

## LESSON 28: The Journey to Bethlehem



### AIM

To narrate the stories of the Annunciation and the journey to Bethlehem. (5.1.5, 5.4.5)

### OUTCOME

Learners retell the stories of the Annunciation and Joseph and Mary's journey to Bethlehem.

### WHAT YOU NEED

- \* 🎵 *Sing for Life – Carol of the Journey* (p.10) (4)
- \* A prepared Christmas tree (5)
- \* Card, paper, glitter, paints, crayons, ribbon, wool or cord (5)

### LEARNING ACTIVITIES

#### 1 Tell the story of the Annunciation and the journey to Bethlehem

Mary had a big surprise. An angel came to visit her. The angel said, "Don't be afraid. God loves you very much." The angel told her that God wanted her to be the mother of Jesus.

Mary thought about this. She did not understand how she could be the mother of God's son. But Mary said yes to God.

That night Joseph had a dream. In the dream the angel told Joseph that he should marry Mary. The angel also told him a secret, that Mary would be Jesus' mother. Joseph said yes to God. He married Mary and he took good care of her.

Now it was nearly time for Jesus to be born. All the people in the land had to be counted. Mary and Joseph had to go to Bethlehem. It was a very long trip. It was very hard. Mary sat on the donkey and Joseph walked all the way. Mary said, "Jesus will come soon."

When they got to Bethlehem, the first thing they had to do was find a place to stay. They knocked on the door of many houses. There was no room anywhere. At last they found a stable and they decided to sleep there. "This is fine," said Mary. "It is nice and warm and the animals will keep us company." Then she smiled and said, "Jesus will come soon."

#### 2 Ask questions to help the children retell the story. For example: Who came to visit Mary? What did the angel say? etc.

#### 3 Action rhyme:

Mary rode to Bethlehem  
Such a long, long way.  
Joseph walking by her side  
Helped her through the day.  
Mary rode to Bethlehem  
Upon the donkey's back.  
Joseph walking by her side  
Following the track.

Mary rode to Bethlehem  
Underneath the moon  
She held Joseph's hand and said  
"Jesus will come soon!"  
Mary rode to Bethlehem  
That's where they had to go  
"My baby will be special  
The angel told me so."

#### 4 Song: *Sing for Life – Carol of the Journey* (p.10)

#### 5 Arts and Crafts: You will need to prepare a Christmas tree. Cut a large triangle out of cardboard. Remember to add a trunk. Take crumpled green crepe paper and glue it to the cardboard. Paint the trunk brown. The ornaments the children make can be attached with pins. Children make decorations for the Christmas tree. As the children are busy making their

decorations mention the meaning of the decorations.

- Bells ring out the Good News
- Circles and globes speak of eternity, and many people brought to unity.
- Stars tell us of hope
- Candles or lights tell us that Jesus is the light of the world
- The shepherds' crooks remind us that the shepherds were the first to hear of the birth of Jesus.



The decorations should be bright and glittery. Ribbon can be added. Thread wool or cord through the tops of the decorations. Use glitter.

- 6 Once the tree has been decorated, gather the children round the tree and conduct a **Christmas tree blessing**.

God, our Creator, who made all things good, thank you for the gift of trees.

*RESPONSE (R): Thank you God for trees.*

Trees to climb and play around,  
Trees that are a home to birds ,  
Trees that give us fruit to eat,  
And wood for things we need ,  
For paper that we use to read and write.  
And for shade on sunny days.

*(R): Thank you God for trees.*

We decorate our Christmas tree so brightly  
for Jesus who was born in Bethlehem.

*(R): Loving God, Bless our Christmas Tree*

The branches remind us of everlasting life  
And the stars are there to guide us.  
Our circles speak of unity  
and love and peace around the world.  
Thank you God for Jesus  
who brings us peace, love, hope joy.

*(R): Loving God, Bless our Christmas tree*

Amen.

