

Teaching Aids

SESSION 1

Letter to Families



Dear Families,

Welcome to the season of Advent, a time of preparation for the coming of Jesus at Christmas! Your child will bring home an Advent Calendar and coloring page to use during the month of December. As you complete each daily activity, your child can color in the box. This is a fun way to prepare for Jesus' birth as a family. There is also a coloring page for Christmas.

After Christmas, children will begin an exploration of Jesus' life and teachings from the Gospel of Matthew. They will meet Jesus the healer, the teacher, and the storyteller. These passages include eight parables, such as the two builders, the mustard seed, and stories of hidden treasure!

Retell Bible Stories

Parables are great for children. Even if children do not grasp all the layers of meaning, there are many concrete images that children recognize and understand. Look for ways to incorporate these stories into daily life. For example, if you see a bird or tree, remind children of the mustard seed which started small but became a large tree where birds could safely nest.

Pray

Continue the spiritual practices that your child is doing at church. Sessions 1–5 are focused on **praising God**. Sessions 6–9 are **“help me”** prayers. Sessions 10–13 are **“help others”** prayers. These do not need to be long or formal prayers. Keep them short and interactive. Pray outside or as you go from place to place. Incorporate music or movement. Bath time, bedtime, or before starting a new activity are great opportunities to pause for a prayer.

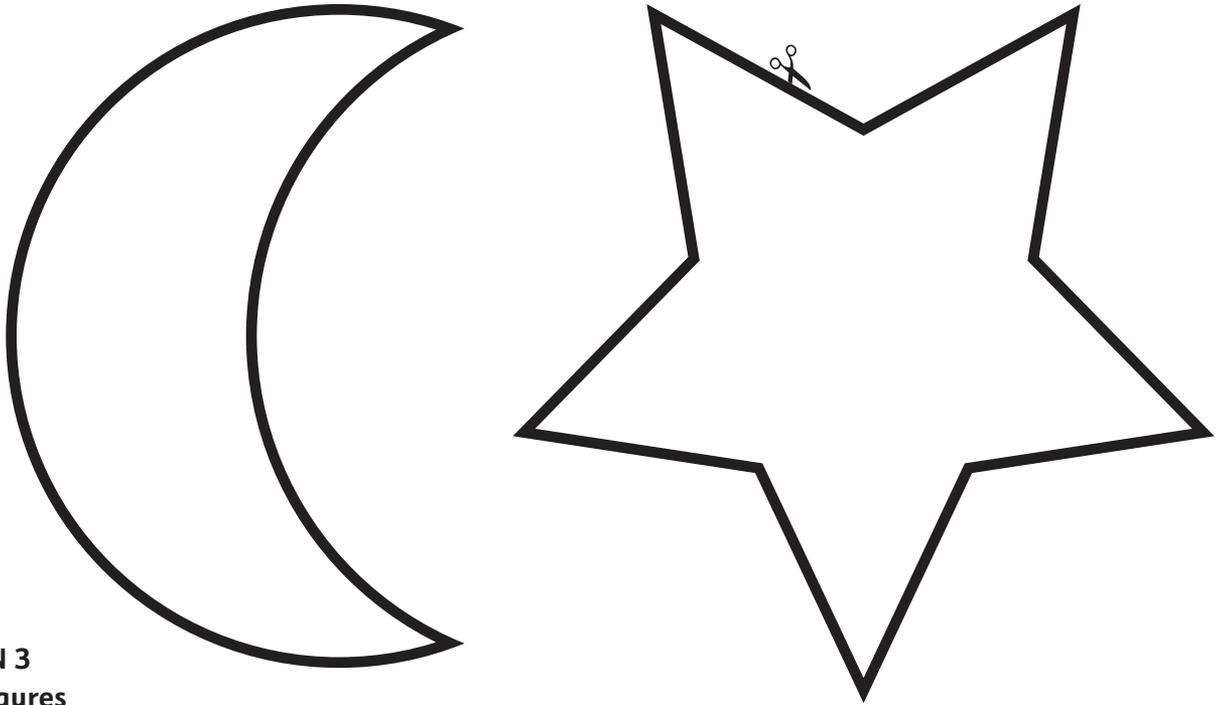
You are a spiritual leader and example for your child. You may not see yourself this way. You might not know every Bible story or feel confident to answer every faith question. That's okay. Start by telling your child about God's great love for them! That is an essential message that provides a foundation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

Blessings as you journey with your child!



