Celebrating a Christ-Centered Christmas

WEEK 3

25 DAYS OF FAMILY DAILY DEVOTIONS & ACTIVITIES

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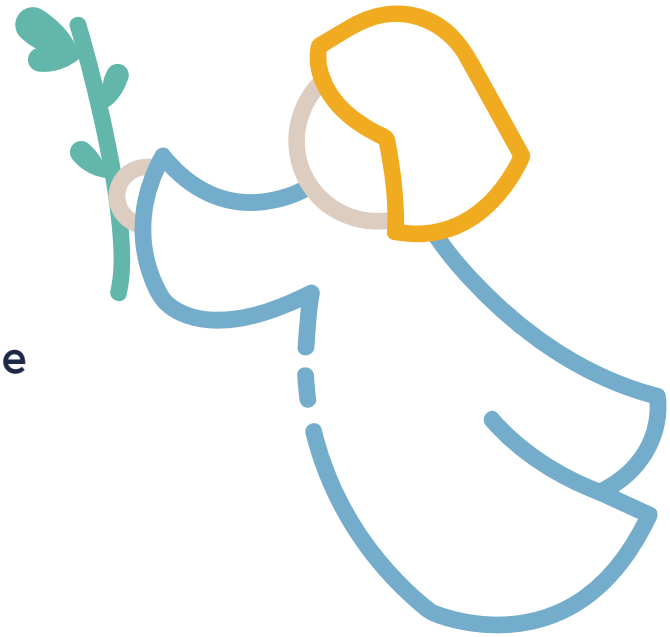
December 14

DISCUSS: What various announcements do you find in the internet today? Which types of news do you like to read or listen to? Does the message of the angel make any difference in your life today?

READ: Luke 2:10-14

When an angel appeared before the shepherds bearing the announcement of Christ's birth, the shepherds were very scared. To have seen an angel with their own eyes must have been a terrifying experience. The first words the angel spoke were, "Do not be afraid". He gave them a sign on how to find the Messiah. Later, many more angels joined in a chorus of praising and singing to God. That must have been such a glorious sight! They praised God and brought greetings of peace, not only to the shepherds but to all of us who read the Christmas story today. The gift of peace is ours as we open our hearts to Jesus.

DO: Draw some Christmas cards with angels and their message and mail them to friends.



PRAY: Pray that the message of peace and courage be yours today as you share it with others.

December 15

DISCUSS: What is your favorite animal? If you could have a pet what would it be? How do you think the birthplace of Jesus looked like and smelled like?

READ: Psalm 50:10-11

The Bible does not mention if there were any animals in the place where the Lord Jesus was born. However, many pictures depict sheep, cows and even donkeys. It is assumed there were animals because Jesus' bed was a feeding box for cattle. The donkey was probably used by Mary and Joseph on their journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem. It was a journey of several days on difficult and winding roads with a woman ready to give birth. Animals, which were created to serve man, became a silent witness to the birth of their Creator.

DO: Place the sheep and cattle at the stable. Play a game of Christmas charades. Act out some Christmas characters including animals.

PRAY: Thank God for the animals He has created.

December 16

DISCUSS: Suppose you are going on a long trip and when you arrive at your destination, all the hotels and motels are full. You have no place to spend the night. How would you feel? What would you do?

READ: Luke 2:4-7

When Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem, they could not find any place for them to sleep in. There was "no room for them in the inn". Since it was the time of paying taxes, every person was in his hometown for the census and there were so many people crowding in Bethlehem. But the Lord provided a quiet and secluded place for Jesus to be born: His bed was a manger. It must have been a dark, dirty place. But in that manger, filled with hay, the baby Jesus lay.

DO: Prepare a small empty box and fill it with dried grass. Think of what it was like for Jesus to sleep there.

PRAY: Pray that we will have room in our hearts for Jesus and that we will gladly love and serve Him.

December 17

DISCUSS: What would Christmas look like without Christ? What are some ways the world celebrates Christmas? Why do people forget to focus on the Baby who had a birthday?

READ: 1 John 4:9-10, John 1:14

Jesus' coming was a miracle – He was born through a virgin, conceived of the Holy Spirit and sent by God the Father. Even before time began, God the Father had planned for the Lord Jesus to leave His royal throne in heaven and come to live on this earth. Jesus was the only baby on this earth who knew His life purpose even before He was born. He came to die and be the sacrifice of our sins. Let us not stop short of worshiping the cute baby Jesus, rather let us fall down at the feet of our Saviour and Risen King.

DO: Place the baby Jesus in the stable. Memorize this verse as a family: 1 John 4:9

PRAY: Praise God for the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus which led to our salvation.

December 18

DISCUSS: What are some things we believe in without seeing? How do you think the people who heard about Jesus from the shepherds reacted?

READ: Luke 2: 16-20

The first bearers of the Good News of Jesus' birth to the world were also the first ones who visited Him. The shepherds realized the truth of the angel's message when they saw the baby with their own eyes. They could not keep to themselves what they saw and heard. God had touched their hearts in a special way and their response was to tell everyone they saw about the Saviour. Then they went back to their world as shepherds, glorifying and praising God. What an impact they must have made among the people of Bethlehem!

DO: Sing "The First Noel". Bring out whatever instruments you have around the house and use them to praise God. You may also wish to make your own if you do not have any. As you sing, determine to be like the shepherds who brought the Good News to people around them.

PRAY: Ask the Lord to make you like the shepherds, joyfully sharing God's word to others.

December 19

DISCUSS: What is the purpose of our lives? How does God invite us to seek Him and know Him? Are we to lose hope when we have difficulty "looking" for Him?