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## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- 7 Clay-dough can be used to make **Christmas decorations**. It can be rolled out and cut with biscuit cutters. Remember to make a hole using a toothpick or a skewer if the object is to be hung. Since the decorations will take a few days to dry, this activity is also a lesson in waiting. The clay-dough can also be modelled like clay.

- 8 **Preparing Clay-Dough:** Here is the recipe.

4 cups flour

2 cups salt

3 tablespoons salad oil

1 tablespoon cream of tartar

2 cups of warm water

food colouring (optional)

Combine all the ingredients and knead well. Add more flour if sticky or more water if crumbly. This may be stored in the refrigerator.

## LESSON 29: Advent – A Time of Waiting



### AIM

To introduce learners to the season of Advent and its meaning (5.1.5, 5.4.5)

### OUTCOME

Learners understand that Advent is a time of preparing for the feast of Christmas.

### LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- 1 **Introduction:** Show the children a class birthday calendar if you have one. Tell the class that there is a very important birthday that we will be celebrating soon. Show the children the 25<sup>th</sup> December and explain that this is the day we celebrate Jesus' birthday. We are all getting ready and waiting for this special day. We call this time of waiting for Jesus, Advent. Advent is a time to get ready.
- 2 **Action Rhyme:** The children say the following lines and add appropriate actions -
 

We are waiting, we are waiting  
For Lord Jesus to come  
We are looking, we are looking  
For the star in the sky  
We are smiling, we are smiling  
At each and every one.
- 3 **Advent Wreath:** Talk about the advent wreath. The circle symbolises eternal life. The candles remind us that Jesus is the light of the world. Give each child a large jar lid. They roll green clay-dough (made ahead of time - see ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY 6) into a sausage shape. They put the clay dough into the rim of the lid. They stick four candles into the clay dough so that they are evenly spaced, and set evergreen leaves into it. Impress on the children the need for safety. The candles must only be lit under adult supervision.
- 4 **Advent Prayer Service:**

Encourage the children to become still, and to remember that God is with us when we pray.

Begin with an Advent song. A suggestion is *Sing for Life – The Advent Song* (p.27) teaching the children only the first two lines of the 3<sup>rd</sup> verse: "I must prepare, I must prepare, Christmas will soon be here."


TEACHER: Come, Lord Jesus, come.

ALL: Come and be with us.

TEACHER: The candles on our Advent wreaths remind us that Jesus is the light of the world. Loving God, be with us as we pray. Help us, Loving God, to be lights that brighten other people's days.

ALL: Jesus is the light of the world.

### WHAT YOU NEED

- \* Birthday calendar (1)
- \* Large jar lids, sets of four birthday candles, green clay dough, evergreen leaves (3)
- \* 🎵 *Sing for Life – The Advent Song* (p.27) (4)
- \* Copies of the worksheet  (5) ⇨
- \* Ingredients for clay-dough (6)
- \* Clay-dough (7)
- \* Cardboard tubes, paints, red and green streamers, sticky tape, string (8)
- \* Newsprint or brown paper, star or tree stencils, sponges, paint (9)

TEACHER: Help us to love each other and to let our love shine for all to see.

ALL: Come, Lord Jesus, come.

TEACHER: Help us to spread your love and light to others.

ALL: Come, Lord Jesus, come.

TEACHER: We need light to see. We need the light of Jesus to see the right way to live.

ALL: Come, Lord Jesus, come.

TEACHER: Let us listen to a reading from the Bible. These are the words of Isaiah, a very holy man. [Isaiah 9:2]

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. They lived in the land of shadows, but now light is shining on them.

ALL: Jesus is the light of the world.


TEACHER: Come Lord Jesus, come.

ALL: Come and be with us.


Close with the Advent song as above.