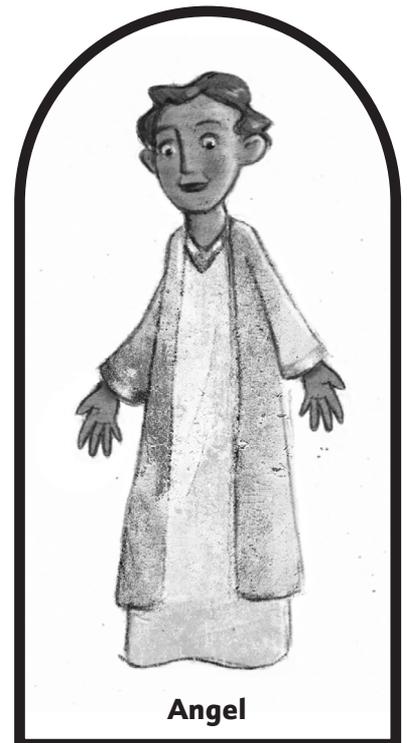
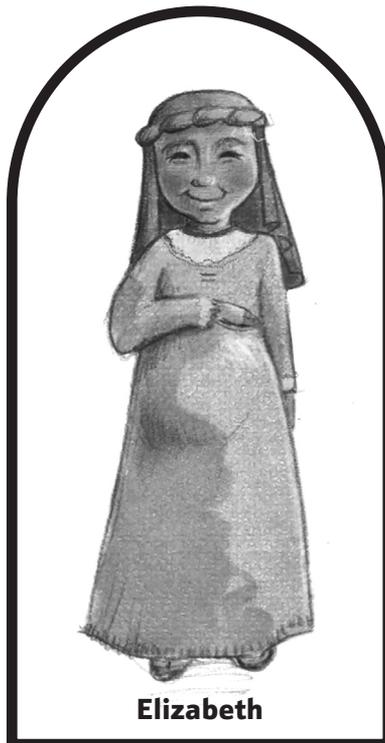
SESSION 2, 5
Moon and Star Templates

Copy, cut apart, and trace each template onto a kitchen sponge. Cut the sponges and use for Responsive Play (Create) in Session 2. Save the cut out star template to make cut-out paper stars for Early Arrivals in Session 5.



SESSION 3
Story Figures

Make enough copies so each child can have a set of story figures. Attach each one to a craft stick to make a puppet for use in Share the Story.



Illustrations by Angela Hawkins

SESSION 3

Story Song

Sing the words to the tune of “The Wheels on the Bus” during Responsive Play (Move).

Verse 1

The angel told Mary, “God has chosen you,”
chosen you, chosen you.
The angel told Mary, “God has chosen you.”
God is sending a Son! (*Pretend to cradle a baby.*)

Verse 2 (*Run in place.*)

Mary ran to share the news,
share the news, share the news.
Mary ran to share the news:
God is sending a Son! (*Pretend to cradle a baby.*)

Verse 3 (*Jump.*)

God fills the hungry, and they jump for joy,
jump for joy, jump for joy.
God fills the hungry, and they jump for joy.
God is sending a Son. (*Pretend to cradle a baby.*)

Verse 4 (*Dance freely.*)

Mary said, “O God, you do great things,”
do great things, do great things.
Mary sang, “O God, you do great things.”
God is sending a Son. (*Pretend to cradle a baby.*)

SESSION 9

“This Is the Way” Song Lyrics

Sing the following song to the tune of “Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush” during Responsive Play (Move):

This is the way we mix the bread,
mix the bread, mix the bread.
This is the way we mix the bread.
God’s kingdom grows.

This is the way we bake the bread,
bake the bread, bake the bread.
This is the way we bake the bread.
God’s kingdom grows.

This is the way we eat the bread,
eat the bread, eat the bread.
This is the way we eat the bread.
God’s kingdom grows.

This is the way we plant the seed,
plant the seed, plant the seed.
This is the way we plant the seed.
God’s kingdom grows.

This is the way a tree grows tall,
tree grows tall, tree grows tall.
This is the way a tree grows tall.
God’s kingdom grows.

This is the way the birds will fly,
birds will fly, birds will fly.
This is the way the birds will fly.
God’s kingdom grows.

SESSION 4

“Christmas Praise Song”

Sing these words to the tune of “Jesus Loves Me” during Responsive Play (Make Peace).

