



Rejoice

TOGETHER ONE AND ALL!

THE GREAT ADVENT CHALLENGE



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The Great Advent Challenge

All around the world people are preparing for Christmas. Some people are buying gifts, some are making special goodies, some are busy planning for guests, some are preparing their houses with special decorations. What are you, or your family, doing to prepare for Christmas this year?

This ADVENT (the lead-up to Christmas), we invite you to join us on the Great Advent Challenge to “Rejoice together one and all!”

Together we will use our senses and take time to see, hear and feel the things around us, as we explore what it means to Rejoice.

In some circles the word REJOICE is common. We might hear it at church, in Christmas Carols, and it features in the Bible over 200 times. But when was the last time you heard someone use the word rejoice? What does it mean to rejoice? When do we rejoice? Here are some definitions:

To feel or show great joy or delight. *Oxford Dictionary*

To feel or show that you are very happy about something. *Brittanica*

To feel joy; to experience gladness in a high degree; to have pleasurable satisfaction; to be delighted.

Webster's Dictionary

This guide has many activities that you can engage with over the next 4 weeks. You can:



Read and think about the theme of the week and how you can Rejoice



Take time for mindfulness and prayer



Try some challenges



Do some colouring



Learn about the birth of Jesus

This Advent, let's take in the sights, sounds, feelings and learnings, and find reasons to rejoice. We encourage you to share your experiences with others and let's make the word 'rejoice' a mainstream word again.



Rejoice & See

Week One

How often do you take the time to really look and see all that is around you?

This week, we encourage you to take a good look around and notice things that you may never have noticed before – a newly formed spider web, a plant flowering in your neighbourhood, a new Christmas ornament, someone’s earrings, an excited person.

Our weekly challenges will give you lots of opportunities to open your eyes and see things in your neighbourhood and in your home. As you complete the challenges, look for things that make you rejoice.

NEIGHBOURHOOD SCAVENGER HUNT

Go for a walk around your neighbourhood and take the time to really look at what is all around you.

Look for things that make you want to rejoice. You might like to take a photo of these things.

If you see something that makes you sad or angry, stop and talk about it.

Look for the following items:



Three different types of birds



Something colourful



Christmas decorations



Four different types of flowers



A cloud shaped like an object or an animal



An ant



Something unusual



A big rock



Five interesting things

MINDFULNESS AND PRAYER

Take the time to sit still and watch a candle flicker. Take deep breaths. What thoughts come to mind?

Sit with the word “SEE”, and colour or doodle images, words and ideas that come to mind as you think about what it might mean for you to Rejoice.



LOOKING AND SEEING



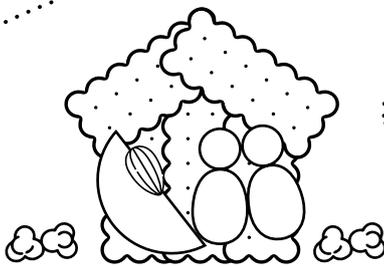
Look through a Christmas recipe book or at online recipe sites. Choose some recipes that you'd like to make this Advent. You might like to try making a baby Jesus snack (see below).



Look at the Christmas decorations at the shops or in people's yards. Which are your favourites? Can you find any that are connected to the Nativity story (Jesus, angels, shepherds, cradle)?



Get up early and watch the sun rise.



BABY JESUS SNACK

Ingredients:

- Crackers for the stable
- Peanut Butter or Hummus for "hay" and to help things stick together
- Thinly Sliced Apples for Jesus' bed
- Almonds or Mini Marshmallows for baby Jesus
- Grapes cut in half lengthwise for bodies and some ends cut for heads
- Popcorn for sheep
- Pineapple or star fruit for the star above the stable
- Other items that you'd like to add from the story



Look at Christmas craft ideas online. What ideas could you make during Advent? You might like to try making [this baby Jesus Christmas star ornament](#).¹



Read the [book Joy by Corinne Averis](#).²

What joyful things would you try to catch? Like the grandma in this book, is there anyone, in your life, who needs a reason to rejoice? How might you be able to help them this Advent?



Warm up your eyes (and brains) by looking at objects and guessing what they are [in this video](#).³



Colour in the SEE word and surround it with pictures of things that you like looking at or seeing. These might be photos that you took on your neighbourhood walk.

