

Christian MONTHLY

DEDICATED TO THE PROCLAMATION
OF THE WORD OF GOD

for Children



Psalm 119:105
Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path.

Winter 2011

JESUS IS BORN!

Luke 1 and 2

Little Bethlehem was bustling with activity. Caesar Augustus, the Roman ruler, had made a law that everyone in his empire had to pay taxes and they had to register in their own hometown. Those who came to Bethlehem to register were of King David's family line. People came from all around. The inn was full, so there wasn't anywhere left to stay.

Joseph traveled from Nazareth to Bethlehem because King David was Joseph's great-great-many-times-over-great-grandfather. It was a long journey. Joseph's wife, Mary, was pregnant for her first Baby, who was the Son of God, not the son of Joseph. Before Joseph and Mary were married, the angel Gabriel came to Mary and told her she would become pregnant by the Holy Spirit and have a Son who would be the Son of God, and His name would be JESUS. This happened just as the angel had said. Now Mary and Joseph were traveling to Bethlehem, and she was nearly ready to have her Baby.

While they were in Bethlehem, the time came for Mary to deliver her Baby, but there was no room in the inn. They went into a place where animals were kept. In that humble place, Mary had her firstborn Son. She wrapped little Jesus in a long piece of cloth to keep Him warm. She didn't have a crib or cradle, so she laid Him in the manger, the box for the animal's food.

Baby Jesus was true God, the King of Kings. He was the Word who made the world. Now Jesus entered the world He had created in human form, as a helpless Baby, in a lowly barn. When a king has a son, there is always a great celebration. Who would celebrate the birth of this King of creation? He was tucked away in a manger. No one was sending the news around the kingdom that the Son of God, the King of Kings, was born.

In the fields outside Bethlehem, some shepherds were watching their flock that night. An angel of the Lord came to the shepherds, and the glory of the Lord shone down on them, and they were very afraid. The angel said, "Don't be afraid! I'm bringing

you good, joyful news for all people. Today, in Bethlehem, your Savior has been born. He is Christ the Lord. This will be the sign so you know who He is: you will find Him wrapped in a long piece of cloth, lying in a manger." Suddenly the sky was filled with angels, many of the host of heaven, praising God! They said, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." They were celebrating the birth of the great King of creation; they were spreading the news around the kingdom.

When the angels had gone back into the sky, the shepherds talked about what they had seen. They said, "Let's go to Bethlehem right now and see this thing that the Lord has told us." They hurried to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph. There was Jesus, lying in the manger, wrapped in cloth, just as the angel had said!

When the shepherds had seen Jesus, they went out and told people what the angel had said about Him. Everyone wondered at the words that the shepherds said. What did it mean? After they had spread the news, the shepherds returned to the fields, praising God and calling Him great. They were so happy for all the things that they had heard and seen.

But Mary remembered all these things, and she thought about them in her heart.



Toddlers

Through Three Years

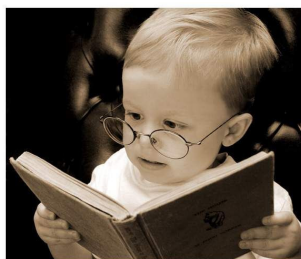
Winter days can get long when it's too cold or snowy to go outside, even for a little while. On an especially cold, bright day, help your toddler learn this winter prayer:

Dear God:

Thank You for the snow so white,
For the sun that shines so bright.
On this chilly winter day
Keep us safe in every way.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

Winter is a wonderful time to read. While the snow and wind blow outside, inside it is warm and cozy. Curl up and read a Bible story with your toddler. They love to listen to the same stories over and over again.



Tots

Four-Six Years

Do you like candy canes? A candy cane and a cup of hot cocoa can be a sweet treat on a winter day. A candy cane can also help you remember the real meaning of Christmas.

We celebrate Jesus' birthday on Christmas Day. He came from heaven to earth many years ago. He was born as a baby in Bethlehem. He grew to be a perfect, sinless Man, and He died on a cross for our sins. His pure, innocent blood was shed for guilty sinners. He arose again—came alive again—from the dead, and He went back to heaven to live with God, His Father.

