

Quiet Hope

**Bible verses:**

Luke 1:5-20

**Aim:**

To understand that praying comes with waiting, but we can wait with hope

**Today's fruit:**

Patience



In today's session we meet Zechariah and Elizabeth. For many years they prayed for God to give them a very special gift. After years of waiting, their prayers were finally answered. Their son, John, would prepare the way for Jesus. Waiting for God to answer our prayers can be challenging, but today's story reminds us that we can wait with quiet hope, trusting that God hears every prayer. Even when we don't understand his timing, we can be confident that he is faithful and that his plans are always part of something much bigger.

Each child will need:

- A 'Memory Verse Wristband' handout
- Gift tag / luggage tag
- Ribbon/string
- Colouring pencils / felt-tips
- Craft materials to decorate the luggage tag – see 'Action it'
- 'Explore it Ideas' handout

You will need:

- The 'Fruit of the Spirit – Patience' sign – download from **Salvationist**



Start it

Say:

Ask the children to think of a well-known children's film or cartoon character. Make sure they don't tell anyone who it is. Give the children a couple of minutes to write a Christmas list for that character, a list of presents they think their character would love to receive. Ask the children to read out their list and see if the others can guess which character it is for.

Ask:

- Have you written your own Christmas list yet?
- What one item are you really hoping to receive this Christmas?

Say:

In our Bible story today, Zechariah and Elizabeth had been waiting a very long time for a precious gift. Rather than asking Father Christmas to leave a gift under the tree, this elderly couple had been praying with quiet hope, trusting that God heard their prayers even while they waited.



Sing it

Say:

Our memory verse for this month is extra challenging as it is two verses! We know you can meet the challenge, especially when the memory verse reminds us of good news.

Give each child a 'Memory Verse Wristband'. Read it through together and, if it helps the group, create actions to help them to remember it.

Memory verse:

'The angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, because I am bringing you some good news. It will be a joy to all the people. Today your Saviour was born in David's town. He is Christ, the Lord."'

(Luke 2:10-11 *ICB*)

Say:

Our song for today reminds us that the good news of Jesus gives us hope, not just at Christmas, but every day.

Watch:

'Good News' (Official Lyric Video) by Vineyard Kids (2:14)



Share it

Ask:

- Is there something you have been praying for? If you feel comfortable, then share with the group what it is.
- How long have you prayed about it?
- How long would you be willing to pray about it?
- Would you keep praying for five, ten, fifteen years? What about if it was more than that?

Say:

In our story today, we meet an elderly couple who had been praying for a child for many, many years. They thought that they would never be able to have a son or daughter of their own, but God had different plans.

Read:

During the time Herod ruled Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah. He belonged to Abijah's group. Zechariah's wife came from the family of Aaron. Her name was Elizabeth. Zechariah and Elizabeth truly did what God said was good. They did everything the Lord commanded and told people to do. They were without fault in keeping his law. But Zechariah and Elizabeth had no children. Elizabeth could not have a baby; and both of them were very old.

(Luke 1:5-7 ICB)

Say:

Zechariah and Elizabeth loved God very much and trusted him with their future. They had prayed for many years to have a child, but now, due to their age, it seemed like having children was not going to be part of their lives. Zechariah was carrying out his duty in the Temple when this happened ...

Watch:

Gabriel Visits Zechariah by Superbook (1:27)

Ask:

How would you feel if an angel like Gabriel came to visit you?

Say:

It's easy to understand why Zechariah felt confused and frightened, but the angel told him not to be afraid.

Ask:

- What message did the angel Gabriel bring to Zechariah?
- Why did the angel silence Zechariah?

Say:

As a priest, Zechariah would have been used to having plenty to say, but now he needed to wait quietly for the arrival of his son. God had promised that he would have a son, but Zechariah still had to trust God until that promise was fulfilled.

Waiting isn't always easy. We might wait for Christmas Day, a birthday or exciting news, but waiting for God can sometimes feel even harder.

Ask:

- What is the hardest thing you have ever had to wait for?
- What helps you to be patient while you are waiting?
- Have you ever had to wait for God to answer your prayers? What did it feel like when he did that?
- Why do you think God sometimes makes us wait before he answers our prayers?

Display the 'Fruit of the Spirit – Patience' sign

Say:

The Fruit of the Spirit for today is patience. Patience doesn't just mean waiting without complaining. It means trusting God, even when we don't understand what he is doing.

Zechariah and Elizabeth had waited for many years. There must have been times when they felt disappointed or wondered if God had forgotten them. God hadn't forgotten them at all. At just the right time, he answered their prayers in a way that was part of his much bigger plan.

Ask:

- Do you think it would have been easy for Zechariah and Elizabeth to keep trusting God for so many years? Why?
- What do you think helped them to keep hoping instead of giving up?
- How can we keep trusting God when we're still waiting for an answer to our prayers?

Say:

Hope is trusting that God is with us, hears every prayer and knows what is best, even when we have to wait. Like Zechariah and Elizabeth, we can choose to wait with quiet hope, believing that God has not forgotten us.

 Action it

Today's activity gives the children an opportunity to create a reminder that God hears every prayer. Zechariah and Elizabeth waited many years before God answered their prayers, but he had not forgotten them. Their story reminds us that we can wait with hope, trusting that God is always listening and working, even when we cannot yet see the answer.

