

A NATIVITY STORY



Family Devotional



GABRIEL

Hearing God's Voice Through Distraction

We live in a noisy, fast-paced world, but distractions aren't new. Long ago, people faced their own interruptions—from government oppression and heavy taxes to family dysfunction and tribal conflict. Distraction has always been part of life.

And not all distractions come from outside. Worry, for instance, can quietly take over our thoughts, replacing trust with anxiety and fear.

Even good things can distract us. Our calendars overflow with school, work, sports, and social events. Technology adds even more noise, quietly pulling us away from God.

But Scripture invites us to slow down. “Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10). Isaiah 26:3 reminds us that peace comes when our minds stay on Him. Jesus often withdrew to pray, modeling what James 4:8 promises: “Come near to God and He will come near to you.”

God draws near when we make space to hear Him.

This Christmas, amid the joy and celebration, choose to slow down and spend time with God. It's in those quiet moments that He reveals Himself. As we grow in our relationship with Him—and reflect on the Good News the angels declared—we'll learn to trust Him more with every part of our lives.

Discussion Questions

- **Let's start with Gabriel from the video.**
 - Gabriel seems frustrated. Why do you think that is?
 - What might be bothering him about how people are spending their time?
 - *(Leader tip: You can say something like, "Have you ever felt like no one is listening when you're trying to say something important?")*
- **Mary shares some gentle wisdom about how God speaks to us.**
 - What did she say that stood out to you?
 - How might that be comforting?
 - Can you think of a time when God gave you peace or encouragement through something you read, heard, or felt?
- **Let's talk about spending time with God.**
 - What is one of your favorite ways to connect with God?
 - (Some examples: being in nature, singing, drawing, reading the Bible, going to church, praying, being quiet.)
 - *(Leader tip: If your group is quiet, offer one of your own answers to get things started.)*
- **Distractions are everywhere.**
 - What are some of the biggest distractions in your life right now?
 - (Examples: phone notifications, YouTube, busy schedules, stress, noise, sports, comparison.)
 - In Jesus' time, people had distractions too. What do you think some of those might have been?
 - (Examples: family arguments, Roman government issues, taking care of animals or crops, traveling far for a census.)
- **Why does spending time with God matter?**
 - What changes when we slow down and make space to listen to God?
 - Can you think of one way you could make a little more room for Him this Christmas?
 - (Examples: a quiet walk, lighting a candle and saying a prayer, reading a short Scripture passage.)
- **God speaks to us in different ways.**
 - Sometimes it's through Scripture or prayer. Sometimes, through someone's encouragement or a message we hear at church.
 - Can you remember a time when God spoke to your heart in one of those ways?
 - What did that moment feel like?

Activity: Hearing God's Voice Through Distraction

Create a "Quiet Space Card"

Supplies needed: Index card or cardstock, markers or crayons, stickers (optional), Bible or Bible app

- Read Psalm 46:10 aloud: *"Be still and know that I am God."*
- Invite everyone to find a verse about Jesus that brings them peace or reminds them that He is near.
- Write the verse on the card and decorate it with soft visuals (stars, candles, hearts, clouds, etc.).
- On the back, write one thing you'll do this week to be still with God—like lighting a candle, turning off your phone, or going for a silent walk.
- Place the card somewhere you'll see it, like on your nightstand, bathroom mirror, or lunchbox.

Noise Check Challenge (Group Version)

- Invite everyone to sit silently for one minute. Then ask:
 - What did you hear?
 - What distracted you?
 - How hard was it to stay quiet?
- Read James 4:8 aloud: *"Come near to God and He will come near to you."*
- Discuss how "coming near" to God might look when we turn down the volume on life.

DIY "Do Not Disturb" Door Hanger

Supplies: A blank door hanger (paper or foam), markers or crayons, stickers (optional)

- Decorate the hanger with verses, drawings, or words like:
“I’m meeting with God—come back later!” or
“Quiet time with Jesus in progress.”
- Hang the sign on your bedroom door before your quiet time with God to help reduce interruptions.

QUIET SPACE



I'm spending
time with God



DO NOT DISTURB

Quiet time with
God in progress



SHEPHERD

Jesus Came as the Great Shepherd

Christmas is full of festive events—parties, concerts, family gatherings. And often, that means being around people we don't usually spend time with. It can pull us out of our comfort zones—away from our cozy routines and familiar faces.

But what if God is calling us to something more this season? Something that feels risky but meaningful?

We can choose to stick with what's familiar—or we can see these moments as opportunities. A conversation at a party, a quiet act of kindness, or an invitation to church might be the start of someone's journey toward Jesus.

In the video, when Joseph sees the shepherd chasing after a lost sheep (Ezekiel 34:11–12), he's reminded that Jesus chases after us too—every one of us. Even the irritating Elf who keeps waking Baby Jesus is welcome at the manger of mercy.

This Christmas, as you attend events and meet new people, ask God to help you notice who might need to be “chased after” with love. You could be the one to introduce someone to the truth that sets them free.

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Discussion Questions

- **Let's start with the shepherds.**
 - What do you think shepherds do to take care of their sheep?
 - *(Leader tip: Invite everyone to share one idea, even silly ones!)*
- **Read John 10:27–28 together.**
 - What stands out to you in this verse?
 - How does it make you feel to know that Jesus calls you by name and promises to never let you go?
 - *(Leader tip: With kids, invite them to imagine Jesus calling their name like a shepherd calls sheep.)*
- **Think about Jesus as the Good Shepherd.**
 - Can you think of a time when Jesus guided, protected, or “found” you when you felt lost or unsure?
- **Let's talk about meeting new people.**
 - How do you usually feel—nervous, excited, unsure?
 - Why do you think that is?
 - Is it easy or hard for you to talk to someone you don't know?
- **Jesus calls us “sheep,” and He is the “Good Shepherd.”**
 - Why do you think He uses that picture?
 - *(Leader tip: You might mention that sheep need help and direction—and Jesus lovingly gives both.)*
- **Have you ever been lost?**
 - What happened?
 - How did it feel at the time?
 - How did it feel to be found again?
 - *(Leader tip: This can be about being physically lost or feeling spiritually distant.)*
- **Think about the Elf in the video—the one who kept interrupting.**
 - Do you have any “Elfs” in your life—someone who's difficult or irritating?
 - How might you show them patience, kindness, or an invitation this Christmas?

Activity: Jesus the Good Shepherd

The Lost Sheep Search (Stuffed Animal or Cut-Out Hunt)

Supplies:

- 10 small stuffed animals (or paper sheep cutouts)
- A Bible or nativity set (optional)

Instructions:

- Have an adult hide the stuffed animals or paper sheep around your home, yard, or classroom.
- Assign someone to be the “Good Shepherd” and go search for all the lost sheep.
- Celebrate when each sheep is found—cheer, ring a bell, or bring them to a “manger” spot.
- After the game, reflect:
 - *“How did it feel to find the sheep?”*
 - *“How does it feel knowing Jesus searches for us when we’re lost?”*

Lost Sheep Printable Hunt (with Encouragement Verses)

Supplies:

- One-page printable with 10 sheep, each with a truth about God’s love
- Scissors and tape
- Optional: basket or manger for collected sheep

Instructions:

- Print and cut out the 10 sheep (each with a short encouraging message like “Jesus knows my name”).
- Hide them around your space.
- As each one is found, read the message aloud and reflect on what it means.
- After all are found, lay them out or place them by a nativity scene.

