



A Family Advent Calendar on a Chain

Dear Parents,

We invite you to lead your family in making *A Family Advent Calendar on a Chain* with your children. Attached are two pages of dated cutout figures and a page with “*The Nativity Story*.”

Beginning on **December 11**, help your children cut out one figure each day and attach it to the chain link for that day. Since each figure is dated, you will have no trouble matching it with the appropriate link. While a child is attaching the figure to the chain, read the part of the Nativity story pertaining to the figure of the day.

While our children may be provided with many Christmas activities between now and Christmas in preschool or public school, most of these will be of a secular nature. This Advent Activity, with its focus on the story of the birth of Christ, will [1] serve as a daily reminder of the religious meaning of Christmas, and [2] familiarize our children with the story of the Nativity.

As we tell the Nativity story there are words that are unfamiliar to our children because they speak of a time and place removed from our daily experiences. We hope that this simple retelling of the story will provide definition and visual examples that will help make the story more meaningful. In addition, this Advent chain-calendar will help our children count down the days until Christmas in a spiritual way as they wait to complete the chain that they can hang on the tree or elsewhere in the home.

We wish you and your family all the joy and promise that this holiday offers, and we hope that sharing in this project brings us all closer to each other and to the meaning of Christ's birth.

Sunday Church School Director and Staff

Needed Materials

- Colored paper
- Scissors to cut the strips and the people and items
- 60 or more - 6”x ¾” strips of colored paper; you can add more links afterwards if needed
- Tape to connect the paper strips together to make the links of the chain
- Markers, crayons or colored pencils to add color each of the people and items
- Glue to attach the people and items from the story to the chain
- Marker or pen to write the dates on the paper chain

Directions

1. Cut the 60 strips of paper for the chain links
2. Tape the strips together to make the chain links
3. Beginning with the 5th link mark the first date December 11.
4. On every 4th link mark the next date, December 12, December 14, ... until you get to December 24

THE NATIVITY STORY - An Advent Calendar

December 11--MARY--This is Mary, Jesus' mother. She was a very good person - she was kind and gentle. She also loved God very much. She was just the right person to be Jesus' mother.

December 12--ANGEL--This is an angel. He is a special angel. His name is Gabriel, and God often sent him to deliver messages to people. Gabriel came to Mary one day to tell her that God wanted her to do something very important - to be Jesus' mother. Gabriel told Mary that she would have a baby soon, and the baby's name would be Jesus and the baby would be God's son.

December 13--JOSEPH—This is Joseph, and he was Mary's husband. He was a very nice person. He took very good care of Mary.

December 14--DONKEY— This is a donkey. A very long time ago, when Mary, Joseph, and Jesus lived, there were not any cars or buses or trains or airplanes. When people wanted to take a trip, they either walked or rode on donkeys. Mary and Joseph had to take a trip, even though Mary was going to have a baby any day.

December 15—OUTLINE OF BETHLEHEM—This is part of the town of Bethlehem. That is where Mary and Joseph were going on their trip. It is the place where Jesus was born. There were a lot of people from out of town in Bethlehem when Joseph and Mary got there. The town was very, very crowded.

December 16—INNKEEPER—Another name for a hotel is an "inn." The man or woman who runs an inn is called an innkeeper. When Mary and Joseph got to Bethlehem, they needed to find a place to stay, but Bethlehem was very crowded. Mary and Joseph were very tired, and Mary was ready to have her baby. However, every place, every inn, where they stopped was filled, and the innkeepers told them that there was not any room for them.

December 17—STABLE—This is a stable. A stable is like a barn. It is a place people keep animals, like cows and sheep and goats. Because Mary and Joseph could not find any place else to stay in Bethlehem, they had to stay in a stable.

December 18—STAR— Because Jesus was the Son of God, a very special thing happened when Jesus was born. A very bright star appeared in the sky. It told people that Jesus was a very important and a very special person.

December 19--WISE MAN—A wise man is a very smart person. Three wise men saw the bright star in the sky, and they knew someone very important was born. They traveled very far to find this baby. They brought presents so they could give them to the baby.

December 20—SHEEP—On the hills around the city of Bethlehem, people kept sheep. The sheep grazed or ate the grass on the hills. On the night when Jesus was born, there were many flocks of sheep grazing on the hills around Bethlehem.

December 21—SHEPHERD—A shepherd is a person who cares for sheep. He makes sure they have enough to eat; he takes care of them if they get sick, and he keeps away other animals that might hurt the sheep. On the night Jesus was born, there were many shepherds on the hills around Bethlehem watching over the flocks of sheep.

December 22—ANGEL—Do you remember that sometimes God sends angels to give people messages? Well, on the night that Jesus was born, God sent an angel with a message for the shepherds. The shepherds were scared when they first saw the angel, but the angel told them not to be afraid because he was bringing them very good news--that a very special person was born that night, a person who would help them and bring them closer to God. The angel told them that they could find the baby in a manger. The shepherds went to Bethlehem to see the baby. It was Jesus.