Before Jesus went back to heaven, He promised that He will come to earth to take everyone who believes in Him to heaven to live with Him forever. When we trust and believe in Him, He washes our sins away with His blood, so that we're pure and clean. We don't know when He will come back for us, but we know that He will, because He said that He will. Jesus always keeps His promises.

Jesus said that He is the Good Shepherd and that we are His sheep. He takes care of us, like a shepherd takes care of his sheep.

The next time you eat a candy cane, think of the ways that it can remind you of the real meaning of Christmas. Here is a candy cane poem for you:



Look at a candy cane, what do you see?

Stripes that are red, like the blood shed for me.

White for my Savior, who's sinless and pure.

"J" is for Jesus, my Lord, that's for sure.

Turn it over, a staff you will see

Jesus, my Shepherd, is coming for me.

Ages Seven-Ten

Tykes

Jesus was a Baby...

He slept a lot;
He learned to coo.
He loved His Mom;
He grew and grew.



Jesus was a Child...

He learned to talk;
He played outside.
He loved His Dad;
He sometimes cried.



Jesus was a Man...

He died on a cross;
He saves from sin.
He is God's only Son,
The Savior of men.



Jesus was a baby, just like you when you were born. He grew just like you did. He had to learn to walk and talk. He had to learn to eat and drink.

There is big difference between Jesus and you, though. Jesus didn't have a father here on earth. Jesus was the Son of God, not the son of Joseph. Joseph was Mary's husband, and he loved Jesus. He took care of Jesus like his own son, but Jesus was not his son. Jesus was both God and man, because God was His Father, and Mary was His mother.

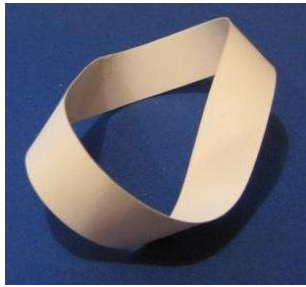
There is another big difference between Jesus and you. Every person who has ever lived on this earth, or ever will, is a sinner. Except Jesus. Jesus was not a sinner. He never broke any of God's laws. He never told a lie or cheated. Never ever. He was perfect God and perfect man.

Because Jesus was sinless and pure, He was able to take our sin upon Himself when He died on the cross. Praise God that He sent His Son, Jesus, to take our place and to die for our sin, so that we can live forever.

Tweens

Eleven-Twelve Years

A Möbius strip has no beginning and no end. Take a strip of paper. Twist it once. Tape it together so you have a loop with a twist in it. Draw a line lengthwise along the center of the strip. Keep drawing until you've gone all the way around. How many sides does the Möbius strip have? Cut with scissors along the line you drew, but don't snip through the edge. What happens? Hmm...



Humans are not eternal. People have a beginning and an end; they are born and they die.

Your beginning was when you were conceived deep inside your mother. You didn't exist before the moment that God formed you. You grew and changed, and you were born. You began life outside, separate from your mother. Now you've been growing for many years, and you may be nearly as big as your parents.

Your death will be the end of your earthly existence. Your heart will stop beating; you will stop breathing. Your physical body will end.

What about Jesus? Is He eternal or did He have a beginning? Did He come into existence deep inside Mary, after the angel visited her and told her she would become pregnant by the Holy Spirit? Or did He exist before that?

Jesus was born as a baby in Bethlehem, but that was only the beginning of His human existence. Jesus has existed, and will exist, forever. He is God in human flesh; He has been with the Father from eternity. The Apostle John, who saw, listened to, and physically touched Jesus, says this:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us... (John 1:1, 14)

The Bible brings the Good News that Christians don't ever really end; we never stop existing. Anyone who believes in Jesus will live forever, just not in a physical body on this earth. If you are a Christian, you are eternal, because God has forgiven your sin and given you eternal life. You had a beginning, but you will never have an end. You didn't exist from eternity, but you will exist TO eternity.

Teens

Our lives are like a vapor, like the little wisp of steam that rises from a cup of hot cocoa. This doesn't seem possible to young people, because you are waiting for exciting things to happen in your life: getting your driver's license, finishing high school or college, starting a job, moving out of your parent's home, marrying, having children.



But our lives really are fleeting and insubstantial. The Bible compares us to grass or flowers that grow, flourish and die (Psalm 103:15-16). Our days are like shadows (Psalm 102:11). We exist for a moment and then we're gone. Compared to eternity, the life of a hundred year old person is short, like a dream that passes when morning comes.

