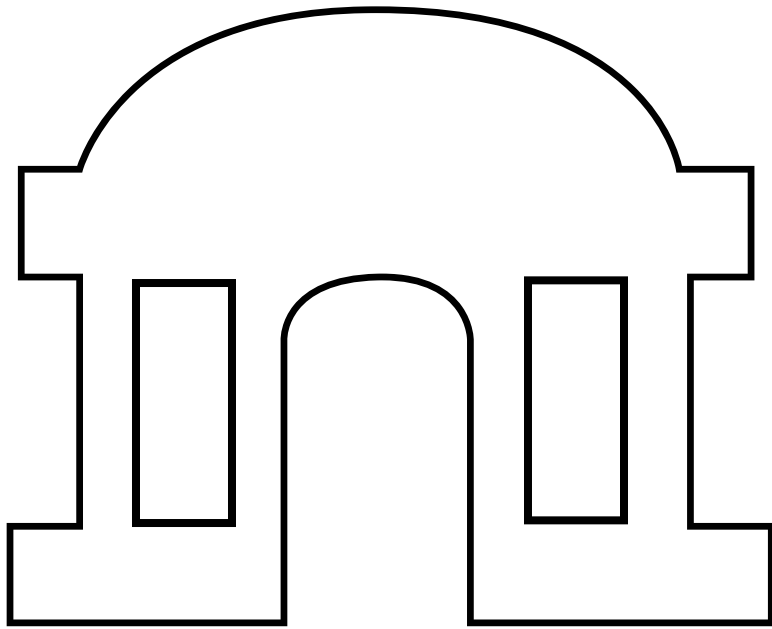
day 6 mary/elizabeth paper doll template



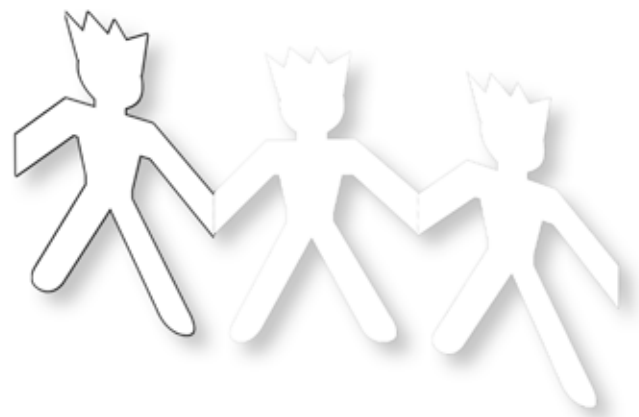
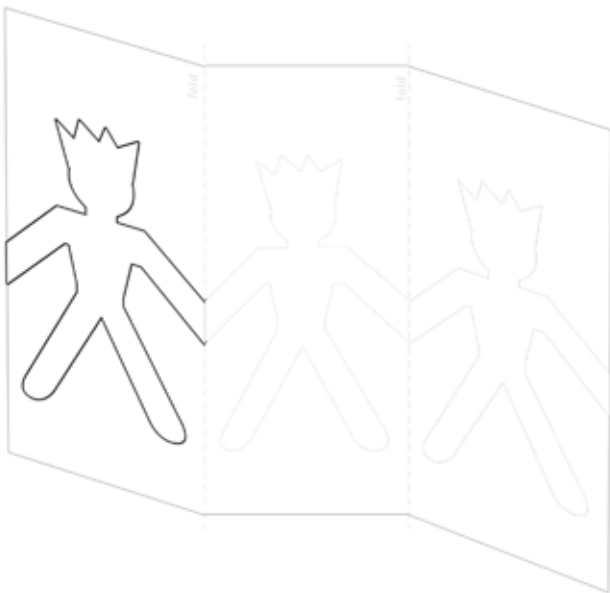
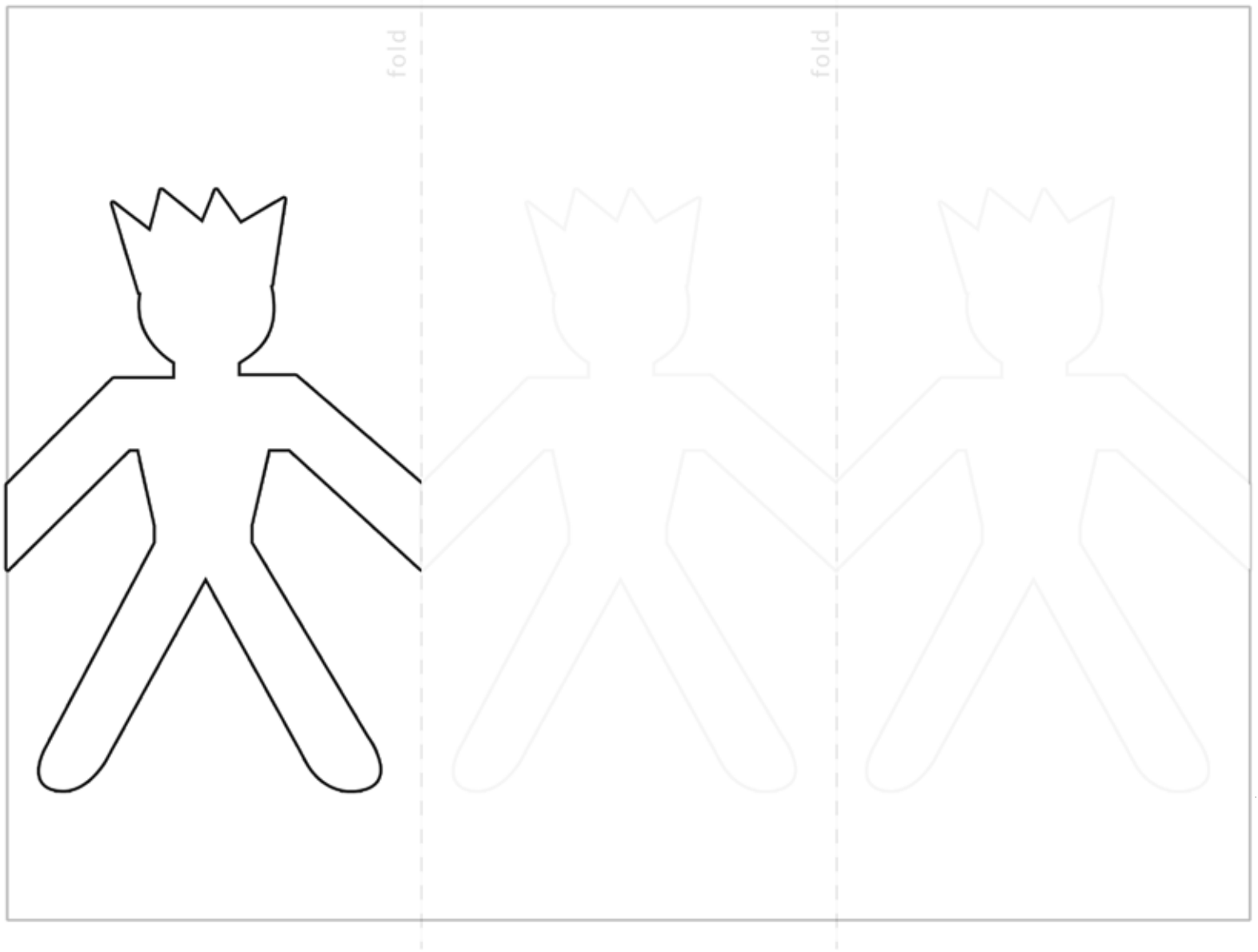
day 8 sun template