Reflection Prompt:

- *“Which message stood out to you most today?”*
- *“Why do you think Jesus wanted us to hear these things?”*

Who's Your Elf? (Sheep Name Drop Activity)

Supplies:

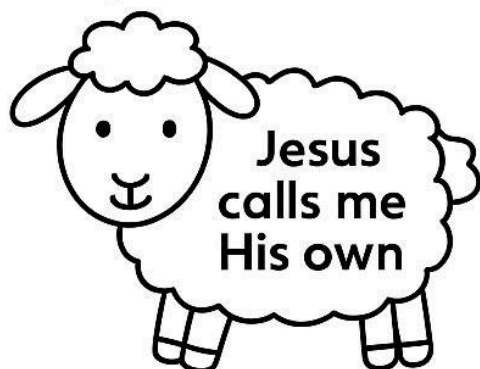
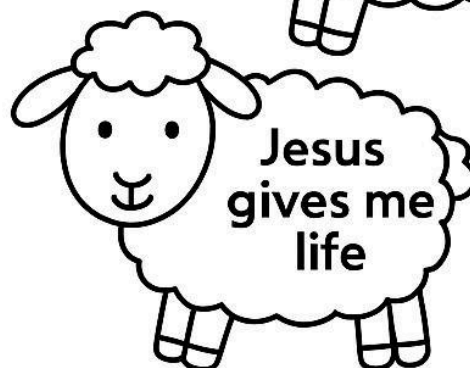
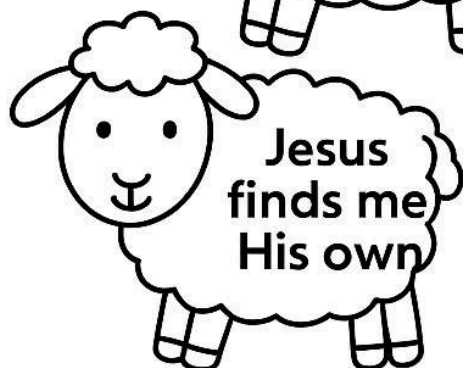
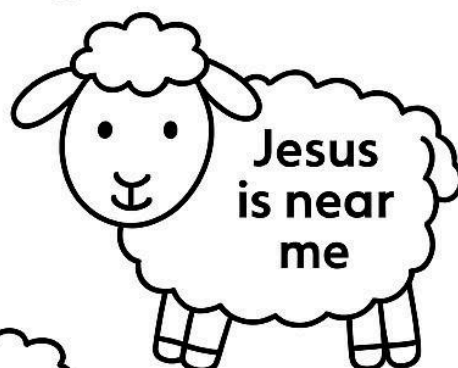
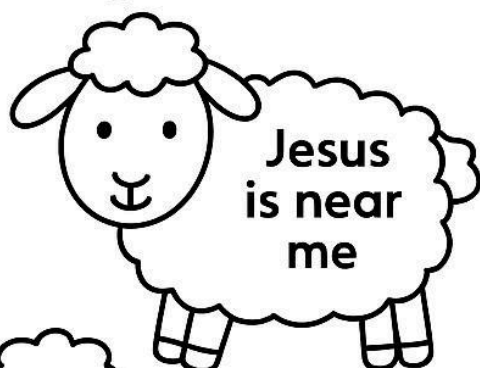
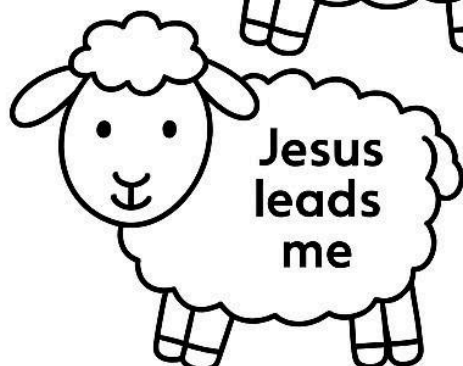
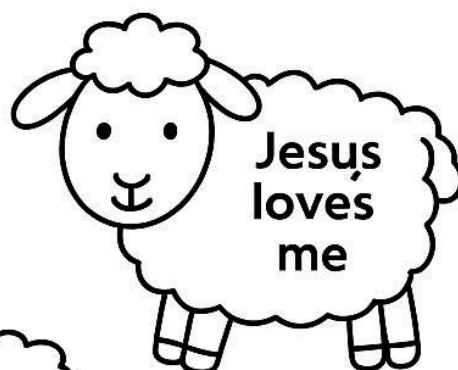
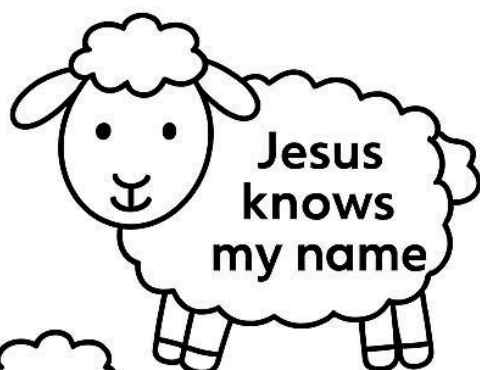
- One-page printable of blank sheep
- Pen or marker
- Nativity set or “manger space”

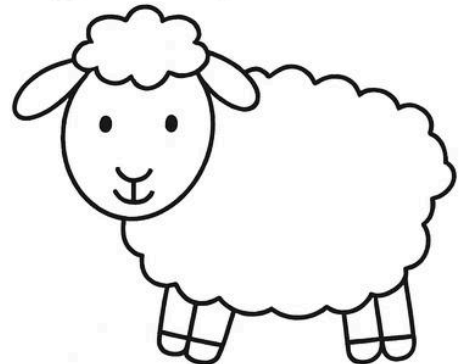
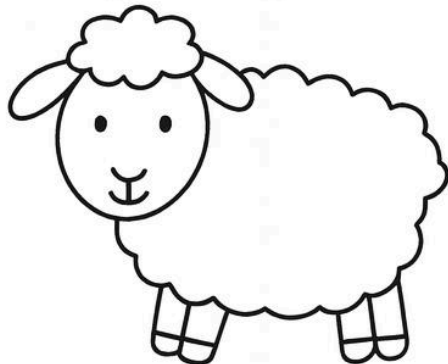
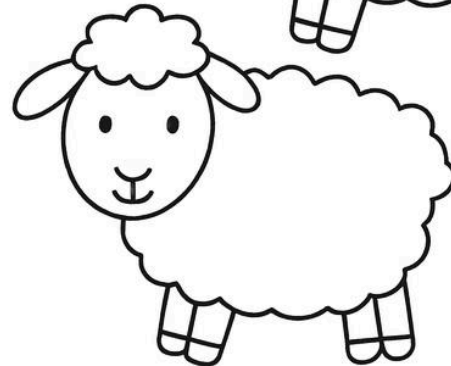
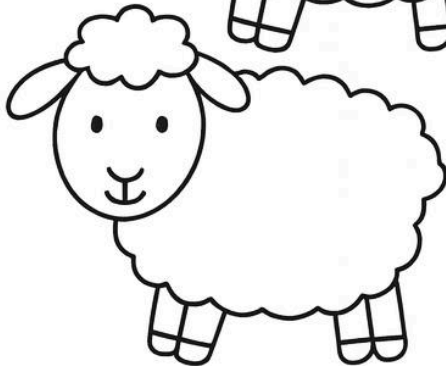
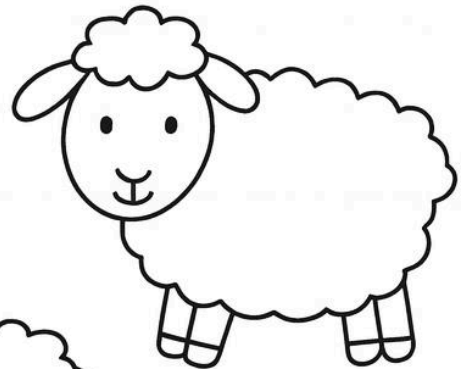
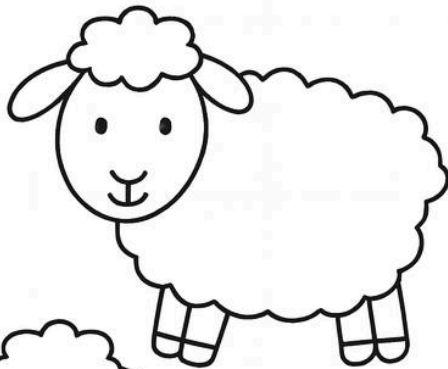
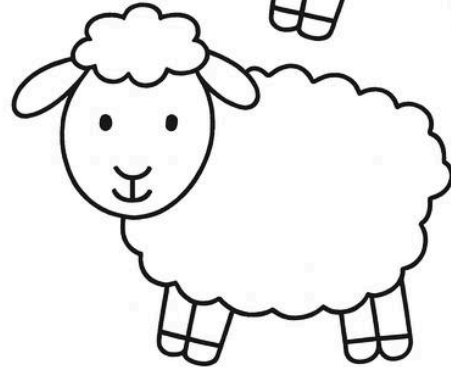
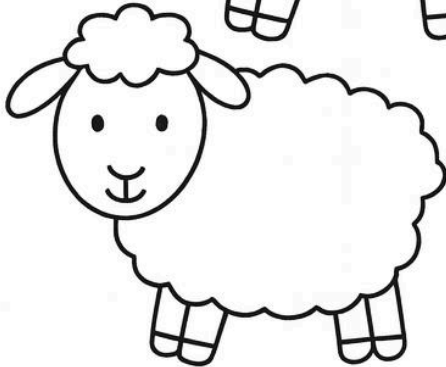
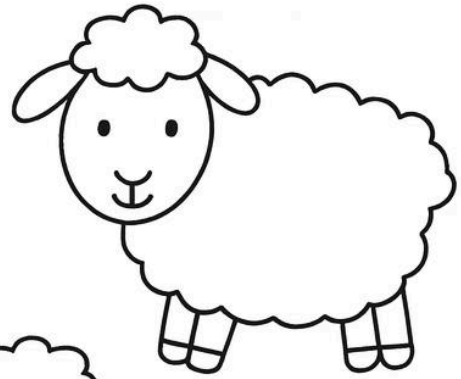
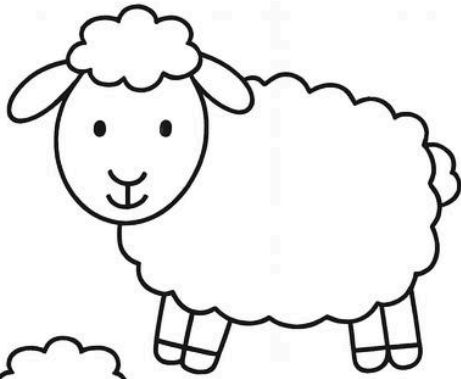
Instructions:

- Think of someone in your life who can be difficult to love—or who may feel left out or forgotten.
- Write their name inside a blank sheep shape.
- Place that sheep near the nativity or manger scene to remind your family:
“Even the Elf is welcome at the manger.”
- Consider praying for the person or doing something kind for them this week.

Reflection Prompt:

- *“What might it mean to ‘chase after’ someone with kindness?”*
- *“Why do you think Jesus wants us to include everyone in His love?”*







WISE MEN

Jesus is the Gift

Gift-giving is one of the joys of Christmas. Even the wise men brought meaningful gifts to Jesus—treasures fit for a king, and practical support for Mary and Joseph during their escape from Herod.

Today, our culture still celebrates what we're good at—our talents, skills, and achievements. Maybe you're great at math, painting, or working with people. Sometimes this focus makes us feel like we have to offer something to Jesus to be accepted.

We think we need to earn His love through talent, effort, or service. But when we feel unworthy or compare ourselves to others, we can begin to pull away—praying less, reading less, even avoiding church.

But the manger tells a different story. Jesus came to be approachable. His name means “God with us.” He desires a relationship, not performance. Of course He enjoys the gifts we bring, but they're not required.

Imagine if a friend expected a gift every time you saw them. That wouldn't feel like a real friendship. Jesus isn't like that. The wisemen gave out of inspiration—not obligation.

This Christmas, remember: Jesus delights in who you are, not what you bring. After all—He is the gift.

Discussion Questions

- **Let's start with the idea that Jesus is a gift.**
 - Why do the Scriptures say Jesus is a gift from God?
 - What does that mean to you personally?
 - *(Leader tip: If someone needs help getting started, you can remind them that John 3:16 says "God so loved the world that He gave...")*
- **We all have different gifts and talents.**
 - What is something you believe you're gifted at or something you enjoy doing?
 - (Examples: music, drawing, helping others, sports, fixing things, making people laugh.)
 - How could you use that gift to honor God or serve others?
 - *(Leader tip: Be ready to encourage each person's answer—some may be shy about naming their strengths.)*
- **Let's imagine we were one of the wise men.**
 - What kind of gift would you want to bring to Jesus and why?
 - (It could be something meaningful, funny, creative, or even symbolic.)
 - How can our Christmas gift-giving help remind us that Jesus is the greatest gift of all?
- **The wise men gave Jesus gold, frankincense, and myrrh.**
 - Why do you think they brought gifts at all?
 - What do you think those gifts said about how they saw Jesus?

Activity: My Gift, God's Glory

Wrap a Gift for Jesus

Supplies:

A small personal item from home, wrapping paper or fabric, tape, ribbon, gift tag

Instructions:

- Invite each person to find something they own that feels special to them. Don't tell anyone what it is yet!
- Spend time wrapping the item thoughtfully—use whatever materials you have to make it beautiful.
- Write a gift tag: *"To: Jesus. From: [Your Name]"*
- Place the gift under the tree. On Christmas morning (before opening presents), gather as a family and unwrap your Jesus gifts together.
- When it's your turn, explain:
 - *"If I could give this to Jesus, here's why I would..."*

Wrap-Up Thought:

Close with a prayer, thanking Jesus for being the greatest gift and offering your hearts to Him this Christmas.

“I Am the Gift” Ornament – My Gift, God’s Glory

Supplies:

Printable ornament template (bulb-shaped), markers or crayons, scissors, string or ribbon (optional)

Instructions:

1. Decorate the Front:

- Write: *“I am the gift Jesus wants.”*
- Add your name and drawings or symbols that represent you—like stars, hearts, tools, music notes, etc.

2. Complete the Back:

- Write: *“One way I can offer myself to Jesus this Christmas is...”*
- Add something you’re good at or love to do (e.g., “I’m good at encouraging people,” “I love helping my family”).
- Then finish the thought: *“God, I give this gift back to You for Your glory.”*

3. Display It:

- Hang your ornament on the Christmas tree, near your nativity, or on a string across the room to remind your family that we are all part of God’s plan.

Reflection Prompts:

- *Why do you think Jesus wants **us** more than anything else?*
- *How can your gifts make a difference in someone’s life this Christmas?*





MARY AND JOSEPH

Jesus Changes Everything

In the video, Mary and Joseph are overwhelmed. Life with Jesus hasn't gone as expected—giving birth in a stable, surrounded by animals and unexpected visitors. It's nothing like they imagined.

They're not unhappy—but they realize: Jesus changes everything. And they've only just begun to see how.

In our lives, following Jesus brings joy and salvation, but it also calls us to make difficult choices—standing for what's right, avoiding gossip, sitting with someone who's alone. Obedience is rewarding, but it isn't always easy. Giving, forgiving, and trusting God can challenge our comfort zones.

Like Mary and Joseph, we may not count the cost ahead of time. Following Jesus can feel uncertain, but God prepares us along the way. As we trust Him more, our hearts soften and our minds renew. Like muscles growing stronger through soreness, our faith grows through effort.

This Christmas, ask God what He might want to change in your life through Jesus. What is He asking you to trust Him with? What sacrifices might He be inviting you to make?

Jesus changes everything—including how we relate to God. Through Him, we are no longer bound by sin but welcomed as God's children, washed clean.

Discussion Questions

- **Let's start with how Jesus has changed your life.**
 - Can you name something that's different in your life because of Jesus?
 - *(Leader tip: This can be something big or small—like being more forgiving, having hope, or learning to pray.)*
- **Following Jesus can be joyful—but sometimes it's hard too.**
 - What is something difficult you've experienced or given up because of your decision to follow Jesus?
 - Why do you think Jesus calls us to do hard things sometimes?
 - *(Leader tip: Share your own story if the group hesitates. Let them know it's okay if following Jesus doesn't always feel easy.)*
- **God surprises us in good ways, too.**
 - Can you think of an unexpected blessing you've experienced because of your faith?
 - (Examples: a friendship, peace in a tough situation, direction when you were lost.)
 - How did it show you more of who God is?
- **Why do you think God allows challenges in the Christian life?**
 - How might those challenges grow our faith or help us rely on Him more?
- **Mary and Joseph didn't know all that would change—yet they trusted God.**
 - What are some ways God might prepare us today to follow Jesus, even when it's hard or uncertain?
 - (Examples: reading Scripture, prayer, trusted friends, church, mentors.)
 - *(Leader tip: Remind the group that God often prepares us little by little—just like training a muscle.)*
- **Let's talk about obedience.**
 - Can you name something you did recently that felt like a step of obedience to God?
 - How did it feel afterward?
 - What helped you make that choice?

