

Teaching Aids

SESSION 1

Letter to Families



Dear Families,

As we begin a new quarter, Christmas activities are filling the calendar. It's so easy to get busy and rush around with so much on our schedules. We invite you to take a breath. Slow down and find some meaningful ways to connect as a family. The following are a few suggestions for you.

Appreciate Advent

Instead of just focusing on Christmas activities, take time to also appreciate Advent. Advent is a time of anticipation of the birth of Jesus. Create a simple Advent wreath as a family. Set a time each week to light one of the four candles, representing hope, peace, joy, and love. As you light the candle, take turns sharing one way that you've experienced that week's word in your life.

Pray Together

After Christmas children will focus on praying for two things. They will be asking God to "help me" and "help others." Try to pray with your child before they go to bed each night. Have them name one way they want God to help them, such as with a spelling test, a problem with a friend, or an upcoming recital or sporting event. Then have your child name one person they want to pray for, such as a family member, friend, or leader in the community, in the country, or in the world.

Another possible idea for praying for God to help others is to select one person that you will pray for every day for a month. Do not tell the person you are praying for them. Your child might enjoy finding out more about the person you chose, as well as watching to see how their prayers might be making a difference in that person's life.

Talk Together

You are a spiritual leader and example for your child. You may not see yourself this way. You might not know every Bible story or feel confident to answer every faith question. That's okay. Start by telling your child about God's great love for them! That is an essential message that provides a foundation to learn and grow in faith.

May God bless your family as you grow in faith together!



SESSION 2

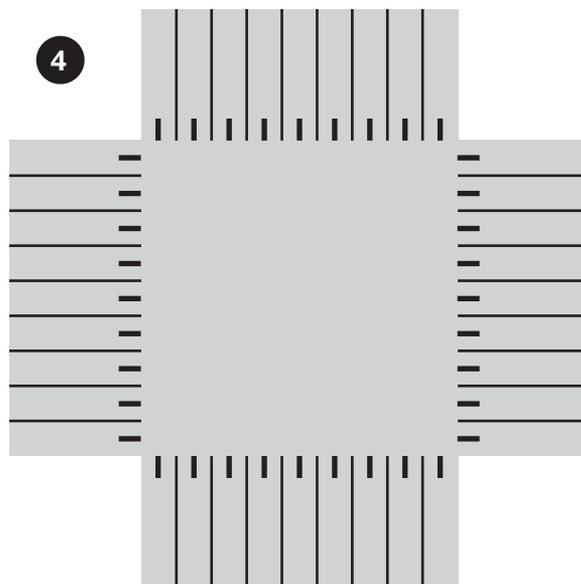
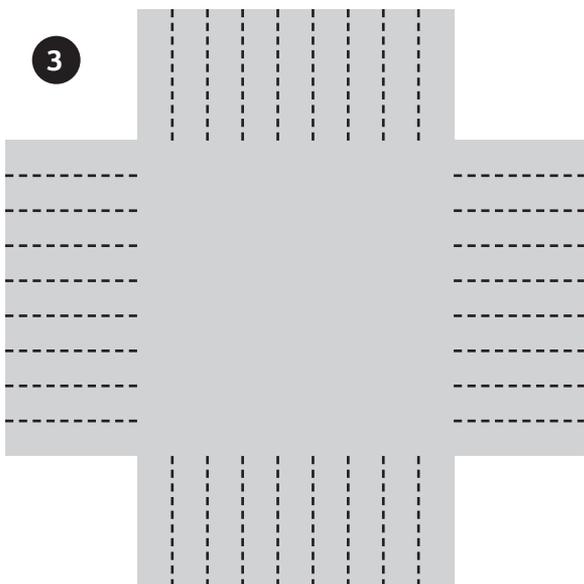
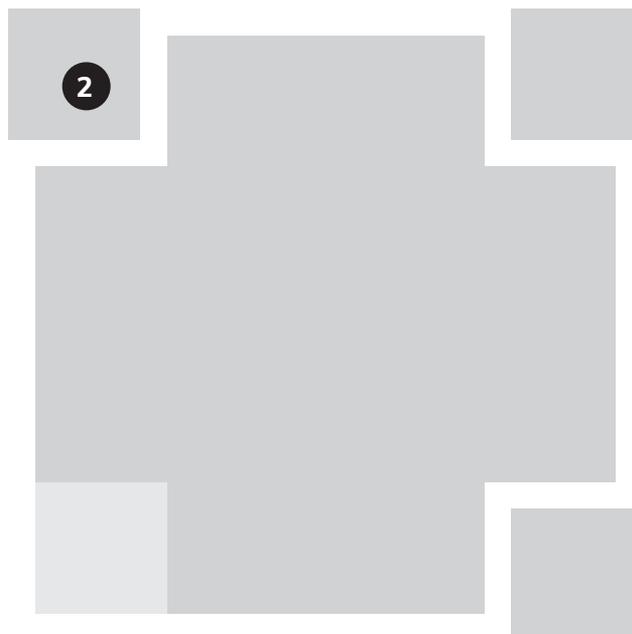
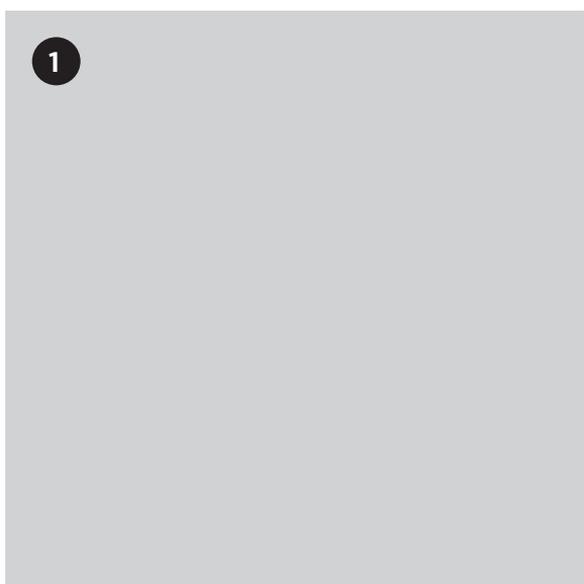
Fleece Blanket Instructions

