FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
WINTER HAVEN

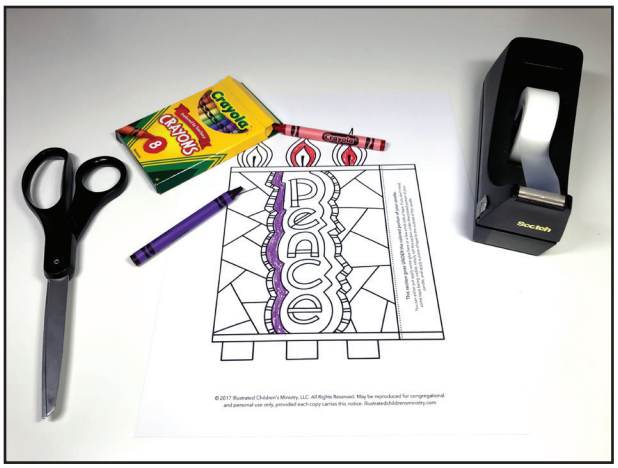
Advent Guide

2022

AN AT-HOME GUIDE FOR
WEEKLY ADVENT DEVOTION
EACH WEEK YOU'LL READ THE STORY,
COLOR A CANDLE OF THE ADVENT WREATH, PRAY
AND SPENT TIME TOGETHER.

TAKE HOME 1 PER FAMILY

Step 1



Step 2

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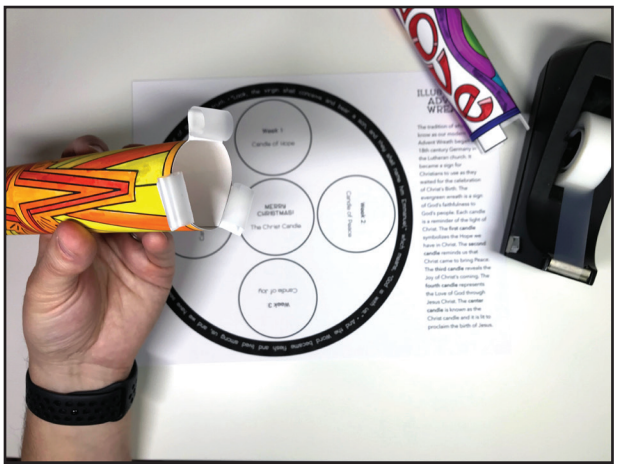
Step 3

Step 4



Step 5

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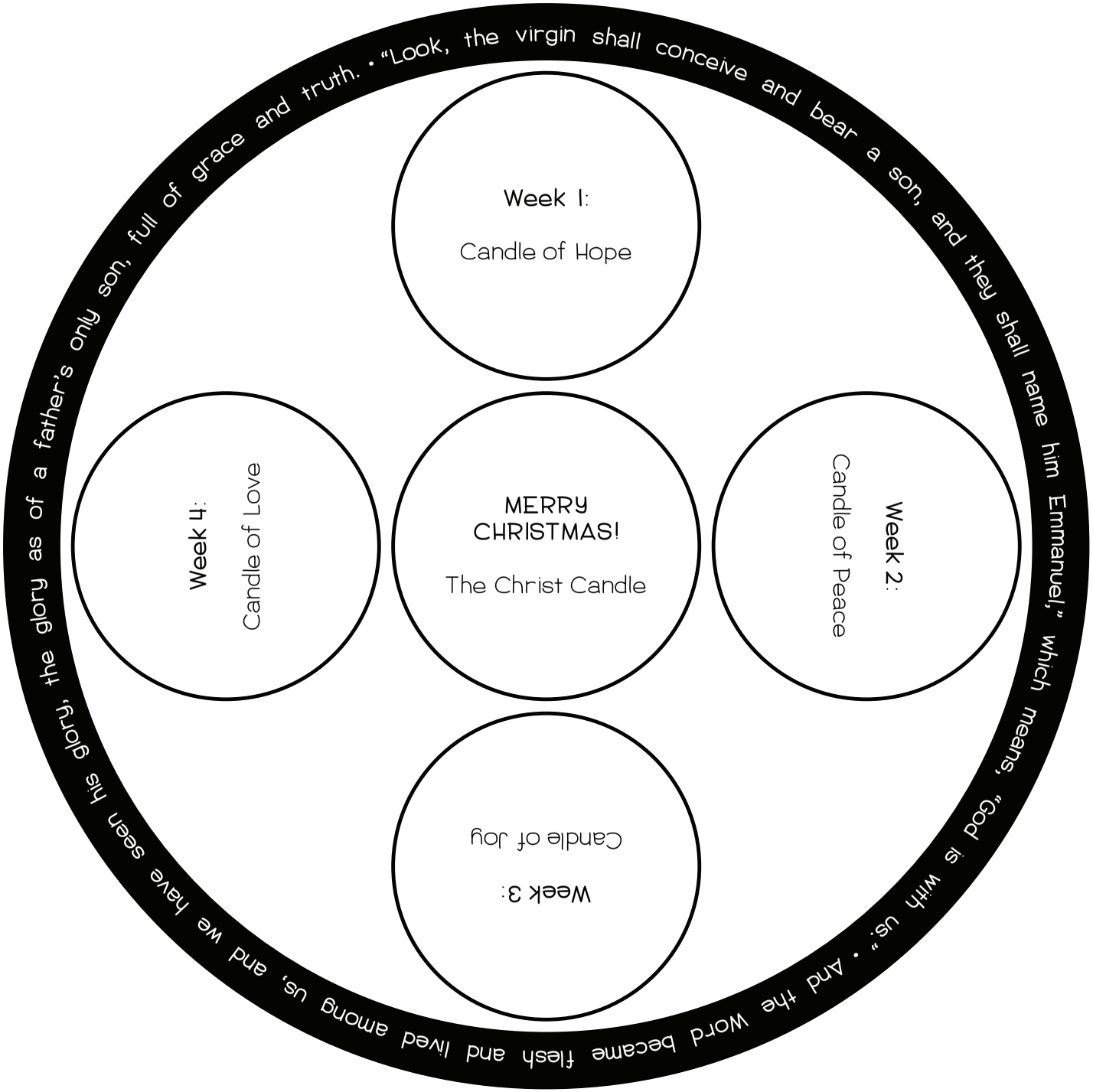

ILLUSTRATED ADVENT WREATH

The tradition of what we know as our modern Advent Wreath began in 18th century Germany in the Lutheran church. It became a sign for Christians to use as they waited for the celebration of Christ's Birth. The evergreen wreath is a sign of God's faithfulness to God's people. Each candle is a reminder of the light of Christ. The **first candle** symbolizes the Hope we have in Christ. The **second candle** reminds us that Christ came to bring Peace. The **third candle** reveals the Joy of Christ's coming. The **fourth candle** represents the Love of God through Jesus Christ. The **center candle** is known as the Christ candle and it is lit to proclaim the birth of Jesus.

