



Family Advent

Guide

Lifeway[™]kids



Merry Christmas

Christmas is an exciting time where families can see how God has given us peace, joy, hope, and love! Each week's devotion will explore one of these themes as you open the Bible as a family and read a part of the Christmas story. After you read the story, we have included discussion questions to help get the conversation started and connect this story from Scripture to your kids' lives.

One of the best parts of Christmas is the memories that we make with our families, and we want to give you a chance to make some of these memories. In each devotion, we are including nativity figures from the Bible story that your family can print out and decorate. By the fourth week, you will have a full nativity set to help remember the Bible stories and how God has given us peace, joy, hope, and love!



Week 1

Peace

Mary and Joseph

Luke 1:26-38, Matthew 1:18-25

Talk about it

Christmas is almost here! As we get closer to Christmas, sometimes life can feel a little bit crazy, and we may be wishing for peace. Do you know what peace is? (Invite your kids to share what they think the word peace means.) Peace is a time of calm when we trust that God is in control. Let's open the Bible and see how God gave peace to two people who were afraid and didn't understand what was going on. We are going to read from the New Testament, the second part of the Bible, from the books Luke and Matthew.

Read it

Luke 1:26-38, Matthew 1:18-25

Ask it

Have you ever been afraid or didn't understand what was going on? (Invite your child to share a time when they may have felt afraid.) What happened to help you get through that time? (Ask your child to share how the situation they were in was resolved and how they were able to get through that tough time.)

In these Bible verses today, we learned that Mary and Joseph had moments where they were afraid and didn't know what would happen.

When the angel appeared to Mary and Joseph, he said, "Peace be with you." The angel told them that, even though they were afraid, God was with them. God had a plan for Jesus to be born. Everything may have felt crazy or unsettling for Mary and Joseph, but they could have peace knowing that God is always in control.

How can we ask God to give us peace? (Remind kids that we can pray and ask God for peace, no matter what is going on. We can trust that He is in control, and that He has a plan for them.) God sent Jesus to earth so that we can have a relationship with Him. Through Jesus we can know God and have peace!

Make it

Create a part of the Christmas story! Cut apart and decorate the Mary and Joseph nativity figures on the next page. While you are decorating the figures, talk to your kids about the story that you just read from the Bible and how God gives us peace.

Pray it

Take some time to pray as a family. Ask God that as you enter this season, He would give you peace.

God, thank You for giving us peace through Jesus. Please help us trust You and know that You have an amazing plan for our lives. When things feel crazy in our lives, help us to remember that You are always in control. In Jesus' name, amen.

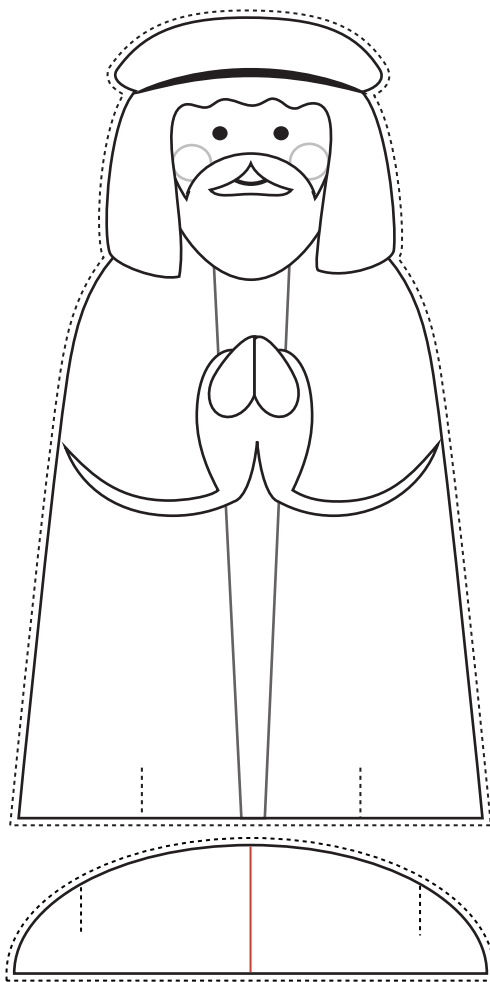
Week 1 - Peace

She will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.

