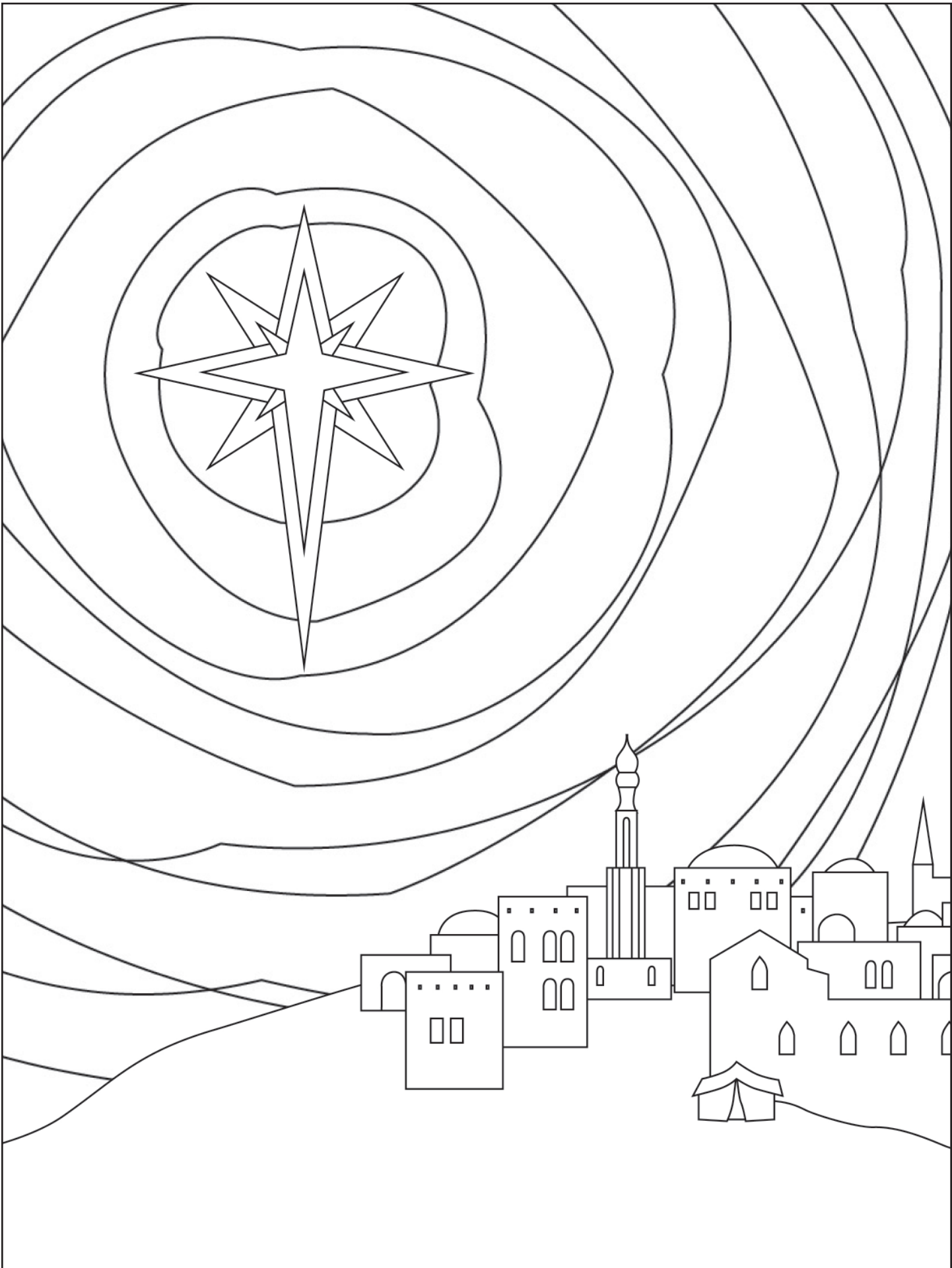




**Love**  
came  
down

**Advent Worship Guide**  
**FOR ALL AGES**



# Contents

Using this Guide.....	2
Preparing for Advent.....	5
Week 1   Of the Father's Love Begotten: Trinity.....	7
Week 2   And Wonders of His Love: Creation .....	15
Week 3   Love Came Down: The Gospel .....	23
Week 4   To Show God's Love Aright: The Gift of the Incarnation .....	31
Week 5   Through His Own Redeeming Love: Loving Others .....	39

# Using this Guide

This guide is meant as a gift to you: to help you rest in God's love and hope in what can be a very busy season; to help you engage more fully in our journey as a church through Advent; and to help you recognize God's presence each day.

Below are some explanations of the different pieces you'll find in this guide. Do as much or as little as works for you!

Those who have the time may enjoy reading through the scripture each day, and dwelling on all of the reflections and activities over the course of each week. Those with young kids may want to focus on one piece, such as the hymn or kinetic response, or may gather together one time each week for Advent family worship.

Use the pieces that resonate with you, seek God, and trust him to meet you.

## Advent Cards

Separately, you will find cards with a picture on one side, and hymn lyrics on the other. Here are some ideas for using these:

- Display the picture throughout the week to remind you to turn your thoughts to God and his big love story.
- Use the picture together with your scripture reading and worship time, by examining the picture to consider how it relates to the word.
- With kids (or on your own), ask the questions:  
What part of the picture stands out to you?  
What does this picture remind you of?  
What parts of the story do you see in the picture?  
If you were to create a picture of the story,  
which part would you choose?  
What picture would you create?
- Use the lyrics to help you memorize the hymn of the week.

## **Reading the Word**

We've included one primary scripture passage for each week, along with some reflection questions. Be sure not to neglect the second major question, "What is God saying to me?" Having studied the passage with the prior questions, this one is the heart of listening to and hearing from the Holy Spirit.

## **Hymn of the Week**

Each week includes a hymn that will be sung during the upcoming Sunday worship service. Don't just read it! Sing it out loud in praise to God!

## **Kinetic Response**

Each week has a suggested kinetic response activity. These are hands-on ways of responding to the themes and scriptures for the week, and are a great way to engage children. But they're not only meant for children; I encourage you adults to try them too--you may be surprised how God can meet you through these different types of prayers.