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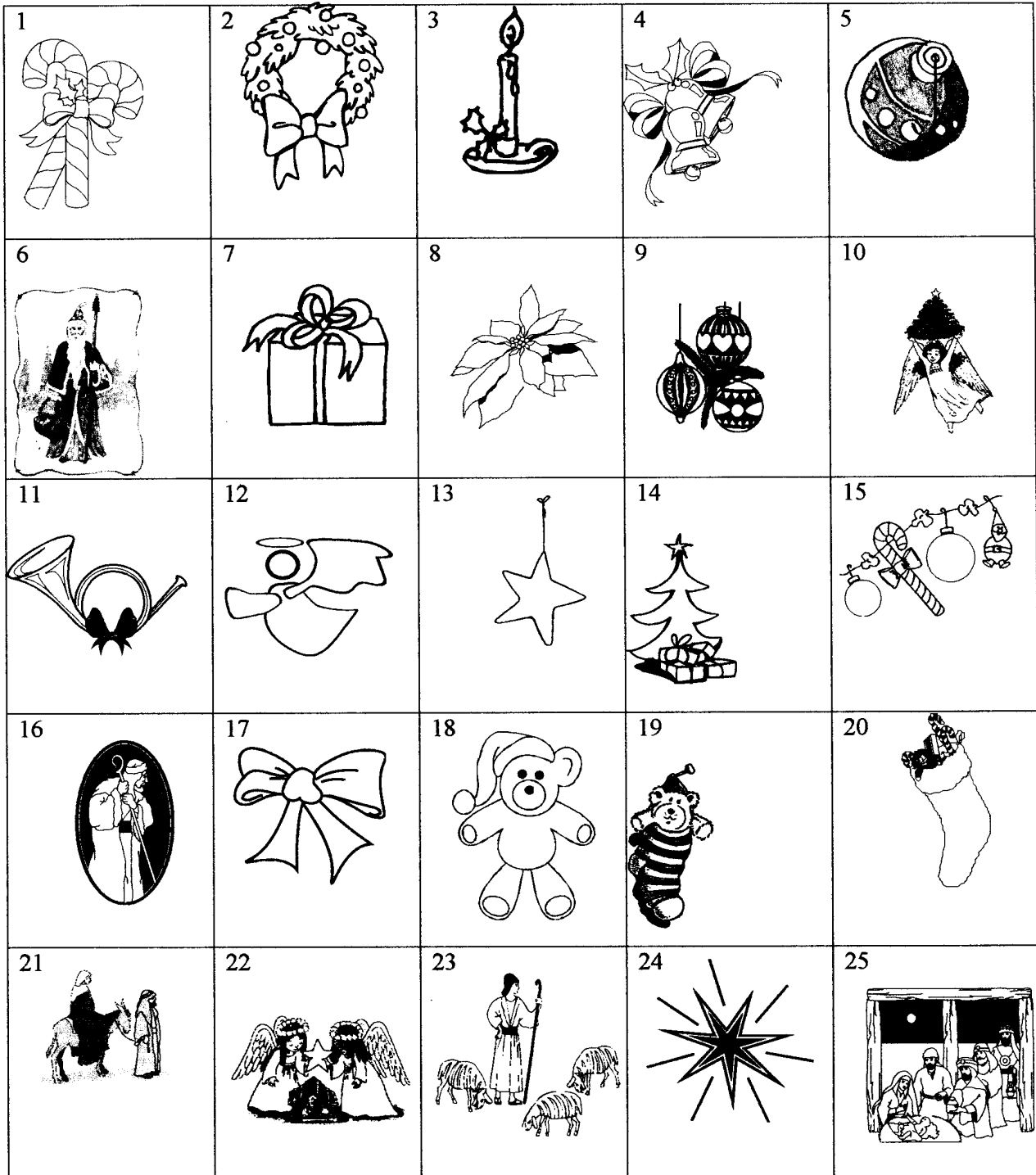
## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- 5 **Advent Calendar:** An Advent calendar is another way to help us wait and to get ready for Christmas. Such a calendar is found on the worksheet.  ⇒ The children colour a picture each day. If this is too difficult, the children can cross off each day of Advent as it passes. Encourage the children to count the numbers and to recognise the number 25.
- 6 **Preparing Clay-Dough:** Here is the recipe.