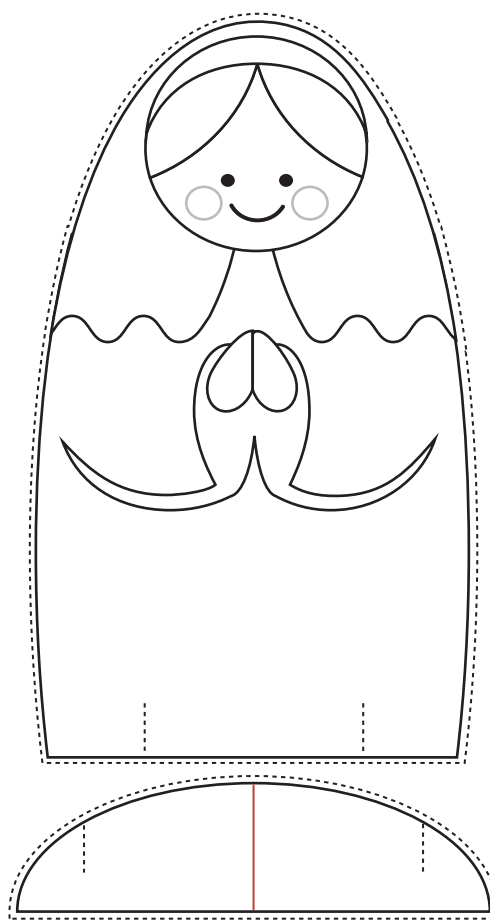
Matthew 1:21

Nativity Figures

Week 1



Joseph



Mary



Week 1

Family Activity

Peace Banner

Make a simple banner to decorate your home and remind your family that trusting God's plans brings peace.

You'll need:

- plain or printed scrapbook paper in the colors of your choice
- scissors
- narrow fabric or curling ribbon
- markers
- a hole punch or stapler

Directions:

Cut triangular banners from the paper and arrange them pointing down. Help your younger child print *PEACE* with markers, one letter per banner. Older children can make a more elaborate banner with a *PEACE ON EARTH* caption (inserting blank triangles between words).

Punch holes in the top two corners and help your child thread ribbon through the holes, or simply fasten the triangular banners to the ribbon with a stapler.





Week 2

Joy

Shepherds and Angels

Luke 2:8-19

Talk about it

Christmas is an exciting time of the year and a word you may hear a lot is, "Joy!" What is joy? (Invite your kids to share what they think joy is.) We can have joy in our life when we love and follow God. Let's open the Bible and read about a group of people who felt joy after they got some very exciting news. We are going to open to the second part of the Bible, the New Testament and look at the book of Luke.

Read it

Luke 2:8-19

Ask it

Have you ever been super excited for something? (Invite your kids to share a time when they were excited about something that was happening.) Have you ever been filled with so much joy that you couldn't keep the excitement to yourself? (Allow kids to share how they told people what they were excited for.)

We saw in this story from the Bible that the shepherds were amazed and full of joy when the angels told them that Jesus had been born! The shepherds did not keep the news of Jesus' birth to themselves. They were too excited! They were overflowing with joy as they told people that Jesus had been born.

Jesus' birth gives us joy too! How can we respond to this good news that Jesus was born? (Help your family know that we can pray and thank God for sending Jesus. We can worship Him for how amazing He is. We can also tell others that Jesus came to earth, just like the shepherds did.) The shepherds were excited because they knew that the Savior they had been waiting for had arrived. By sending Jesus, God showed us that He loves us and wants a relationship with us. That is something to be joyful about!