Supplies

- 1.5 yd / 1.4 m polar fleece fabric (up to 60 in / 1.5 m wide)
- Ruler or tape measure
- Scissors
- Seam ripper

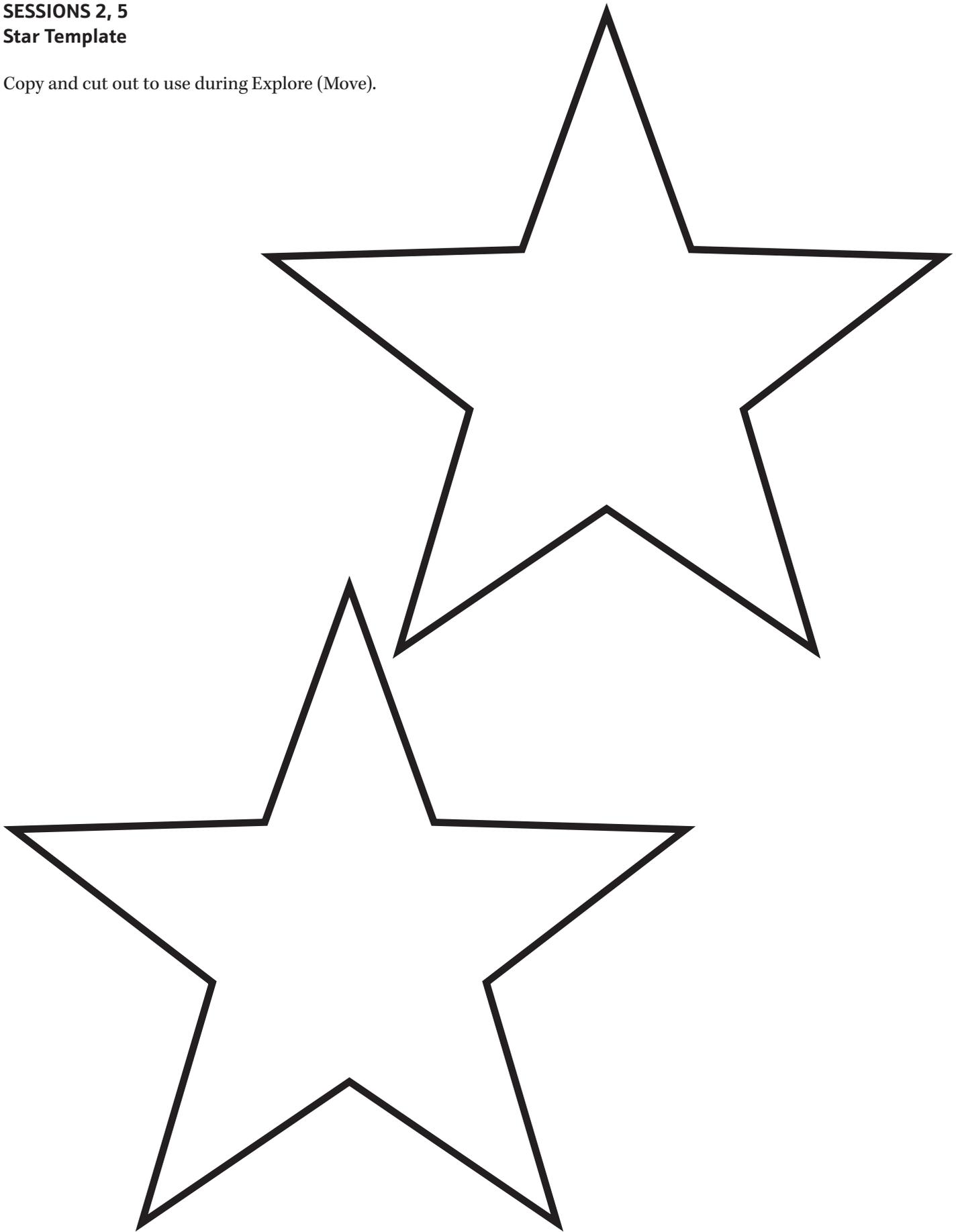
Instructions

1. Spread the fleece flat on the floor or a large table. Make sure the edges are even and the corners are square.
2. Cut a 4 in / 10 cm square from each corner of the fleece. You can use the corner pieces for another project.
3. Cut fringes around all sides of the blanket. Make the strips $\frac{1}{2}$ –1 in / 1.25–2.5 cm wide.
4. Cut a tiny slit at the top (blanket end) of each fringe.
5. Loop the end of each fringe up through the slit and pull it tight.



SESSIONS 2, 5
Star Template

Copy and cut out to use during Explore (Move).



SESSIONS 2-5

"Act It" Cards

Copy and cut apart to use with the Advent Calendar Game.

Read your Bible.	Pray.	Sing a worship song.	Rock a baby.
Sleep.	Bake cookies for a neighbor.	Light Advent candles.	Drink hot chocolate.
Put on warm clothes.	Cut out paper snowflakes.	Give someone a hug.	Wrap Christmas presents.
Write a Christmas card.	Give a message like an angel.	Travel while pregnant like Mary.	Have a dream like Joseph.
Be surprised by an angel.	Decorate a tree.	Hang up Christmas lights.	Eat a candy cane.

SESSIONS 2-5

Retell Cards

Copy and cut apart to use with the Advent Calendar Game.