READ: Matthew 2: 1-9

The Wise Men or Magi were scholars who studied the stars and became counsellors to kings. They probably came from either Iraq (Babylon) or Iran (Persia). They had been intently seeking the Messiah and had heard about His coming from the olden times when the Jews were exiled in their country. The wonderful thing about the Wise Men is that they were willing to sacrifice everything - leave their homes, possessions and loved ones to travel a great distance, probably more than a thousand miles, to search for the promised King. Are we willing to go to great lengths to seek out a true living relationship with the Lord Jesus?

Three Wise Men

DO: Place the Wise Men on the nativity scene.

PRAY: Pray that the Lord will renew your passion to seek Him and know Him in a deeper way.

December 20

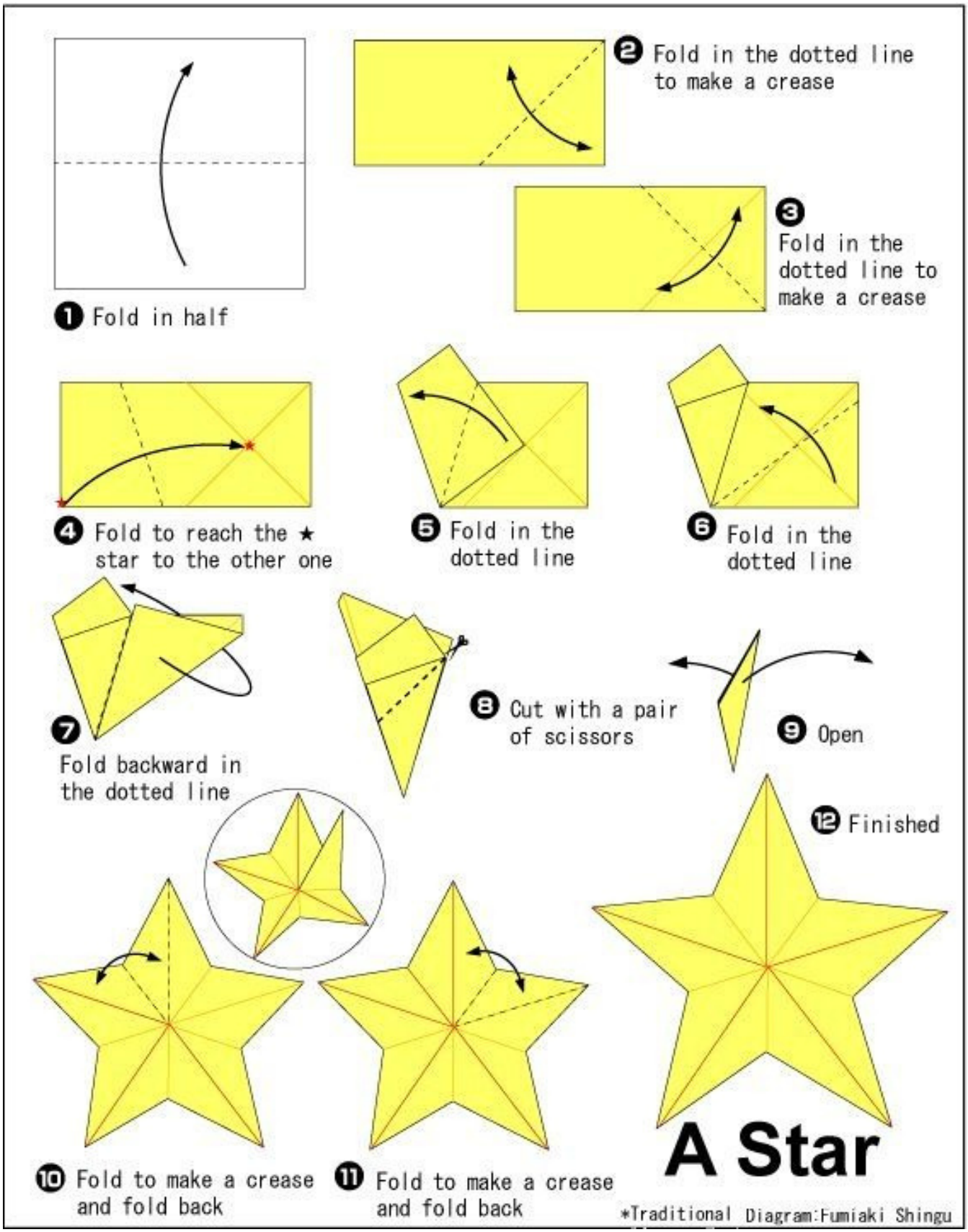
DISCUSS: Have you looked at the stars in the sky recently? Can you name some of the stars? Try to look at the internet for photos of the night stars. Which day of creation were the stars formed by God? (Genesis 1:14-16)

READ: Matthew 2:2 and 9, Psalm 8:1-3

The Bible says that God sent a special star, "His star", that appeared in the sky to guide the Wise Men to Jesus. It was extraordinarily brilliant and it rose in the East. The Wise Men knew somehow that this was the star of the Jewish Messiah. Their journey led them to Bethlehem. After they encountered Herod, he asked them to search for the Child King. The star then appeared once more and led them to the house where Jesus lived. What special faith the Wise Men must have had to follow a sign from heaven! In the same way, God calls us to follow His signs and be sensitive to His leading in order to bring us to a closer relationship with Him.

DO: Make a small 'parol' (star lantern) or create origami paper stars (See Appendix)

PRAY: Thank God for the stars and His majestic creation!

Appendix

Origami Paper Star