

The Birth of Jesus Christ

Overview



Materials You'll Need

- angel pattern
- lightweight poster board
- ribbons (various colors)
- ruler
- glue
- scissors
- markers
- stapler



Scriptures

Mt 1:18-25; Lk 1:26-33

Bible Truth Objective(s)

God sent His Son to earth so that He could save all sinners

Behavioral Objective(s)

To acknowledge that God made us and has special plans for each of us

Memory Verse

"God sent forth His Son." (Gal 4:4)



Bible Knowledge

Joseph and Mary

Both Joseph and Mary were descendants of King David. They lived in a village of Galilee called Nazareth.

Joseph was a carpenter by trade. When he learned of Mary's pregnancy, he wanted to dissolve the marriage arrangement quietly (Mt 1:18-19). Later on, when he was assured of God's plan through a dream, he married Mary as planned. His actions demonstrated his character and righteousness.

Mary was related to Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist (Lk 1:36). The Bible shows Mary to be a person of great faith. When the angel appeared before her and told her how God arranged for His Son to be born, she replied, "Let it be to me according to your word" (Lk 1:38).

Although both Joseph and Mary were aware of Jesus' divinity, they were still ordinary parents and anxious for their child. When Jesus was "lost" on the way home from Jerusalem, both of them were worried and searched frantically for Him until

they found Him at the temple.

The Birth of Jesus

The emperor Augustus issued a decree for a census to be taken throughout the Roman world. It became customary to count the people every fourteen years for the purpose of taxation. The decree required that Joseph and Mary journey from Nazareth in Galilee to Bethlehem in Judea.

Bethlehem was the famed city of David. It lies 9 km south of Jerusalem. Its former name was Ephrath (Gen 35:19), and it was known as Bethlehem Judah, to distinguish it from the other city of the same name.

Joseph and Mary traveled at a time when Mary was about to deliver. Because of the great crowds in Bethlehem, they stayed in a stable in order to give birth to Jesus.

The prophesy of Jesus' birth is recorded in Isaiah 7:14 and Micah 5:2. "Emmanuel" means "God is with us." God chose the name "Jesus," meaning "the Lord saves."



Understanding Your Students

Children at this age have many questions but often lack the sophistication to really understand the answers. Giving birth is a particularly difficult topic to explain to such young minds. Most of them may already know that they came from their mommy's tummy. But that could be the extent of their knowledge. In fact, it is not necessary to go into the "birds and the bees" at this point. The miracle of Jesus' birth is the fact that it was a part of God's great plan to save all sinners. Rather than going into a long discussion of how people are born versus how Jesus was born, emphasize that Jesus' birth was special. Even though Mary was His mother, He was also God's Son.

To talk about how special His birth was, you

could begin the class by showing a birth announcement card. Usually, there is a place to write the newborn's name, how much he weighs and how happy and proud the parents are. People give out these cards because everyone wants to share the news of their baby's birth. In the same way, people had been awaiting Jesus' birth for a long time. You can share how Jesus' birth had already been foretold centuries ago (Isa 7:14; Mic 5:2). People had been waiting for a long time for the Lord to appear because they wanted to have a Savior. When He was finally born, angels announced His birth. Some people were so excited they traveled to see Him at the stable. They even brought gifts for Jesus. They knew He was not just an ordinary baby. He was going to save everyone when He grew up because He was God's precious Son.



Vocabulary

Angel

a messenger of God

Stable

a place where farm animals eat and sleep

Manger

a big box where the food for the farm animals are kept

Inn

a place where travelers stay to rest and sleep, like a motel or hotel today



Before You Teach

Today, people make a big deal about newborns. Before the baby is born, the mother-to-be has a baby shower. She receives every imaginable gift possible to prepare her for the exciting moment as well as the days ahead. Immediately after the baby is born, birth announcements go out, telling others of the great news. Everyone wants to know how much the baby weighs and who he looks more like. In some cultures, families will celebrate the one month birthday of the baby. They have parties and invite others to share in their joy. People do these things because having a baby is miraculous and wonderful. They also have great hopes for the future of their child and every day is another day that brings new wonders.

