



As we journey this Advent season, see if you can color and then find the items in this picture that help us tell the story of Jesus' birth and ministry.

CAN YOU FIND...

■ the watchman?

Can you think of a time when you had to wait for something you really wanted? Not just waiting for a toy, or a treat, but a time when you had to wait patiently to feel happy — like waiting to be able to see a friend. Like then, this is a time to wait patiently for Jesus.

■ the wisemen?

What was the longest trip you've ever been on? Who did you go to see? Was it special to spend time with them? The wisemen journeyed for a long time to see Jesus, so it is special when they finally get to be with him.

■ the tree stump with a shoot?

Knowing what has happened in the past is important for helping us act better in the future. Can you think of something that happened in the past that helped you to know how to do better now?

■ the basket with loaves & fishes?

At meal times we give thanks to God for having nourishing and delicious food to eat, but there are many people near and far who sometimes go hungry. How can you find ways to share what you have with those who have less?

■ the angels?

It is good to remember that God is always with us, especially when we feel sad or lonely. We can always call on angels and saints to keep us company, too. Do you have a favorite saint that you pray with sometimes?

■ the orchard?

Have you ever worked in a garden to grow flowers or food before? In a garden, you plant seeds and offer love and care in the form of water and sunlight. Then, God works God's magic and beautiful things grow. Thank God today for the many gifts God offers.

■ the sheep?

In the Bible, Jesus is sure to include and share with those who are left out. How can you be more like Jesus today, including people who are sometimes left out or forgotten?

■ the shepherd?

Candy canes are a fun Christmas treat, but have you ever noticed how the shape is the letter "J," like Jesus? Not only this, but the shape also looks like the cane a shepherd uses to help him walk steep mountains. It reminds us that Jesus is our shepherd, taking care of us like a shepherd takes care of his sheep.

■ the person on crutches or the beggar near the door?

Many people came to Jesus to cure their illnesses and injuries. Because of their faith or the faith of their loved ones, Jesus heals them. If Jesus were going to heal you of something today, what would you ask for?

■ the fruits on the trees?

Can you think of a time when you had to make a difficult choice? Maybe you were choosing between doing what you have been asked to do or doing something you weren't supposed to be doing. Even though God always gives us the choice whether or not to be kind and caring, God calls us to kindness when it is difficult.

■ the oxen's yoke?

Sometimes jobs are too hard to do alone, so we ask for help from a friend. Likewise, sometimes our friends need our help, and we drop what we are doing to help them. When we witness a friend being treated unfairly, our faith asks us to stand up for what is right. Can you think of a time when you had to do this?

■ the evergreen trees?

Does your family decorate a Christmas tree for Christmas? What is your favorite part of the tradition? Even if this is not a tradition your family is celebrating, something unique about Christmas trees is that they stay green year-round. Likewise, even though we celebrate Jesus's love and care for us in a special way at Christmas, he is by our side all year round.

■ the lanterns?

Are you afraid of the dark? Maybe you sleep with a night-light plugged in, just in case you wake up scared in the middle of the night. The light of Jesus's love is like a candle, a light for when we are scared and in the dark.

■ the roses?

On December 12, we celebrate Mother Mary, Our Lady of Guadalupe, appearing to Saint Juan Diego. When she appeared to him, he was not scared because she looked like a typical indigenous woman he would have encountered in his town in Mexico. The story of Our Lady and Juan Diego is special for many reasons, but is especially important because of her familiar appearance. We do not need to be afraid because God and Mother Mary look familiar to us, and meet us where we are.

■ the stars?

The star of Bethlehem is how people knew that Jesus had been born, and how the three kings were able to find him. The star and its light are signs from God that remind us that God is always there — even when we experience darkness.

■ the sky?

Just like Jesus can be a light for us when we are scared in the dark, God is always there for us when we experience hard things. Can you think of a hard thing you experienced recently? Did you call on God to walk with you through it?

■ the mother holding her baby?

God's love is snuggly, cozy and warm just like a cuddle from someone we love. Every family looks different and is special, but God loves them all the same. How does your family show you God's love?

■ the knapsack full of scrolls?

In Jesus's time, stories were written on scrolls for people to read and learn from. Now, we read stories from books with loved ones or before bed. They teach us important lessons about our families, life, and the world. Can you think of a lesson you learned recently that came from reading a story?

■ the elders walking toward the manger?

Who is the oldest person you know? Maybe it is a grandparent, a great-grandparent, or someone who is older who lives in your neighborhood. Older people are important to have in our lives because they remember things we might not. Have you ever learned an important lesson from an elder that you would not have learned otherwise?

■ Joseph?

Every family looks different and is unique, including Jesus' family. Jesus' family was unique because Joseph was not his father by blood. Use your imagination to picture your own family. Are there close friends or others who are important to you that you would like to include?

■ the lamb that is resting?

Lambs are baby sheep and known to be gentle and peaceful animals. The bible sometimes describes Jesus like a lamb, and we hear often that "Jesus is the lamb of God." Why do you think that is? How is Jesus like a lamb?

■ Mary?

Have you ever wondered where God lives? What ideas do you have? God is all around us and lives in a special way in our hearts. When do you feel God in your heart? How can you make your heart a special place for Jesus to rest?

■ the dove?

We call it justice when anyone who wants to has a fair chance to participate or play with us. While sometimes it can be hard, God calls us to treat everyone like we would treat a brother or sister—regardless of how they might be different than us. When everyone has a fair chance to play and is treated with the love and respect of a sibling, we can better feel God's peace in our hearts. Can you think of a time when you felt God's peace in your heart like this?

■ the bull?

Sometimes our parents ask us to behave differently than we want to. Like when you want to be silly, but a grown-up asks you to act serious instead. God asked Mary to be brave when she felt scared about giving birth to Jesus. God asks us to behave differently too. God asks that we work to be kind, loving, and brave like Jesus and Mary, even when it feels hard or we don't want to.

■ the keystones in the doorway arches?

Like the grown-ups in our lives we love and trust, Jesus's friendship helps us to feel safe when we feel scared. Can you think of a time when you felt scared and called on Jesus to be with you?

■ Jesus?

Sometimes it can be hard to remember that Jesus—not presents—is the reason for Christmas. Our forever-friend Jesus is born to remind us of how God's love for us is bigger and deeper than we could ever imagine. How do you see God's love for you today?

■ Merry Christmas!

Today we continue to celebrate God coming to be with us in the form of Jesus. How can you share God's love with others today?

Visit an Online Advent Calendar with full reflections at CHAUSA.ORG/ADVENT