Make it

Create a part of the Christmas story! Cut apart and decorate the shepherds and angel nativity figures. Talk about the joyful news that the angels shared with the shepherds and how the shepherds reacted.

Pray it

Take some time to pray as a family, and ask God that He would give you an opportunity to share the joy He has given you in this season.

God, thank You for giving us joy by sending Your Son for us. Please help us to remember Your love for us no matter what is happening in our lives. Show us ways we can share Your joy in our lives this season. In Jesus' name, amen.

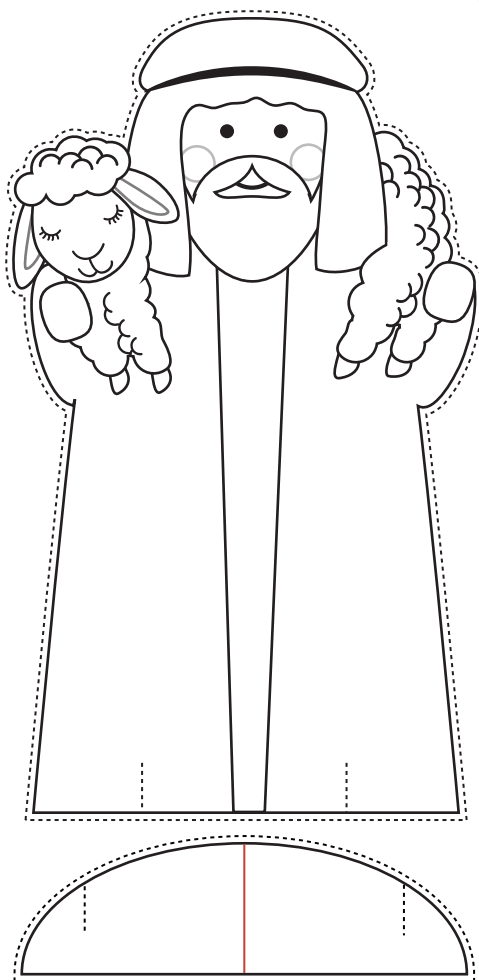
Week 2 - Joy

The angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, for look, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people: Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you, who is the Messiah, the Lord.