Verse 1

Jesus was a baby boy.
He was born to bring us joy.
He gives peace and he gives love,
gifts to us from God above.

Yes, Jesus was born!
Yes, Jesus was born!
Yes, Jesus was born!
We’re glad Jesus was born.

Verse 2

Angels sang to God on high,
sang to shepherds late at night.
Light from God shone all around,
shepherds heard a happy sound.

Yes, sing praise to God!
Yes, sing praise to God!
Yes, sing praise to God!
Sing praise to God on high.

SESSION 3
Game Cards

Make multiple copies of the cards for use in Responsive Play (Explore). Each child will need five cards, plus a set for a draw pile.



 <p>Mary</p>	 <p>Mary</p>	 <p>Mary</p>	 <p>Mary</p>	 <p>Mary</p>
 <p>Elizabeth</p>	 <p>Elizabeth</p>	 <p>Elizabeth</p>	 <p>Elizabeth</p>	 <p>Elizabeth</p>
 <p>Angel</p>	 <p>Angel</p>	 <p>Angel</p>	 <p>Angel</p>	 <p>Angel</p>

Illustrations by Angela Hawkins

SESSION 5

"We're Going to Baby Jesus" Chant

Refer to this page during Responsive Play (Move). Chant these words, in the rhythm of "We're Going on a Bear Hunt." Use the suggested motions or add other ones.

We're going to baby Jesus. (*Pump your arms as if walking.*)
We're going to go and praise him! (*Clap.*)
Uh oh! A desert! (*Point forward.*)
We can't go over it. (*Use your hand to show "over."*)
We can't go under it. (*Use your hand to show "under."*)
We'll have to go through it! (*Point straight ahead.*)
Walk, walk, walk, walk, walk. (*Pump your arms as if walking.*)

We're going to baby Jesus. (*Pump your arms as if walking.*)
We're going to go and praise him! (*Clap.*)
Uh oh! A river! (*Point forward.*)
We can't go over it. (*Use your hand to show "over."*)
We can't go under it. (*Use your hand to show "under."*)
We'll have to go through it! (*Point straight ahead.*)
Splash, splash, splash, splash, splash. (*Move your hand to show waves.*)

We're going to baby Jesus. (*Pump your arms as if walking.*)
We're going to go and praise him! (*Clap.*)
Uh oh! A city! (*Point forward.*)
We can't go over it. (*Use your hand to show "over."*)
We can't go under it. (*Use your hand to show "under."*)
We'll have to go through it! (*Point straight ahead.*)
Walk, walk, walk, walk, walk. (*Pump your arms as if walking.*)

We're going to baby Jesus. (*Pump your arms as if walking.*)
We're going to go and praise him! (*Clap.*)
Oh good! The star stopped! (*Point up.*)
We're going under it. (*Use your hand to show "under."*)
We're going to Bethlehem. (*Pump your arms as if walking.*)
We'll bow down to Jesus! (*Bow forward or kneel.*)
Praise, praise, praise, praise, praise! (*Clap.*)

SESSION 4
Celebration Cards

Cut apart and use for Responsive Play (Move).



Jump for joy.

Dance for joy.

