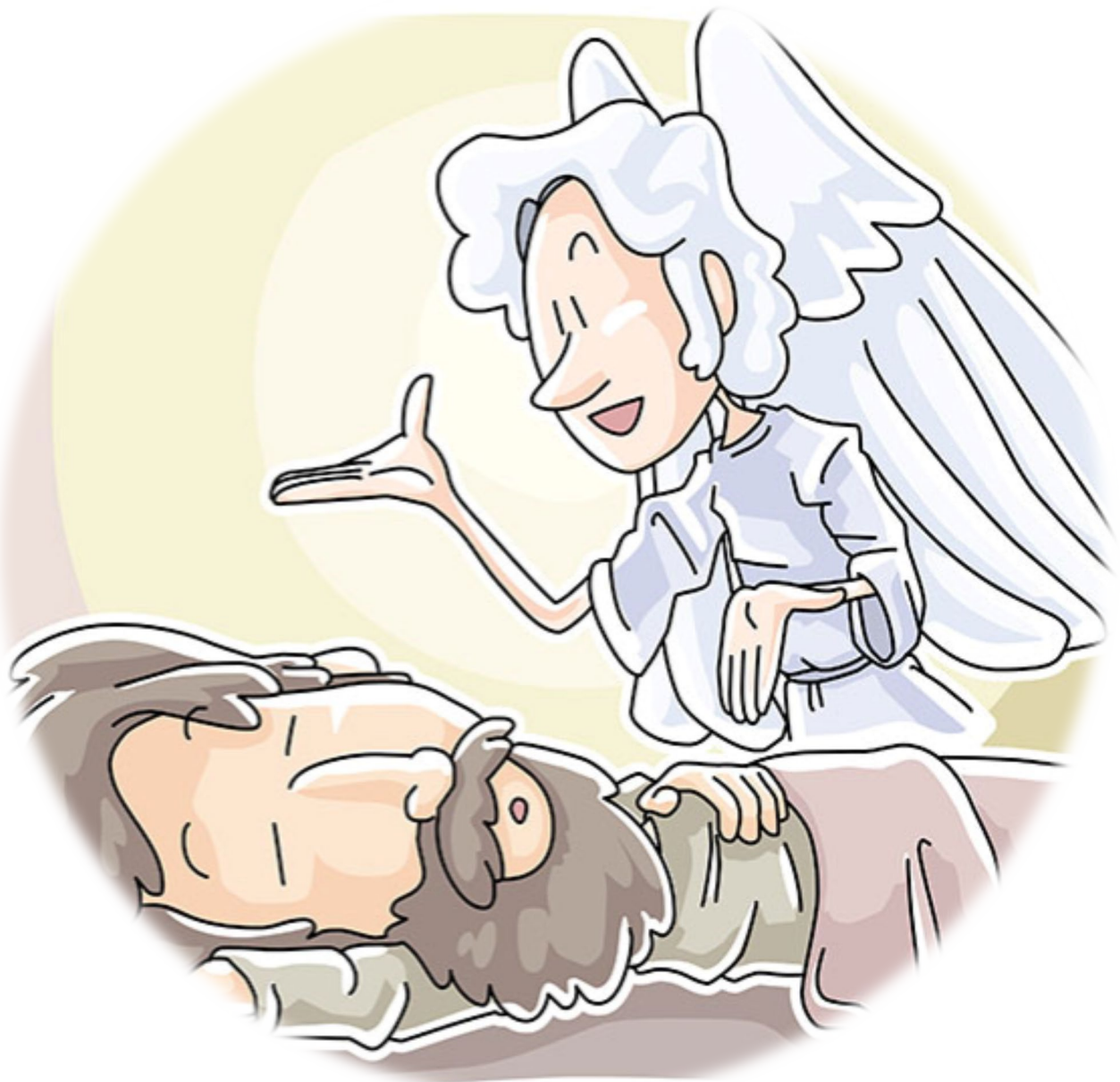


“Angels Announce the Good News about Jesus Birth”