If we're so insubstantial and wispy, what's the point? Our lives may be insubstantial, and we may only live here for a short time, but we're not insignificant.

We are not insignificant to *one another*. We love—and are loved by—our parents, spouses and children, our family and friends. There is a great hole in our lives when someone we love moves away or passes away. God gives us these loving relationships. The Apostle Paul compares the love of Christ for the Church—that's us!—as that of a husband for his wife (Ephesians 5:25), and Christ's love isn't insignificant.

We are not insignificant to *God*. He made humankind in His image. He made each of us exactly as He wanted us to be. God cares deeply for us, so deeply that He didn't abandon us to die in our sin but sent His only Son to save us. God wants a fatherly relationship with us; He wants us to trust Him as children trust their father. God rejoices over Jerusalem like this:

Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God... as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee. (Isaiah 62:3, 5)

Every believer is a citizen of the new Jerusalem. If we are Christ's, we are offspring of Abraham. We are Christ's Church, His bride. No bridegroom thinks that his bride is insignificant! A groom adores his bride, as Christ adores us. The Apostle Peter says this about us:

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. (1 Peter 2:9)

God has chosen us and set us apart. Though our lives here are as fleeting as a shadow and wispy as steam, the God of the universe delights over us and loves us dearly.



Imagine a cup of hot cocoa. A little swirl of steam rises from it, along with a wonderful smell. Whipped cream or marshmallows are floating on top. Maybe there's a candy cane stir-stick, or the cocoa may be flavored with white chocolate or cinnamon. Mmmm...

When you sip this warm, sweet drink, your taste buds transfer signals to your brain and you "taste" the flavor. Your nose sends signals to your brain so you can "smell" the scent.

God didn't need to give us a sense of taste or smell for us to survive. They are not necessary to life, like a heartbeat or breath. We could eat and digest food, and our bodies would function.



But what a wonderful Father we have! He has given us taste and smell senses, and such an array of different foods to enjoy. Remember to thank Him for giving you the senses of taste and smell. Appreciate and give thanks for the different tastes and scents God has made.



Suppose you have two shakers. One has salt in it; the other has sugar. How can you tell the difference between them? You could do a test to determine the molecular formula of each, or you could taste them. You know what salt tastes like, and you know what sugar tastes like. You can easily determine which would be better on your eggs or cereal. The Bible mentions "tasting" these things:

- O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him. (Psalm 34:8)
How do we "taste" the Lord? He is asking us to experience Him. When we taste (experience) Him, then we will see (realize) that He is good. We can put our trust in Him and we won't be disappointed.
- ...have tasted of the heavenly gift... (Hebrews 6:4)
We can experience the heavenly gift of salvation, because Jesus came as a gift to this earth to save us from sin. Our salvation is a heavenly gift because we can't earn it, buy it, or work for it. We can only receive it from the hand of God and be thankful.
- ...have tasted the good word of God... (Hebrews 6:5)
- As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. (1 Peter 2:2-3)
We can eat and drink God's Word by reading and learning it, and listening to ministers who preach it. You will find that the more you learn of God's marvelous Word of Life, the more you will want to learn. God's graciousness is on display in His Word, and we can taste it and feast on it!

First Lady Laura Bush's Hot Chocolate

6 T. unsweetened cocoa
6 T. sugar
pinch of salt
2 1/2 c. milk
2 1/2 c. light cream
1/2 t. vanilla (or more)
pinch of cinnamon powder (optional)
whipped cream
orange zest

Mix cocoa, salt and sugar. Add milk. Heat to dissolve. Add light cream, cinnamon, vanilla. Heat to just under boiling. Mix very well and pour into warm mug. Top with whipped cream, cocoa powder and fine orange zest.



The Gathering of the Manna

God provided manna for the children of Israel to eat after they left Egypt and were in a desert place where there was very little food. The Bible describes manna as tasting like wafers made with honey. The children of Israel ate manna for 40 years. Can you imagine eating the same thing, meal after meal, for a few days, or even a week?

Some of the children of Israel had a strong craving and they all cried and complained to Moses, remembering the fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic that they had in abundance in Egypt (Numbers 11:4-8). They were sick of manna and they were angry with God and Moses for not providing more variety in their diet.