**Spin around
and be joyful.**

**Be still
and joyful.**

**Clap and
be joyful.**

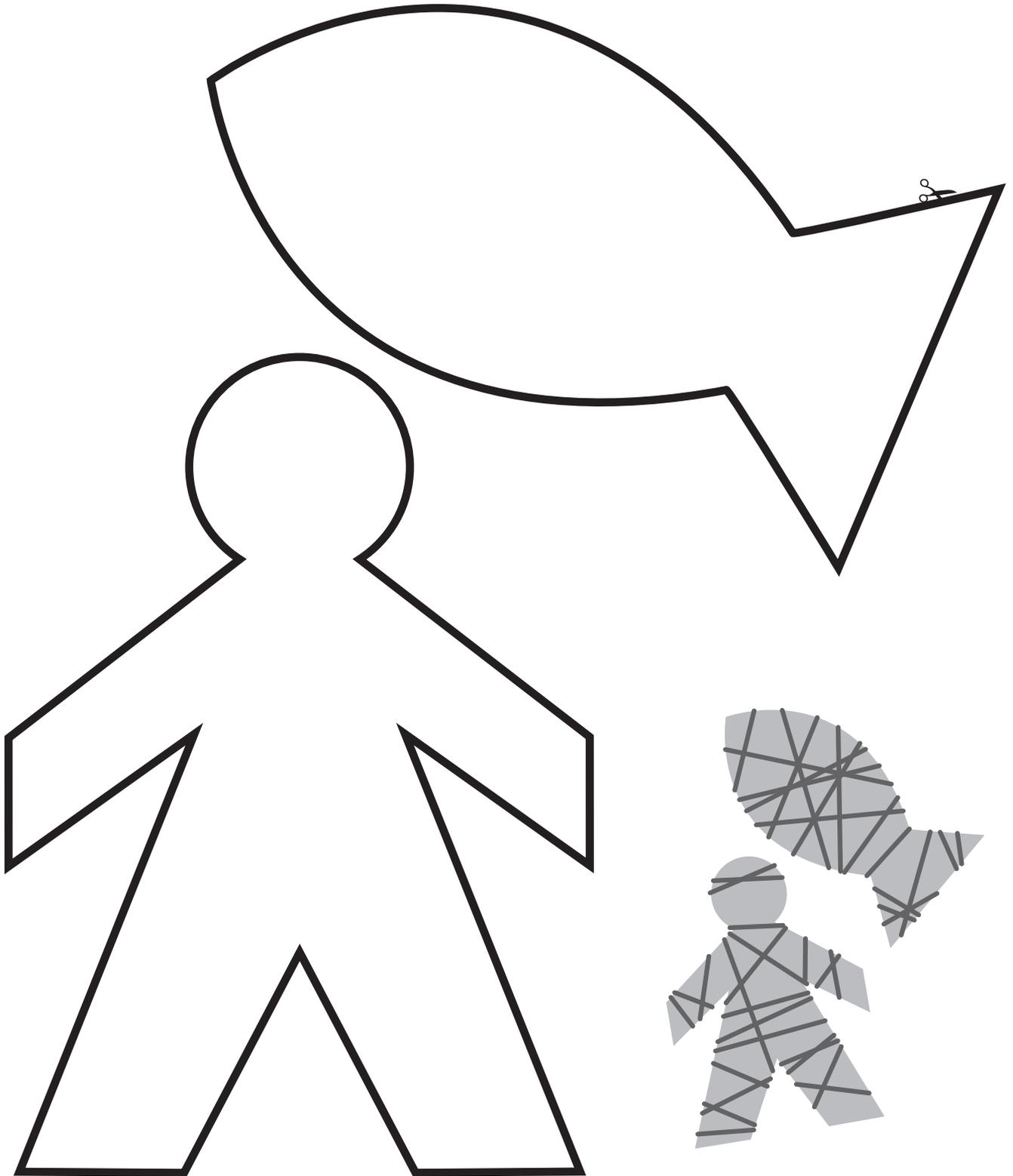
**Raise your arms
and be joyful.**

**Close your eyes
and be joyful.**

**Be silent
and joyful.**

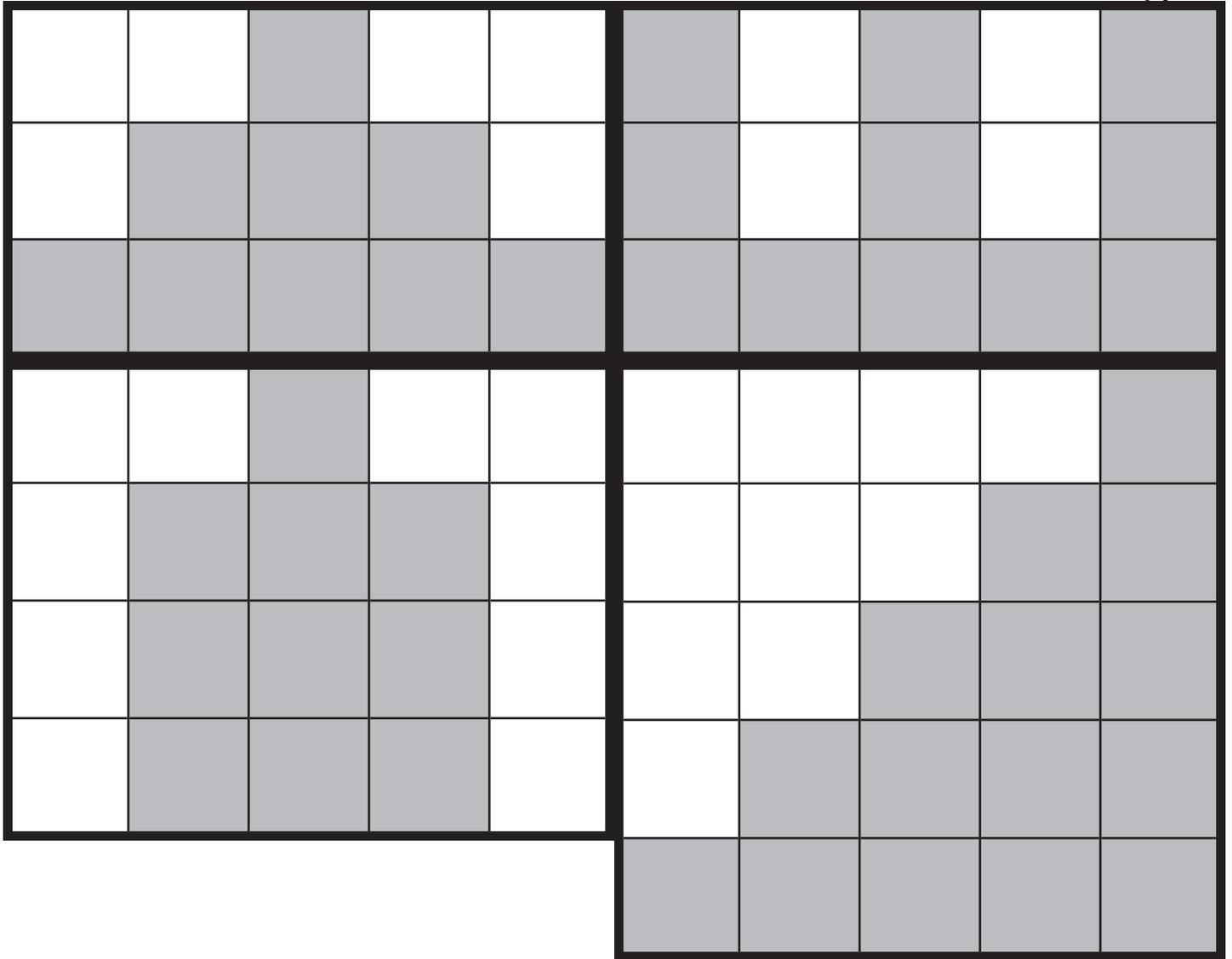
SESSION 6
Fish and Person Templates

Trace the templates onto sturdy cardboard, one set per child. Tape a long piece of yarn onto the back of each cardboard shape. Children can wrap the yarn in a criss-cross pattern to decorate the shapes. If children remain interested, tape additional colors of yarn onto the back to create a multicolor design.



SESSION 8
Block Patterns

Make several copies of the cards for use in Responsive Play (Explore).