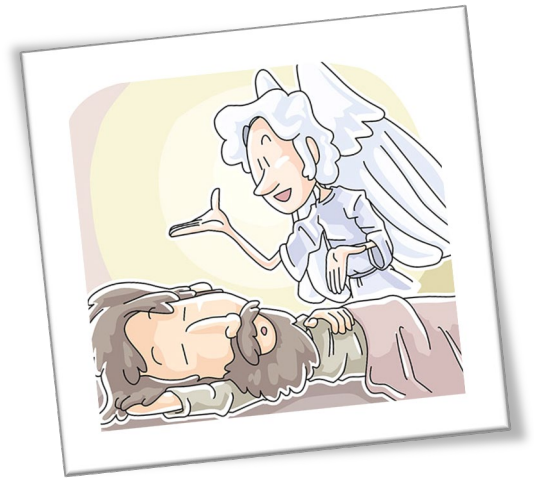
Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 1:26-33; 2:8-14 KJV

Bible Lesson & Activities for Children



THE SUNDAY SCHOOL STORE

Angels Announce the Good News of Jesus about Jesus Birth



What are angels, and what do they have to do with us? This lesson reviews how God sent angels to announce the birth of Christ. When Mary and Joseph (and the shepherds) encountered these holy messengers, they were surprised, but trusted what they were told. Their lives were changed in unexpected ways, but God's plans for them were wonderful! The angels we see in the Bible are quite different from our usual idea of what angels "should" be like, just as God's blueprints for our lives are often different from what we'd plan or expect. Fortunately, we can know that God is trustworthy, and will bless us when we hope in Him!

We often think that we are in control of our own lives, or we hope that somehow, we can manage things. God reminds us that His ways and plans are bigger and better than ours, and that is a blessing! We know we can trust in His Word and promises, because He sent Jesus to be our savior, and He transforms our lives in great ways!

Passage: Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 1:26-33; 2:8-14

Target Audience: Kindergarten-6th grade

Materials Needed: Construction paper, markers, stickers, scissors, tape/glue, popsicle sticks, paper plates, paper bags, coffee filters, paper towel tubes, string, pipe cleaners, decorations (all optional, depending which activities you choose to use). Object lesson props can include pictures or representations of angels (ornaments, paintings, etc.), of various types.

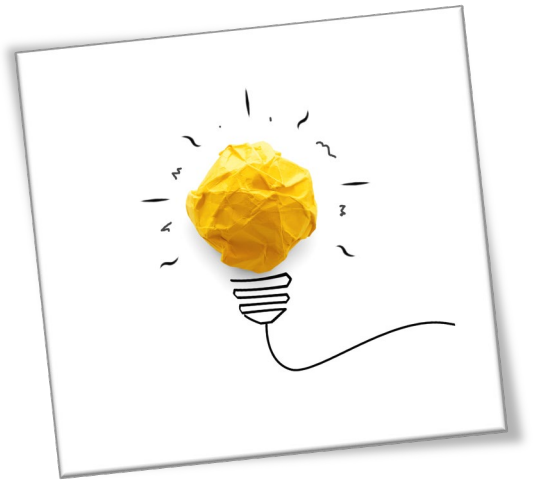
More Resources Online

- Watch the [video demonstration of the object lesson](#)
- Watch the [video example for the craft projects](#)
- Watch the [video Bible story "God's Story: Jesus is Born"](#) from *Crossroads Kids Club*
- Watch the [video Bible Story "The Story of Christmas"](#) from *Saddleback Kids*
- For more free Bible illustrations, visit [Christian Clip Arts](#) and [Ministry-To-Children's Coloring Pages](#)

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Object Lesson (5 minutes)



Greet children, and discuss the topic of angels...

Hello, children of God! Have you ever heard anything about angels? What do you picture when you think of an angel? We hear about them in the Bible and stories, and maybe you've seen pictures of angels. *As you describe features of angels, hold up several pictures, ornaments, or figures representing angels.* Sometimes we think of them with fancy wings, or white robes, or halos, maybe with trumpets or songs. We expect them to be beautiful, sweet beings, and a lot of times we might picture them as sort of feminine (girly). But what, or who, are angels, anyway?