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Week 1: Hope

Scripture

Jeremiah 23:5

Activity

Christmas Countdown

To help mark the days of Advent leading up to Christmas, use construction paper to make a paper chain to use as a countdown. Cut the construction paper into 29 1-inch-wide strips (one for each day of Advent). Then, loop a strip and staple together, creating a chain as you go. Display your chain somewhere you will see it often. Each day, remove a link from the chain and discuss together:

What was special about today?

How did you experience God today?

Share

One definition of hope is to trust in God's promises. What gives you hope? How do you share hope with others?

Advent Wreath

If you are using an Advent wreath, light or color the first candle.

Liturgy/Prayer

Let's take a moment and ask the God who still speaks to us to help us listen. This prayer is a call and response. I'll say a line, then we will all respond with "Lord, help me listen; Lord, help me pray."

Leader: God who still speaks, help me to hear your voice in the stories, poems, and prayers of the Bible.

All: Lord, help me listen; Lord, help me pray.

Leader: God who still speaks, help me hear your voice in the words of the prophets.

All: Lord, help me listen; Lord, help me pray.

Leader: God who still speaks, help me hear your voice in nature, creation, and in the majesty of all you designed.

All: Lord, help me listen; Lord, help me pray.

Leader: God who still speaks, help me hear your voice in music, art, and all the ways you've given us to express ourselves.

All: Lord, help me listen; Lord, help me pray.

Leader: God who still speaks, help me hear your voice in the words, faces, and presence of those who love me.

All: Lord, help me listen; Lord, help me pray.

All: Amen.

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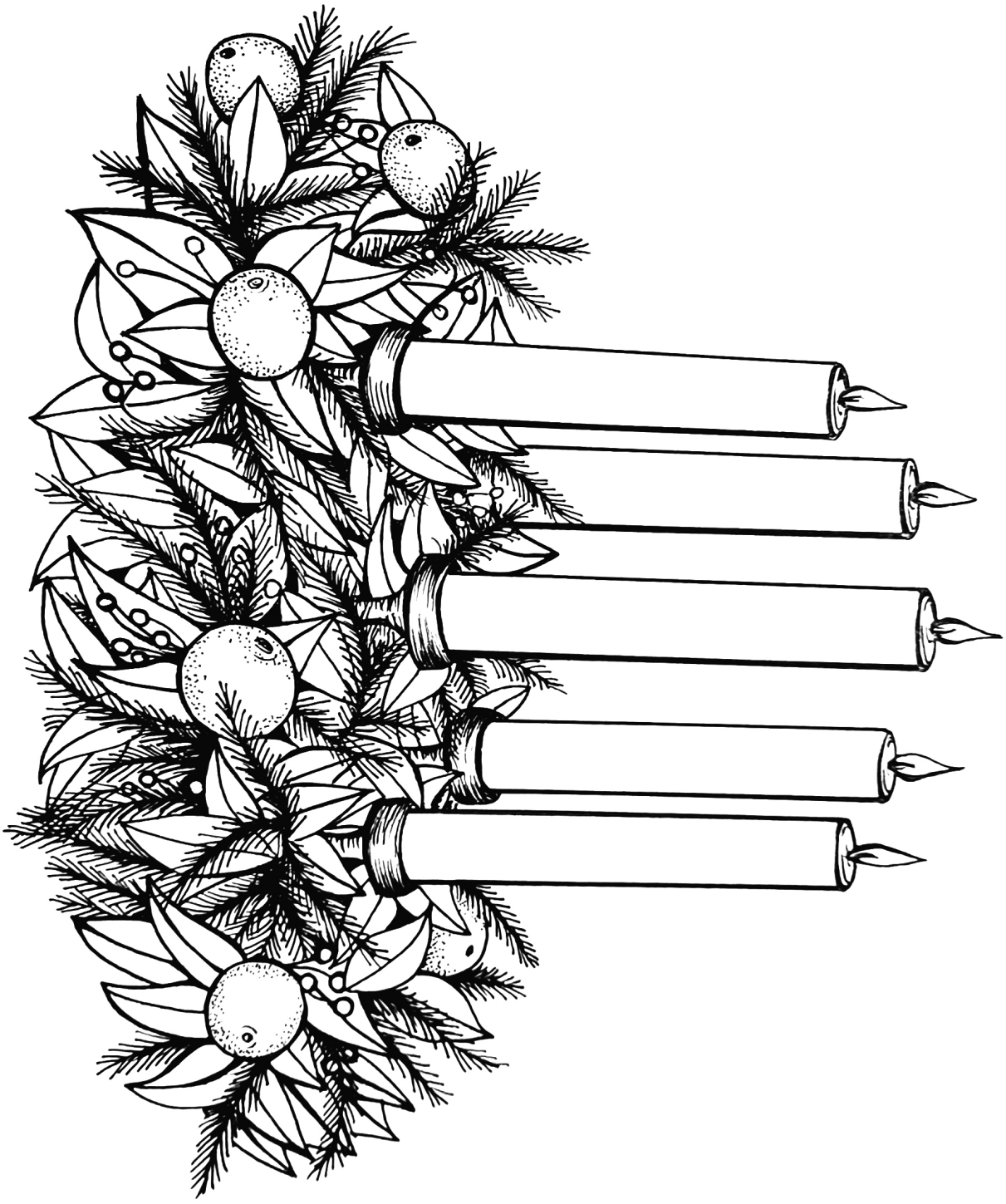
Week 1: Hope