## **Creating Space for God**

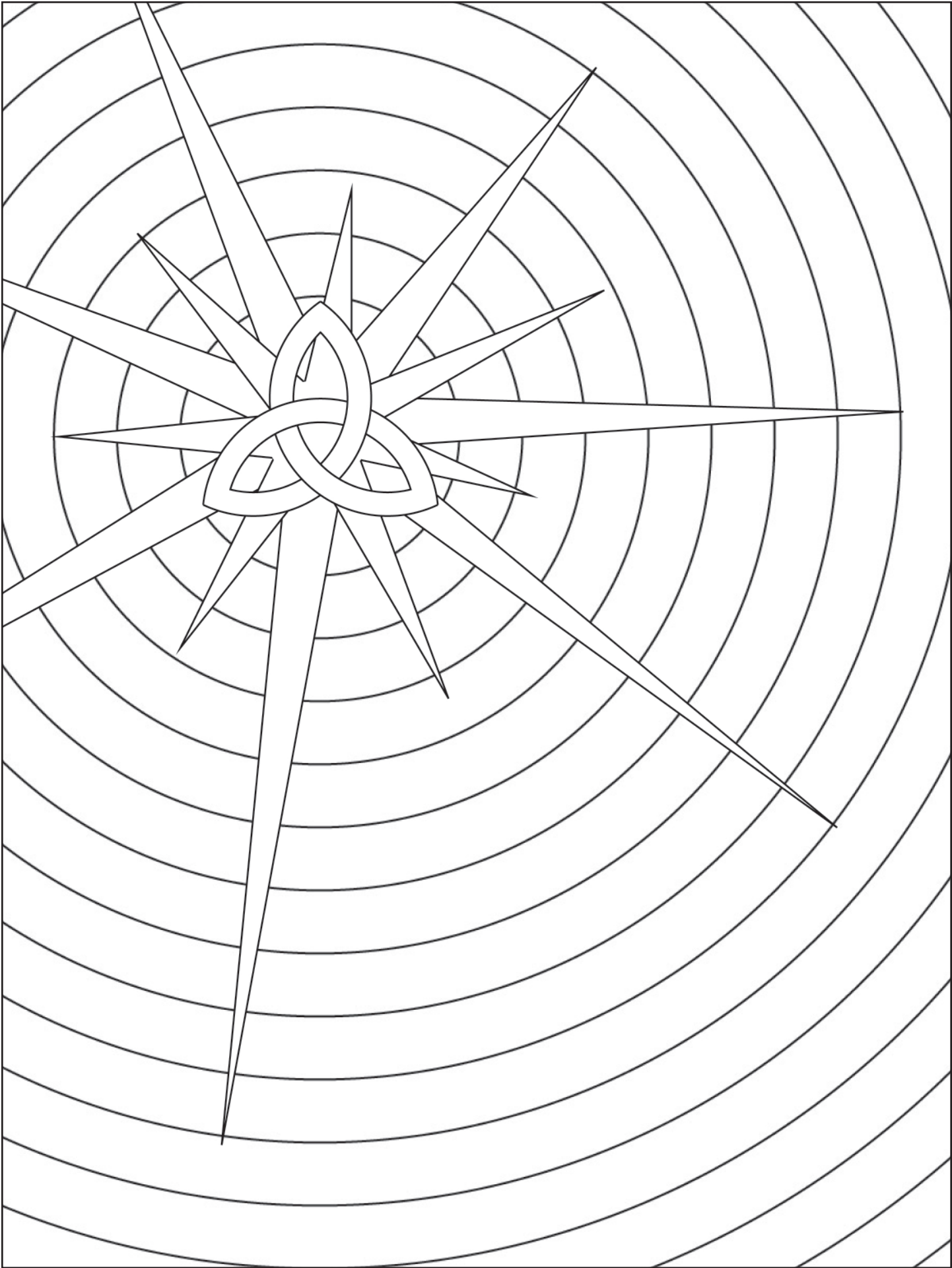
We all know how easy it is to let the Advent and Christmas Season get away from us, turning into a hectic rush to just get through it. Each week includes a suggested practice that is especially appropriate for children. But don't let that put you off, adults! There are deep riches to be discovered through these simple rhythms.



# Preparing for Advent

As you get ready for Advent to begin, choose one thing that you would like to do to make the observation of Advent special in your home!

- Create an Advent wreath and light it each week or each evening at dinner.
- Create a quiet “Advent Space” in your home with a purple blanket or table cloth, a Bible, some Christmas picture books, a nativity set, art supplies, and a battery candle. Explain that this is a special space where people in your family can share time with God during Advent.
- Use a favorite Advent guide or devotional with daily or weekly readings. This booklet can be used for this purpose, but there are also many wonderful daily Advent devotional books that can be purchased for families to read. A Jesse Tree reading plan will take you through the story of Scripture during Advent, and a list of the readings is available online through a simple Google search.
- Choose a night of each week during Advent when your family will use this guide to read and think about the scriptures together. Many of the questions are simple for children to enter into.





**Week 1**

# **Of the Father's Love Begotten: Trinity**

Before he created anything in this big and beautiful world,  
the Creator existed.

One glorious and perfect God in three persons:  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The Trinity was perfect with no need for anything else at all;  
God was beautiful, full of love, and complete.

# Reading the Word

## John 17:1–5, 24–26 (ESV)

1 When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, 2 since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. 3 And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. 4 I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. 5 And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

24 Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. 25 O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. 26 I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

## John 17:1–5, 24–26 (NirV)

1 After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed. He said,  
“Father, the time has come. Bring glory to your Son. Then your Son will bring glory to you. 2 You gave him authority over all people. He gives eternal life to all those you have given him.

3 “And what is eternal life? It is knowing you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. 4 I have brought you glory on earth. I have finished the work you gave me to do. 5 So now, Father, give glory to me in heaven where your throne is. Give me the glory I had with you before the world began.

24 “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am. I want them to see my glory, the glory you have given me. You gave it to me because you loved me before the world was created.

25 “Father, you are holy. The world does not know you, but I know you. Those you have given me know you have sent me. 26 I have shown you to them. And I will continue to show you to them. Then the love you have for me will be in them. I myself will be in them.”



## Head

*Using these simple questions, study the passage to learn what God is saying in and through His Word.*

### **What is God saying?**

What do I observe about the passage? What are the basic facts?

What should I interpret the passage? What points are being made?



## Heart

*Having studied the passage, open your heart to listen to the Holy Spirit and discover how God is speaking to you.*

### **What do I find significant in the passage?**

**What is God saying to me today?**



## Hands

*Having heart-listened to God what might you now do, think, feel?  
Perhaps capture your response with a written or spoken prayer.*

**How do I want to respond to God?**

# Week 1 Hymn

## Of the Father's Love Begotten

Marcus Aurelius C. Prudentius, 4th cent.;  
tr. John M. Neale, 1854, and Henry W. Baker, 1859.

12th cent. plainsong; arr. C. Winfred Douglas, 1916.

D                      Em/G      A      D                      D/F#                      A

1. Of the Fa - ther's love be - got - ten,      ere the worlds be - gan\_\_ to be,  
 2. O that birth for - ev - er bless - ed,      when a vir - gin, blest\_ with grace,  
 3. This is He whom seers in old\_\_ time      chant ed of with one\_\_ ac - cord,  
 4. O ye heights of heav'n a - dore\_\_ Him;      an - gel hosts, His prais - es sing;  
 5. Christ, to Thee, with God the Fa - ther,      and, O Ho - ly Ghost to Thee,

G      D      D/F#      A      Bm      G      D/F#      Bm      D

He is al - pha and O - me - ga,      He the Source, the End - ing He,  
 by the Ho - ly Ghost con - ceiv - ing,      bore the Sav - ior of\_\_ our race;  
 whom the voic - es of the proph - ets      prom - ised in their faith - ful word;  
 pow'rs, do - min - ions, bow be - fore\_\_ Him,      and ex - tol our God\_ and King;  
 hymn and chant and high thanks giv - ing      and un - wea - ried prais - es be.

D                      Em/G      D/F#      Bm      A      G<sup>2</sup>      G                      G      A

of the things that are, that have\_\_ been,      and that fu - ture years shall see,  
 and the babe, the world's Re - deem - er,      first re - vealed His sa - cred face,  
 now He shines, the long - ex - pect - ed;      let cre - a - tion praise its Lord  
 let no tongue on earth be si - lent,      ev - 'ry voice in con - cert ring,  
 Hon or, glo - ry, and do - min - ion,      and e - ter - nal vic - to - ry

G<sup>2</sup>                      Bm                      Em/G      D                      D                      A                      D

ev - er - more and ev - er - more!\_\_  
 ev - er - more and ev - er - more!\_\_  
 ev - er - more and ev - er - more!\_\_  
 ev - er - more and ev - er - more!\_\_  
 ev - er - more and ev - er - more!\_\_      A      -      men.\_\_\_