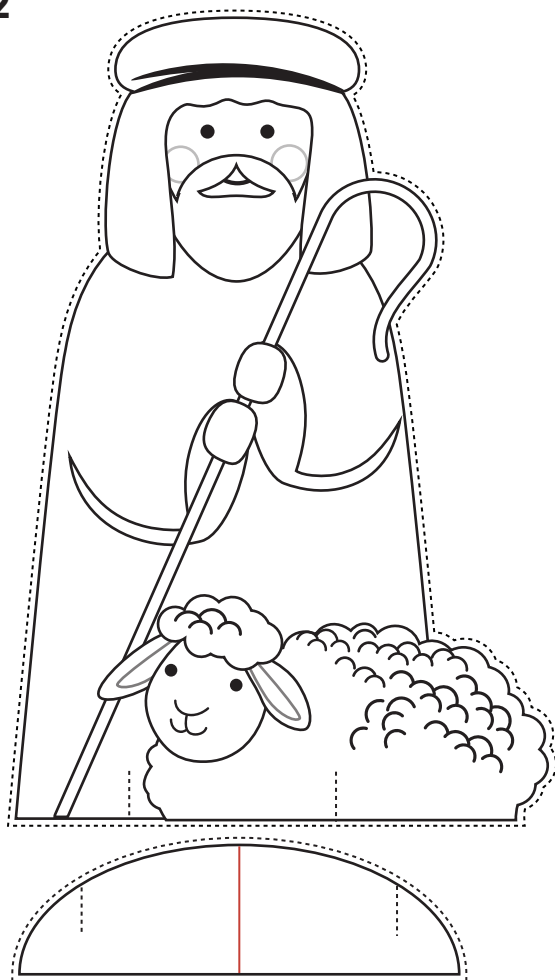
Luke 2:10-11

Nativity Figures

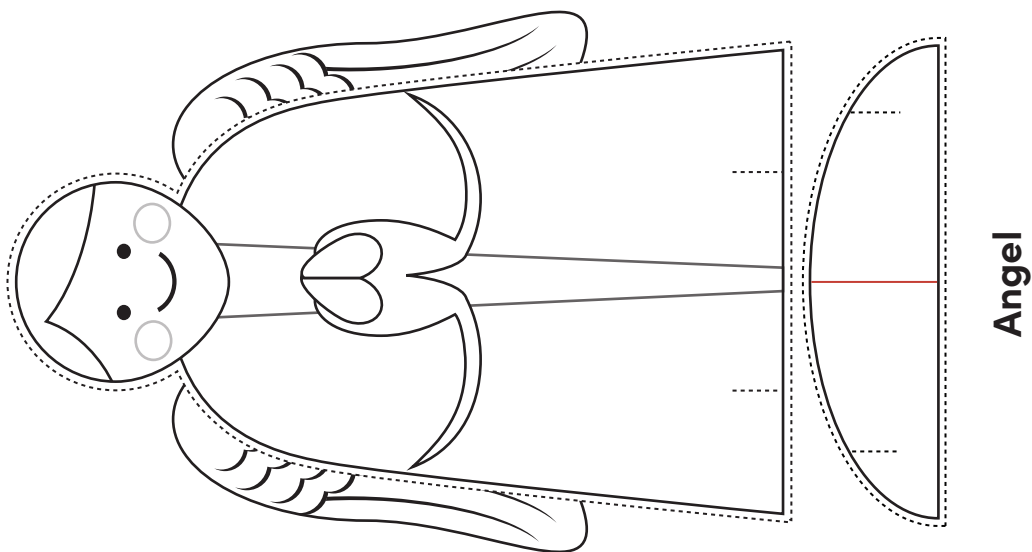
Week 2



Shepherd 1



Shepherd 2





Week 2

Family Activity

Joy Jump Board Game

Play a game that allows you to talk about Jesus, the source of true joy, and how to share that joy with others this season.

You'll need:

- poster board or a large sheet of paper
- red and green stickers or markers
- dice (2)
- buttons, coins, or other game tokens

Directions:

With your child, create a game path by making a closed loop of red and green stickers or dots with markers—as many spots as you wish.

Players can begin with their tokens anywhere on the game path. The youngest player may toss the dice first and move his or her token in any direction. If the token lands on a red space, prompt the player to explain why Jesus gives me joy. If the token lands on a green space, the player should describe how I can share joy with others.

For fun, if a player tosses doubles, yell, “Joy break!” Allow everyone to jump up and down, shout, and clap.

Time the game to last no longer than your child’s attention span, or after everyone has had an agreed-upon number of turns.





Week 3

Hope

Wise Men
Matthew 2:1-12

Talk about it

Christmas is getting closer! The excitement is growing, and we can't wait for it to arrive. Can you tell me exactly how many days there are until Christmas? Imagine having to wait more than a whole year for this day? What if you had waited your whole life? We are going to learn about some important people in the Christmas story. These people visited Jesus after He was born, but we want to learn about them today because they teach us so much about hope! Let's open the Bible and read about a group of people who had waited their entire life with the hope that God would send a Savior to earth. We are going to open to the second part of the Bible, the New Testament, and look at the book of Matthew.

Read it

Matthew 2:1-12

Ask it

Have you ever had to wait for something that you were really excited for? (Invite the kids to tell you about a time they had to wait for something to happen.) Was there ever a moment when you didn't know if it would actually happen? (Let your kids share if they were ever worried that it would not happen.)

When we wait for something good that we believe will happen, we have hope. We are excited for it to happen, and we look forward to it. The wise men had hope that God's promise would come true. They studied the sky and saw the sign that God had left. These men had hoped for a long time for Jesus to come. After Jesus was born, they traveled to see Jesus, to give Him gifts, and to worship Him.