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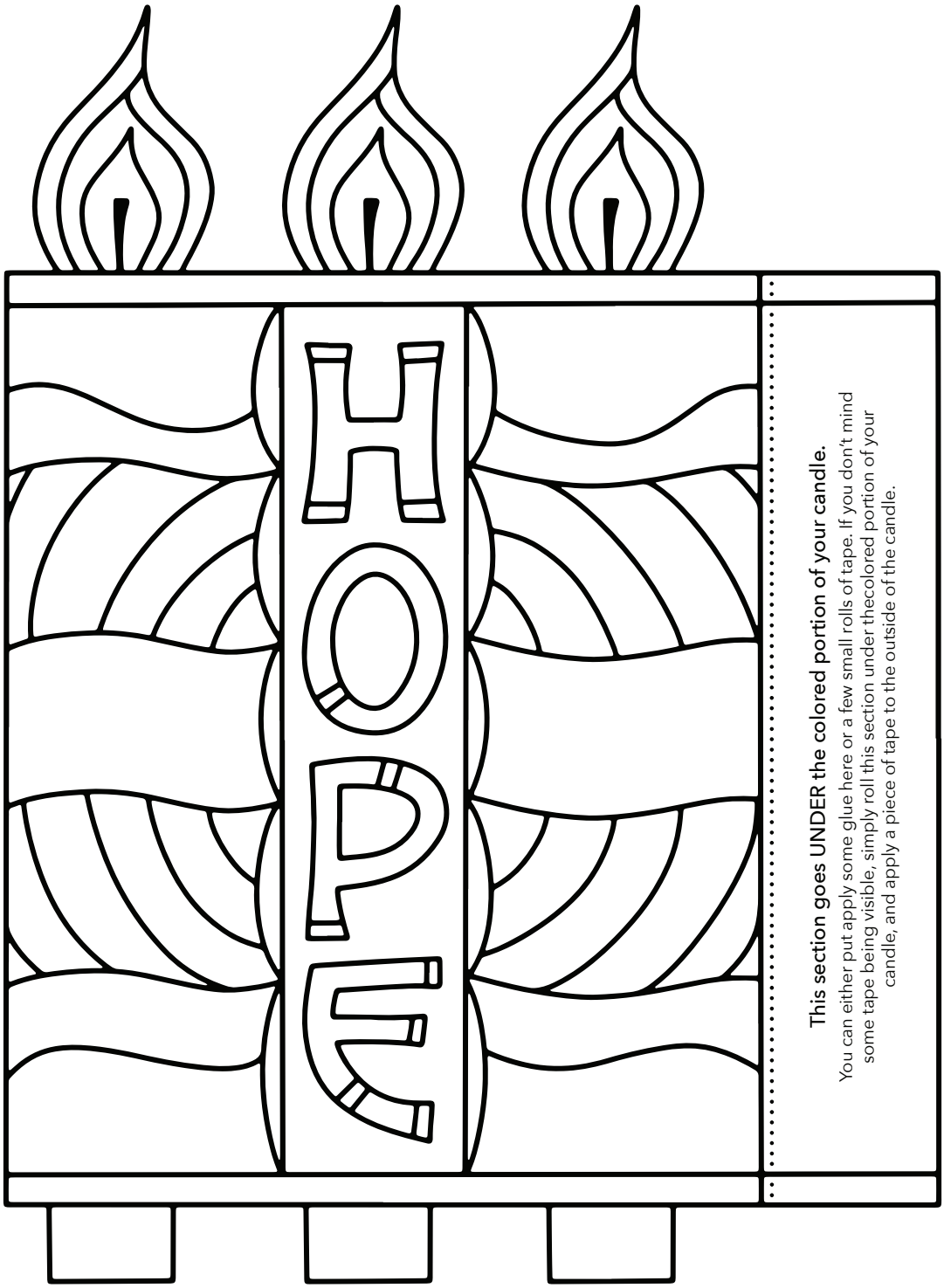
Art: Keeley Moore



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Week 2: Love

Scripture

Matthew 1:18-24

Activity

Names for Jesus

Work together to look through the Bible and find different names for Jesus. Look up Matthew 1:23, Isaiah 9:6, and John 11:25-27 and write down all the names for Jesus you find. Choose your favorite name for Jesus and use any arts or crafts supplies you have on hand to create a special ornament that represents that name. Hang the ornament on your Christmas tree to remind you of Jesus.

Share

Read "Joseph's Story" together. How did Joseph show love to Mary and Jesus? Have you ever felt like God was leading you to do something? Share about it.

Advent Wreath

If you are using an Advent wreath, light two candles or color the second candle.

Liturgy/Prayer

Repeat after me each line of this rhyming prayer:

Some of us are short. Some of us are tall.

Some of us perform ballet. Some of us play ball.

Some of us are young. Some of us are old.

Some of us like warm. Some prefer the cold.

Everyone is different, but one thing stays the same:

God loves every one of us and knows us all by name.

All of us can follow wherever God may lead,

And all of us can show God's love to those who are in need.

Amen.

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Week 2: Love

Joseph's Story

Hi, my name is Joseph. You may have heard of me. My wife, Mary, was the mother of God's Son. That made me Jesus' earthly father. But I'm getting ahead of myself. I want to tell you about something that happened before Jesus was born.