FATHER

HOLY SPIRIT

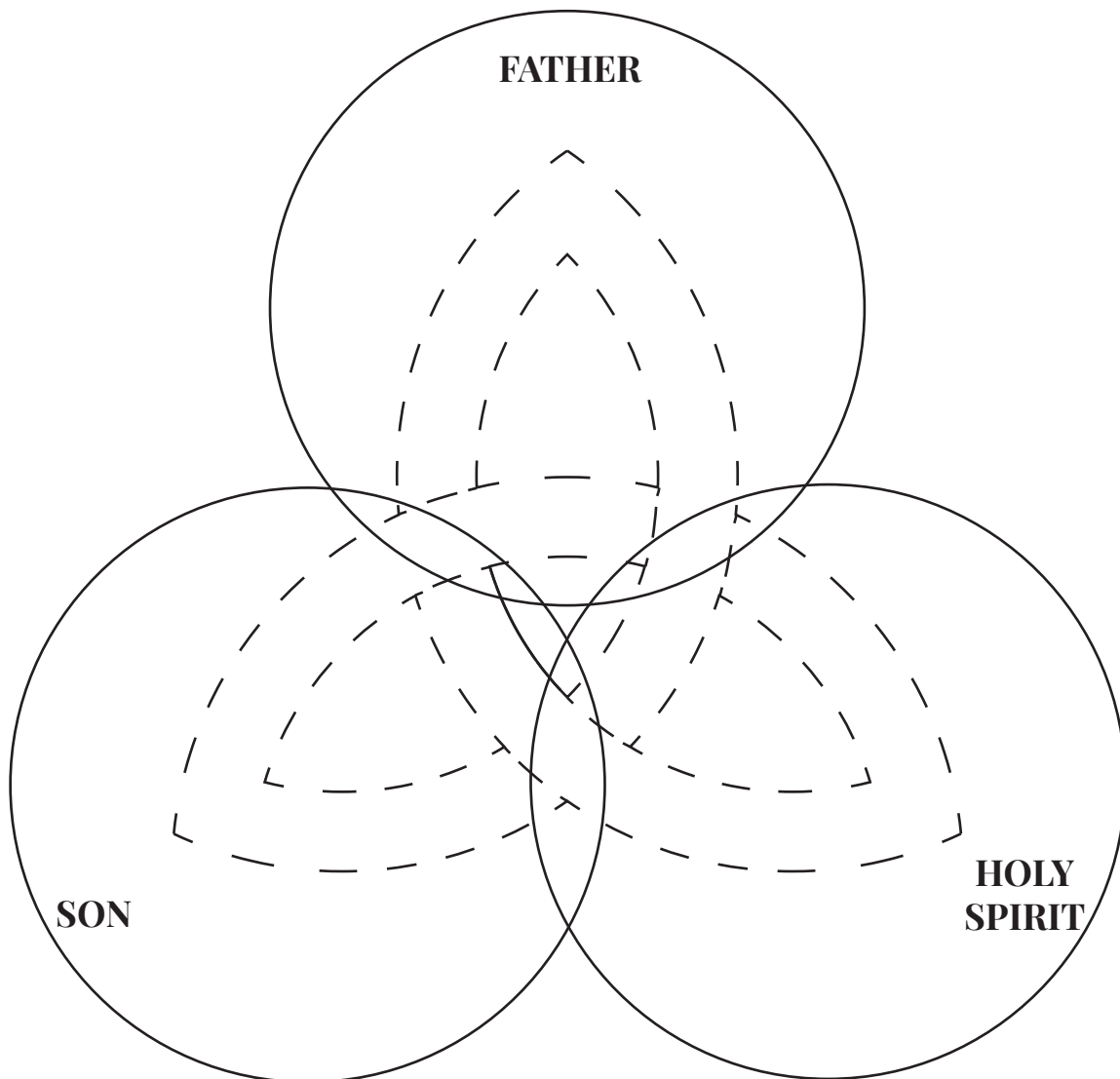
SON

# Kinetic Response

## Trinity Meditation

Spend some time considering the Trinity:  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in One God.

Write or draw the words or pictures that come to mind for each distinct person of the trinity. Then trace the trinity knot, representing their union as one God. (Use another piece of paper if you need more room!)



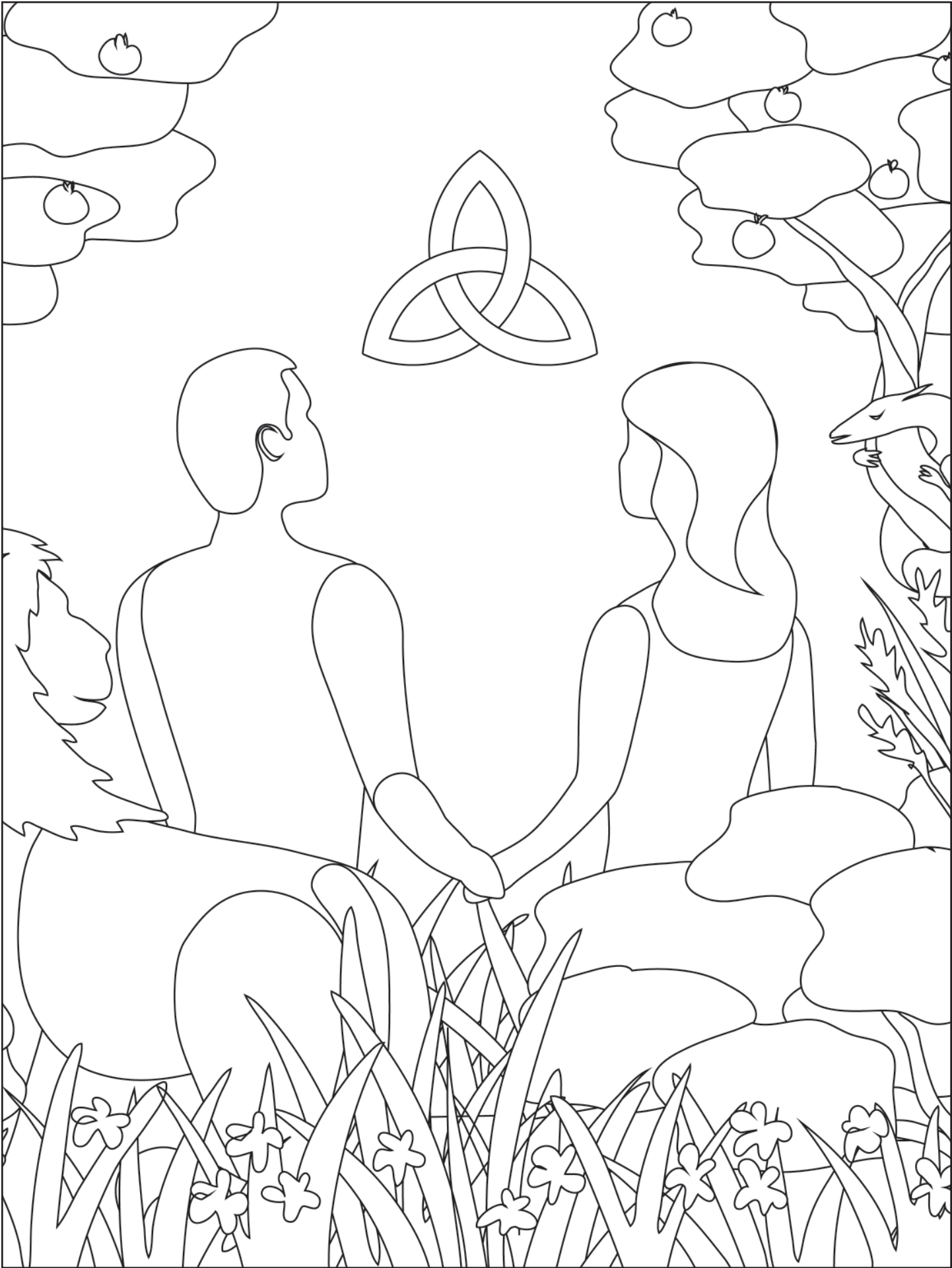
# Making Space for God

## Remember (Examen)

Many Christians have taken time to pray at the end of the day to help them give their day to God, and rest in his care and love. It is a chance to say you are sorry, to thank God for the good gifts he has given you, to look ahead to tomorrow, and to rest in God's love for you.

If your family already makes a practice of sharing highs and lows, you can very simply make this a time of prayer and reflection this Advent season.

- Light a candle (perhaps from your advent wreath or a special advent candle)
- Pray and thank God for his presence with each person in your household during the day.
- Say something like: *Holy Spirit, as we remember our day, please help us to notice the times when we felt especially close to God, please help us to notice the times when we felt far from God, when we made mistakes, or when we were sad. As we share with one another, help us to know that God is here. Right here. Close to me and close to you.*
- Each person takes a turn sharing high (best part) and low (worst or hardest part) from their day. After each person shares, another person in the family prays for their highs and lows.
- Once everyone has shared, thank God for his presence today and spend a few moments in quiet, looking ahead to tomorrow. You can begin your time of quiet by saying something like, *God, as we think about the things we will do tomorrow, remind us that you will be with us every moment of the day.*
- You may choose to finish with the Lord's Prayer or a special Bible verse, or simply by saying "Amen" and blowing out your candle.