<p>1 What is the first word of the message God gave to the sad people through Isaiah? <i>Comfort</i></p>	<p>1 God said the valleys would be lifted. What was going to happen to the mountains and hills? <i>They would be brought down or brought low.</i></p>	<p>3 What two women were pregnant at the same time? <i>Elizabeth and Mary</i></p>	<p>3 What did the angel say about God when he told Mary that Elizabeth was six months pregnant? <i>God can do anything!</i></p>
<p>1 What did King Nebuchadnezzar destroy? <i>City of Jerusalem and Solomon's temple</i></p>	<p>1 Isaiah wrote that the grass withers and the flower fades. What will stand forever? <i>The word of our God</i></p>	<p>3 What angel visited Mary? <i>Gabriel</i></p>	<p>3 What happened inside Elizabeth when Mary greeted her? <i>Her unborn baby jumped.</i></p>
<p>1 Where were the people of Judah living when God spoke through Isaiah? <i>Babylon</i></p>	<p>1 Who is like a shepherd? <i>God</i></p>	<p>3 What king was Jesus' ancestor? <i>King David</i></p>	<p>3 How long did Mary stay with Elizabeth? <i>3 months</i></p>
<p>1 True or False: In Isaiah, preparing the way of the Lord means making a straight highway in the desert. <i>True</i></p>	<p>2 True or False: Joseph wanted to embarrass Mary in front of everyone. <i>False</i></p>	<p>2 What name was given for Jesus? <i>Emmanuel</i></p>	<p>2 What did the angel say Jesus would save people from? <i>Their sins</i></p>
<p>2 What did Mary learn before she got married? <i>She was going to have a baby by God's Holy Spirit.</i></p>	<p>2 True or False: An angel came to Joseph in a dream. <i>True</i></p>	<p>2 What does Emmanuel mean? <i>God is with us.</i></p>	<p>2 Who was engaged to Joseph? <i>Mary</i></p>

SESSIONS 2-5

Retell Cards (continued)

Copy and cut apart to use with the Advent Calendar Game.

<p>4</p> <p>Where did Mary and Joseph travel to for the census? <i>Bethlehem</i></p>	<p>4</p> <p>What words did the angel use to describe Jesus? <i>A Savior, Christ the Lord</i></p>	<p>5</p> <p>Where did the wise men come from? <i>The East</i></p>	<p>5</p> <p>What kinds of gifts did the wise men bring to the new king? <i>Gold, frankincense, and myrrh</i></p>
<p>4</p> <p>What kind of bed did Mary put her baby in? <i>A bed of hay</i></p>	<p>4</p> <p>What did the shepherds do after they saw Jesus? <i>They told everyone the good news about Jesus.</i></p>	<p>5</p> <p>Who was worried when he heard about a child born to be king? <i>King Herod</i></p>	<p>5</p> <p>What were the wise men warned about in a dream? <i>They were to not go back to King Herod.</i></p>
<p>4</p> <p>Whom did the angels visit in the fields near Bethlehem? <i>Shepherds</i></p>	<p>4</p> <p>What did Mary do after the shepherds left? <i>Think and wonder</i></p>	<p>5</p> <p>What were the wise men following? <i>A star</i></p>	<p>5</p> <p>What did the chief priests and the teachers of the Law tell King Herod? <i>The Messiah will be born in Bethlehem</i></p>

SESSION 5

Star Clues

Copy and cut out the slips. Use during Explore (Move).