SESSION 10
Story Picture Puzzle

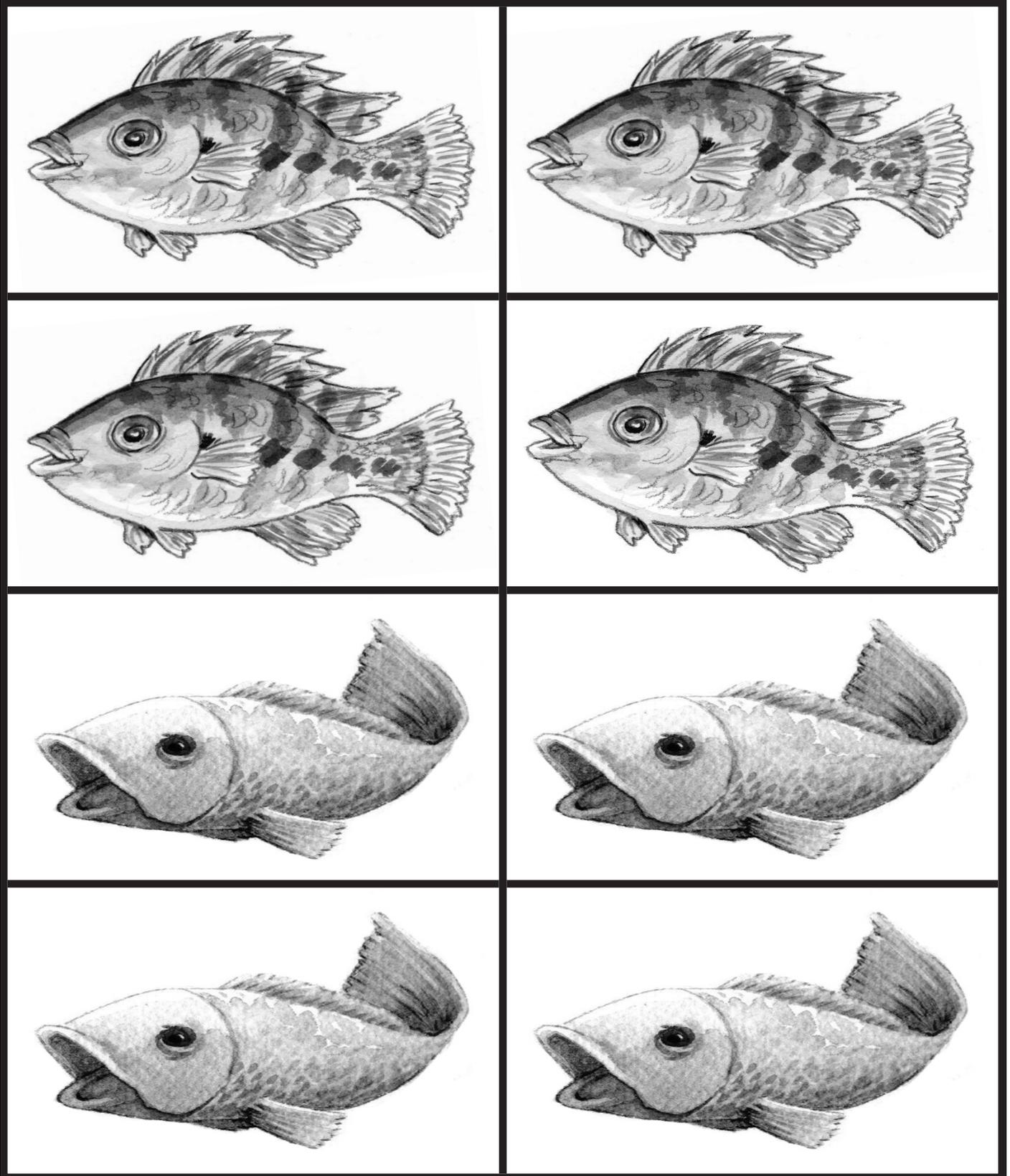
Cut apart the story picture. Lay the pieces out like a puzzle during Share the Story (Bible Story).