God kept His promise to send Jesus for us. We have true hope that Jesus is powerful and completely forgives us from our sin when we respond to Him in faith. One day, Jesus will come again to make all things new.

Make it

Create a part of the Christmas story! Cut apart and decorate the wise men figures. Talk about how the wise men had hope that God would send someone to save the world, and how Jesus gives us hope to have a relationship with God. Remind your child that the wise men visited Jesus after He was born. They gave gifts and worshiped Jesus for being the hope that had come.

Pray it

Take some time to pray as a family and ask God that He would give you an opportunity to share the hope He has given you in this season.

God, thank You for giving us hope by sending Your Son for us. Please help us to remember that You will finish what You have begun in each of us through Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen.

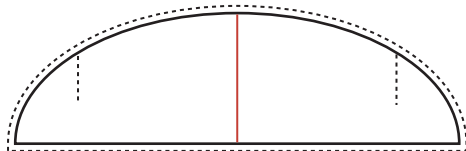
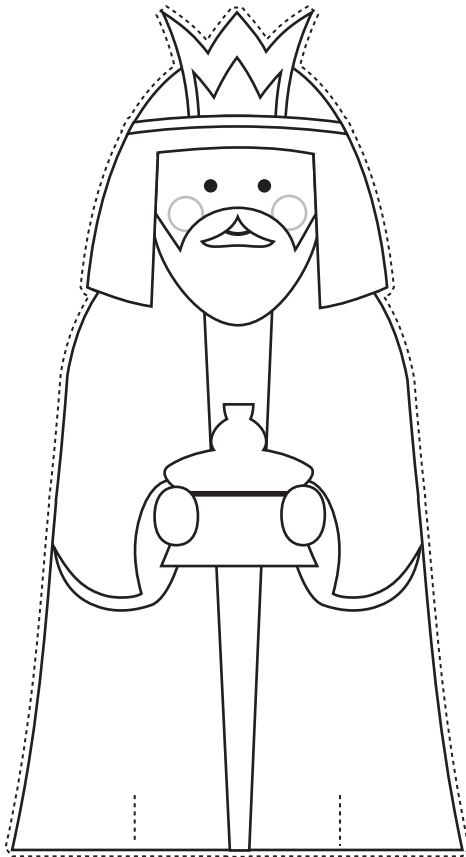
Week 3 - Hope

Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star at its rising and have come to worship him.

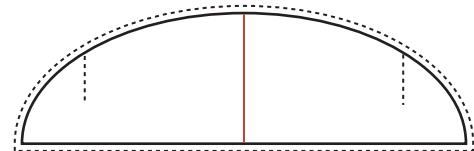
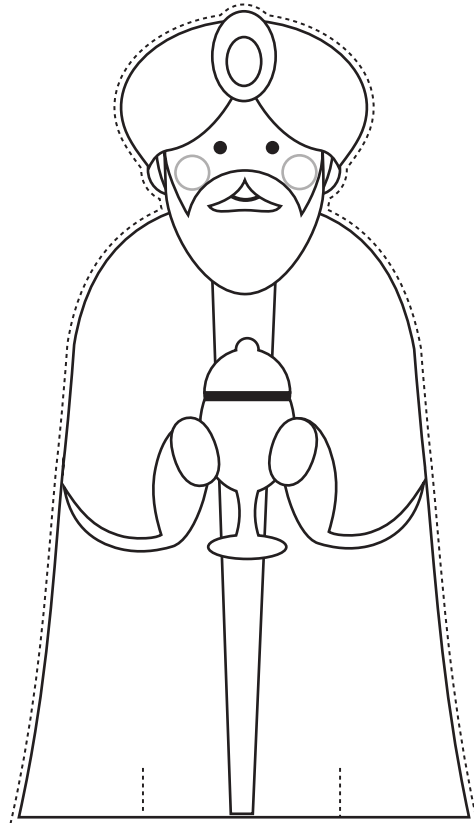
Matthew 2:2