**Week 2**

# **And Wonders of His Love: Creation**

Though God didn't need anything or anyone else,  
he generously let the love that existed between the Trinity  
spill over into the creation of the world.

He filled the world with good things and,  
most wonderfully of all, he filled it with people.

These people, beginning with Adam and Eve,  
would not only get to be loved by this perfect, glorious God,  
but also carry his image into the world.

# Reading the Word

## Psalm 98 (ESV)

1 Oh sing to the Lord a new song,  
for he has done marvelous things!  
His right hand and his holy arm  
have worked salvation for him.  
2 The Lord has made known his  
salvation;  
he has revealed his righteousness in  
the sight of the nations.  
3 He has remembered his steadfast love  
and faithfulness  
to the house of Israel.  
All the ends of the earth have seen  
the salvation of our God.  
4 Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the  
earth;  
break forth into joyous song and sing  
praises!  
5 Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre,  
with the lyre and the sound of melody!  
6 With trumpets and the sound of the  
horn  
make a joyful noise before the King,  
the Lord!  
7 Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;  
the world and those who dwell in it!  
8 Let the rivers clap their hands;  
let the hills sing for joy together  
9 before the Lord, for he comes  
to judge the earth.  
He will judge the world with  
righteousness,  
and the peoples with equity.

## Psalm 98 (NirV)

1 Sing a new song to the Lord.  
He has done wonderful things.  
By the power of his right hand and his  
holy arm he has saved his people.  
2 The Lord has made known his power to  
save.  
He has shown the nations that he does  
what is right.  
3 He has shown his faithful love  
to the people of Israel.  
People from one end of the earth to the  
other have seen that our God has  
saved us.  
4 Shout to the Lord with joy, everyone on  
earth.  
Burst into joyful songs and make  
music.  
5 Make music to the Lord with the harp.  
Sing and make music with the harp.  
6 Blow the trumpets. Give a blast on the  
ram's horn.  
Shout to the Lord with joy. He is the  
King.  
7 Let the ocean and everything in it roar.  
Let the world and all who live in it  
shout.  
8 Let the rivers clap their hands.  
Let the mountains sing together with  
joy.  
9 Let them sing to the Lord,  
because he is coming to judge the  
earth.  
He will judge the nations of the world  
in keeping with what is right and fair.



## Head

*Using these simple questions, study the passage to learn what God is saying in and through His Word.*

### **What is God saying?**

What do I observe about the passage? What are the basic facts?

What should I interpret the passage? What points are being made?



## Heart

*Having studied the passage, open your heart to listen to the Holy Spirit and discover how God is speaking to you.*

### **What do I find significant in the passage?**

**What is God saying to me today?**



## Hands

*Having heart-listened to God what might you now do, think, feel?  
Perhaps capture your response with a written or spoken prayer.*

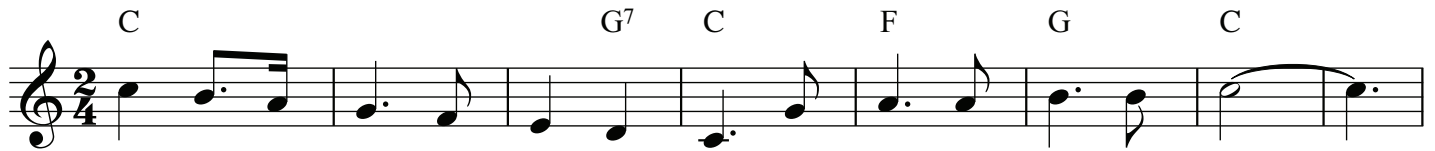
**How do I want to respond to God?**

# Week 2 Hymn

## Joy to the World!

Isaac Watts, 1719

George Frederick Handel, 1744; arr. by Lowell Mason, 1836



1. Joy to the world! the Lord is come; Let earth re - ceive her King;\_\_\_\_  
 2. Joy to the earth! the Sav - ior reigns; Let men their songs em - ploy;\_\_\_\_  
 3. No more let sins and sor - rows grow, Nor thorns in - fest the ground;\_\_\_\_  
 4. He rules the world with truth and grace, And makes the na - tions prove\_\_\_\_



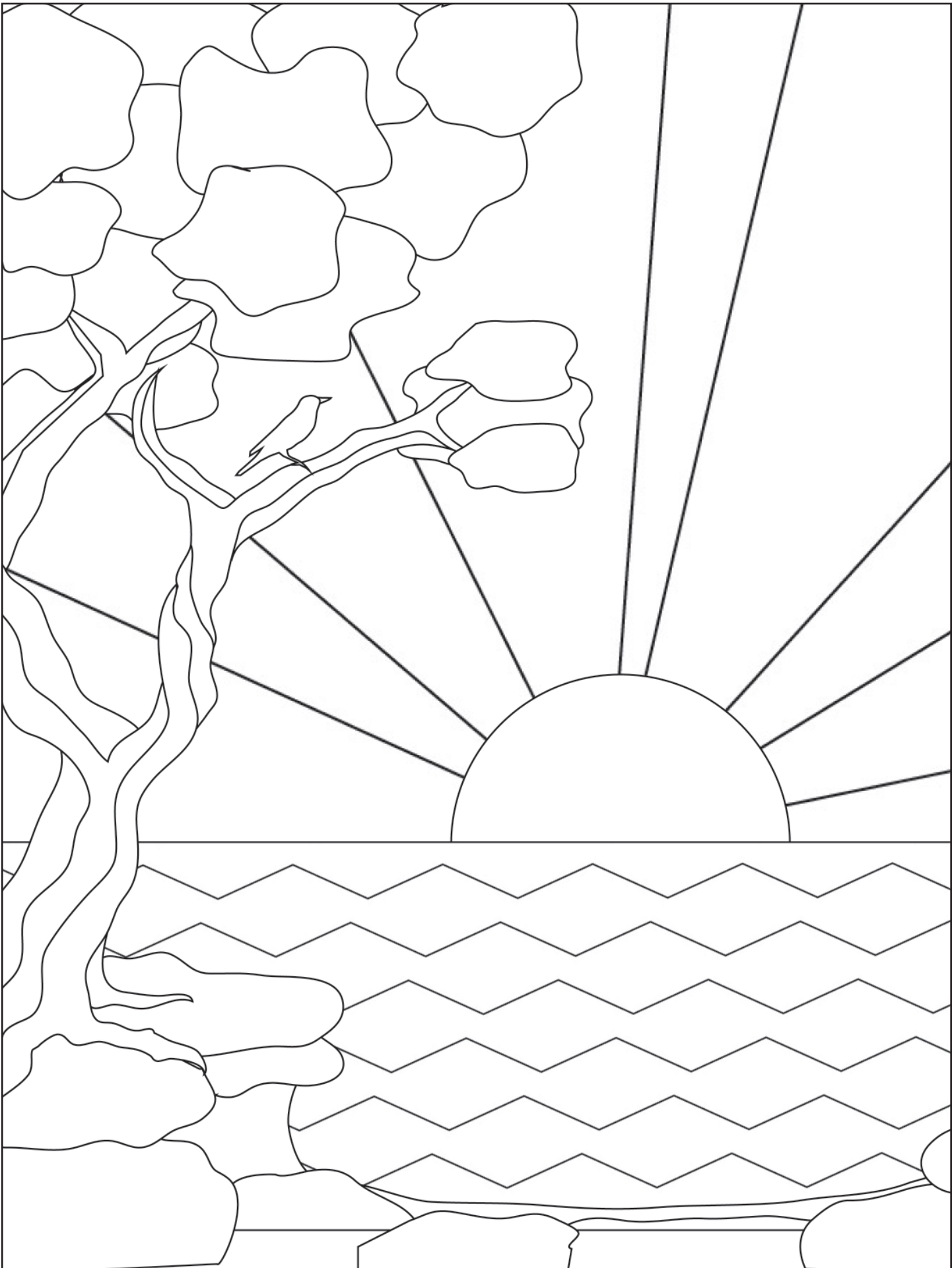
Let ev - 'ry\_\_\_\_ heart\_\_\_\_ pre - pare\_\_\_\_ Him\_\_\_\_ room,\_\_\_\_  
 While fields\_\_\_\_ and\_\_\_\_ floods,\_\_\_\_ rocks, hills,\_\_\_\_ and\_\_\_\_ plains\_\_\_\_  
 He comes\_ to\_\_\_\_ make\_\_\_\_ His bless - ings\_\_\_\_ flow\_\_\_\_  
 The glo - ries\_\_\_\_ of\_\_\_\_ His righ - teous - ness,\_\_\_\_