4 cups flour	1 tablespoon cream of tartar
2 cups salt	2 cups of warm water
3 tablespoons salad oil	food colouring (optional)

Combine all the ingredients and knead well. Add more flour if sticky or more water if crumbly. This may be stored in the refrigerator.
- 7 Clay-dough can be used to make **Christmas decorations**. It can be rolled out and cut with biscuit cutters. Remember to make a hole using a toothpick or a skewer if the object is to be hung. Since the decorations will take a few days to dry, this activity is also a lesson in waiting. The clay-dough can also be modelled like clay.
- 8 Make a **'windsock' ornament**. Children paint small cardboard tubes with bright colours. Print in large decorative letters, "Happy Birthday, Jesus". Make photocopies of this for the children to stick to the tube. Tape red and green streamers to the inside bottom edge of the tube. Make two holes in the top and thread a piece of string through the holes and tie. This ornament may be hung outside or on a branch of a Christmas tree. 
- 9 Make Christmas **wrapping paper** or gift tags using newsprint or brown paper. Make star or tree stencils. Fill the space in the stencil using a sponge dipped into thick paint.

# Waiting for Christmas



## LESSON 30: Jesus Is Born



### AIM

To help learners reflect on the story of Christmas and its meaning. (5.1.8)

### OUTCOME

Learners understand Christmas as the celebration of the birth of Jesus.

### LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- 1 Introduction:** Revise the story of Mary and Joseph going to Bethlehem. The children tell the following story adding actions.

Mary rode to Bethlehem  
Such a long, long way.  
Joseph walking by her side  
Helped her through the day.  
Mary rode to Bethlehem  
Upon the donkey's back.  
Joseph walking by her side  
Following the track.  
Mary rode to Bethlehem  
Underneath the moon  
She held Joseph's hand and said  
"Jesus will come soon!"  
Mary rode to Bethlehem  
That's where they had to go  
"My baby will be special  
The angel told me so."

- 2 Continue the story:**

Finally they arrive in Bethlehem...

Joseph found an inn and knocked upon the door. The innkeeper called, "The rooms are taken. I haven't any more! All I can offer is a stable; and for a bed, some straw."

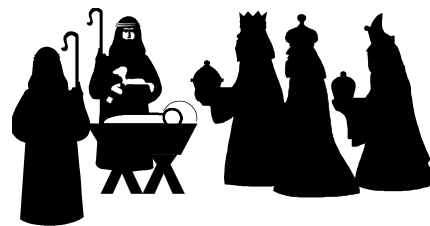
Mary and Joseph were happy that were given a place to stay. Mary lay down on the soft bed that Joseph made that day. That night, that starry night, Jesus was born. Mary wrapped the baby in a blanket and held him in her arms. Then she put him in the manger where he slept so peacefully. All the while Mary and Joseph sat and gazed at this tiny baby with hearts filled with love.

In the sky was a star that shone more brightly than the rest. People looking at the sky could not believe their eyes. The star was a sign that let the people know that this special baby had been born.

In the meantime...

### WHAT YOU NEED


- \* Copies of the worksheet (3) ⇒
- \* Coat hangers, scissors, crayons, cardboard, yarn or ribbon (3)
- \* 🎵 Selection of Christmas carols (4)
- \* Cake and other things for a celebration (7)
- \* Materials for cards (8)
- \* 🎵 *We Wish You a Merry Christmas* (11)

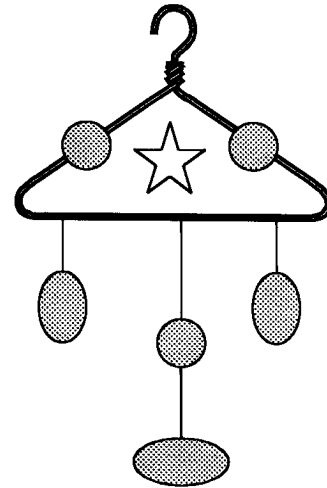


While the shepherds were wondering about the star, an angel appeared to them and gave them a message. "I bring you news of great joy. This very day in Bethlehem Jesus the Lord was born. You will find the baby wrapped in a blanket and lying in a manger. Then the whole sky was filled with angels.