Angels probably appeared quite different from what you'd expect. In fact, most of the time when angels appear to people in the Bible, the first thing they say is "fear not!" Well, if they had to tell people not to be afraid, it might follow that angels were a little bit scary looking. We do have a few descriptions of the way they might have looked, and they do involve wings, but also other interesting things like a whole bunch of eyes or blazing swords. Angels were God's messengers, sent to tell people things that were usually quite life changing. When an angel showed up, there was often some incredible news along with it. Angels might not have appeared like we expect, and when they appeared it was unexpected and surprising!

There are several times that we see angels show up in the story of Christ's birth. In every episode, the angels had important things to tell people, which wound up changing their lives. First, an angel appeared to Mary to tell her that she was going to give birth to the Savior of the world. That was certainly unexpected and completely changed what Mary

thought her life plans were. But she trusted God and believed what the angel promised. It was not easy, but she was blessed to be the mother of the Messiah. Another angel went to Joseph and told him in a dream what was going to happen. And Joseph believed, too. This changed his plans for how his life was going to look but allowed him to be part of God's plan.

See, our lives don't usually follow the ideas and expectations we might have. This is a good thing, because God's design is much better than ours. We don't always understand what He is doing. And we probably won't get to experience special angel messengers giving us specific words from the Lord. But we can trust in Him. The unexpected or uncertain can feel frightening to us, but God is with us! Not only does He have amazing plans, but He stays by us through all His work. He will never leave us, and we know that He has great things in mind for our lives, when we stay close to Him. Just like angels might not look or act like we have in our minds, our stories might not be as simple as we expect. But that's part of the adventure! When we encounter God, things change for the better, and wonderful things lie ahead. Let's say a prayer to thank God for His unexpected and marvelous plans:

Prayer:

(Have kids repeat each line)

Dear God,

Thank you for being with us always

And letting us be part of your plan

Help us to trust in you

Even when we aren't sure what comes next

Thank you for your love

We love you, God!

In Jesus name, Amen!

Game & Activities Suggestions (10 minutes)



This lesson helps us remember the anticipation and the joy of knowing that God's promises are fulfilled in Jesus.

He is our Messiah, and He proved all prophecies with His

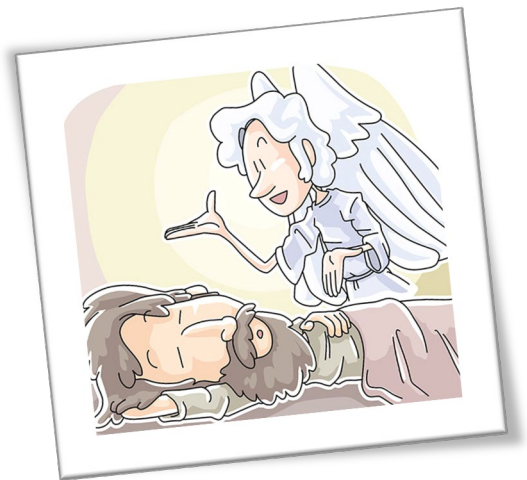
life, death, and resurrection. To get started, select from one of the following openers, or select another of your own choosing!

- Good News telephone: angels are God's messengers. Play a game of telephone or Pictionary (or a mash-up of both!) to celebrate sending and sharing messages with others.
- What are angels like? Invite students to describe or draw how they think angels look. Then compare those ideas and images with descriptions the Bible provides. Challenge students to draw a picture that matches a more Biblical specification (for example, Isaiah 6).
- Surprise! Often in the Bible, angels appeared unexpectedly, and usually caused a certain amount of alarm. Allow one or two students at a time to sit or stand in the center of the group, with others surrounding them. Invite the students in the center to wait patiently and devise methods for startling or surprising the rest of the children (in a safe manner, of course!).
- Make a joyful noise! The angels who announced the birth of Christ to the shepherds burst into song. Use noisemakers and instruments to cheer for Jesus and celebrate God's blessings.

Explain that today's lesson is about angels! Angels in the Bible brought important messages to people, as if God Himself was speaking. We see angels of God appear in various stories, but there are several who show up in the story of Christmas.

Ask: What do you think angels are like? Can you think of some stories in the Bible that involve angels?

Main Bible Teaching (15 minutes)



This lesson uses three episodes of angel appearances.

These could all be easily acted out with some guiding direction and narration. You could also take turns

reading or read the verses out loud and pause for explanatory notes. Choose whichever order of passages seems best to you.

