

Discover!

Finding Faith in Life

Teacher Guide

K

Don't Miss This!

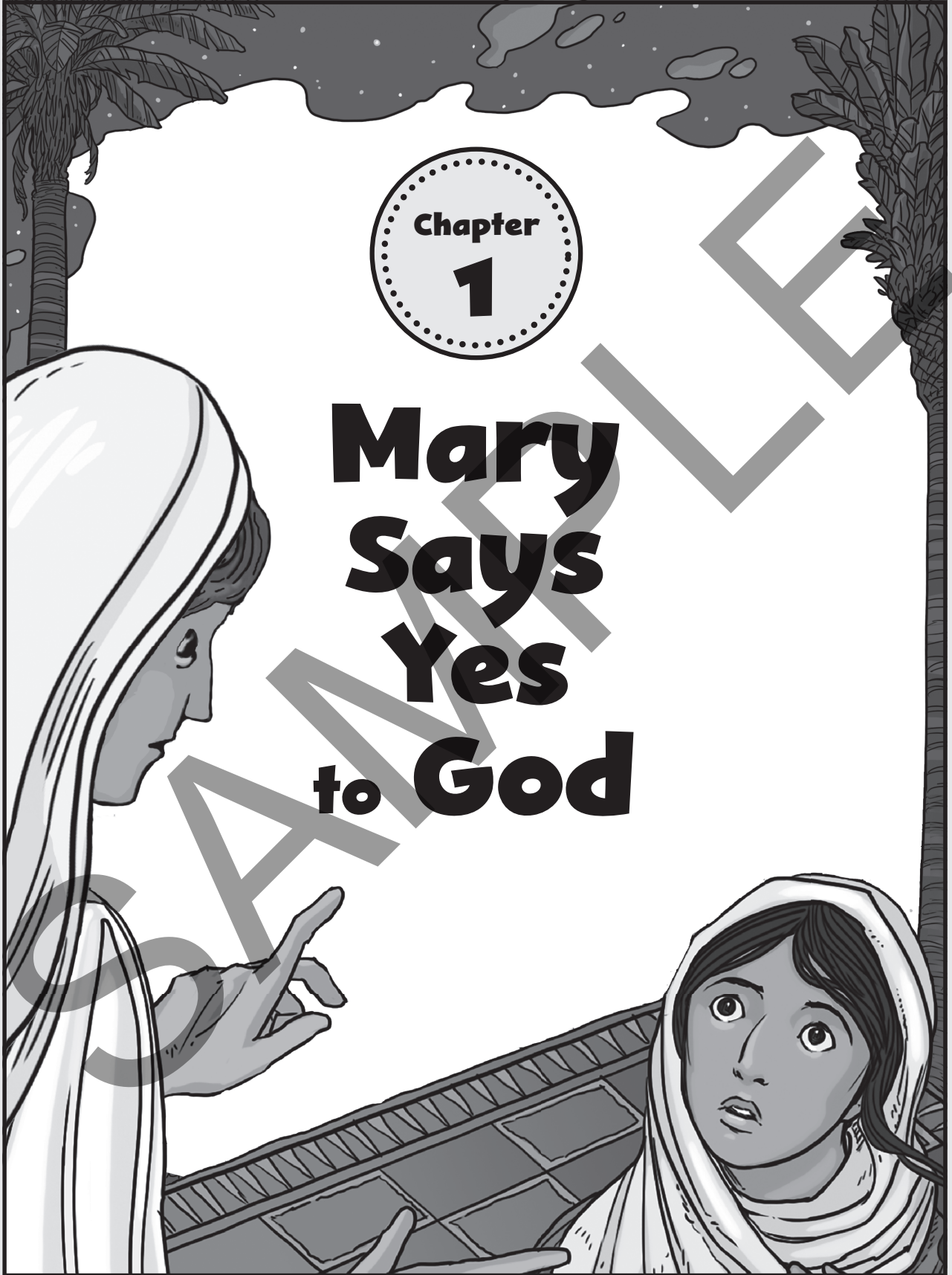
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www.smp.org/discover_kinderschool.



saint mary's press

Chapter
1

**Mary
Says
Yes
to God**



**Chapter
1****Chapter at a Glance****Chapter 1****Scripture Focus**

Luke 1:30–33, 38

Chapter Goals

- to recognize that God chose Mary to be the mother of Jesus
- to recognize that Jesus is the Son of God
- to understand that God chose all of us to be his children

Catechism Pillar

Believe

Catechism References

279–301

Background Reflection

In this chapter, the children hear the account of the beginning of our salvation, when Mary responded to the message of an angel with her assent to be the mother of the Son of God. The fact of being chosen for this momentous responsibility was not enough; God needed Mary's yes to put this plan of salvation into action. The same is true for us. Each one of us is chosen by God—chosen to be born, chosen to be a child of God, chosen to use our gifts and talents for good. We too are invited to say yes to God, just as Mary did.



Day 1—Get Ready!

Materials Needed

- a classroom Bible (*optional*)
- a large bookmark or ribbon (*optional*)
- a designated prayer table or Bible stand (*optional*)
- recorded music and appropriate equipment for playing it (*optional*)
- the chapter 1 child's page, removed from each Bible story booklet
- a statue or picture of Mary, Mother of God

Opening Prayer

- Take time to review how to make the Sign of the Cross.
- Ask the children to repeat each phrase after you, and then demonstrate the hand gesture that goes with each phrase.
- Accept their efforts at this point. Refinements will come later, after you reinforce this during each session.