Activity: Jesus Changes Everything

Trust Walk Obstacle Course (*Movement-Based*)

Supplies: Furniture, cones, pillows, or household objects; a blindfold

Instructions:

1. Set the Course:

Create a simple obstacle course using items around the house or classroom. Keep it safe but challenging.

2. Pair Up:

One person wears the blindfold. The other becomes their “guide,” using only their voice to lead them through the course.

3. Switch Roles:

Let everyone take a turn guiding and being guided.

4. Reflect Together:

- *How did it feel to not know the way?*
- *Was it hard to trust your guide’s voice?*
- *What does this teach us about following God, even when we don’t see the whole path?*

“Jesus Changed My Path” Timeline (*Reflection-Based*)

Supplies:

Printable timeline sheet (can generate), pens or crayons

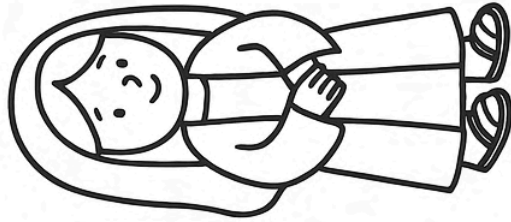
Instructions:

1. **Draw or fill in a timeline of your life**, starting from early memories to now. Include a few key “faith moments,” such as:
 - A time you made a hard choice to follow Jesus
 - A time you felt God helped you through something
 - A time you didn’t understand, but later saw God’s hand
2. **Decorate or illustrate it** to show how Jesus has changed your direction.
3. **Add a “Next Step” box at the end:**
“What is one thing I believe God is preparing me for now?”
4. **Share or post the timeline** in a visible place as a reminder that Jesus doesn’t just save us—He transforms our path.

Jesus CHANGED MY PATH

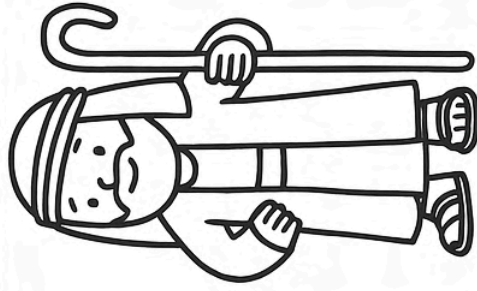


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2

3



4



CHRIST

Share the Gift

When Jesus was born, the news was too good to keep quiet. Angels appeared to startle the shepherds, proclaiming: “The Savior is here!” They didn’t just hear it—they had to go see it. And once they did, they couldn’t help but tell others.

Today, it’s easy to assume people can learn about Jesus on their own. There’s no shortage of information. But knowing *about* someone isn’t the same as knowing *them*.

Think of it this way: if you admired a famous athlete and found out your friend actually knew them, wouldn’t you ask a million questions? “What are they like?” “Are they kind?” “What do they love?” That’s the difference that relationship makes.

The same is true with Jesus. If you know Him, you can describe Him personally—what He means to you, why you follow Him, how He’s changed your life. That kind of sharing makes people curious to know Him too.

This Christmas, think about someone in your life who might need to meet the Jesus you know. A gift, a conversation, or a church invite could open the door.

Jesus is too special to keep to ourselves. He is the gift God gave the world—to save us. And that kind of gift is meant to be shared.

Discussion Questions

- **Let's start with Christmas gifts.**
 - Can you think of a gift that your whole family shares after it's opened?
 - (Examples: board games, treats, puzzles, movies, toys everyone ends up using.)
 - What makes something a "shareable" gift?
- **Have you ever seen someone open a gift that you really wanted?**
 - How did that feel?
 - What would it have meant to you if they had shared it—or even given it to you?
 - *(Leader tip: Use this to help the group imagine the joy of sharing Jesus with others—He's a gift that blesses more when shared.)*
- **Let's talk about sharing Jesus.**
 - Can you think of a time when you shared something about Jesus with a friend, classmate, or someone else?
 - What did you say, and how did they respond?
 - *(Leader tip: If no one answers right away, offer a simple example, like praying for a friend or telling someone "Jesus loves you.")*
- **We can share Jesus in many ways.**
 - What are some different ways to help others know about Him—besides just inviting them to church?
 - (Examples: showing kindness, giving a gift, saying a prayer for someone, sharing your story, encouraging words.)
 - Which of these feels easiest or most natural to you?
- **Think back to when you first learned about Jesus.**
 - Who introduced you to Him?
 - What did you learn about Him at first?
 - How has your understanding of Jesus changed or grown since then?

Activity: Jesus is Worth Sharing

Create an Invitation to Meet Jesus

Objective: Help children understand that Jesus is a gift worth sharing—and give them a way to express that in a creative and personal way.

Instructions:

1. Set the Scene:

Ask the group to imagine they've been asked to design a special invitation to meet Jesus—God's greatest gift to the world.

2. Ask Questions to Spark Ideas:

- What would the event be like?
- Would it be a banquet, a birthday party, a quiet tea, a royal ball?
- Who would be there? What would the atmosphere feel like?

3. Create the Invitation:

Pass out markers, stickers, crayons, and paper—or use the printable “You’re Invited!” template we’ll provide. Let kids fill it in with:

- An event name (like “Dinner with the King” or “The Savior’s Banquet”)
- Why Jesus is worth meeting
- What they’d want someone to know about Him

4. Reflect Together:

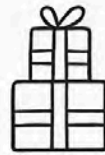
After they’ve finished, ask:

- Who would you want to give your invitation to?
- Why do you think they’d love to meet Jesus?

You're Invited!



To meet the King
of Kings!



What:

Where:

When:

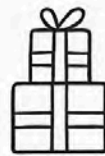
Why this is special:



You're Invited!



To meet the King
of Kings!



What:

Where:

When:

Why this is special:



QUIET SPACE



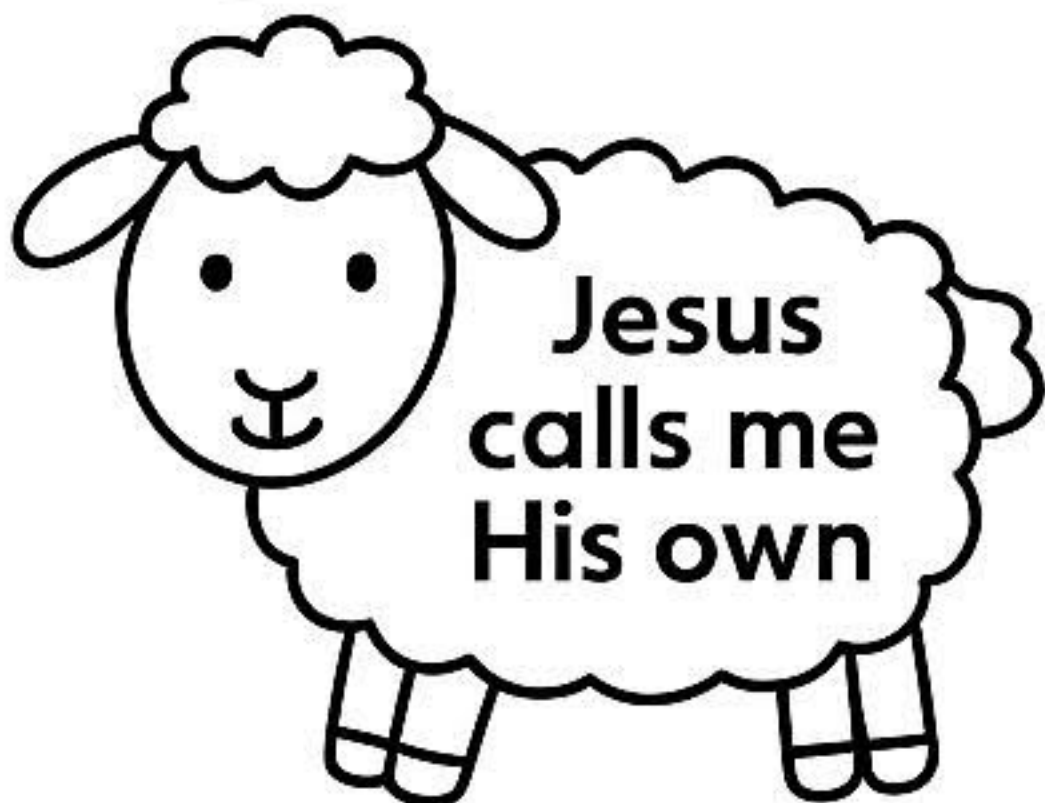
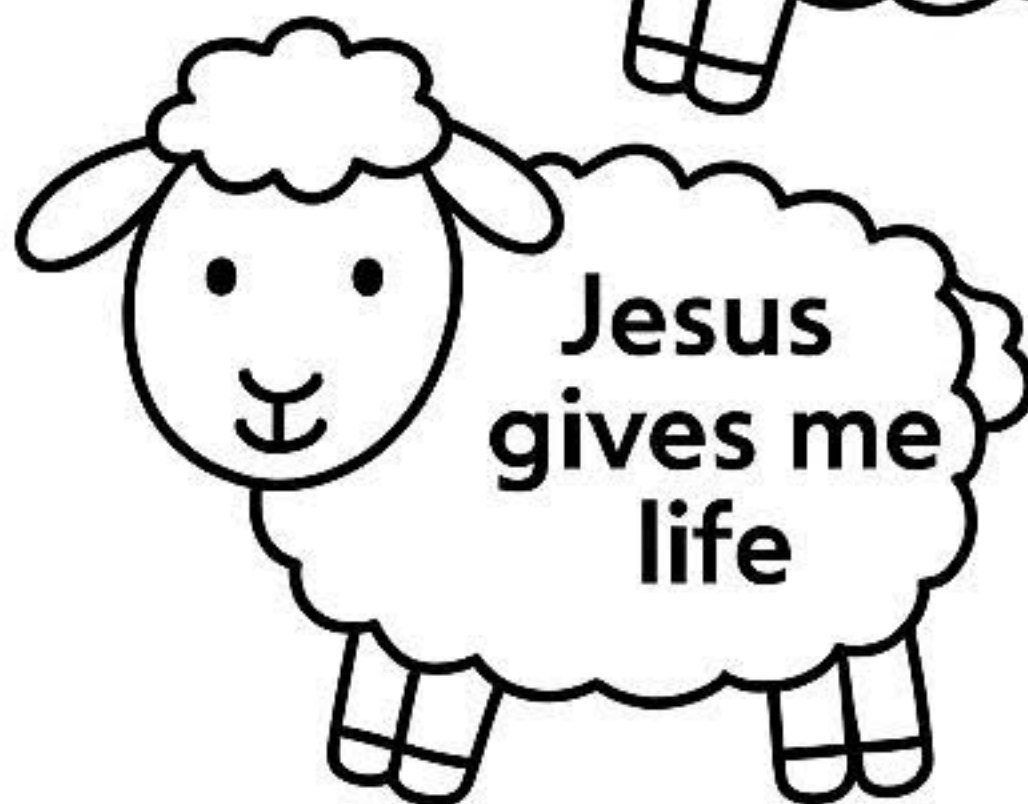
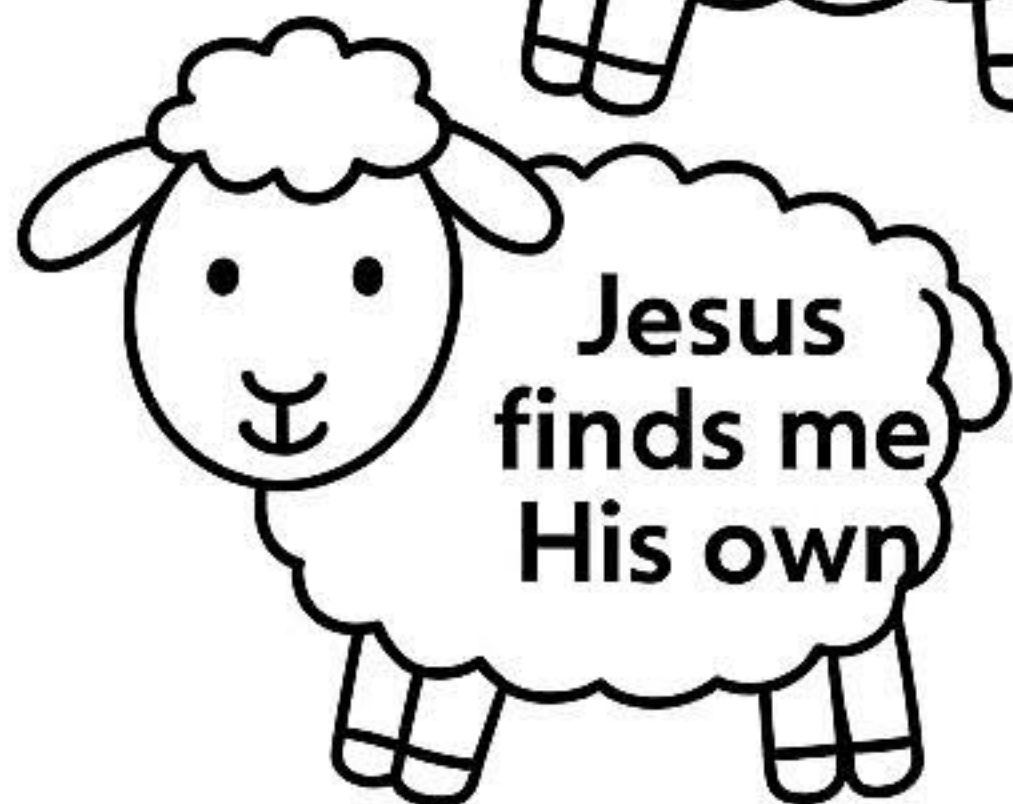
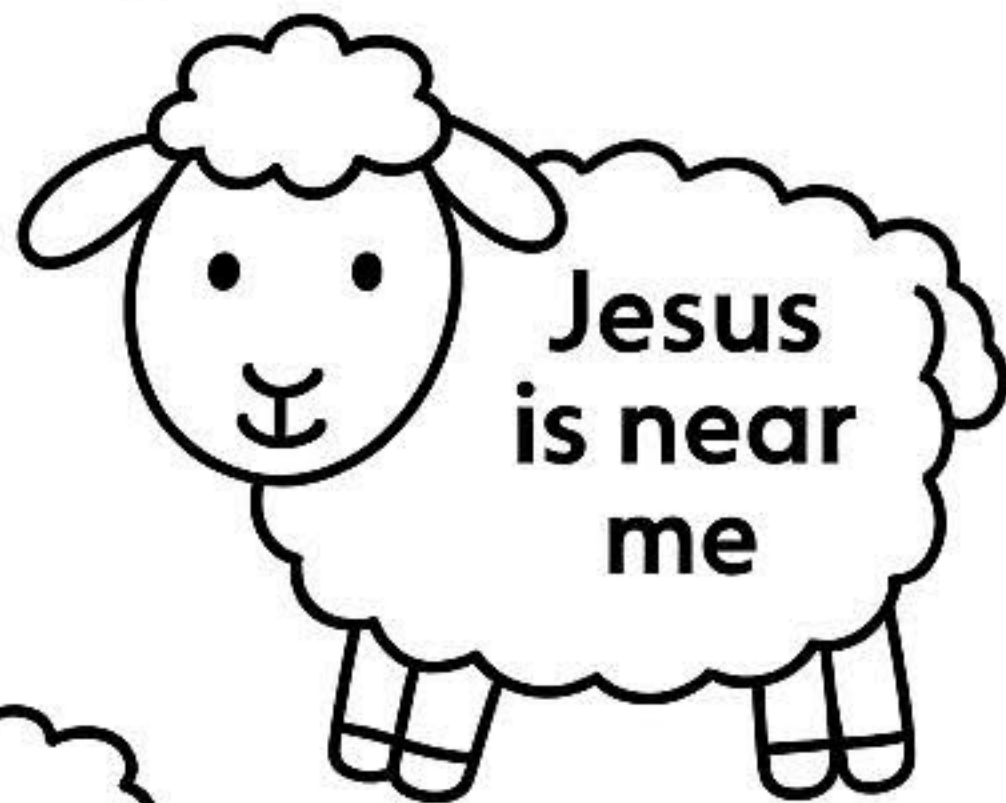