Give each child a gift tag (or luggage tag), ribbon and a selection of craft materials. Ask them to decorate one side of the tag. On the other side, invite them to write or draw one thing they are waiting and hoping for. Encourage them to add the words 'God hears every prayer' or to write Luke 1:13 somewhere on the tag as a reminder of today's Bible story. Help the children thread the ribbon through the hole so they can hang the tag somewhere at home.

Ask:

- What have you chosen to write or draw on your prayer gift tag?
- Why is this something that is important to you?
- How might seeing your gift tag remind you to keep trusting God while you wait?

Encourage the children to hang their prayer tag somewhere they will see it regularly, such as on their Christmas tree or bedroom door, as a reminder to keep praying with hope.



Pray it

Say:

Take a moment to look at your prayer gift tag. Think about the person or situation you have written or drawn.

Invite the children to listen carefully to the words of the song and sing along if they begin to recognise the tune. Encourage them to hold their prayer gift tag as they pray quietly. When the song has finished, close by thanking God that he hears every prayer and asking him to help each child wait with hope, trusting that his timing is always good.

Watch:

'Waiting Here For You' by Kid's Praise! (5:45)



Explore it

Remember to send home the 'Explore it Ideas' for children and families.



Explore it is produced by the Children and Youth Department in collaboration with Kay Moorby (soulwithaview)

Quiet Hope

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Bible verses:

Luke 1:5-20



Aim:

To understand that praying comes with waiting, but we can wait with hope



Today's fruit:

Patience



Pray

Hang your prayer gift tag somewhere you will see it each day this week, perhaps on your Christmas tree or bedroom door. Whenever you notice it, take a moment to pray about the person or situation you wrote or drew. Ask God to help you trust him while you wait, remembering that he hears every prayer.



Share

Read Luke 1:5-20 together at home. Talk about why Zechariah found it difficult to believe the angel's message. What does his story teach us about trusting God, even when we have been waiting for a long time?



Song for the week

Watch:

'Good News' (Official Lyric Video) by Vineyard Kids (2:14)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=eWFBpS-pT6M



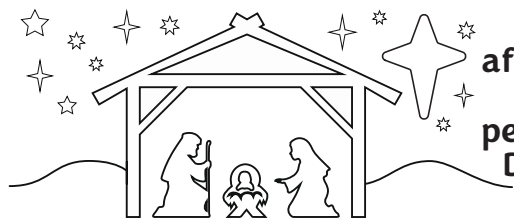
Memory verse

'The angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, because I am bringing you some good news. It will be a joy to all the people. Today your Saviour was born in David's town. He is Christ, the Lord."'

(Luke 2:10-11 /CB)