And heav'n and na - ture\_\_\_\_ sing, And\_\_\_\_ heav'n and na - ture\_\_\_\_ sing,  
 Re - peat the sound - ing\_\_\_\_ joy, Re - peat the sound - ing\_\_\_\_ joy,  
 Far as the curse is\_\_\_\_ found, Far\_\_\_\_ as the curse is\_\_\_\_ found,  
 And won - ders of His\_\_\_\_ love, And\_\_\_\_ won - ders of His\_\_\_\_ love,



And\_\_\_\_ heav'n,\_\_\_\_ and heav'n\_\_\_\_ and na - ture sing.  
 Re - peat,\_\_\_\_ re - peat\_\_\_\_ the sound - ing joy.  
 Far\_\_\_\_ as,\_\_\_\_ far as\_\_\_\_ the curse is found.  
 And\_\_\_\_ won - ders, won - ders of His love.



# Kinetic Response

## Made to Create

Did you know that, since you are made in the image of God the Creator, you are also made to create?

This can look different for each person. It may look like the artistic things you'd expect, like painting or drawing. But it could also look like gardening, or baking, or creating a spreadsheet, or writing a letter, or imagining with toys, or building a house, or organizing your closet or garage just so.

Take some time this week to reflect on what you like to create, and then do it, remembering as you do that God's love has poured his image into you, giving you the ability to imagine and form.

If you need a more specific prompt, or are directing children, consider taking a winter walk (instructions on the next page), and then come home and write or draw the things that struck you most on the walk or in the scriptures, and praise God for them.

# Making Space for God

## Gratitude

Pick a day for a winter walk. Brew a cup of hot chocolate and read Psalm 23 and Psalm 100 together. Then set out on your walk.

As you walk, notice things you are grateful for and name them, thanking God for them together. The things you notice might also remind you of who God is and what he is like, thank him for these things as well.

When you finish your walk, read Mary's Song together from Luke 1:46-55 (NLT):

*Mary responded,  
"Oh, how my soul praises the Lord.  
How my spirit rejoices in God my Savior!  
For he took notice of his lowly servant girl,  
and from now on all generations will call me blessed.  
For the Mighty One is holy,  
and he has done great things for me.  
He shows mercy from generation to generation  
to all who fear him.  
His mighty arm has done tremendous things!  
He has scattered the proud and haughty ones.  
He has brought down princes from their thrones  
and exalted the humble.  
He has filled the hungry with good things  
and sent the rich away with empty hands.  
He has helped his servant Israel  
and remembered to be merciful.  
For he made this promise to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and his children forever."*





**Week 3**

**Love**

**Came Down:  
The Gospel**

Adam and Eve, refusing to obey God,  
reached out and took what Satan offered them.  
In the fall, Adam and Eve surrendered their  
God-given rule over the world to Satan,  
driving a wedge between God and those created in his image.

But instead of turning away, the Creator stepped into his own creation--  
the author became part of his own story.

A woman became pregnant and her child was the crying baby in the manger,  
the herald of his own kingdom. The heels that kicked against the hay  
would soon crush the head of the serpent.

# Reading the Word

## Romans 8:31–39 (ESV)

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? 33 Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? 36 As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all the day long;  
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## Romans 8:31–39 (NIRV)

31 What should we say then? Since God is on our side, who can be against us? 32 God did not spare his own Son. He gave him up for us all. Then won't he also freely give us everything else?

33 Who can bring any charge against God's chosen ones? God makes us right with himself. 34 Who can sentence us to death? Christ Jesus is at the right hand of God and is also praying for us. He died. More than that, he was raised to life.

35 Who can separate us from Christ's love? Can trouble or hard times or harm or hunger? Can nakedness or danger or war? 36 It is written,

“Because of you, we face death all day long.  
We are considered as sheep to be killed.”

37 No! In all these things we will do even more than win! We owe it all to Christ, who has loved us.

38 I am absolutely sure that not even death or life can separate us from God's love. Not even angels or demons, the present or the future, or any powers can do that. 39 Not even the highest places or the lowest, or anything else in all creation can do that. Nothing at all can ever separate us from God's love because of what Christ Jesus our Lord has done.



## Head

*Using these simple questions, study the passage to learn what God is saying in and through His Word.*

### **What is God saying?**

What do I observe about the passage? What are the basic facts?

What should I interpret the passage? What points are being made?



## Heart

*Having studied the passage, open your heart to listen to the Holy Spirit and discover how God is speaking to you.*

### **What do I find significant in the passage?**

**What is God saying to me today?**



## Hands

*Having heart-listened to God what might you now do, think, feel?  
Perhaps capture your response with a written or spoken prayer.*

**How do I want to respond to God?**

# Week 3 Hymn

## Love Came Down at Christmas



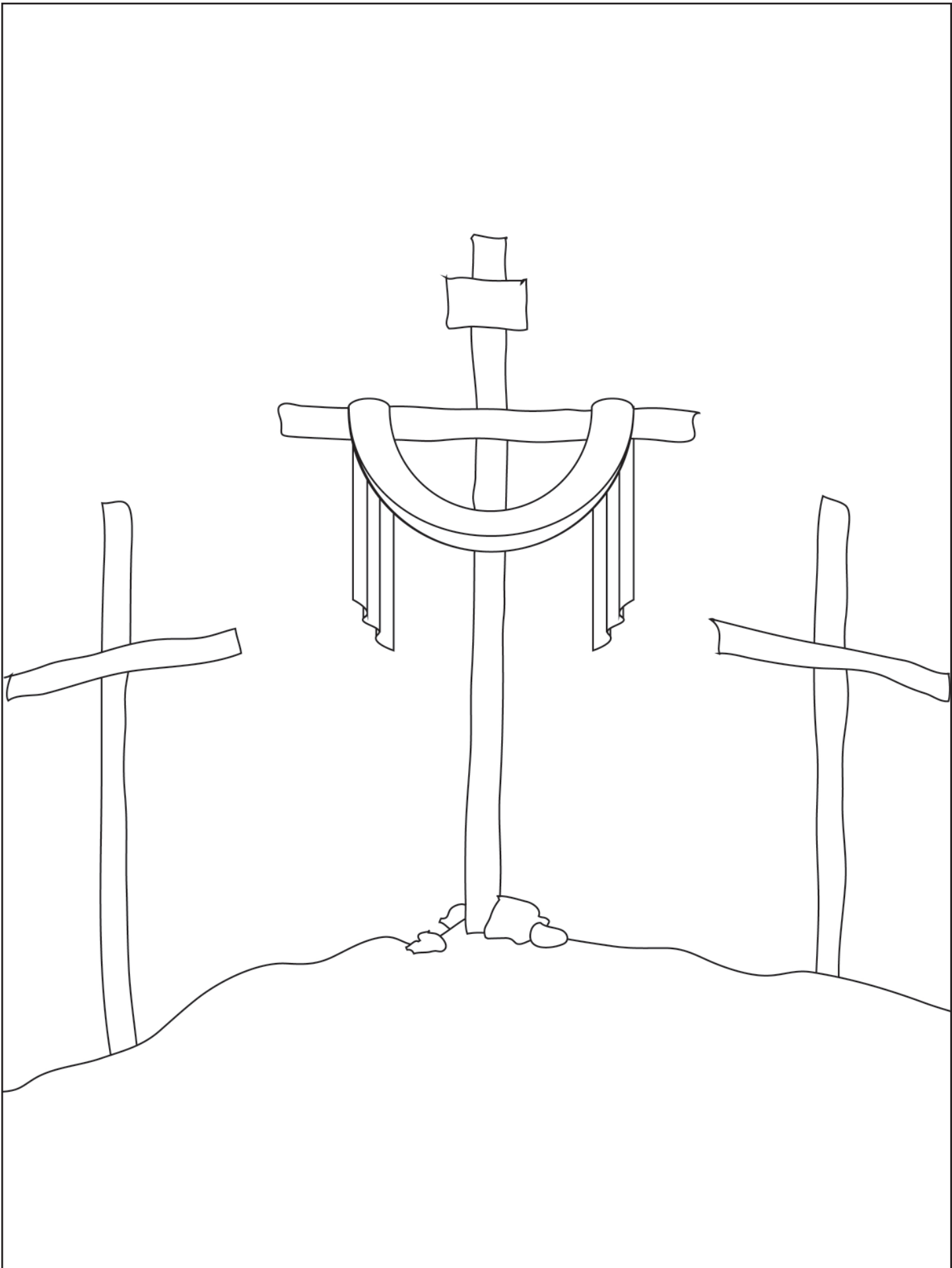
1. Love came down at Christ - mas, Love all love - ly, Love di - vine; \_\_\_\_\_  
 2. Wor - ship we the God - head, Love in - car - nate, Love di - vine; \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. Love shall be our to - ken; love be your and love be mine; \_\_\_\_\_