The shepherds hurried off and went to visit baby Jesus. They were so excited they could not stop talking about all they had seen.

Sometime later three wise kings came from far away to visit the baby Jesus. They had followed the star which shone so brightly in the sky. They brought special birthday presents.

- 3 **Arts and Crafts:** Make a mobile of the nativity scene. Make copies of the figures on the worksheet or any similar figures of your own.  ⇒ The children colour the pictures and paste them on cardboard. Punch holes near the top of the pictures so that they can be hung. Use coat hangers. The angels could be stuck on the hanger itself. The figures could be hung as shown.



- 4 **Sing** a selection of Christmas carols.
- 5 **Learn:** Children commit to memory the following Scripture verse [John 3:16]: God loved the world so much that God gave us Jesus.
- 6 **Prayer:** For the happiness in our hearts this Christmas time...

**RESPONSE (R):** We thank you, Jesus.

For a birthday celebration for the whole world...(R)

For candles that remind us of Jesus...(R)

For our friends and families...(R)

For our loving God who sent us Jesus...(R)

The children might like to add their own petitions to this litany of thanks.

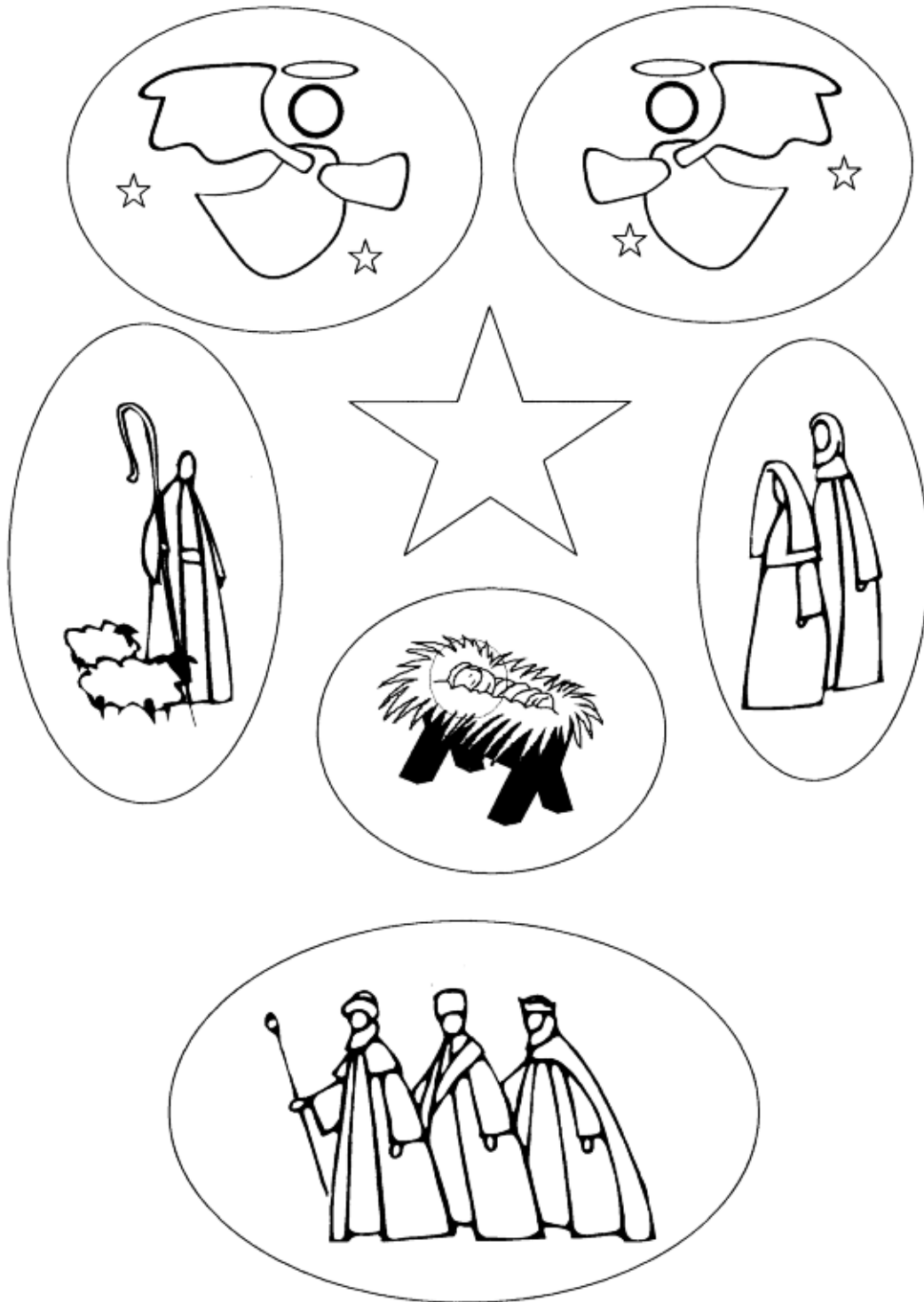
- 7 A **birthday celebration:** Sing, "Happy birthday, dear Jesus." Have a cake or cup cakes for the birthday party. The children might play a party game.
- 8 Make **cards:** The children could make Christmas cards to take home for their families.