In the Bible we read about the Christmas story - God's ultimate gift to us. The highlight of history. You might like to read the story before and after making the snack and talk about each of the parts as you do. Listen out for all the key words - Jesus, stable, manger, star.

You can find the story in Luke 2:8-16 and Matthew 2:1-2

[CLICK HERE FOR THE EASY TO READ VERSION](#)⁴

I wonder what part of the story you like the best?

Adapted from <https://www.trueaimeducation.com/cooking-with-kids-nativity-snack-and-activity/>⁵



Rejoice & Hear

Week Two

How often do you take the time to really listen and hear all the sounds around you?

This week, we encourage you to stop and listen. What sounds, noises and/or words are loud? What are some of the quieter sounds you hear around you, and within you? What sounds do you hear that you may not have heard before?

Our weekly challenges will give you lots of opportunities to open your ears and hear things in your neighbourhood and in your home. As you complete the challenges, listen for things that make you rejoice.

LISTENING SCAVENGER HUNT

Sit in a park, or in your backyard. Actively listen to all the sounds that are around you.

Listen for things that make you want to rejoice. You might like to make a recording of these sounds.

Listen out for sounds that might make you sad or angry. Talk about these things.

Listen out for interesting, or unknown, sounds.

Listen for the following sounds:



Three different birds



A motorbike



Machinery



A dog barking



A plane



An insect



A car



A child's voice



An unusual sound

MINDFULNESS AND PRAYER

FOIL FUN

Listen to the sounds of foil as you use it to think about others and yourself.

Get a piece of foil (6x6cm is big enough)

Place the piece of foil shiny side up: think of the good things in your life.

Lightly scrunch the foil into a loose ball: think of people who find life tough.

Smooth out the foil again: think of people who help others (smooth things out) – parents, teachers, doctors etc.

Think of something or someone and make a letter out of the foil for their name.

Reference <https://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com/2016/04/interactive-prayer-foil-intercessions.html>⁶



LISTENING AND HEARING

Make, and listen to, a Christmas music playlist – which are your favourite songs or pieces?

You might like to add some songs about the nativity story or Rejoicing:



Do you hear what I hear



O Holy Night



Silent Night



Away in a Manger



O Come, O Come Emmanuel

[Check out this Advent and Christmas Playlist](#)⁷



Say kind or encouraging things to your family and listen out for kind things that are said to you.



Colour in the HEAR picture and surround the word with pictures/words of things that you like hearing.



Listen to [Sounding Joy](#)⁸. What sounds like joy to you?



Read the book, [The Rabbit Listened](#)⁹. What does listening mean to you?



Warm up your ears (and brains) by listening to and guessing the sounds [this video](#).¹⁰



Rejoice & Act

Week Three

How often do you stop to think about the things that you are doing during the week?

This week, we encourage you to take some time to think about what you want to be doing, or how you want to be acting, this Advent. What is important to you as a family, or as an individual? What might be missing?

Our weekly challenge will give you lots of opportunities to do things, or act in a way that you may not have done in a long time, or maybe never tried. Hopefully, the activities will help you connect with the world and people around you in a different way, help you reflect on what's important in your life, and help you and others rejoice.

'IT'S TIME TO ACT' CHALLENGE

Can you complete the following 'doing' challenges:



Pick up some rubbish in your neighbourhood.



Make a Christmas recipe and give it to someone.



Do something that will make someone rejoice.



Say something kind to a stranger.



Make a Christmas tree ornament.



Have a 'normal' dinner meal using your nicest plates and table decorations.



Write a letter or card to a friend or relative.



Clean something in your house that hasn't been cleaned for a long time.

MINDFULNESS AND PRAYER

FIVE FINGER PRAYER:

Use your fingers to think/pray for yourself and others.



Thumb

Pray for people closest to you – your family and friends



Pointer Finger

Pray for teachers and healers – your Teachers, Leaders, Coaches, Doctors and Pastors



Middle Finger

Pray for leaders – those in government, business, school and church



Ring Finger

Pray for the sick, lonely and poor



Pinky Finger

Pray for yourself and your own needs last

Reference <https://www.imom.com/printable/five-finger-prayer/> ¹¹

SCRABBLE PRAYER:



During the week, use scrabble tiles to make words that represent people or situations that you are thinking/praying about.

How many different words can you make?



DOING AND ACTING:



Trace, then colour-in, your hands. As you do, think of all the ways your hands have helped others and the ways other people's hands have helped you.