Love was born at Christ - mas; star and an - gels gave the sign.  
 wor - ship we our Je - sus, but where-with for sa - cred sign?  
 love to God and oth - ers, love for plea and gift and sign.

Text: Christina Rossetti, 1885  
 Music: GARTAN, Irish Melody, 1903

Public Domain



# Kinetic Response

## The Four Gospel Movements

Are you familiar with the four “movements” of the gospel story? They are Creation (the beginning of all things), The Fall (humanity’s rebellion), Redemption (God’s plan of salvation through Jesus), and Restoration (the renewal of all things).

Try drawing a simple picture to represent each movement below. As you do, pray, following the prompts.

### 1. Creation

(God, I praise you for...)

### 2. The Fall

(God, I’m sorry for...)

### 3. Redemption

(God, thank you for...)

### 4. Restoration

(God, I hope for...)

# Making Space for God

## Wonder

Create a “Wonder Wall” in your house. This can be any space on a wall or door or cabinets where anyone in the family can post their “wonderings.”

You can make a sign for the wall that says, “I wonder...” Stack some post it notes and some markers or pens nearby.

Before you read Scripture together, invite everyone to listen for something they wonder about. Take a few moments after the story to write or draw your wonderings and add them to the wonder wall.

You can add to your Wonder Wall at any time!

## Remembering Revisited

As you continue to practice Remembering (or Examen) from Advent 1, try to remember when there were moments of wonder over your previous day.

Then move on to Gratitude (from week 2). How would you like to express your gratitude to God for all his wonders?





**Week 4**

# **To Show God's Love Aright: The Gift of the Incarnation**

The biggest victory in the whole world began with the sound of a baby's cries.

Christ the Savior was born!

The One who created the universe made himself a tiny baby,  
and came to live with his people, to walk beside them,  
to carry their burdens, to show them what God was like.

# Reading the Word

## **1 John 4:7–12 (ESV)**

7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. 10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

## **1 John 4:7–12 (NirV)**

7Dear friends, let us love one another, because love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born again because of what God has done. That person knows God. 8Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

9How did God show his love for us? He sent his one and only Son into the world. He sent him so we could receive life through him.

10What is love? It is not that we loved God. It is that he loved us and sent his Son to give his life to pay for our sins.

11Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we should also love one another. 12No one has ever seen God. But if we love one another, God lives in us. His love is made complete in us.



## Head

*Using these simple questions, study the passage to learn what God is saying in and through His Word.*

### **What is God saying?**

What do I observe about the passage? What are the basic facts?

What should I interpret the passage? What points are being made?



## Heart

*Having studied the passage, open your heart to listen to the Holy Spirit and discover how God is speaking to you.*

### **What do I find significant in the passage?**

**What is God saying to me today?**



## Hands

*Having heart-listened to God what might you now do, think, feel?  
Perhaps capture your response with a written or spoken prayer.*

**How do I want to respond to God?**

# Week 4 Hymn

## Lo, How a Rose E're Blooming

German, 15th cent; stanzas 1-2 tr. Theodore Baker, 1894;  
stanza 3 tr. Gracia Grindal, 1978; alt.

*Geistliche Kirchengesäng*, Cologne, 1599;  
harm. Michael Praetorius, 1609

D G D A Bm G D A Bm A D

1. Lo, how a rose e'er bloom - ing from ten - der stem has sprung;
2. I - sa - iah 'twas fore - told it, the rose I have in mind;
3. This flow'r, so small and ten - der, with fra-grance fills the air;

D G D A Bm G D A Bm A D

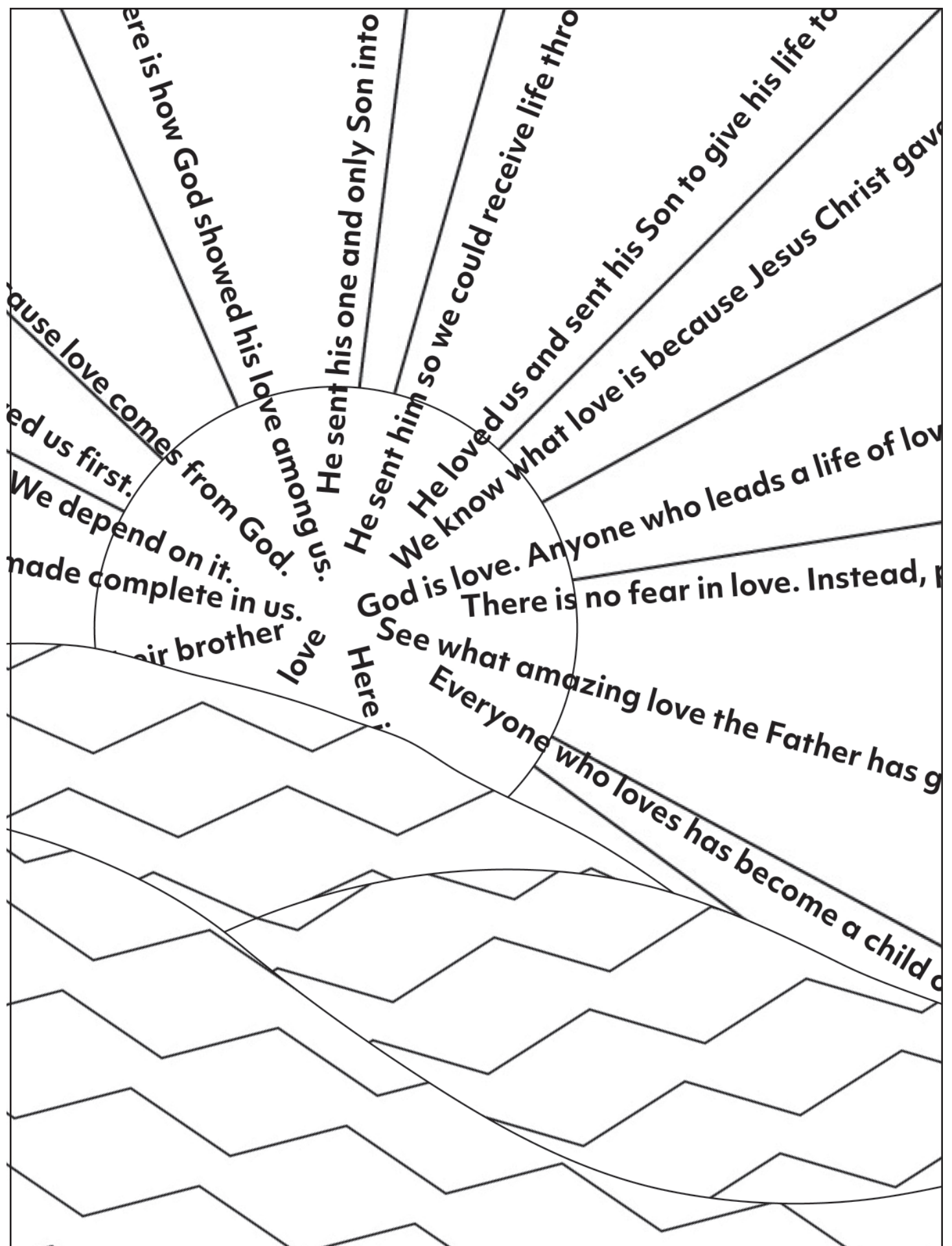
of Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing, as saints of old have sung. It  
with Mar - y we be - hold it, the vir - gin moth - er kind. To  
His bright - ness ends the dark - ness that kept the earth in fear. True