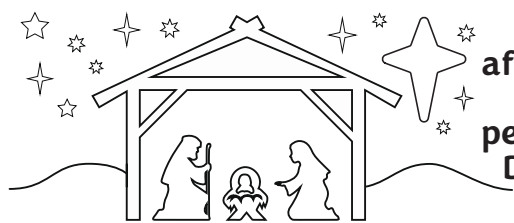
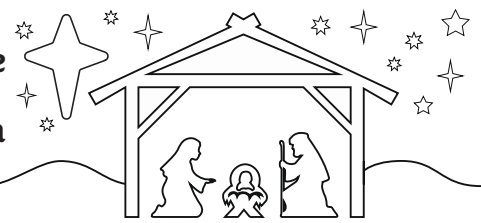
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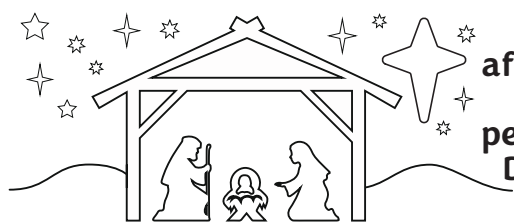
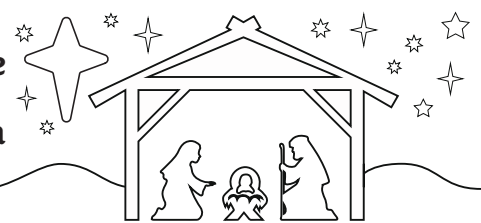
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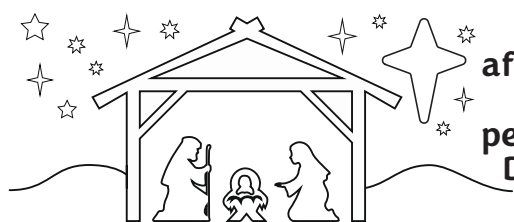
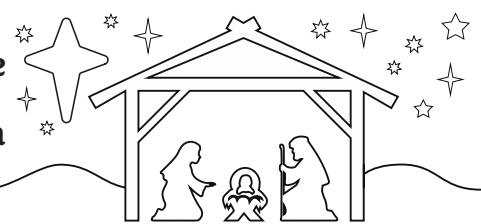
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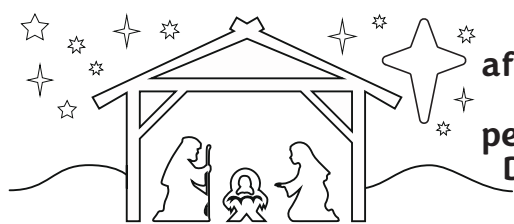
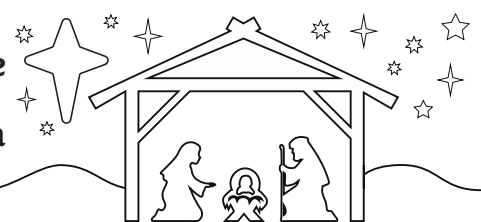
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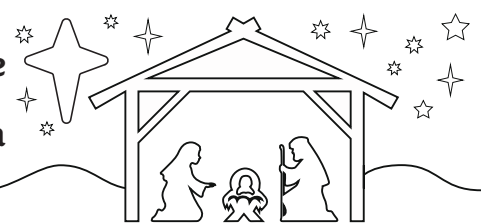
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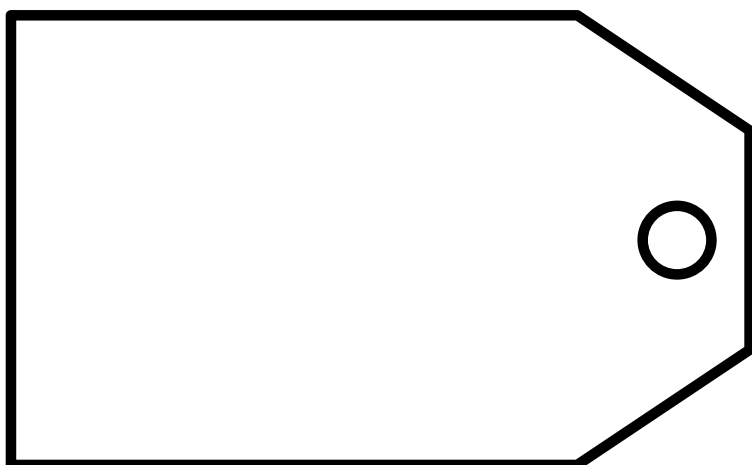
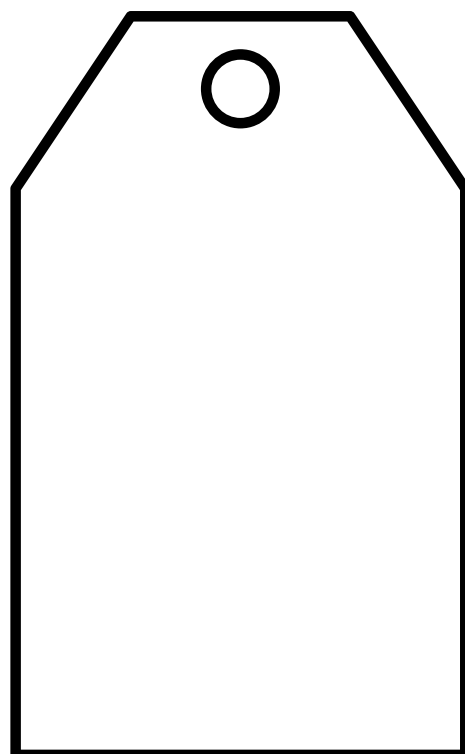
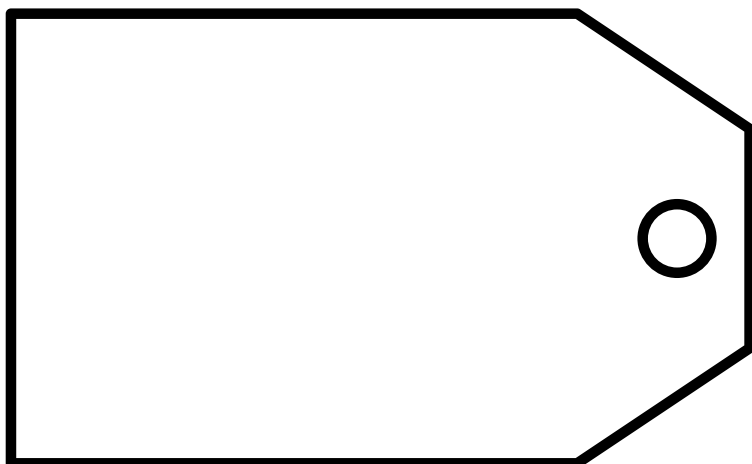
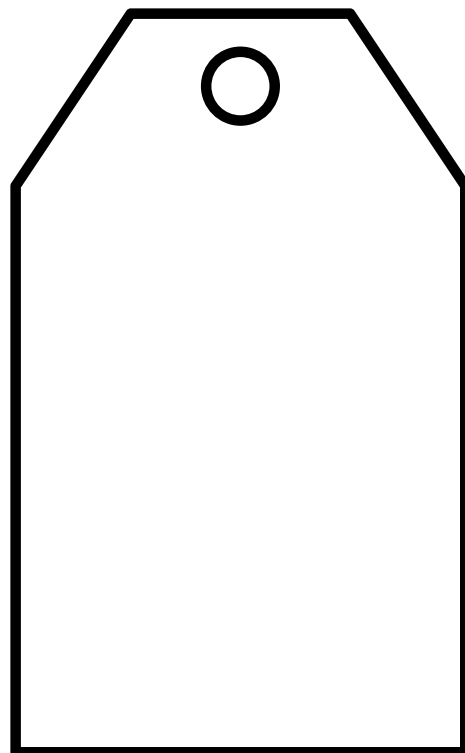
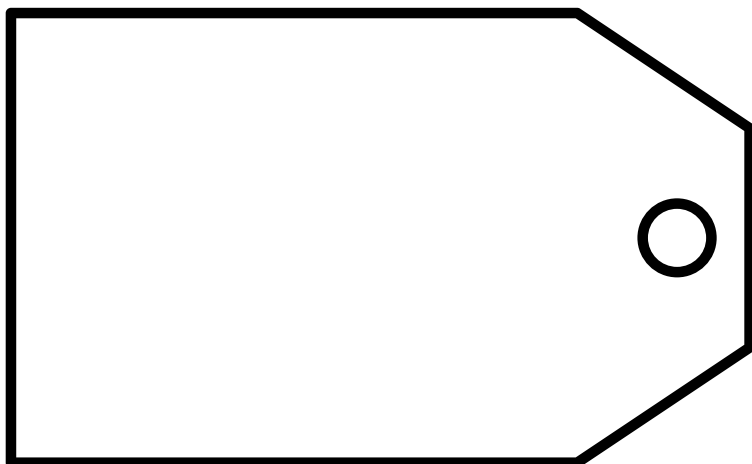
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(Luke 2:10-11)





