

## PREPARING FOR THE ADVENT OF THE LORD

**“Behold, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us.”**  
(Isaiah 24:9)

The angels in heaven and some people on earth knew that the Lord was going to come into the world, but they didn't know when. One group of angels called “Gabriel” was especially focused on the Lord's advent, and these angels were called to serve as messengers to those who needed to be informed about the events to come. Zacharias was told about the special role John the Baptist would play in preparing people to receive the Lord. Mary and Joseph were individually instructed about the Lord's birth, and the roles they would play in His early life. The shepherds were called to witness the blessed event.

### **FAMILY WORSHIP: Messenger Angels**

In the weeks leading up to Christmas, read about the Christmas stories and focus on the messages delivered by the “Gabriel angels” to:

Zacharias—Luke 1:8-20

Mary—Luke 1: 26-38

Joseph—Matthew 1:18-25; 2:13-15, 19-21

The Shepherds—Luke 2: 8-20

The Wise Men—Matthew 2: 1-12 (Divinely warned in a dream, but angels not mentioned)

(NOTE: Some suggest that the star seen by the wise men may have been light surrounding the group of angels collectively called Gabriel, guiding the wise men on their journey.)

### **READ: “Angelic Appearances at the Time of the Lord's Advent” by the Rev. Daniel W. Heinrichs**

A sermon about the angel Gabriel's appearances to different people and how this pictures aspects of the preparation we must do for the Lord's birth in our own lives.

### **DRAMATIZATION: Angelic Appearances**

While portions of the Christmas story are read aloud, children can take turns being the angel Gabriel as he appears to Zacharias, Mary, Joseph (in his dreams), and to the shepherds.

### **SING: “Hark, the Herald Angels Sing”**

### **NATIVITY REPRESENTATION: Angels in the Christmas Story**

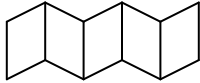
Many nativity scenes have the baby Lord, Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, and perhaps the wise men but do not include angels. You may want to purchase a beautiful angel or have your children make angels for your nativity scene. During the weeks leading up to Christmas, you can move the figures around to show different parts of the Christmas story.

### **PROJECT: Felt Figures for a Flannel Board Christmas Scene (ages 3-8)**

Cut out felt figures of Mary, Joseph, the Baby Lord, and other figures for retelling the Christmas story on a flannel board. (This can be made by covering a piece of wood or cardboard with flannel.)

**PROJECT: Make a Scroll or Accordion Book of the Angelic Appearances** (ages 7-14)

Have child (or a group of children) illustrate the angelic appearances on separate pieces of paper. These can be taped together vertically into a scroll or horizontally to make an accordion book.



*Accordion Book*

## **THE ANGEL GABRIEL**

**“I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God,  
and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings.”  
(Luke 1:19)**



Gabriel’s glad tidings are announcements of the Lord’s coming. Sharing these good tidings is the special delight of the community of angels in heaven known as “Gabriel.”

How can we cherish these glad tidings and share them with others? For those who have contact with children, helping them see the true meaning of Christmas is a wonderful way to share these glad tidings. In planning your celebration of Christmas, reflect on the traditions that look to the Lord.

### **ACTIVITY: Ways to Focus on the Lord at Christmas**

- ◆ Set up the nativity scene in your home before putting up other Christmas decorations.
- ◆ Put up a religious Advent calendar to help children look toward Christmas Day.
- ◆ Encourage children to do religious art projects for display in your home or for gifts to grandparents and other relatives.
- ◆ Read aloud the Christmas story on Christmas Eve or on Christmas morning before opening gifts.
- ◆ Sing (or listen to) favorite Christmas hymns.

### **SING: “Joy to the World”**

### **READ: “Christmas Joy and Happiness”** by the Rev. Norman H. Reuter

This family talk helps us reflect on the joy of the angels at the Lord’s birth and the way the joy of the angels can affect us when we are celebrating Christmas.

### **PROJECT: Make a Picture of the Angel Gabriel** (ages 3-8)

### **PROJECT: Make a Stand Up Angel** (ages 6-12)

### **PROJECT: A Mobile of (Tissue Paper) Angels** (aged 8-14)

**PROJECT: A Simpler Angel Snowflake** (*ages 8-12*)

**HELP: Tips on Folding and Cutting Paper Snowflakes** (*ages 8 through teens*)

**PROJECT: Another Angel Snowflake** (*ages 9 through teens*)

**PROJECT: Flying Angel Snowflake** (*ages 10-up*)

**COLORING PAGE: An Angel Appears to Joseph**

**COLORING PAGE: The Angel Appears to Zacharias**

**PROJECT: Make a Paper Chain of Angels** (*ages 10-14*)

**COLORING PAGE: The Angel Appears to the Shepherds**

**COLORING PAGE: Glory to God in the Highest**

**COLORING PAGE: Unto You Is Born This Day**

## **THE ANNUNCIATION TO MARY**

**“[Y]ou will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son,  
and shall call His name Jesus.”**

**(Luke 1:31)**

Though surprised by the angel’s visit and words, Mary responds, “Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38). We can all appreciate how wonderful it was that Mary was asked to give birth to the Lord. But this is also a beautiful illustration of the humility and innocence we must have for the Lord to come into our lives as our Savior.



**READ: “The Annunciation”** by the Rev. David R. Simons

This family talk explores the wonder of Mary being asked to serve a special use as the mother of the baby Lord.

**PROJECT: Wool Angel Mobile** (*ages 10-12*)

**COLORING PAGE: The Annunciation**

**PROJECT: The Angel Gabriel and Mary** (*ages 3-6*)

**POSTER: The Magnificat—Mary’s Song of Praise** (*ages 11-up*)

**READ: “The Virgin Birth”** by the Rev. Ormond Odhner

This is a brief explanation of the importance of understanding and believing in the Virgin birth.

**SPIRITUAL TASK: The Maidservant of the Lord** (*teens and adults*)

## **THE LORD’S BIRTH**

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given....  
(Isaiah 9:6)

The Lord was born in Bethlehem so long ago, and He can be born in our hearts and minds—if we will receive Him. All of His angels want to help us come to love the Lord above all things, being able to join in the joyous refrain: “Glory to God in the highest!” As you celebrate Christmas, think about ways that you can look to the Lord in your life.

**READ: “The Joy of the Angels at the Lord’s Birth”** by the Rev. Eric Carswell

**PROJECT: Make a Diorama of the Lord in a Manger** (*ages 6-10*)

**COLORING PAGE: The Nativity**

**COLORING PAGE: Immanuel**

**SING: “Silent Night, Holy Night!”**

**READ: “Our Savior”** by the Rev. Geoffrey S. Childs

A sermon explaining why it was essential for the Lord to come down to earth.

**SING: “In Lowly Stable Thou Art Born”**