Matthew 1:18-19 KJV Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. (19) Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.

With younger students, it may be better to avoid excessive discussion of the pregnancy element, as it could lead to awkward “why is this strange?” confusion. Sometimes it is best to merely mention that having a baby necessitates marriage and leave it at that...

However you choose to address that specific component, discuss how Joseph was a little nervous about getting married to Mary. He thought it might be best to end things and move on, but God had other plans!

Ask: Have you ever been disappointed? Did it seem like God had left you somehow?

Matthew 1:20-25 KJV But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. (21) And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. (22) Now all this was done, that it might

be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, (23) Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. (24) Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: (25) And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

Explain that an angel came to bring Joseph good news. Joseph was worried, but God sent this angel to give him an encouraging and wonderful message: his fiancée was going to have the most amazing and important baby ever born! This surely altered the trajectory of how Joseph might have thought his life would go. Now it would be even better! Joseph was reassured and believed the message of the angels.

Discuss how sometimes God has plans that are different from ours but are much better!

Ask: Have you ever had a plan that changed significantly? Did things seem better for the change?

Continue with a look at how Mary was visited by an angel also...

Luke 1:26-29 KJV And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, (27) To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. (28) And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. (29) And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

Take note of Mary's reaction... Even after the angel promised that the Lord was with her, she was "greatly troubled", wondering what was going on. It makes sense, after all.

Ask: Do you like surprises? How do you feel when something catches you off guard?

Fortunately, the angel gave her reassurance.

Luke 1:30-33 KJV And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. (31) And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. (32) He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: (33) And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

This was quite a promise! Gabriel told Mary that her son would be a king, the Son of the Most High God! He would reign not just for a lifetime, but forever.

Explain that Mary believed what was told to her and rejoiced because of it. It might seem strange to think of suddenly being told such a thing, but God had picked and planned out Mary from the start and knew she would be His servant.

If time and desire allow, mention one more angel episode, describing the angels who came to the shepherds the night of Christ's birth:

Luke 2:8-14 KJV And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. (9) And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. (10) And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. (11) For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. (12) And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. (13) And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly

host praising God, and saying, (14) Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

Ask: What do you do when you get good news? How do you share with others?

Explain how wonderful this was. The angels were sent to tell shepherds that Jesus was born. They gave this message to smelly, unpopular sheep-sitters. The shepherds were not considered too important, but they were some of the first to hear about the birth of the Messiah. They were scared at first, but the angels assured them of great things to look to! Just as the angels and shepherds shared good news, we can tell others of God's great works, too! We trust Him to provide for us, and pass on His good news to others, too.

Pray: Say a prayer thanking God for loving us and having great plans for us. Ask for His help in trusting Him and living in His presence.

Craft Activities (15 minutes)

Angels are remarkable to consider and are an integral part of the Nativity narrative. God's messengers might not have been as "white and fluffy" as we typically imagine them, but whatever they looked like, they spread hope and good news of blessing to Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds. Celebrate the Christmas story with a couple of fun angel crafts. An "angel in a pail" uses creative supplies on hand to put together an unusual angel. An "Angel from the Heart" features heart-shaped papers to create a Heavenly messenger.

Verses or Captions to Consider... Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 1:26-33; 2:8-14.

- *The angels proclaimed God's good news!*
- *The angel Gabriel from Heaven came...*
- *God sent angels as messengers.*

Craft one: "Angel in a Pail"

You will need:

- Paper plates
- Scissors
- Markers and/or crayons
- Construction paper or cardstock
- Glue, tape, or stapler
- Paper or Styrofoam cups or small pails
- Extra decorations as desired



Procedure:

1. Decorate a cup or small pail to represent the body of the "angel", with eyes, verses, captions, or other appropriate elements.
2. Cut plates or coffee filters/cupcake liners to resemble wings, and attach to pail or cup.
3. If desired, attach pipe cleaners for a halo element or way to hang.
4. Use the decoration as a prayer request bank or to recall the promises of angels.