day 19 shepherd template



day 20 temple template



day 22

wisemen

template





### **Advent Paper Chains:**

Cut out the paper chain templates on the following 6 pages.  
Fold the green side and the text side so that they are back to back (tent style).  
Tape, glue or staple the ends together to create the link of the chain.  
Each day, add or take away the next link of your advent chain.

### **Square Clues:**

The last two pages contain all 24 square clues to be cut out and used each day.







Joseph



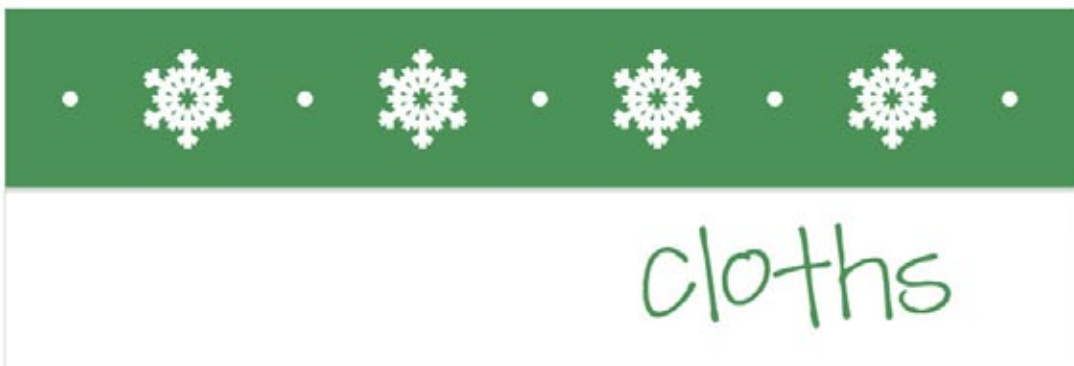
Dream



Jesus' Name



CENSUS





Sheep



Angels



Shepherds



Temple



Day 1 - Light



Day 1 - Kingdom



Day 3 - Zechariah



Day 4 - Gabriel



Day 5 - Mary



Day 6 - Mary & Elizabeth



Day 7 - Song



Day 8 - Sun



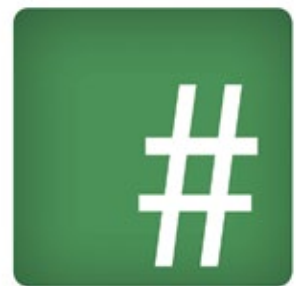
Day 9 - Joseph



Day 10 - Dreams



Day 11 - Name of Jesus



Day 12 - census



Day 13 - Bethlehem



Day 14 - Stable



Day 15 - Manger



Day 16 - cloths



Day 17 - Sheep



Day 18 - Angels



Day 19 - Shepherds



Day 20 - Temple



Day 21 - Star



Day 22 - Wise Men



Day 23 - Gifts



Day 24 - cross