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## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- 9 Act out a **Christmas play.**
- 10 Make little **gifts** to take home
- 11 **Sing:** *We wish you a Merry Christmas (3x) and a Happy New Year.*

# Nativity Scene





## LESSON 31: Christmas – A Time for Rejoicing

### AIM

To help learners reflect on the story of Christmas and its meaning. (5.1.8)



### WHAT YOU NEED

- \* Glossy paper or paper doilies, scissors, glue, ribbon (4)
- \* Paper strips, glue (5)

### OUTCOME

Learners understand Christmas as the celebration of the birth of Jesus.

### LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- 1 **Introduction:** Tell the children that long ago, the children who lived in England would say the following at Christmas time. The children can learn this nursery rhyme.

Christmas is a-coming  
The geese are getting fat  
Please put a penny in the old man's hat.

Explain that by saying this rhyme they were reminded that Christmas is a time for giving.

- 2 Tell the story of **St Nicholas**.

As a child Nicholas shared his things with his friends. When he grew up, Nicholas gave most of his money to help the poor. Nicholas loved God very much. Because he loved God, and he wanted to be like Jesus, he also loved children very much. He was very kind to them. Sometimes he would give secret gifts to people who were in need.

Someone saw him one day and began to tell others about Nicholas and his good deeds. These stories spread until lots and lots of people heard about Nicholas and how kind he was. On the sixth of December we remember St Nicholas. People started following his example. On the sixth of December people in some countries give gifts to each other.

The idea of Father Christmas is based on St Nicholas - 'Santa Claus'. Father Christmas can be introduced to the children as an example of joyful giving.



- 3 **The shepherds** tell an amazing story.

A long time ago a group of shepherds were talking to each other. One of the shepherds said, "Wow! Did you see all the people in Bethlehem today? They have all arrived for the census."

His friend replied, "Yes, I did. I'm sure all the inns are full."

It was a cold night and some of the shepherds had brought warm cloaks to wear. They had to stay awake the whole night to guard their sheep from wolves and thieves. To keep awake they would tell each other stories about King David who had also been a shepherd just like them.

They thought it was going to be a night like every other night, but they were in for a big surprise.

Suddenly the angel of God appeared to them and the glory of God shone around them. They were struck with fear. The angel spoke to them and said, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people." And as if that wasn't amazing enough, there was a huge number of angels, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest and peace to God's people on earth."

Well, you could have knocked the shepherds over with a feather! They could not believe their eyes or their ears. The shepherds started talking almost all at once.

'Did you see the angels?'

'Yes. Wasn't it the most amazing sight?'

'Did you hear the angel speaking about a baby in a manger?'

'Yes. And the angels spoke about peace on earth!'

'Can you imagine a baby bringing peace on earth?'

Finally one of the shepherds said, "I would really like to see this baby. Wouldn't you?" Together they all said, "Let's go. Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's go and find the baby."