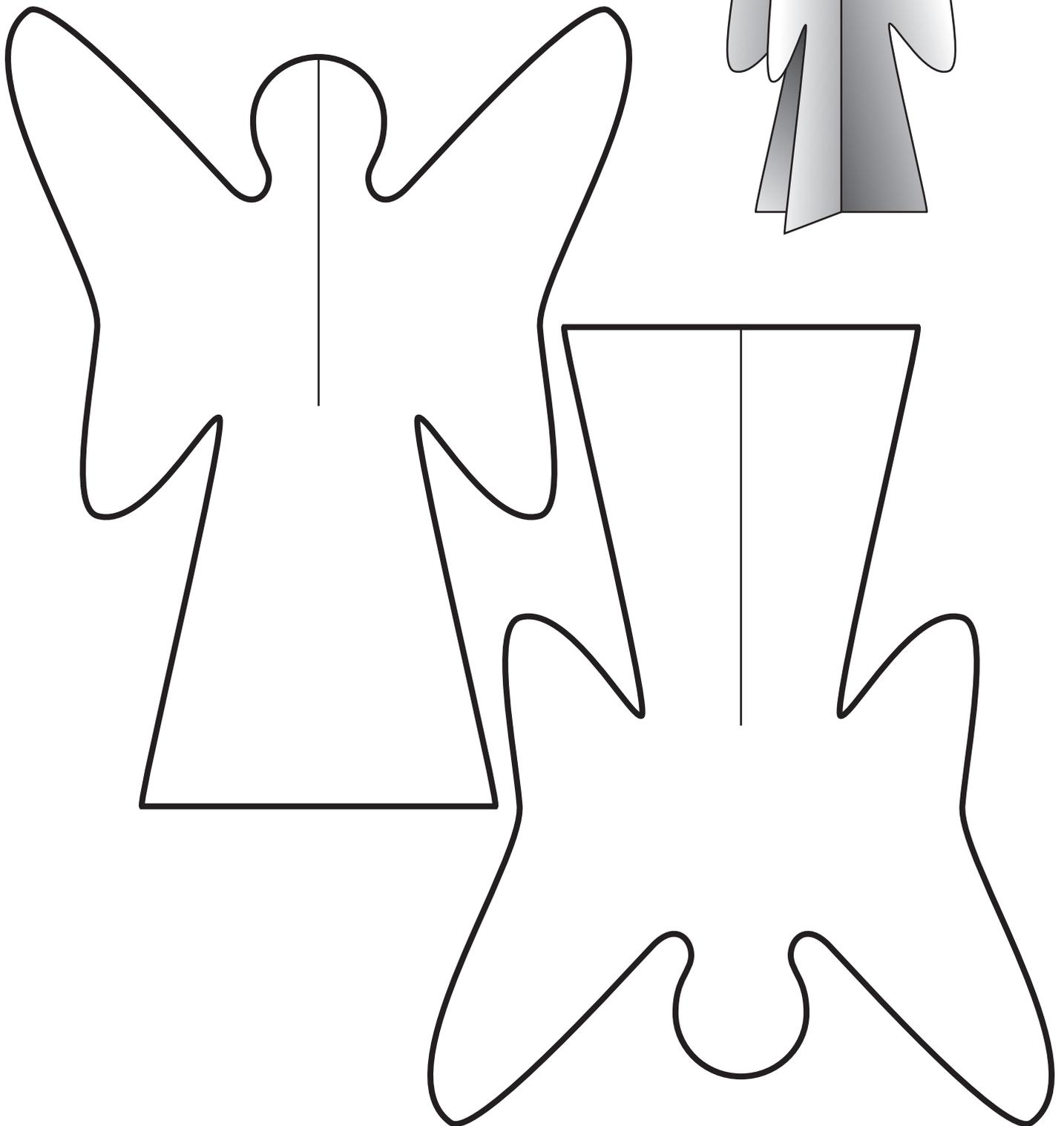
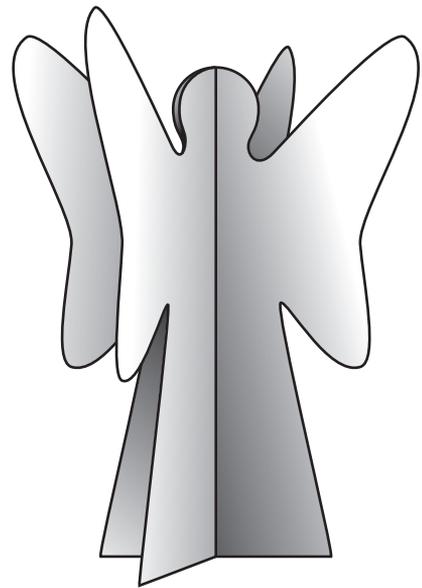
<p>Go to the place where a leader stands in your church.</p>
<p>Bethlehem means "house of bread." Where do people keep bread?</p>
<p>Find a Bible with a star in the book of Micah (the prophet's words in today's story).</p>

<p>God spoke in a dream. Go to the place where babies might sleep during a worship service.</p>
<p>Return to your room by a different path to find the final star.</p>

SESSION 4

Angel Ornaments

Make enough copies so each child can have a pair of angels for Explore (Create). Follow the instructions there to make a sample ornament.