Wise Men Figures

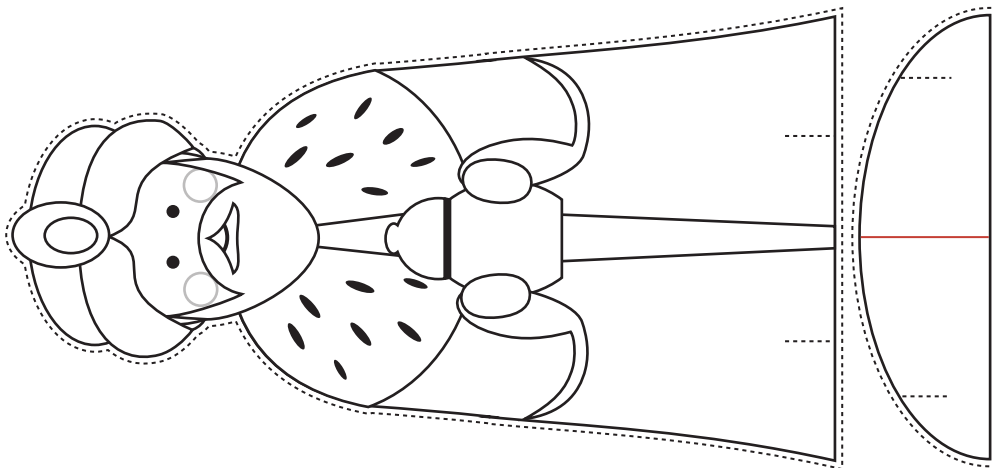
Week 3



Wise man 1



Wise man 2



Wise man 3



Week 3

Family Activity

Shadow Figures

Play with light and shadows to help your child remember elements of the Christmas story. Use the “together time” opportunity to talk about the hope Christians have because Jesus is the Savior God promised.

You'll need:

- a camping lantern or small light
- construction paper and scissors (optional)

Directions:

If you wish, before “lights out,” allow your child to use the previous weeks’ nativity cutouts related to the Christmas story. If your children use the wise men cut outs, remind them that the wise men traveled from far away. They had hope for a very long time that God would send Jesus. At just the right time, God sent Jesus to be the hope of the world.

Darken the room except for the lantern. Allow your child to move the cutouts back and forth, experimenting with sizes and angles. Encourage him to explain what each cutout represents and share part of the Christmas story related to that person.

For a paper-free twist, challenge your child to use her hands or objects in the room to approximate shapes and figures related to the Christmas story.





Week 4

Love

Jesus
Luke 2:1-7

Talk about it

How can you show people that you love them? You can write them a note, do something nice for them, give them a hug, or just tell them! As we get closer to Christmas, we can remember how God showed His love for us. He sent Jesus! Let's open the Bible and see how the world was changed forever when Jesus was born. We are going to open to the second part of the Bible, the New Testament and read in the book of Luke.

Read it

Luke 2:1-7

Ask it

What is something that you really care about? (Give kids a chance to talk about people or things that they cherish and care for.) What would you do for that special person or thing to show that you care? (This can be fun like giving them a gift, or it can be sincere like protecting them from the rain.)

God showed us how He truly loves us by sending His Son to earth. God wants us to have a relationship with Him, but we were separated from Him because of the wrong things we think, say, and do. The Bible calls these wrong things sin. We all have sinned, and there is a fair punishment due because of our sin. (See Romans 3:23 and 6:23.) Jesus came and took the punishment we deserve because He loves us! (Romans 5:8) When we trust in Jesus and respond to Him in faith, we can know God! We can talk to Him, and we can show His love to others!

Make it

Create a part of the Christmas story! Cut apart and decorate the Jesus nativity figure. Talk about how God showed His love to us by sending Jesus to earth so that we can have a relationship with God.

Pray it

Take some time to pray as a family and ask God that He would give you an opportunity to share His love during the Christmas season.