Illustration by Linda Pierce

SESSION 10
Sorting Fish

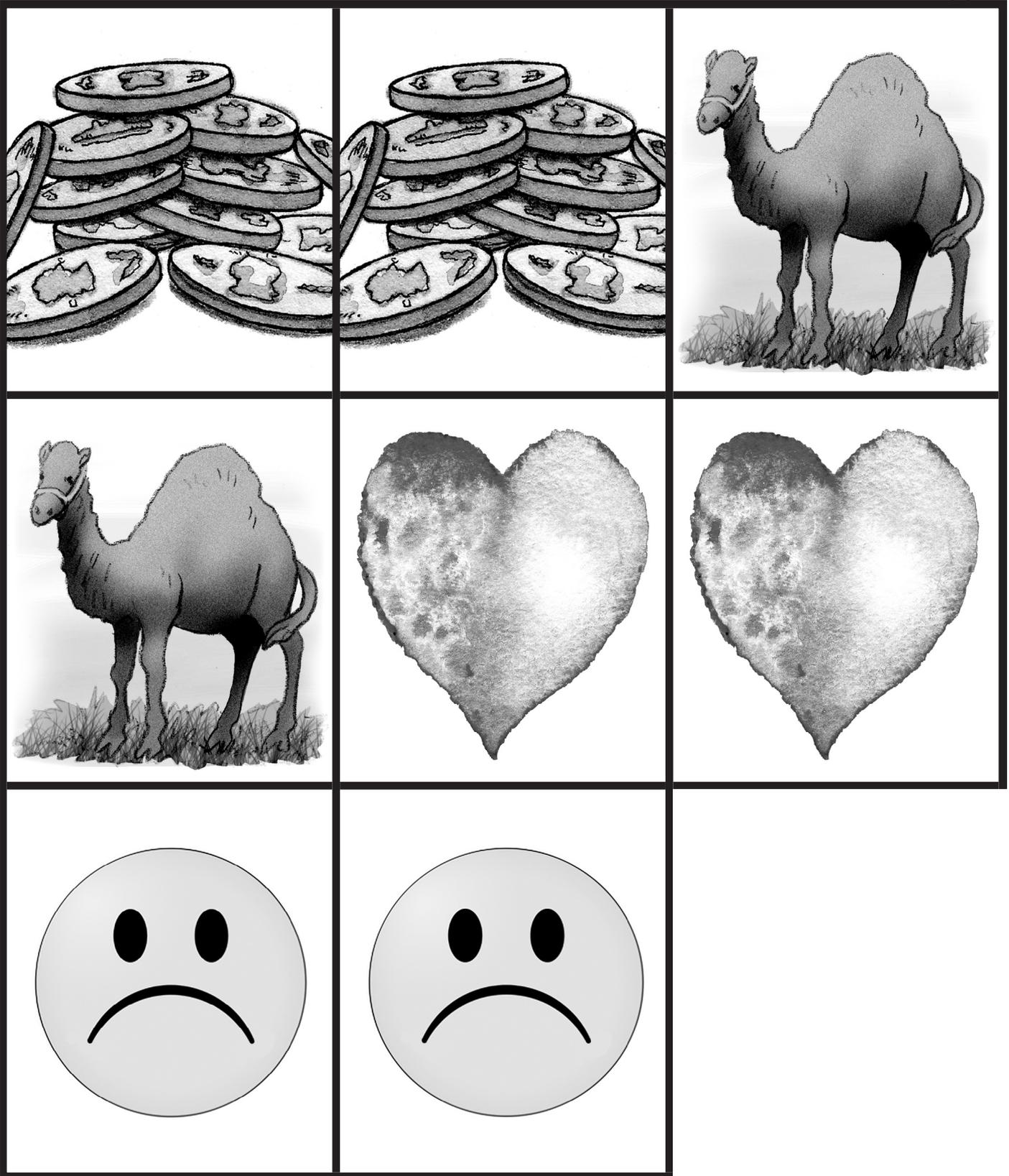
Make multiple copies of the page and cut apart the boxes for use in Share the Story (Re-play) and/or Responsive Play (Explore).



Illustrations by Sherry Neidigh and Gabhor Utomo

SESSION 11
Story Props

Copy and cut apart one set for use during Share the Story (Bible Story). Make additional sets to play a memory game during Re-play.