When Jesus Christ came into the world, an angel announced His birth. The angel wanted the whole world to know that this was no ordinary

baby. He was to be our Savior, the long-awaited Messiah. This was to be a celebrated event of a lifetime! Some shepherds and wise men came to see Jesus Christ, and even brought gifts for Him. But compared to the things we do today, Jesus' birth was quite uneventful. Surely the birth of God's Son should have caused more than a stir. Yet, very few people paid attention even though God had destined Him for great things in the future. He came into the world to save, heal and forgive. Yet no one really acknowledged or understood the real purpose of Jesus' birth. Some only wanted a quick fix to their physical ailments, while others just wanted to be full. Most of the attention Jesus Christ did end up getting was negative. Even though no one welcomed Jesus into the world with parties and great expectations, He faithfully carried out God's plan. He was the Savior; but He came as a servant, humble and unassuming. He was the King, yet He led a plain and simple life. He was God's Son; still He was nailed to the cross. And He left the world with an impact that is still felt today.



Bible Story

An Angel Appears to Mary

A long time ago, there was a young woman named Mary. She lived in a town called Nazareth in Galilee. She was going to marry a man named Joseph. She was happy and excited.

One day, an angel came to talk to Mary. His name was Gabriel. The angel said, "Mary, you have been chosen to be a very special lady. God is with you."

Mary didn't know what the angel was talking about. She couldn't understand why an angel was talking to her. She was a little bit afraid. She wondered why the angel had come.

The angel could tell that Mary was afraid. He said, "Don't be afraid, Mary. God is very pleased with you. He has something special planned for you."

Mary was still afraid. Then the angel said, "Mary, God has great plans for you. You are going to have a very special baby. You will have a son, and you will name Him Jesus. This baby will be God's Son. He will grow up to be very important."

Mary didn't understand these words. She asked the angel, "How can this be? I am not even married yet."

The angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you. God's power will also come down on you. That's how the baby will be God's Son."

Even though Mary didn't really understand everything, she had faith in God.

"I am God's servant. Let everything happen like you say it will," Mary said. After that, the angel went away. But Mary kept thinking about everything that the angel had told her.

An Angel Appears to Joseph

Now, Joseph didn't know that God had put His Son into Mary through the Holy Spirit. So when Joseph learned that Mary was going to have a baby, he was upset. He didn't want to marry her anymore. He was trying to think of a nice way to tell Mary that he didn't want her to be his new wife.

But one night while Joseph was asleep, an angel came to him in a dream. The angel said, "Joseph! Don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife. The baby that will be born is sent from God. Mary will have a

son, and you will name Him Jesus. He will be a very special baby, and He will grow up to help all the people."

Do you know what Joseph did when he woke up? When Joseph woke up, he did just what the angel told him to do. He obeyed God and he went to Mary and took her home to be his wife. He believed what the angel told him was true. He knew that Mary's baby would be a very special baby. Joseph also remembered that His name would be Jesus.

Jesus Christ is Born

Not long after Joseph and Mary got married, the king wanted to know how many people lived in his land. So Mary and Joseph had to leave Nazareth and go to another town called Bethlehem to be counted by the king's men. But it was almost time for Mary's baby to be born. Joseph and Mary knew that the baby would not be born in Nazareth because they had to leave for Bethlehem right away. So they got all their things ready and began their journey to Bethlehem. Since Mary's tummy was very large and heavy, it was hard for her to walk. It would be a long walk to Bethlehem. So she rode a donkey instead. Finally, after traveling for a few days, they arrived in Bethlehem. Mary could feel that the baby needed to come out soon. Joseph had to find a place for them to stay. They went to an inn to see if they could stay there for the night, but the man said there was no more room. So many people had come to Bethlehem to be counted that the whole town was full of people. What would Joseph and Mary do? Poor Mary and Joseph! After asking around, the only place they could find to stay was in a stable with the animals. But they were happy just to have a place to rest.

While they were resting in the stable, something special happened. The time came for Mary to have the baby. She gave birth to a baby boy. Joseph and Mary were so glad. Even though they had Him in a stable, they did not mind. They did not mind that all the animals were there with them. They didn't mind that there was no real bed to lay the baby down in. They wrapped Him in a warm cloth and laid Him in the manger. The manger was where the animals ate their food from. They made sure the manger was soft enough for the baby by putting a lot of hay in it first.