God, thank You for showing us love by sending Your Son. Please help us to remember Your love for us no matter what is happening in our lives. Show us ways we can share Your love in our lives this season. In Jesus' name, amen.

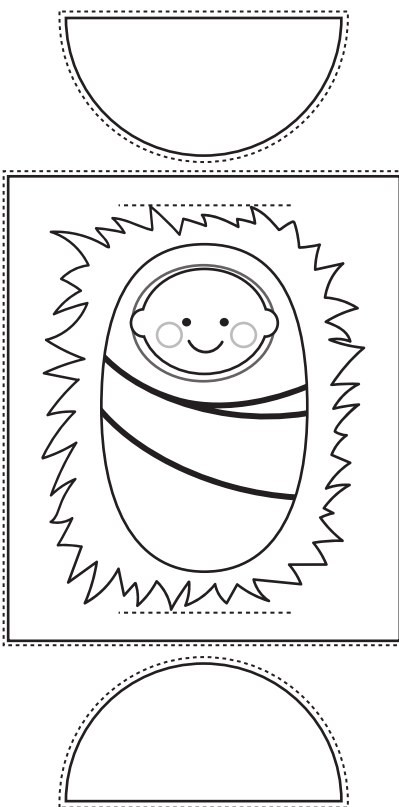
Week 4 - Love

God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16

Nativity Figure

Week 4



Jesus

----- CUT LINES



Week 4

Family Activity

From Our Kitchen with Love

Let the sweet treats you deliver to neighbors or serve at a Christmas gathering signify the love Jesus showed when He came to earth.

You'll need:

- pre-baked cookies, cupcakes, or brownies
- white frosting
- fine point decorator icing tube
- spatula or butter knife

Directions:

Start with a base of your favorite home-baked, slice-and-bake, or picked-up-at-the-store cookies, cupcakes, or brownies. Show your child how to gently frost the treat with a smooth layer of white icing.

When the base layer is ready, help your child squeeze the decorator tube to make a single heart on the treat. Encourage kids to add additional decorations or a design of their choosing. Remind your child that Jesus' love inspires His followers to show love to everyone—not just at Christmas, but all year long.

As a family, choose a time this week to deliver treats to neighbors and friends, celebrating the love of Jesus this Christmas.



Christmas Day

Synopsis:

Luke 1:26-39, Luke 2:1-19, Matthew 1:18-25, Matthew 2:1-12

Gather your family and encourage your child to re-tell the Christmas story using her finished nativity scene. Remind your family how an angel came to Mary and Joseph and gave them peace by reminding them that God is in control. Call attention to the shepherds and remark how they had joy when the angels told them that Jesus had been born in Bethlehem. Talk about the wise men's long journey and how they had hope that the promise God had made had finally come true. Lastly, look at Baby Jesus in the manger and remember how God showed us His love that first Christmas by sending His Son to earth so that we can have a relationship with Him.

Remark that each one of these people's lives were changed when Jesus came to earth! Ask your family to share how our lives have been changed by the good news of Jesus.





Christmas *Family Activity*

Thank You Cards

After a day of celebrating, help your child express thanks to the people who made this day special, and to Jesus, who can change us forever.

You'll need:

- blank card stock
- markers and stickers
- envelopes and stamps

Directions:

Later in the day, when your family is ready for some quiet time, bring out the card making supplies. Help your child fold card stock to fit your envelopes and decorate the fronts of several cards to write thank you notes in the coming days.

Save the last card for a special purpose: before the day ends, encourage your child to design a special thank you card to place in the empty space under your Christmas tree. Inside, encourage your child to write a prayer to thank Jesus for the difference He makes in the lives of those who trust Him.





Merry Christmas!

We hope you are encouraged by the peace,
joy, hope, and love that Jesus brings your
family this Christmas season!

Follow Lifeway Kids on social media for free resources,
discipleship tips, crafts, family activity ideas, and more!



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