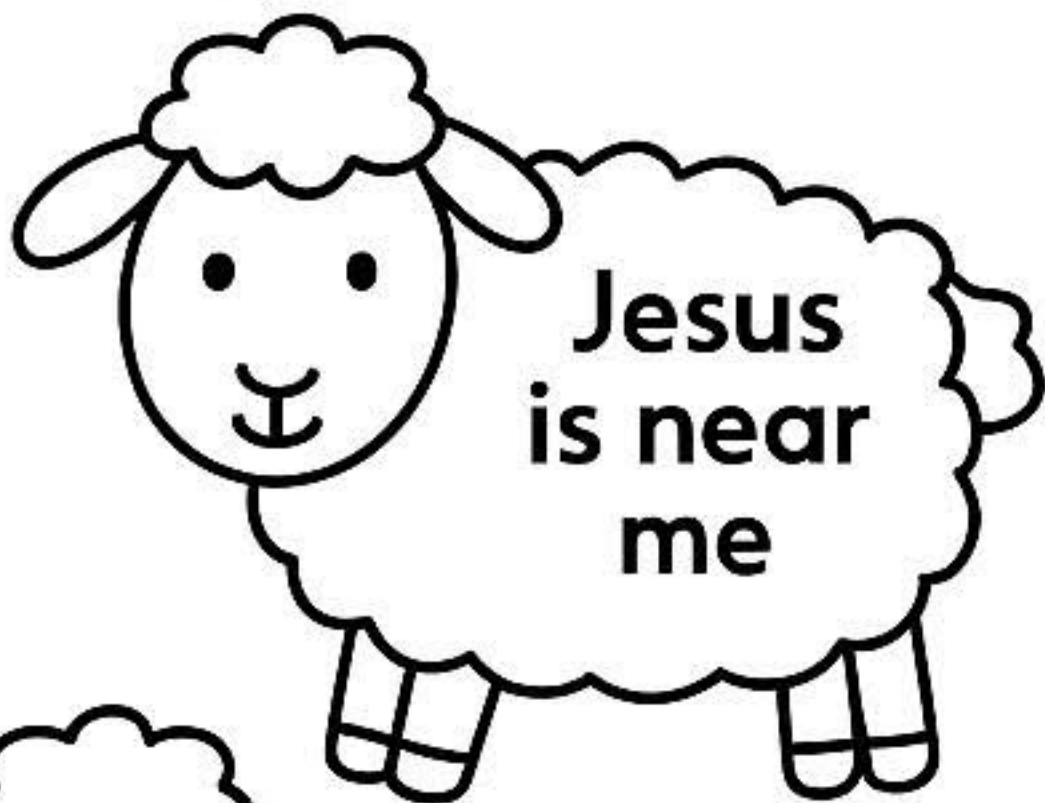
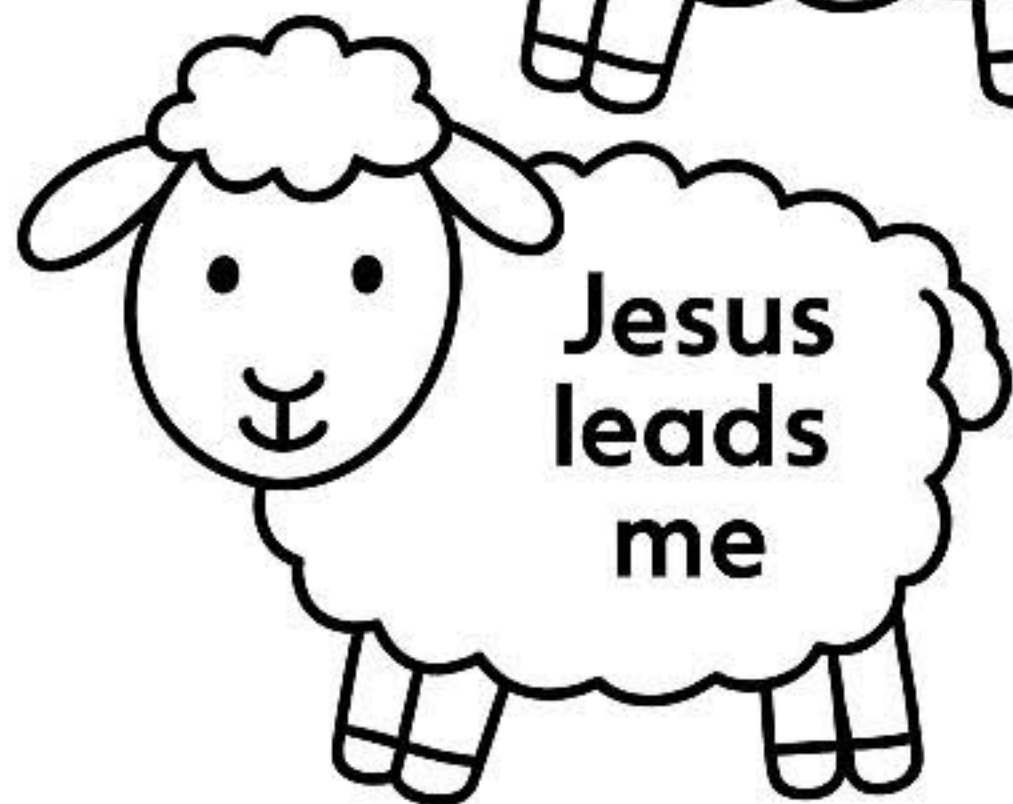
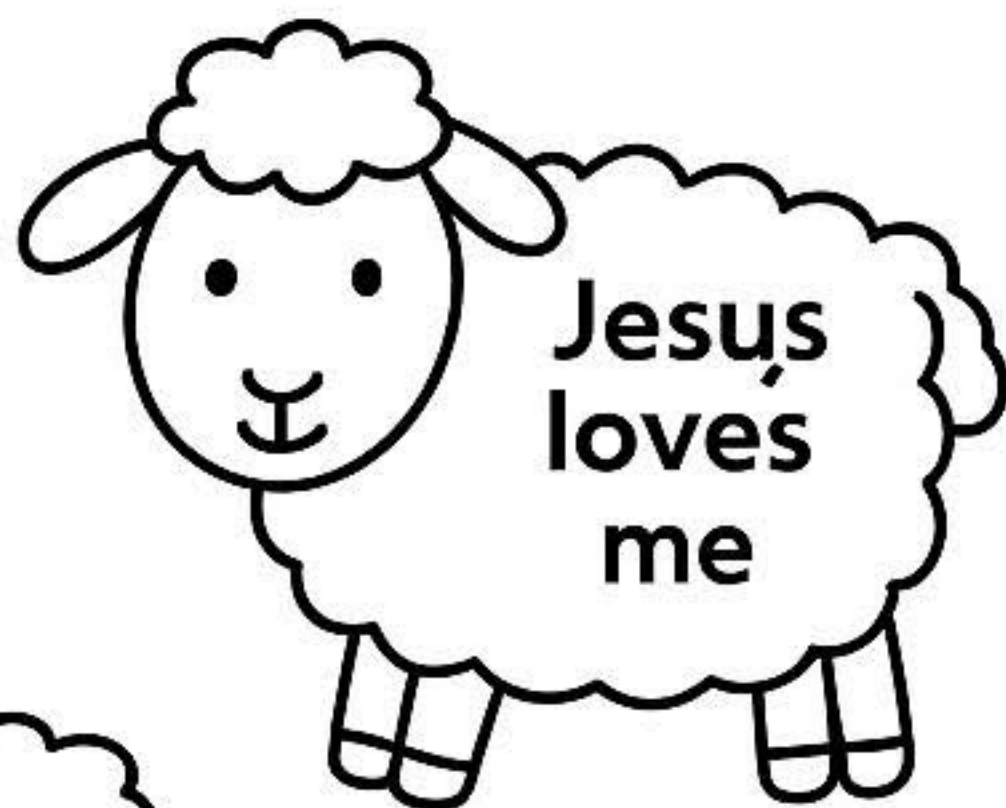
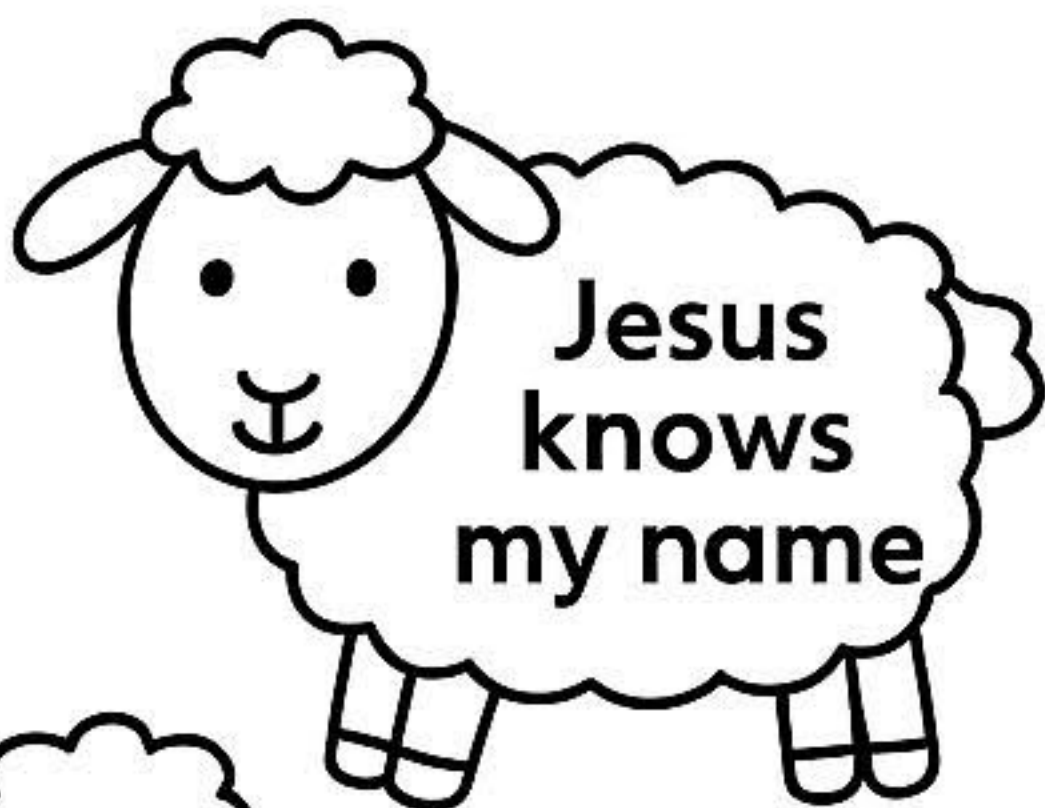
I'm spending
time with God

