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Dear Families: Last week I talked about Hope, not as a wish, but as a certainty if we hope in Christ. I also covered a little about being “homesick” in relationship to our theme *Close to Home*. The main idea of the theme is that we always have a “home” in Christ, no matter our physical circumstances. It reminds me of my studies in Human Growth and Development. We need to have physical, safety, love and belongingness needs met first, to be able to deal with higher thought processes and second, to have peace in our lives. We can have all these needs met when we learn to depend on God. Laying the foundation of the Lord in our lives and making space for God allows for God’s blessings to break through into ourselves and our dealings with others. Shalom-Peace to you all!

New Prayer: God be in my head and in my understanding;
God be in my eyes and in my looking;
God be in my mouth and in my speaking;
God be in my heart and in my thinking;
God be with me wherever I go.

Bible text: Please re-read Luke 15:11-24 from last week; Summary of Luke 1:5-24 & 1:57-80

In the time just before Jesus’ birth there was a Jewish priest named Zechariah. His wife was called Elizabeth. Both worked hard to live righteously. They were sad because Elizabeth could not have children. Once, when Zechariah was performing his priestly duties, an angel, Gabriel, appeared to him inside the temple. Zechariah was terrified! Gabriel said, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John.” Zechariah was not sure he believed the angel. So Gabriel said, “. . .because you did not believe my words (from God), you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things happen.” When Zechariah came out of the sanctuary he could not speak and the people realized he had seen a vision. Zechariah returned home after his time of service ended. Elizabeth got pregnant and was very happy.

It came time for Elizabeth to give birth and she had a baby boy! Her friends and family rejoiced with her. On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child and give him his name. Everyone expected them to name the child Zechariah, after his father. But Elizabeth said his name was to be John. All were amazed. At that moment Zechariah’s voice returned and he praised God! All who were there said, “What then will this child become?” They realized the hand of the Lord was with him!

Bible Verse:

*The Lord your God is with you
wherever you go.
Joshua 1:9*

Activities: Songs for all:

Jesus Loves Me

Jesus loves me, this I know,
For the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to Him belong,
They are weak, but He is strong.
Yes, Jesus loves me, (3X)
The Bible tells me so.

Jesus loves me, this I know
As He loved so long ago,
Taking children on His knee,
Saying, "Let them come to Me."
Yes, Jesus loves me, (3X)
The Bible tells me so.

Jesus loves me still today,
Walking with me on my way.
Wanting as a friend to give,
Light and love to all who live.
Yes, Jesus loves me, (3X)
The Bible tells me so.

Joy to the World

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King.
Let ev'ry heart, prepare Him room.
And heaven and nature sing, (2X)
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

Joy to the world, the Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ.
While fields and floods, rocks hills and plains,
Repeat the sounding joy, (2X)
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

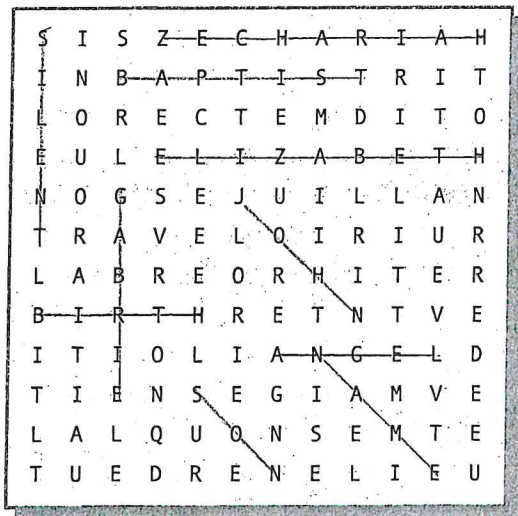
He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove,
The glories of His righteous
And wonders of His love, (2X)
And wonders, wonders of His love.

PreK-2nd: *The Parable of the Prodigal (Lost) Son Dot-to-Dot -- Connect the dots and color.
*Zechariah Cannot Speak puppet *Zechariah Speaks puzzle

3rd and Up: *The Lost Son maze *The Birth of John the Baptist word search

For both age groups: Ask you family about your birth. Write the story of your birth and maybe include some pictures from that time of your life

Oops: I forgot to include the coloring pages for the theme for each week of Advent. Hope is for last week and Peace is for this week.