SESSION 4

Images for Retelling the Story

Print so each child has one set of story figures to use to retell the story on page 4A of Younger Elementary Booklets.



Illustrations by Angela Hawkins

SESSION 6

"Bringing Our Cares to Jesus" Items

Use this list of items to guide a conversation during Explore (Make Peace). Hold up an item (or related items) and ask what it might represent. Then have volunteers place the items by the "Jesus Cares" sign.

- **Medical supplies** (*thermometer, medicine, adhesive bandages*): Jesus cares when we are sick.
- **Pictures of emotions** (*sadness, joy, anger*): Jesus cares about our sadness/joy/anger.
- **Picture of a family/friends group**: Jesus cares about our family and friends.
- **Hobbies** (*sports equipment, musical instrument, gaming item*): Jesus cares about our interests and hobbies.
- **Stuffed animal toy**: Jesus cares about our pets.
- **School items** (*books, folders, notebook*): Jesus cares about our joys and struggles at school.

SESSION 7

Animal Instinct

How do you respond when there is a conflict? Take the quiz to find out.

1. Your two best friends are having a fight. What do you do?

- A. Stay away from your friends while they work it out.
- B. Think carefully about what to say to your friends to help them try to work it out.
- C. You can't take sides—they are both your friends!
- D. Get in the middle of it.

2. Someone is trying to bully a classmate on the playground. What do you do?

- A. Move away. The bully might come and find you next.
- B. Pull the bully aside later and tell the person that what he or she are doing is wrong.
- C. Stand up for your classmate and tell the bully to stop.
- D. Yell at the bully to leave.

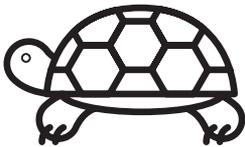
3. Your older sister went into your room without permission and took a favorite game. What do you do?

- A. Say nothing. She'll put it back eventually, or you can just take it back without her noticing.
- B. Say nothing, but plan to get revenge. Maybe you should take something of hers . . .
- C. You don't want a fight, but going into your room is too much. You go tell your mom.
- D. March in her room and grab it back, yelling at her loudly.

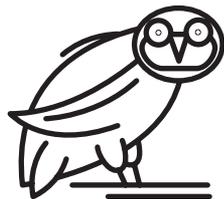
4. You got a bad grade on your report card. What will you do?

- A. You don't want to be yelled at, so you hide it in your backpack until you can figure out how to tell your parents.
- B. You pull your parents aside after dinner to quietly show them the report card.
- C. You leave the report card on your parents' bed so that they will see it when you are not around.
- D. You show it to your parents and complain that the teacher is not fair.

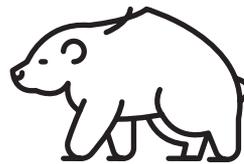
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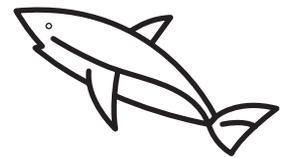
Mostly A's: You are a turtle. You tend to respond to conflict by hiding from it or waiting it out. You also think carefully before responding.



Mostly B's: You are an owl. You tend to respond to conflict by being cautious when making choices about what action to take. You take action quietly, but you can do a lot of damage with your words and actions.



Mostly C's: You are a bear. You avoid conflict when it is possible but will become angry if you are provoked enough. You are very protective of people and spaces that you feel are yours.