God was very angry with them for complaining, and Moses was angry too. God sent many quail near where they were camped. They gathered quail for two days and spread it around the camp. The complainers began to feast. While they were still eating, God became very angry with them and struck them with a great plague, and they died. They buried the people there who had the very strong craving.

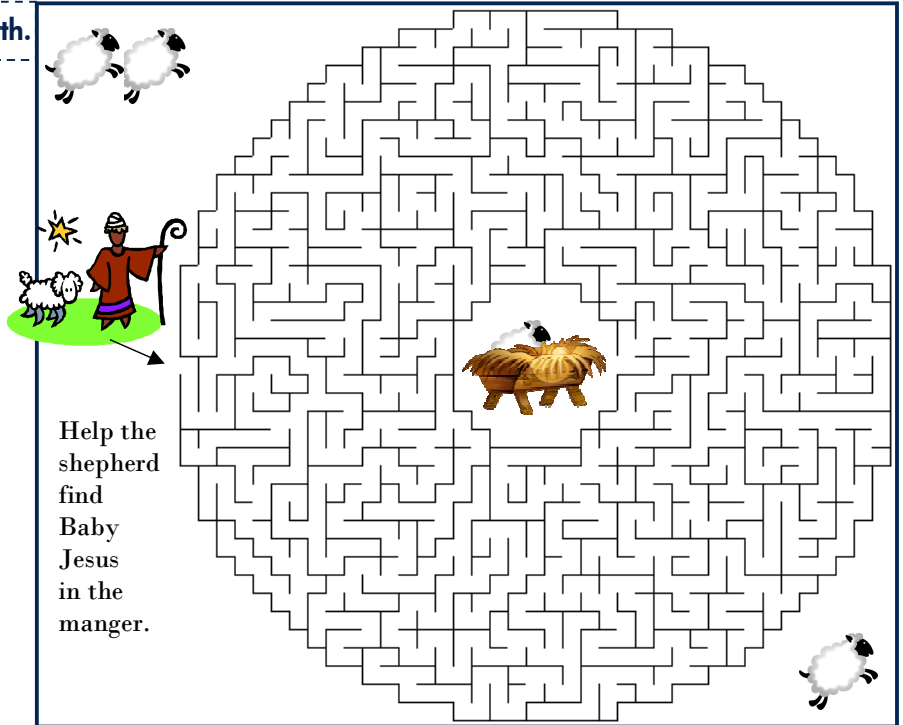
Does this mean that we shouldn't "crave" certain foods or God may strike us down with a plague? No, not in the sense that we use the word. We say, "I'm craving pizza," but what we really mean is that we would like pizza, that pizza sounds good to our taste buds right now. Their "craving" was very strong, and they wouldn't stop thinking about it and wanting it more than anything else, even what God had freely and abundantly provided for them.

We certainly should never complain about our food. God provides everything for us to eat, and He has blessed us with the ability to taste and enjoy food. We should always be thankful to God for giving us food.

Find these words from the story of Jesus' birth.

L T S B B H O H M B
Z L U A P D Q L E J
M L I E V A Y T T E
Z A S W N I H O S S
I O R G D L O Z E U
J X E Y E O V R H S
N L P H Y R O L G T
N P E A C E E G I X
L M A N G E R U H M
S D R E H P E H S U

ANGEL
BETHLEHEM
GLORY
GOODWILL
HIGHEST
JESUS
JOSEPH
MANGER
MARY
PEACE
SAVIOR
SHEPHERDS



CHRISTMAS TIME!

Puzzle Fun



Answer Key: page 7

What did the angels say? Replace the numbers with the correct letters.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
														11											
25	6	11	9	20	17	11	25	11	23	14	22	17	7	3	7	14	25	7	3	2	17				
19	22	23	11	22	3	19	9	17	7	15	3	19	1	3	25	11	11	23	13	14	6	6			

How many sheep are on this page?