The Parable of the Prodigal Son


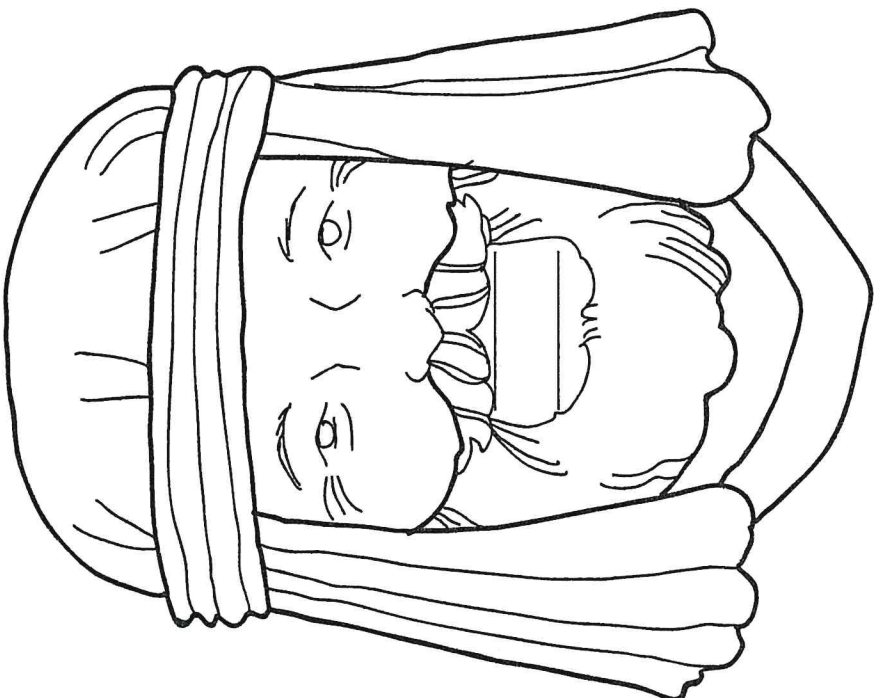
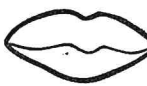
Connect the dots.



Our Father forgives us.

Like the father in the story of the prodigal son,
God rejoices when we return to Him.

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<p><i>An angel appeared to Zechariah in the temple, and said, "Your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will have a son, and you are to call him John."</i></p> <p><i>Zechariah asked how his wife could have a baby, since they were both so old. The angel said, I have been sent from God to tell you this good news. But since you do not believe me, you will not be able to speak until the child is born.</i></p> <p><i>Zechariah was not able to speak.</i></p> <p><i>Soon, Elizabeth had a baby boy. Many people told them names for the baby. But, Elizabeth said, "His name is John."</i></p> <p><i>Right then, Zechariah was able to speak. He began to praise God!</i></p> <p><i>(Luke 5:2-25 and 57-80)</i></p>	
	

John the Baptist Is Born

Luke 1:5-25; 57-80

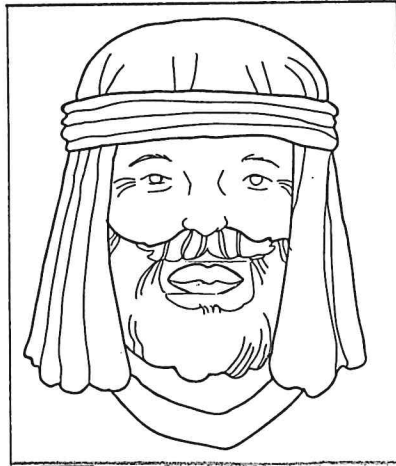
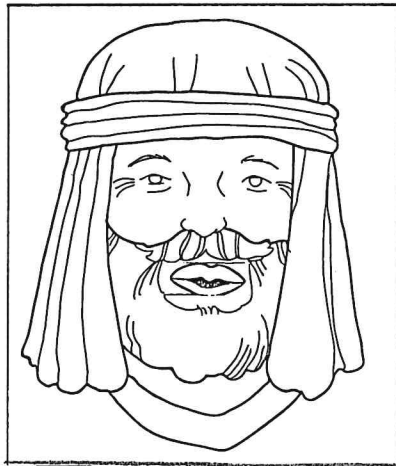
Have the children cut the strip from the page and cut the mouth section from the puppet.

Show how to fold the page in half to form the puppet. Tape the side only.

Have the children color the puppet.

Show how to place the strip inside the puppet, so that the mouths show through the hole in the puppet. Add more tape around the edges as needed to keep the strip from moving from side to side.