Craft Two: "Angel from the Heart"

You will need:

- Markers/crayons
- Construction paper or card stock
- Decorations (stickers, glitter, etc.)
- Scissors
- Coffee filters or cupcake liners
- Pipe cleaners or string
- Tape or glue



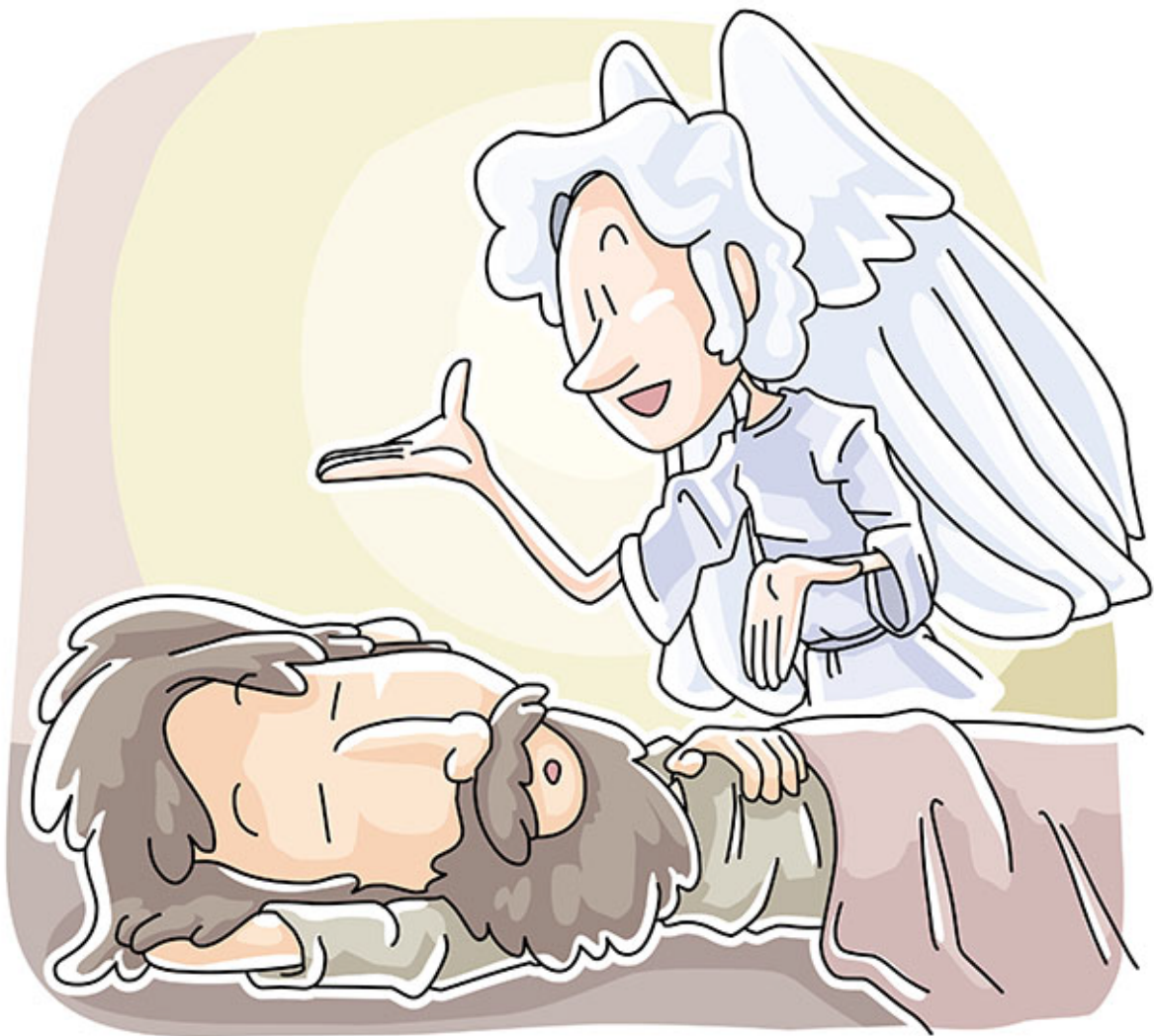
Procedure:

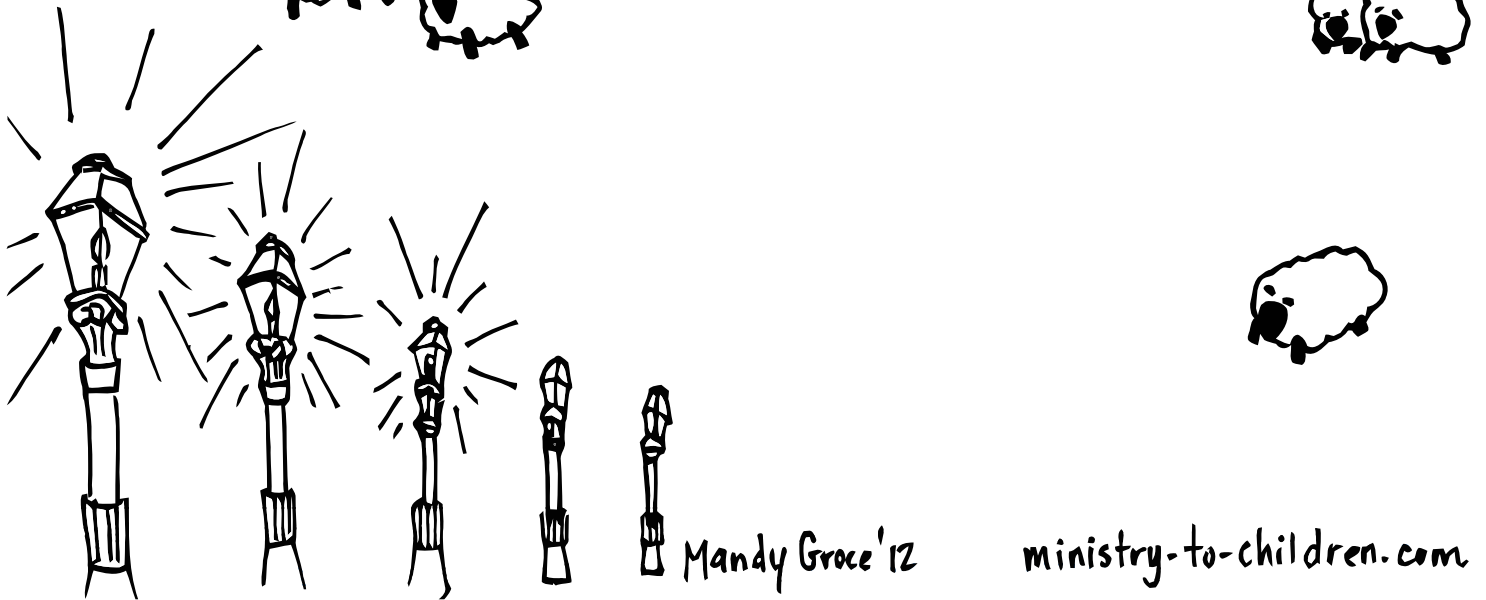
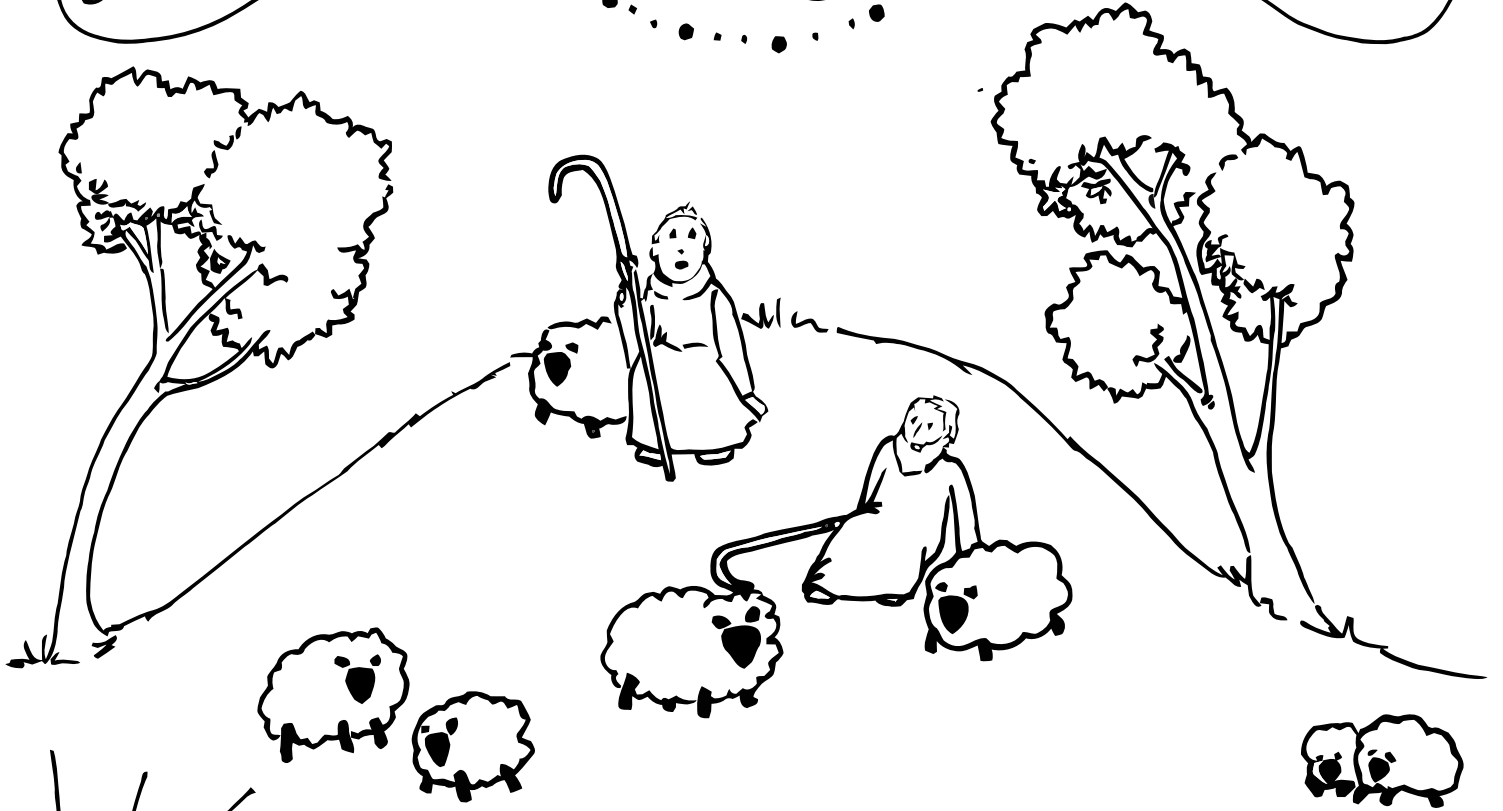
1. Cut out a few hearts from construction paper or cardstock.
2. Arrange the hearts into "body" and "head" shapes for the angel.
3. Add verses or captions.
4. Add coffee filters or cupcake liners as "wings", and extra decorative elements as wished.
5. Add string for a hanging attachment, as desired, to consider the messengers God sent.