Mary and Joseph spent a long time looking at the baby. They were happy He was healthy and strong. They remembered what the angel had told them. The angel said that He was born by the Holy Spirit. He was a special baby because He was God's own Son. They also remembered to name the baby Jesus. Mary and Joseph were glad they listened to the angel and obeyed God's plan.

Today, we are usually born in hospitals, with doctors and nurses around us, taking care of us. Our

families give us new clothes to wear and we have comfortable cribs to sleep in. But Jesus Christ was not born in a hospital. He was born in a stable, with animals all around Him. He didn't have a nice and comfortable crib. He slept in a manger, the place where animals get their food. But Jesus Christ did not mind. Joseph and Mary did not mind. They were just happy that Jesus was born because He was going to help the people in the world one day. He is God's Son.



Check For Understanding

1. **Who was Joseph going to marry?** (Mary.)
2. **Who came to see Mary before she was married?** (An angel.)
3. **What did the angel tell Mary?** (The angel told her not to be afraid. She was going to have a special baby, God's Son.)
4. **After Joseph found out about the baby, did he still want Mary to be his wife?** (No, he did not.)
5. **What did the angel tell Joseph in his dream?** (The angel told him not to be afraid. The baby was going to be a special baby. It was a part of God's plan.)
6. **What did Joseph do after he woke up?**

(He obeyed God and took Mary home to be his wife.)

7. **Where did Joseph and Mary travel to?** (They went to Bethlehem because the king of the land wanted everyone to be counted.)
8. **Why did Joseph and Mary have to stay in a stable after they got to Bethlehem?** (There was no room in the inn.)
9. **What happened while they stayed in the stable?** (Mary had the baby.)
10. **What did Joseph and Mary name the baby?** (They named Him Jesus, just as the angel had told them to.)
11. **What was so special about this baby?** (Jesus is the Son of God.)



Life Application Story

Special Fingers

Julie stared at the piano. "You're almost at the end," Julie thought to herself. She lifted her hands and played the scales one more time. When she was done, she slammed down the cover and ran to the family room to turn on the television.

"Julie," said Mrs. Lewis as she walked past the room. "What are you doing?"

"I am watching TV. My favorite show is on."

"Are you done practicing your piano?" asked Mrs. Lewis.

"Yes," replied Julie. "Didn't you hear me shut the piano cover?"

"Yes, but you didn't shut it, you slammed it."

"Mom, I really want to watch this. Can we talk about piano later?"

"No, I need you to turn off the television set now."

Julie picked up the remote and turned off the TV. Then she slouched back on the couch.

"Julie, we need to talk about your piano practices. Lately, you have been doing sloppy jobs. You

have been rushing and not really paying attention to what you are playing.”

“Mom, I am tired of practicing so much. Can’t I take a break sometimes?”

“I understand that practicing piano is hard work. If you need a break, you can ask me. I won’t make you sit at the piano all day long,” replied Mrs. Lewis.

“Okay, Mom. I need a break now.”

“Julie, that is not what I mean. What I mean is that you need to practice your best and then when it is time to take a break, you can rest.”

“Why do I have to play piano anyway? You don’t play it,” said Julie.

“That’s true. I don’t play the piano. But that doesn’t mean you can’t learn. Besides, the biggest reason why you should learn is to praise God with your playing,” explained Mrs. Lewis.

“Do you mean one day I can play in the chapel and play the hymns?” asked Julie.

“Exactly,” said Mrs. Lewis.

“But Mom, I am never going to be that good,” whined Julie.

“That’s why you need to practice. Everything takes hard work. It is kind of like the story of Jesus when He was born.”

“What does this have to do with the birth of Jesus?” asked Julie.

“Well, do you remember where Jesus was born?”

“He was born in Bethlehem, in a stable with all the animals,” said Julie.

“You have a good memory,” said Mrs. Lewis. “But Jesus is the Son of God. Do you think a king’s son today would be born in a country farm where all the animals are?”

“No, more like in a big castle with lots of nice things in it,” answered Julie.

“That’s right. But Jesus wasn’t born in a nice place, even though He is the Son of God. But He didn’t mind because He knew He came to earth for one reason, and that was to save the people.”

“What does this story have to do with my piano practices?” asked Julie, a little bit confused.

