

**For a child is born to us,
a son is given to us.
The government will rest on his shoulders.
And he will be called:
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**

Isaiah 9:6

Christmas is a time of expectation. Our minds are full of things we are hoping for and wanting to see happen. Gifts, time with family, yummy treats, games, adventures... there are so many things to look forward to. But Christmas is more than things and experiences. It is a time dedicated to remembering the birth of Jesus! Isaiah wrote about Jesus coming nearly 700 years before his arrival. That was a LONG time of expectation. A time of waiting for our great rescue! Can you imagine? It's so hard to wait to open presents on Christmas morning. Nothing like hundreds of years. And yet, we do not have to wait anymore! How amazing is that? We get to know Jesus because he came as a baby that first Christmas. He made a way through his death, burial, and resurrection, for us to be with Him forever! What a gift! So let's celebrate Him this Christmas.

READ

The Christmas Story - Luke 2:1-20

DISCUSS

What do you think it was like to be Mary? Joseph? A Shepherd?

What is it like to wait for something you REALLY want?

How can you praise God this Christmas? How can you show God how much you love him this Christmas?

PLAY

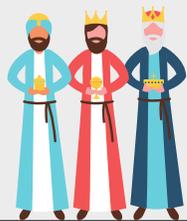
We have created two family activities for you focused around expectation/waiting. One, you have to wait to find the answer. One where you have to wait to get a prize. You can which you want to play (maybe both!).



DON'T FORGET TO TAKE PICTURES ALONG THE WAY!

CHRISTMAS CHARADES

Charades is a word guessing game. A player acts out a word or phrase (like a movie, song, object or a book), while other players guess the word or phrase. But let's play this game with a Christmas-themed twist! Cut out the following words or phrases and place them in a bowl for person to select one at a time and act out.

 <p>Mary</p>	 <p>Jesus</p>	 <p>Wise Men</p>
 <p>Sheep</p>	 <p>Shepherds</p>	 <p>Star</p>
 <p>Angels</p>	 <p>Present</p>	 <p>Bell</p>
 <p>Hot Cocoa</p>	 <p>Snow</p>	 <p>Ice Skating</p>
 <p>Snowman</p>	 <p>Baking</p>	 <p>Christmas Tree</p>



NATIVITY LEFT RIGHT GAME

There are two ways to play this game:

- 1.) Give every player a gift. When the word **LEFT** is read, pass their gift to the left. When **RIGHT** is read, players pass their gift to the right. When the game ends, open the gift in your hands.
- 2.) Have one gift and follow the same instructions. Not all players will open a gift in the end, but that's okay.

There was a census in the day so Mary and Joseph arose and **LEFT** to go to Bethlehem. You would be **RIGHT** to guess that Mary and Joseph were expecting a baby. It was almost as if everyone looked **RIGHT** by the couple as there was no guest room available; not a house to the **LEFT** or a house to the **RIGHT**. The timing may seem odd, but God's timing is always **RIGHT**. Soon after they arrived, at just the **RIGHT** time, Mary gave birth to a baby boy. The baby's name was Jesus. Joseph grabbed a cloth with his **LEFT** hand and handed it to Mary. Using her **LEFT** and **RIGHT** hand, she wrapped baby Jesus and placed him **RIGHT** in the manger with animals to the **LEFT** and even more to the **RIGHT**.

There were shepherds keeping the fields watching **RIGHT** over their flocks. If one shepherd **LEFT** for a break, the other would always watch over their flock. At just the **RIGHT** time, an angel appeared to them. They were **RIGHT**ly terrified. The angel told the shepherds of the baby that was born. This wasn't just any baby. This was the Savior who **LEFT** heaven to come to earth. The angels couldn't help but jump **RIGHT** up and celebrate. The only **RIGHT** thing to do was to leave and go to see the newborn baby. They rarely **LEFT** their flocks, but this was a once in a lifetime opportunity. They would see baby Jesus **RIGHT** in front of them with their very own eyes. They made a **RIGHT** out of their field, another **RIGHT** down the hill, a **RIGHT** on the road and soon enough they were heading in just the **RIGHT** direction.

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They hurried and soon arrived. They were so excited that it felt like they just **LEFT** on their journey. They made a **LEFT** through the town, a **RIGHT** at the market, and another **RIGHT** at a farm. Soon they found Mary and Joseph and baby Jesus **RIGHT** where the angel had told them. Everything was just **RIGHT**. The shepherds shared with Mary and Joseph that the angels came to them at just the **RIGHT** time and they **LEFT** everything behind to come see the Savior. Mary treasured all of these things in her heart and **RIGHTly** so. The shepherds **LEFT** glorifying and praising God for all they just heard. There was nothing **LEFT** to do but to accept the gift and tell everyone about it.

The time of waiting in expectation is over. Open your present!

Read **LUKE 2:1-20** for the real full story of the first Christmas.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