Hope for Better



Bible verses:

Luke 1:26–38, 57–64



Aim:

To know that trusting God might mean doing things differently



Today's fruit:

Peace



In today's session we discover how Mary, Elizabeth and Zechariah all trusted God, even when his plans were very different from what they expected. As they saw God at work, they found hope for the future and peace in knowing that he was with them.

Each child will need:

- Card
- A selection of art materials – see 'Action it'
- 'Explore it Ideas' handout

You will need:

- The 'Fruit of the Spirit – Peace' sign – download from **Salvationist**



Start it

The aim of today's activity is to help the children experience what it feels like when plans suddenly change. Throughout the session, they will discover that Mary's plans changed completely, but she chose to trust God.

Ask the children to find a space and listen carefully to the instructions you will give them. Give a series of simple instructions, changing them just as the children begin to follow them.

For example:

- Find a partner ... actually, stay where you are.
- Sit on the floor ... no, stand back up.

- Walk to one corner of the room ... stop! Go to a different corner instead.
- Stand in alphabetical order by your first name ... actually, stand in birthday order instead.

Ask:

- How did it feel when the instructions kept changing?
- Was it easy or difficult to know what to do?
- How did you decide what to do next?

Say:

Sometimes plans change when we least expect it. It can leave us feeling confused or uncertain because we don't know what will happen next. In today's Bible story Mary thought she knew what her future would look like. Then God gave her some completely unexpected news that changed everything. Mary had to decide whether she would trust God's plan, even though it was very different from her own.

**Sing it****Say:**

Our memory verse for this month reminds us of the amazing message of good news brought to everyone by the angels. Let's share it together.

Memory Verse:

'The angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, because I am bringing you some good news. It will be a joy to all the people. Today your Saviour was born in David's town. He is Christ, the Lord."'

(Luke 2:10-11 *ICB*)

Say:

The song for today is based around Luke 2:10-11 and should help us to learn our memory verse.

Watch:

'Motions' (Luke 2:10-11) by Saddleback Kids (2:28)

**Share it****Say:**

As we discovered in the previous activity, it isn't always easy when our plans suddenly change. We can feel unsure about what will happen next. In today's Bible story Mary's plans changed completely when an angel brought her an unexpected message from God.

Watch:

An Angel Visits Mary / Birth of Jesus (Part 1/3) by Christmas Story for Kids (stop clip at 3:00)

Ask:

Mary was engaged but wasn't married to Joseph. Why was the angel's news that Mary would have a baby such a surprising and scary idea?

Say:

The rules about marriage were very strict in the time of Mary and Joseph. Mary's future suddenly looked very different from the one she had expected. She may have been worried about what other people would think of her. She may even have been afraid of losing Joseph as her future husband.

Ask:

- What did the angel say would happen to Mary?
- How did he reassure her that everything would be OK?

Say:

Although Mary's future suddenly looked very different from the one she had imagined, she chose to trust God. We find her answer to God's request in Luke 1:35-38. We also get an update on the story of Elizabeth and Zechariah, who we met last week.

Read:

The angel said to Mary, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will cover you. The baby will be holy. He will be called the Son of God. Now listen! Elizabeth, your relative, is very old. But she is also pregnant with a son. Everyone thought she could not have a baby, but she has been pregnant for six months. God can do everything!'

Mary said, 'I am the servant girl of the Lord. Let this happen to me as you say!' Then the angel went away.

(Luke 1:35-38 *ICB*)

Ask:

How do you think the news about Elizabeth and her baby gave Mary the confidence to trust God?

Say:

Sometimes, when we are unsure about the future, it helps to remember the ways God has been faithful before. The news about Elizabeth reminded Mary that God was already at work. Seeing what God had done for Elizabeth gave Mary hope and helped her trust him with her own future.

Read:

When it was time for Elizabeth to give birth, she had a boy. Her neighbours and relatives heard how good the Lord was to her, and they rejoiced.