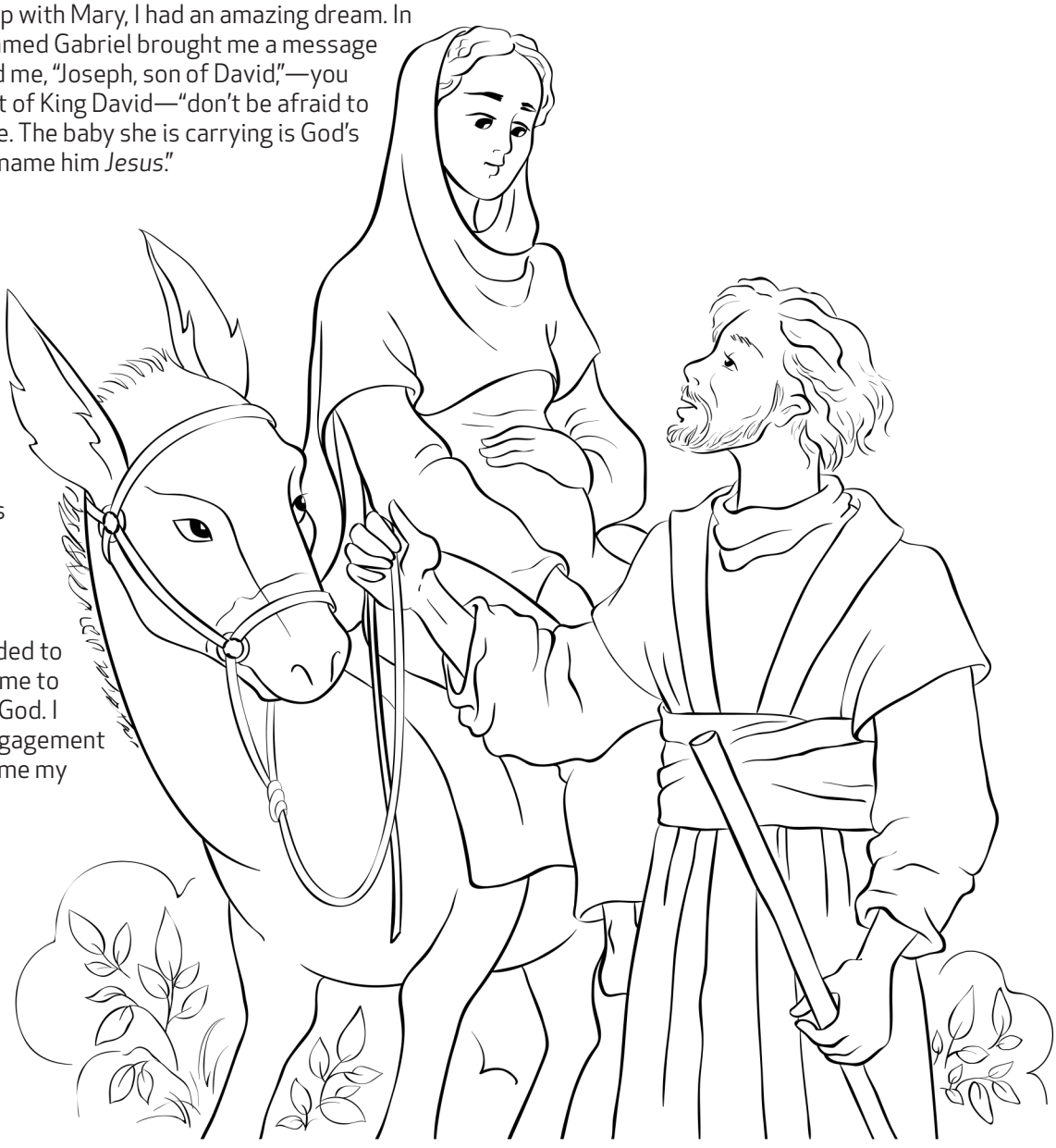
Mary and I were engaged, but we weren't married yet. Mary told me she was pregnant. I knew I wasn't the baby's father and since we were engaged, the law said I was allowed to make a big deal out of this and disgrace Mary publicly. That didn't seem right to me and I wanted to be kind to Mary, so I decided I would break off our engagement quietly.

Before I could break up with Mary, I had an amazing dream. In my dream, an angel named Gabriel brought me a message from God. Gabriel told me, "Joseph, son of David,"—you see, I am a descendant of King David—"don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife. The baby she is carrying is God's Son. When he is born, name him *Jesus*."

Long before Gabriel appeared to me in a dream, the prophet Isaiah had said a young woman would have a son and he would be named *Emmanuel* which means, "God with us." The birth of Mary's baby would fulfill this prophecy.

After I woke up, I decided to do what God had told me to do. After all, I trusted God. I didn't break off my engagement to Mary, and she became my wife.

(Based on Matthew 1:18-24.)



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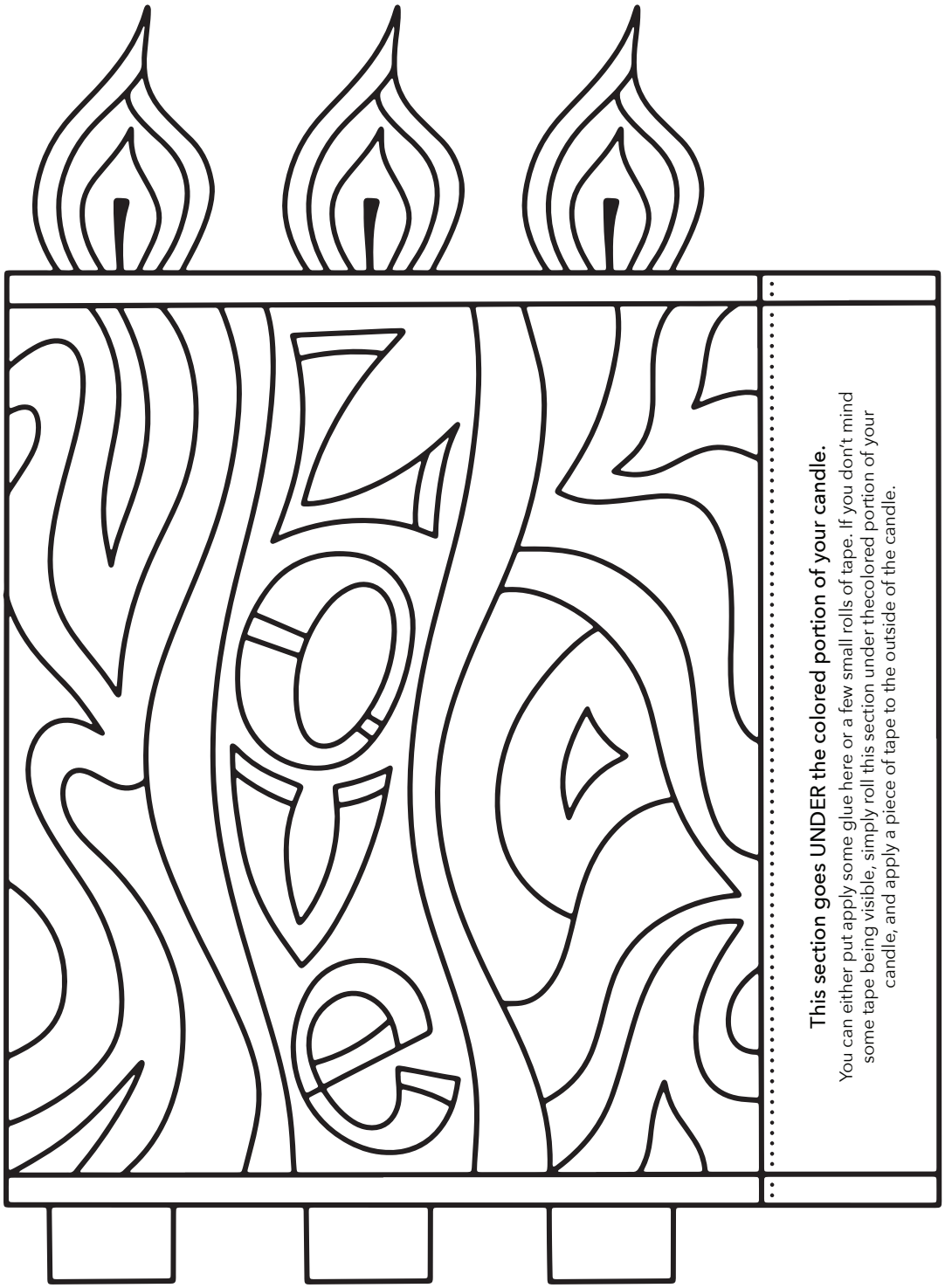