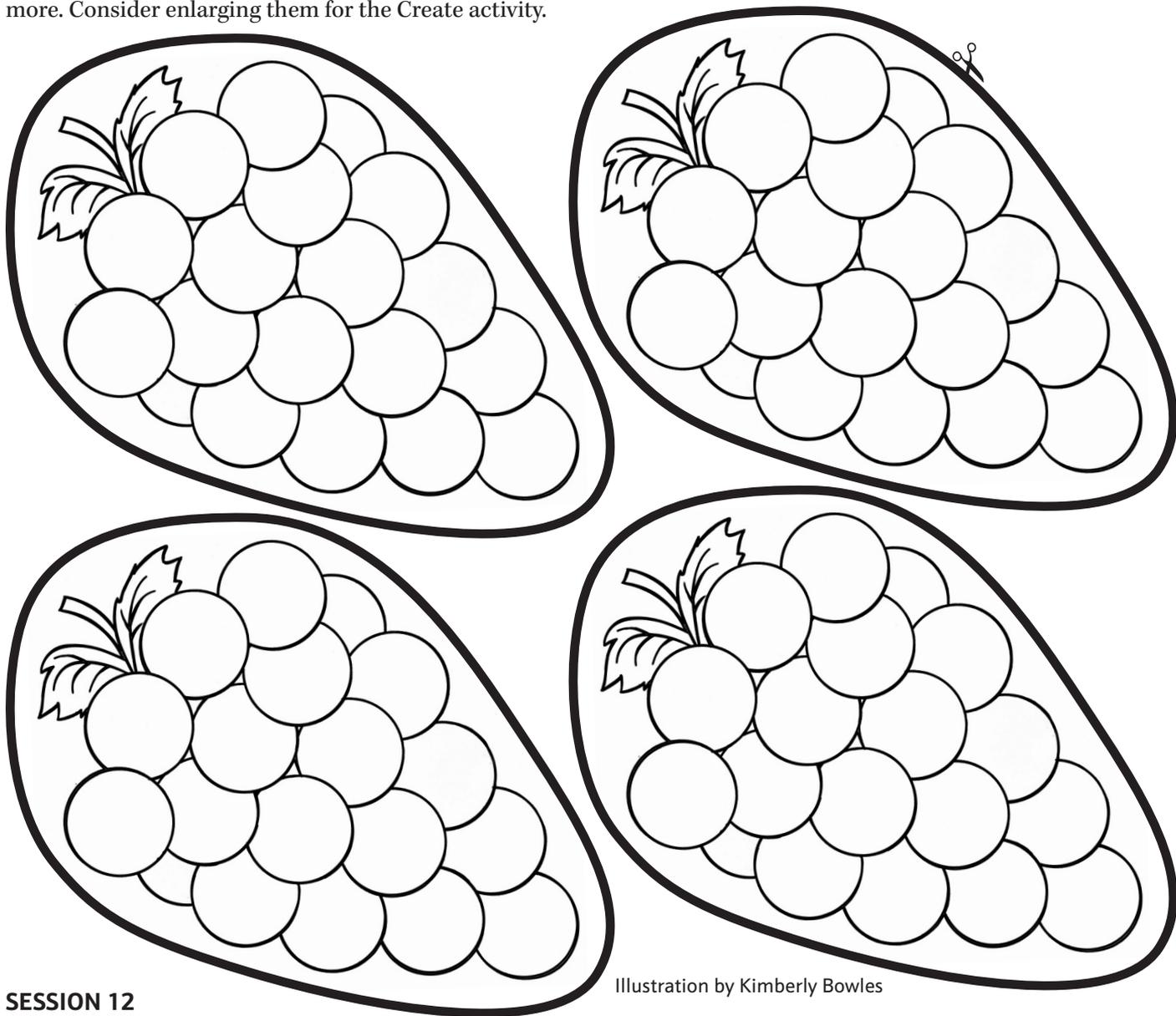


Illustrations by Rebecca Thornburgh and Nancy Munger

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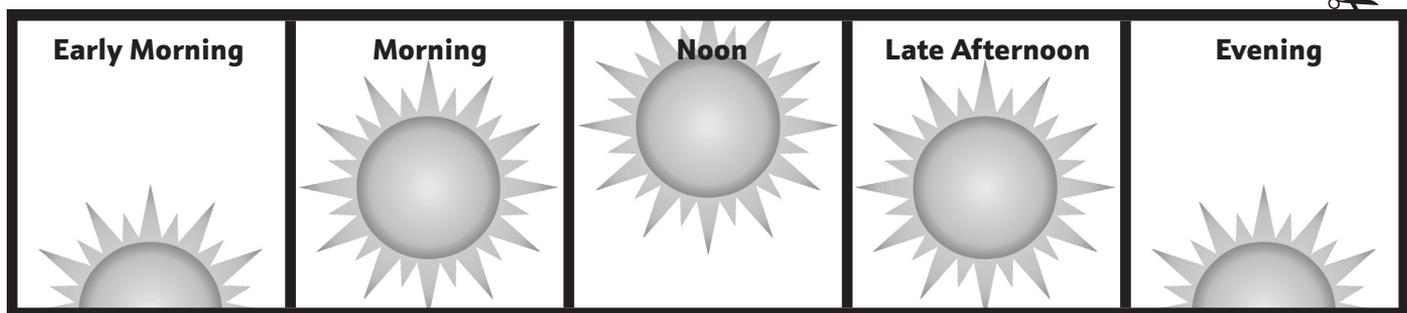
SESSION 12
Grape Clusters

Make multiple copies of this page, depending on which activities you are using. For Early Arrivals (Play), have enough copies so each child can gather multiple clusters. For Responsive Play (Create), each child will need one or more. Consider enlarging them for the Create activity.



SESSION 12
Story Props

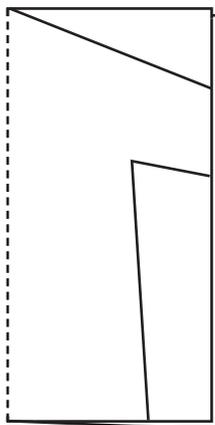
Copy and cut apart for use as story props during Share the Story (Bible Story).



SESSION 13
Shirt Sample

SESSION 13
Snack Mix Labels

Refer to this sample for Responsive Play (Create). Fold the paper or poster board in half, then cut as shown here.



[[Jesus said,] “I was hungry and you gave me food to eat. . . . When you [do this] for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you have done it for me.”
—Matthew 25:35a, 40b (CEB)

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