- 4 **Arts and Crafts:** Remind the children that an angel came to give Mary a very special message. Angels also came to give a message to the shepherds.

The children make angels using either paper doilies or glossy paper. Here are the instructions. Cut out a semi-circle from the glossy paper. Bend the semi-circle into a cone. Glue or staple the two straight edges together. Cut a circle for the wings. Fold the circle in two and glue the two halves together. Glue the wings to the back of the cone. Cut a circle for the head. Attach a loop of ribbon to the back of the head if the angels are to be hung on a Christmas tree. A bare branch may be used. Curl the wings back a little.



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## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- 5 The children could work together to form a **paper chain**. Cut the paper into 2.5 cm by 14 cm strips. Roll a strip into a ring and glue the edges together. Loop the second piece of paper through the first. Continue until the chain is long enough.

## LESSON 32: The Child Jesus



### AIM

To tell the children a story of Jesus as a child (8.4.4)

### OUTCOME

Learners realise that Jesus had a childhood just as they do.

### LEARNING ACTIVITIES

#### WHAT YOU NEED

- \* Flannel-board and figures or pictures (1)
- \* Story of Jesus' childhood (1) ⇔
- \* Materials for drawing and colouring (5)
- \* *Sing for Life – Ga Gona Ya Tshwanang* (p.205) (6)

- 1 **Tell a story** of Jesus in his childhood using pictures to build the story as you tell it. (A flannel-board is a good teaching aid in story telling. Otherwise, you could put chalk drawings on the board, or a selection of pictures from your own collection. A good resource, besides magazines, is the Liturgical Calendar from the Catholic Bookshop in Cape Town. This calendar uses full-colour reproductions of art work found in South African churches.)

Here is **A SAMPLE STORY** (Rita Bull 1999):

One day, God sent an angel to visit a young woman named Mary. "Be happy, Mary," the angel said. "God is with you. God blesses you more than any other woman! God has chosen you to be mother of God's son. And his name will be Jesus."

Just before the baby was born, Mary and her husband, Joseph, had to go to Bethlehem. While they were there, Jesus was born in a stable because there was no room for them in the hotel. They were very happy to have such a lovely baby boy. But at that time, there lived a very wicked king, Herod who wanted to harm the baby Jesus. So Mary and Joseph took Jesus and went to another country called Egypt. The wicked king could not find them there.

As Jesus grew, Mary and Joseph told him about his home in Nazareth. They would say to him, "One day we will go home again. We will go back to Nazareth, to our own little house. We will see our friends and relatives again." And Joseph said, "I will be able to work as a carpenter again and make beautiful things from wood."

Now the time came for them to make the long journey home. On the way, Jesus would ask, "Are we there yet?" He was very excited about going home and he tried to imagine what everything would be like.

As Mary and Joseph led Jesus into Nazareth, people came running up to welcome them. Jesus loved meeting the friends and relatives that he had heard so much about. He also saw that there were many boys and girls his own age that he would be able to play with.

Jesus felt so happy as he walked up to the little white clay house with the brown wooden door. And as he touched the front door, he prayed to God, his Father, "Thank you, Father, for bringing me home."

Jesus made many friends and he played happily with them. As he grew and he was able to do more things, Joseph taught him how to make things from wood. The family loved and cared for each other. They would go to the synagogue together and they prayed to God every day.

- 2 **Action rhyme:** Do suitable actions for each line.

Jesus helped his mother.

## GRADE R

He helped his father, Joseph, too.  
He was just a little kid  
Like you, and you, and you!

- 3 Refer back to the story when the angel says the baby will be called Jesus which means 'God saves and helps us.' remind the children they each have a **special name**, too.

4 **Prayer:**

Dear God, thank you for a happy day,  
For friends, for work, for play.  
Thank you for your loving care,  
At home, at school, and everywhere.

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## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- 5 The children may enjoy **drawing a picture** of a scene from the story.
- 6 **Song:** *Sing for Life – Ga Gona Ya Tshwanang* (p.205)