“Well, what I am trying to say is that Jesus’ life was hard too. He didn’t come into the world with a lot of money or power. Most of the people didn’t even know who He was. But because He knew He had an important job to do, He spent His life

doing that, learning and teaching.”

“Are you saying that I have an important job?”

“Yes. Even though it is hard for you to see practicing piano as an important job, you could play for God when you grow up. That’s important, right?” asked Mrs. Lewis.

“Yes, I guess,” replied Julie. “But I will have to practice forever.”

“Jesus had to work hard every day too. Remember He went to learn in the temple? He prayed to God every day. Those aren’t easy things to do but He did them because He wanted to be good at His job later on,” explained Mrs. Lewis.

“So practicing now will make me better later on?”

“You bet. Even little kids like you can have an important job in God’s kingdom,” said Mrs. Lewis.

“I am going to go back to practice now, Mom,” said Julie.

“I am glad you have the heart to do it,” said Mrs. Lewis. “But I just baked some cookies. How about we take that break now and practice some more later?”

“Deal,” smiled Julie as they walked to the kitchen together.

Questions to Think About

1. **What did Julie think about playing the piano?** (She was tired of it and wanted to stop.)
2. **Did Julie’s mom say playing the piano was easy?** (No. She said that playing the piano is hard work and needs practicing every day.)
3. **Why did God send His Son to earth?** (Jesus came to save all sinners. He was doing God’s important work.)
4. **How can playing the piano help in God’s kingdom too?** (One day, Julie can also play hymns in the chapel and help everyone sing praises to God.)
5. **What else can we do now to help in God’s kingdom later on?** (Allow students to answer but throw out some suggestions: e.g. learning a different language is hard but can help spread the gospel; doing well in school can help us learn things that can help the church later on, i.e. writing articles, Internet ministry; we all have to do well in our little jobs now in order to help out when we grow up.)



Activity 1

Baby Jesus

Look at baby Jesus' family. Write down the names of the family members. Color in the picture.



Activity 2

Action Rhymes

Let's retell the story of the birth of Jesus in rhymes.

As she was alone in her room one day,
 (FORM ROOF WITH HANDS OVER HEAD)
 Mary bowed her head to pray.
 (ASSUME POSITION OF PRAYER)
 Suddenly an angel stood beside her,
 (STAND UP STRAIGHT AND TALL)
 Saying that Jesus was coming to earth,
 (POINT UP WITH FINGER)
 And that God would send His Son.
 (MAKE A CRADLE WITH ARMS)
 Then Mary began to pray,
 (SMILE AND FOLD HANDS TOGETHER TO PRAY)
 Oh, how glad she was that day.
 (CLAP HANDS IN TIME TO THE FINAL WORDS)

Jesus was born one day, one day.
 He laid among the hay, the hay.
 (MAKE A CRADLE WITH ARMS)
 He was special to God, to God,
 Because He is His Son, His Son.
 (POINT BOTH INDEX FINGERS TO SKY)
 He calls me His child, His child.
 He has plans for me, for me.
 (POINT FINGERS TO SELF)
 I want to do His will, His will.
 And smile He will, He will.
 (SMILE AND PUT INDEX FINGERS AT CORNERS OF MOUTH)



Activity 3

God Has Important Jobs For Us

Look at each picture. How is each person doing an

important job for God?

1. He is picking up the pen from the ground. When we keep God's house, the church, clean, we are doing an important job.
2. She is learning in class. When we study hard, we can learn more about God and His words. Then when we grow up, we can do other jobs like tell others about God.
3. They are playing together. God likes to see us play nicely together, with our friends and our siblings too. That is an important job because God sees we are trying to please him.
4. She loves her family. That is an important job because we are following His commandment.