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Week 3: Joy

Scripture

Luke 1:26-38

Activity

Angel Cookies

Use a favorite cookie recipe, such as a sugar cookie or shortbread cookie recipe, and use an angel cookie cutter to shape the cookies as angels. Use icing and sprinkles to decorate your cookies. As you enjoy your "Angel Cookies," talk about how you have experienced joy this Advent season.

Share

Read "Mary's Story" together. What was the good news that the angel shared with Mary? What is the best news you have ever heard? How did it make you feel?

Advent Wreath

If you are using an Advent wreath, light three candles or color the third candle.

Liturgy/Prayer

Today, we are going to join in a litany that reminds us of the joy of Christmas. Your response will be, "Thank you, God, for the gift of Jesus!"

Leader: The angel Gabriel visited Mary and told her she was going to have a baby.

Children: Thank you, God, for the gift of Jesus!

Leader: Mary visited her relative, Elizabeth, who was also pregnant. Elizabeth's baby jumped for joy at the sound of Mary's voice.

Children: Thank you, God, for the gift of Jesus!

Leader: Joseph and Mary traveled to Bethlehem to enroll in the tax lists.

Children: Thank you, God, for the gift of Jesus!

Leader: Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and Mary laid him in a manger because there was no room for them in the guestroom.

Children: Thank you, God, for the gift of Jesus!

Leader: The angels told the shepherds of Jesus' birth, and the shepherds hurried to Bethlehem to find the baby Jesus.

Children: Thank you, God, for the gift of Jesus!

Leader: Amen.

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Week 3: Joy

Mary's Story

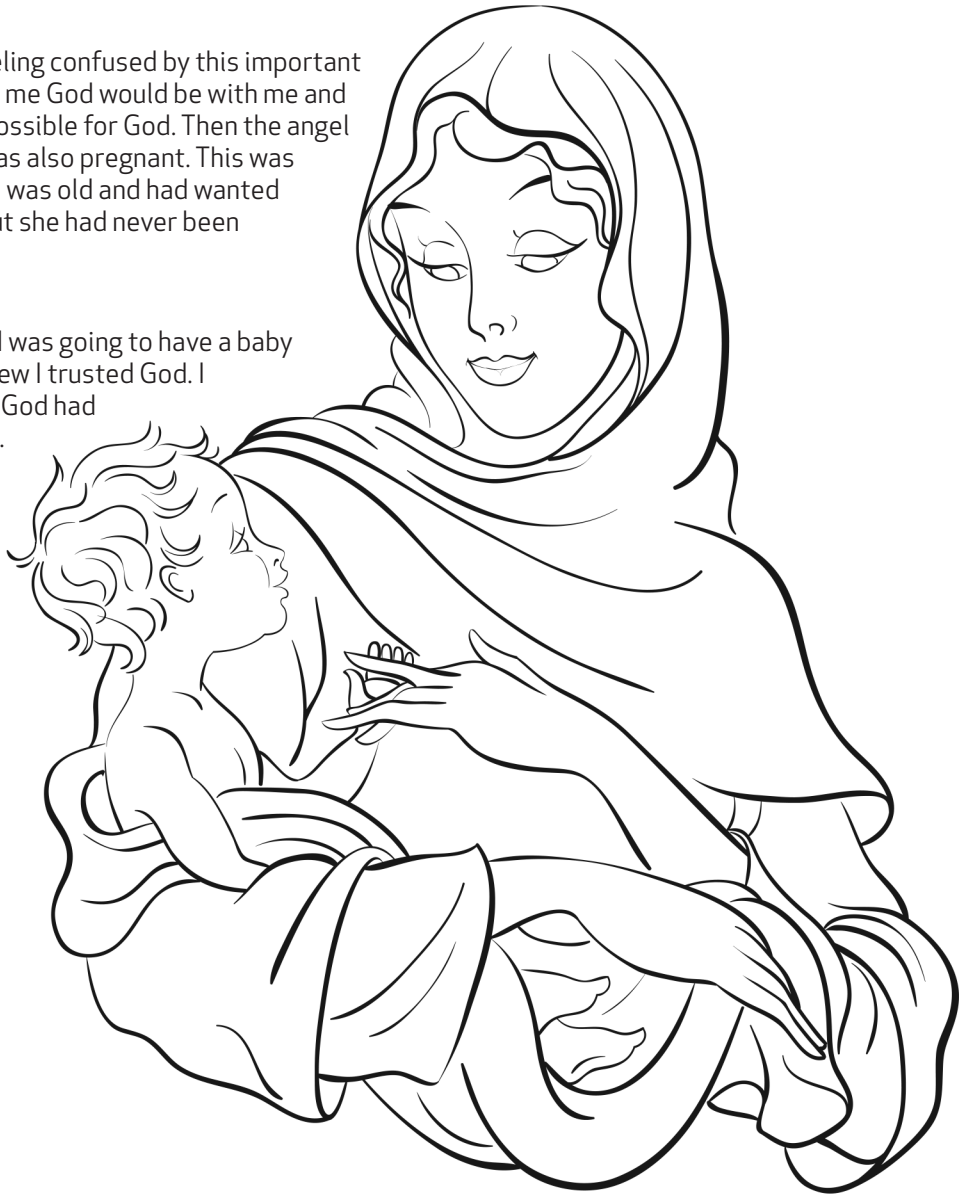
My name is Mary. You have probably heard of me, and I'm sure you've heard of my son, Jesus. Today I want to tell you about the time I found out I was going to be Jesus' mother. I was engaged to Joseph, but we weren't married yet. I was still living in my father's house in Nazareth. One day an angel visited me. Can you believe that? I wasn't sure what an angel would want with me.