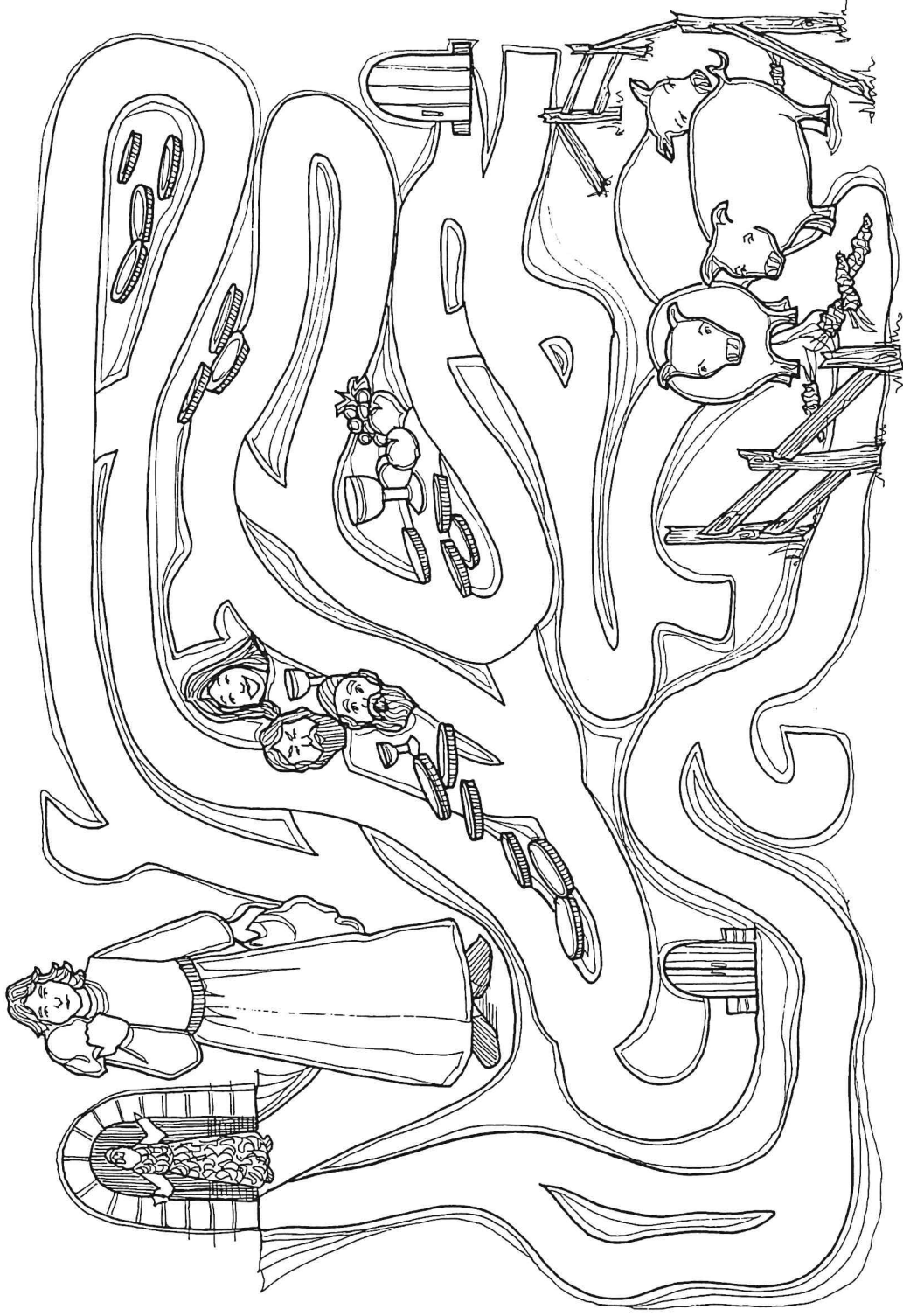
Retell the story, having the children open and close Zechariah's mouth as the story says.



EXTRA TIME

Play a game. Find a picture of an angel to use. Have the children sing some simple songs. Now and then, hold up the angel. Instruct the children to close their mouths when they see the angel. Say, **When Zechariah didn't believe the angel, he wasn't able to talk.**

When he left home and had money, he had lots of friends and fun. Soon his money and friends were gone. He was lonely, poor and hungry. He got a job feeding pigs.



Follow the young man as he leaves home. Work him through the maze and get him home again.

Word Search for The Birth of John the Baptist

Find the words on the list that are hidden in the puzzle. The words can be left to right, up and down, or diagonally.

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

ANGEL
BAPTIST

BIRTH
ELIZABETH

GABRIEL
JOHN

NAME
SILENT

SON
ZECHARIAH





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