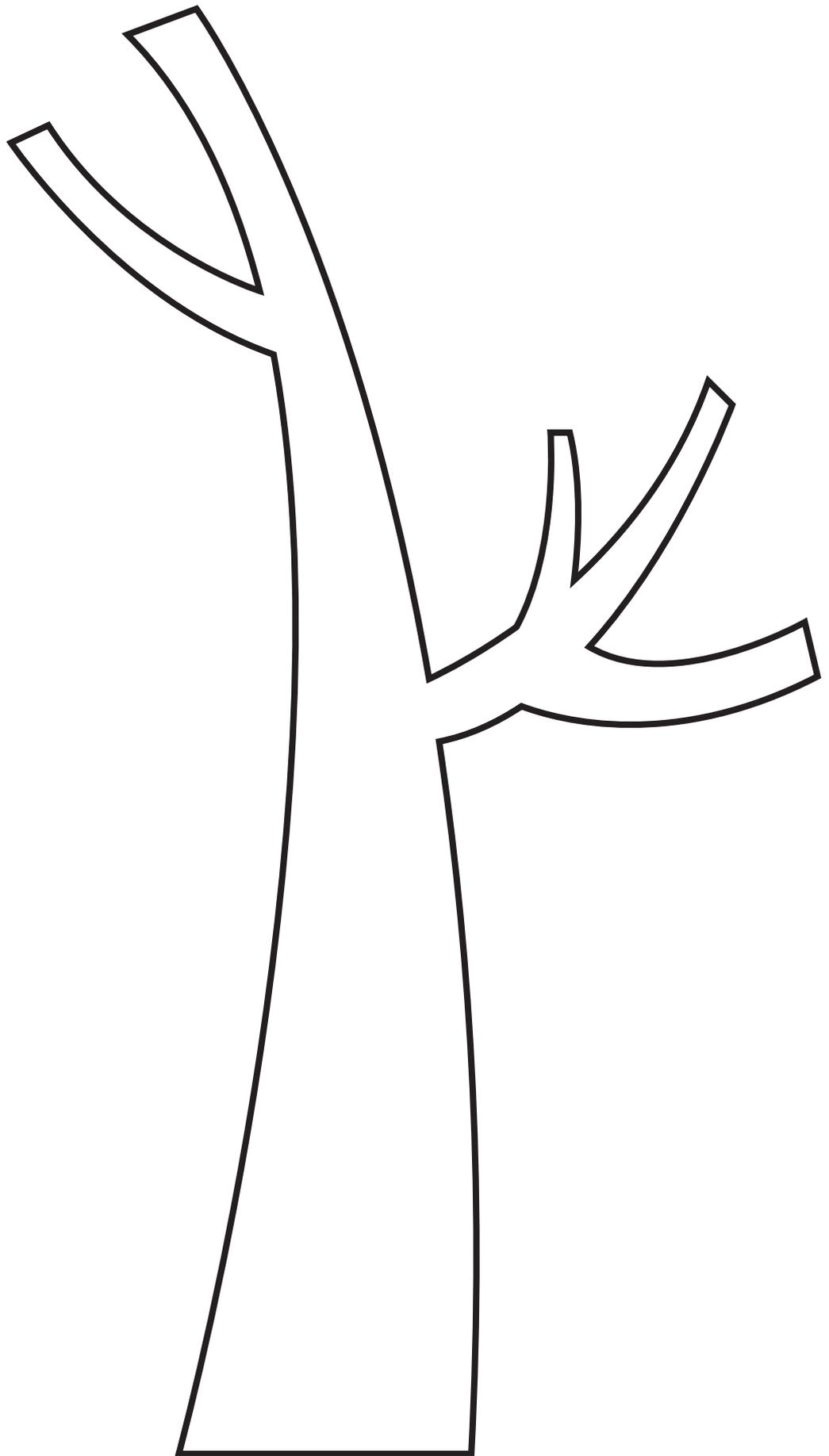


Mostly D's: You are likely a shark. You can be very forceful and stubborn. You are drawn to conflict. If you are provoked, you will stick up for yourself.

SESSION 9

Tree

Copy this tree pattern onto card stock to use during Explore (Create).