The angel told me his name was Gabriel. I must have looked as frightened as I felt when he appeared because his first words to me were, "Don't be afraid, Mary. God is honoring you." Then Gabriel told me I was going to have a baby. A baby? I was sure I had heard incorrectly. But Gabriel said the baby was going to be God's Son, and I was to name him Jesus. Gabriel told me he would grow up to do many great things.

As you can imagine, I was still feeling confused by this important and surprising news. Gabriel told me God would be with me and reminded me that nothing is impossible for God. Then the angel told me my relative, Elizabeth, was also pregnant. This was amazing news because Elizabeth was old and had wanted to have a child for many years, but she had never been pregnant.

What could I say? The news that I was going to have a baby was not what I expected, but I knew I trusted God. I told Gabriel I would do whatever God had planned for me. Then Gabriel left.

(Based on Luke 1:26-38, 46-47.)



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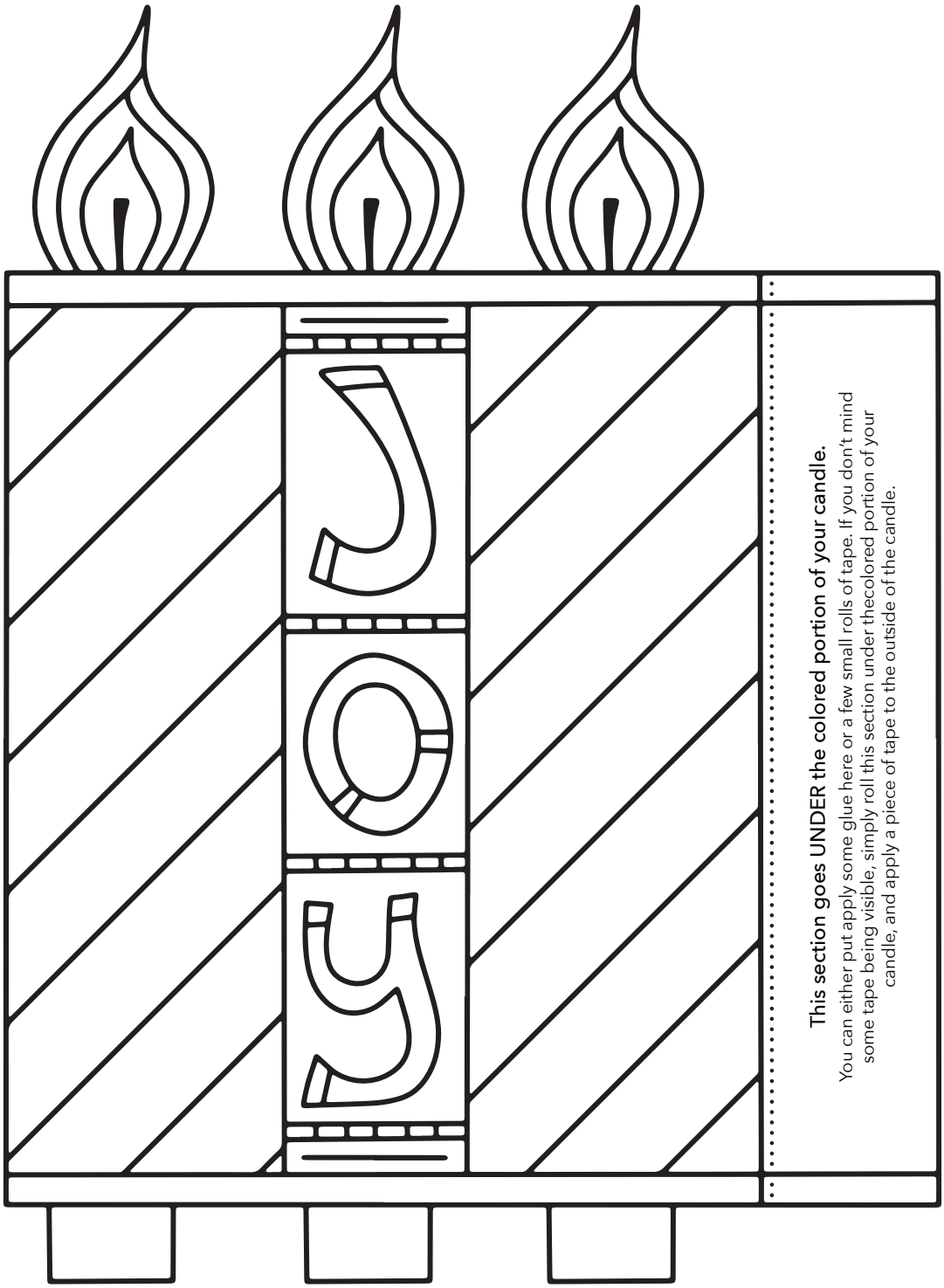

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Week 4: Peace

Scripture

Luke 2:1-7

Activity

Christmas Cards

The wonder of the Christmas story is something to share! Use construction paper, markers, stickers, wrapping paper scraps, and other art supplies to create Christmas cards for your friends and neighbors. Consider using Bible verses from Luke 2 or lyrics from your favorite Christmas hymn as the message in your cards.