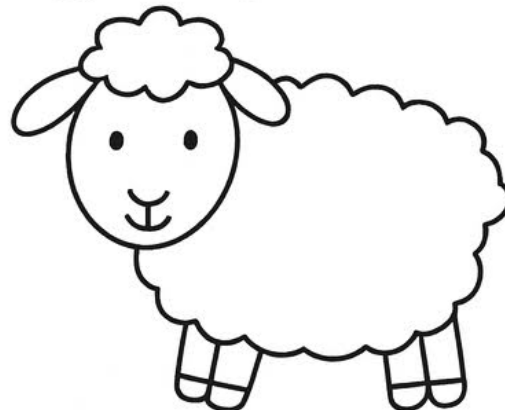
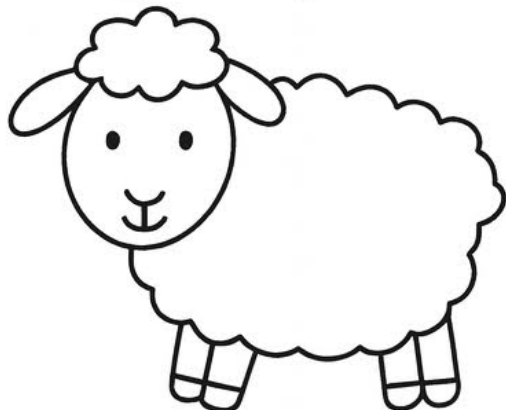
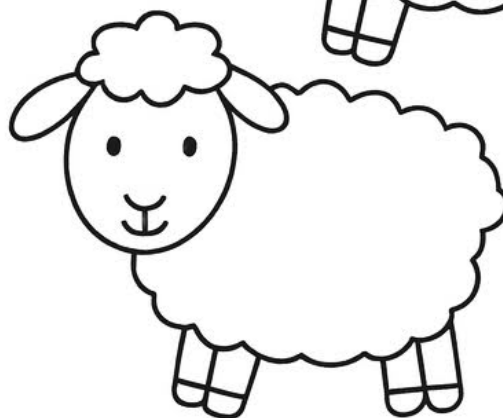
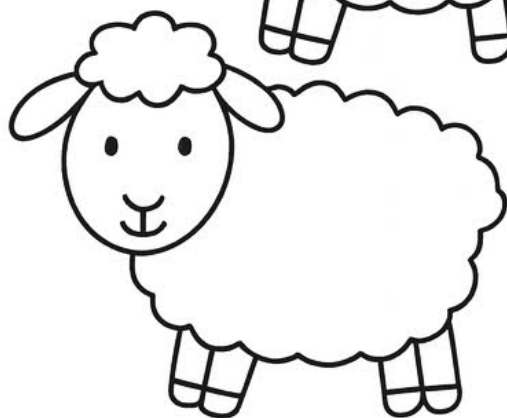
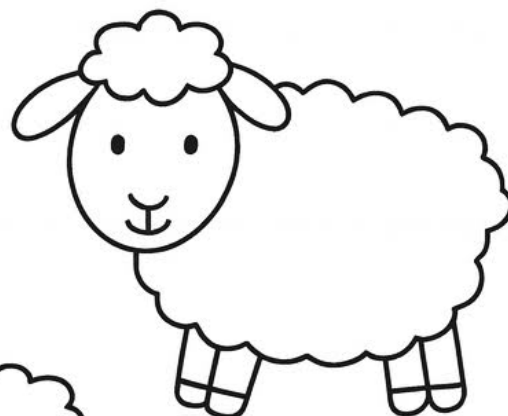
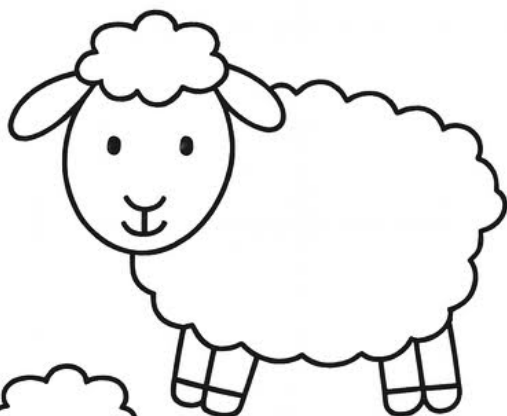
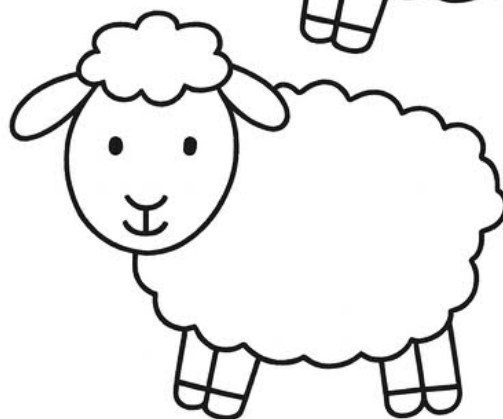
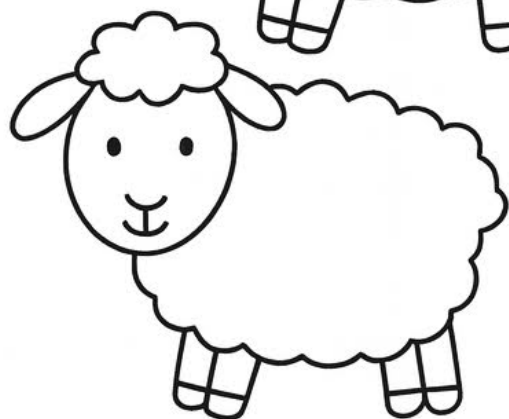
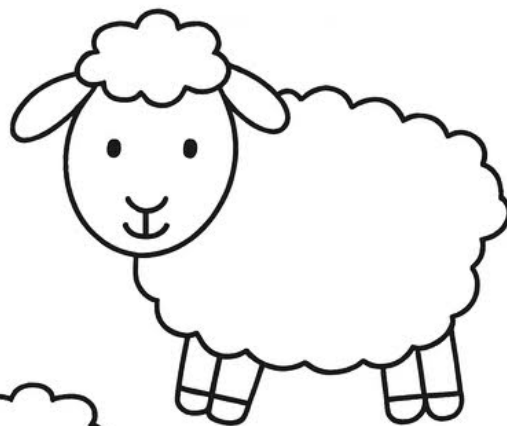
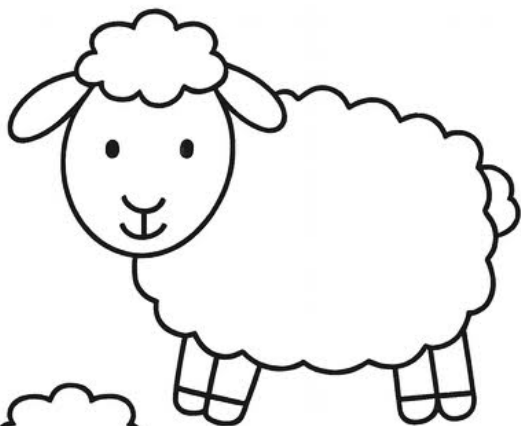