Optional Activity

Angel Bookmark

Materials:

1. angel pattern
2. lightweight poster board
3. markers
4. ribbons (various colors)
5. ruler
6. glue
7. scissors
8. stapler

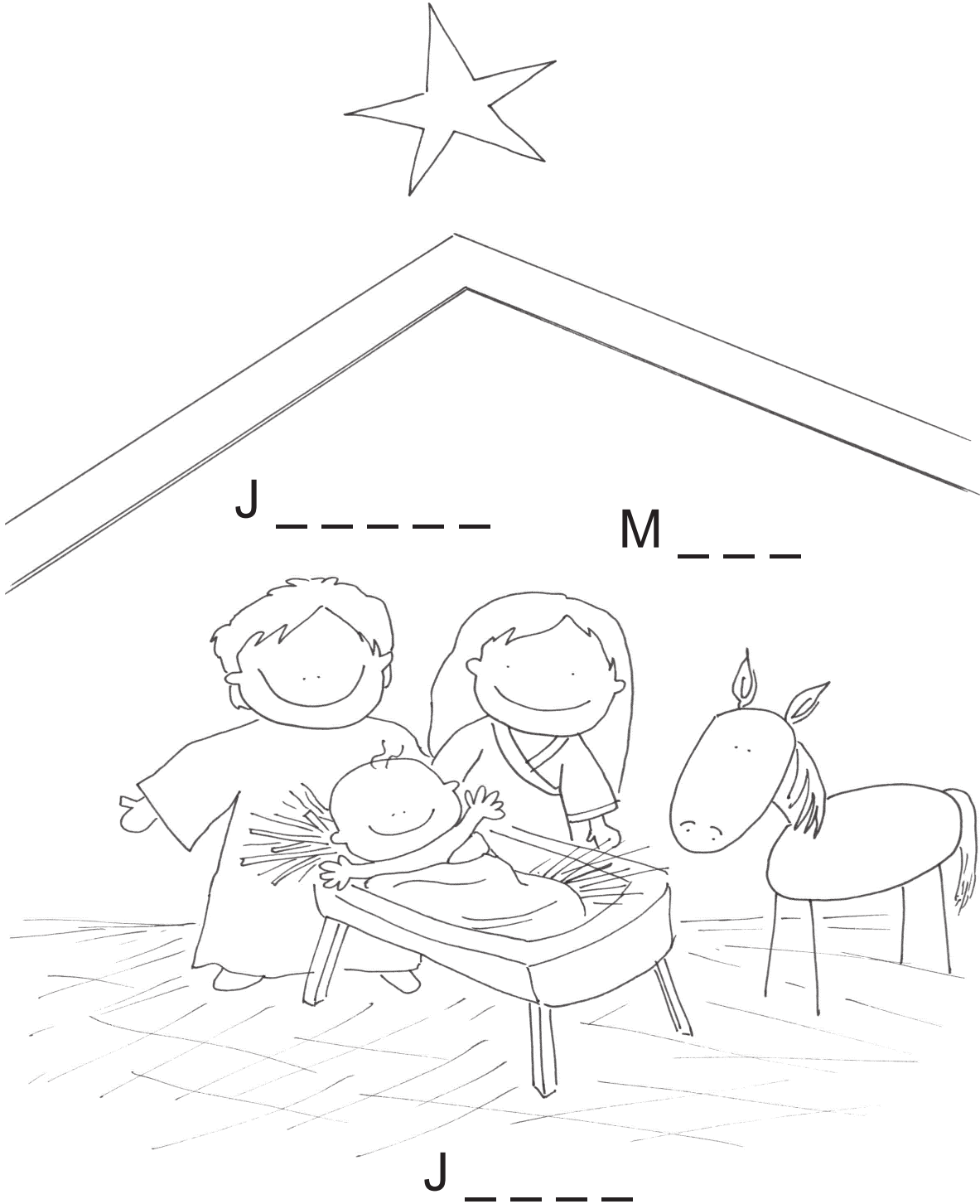
Directions:

1. Trace the angel pattern onto the poster board and cut one out for each student (you may wish to pre-cut these at home).
2. Cut ribbon streamers into 6-inch (15 cm) lengths, four for each student.
3. Also cut out a waistband out of the ribbon into 3-inch (7.5 cm) lengths, one for each student.
4. Guide the students to staple the ribbon streamers to the waist of the angel (see diagram).
5. Then glue the ribbon waistband over the staples to hide the raw edges. Also glue the ends of the waistband to the back of the angel.
6. Allow students to draw the angel's facial features and hair with the markers.
7. Spark the students' interest as they complete the activity that in next week's lesson, they will learn about an angel who told others about the good news of the birth of Jesus. How can they tell others about the good news?

Activity 1:1

Baby Jesus

Look at baby Jesus' family. Write the names of each of the family members. Color in the picture.



Activity 1:3

God Has Important Jobs For Us

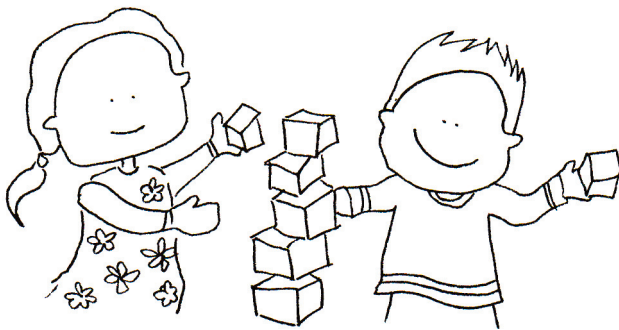
Look at the pictures. How is each person doing an important job for God?



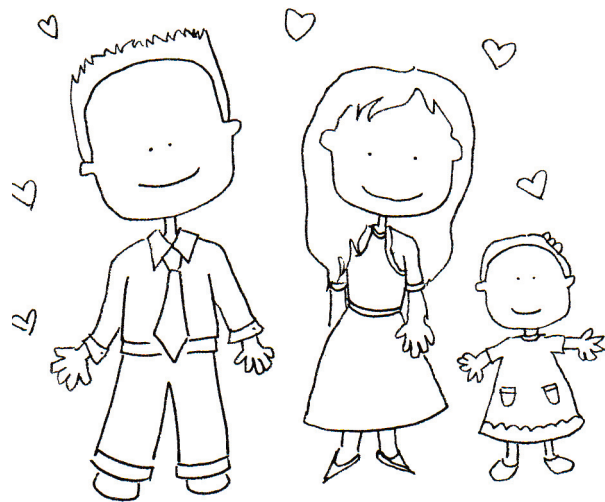
1. He is picking up the pen.



2. She is learning in class.



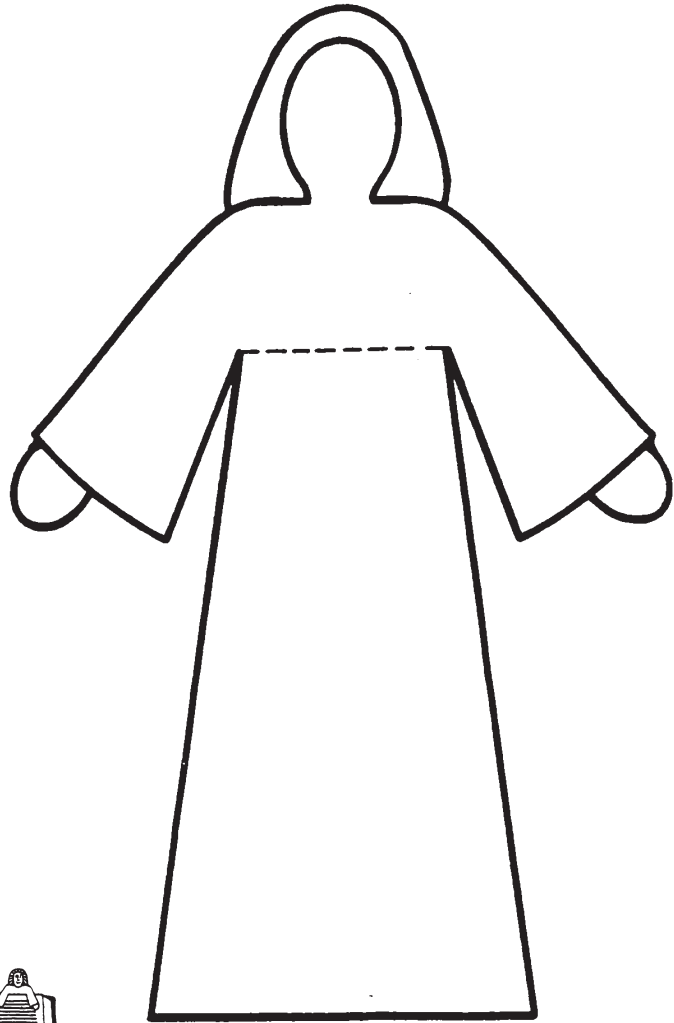
3. They are playing together.



4. She loves her family.

Optional Activity

Angel Pattern



Angel Pattern