When the baby was eight days old, they came to circumcise him. They wanted to name him Zechariah because this was his father's name. But his mother said, 'No! He will be named John.'

The people said to Elizabeth, 'But no one in your family has this name!' Then they made signs to his father, 'What would you like to name him?'

Zechariah asked for something to write on. Then he wrote, 'His name is John.' Everyone was surprised. Then Zechariah could talk again. He began to praise God.

(Luke 1:57-64 ICB)

Ask:

- What name was everyone expecting Elizabeth and Zechariah to give their baby boy?
- What did they do instead?
- Why do you think they chose to obey God instead of following what everyone else expected?

Say:

God doesn't always work in the ways we expect, but he is always at work. Sometimes he asks us to do things differently or leads us in a direction we hadn't planned. Like Mary, Elizabeth and Zechariah, we can trust that God is with us and that his plans are always part of something bigger. When we trust him, we can have hope, even when the future feels uncertain.

 Action it

Today's activity gives the children an opportunity to get creative. The angel Gabriel reminded Mary that 'God can do everything!' (Luke 1:37 ICB). These words gave her hope that God was at work even when she didn't understand his plans.

Give the children a selection of art materials and card. Ask them to create a Christmas card using the verse 'God can do everything!' as their inspiration.

Ask:

- Who could you send this card to?
- Who might need some hope or encouragement today?
- How could this verse remind them that God is with them, whatever they are facing?

When the children have completed their cards, invite them to share them with the rest of the group and explain who they have chosen to send them to and why.



Pray it

Say:

Mary's future looked very different from the one she had imagined, but God was preparing something even better. As Mary saw God at work in Elizabeth's life, she found hope and chose to trust God's plan. That trust brought peace, even though she didn't know exactly what would happen next.

Display the 'Fruit of the Spirit – Peace' sign

Say:

Today's fruit of the Spirit is peace. When we remember that God is with us and always at work in our lives, we can experience his peace too.

Let's listen carefully to the words of this song and think about what it means to know that God is always with us.

Watch:

'God with Us' (Christmas Song) by Christian Music Collective (3:09)

Invite the children to listen carefully to the words of the song and sing along if they start to pick up the tune. As the music plays, pray that each child would know the peace that comes from remembering that God is always with us. When the music finishes, then pray with the whole group.



Explore it

Remember to send home the 'Explore it Ideas' for children and families.



Hope for Better

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Bible verses:

Luke 1:26-38, 57-64



Aim:

To know that trusting God might mean doing things differently



Today's fruit:

Peace



Encourage

In today's session you created a very special Christmas card. It reminded us that 'God can do everything' (Luke 1:37 ICB). Give the card to the special person you thought of during the session and say a short prayer for them each night this week before you go to sleep.



Share

During today's session we discovered that God was with Mary, even when her future looked very different from the one she had imagined. Watch the following Advent video together at home and talk about how God's peace can help us trust him when life doesn't go as we expect.

Watch:

Advent for Kids: Peace (Week 2) - 5 Minute Family Devotional by Minno (5:41)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=cm-TP6OmZm4



Song for the week

Watch:

'Motions' (Luke 2:10-11) by Saddleback Kids

www.youtube.com/watch?v=bPtbbgFoK1c



Memory verse

'The angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, because I am bringing you some good news. It will be a joy to all the people. Today your Saviour was born in David's town. He is Christ, the Lord."'

(Luke 2:10-11 ICB)

Kids Alive! Online – salvationarmy.org.uk/kidsalive

Kids Alive! is the UK's only weekly Christian comic. It is filled with jokes, competitions, Bible-based cartoons and much more ... and is now available to read online!



Children & Youth

Moving Hope

**Bible verses:**

Luke 2:1-7; Matthew 1:18-25

**Aim:**

To learn how the Holy Spirit was crucial to the Christmas story

**Today's fruit:**

Love



When we hear the Christmas story, we don't usually spend much time thinking about the Holy Spirit. In today's session we will discover the crucial role that the Holy Spirit played in the birth of Jesus. We will also discover who the Holy Spirit is and the part that he plays in our lives today.

Each child will need:

- Paper heart
- Pen/pencils – see 'Pray it'
- 'Explore it Ideas' handout

You will need:

- The 'Fruit of the Spirit – Love' sign – download from **Salvationist**



Start it

Our 'Start it' activity for today is full of festive sounds. Play the clip for the children and see how many sounds they can guess. You do not need to complete all 24 sounds and can stop the clip at any point. We would suggest that you only guess the first ten sounds. After the quiz, talk about how the children recognised the sounds without seeing what was making them. Explain that we don't always have to see something to know it is there.

Watch:

Guess the Christmas Sound Game (24 Festive Sounds Quiz) by Mister Teach (8:05)



Sing it

Say:

Today we are going to learn about the Holy Spirit. Here's a fun song to remind us of who the Holy Spirit is and how he helps us to live our lives as followers of Jesus.

Watch:

'Holy Spirit for Children' – **AYI the Cow** by Aji and her friends (3:28)



Share it

Ask:

- When you think about the Christmas story, who are the main characters?
- Is there anyone you think we might have forgotten?

Say:

The Holy Spirit plays an important part in the Christmas story. Before we discover the part he played in the birth of Jesus, let's find out more about who the Holy Spirit is.