DO NOT DISTURB

Quiet time with
God in progress

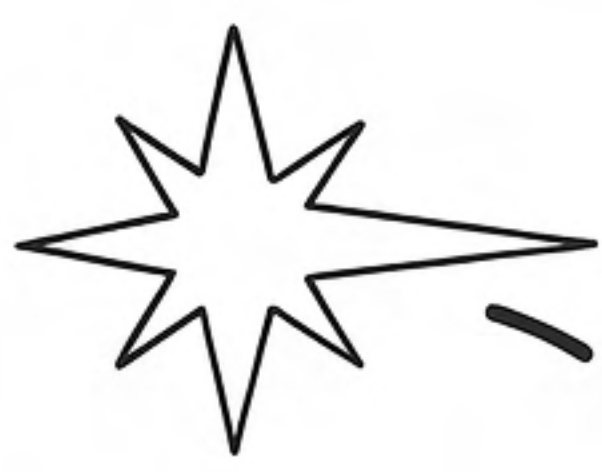




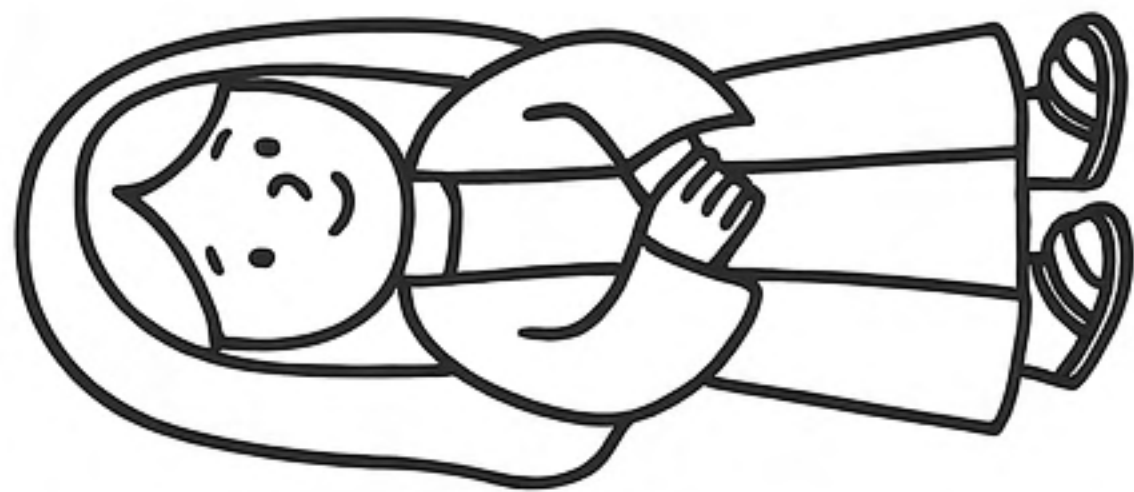




Jesus CHANGED MY PATH



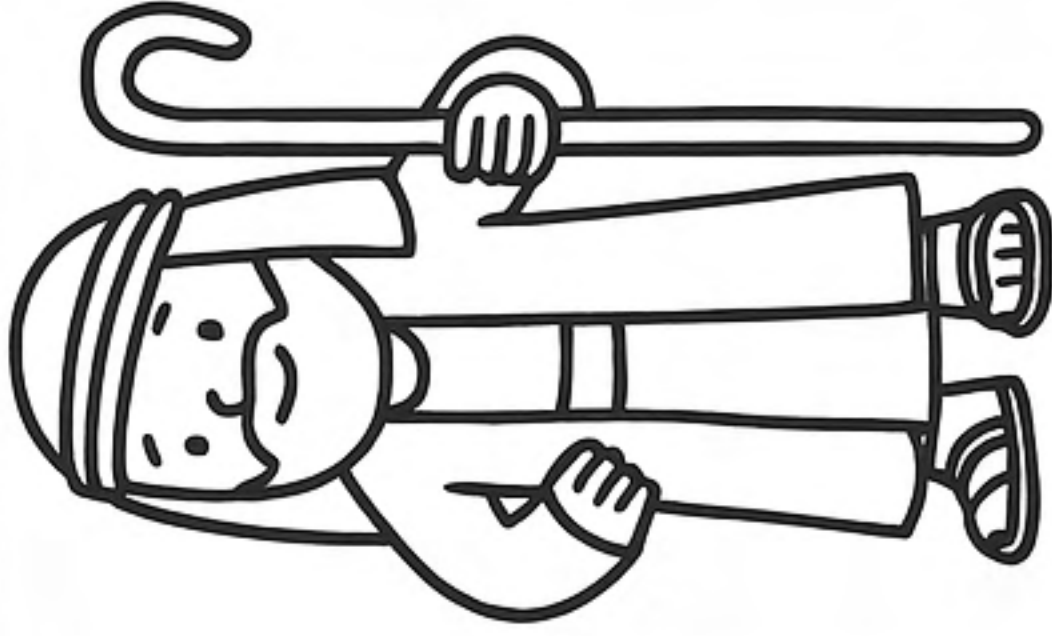
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2

4

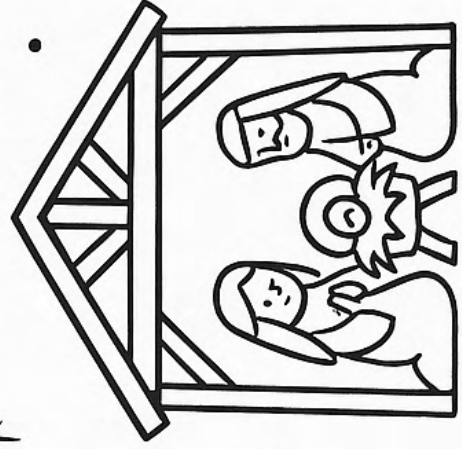
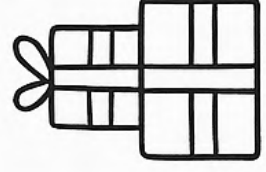
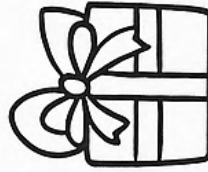
3



You're Invited!



To meet the King
of Kings!



What:

Where:

When:

Why this is special:

