

Jesus Is Born

Allelu!

Growing and Celebrating with Jesus

Lesson 23, ages 4-5

Lesson 23 Goal

- Your child will learn the story of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem and Jesus' birth in a stable, and about welcoming others.

Key Points

- Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem, where Jesus was born.
- We should help others feel welcome.



Parent Reflection

In the Gospel story of Jesus' birth, Mary and Joseph travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem because Caesar Augustus calls a census, and Joseph must register in Bethlehem since he is descended from David. Mary's and Joseph's journey would not be far by today's standards, but it is a steep and treacherous one in their day. By the time they arrived, the town was quite full. Joseph goes door to door, frantically searching for a place to settle for the night as Mary is about to deliver. Finally, one innkeeper offers the stable behind the inn as a makeshift room for the couple.

Although God's people had awaited the promised Messiah for so many years, on the night he is born, there is no room for him in the inn. This should cause us to pause and ask ourselves the ways in which Jesus comes to us today, and whether we make room for him. Jesus himself tells us some of the ways he will be present in the opportunities we have to give to others ("I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me" [Matthew 25:35–36].) When we show kindness to those in need, we are receiving the greater gift. For while we may offer material assistance or a listening ear, we are given an encounter with Jesus himself. Let us make him welcome.

Reflection Question

In what ways (or persons) is Jesus coming to me today? How will I welcome him?

Lesson Preparation

Before inviting your child to sit with you for lesson time, prepare all materials.

Materials

- Family Activity Sheet
- crayons or colored pencils
- safety scissors
- six craft sticks
- tape
- Activity Master #21
- Activity Master #2 – Saint Page (Keep the

saint page from each lesson to gather together a Communion of Saints Book created by your child.)

Preparation Steps

- Make sure your child has a copy of Activity Masters #21 and #2 (included with this lesson).
- You may wish to precut the drawings for the stick puppets (Activity Master 21).

Gathering

Create a prayerful space. You might place a candle on the table, or set a cross in front of you. Invite your child to join you in quietly preparing for prayer.

Say, “Today we will tell Jesus through our prayer that we welcome him to our hearts. This means that we are asking Jesus, who loves us so much, to be close to us.”

Begin in prayer:

Pray the Sign of the Cross together or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead: “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

Parent: *Dear Jesus, When we pray,*

Together: *We welcome you, Jesus!*

Parent: *When we learn,*

Together: *We welcome you, Jesus!*

Parent: *When we sing,*

Together: *We welcome you, Jesus!*

Parent: *When we play,*

Together: *We welcome you, Jesus!*

Parent: *When we are sad,*

Together: *We welcome you, Jesus!*

Parent: *When we meet new friends,*

Together: *We welcome you, Jesus!*

Parent: *When we are alone,*

Together: *We welcome you, Jesus!*

Say, “Let’s each add other times when we welcome Jesus.” (Encourage your child to contribute.)

Together: *We welcome you, Jesus!*

Discovering

The Birth of Jesus. Turn to the first page of the Activity Sheet and read about Jesus’ birth.

Ask your child, “Share your favorite Christmas story.”

Turn to the second page of the Activity Sheet. Ask your child the “Ask Me!” questions and review the answers.

Exploring

Use the following activities to enrich your child’s understanding of the lesson and of our Catholic faith.

1. On the Way to Bethlehem. Turn to the main activity of the Activity Sheet (center pages) and invite your child to describe what he or she sees. Give your child crayons or colored pencils. Explain the activity to your child and have him

or her complete it.

2. Christmas Stick Puppets. Provide the drawings for the stick puppets (see Activity Master 21). Invite your child to color and cut the pictures of the people and animals. Help him or her tape each figure to a craft stick. Have your child use the stick puppets to retell the Christmas story.

3. The Communion of Saints: Saint Marguerite d'Youville. Show your child the picture of Saint Marguerite on the Family Activity page and read about her. Then read more about Saint Marguerite to your child (see below).

Ask your child:

- ▶ Why did Marie Marguerite help people?

- ▶ What is one way you can help someone feel welcome at school?

Have your child write and draw about Saint Marguerite d'Youville using Activity Master #2.

Sending

Pray with your child. Begin by making the Sign of the Cross together, or bless your child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead. Pray aloud with your child:

“Dear God, Thank you for the gift of your Son, Jesus. Help us to always be welcoming and to treat one another with love. Amen.”

Saint Marguerite d'Youville

A Welcoming Saint

Marie Marguerite worked very hard to have enough food for her two little boys and herself. She made beautiful clothing to sell. Even though Marie Marguerite did not have much money, she shared the money she earned with people who were poorer than she was.

She knew that God loves every single person. Marie Marguerite helped people because of God's love for them. She visited those who were sick and mended clothing for those with few things to wear. Marie Marguerite taught children who had no families.

One day, she met a blind woman who had no home. “You are welcome to live at my house,” Marie Marguerite said. So the woman came home with Marie Marguerite.

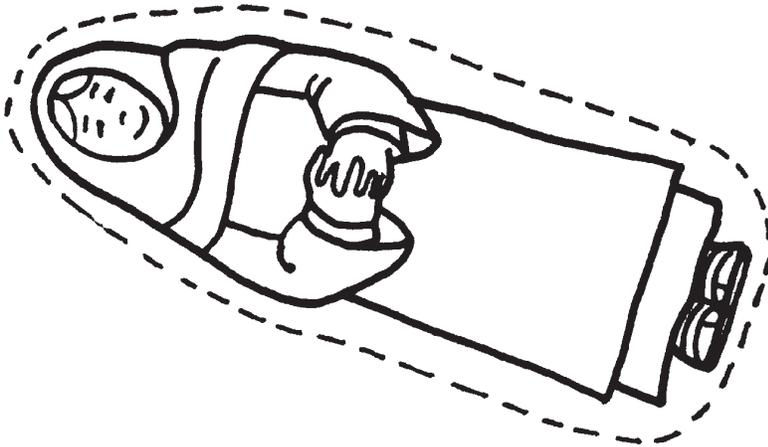
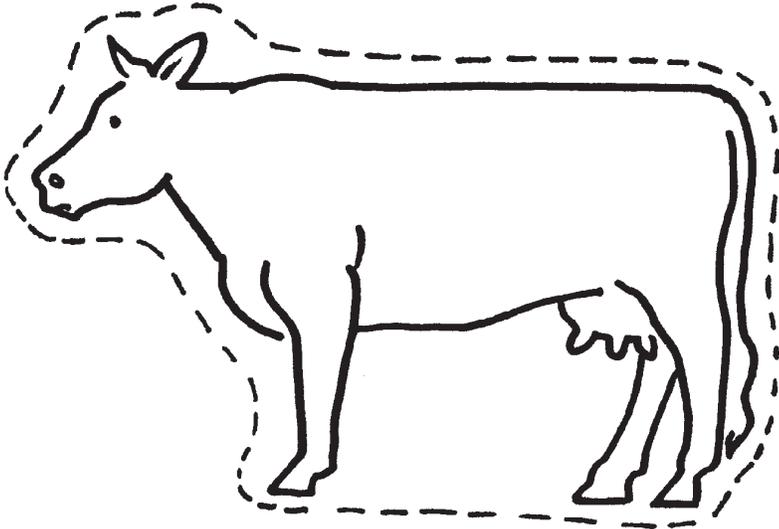
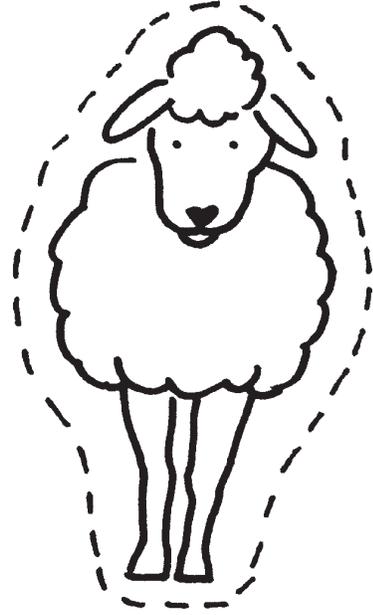
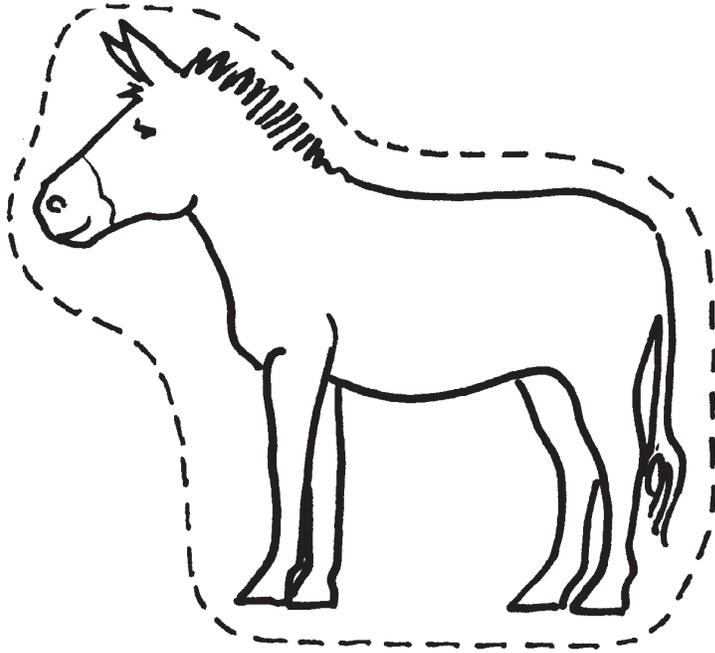
Another time, three women came to see Marie Marguerite. One of them said, “We see what