Watch:

What is the Holy Spirit? A Sunday School lesson for kids! by Douglas Talks (stop clip at 3:46)

Ask:

- What did you learn about the Holy Spirit from this clip?
- Douglas said that the Holy Spirit is someone, not something. Why do you think that is important?
- How would you describe the Holy Spirit and what he does?

Say:

The Holy Spirit is God. He isn't simply God's power or an invisible force. He is God himself, helping, guiding and encouraging his people. The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit was already at work long before the shepherds arrived in Bethlehem.

Read:

The mother of Jesus Christ was Mary. And this is how the birth of Jesus came about. Mary was engaged to marry Joseph. But before they married, she learned that she was going to have a baby. She was pregnant by the power of the Holy Spirit. Mary's husband, Joseph, was a good man. He did not want to disgrace her in public, so he planned to divorce her secretly.

While Joseph thought about this, an angel of the Lord came to him in a dream. The angel said, 'Joseph, descendant of David, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife. The baby in

her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son. You will name the son Jesus. Give him that name because he will save his people from their sins.'

All this happened to make clear the full meaning of what the Lord had said through the prophet: 'The virgin will be pregnant. She will have a son, and they will name him Immanuel.' This name means 'God is with us.'

(Matthew 1:18–23 *ICB*)

Ask:

- What part did the Holy Spirit play in the birth of Jesus?
- Why do you think the angel wanted Joseph to know that the baby was from the Holy Spirit?

Say:

Joseph had a difficult decision to make. At first, he didn't understand what God was doing, but the angel explained that God had chosen Mary to be the mother of Jesus, his Son. When Joseph chose to trust God, he became part of the Christmas story.

Ask:

What special meaning was given to the name Immanuel?

Say:

The name Immanuel means 'God with us'. Through the Holy Spirit, God fulfilled his promise to come and live among his people.

Display the 'Fruit of the Spirit – Love' sign

Ask:

What do you think this story tells us about God's love?

Say:

Today's Fruit of the Spirit is love. God loved the world so much that he sent Jesus. The Holy Spirit played an important part in God's plan to send Jesus into the world. Jesus wasn't born just for Mary, Joseph or the shepherds. He came for each one of us. Christmas reminds us that God didn't stay far away. He came close to us through Jesus, and he is still with his people today.

 Action it

Explain to the children that different parts of the Christmas story are mainly told in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Having already listened to part of the Christmas story in the Gospel of Matthew, read Luke 2:1–7 to the children. Once you have done this, list the key parts of the story and any tricky names that the children need to remember. Ask the children to create a comic strip or storyboard version that they could share with someone who does not know the Christmas story.

Read:

At that time, Augustus Caesar sent an order to all people in the countries that were under Roman rule. The order said that they must list their names in a register. This was the first registration taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And everyone went to their own towns to be registered.

So Joseph left Nazareth, a town in Galilee. He went to the town of Bethlehem in Judea. This town was known as the town of David. Joseph went there because he was from the family of David. Joseph registered with Mary because she was engaged to marry him. (Mary was now pregnant.) While Joseph and Mary were in Bethlehem, the time came for her to have the baby. She gave birth to her first son. There were no rooms left in the inn. So she wrapped the baby with cloths and laid him in a box where animals are fed.

(Luke 2:1-7 ICB)

Say:

Matthew and Luke both tell the Christmas story. Matthew helps us understand how God was working through the Holy Spirit, while Luke tells us what happened when Jesus was born.

The message of the good news of Jesus shines through the Christmas story. Let's share our memory verse for this month to remind us of its message.

Memory Verse:

'The angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, because I am bringing you some good news. It will be a joy to all the people. Today your Saviour was born in David's town. He is Christ, the Lord.'"

(Luke 2:10-11 ICB)

**Pray it****Leader's notes:**

Give each child a paper heart.

Say:

Today we discovered that the Holy Spirit played an important part in sending Jesus into the world. The Holy Spirit is still with God's people today, helping us to become more like Jesus. He helps us to love other people in the way that God loves us.

Think of one person you could show God's love to this week. It might be someone in your family, a friend, a teacher or someone who sometimes feels left out.

Write or draw their name on your heart. As you do, think of one way you could show God's love to them this week.

Allow a few moments for the children to write or draw on their paper heart and then pray with the group.

Pray:

Holy Spirit, thank you for the important part you played in sending Jesus into the world. Thank you that you are still with your people today. Please help us to show your love to the person we have written or drawn on our heart this week. Help us to be kind, caring and loving, just as Jesus is.

Amen.

Explore it

Remember to send home the 'Explore it Ideas' for children and families.



Moving Hope

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Bible verses:

Luke 2:1-7;
Matthew 1:18-25



Aim:

To learn how the Holy Spirit was crucial to the Christmas story



Today's fruit:

Love



Create

Keep adding to the comic strip you started in today's Explore it session. Which part of the Christmas story will you draw next? See if you can tell the whole Christmas story.



Song for the week

Watch:

'Holy Spirit for Children' - AYI the Cow by Ayi and her friends

www.youtube.com/watch?v=T4eW2Huizul



Share

Ask everyone in your family:

- Who are the main characters in the Christmas story?
- Did anyone remember the Holy Spirit?
- What important part did the Holy Spirit play?