December 23—MANGER—A manger is a box on legs that holds food for animals. When Jesus was born, Mary made a bed for him in a manger, like this one.

December 24—CHRIST CHILD—Christmas is the day we celebrate Jesus' birthday. Jesus is very special because He is God's son. Jesus was born a long time ago. He grew up and was a teacher. He taught people about God and about the way we should act to be closer to God—to be kind to other people, to love God and to love other people.

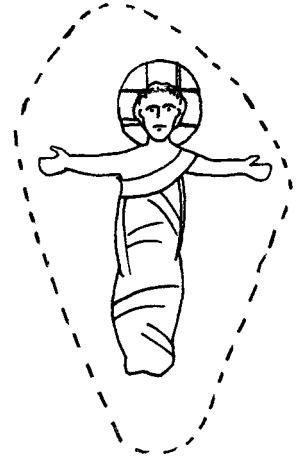
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Reformatted by Phyllis Meshel Onest, M.Div., Director of Religious Education, Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh, 2004.*



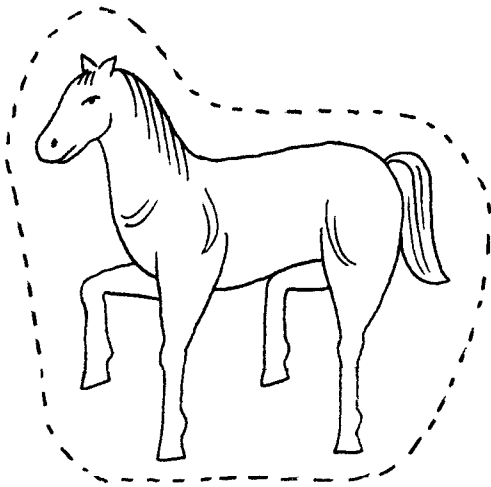
December 11



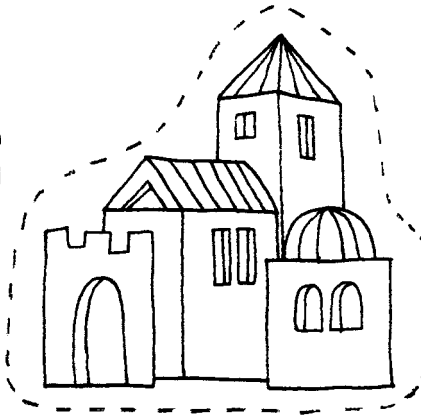
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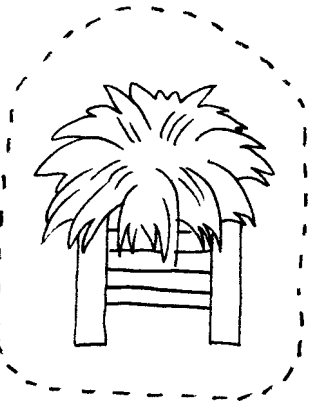
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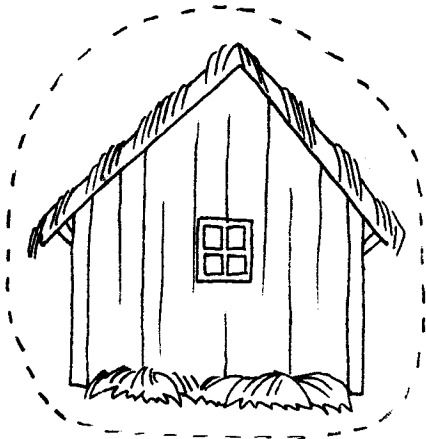
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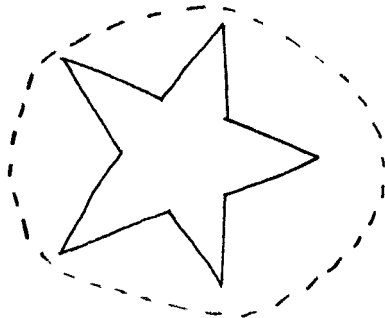
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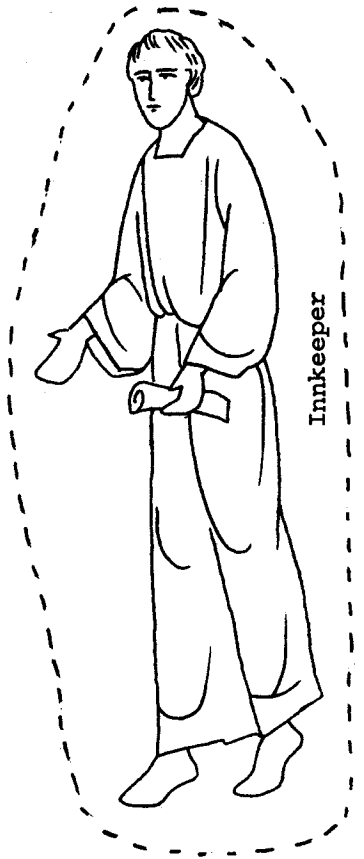
December 23