Share

Read "Jesus' Story" together, then listen to your favorite version of "Silent Night." What do you feel when you hear the night of Jesus' birth described? What do you think it would have been like to have been there the night that Jesus was born?

Advent Wreath

If you are using an Advent wreath, light four candles or color the fourth candle.

Liturgy/Prayer

Let's take a moment and spend time with the God who calls us to bring peace. For this prayer, we are going to pray for people in our world to find ways to work together. I'll say a sentence, then we all will respond with "Lord, hear our prayer."

Leader: God who calls us all to work together, we pray for ourselves and ask that you help us remember that working together honors you and all your creation, including us.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: God who calls us to strive for the things that bring peace, we pray for the leaders in our world so they can make working together for the good of all your children their top reason for leading.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: God who calls us to strive for the things that build each other up, we pray for the parents and caregivers in our lives so they will work together with each other and us to build up good in our lives.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: God who calls us to be in community, we pray for the leaders in our faith to work together to always point us to the things that bring peace and the things that build each other up.

All: Lord, hear our prayer. Amen!

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Week 4: Peace

Jesus' Story

Hi! My name is Jesus. You've probably heard of me. I'm God's Son. I could tell you many stories about the things I did during my time on earth, but today I want to tell you about the day I was born.

My mother, Mary, lived in Nazareth. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, who also lived in Nazareth. At that time, Caesar Augustus was the emperor and he decided everyone in the empire needed to be enrolled in the tax lists. Caesar said everyone had to travel to the city their family was from in order to sign up. This meant Joseph had to travel to Bethlehem, also known as David's city, because he was a descendant of King David. Since they were engaged, Mary went with Joseph to Bethlehem even though she was pregnant.

When Mary and Joseph got to Bethlehem, there were many other people there too. People had traveled from all over to register for the tax lists. Because Bethlehem was crowded, there was no place for Joseph and Mary in the guestroom. While they were in Bethlehem, Mary gave birth to me! She wrapped me up snugly and laid me in a manger. That's right—even though I'm God's Son, my first bed was an animal's feed box.

(Based on Luke 2:1-7.)

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Art: Shutterstock

This section goes UNDER the colored portion of your candle.

You can either put apply some glue here or a few small rolls of tape. If you don't mind some tape being visible, simply roll this section under thecolored portion of your candle, and apply a piece of tape to the outside of the candle.

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Christmas

Scripture

Luke 2:8-20

Activity

Shepherds' Staff Breadsticks

Using refrigerated breadstick dough or pizza dough, have children shape the dough into a shape resembling a shepherd's staff. Place the dough on a baking sheet. If desired, brush the breadsticks with melted butter and add your favorite seasonings. Bake the breadsticks according to the package directions. Enjoy your breadsticks as a special snack or have them alongside a Christmas meal. Share the breadsticks with one another to remind you that the good news of Jesus is meant to be shared!

Share

Read "Shepherds' Story" together, taking turns reading the story or assigning parts. You may also choose to have children act out the Christmas story. Why do you think the shepherds were the first ones to hear about the baby Jesus? What would you have done if you had been the first person to hear about Jesus?

Advent Wreath

If you are using an Advent wreath, light all four candles plus the Christ candle, or color the center Christ candle.

Liturgy/Prayer

For this session's prayer and worship time, let's use our imaginations and our senses to experience the different parts of this story of grace in our minds. Close your eyes and try to imagine each scene as I read these prompts. Consider what you see, what you hear, what you smell, what you feel, and maybe even what you taste. Notice how God's grace shows up in these scenes.

- The shepherds guarding their sheep in the fields.
- The Lord's angel telling the shepherds, "Don't be afraid!"
- The great assembly praising God.
- The shepherds finding Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus.
- The shepherds telling everyone about Jesus and the people being amazed
- Mary thinking about and remembering everything that was happening.
- The shepherds returning home, praising God.

God of grace and God of glory, thank you for this amazing story of hope, love, joy, and peace. As we move beyond the time of Advent, give us the grace to be people who do the things that bring peace and build each other up. Amen.

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Christmas

Shepherds' Story

Narrator: After Jesus was born in Bethlehem, there were shepherds in a field nearby who were watching their sheep at night. Suddenly, there was a bright light and an angel stood before them. The shepherds were terrified!

Angel: Don't be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people. Your Savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord. This is a sign for you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly and lying in a manger.

Narrator: Suddenly, a great assembly of angels was present and they were praising God, saying, "Glory to God in heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors."