Then share what you discovered about the Holy Spirit in this week's Explore it session and explain why he was so important to the Christmas story.



Memory verse

'The angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, because I am bringing you some good news. It will be a joy to all the people. Today your Saviour was born in David's town. He is Christ, the Lord."'

(Luke 2:10-11 ICB)

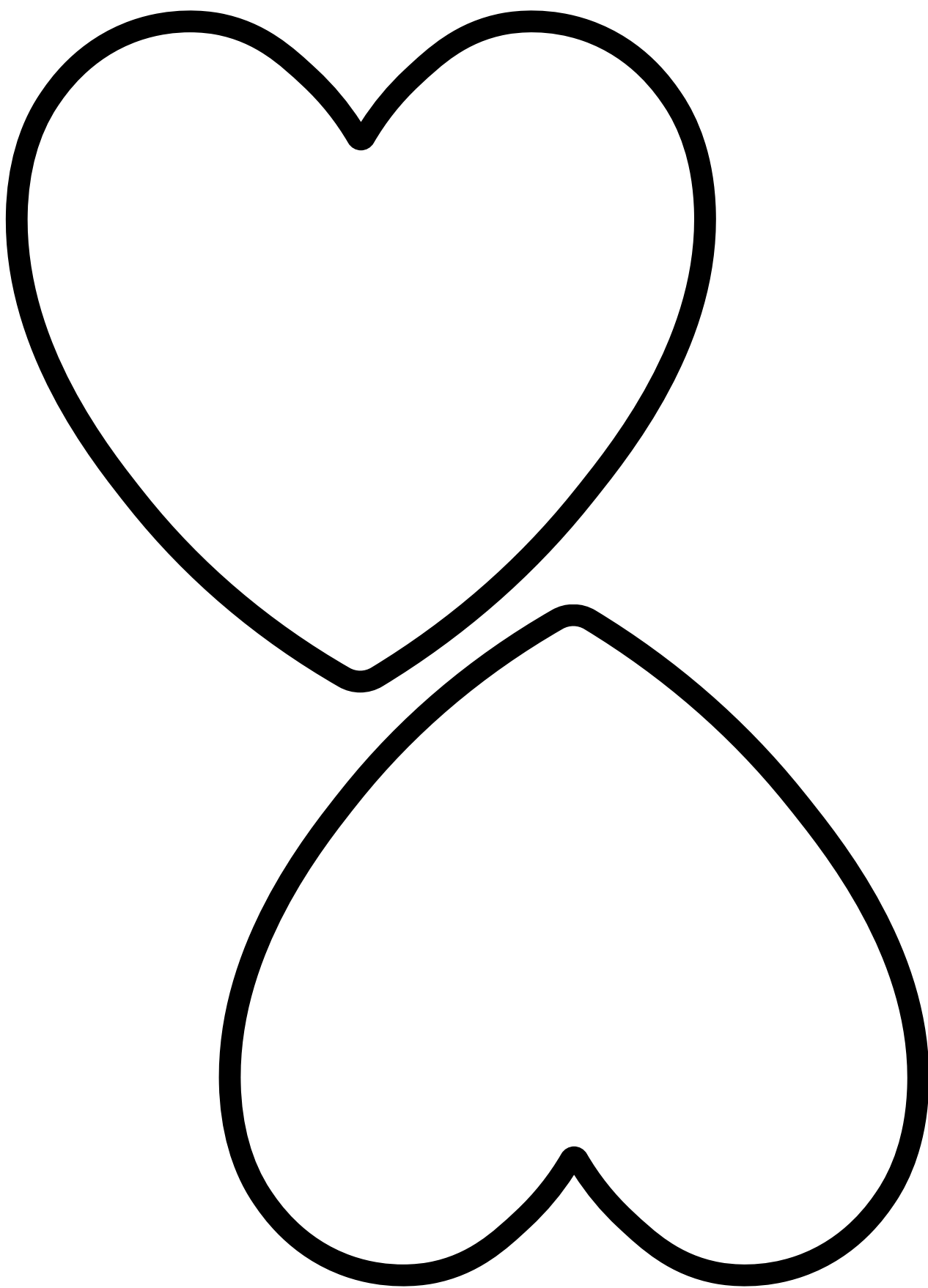
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Children
& Youth



Hope is Real

**Bible verses:**

Luke 2:8-20

**Aim:**

As the shepherds go into Bethlehem, they find a hope that is real, trustworthy and for everyone

**Today's fruit:**

Joy



In this week's session the angels appeared to shepherds as they looked after their sheep on the hillside. When the angels announced the birth of Jesus, the shepherds chose to trust the message and hurried to Bethlehem. There they met Jesus, the promised Saviour, and left filled with joy. Their story reminds us that Jesus offers everyone a hope that is real and can always be trusted.

Each child will need:

- Wooden lollypop sticks
- String
- Brown card
- Colouring pens / felt-tips
- Glue – See 'Action it'
- 'Explore it Ideas' handout

You will need:

- The 'Fruit of the Spirit – Joy' sign – download from **Salvationist**



Start it

Say:

Over the past few weeks we have been discovering different parts of the Christmas story. Before we begin today's session, let's see how much everyone can remember.