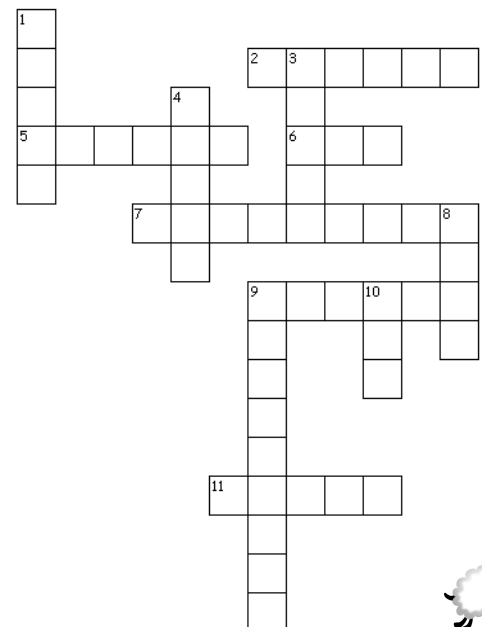


Across

2. Box for animal's food
5. Roman ruler
6. Father of Jesus
7. City where Jesus was born
9. One who saves
11. Son of God

Down

1. Herd of sheep
3. Brought good news
4. Everyone had to pay these
8. Mother of Jesus
9. Came to find Baby Jesus
10. No room left there



And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

Luke 2:10



AN ANGEL BRINGS GOOD NEWS

A picture to color

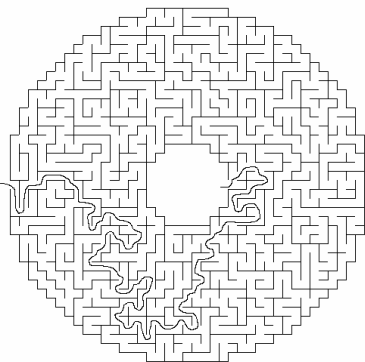
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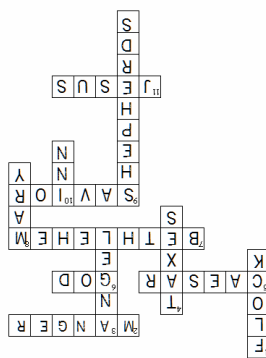
Dear Father God,

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

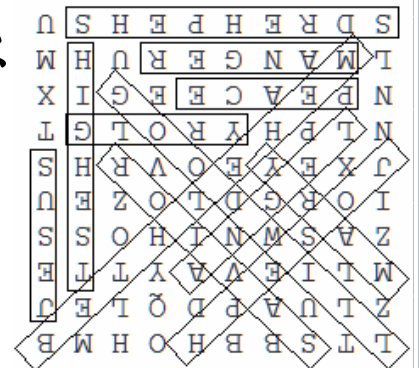
Puzzle Answer Key



How many sheep?
There are 12 sheep on the puzzle page.



Cryptogram: The angels said: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."



7

For Parents:

The story of Jesus' birth so long ago in Bethlehem is a favorite of all Christians, especially children. The excitement of Christmas comes every year with its presents and parties. Help your children understand the true meaning of Christmas, that presents and parties are only a periphery, not the reason for the season. The true gift that came at Christmas was the Incarnation of God Himself, in the form of a human. God became flesh, lived among us, grew to manhood and gave Himself a sacrifice for the sin of the world. Children need to understand that Baby Jesus was fully God and fully Man, that He existed from eternity with the Father in heaven, and that He left the glories of heaven to come here to save sinful mankind. That He walked as a human among us, yet without sin, and that He healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, raised the dead and brought the Kingdom of God to earth. That He brought Life and Light to this dark planet, the only Life and Light we trust for salvation.

This was the most important birth in history, and we remember and celebrate it at Christmas time. Our calendar marks time from the birth of the Christ. The world, though it may not realize it, honors this birth by setting it at the center of the crossroad in time, as BC stands for "before Christ" and AD is the Latin phrase "Anno Domini," which means "in the year of our Lord." Over 2000 years after the birth of the Christ, this is a forgotten bit of trivia to most people. Help your children realize the significance of Jesus' birth and the importance that it has had on the entire world.

The wonder of Christmas is ever new to a child. The lights and sparkle, the wonderful food and fellowship, the tinsel and wrappings. The birth of Jesus was in a humble place; the King of creation was laid in a lowly manger. Help your children understand that it was for them personally, that God's love was so great and all-encompassing that He came to earth to save them.

May the blessings and peace of Christmas reign in your home this Christmas and through the coming year. Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift!