December 17

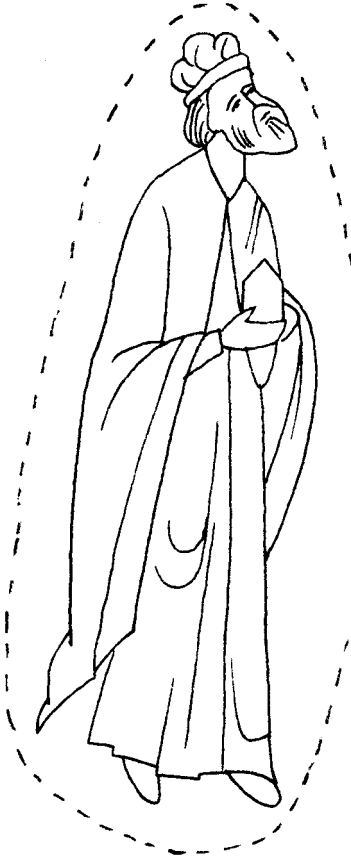


December 18

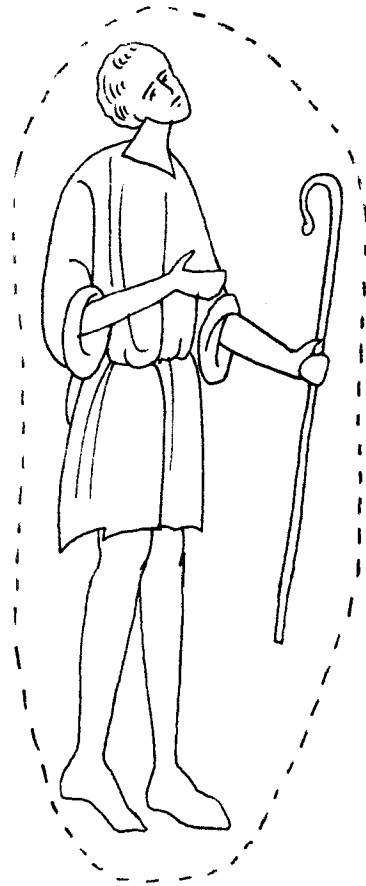


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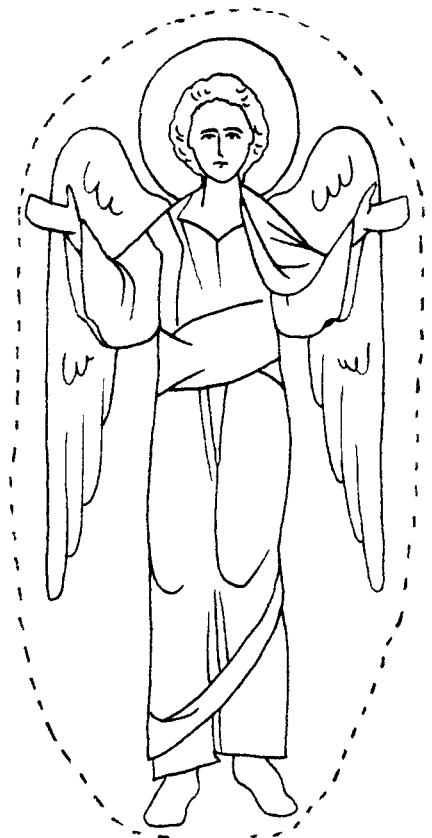
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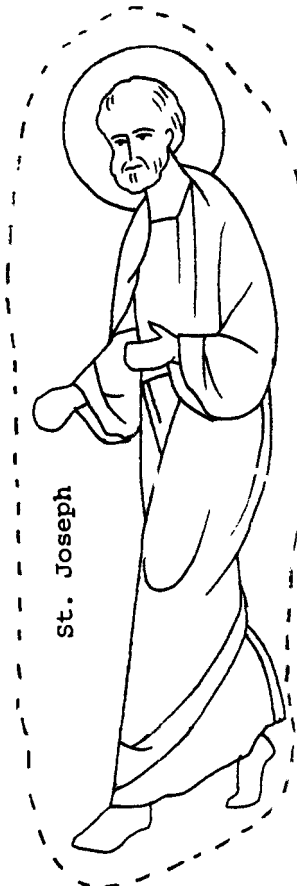
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December 21

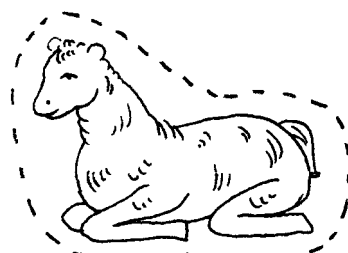


December 22



St. Joseph

December 13



December 20