Matthew 1:20-21 KJV

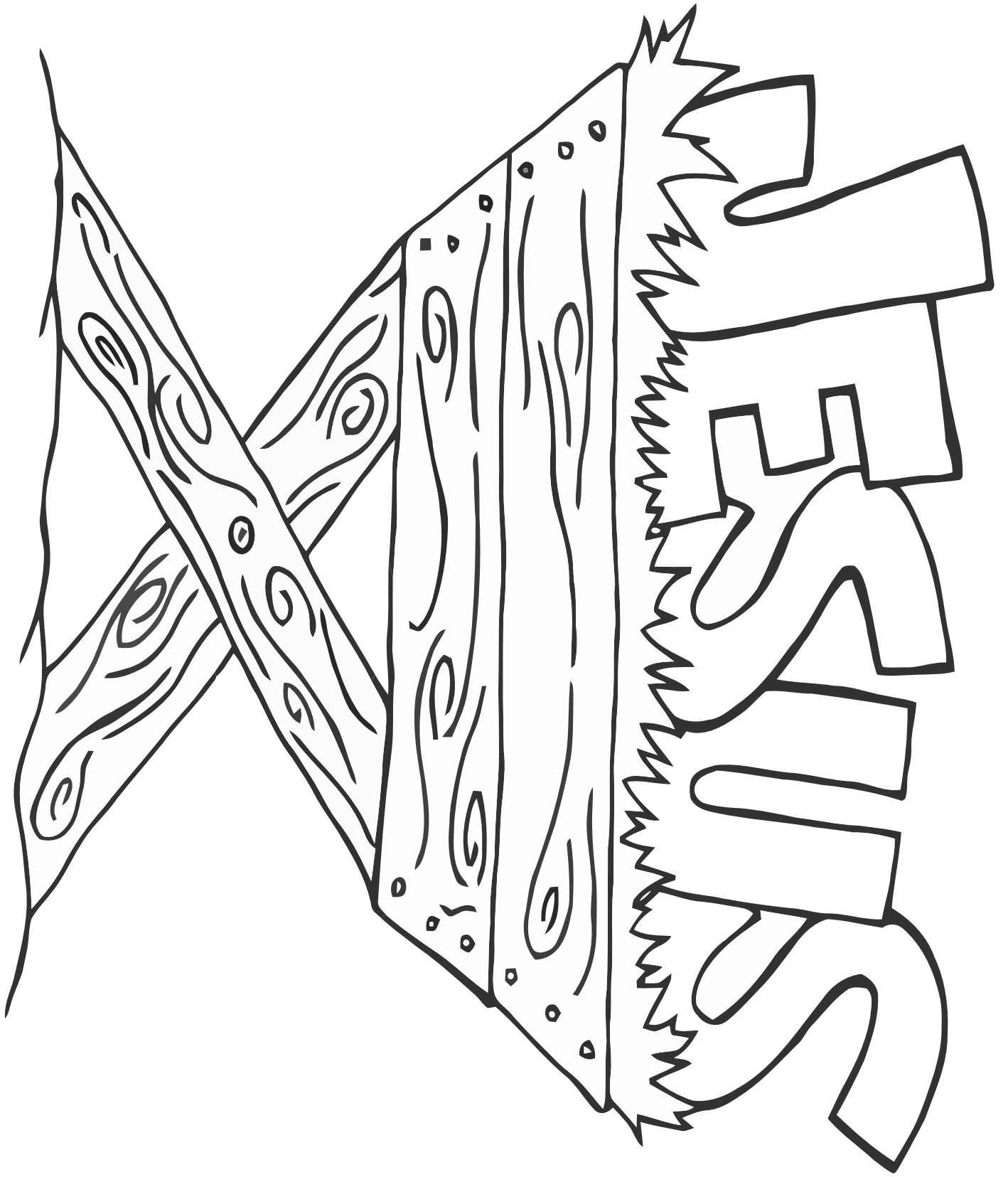
But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.





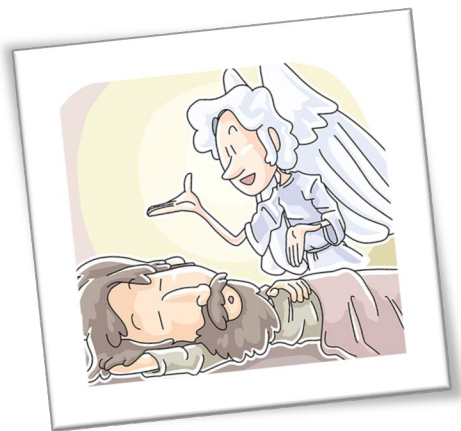
Mandy Groce '12

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Peace on Earth
Good Will Towards Men





Bible Word Search Puzzle

ANGEL – CHILD – DREAM – JESUS – JOSEPH

JOY – MARY – SAVE – SINS – SON – VIRGIN - WIFE

U X M Y O I G G I E G
P Z Q O H A P H H M D
D K V P Y C W G D J H
O A L Y C H I L D S S
E N J K M A F F R V J
V G O S A V E X E I O
J E S U S C I M A R Y
H L E O I A Z T M G Z
F G P P N K R T B I D
Y J H D S Z F U Y N B
O S V O V F V G G H G

Word Search Answers

U X M Y O I G G I E G
P Z Q O H A P H H M D
D K V P Y C W G D J H
O A L Y C H I L D S S
E N J K M A F F R V J
V G O S A V E X E I O
J E S U S C I M A R Y
H L E O I A Z T M G Z
F G P P N K R T B I D
Y J H D S Z F U Y N B
O S V O V F V G G H G