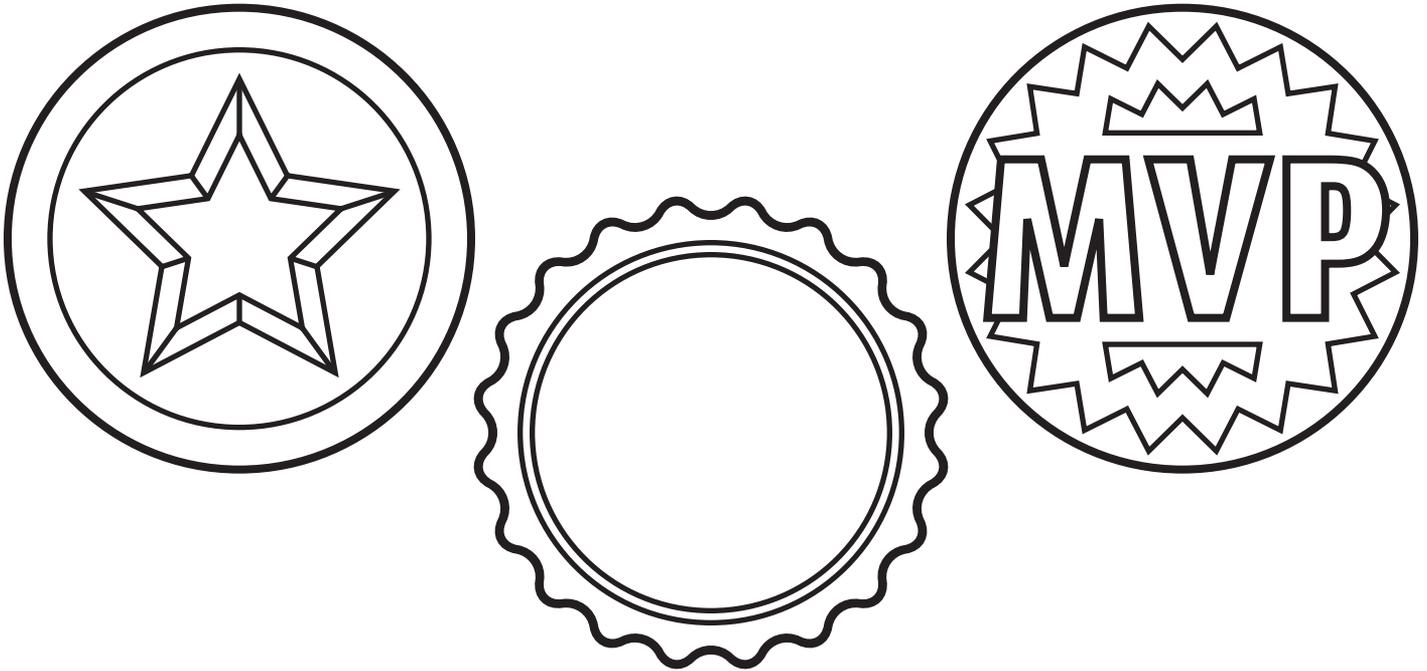
SESSIONS 10, 13
Bible Memory Strips

Copy and cut apart to use during Connect to the Bible.

The kingdom of heaven	is like a mustard seed
that someone took	and sowed in his field;
it is the smallest	of all the seeds,
but when it has grown	it is the greatest
of shrubs and	becomes a tree,
so that the birds	of the air come
and make nests	in its branches.
—Matthew	13:31b–32 (NRSVue)

SESSION 11
MVP Medals

Copy and cut out to use during Explore (Create).



SESSION 12
Gift Questions

Copy and cut apart to put in the wrapped gift box during Connect to Each Other.

Name a gift you gave to someone.	What is one thing you're good at?
What is something you're looking forward to?	Name a gift someone gave to you.
What was a good thing that happened this past week?	What is one thing you like to do during your free time?
What is one way you helped someone this past week?	What is one way you could help someone next week?
Name a time from this past week when you were surprised by something.	Name a time from this past week when you saw something that seemed unfair.

SESSION 13

"Match Game" Cards

Copy and cut out a set of cards for each child. Shuffle all the cards together and use for Explore (Retell).

 <p>I was hungry</p>	 <p>and you gave me food.</p>	 <p>I was thirsty</p>
 <p>and you gave me something to drink.</p>	 <p>I was a stranger</p>	 <p>and you welcomed me.</p>
 <p>I needed clothing</p>	 <p>and you gave me clothing.</p>	 <p>I was sick</p>
 <p>and you took care of me.</p>		

Illustrations by Shelley Dieterichs