Quiz:

1. Who waited many years for God to answer their prayers for a baby boy? Zechariah and Elizabeth
2. Who visited Mary to tell her she would have a baby? The angel Gabriel
3. Who played an important part in bringing Jesus into the world? The Holy Spirit
4. What special name did the angel say Jesus would be called? Immanuel
5. What does the name Immanuel mean? God with us
6. Who were the first people to hear the good news that Jesus had been born? The shepherds

Say:

The last question gave us a clue about the story we will be exploring today. Let's discover what happened when the shepherds first met Jesus.

**Sing it****Say:**

Our song for today shares the story of the shepherds on the hillside.

Watch:

'It was on a Starry Night' by King's Kids Worship (2:15)

**Share it****Ask:**

In our session last week, we discovered that the name 'Immanuel' given to Jesus had a special meaning. What was it?

Say:

Immanuel means 'God with us', and this promise carries on in our story this week.

Read:

That night, some shepherds were in the fields nearby watching their sheep. An angel of the Lord stood before them. The glory of the Lord was shining around them, and suddenly they became very frightened.

(Luke 2:8-9 ICB)

Say:

We have just listened to Luke 2:8-9 and everyone here should know what comes next! We've finally reached our memory verse. Let's share it together.

Memory Verse:

‘The angel said to them, “Don’t be afraid, because I am bringing you some good news. It will be a joy to all the people. Today your Saviour was born in David’s town. He is Christ, the Lord.”’

(Luke 2:10–11 *ICB*)

Ask:

Why was it surprising that the angels came to visit the shepherds?

Say:

The shepherds were ordinary working people rather than kings, rulers or important leaders. Yet God chose them to hear the good news first, reminding us that the hope found in Jesus is for everyone.

Read:

‘This is how you will know him: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a feeding box.’

Then a very large group of angels from heaven joined the first angel. All the angels were praising God, saying:

**‘Give glory to God in heaven,
and on earth let there be peace to the people who please God.’**

Then the angels left the shepherds and went back to heaven. The shepherds said to each other, ‘Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened. We will see this thing the Lord told us about.’

(Luke 2:12–15 *ICB*)

Ask the children to close their eyes and imagine what it would have been like to be a shepherd on the hillside. While their eyes are closed, you could play a piece of choir music, like the ‘Hallelujah Chorus’ (from Handel’s Messiah) to help them imagine the scene. Ask them to describe what they saw and felt in their imagination.

Ask:

- How do you think the shepherds felt after the angels disappeared?
- If you had been one of the shepherds, would you have believed what the angels said? Why / why not?
- Why do you think the shepherds went straight away instead of waiting until the morning?

Say:

The shepherds trusted the message they had heard. They didn’t stay in the fields wondering if it was true. They trusted what God had told them and travelled to Bethlehem. When they arrived at the stable, they found everything just as the angel had said.

Ask:

How do you think the shepherds felt as they travelled home after meeting Jesus?

Display the 'Fruit of the Spirit – Joy' sign.

Say:

Today's Fruit of the Spirit is joy. When the shepherds met Jesus, they returned home praising God, filled with joy because they had met the promised Saviour. When we put our trust in Jesus, we can have that same joy and hope today.

Action it

For the 'Action it' activity, the children are going to make a Christmas tree decoration to remind them that Jesus is our hope. Use the image on the right for an idea for a decoration using wooden lollypop sticks. You can use this idea as a starting point, but encourage the children to include the words 'Jesus is our hope' on their decoration. The children can then take their decoration home and hang it on their Christmas tree as a reminder of what they have learnt today.



Pray it

Say:

Throughout this month's *Explore it* sessions we have discovered that we can have hope because God always keeps his promises.

For our time of prayer, we're going to sing a song together that reminds us that our hope is found in Jesus.

Watch:

'Hope' – Kids Worship Song by Allstars Kids Club (3:50)

Pray:

Dear God, thank you for everything we have discovered together during Advent.

Thank you that Zechariah and Elizabeth showed us how to wait patiently and trust your promises.

Thank you that Mary said yes to your plan, even when she didn't know what would happen next.

Thank you for the important part the Holy Spirit played in the birth of Jesus.

Thank you that the shepherds found Jesus just as the angels had promised and discovered that the good news was for everyone.

As we celebrate Christmas, help us to remember that Jesus is our hope.

Help us to trust you, share your love with others and remember that you are always with us.

Amen.

Explore it

Remember to send home the 'Explore it Ideas' for children and families.



Hope is Real

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Bible verses:
Luke 2:8-20



Aim:
As the shepherds go into Bethlehem, they find a hope that is real, trustworthy and for everyone



Today's fruit:
Joy



Dance

Dance and sing along to the dance version of our prayer song from this week's *Explore it*. Let the words remind you that Jesus is our hope.

Watch:

'Hope' (Dance Mix) – Kids Worship Song by Allstars Kids Club

www.youtube.com/watch?v=PoNt6zWq1qg



Create

We started this week's *Explore it* with a Christmas quiz. Create your own quiz to try out with the people at home over Christmas.



Memory verse

'The angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, because I am bringing you some good news. It will be a joy to all the people. Today your Saviour was born in David's town. He is Christ, the Lord."'

(Luke 2:10-11 ICB)



Song for the week

Watch:

'It was on a Starry Night' by King's Kids Worship

www.youtube.com/watch?v=tC9t51AKgZo

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