Em F#m D E A A/C# A A/C# D G D

came a flow - er bright, a - mid the cold of  
show God's love a - right she bore to us a  
God and yet true man, he came to save His

A B Em D/F# Em/G D A(sus4) A D

win - ter when half spent was the night.  
Sav - ior when half spent was the night.  
peo - ple from earth's dark night of sin.



are is how God showed his love among us.

He sent his one and only Son into

He sent him so we could receive life thro

He loved us and sent his Son to give his life to

We know what love is because Jesus Christ gave

cause love comes from God.

ed us first.

We depend on it.

made complete in us.

our brother

love

Here

God is love. Anyone who leads a life of love

There is no fear in love. Instead,

See what amazing love the Father has g

Everyone who loves has become a child o

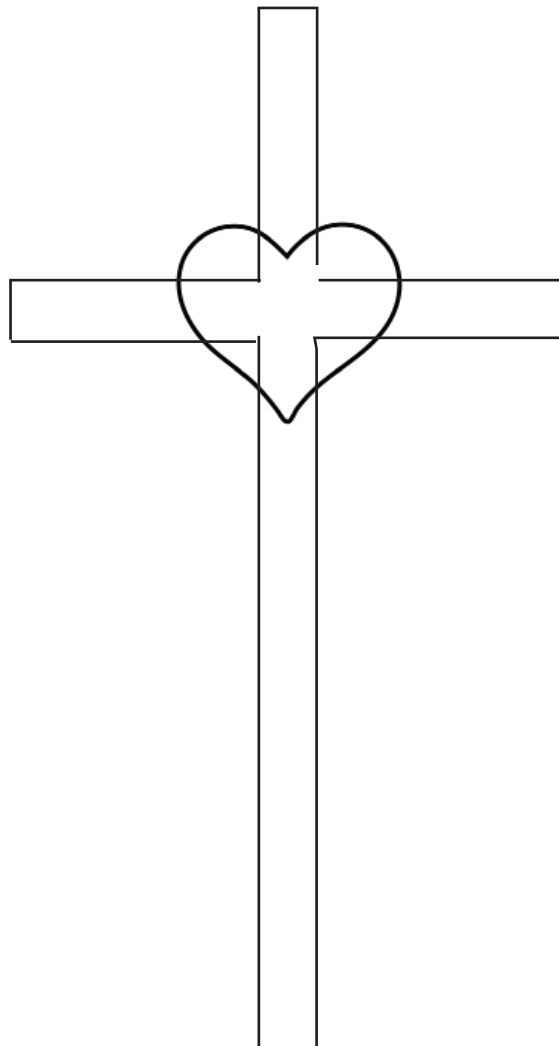
Everyone who loves the Father has g

Everyone who loves has become a child o

# Kinetic Response

## Reflecting on God's Love

Take some time this week to reflect on God's love for you, and the ways Jesus showed his love to us tangibly. Trace or color in the cross below, representing Jesus' ultimate gift of love to us, and then write or draw around it other ways Jesus showed love in the Bible, and ways you feel loved by God. As you write or draw, consider how these gifts of love make you feel, and let your prayer be an outpouring of those thoughts and feelings.



# Making Space for God

## Generosity

The week leading up to Christmas is often busy with travel, gift buying, parties, programs, and other preparations for celebration. Intentionally make time this week to reflect on and be intentional about generosity.

Perhaps you have gifts for teachers or other people in your family's life. Share with your child how our generosity is a reflection of the generosity of God. Ask your child who they would like to be generous to. Consider who you would like to be generous to.

Children often have wonderful ideas of homemade or creative gifts that are not expensive, but communicate care for the people around them. Encourage your child to share from what they have with the people God has placed in their lives.

Here are some questions that your household can reflect on as you talk together:

- How has God provided for you?
- What does it look like for your family to be generous with what you have been given?
- Who in your life is God inviting you to be generous to?
- Is there something you are being invited to give up for the sake of another?
- What would it look like to share the joy that you have in the story of Christmas?

## Natural Outflow

When we create space for God in our lives, whether during Advent or any other time of year, with Remembering, Gratitude, and Wonder, the natural outflow of our lives will be one of Generosity... to God, to others, and even to ourselves.





**Week 5**

# **Through His Own Redeeming Love: Loving Others**

*We love because he first loved us.*

1 John 4:19 (ESV)

None of us loves perfectly, as Jesus did,  
but when we take the time to enter into the lives of others,  
we begin to see what that love is like.

# Preparing for the Word

## 1 John 4:13–21 (ESV)

13 By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. 14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. 15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. 16 So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. 17 By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. 19 We love because he first loved us. 20 If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. 21 And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

## 1 John 4:13–21 (NirV)

13 We know that we belong to him and he belongs to us. He has given us his Holy Spirit.  
14 The Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. We have seen it. We give witness to it. 15 God lives in anyone who agrees that Jesus is the Son of God. That kind of person remains joined to God. 16 So we know that God loves us. We depend on it.  
God is love. Anyone who leads a life of love shows that he is joined to God. And God is joined to him.  
17 So love is made complete among us. We will be bold on the day God judges us. That’s because in this world we love as Jesus did.  
18 There is no fear in love. Instead, perfect love drives fear away. Fear has to do with being punished. The one who fears does not have perfect love.  
19 We love because he loved us first. 20 Anyone who says he loves God but in fact hates his brother or sister is a liar. He doesn’t love his brother or sister, whom he has seen. So he can’t love God, whom he has not seen.  
21 Here is the command God has given us. Anyone who loves God must also love his brothers and sisters.



## Head

*Using these simple questions, study the passage to learn what God is saying in and through His Word.*

### **What is God saying?**

What do I observe about the passage? What are the basic facts?

What should I interpret the passage? What points are being made?



## Heart

*Having studied the passage, open your heart to listen to the Holy Spirit and discover how God is speaking to you.*

### **What do I find significant in the passage?**

**What is God saying to me today?**



## Hands

*Having heart-listened to God what might you now do, think, feel?  
Perhaps capture your response with a written or spoken prayer.*

**How do I want to respond to God?**

# Week 5 Hymn

## Once in Royal David's City

Cecil Alexander, 1848, alt.