Bible Procession (*optional*)

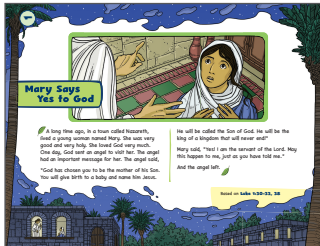
- Prepare by placing a bookmark or ribbon in the Bible at Luke 1:30–33, 38.
- Explain to the children that they will begin the new week and the new Bible story by having a Bible procession, which will involve processing, or walking, with the Bible to the prayer space. Remind them that we give special honor to the Bible because it is God's message of love to us.
- Invite the children to gather at the back of the room. Arrange them in one or two lines as appropriate. Begin playing music if desired.
- Lead the children to the prayer space, carrying the closed Bible with two hands at waist level with the front cover facing forward. (*You may choose to designate one child to carry the Bible in this way.*)
- Open the Bible on the table or Bible stand, using the bookmark or ribbon to find the Bible story for the week.
- Fold your hands, bow slightly from the waist, and step aside. Ask the children to come up to the Bible, one or two at a time, and guide them in making this reverent gesture before returning to their seats.

Engage

- Ask if anyone in the group has ever been chosen to do something special or received a special invitation. Perhaps someone has been asked to join a team, attend a party, or be part of a wedding.
- Explain that this week the children will hear a Bible story about something special Mary was chosen to do.

- Remind the children that Mary is the mother of God and the mother of Jesus. Sometimes we call her Our Lady. Ask if anyone has seen pictures of statues of Mary in church or even in their home.
- Show the children a statue or picture of Mary as a reminder of who she is.

Bible Story Preview



- Distribute the child's page, and ask the children to look at the main picture above the Bible story. Briefly discuss the picture by asking the following questions:
 - In the picture, we can see someone's hands and someone with a white robe. Who do you think this might be? *(Accept responses.)* Those are the hands of the angel and the angel's white robe.
 - We also see a young woman in the picture. That is Mary. How do you think she is feeling? Happy? *(No.)* Sad? *(No.)* Kind of wondering and questioning? *(Yes.)*
 - Can you look like you're wondering and questioning? Can you say, "Hmm?" and put your finger on your chin? *(Model this for the children.)*
 - Let's look at the bottom of the page. We can see the angel and Mary through the windows. What do you think they are doing? *(Accept responses.)*
 - Mary and the angel are having a conversation! In a conversation, it is important to talk. But what else is important in a conversation? *(listening)*
- Explain that in the next lesson, you will read the Bible story. Tell the children that they will find out what the angel said to Mary and what Mary said to the angel after she had listened carefully.
- Collect the child's page for use on days 2 and 4.

Closing Prayer

- End the lesson by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and a brief, spontaneous prayer. Close with another Sign of the Cross.



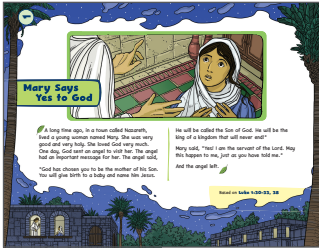
Day 2—Dive In!

Materials Needed

- the chapter 1 child's page, one for each child

Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Continue with this prayer:
 - Mary, our Mother, help us to say yes to God as you did. Amen.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.



Engage

- Distribute the child's page, and ask the children to turn to the side where the Bible story appears.
- Invite them to review the pictures to consider what the Bible story might be about.
- Ask them who the two figures are in the pictures. (*Mary and the angel*)
- Encourage the children to listen carefully to learn what the angel said to Mary and what Mary said to the angel.

Bible Story

- Read the Bible story to the children slowly, stopping briefly after each sentence. If the children are readers, invite them to follow along. If not, invite them to look at the main picture as you read.
- Collect the child's page for use on day 4.

This Chapter's Bible Story

Mary Says Yes to God

A long time ago, in a town called Nazareth, lived a young woman named Mary. She was very good and very holy. She loved God very much. One day, God sent an angel to visit her. The angel had an important message for her. The angel said,

"God has chosen you to be the mother of his Son. You will give birth to a baby and name him Jesus. He will be called the Son of God. He will be the king of a kingdom that will never end!"

Mary said, "Yes! I am the servant of the Lord. May this happen to me, just as you have told me."

And the angel left.

(Based on Luke 1:30–33, 38)

Core Teaching

- Begin the discussion by reminding the children that the angel and Mary were having a conversation. Ask the children to share what it means to have a conversation with someone. (*We talk and we listen to the other person.*)
- Invite the children to recall what the angel said to Mary in the conversation in today's Bible story. Emphasize that the angel told Mary that God had chosen her to be the mother of Jesus.

- Ask the children to recall what Mary said in the conversation with the angel. Point out that she said yes and said she was a servant of the Lord. Explain that this means she wanted to do what God wanted her to do.
- Expand the discussion with the following questions:
 - Who was talking in this conversation? (*the angel and Mary*)
 - Who was listening in this conversation? (*At first, Mary was listening. Then Mary started talking too.*)
 - How do we know that Mary was listening to the angel? (*She said yes to the message of the angel.*)
 - How do we know that the angel was listening to Mary? (*Mary gave her answer, and then the angel left.*)
 - Where do you think the angel went? (*back to God, to deliver the message*)
 - What do you think the angel said to God? (*The angel told God that Mary said yes!*)
- Explain to the children that each of us is chosen by God. Tell them that God chose us to be born, to be his children, and that God chose us to have certain good qualities like loving others, telling jokes, drawing pictures, and other good gifts.
- Invite the children to share some of the good gifts they have from God. Help them name some of the things they are good at.
- Point out to the children that when God asks us to do something, he usually doesn't send an angel. Tell them that their parents or teachers often ask them to do things. Invite them to share some examples.
- Explain that when we listen to our parents or teachers, we can say yes to God, just like Mary.
- Tell the children that you will all say yes to God right now. Explain that you will all make an exploding yes!
- Ask the children to follow your actions. Crouch down and put your hands on your knees. Slowly come up, moving your hands up your legs and making a "ya, ya, ya, ya" sound. Then "explode" by placing your feet and legs wide, raising your arms up wide, and exclaiming, "YES!"

Closing Prayer

- End the lesson by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Offer a short prayer of petition, asking the children to share the names of people or situations they would like the group to pray for.
- Close with another Sign of the Cross.



Day 3—Discover!