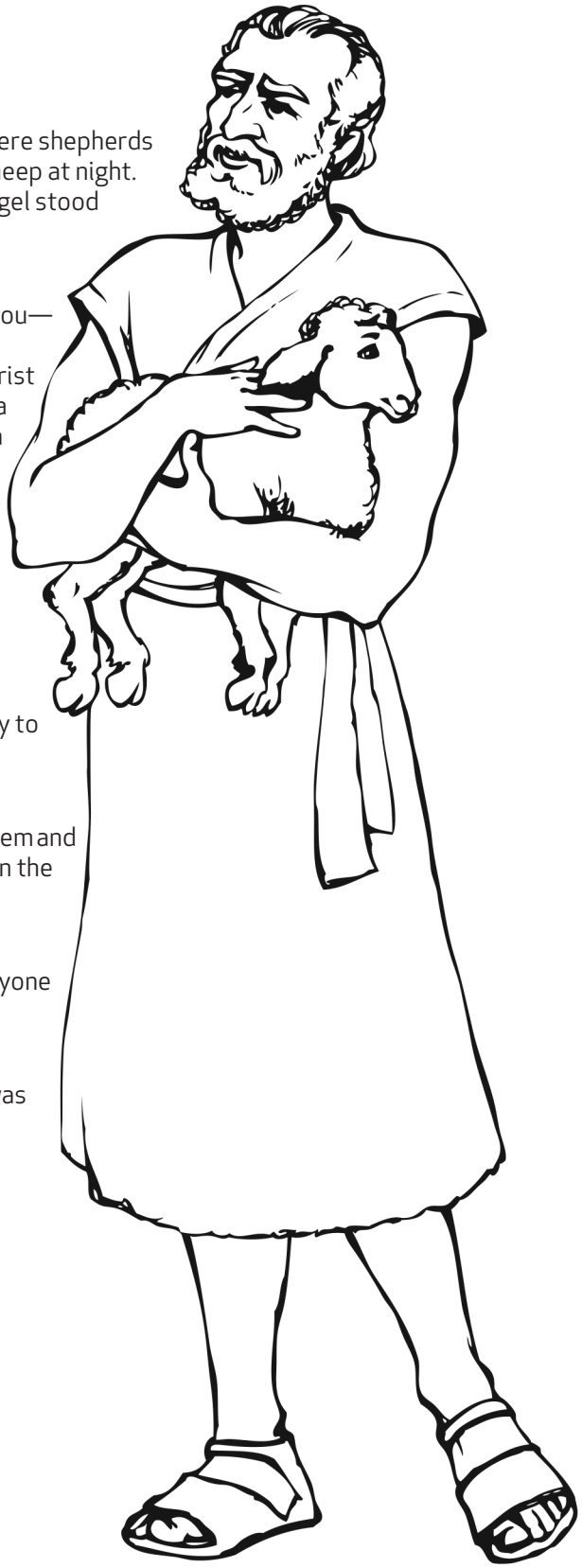
Shepherd 1: I know we had to go to Bethlehem right away to confirm what the Lord had revealed to us.

Narrator: The shepherds immediately went to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger.

Shepherd 2: When we left Mary and Joseph, we told everyone we saw about their baby! It was wonderful!

Narrator: Everyone who heard the shepherds' story was amazed. The shepherds returned home, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen.

(Based on Luke 2:8-20.)



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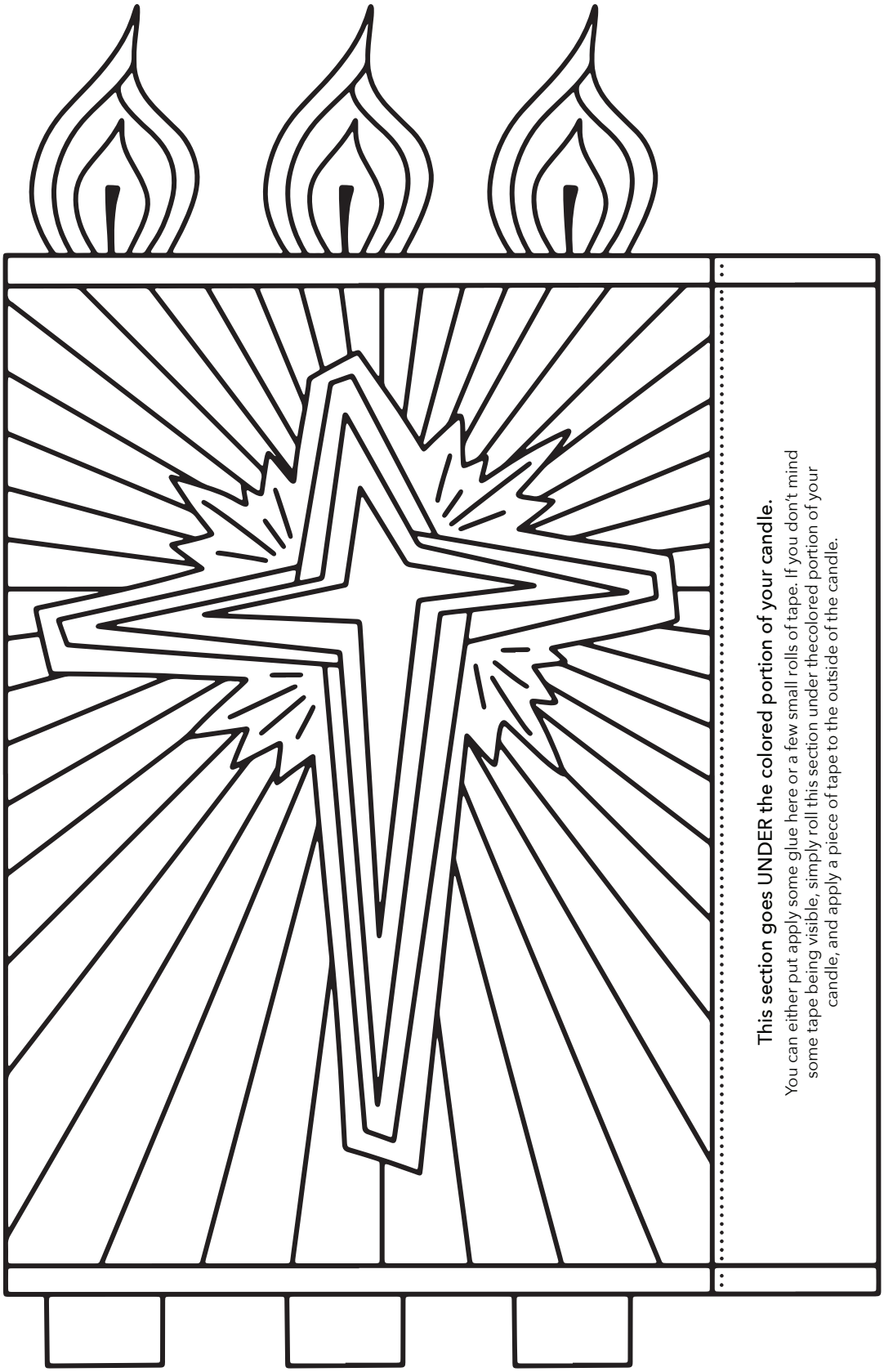
Art: Deep Blue Digital LGSG Bundle Winter 2- 17



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