Henry J. Gauntlett, 1849

A A/C# D Bm A D D/B F#m A D

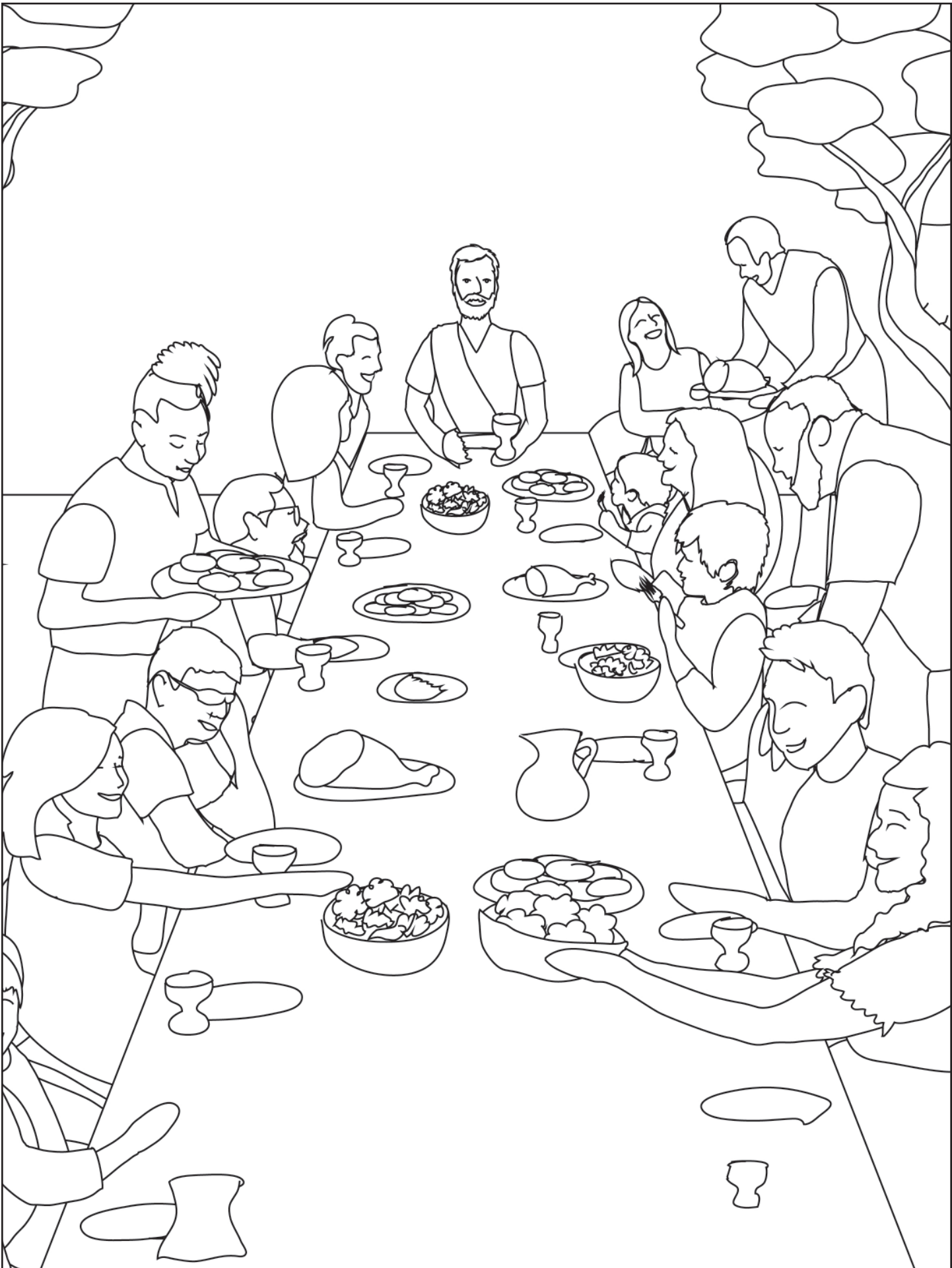
1. Once in roy - al Da - vid's cit - y stood a low - ly cat - tle\_\_ shed,  
 2. He came down to earth from heav - en Who is God and Lord of all,  
 3. And our eyes at last shall see Him, through His own re - deem - ing love,

A A/C# D Bm A D D/B F#m A D

where a moth - er laid her Ba - by in a man - ger for His bed;  
 and His shel - ter was a sta - ble, and His cra - dle was a stall;  
 for that Child, so dear and gen - tle, is our Lord in heav'n a - bove,

G D Em D G D A D

Ma - ry was that moth - er mild, Je - sus Christ, her lit - tle child\_\_  
 With the poor, op - pressed, and low - ly lived on earth our Sav - ior ho - ly.  
 and He leads His chil - dren on to the place where He is gone\_\_



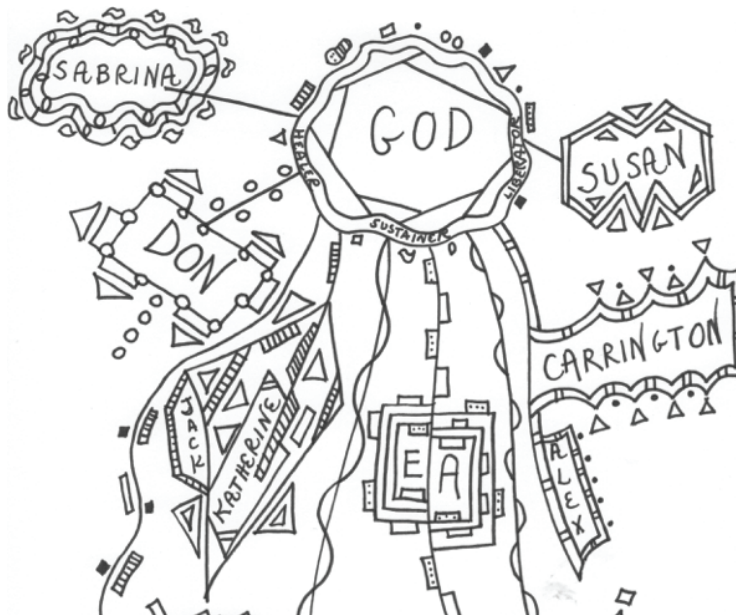
# Kinetic Response

## “Praying in Color” Intercessory Prayer

Sometimes when we pray, our minds wander. The website [prayingincolor.com](http://prayingincolor.com) has lots of ideas for using your hands to pray (which can also help your mind and heart to stay focused). Here is one way to pray for other people:

1. Get a blank piece of paper and something to write or color with.
2. Start with God. Write a name for God in the middle of the paper. Ask God to be part of your prayer. Draw or doodle around the name while you pray. Think of each stroke or dot as a prayer. If words come to you, pray them. If not, enjoy the silent time with God while you draw.
3. Write the name of someone for whom you want to pray. Start to draw around their name. Release the person into God’s care. If words come to you, pray them. If not, just keep drawing.
4. When you are finished praying for the person, take a breath, say “Amen,” or “Lord, hear my prayer.”
5. Continue to add names and doodles to your page.

Example:



Full Instructions:



# Making Space for God

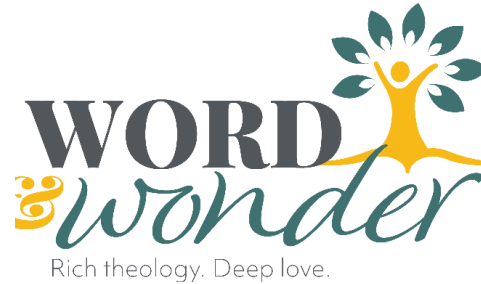
## Serve

Listen to the song *Christ Has No Body Now but Yours* by the Porter's Gate on YouTube.

Who do you know who needs Jesus' help? Who is experiencing something hard or sad? Make a list of these people to pray for this month, and consider how you can tangibly reach out to them with God's love through your hands.

Maybe you know people who need physical help such as meals, childcare, yard help, or other work. Perhaps you know people who need to be reminded that they are not alone and would like presence, an invitation to share a meal with your family, or to be included in some other plans. It's possible that you know people who are ill and confined to their home or a hospital or living in an assisted care facility who might enjoy receiving a card, visit, or video call.

Spend time in prayer thinking through the people your family knows who might need to be reminded that Jesus is with them and loves them. If you have trouble finding these people, our deacons would be happy to connect you.



For more resources, visit  
[wordandwonder.org](http://wordandwonder.org)

©2023 Word & Wonder Creative

Scripture quotations marked (ESV) are from the ESV® Bible  
(The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®),

© 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.  
Used by permission. All rights reserved.

The ESV text may not be quoted in any publication  
made available to the public by a Creative Commons license.

The ESV may not be translated in whole or in part into any other language.

Scripture quotations marked (NIRV) are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Reader's Version®,  
NIRV® Copyright © 1995, 1996, 1998, 2014 by Biblica, Inc.™

Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. [www.zondervan.com](http://www.zondervan.com)

The "NIRV" and "New International Reader's Version" are trademarks registered  
in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™

Scripture quotations marked (NLT) are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation,  
copyright ©1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation.

Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.