you do to help others. We would like to do that work too.” Marie Marguerite welcomed them to live with her, too. Together, these women served the poor and the sick.

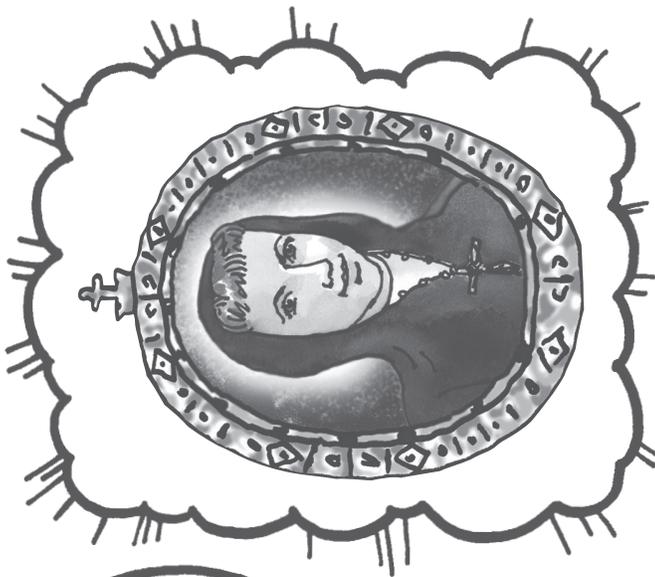
In their work, these women met women who had no homes. They were very poor and needed much help. Soon they too were welcomed into Marie Marguerite's home.

Later, more women joined her in her work. They were able to move to a big building that had been a hospital. There they welcomed and took care of old people, babies who had no families, soldiers who were hurt, and people who were very sick.

All her life, Marie Marguerite welcomed people who needed help as she welcomed Jesus into her heart.



DRAW



**Saint
Marguerite,
pray for us!**