Materials Needed

- copies of the handout “Mary Says Yes,” on page 42 of the teacher guide, one for each child
- scissors, one pair for each child

Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Continue with this prayer:
 - Mary, our Mother, help us say yes to God, as you did. Amen.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

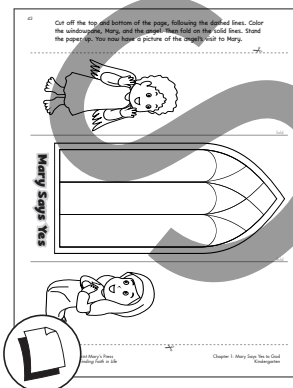
Engage

- Begin with a brief review of the Bible story or a few key points from the core teaching on day 2.
- Invite the children to retell the Bible story to the best of their recollection, and then continue with the following points:
 - In the Bible story, we heard about the visit of an angel to a young woman named Mary. Who sent the angel to visit Mary? (*God*)
 - What was the angel’s message to Mary? (*God has chosen you to be the mother of his Son.*)
 - What was Mary’s answer to the angel? (*Yes!*)

Learning Activity

Mary and the Angel

- Distribute the handout and scissors. Invite the children to cut along the dashed lines. Be ready to assist children who may need extra help cutting.
- Ask the children to color in the pictures of the windowpane, the angel, and Mary.
- Show the children the solid fold lines on the handout, and demonstrate how to fold the handout so that it will stand.
- Help the children fold their handout, even if they have not finished coloring.
- Assure the children that they can finish coloring their handout when they get home.
- Remind the children to stand the picture on their dresser or in another place in their home.
- Explain that the picture will remind them to ask Mary to bless them and their family.



Also available
at [www.smp.org](http://www.smp.org/discover_kinderschool)
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Additional Activity Options

If this learning activity would not work well with your group, you may choose to use either of the activity ideas on pages 40–41 of the teacher guide in its place.

Closing Prayer

- End the lesson by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Invite them to fold their hands, close their eyes, and open their ears and their hearts. Then pray this short prayer:
 - Dear God, we know you chose Mary to be the mother of your Son, Jesus. We know you chose us to be your children. Help us say yes to you, like Mary did. Amen.
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.



Day 4—Go!

Materials Needed

- the chapter 1 child's page, one for each child
- copies of the chapter 1 family page, on page 43 of the teacher guide, one for each child

Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Continue with this prayer:
 - Mary, our Mother, help us say yes to God as you did. Amen.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

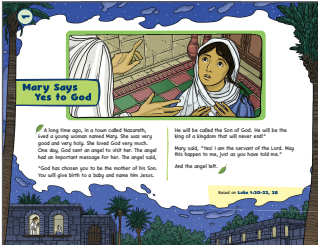
Engage

- Begin with a brief review of the learning activity from day 3.
- Invite the children to share what they remember from the activity and what they might have learned. Then continue with the following points:
 - In the last lesson, we made a picture of Mary and the angel talking together. We talked about the conversation Mary had with the angel.
 - What did the angel tell Mary? (*that God had chosen her to be the mother of his Son*)
 - What did Mary say to the angel? (*Mary said yes!*)

- Are we chosen by God to be his children? *(Yes.)* Did God choose us to have good qualities? *(Yes.)*
- How can we say yes to God? *(By listening to our parents and teachers and doing what they ask.)*

Bible Story

- Distribute the child's page, and ask the children to turn to the side where the Bible story appears. Remind them that it has been a few days since they last heard the story, so you will read it again to refresh their memory.
- Read the Bible story to the children slowly, inviting them to follow along or look at the pictures as you read.



This Chapter's Bible Story

Mary Says Yes to God

A long time ago, in a town called Nazareth, lived a young woman named Mary. She was very good and very holy. She loved God very much. One day, God sent an angel to visit her. The angel had an important message for her. The angel said,

"God has chosen you to be the mother of his Son. You will give birth to a baby and name him Jesus. He will be called the Son of God. He will be the king of a kingdom that will never end!"

Mary said, "Yes! I am the servant of the Lord. May this happen to me, just as you have told me."

And the angel left.

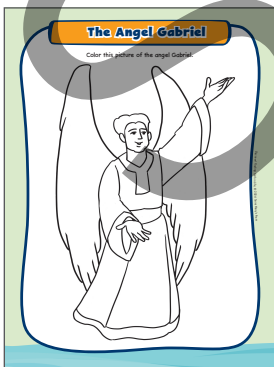
(Based on Luke 1:30–33, 38)

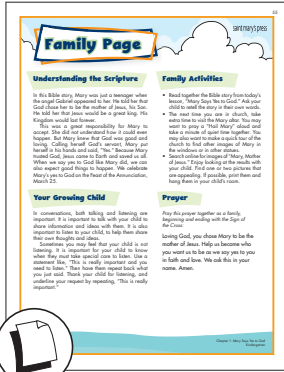
Child's Page Activity

- Tell the children to turn over the child's page. Introduce the activity, reading any directions that are offered.
- Assure the children that if they do not finish the child's page activity by the end of the session, they can complete it at home.

Chapter Wrap-Up

- Recall the chapter goals by asking the following questions:
 - Who did God choose to be the mother of Jesus? *(Mary)*
 - Who is the Son of God? *(Jesus)*
 - Who chose us to be God's children? *(God chose us to be his children.)*





Also available in full color in both English and Spanish at www.smp.org/discover_kinderschool

- Remind the children to take the child's page home.
- Distribute the family page, and encourage the children to share it at home. You may want to staple the child's page and the family page together as the children are getting ready to leave.

Closing Prayer

- End the lesson by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Invite them to fold their hands, close their eyes, and open their ears and their hearts. Then pray this short prayer:
 - Dear God, we know you chose Mary to be the mother of your Son, Jesus. We know you chose us to be your children. Help us say yes to you, like Mary did. Amen.
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.



Day 5—Discover More! (optional)

The following suggestions can be used alone or in combination to create an additional lesson for day 5. Choose the suggestions that best fit with your particular schedule or any specific objectives you might have.

Artistic Reflection

Encourage the children to share significant learnings or key points through art, skits, or other forms of creative expression.

Child's Page Activity

If the children did not complete their child's page activity on day 4, instead of sending it home that day, use day 5 to have them complete it.

Additional Activity Options

Use either or both of the activity ideas on pages 40–41 of the teacher guide to reinforce the core learning goals of the chapter.

Liturgical Readings

Read through the Gospel for the upcoming Sunday liturgy—a list of readings can be found by using the calendar on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' website (www.usccb.org). Invite the children to share what they hear as a message. You do not need to provide lengthy background or explanation; rather, encourage the children to open their ears and hearts to what the reading might be saying to them. Use this as a time of preparation for the Sunday liturgy.

Activity Ideas

Materials Needed

- none

Conversation: Talking and Listening

- Introduce this activity as a game of talking and listening.
- Explain that you will call on several children and ask them a question.
- Encourage the group to listen carefully to the answers.
- Announce a simple question to the group, like, "What will you do after our session today?"
- Call on someone to answer the question. Remind the group to listen carefully to their answer.
- Try this format:
 - Johnny, what will you do after our session today? (*My mom is taking me to the park.*)
 - Johnny is going to the park after our session today!
 - Sally, what will you do after our session today? (*I will go home and eat lunch.*)
 - Did everyone listen to Johnny and Sally? What will Johnny do after our session today? (*He will go to the park.*) What will Sally do after our session today? (*She will go home and eat lunch.*)
- Continue in this way until several children have answered a question.
- Repeat as time permits, announcing another simple question. Here are a few sample questions:
 - What do you do after you get up in the morning?
 - What is your favorite thing to do on Saturdays?
 - What is your favorite food?
- Review each question and answer briefly to help the children remember the answers.
- Congratulate the children on being good talkers and good listeners!

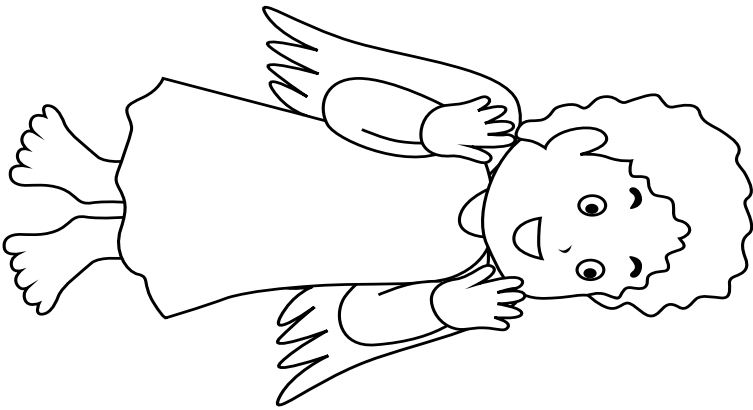
Materials Needed

- items needed for costumes (optional)
- coaching ahead of time for two volunteers

Mary Says Yes: A Short Play

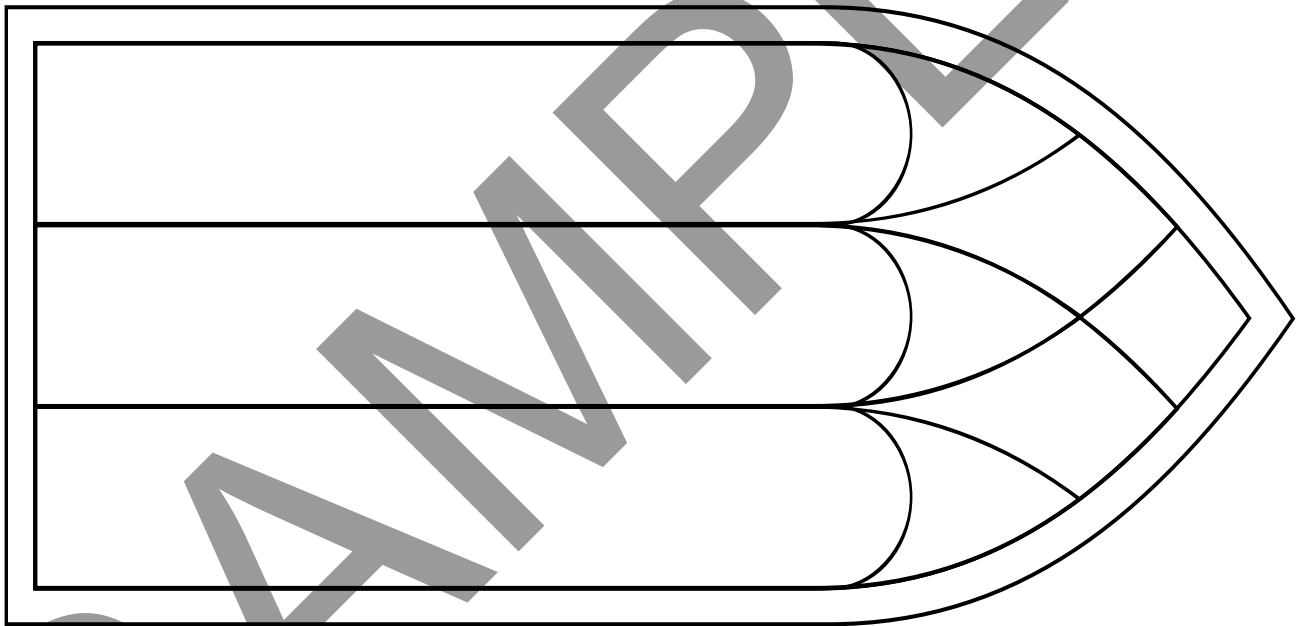
- Introduce this activity by explaining that two children will act out the story of the angel's visit to Mary.
- Choose volunteers to be the angel and Mary. (*Choose children who have loud voices and who do not mind being the center of attention.*)
- Take the volunteers aside to give them their lines. Ask them to repeat their lines a few times. Use the following, or similar, script:
 - Angel:** God has chosen you to be the mother of his Son! Do you agree?
 - Mary:** I agree. I say yes to God.
- Arrange an area as a stage, and have the rest of the children gather as the audience.
- Introduce the play as follows:
 - Ladies and gentlemen, we are about to watch an important story. It is the story of Mary saying yes to God. Please enjoy the show!
- Bring the child playing Mary to the center of the stage, directing them to kneel with their side facing the audience.
- Signal to the child playing the angel to "fly in" with open arms and land in front of Mary, standing sideways to the audience.
- Help the child playing the angel say their lines, repeating after you if necessary. Direct the child playing Mary to look up at the angel and say their lines, again assisting as needed.
- Invite the actors to stand up, turn to the other children, and say, "The End." Conclude the play with the following words:
 - Thank you, angel and Mary (*or name the children*), for a wonderful performance. Take a bow!
- Ask for two more volunteers to act out the play again, as time permits.

Cut off the top and bottom of the page, following the dashed lines. Color the windowpane, Mary, and the angel. Then fold on the solid lines. Stand the paper up. You now have a picture of the angel's visit to Mary.

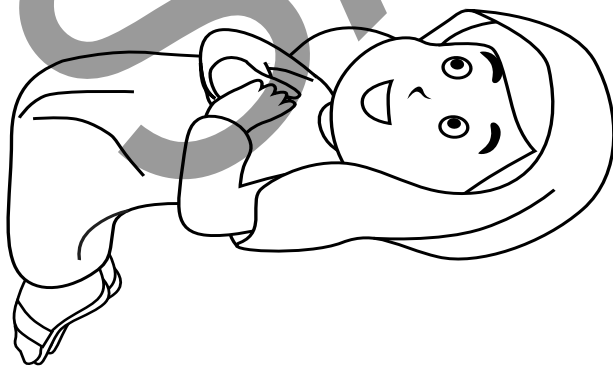


fold

Mary Says Yes



fold



Family Page

Understanding the Scripture

In this Bible story, Mary was just a teenager when the angel Gabriel appeared to her. He told her that God chose her to be the mother of Jesus, his Son. He told her that Jesus would be a great king. His Kingdom would last forever.

This was a great responsibility for Mary to accept. She did not understand how it could even happen. But Mary knew that God was good and loving. Calling herself God's servant, Mary put herself in his hands and said, "Yes." Because Mary trusted God, Jesus came to Earth and saved us all. When we say yes to God like Mary did, we can also expect good things to happen. We celebrate Mary's yes to God on the Feast of the Annunciation, March 25.

Your Growing Child

In conversations, both talking and listening are important. It is important to talk with your child to share information and ideas with them. It is also important to listen to your child, to help them share their own thoughts and ideas.

Sometimes you may feel that your child is not listening. It is important for your child to know when they must take special care to listen. Use a statement like, "This is really important and you need to listen." Then have them repeat back what you just said. Thank your child for listening, and underline your request by repeating, "This is really important."

Family Activities

- Read together the Bible story from today's lesson, "Mary Says Yes to God." Ask your child to retell the story in their own words.
- The next time you are in church, take extra time to visit the Mary altar. You may want to pray a "Hail Mary" aloud and take a minute of quiet time together. You may also want to make a quick tour of the church to find other images of Mary in the windows or in other statues.
- Search online for images of "Mary, Mother of Jesus." Enjoy looking at the results with your child. Find one or two pictures that are appealing. If possible, print them and hang them in your child's room.

Prayer

Pray this prayer together as a family, beginning and ending with the Sign of the Cross:

Loving God, you chose Mary to be the mother of Jesus. Help us become who you want us to be as we say yes to you in faith and love. We ask this in your name. Amen.

Chapter

2

Jesus Is Born




 Chapter
2

Chapter at a Glance

Scripture Focus

Luke 2:1–7, 8–11, 13, 15–16

Chapter Goals

- to understand that angels told the shepherds about Jesus
- to recognize that Jesus, Mary, and Joseph were poor
- to know that Jesus loves us and shows us God's love

Catechism Pillar

Celebrate

Catechism References

456–460, 477–478, 527–530

Background Reflection

This chapter is a balancing act! In teaching about the birth of Jesus, we retell the beautiful story of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem, the story of the journey of Mary and Joseph, the stable, the innkeeper, the shepherds, and the angels. But we also must emphasize that this Jesus, who was born as an infant in Bethlehem, is alive and with us today. He came to us out of love and loves us still. Subsequent chapters follow Jesus as he grows up, accepts his mission, and begins to teach. The story of the Word of God becoming a human being begins at the Annunciation, continues at Bethlehem, and becomes part of our story today as we proclaim, "Jesus loves us!"



Day 1—Get Ready!

Materials Needed

- a classroom Bible *(optional)*
- a large bookmark or ribbon *(optional)*
- a designated prayer table or Bible stand *(optional)*
- recorded music and appropriate equipment for playing it *(optional)*
- the chapter 2 child's page, removed from each Bible story booklet

Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Pray this short prayer:
 - Dear God, thank you for bringing us together to learn more about the birth of Jesus. Amen.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

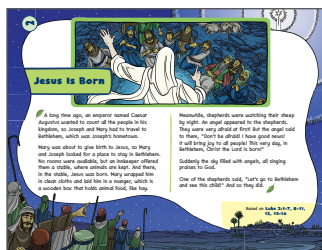
Bible Procession *(optional)*

- Prepare by placing a bookmark or ribbon in the Bible at Luke 2:1–7, 8–11, 13, 15–16.
- Explain to the children that the group will begin the new week and the new Bible story by having a Bible procession, which will involve processing, or walking, with the Bible to the prayer space. Remind them that we give special honor to the Bible because it is God's message of love to us.
- Invite the children to gather at the back of the room. Arrange them in one or two lines as appropriate. Begin playing music if desired.
- Lead the children to the prayer space, carrying the closed Bible with two hands at waist level with the front cover facing forward. *(You may choose to designate one child to carry the Bible in this way.)*
- Open the Bible on the table or Bible stand, using the bookmark or ribbon to find the Bible story for the week.
- Fold your hands, bow slightly from the waist, and step aside. Ask the children to come up to the Bible, one or two at a time, and guide them in making this reverent gesture before returning to their seats.

Engage

- Ask if anyone in the group has ever seen a baby. As volunteers respond, ask if the baby was born into their family or was a relative's or neighbor's baby, etc.
- Explain that we celebrate the birth of Jesus as a baby at Christmas, but any time of year is a good time to celebrate that Jesus was born like us, as a baby. Continue by sharing that he was born like us to show us God's love.
- Tell the children that all of us were born as babies, and our parents and teachers help us grow up.
- Explain that the children will learn more about Jesus' birth as a baby in the Bible story this week.

Bible Story Preview



- Distribute the child's page, and ask the children to look at the main picture above the Bible story.
- Briefly discuss the picture by asking the following questions:
 - In the picture, we can see someone in white. Who is this, and what are they doing? (*This is an angel. The angel is announcing something to the shepherds.*)
 - Let's look at the shepherds. Look at their mouths. Are their mouths open or closed? (*open*)
 - Their mouths are open because they are surprised. Can you open your mouth and look surprised? (*Model this for the children.*)
 - Can you look surprised and say, "Oh!" or "Ah!" or "Wow!"? (*Model this for the children.*)
 - Now look at the bottom of the page. What are the shepherds doing there? (*pointing*)
 - Maybe they are saying, "Look, look!" Let's point at the sky like the shepherds! Let's say, "Look, look!" (*Model this for the children.*)
 - The story we will hear in the next session will tell us why the shepherds were so surprised. We will find out why the shepherds were pointing to the sky!
- Collect the child's page for use on days 2 and 4.

Closing Prayer

- End the lesson by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross and a brief, spontaneous prayer. Close with another Sign of the Cross.



Day 2—Dive In!

Materials Needed

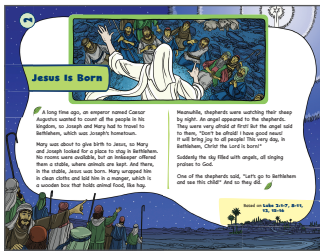
- the chapter 2 child's page, one for each child

Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Pray this short prayer:
 - Dear God, thank you for bringing us together to learn more about the birth of Jesus. Amen.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

Engage

- Distribute the child's page, and ask the children to turn to the side where the Bible story appears.
- Invite them to review the pictures to consider what the Bible story might be about.
- Ask them to put their finger on the angel in the picture, and then to put their finger on the shepherds.



Bible Story

- Read the Bible story to the children slowly, stopping briefly after each sentence. If the children are readers, invite them to follow along. If not, invite them to look at the main picture as you read.
- Collect the child's page for use on day 4.

This Chapter's Bible Story

Jesus Is Born

A long time ago, an emperor named Caesar Augustus wanted to count all the people in his kingdom, so Joseph and Mary had to travel to Bethlehem, which was Joseph's hometown.

Mary was about to give birth to Jesus, so Mary and Joseph looked for a place to stay in Bethlehem. No rooms were available, but an innkeeper offered them a stable, where animals are kept. And there, in the stable, Jesus

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was born. Mary wrapped him in clean cloths and laid him in a manger, which is a wooden box that holds animal food, like hay.

Meanwhile, shepherds were watching their sheep by night. An angel appeared to the shepherds. They were very afraid at first! But the angel said to them: "Don't be afraid! I have good news! It will bring joy to all people! This very day, in Bethlehem, Christ the Lord is born!"

Suddenly the sky filled with angels, all singing praises to God.

One of the shepherds said, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this child!" And so they did.

(Based on Luke 2:1–7, 8–11, 13, 15–16)

Core Teaching

- Begin the discussion by sharing these or similar words:
 - We just heard about the birth of Jesus. Can anyone tell me where people usually put babies so they can sleep? *(in a crib or in a big baby basket or a cradle)*
 - Where did Mary lay Jesus to sleep? *(in a manger, a food box for animals)* Yes, and it was probably full of clean, soft hay, so it was a good bed for Jesus.
 - Who told the shepherds about Jesus? *(the angels)*
 - Where did the shepherds go to see Jesus? *(to the stable in Bethlehem)*
 - Where was Jesus? *(in the manger inside the stable)*
 - Why were Joseph and Mary and Jesus in the stable? *(No rooms were available in the inn. Joseph and Mary were poor. They did not have another other place to stay.)*
- Expand the discussion with the following remarks:
 - There are people today who also have no place to stay. What do we call those people? *(poor people or homeless people)*
 - Yes, we call them poor people or homeless people because they do not have much money and have no place to stay. Mary and Joseph had a home, but they were traveling and had no place to stay.
 - They were also poor. They did not have much money. Even if a nice room had been available, they might not have been able to afford it. Jesus did not come to us as a rich king, but as a poor child.
 - Jesus became poor to show us that God loves us and all people, even the very poorest, and that we should all love one another.

- Explain that we celebrate the birth of Jesus because Jesus shows us that God loves us! Tell the children that Jesus shows us that God loves everybody, even the very poorest people. Continue by sharing that Jesus shows us God’s love by being born and becoming like us.
- Continue with the following:
 - Let’s celebrate that Jesus loves us. *(Gather the children in a big circle, holding hands. Lead the following hand gestures while asking the group to repeat your words after you.)*
 - Jesus loves us! *(Hold hands up high.)*
 - Jesus wants us to love one another! *(Bring hands down and crouch down near the floor.)*
 - God loves us! *(Bring hands up.)*
 - We love God! *(Bring hands down.)*
 - Thank you, God, for sending Jesus! *(Bring hands waist high and sway back and forth. Repeat several times.)*
 - Amen! *(Bring hands up.)* Amen! *(Bring hands down.)* Amen! Amen! Amen! *(Hold hands up and end.)*

Closing Prayer

- End the lesson by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Offer a short prayer of petition, asking the children to share the names of people or situations they would like the group to pray for.
- Close with another Sign of the Cross.

Day 3—Discover!

Materials Needed

- copies of the handout “Jesus Is Born,” on page 56 of the teacher guide, one for each child
- crayons or markers
- scissors, one pair for each child
- envelopes, one for each child

Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Pray this short prayer:
 - Dear God, thank you for bringing us together to learn more about the birth of Jesus. Amen.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

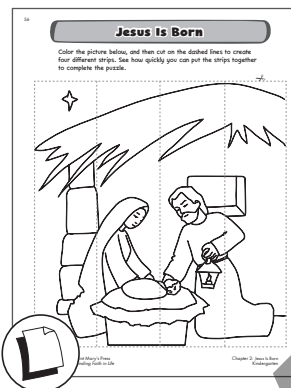
Engage

- Begin with a brief review of the Bible story or a few key points from the core teaching on day 2.
- Invite the children to retell the Bible story to the best of their recollection, and then continue with the following points:
 - The Bible story was about the birth of Jesus. Can anyone remember where Jesus was born? (*in a stable in Bethlehem*)
 - Who were the first people to find out about the birth of Jesus? (*the shepherds*)
 - Who told the shepherds about the birth of Jesus? (*the angels*)
 - Why was Jesus born in a stable? (*because Mary and Joseph were poor and had nowhere else to go*) This shows that God loves everyone and that Jesus was sent to love everyone, especially those who are poor.

Learning Activity

Jesus Is Born Puzzle

- Distribute the handout along with crayons or markers and scissors.
- Point out the image, and ask the children what it shows.
- Tell them that they are going to create their own puzzle, but that the first step is to color the picture on the handout.
- Allow time for the children to color the image, and then explain that they can cut the handout on the dashed lines, creating four different strips of paper.
- Encourage them to mix up the strips of paper, and tell them that you want to see how quickly they can put the pieces together in the right order to complete the puzzle. You can count aloud to create more excitement.
- Congratulate the children when they have completed the puzzle. If there is more time, you might consider having them swap their strips of paper to complete another child's puzzle.
- Distribute the envelopes, and invite the children to place their strips of paper in an envelope for safekeeping. Mention that they may need to fold the strips.
- Tell the children to take their puzzle home and see how quickly their family members can complete it. Also, you might suggest that their family can help them tape the pieces together or glue them onto cardboard to display their artwork at home.



Also available
at [www.smp.org](http://www.smp.org/discover_kinderschool)
[/discover_kinderschool](http://www.smp.org/discover_kinderschool)

Additional Activity Options

If this learning activity would not work well with your group, you may choose to use either of the activity ideas on page 55 of the teacher guide in its place.

Closing Prayer

- End the lesson by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Explain to the children that today's prayer recalls the Bible story of Jesus being born. Invite them to repeat the words and actions after you:
 - Baby Jesus, very small (*make yourself small*)
 - Sleeping in the manger stall (*head to the side on hands as if sleeping*)
 - Many angels in the sky (*look up*)
 - Singing praise to God on high. (*raise hands in air*)
 - Thank you, God, for Jesus! (*wave hands and cheer*)
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.



Day 4 – Go!

Materials Needed

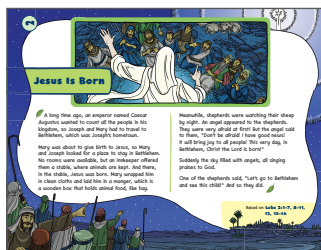
- the chapter 2 child's page, one for each child
- copies of the chapter 2 family page, on page 57 of the teacher guide, one for each child

Opening Prayer

- Begin by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Pray this short prayer:
 - Dear God, thank you for bringing us together to learn more about the birth of Jesus. Amen.
- End with the Sign of the Cross.

Engage

- Begin with a brief review of the learning activity from day 3.
- Invite the children to share what they remember from the activity and what they might have learned. Then continue with the following points:
 - In the last lesson, we talked about the birth of Jesus in the stable at Bethlehem. Today, let's think about why Jesus was born in a stable. Why do you think that was? (*Mary and Joseph were poor, and they had no place to stay.*)
 - Why did Jesus come as a poor little baby instead of as a rich king? (*to show that God loves everyone, not just those who are rich but also those who are poor*)



Bible Story

- Distribute the child’s page, and ask the children to turn to the side where the Bible story appears. Remind them that it has been a few days since they last heard the story, so you will read it again to refresh their memory.
- Read the Bible story to the children slowly, inviting them to follow along or look at the pictures as you read.

This Chapter’s Bible Story

Jesus Is Born

A long time ago, an emperor named Caesar Augustus wanted to count all the people in his kingdom, so Joseph and Mary had to travel to Bethlehem, which was Joseph’s hometown.

Mary was about to give birth to Jesus, so Mary and Joseph looked for a place to stay in Bethlehem. No rooms were available, but an innkeeper offered them a stable, where animals are kept. And there, in the stable, Jesus was born. Mary wrapped him in clean cloths and laid him in a manger, which is a wooden box that holds animal food, like hay.

Meanwhile, shepherds were watching their sheep by night. An angel appeared to the shepherds. They were very afraid at first! But the angel said to them: “Don’t be afraid! I have good news! It will bring joy to all people! This very day, in Bethlehem, Christ the Lord is born!”

Suddenly the sky filled with angels, all singing praises to God.

One of the shepherds said, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this child!” And so they did.

(Based on Luke 2:1–7, 8–11, 13, 15–16)

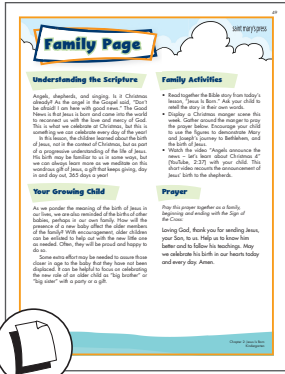
Child’s Page Activity

- Tell the children to turn over the child’s page. Introduce the activity, reading any directions that are offered.
- Assure the children that if they do not finish the child’s page activity by the end of the session, they can complete it at home.



Chapter Wrap-Up

- Recall the chapter goals by asking the following questions:
 - Who told the shepherds about Jesus? (*the angels*)
 - Were Jesus, Mary, and Joseph rich, with lots of money? (*No, they were poor.*)
 - Who loves us and shows us God’s love? (*Jesus*)



Also available in full color in both English and Spanish at www.smp.org/discover_kinderschool

- Remind the children to take the child's page home.
- Distribute the family page, and encourage the children to share it at home. You may want to staple the child's page and the family page together as the children are getting ready to leave.

Closing Prayer

- End the lesson by leading the children in the Sign of the Cross.
- Explain to the children that today's prayer recalls the Bible story of Jesus being born. Invite them to repeat the words and actions after you.
 - Baby Jesus, very small (*make yourself small*)
 - Sleeping in the manger stall (*head to the side on hands as if sleeping*)
 - Many angels in the sky (*look up*)
 - Singing praise to God on high. (*raise hands in air*)
 - Thank you, God, for Jesus! (*wave hands and cheer*)
- Close with the Sign of the Cross.



Day 5—Discover More! (optional)

The following suggestions can be used alone or in combination to create an additional lesson for day 5. Choose the suggestions that best fit with your particular schedule or any specific objectives you might have.

Artistic Reflection

Encourage the children to share significant learnings or key points through art, skits, or other forms of creative expression.

Child's Page Activity

If the children did not complete their child's page activity on day 4, instead of sending it home that day, use day 5 to have them complete it.

Additional Activity Options

Use either or both of the activity ideas on page 55 of the teacher guide to reinforce the core learning goals of the chapter.

Liturgical Readings

Read the Gospel for the upcoming Sunday liturgy—a list of readings can be found by using the calendar on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' website (www.usccb.org). Invite the children to share what they hear as a message. You do not need to provide lengthy background or explanation. Rather, encourage the children to open their ears and hearts to what the reading might be saying to them. Use this as a time of preparation for the Sunday liturgy.

Activity Ideas

Materials Needed

- a figure of the baby Jesus from a manger scene

Seeking the Baby Jesus

- Introduce this activity by explaining that this is a game of hide and seek with the baby Jesus.
- Explain that you will choose a volunteer to stand by the door with their eyes closed. Tell the children that you will then hide the baby Jesus somewhere in the room.
- Share that the volunteer will try to find the baby Jesus, and the rest of the children will help by saying “hot” or “cold” as the volunteer comes closer or moves farther away from the baby Jesus.
- Play the game again, as time allows, by selecting a new volunteer and hiding the baby Jesus in another location.

Materials Needed

- a song sheet for a Christmas carol
- a recording of the Christmas carol and appropriate equipment for playing it *(optional)*
- a computer with internet access *(optional)*
- a computer projector *(optional)*

Let's Sing Christmas Carols!

- Explain that we usually celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas, and we celebrate by singing Christmas carols. Tell the children that today is a good day to sing Christmas carols too, because today they learned more about the birth of Jesus.
- Using the song sheet, teach the carol you have chosen, line by line, asking the children to repeat each line after you. Then help the children sing two lines at a time, and then the entire verse. If you have a recording of the Christmas carol, you may wish to play it and have the children sing along for practice. (Suggested carols: “Silent Night,” “Away in a Manger,” “O Come Little Children.”)
- *Optional:* Show the video “The Rainbow Collections - Little Donkey (Official Lyric Video)” (YouTube, 2:20), which is a song about a donkey carrying Mary to Bethlehem. Then invite the children to get down on all fours and be “little donkeys” like the one in the video. Play the “Little Donkey” song again as you lead the children around the room while they pretend to be little donkeys carrying Mary to Bethlehem.

Jesus Is Born

Color the picture below, and then cut on the dashed lines to create four different strips. See how quickly you can put the strips together to complete the puzzle.



Family Page

Understanding the Scripture

Angels, shepherds, and singing. Is it Christmas already? As the angel in the Gospel said, "Don't be afraid! I am here with good news." The Good News is that Jesus is born and came into the world to reconnect us with the love and mercy of God. This is what we celebrate at Christmas, but this is something we can celebrate every day of the year!

In this lesson, the children learned about the birth of Jesus, not in the context of Christmas, but as part of a progressive understanding of the life of Jesus. His birth may be familiar to us in some ways, but we can always learn more as we meditate on this wondrous gift of Jesus, a gift that keeps giving, day in and day out, 365 days a year!

Family Activities

- Read together the Bible story from today's lesson, "Jesus Is Born." Ask your child to retell the story in their own words.
- Display a Christmas manger scene this week. Gather around the manger to pray the prayer below. Encourage your child to use the figures to demonstrate Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem, and the birth of Jesus.
- Watch the video "Angels announce the news – Let's learn about Christmas 4" (YouTube, 2:37) with your child. This short video recounts the announcement of Jesus' birth to the shepherds.

Your Growing Child

As we ponder the meaning of the birth of Jesus in our lives, we are also reminded of the births of other babies, perhaps in our own family. How will the presence of a new baby affect the older members of the family? With encouragement, older children can be enlisted to help out with the new little one as needed. Often, they will be proud and happy to do so.

Some extra effort may be needed to assure those closer in age to the baby that they have not been displaced. It can be helpful to focus on celebrating the new role of an older child as "big brother" or "big sister" with a party or a gift.

Prayer

Pray this prayer together as a family, beginning and ending with the Sign of the Cross:

Loving God, thank you for sending Jesus, your Son, to us. Help us to know him better and to follow his teachings. May we celebrate his birth in our hearts today and every day. Amen.