Colour in the ACT poster. Surround it with words or pictures that represent ways that you want to 'act' this week.



Have a meal with your family or friends and talk about how people have actively shown love to you.



Do a rejoicing dance with scarves and/or percussion instruments.

You might like to dance along to these Christmas songs:



Show love to someone different or who you might not usually think of showing love to.



"Time to Jingle Jam"
Orange Music ¹²



"Joy to the World"
Go Fish ¹³



Rejoice & Feel

Week Four

How often do you take the time to stop and feel? Feel the textures of things around you and feel the emotions within you?

This week, we encourage you to take the time to feel – it may be sand under your feet, a cool breeze, the bark of a tree, clean sheets, or the warmth of a hug.

Our weekly challenges will give you lots of opportunities to feel things in your neighbourhood, in your house, and within your own body. As you complete the challenges, be aware of the things that make you rejoice.

A SENSORY SCAVENGER HUNT

Go for a walk in a park or the bush and touch different objects. You might want to have some gloves to make sure your hands are kept safe.

As you touch things, does anything make you rejoice?

As you touch things, do you hear any unusual sounds?

As you touch things, does anything make you sad or angry? Stop and talk about these things.

As you touch things, does anything surprise you?

Can you touch the following?



Large rocks



Water in a creek



Flower petals



Something warm



Something squishy



Small stones



Bark from different trees



Grass



Something cool



Something spiky (be careful of this one)



Something soft

MINDFULNESS AND PRAYER

Set up a tactile 'feeling' area and think about or pray for different people and situations.

Take time each day to touch and pray. Some ideas are:



Rock

Think about situations that are hard



Bowl of water

Think about people who live across the sea



Playdough/clay

Make an alphabet letter out of the playdough and think about people and situations that start with that letter



Cuddly

Think about people who need to feel love and warmth



Christmas ornament

Think about people who may struggle this Christmas



FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS

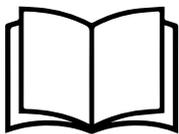
Have a special dinner and talk about different emotions.

What makes you feel happy?

What makes you feel sad?

What makes you feel scared?

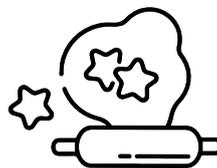
How are you feeling this Christmas?



Take the time to read the Christmas Story. Luke 1: 26-56, 2: 1-20. What emotions do you feel as you are reading it? You can find some different version here:

[Watch the Christmas Story Video](#) ¹⁴

[Easy to Read version](#) ¹⁵



Make biscuit dough. As you roll, shape, and cut the dough, think about people who have shaped your life. Here's a Christmassy biscuit recipe you might like to try:

[Confetti Cookies](#) ¹⁶



Make an Advent sensory box and think about the Christmas story as you feel and play:

[Advent Box](#) ¹⁷



URL REFERENCES:

1. Baby Jesus Christmas Star Ornament:

<https://www.redtedart.com/popsicle-stick-nativity-star-ornament/>

2. Read the book Joy by Corinne Averis

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ni_lxS6Xsy8

3. Warm up your eyes (and brains) by looking at objects and guessing what they are:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WLjZgFjiDfQ>

4. Easy to read version of Luke 2:8-16 and Matthew 2:1-2

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%202%3A8-16&version=ERV>

5. Baby Jesus Snack

<https://www.trueaimeducation.com/cooking-with-kids-nativity-snack-and-activity/>

6. Foil Fun

<https://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com/2016/04/interactive-prayer-foil-intercessions.html>

7. Christmas Playlist

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/3MEKcTdJRhtz1MagmKjX6w?si=887ccf4366ef469a>

8. Sounding Joy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jthLvNgmFjA&t=13s>

9. The Rabbit Listened

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBjAWkog9n0>

10. Warm up your ears (and brains) by listening to and guessing the sounds

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9EmAe3xMfD0>

11. Five Finger Prayer

<https://www.imom.com/printable/five-finger-prayer/>

12. "Time to Jingle Jam", Orange Music

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2p--a5ar3RA>

13. "Joy to the World", Go Fish

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uhJuVHpB8us>

14. Watch the Christmas Story

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dbp24wZQa3Y>

15. Easy to read version of Luke 1: 26-56, 2: 1-20

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%202%3A1-20&version=ERV>

16. Advent Box

<https://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com/2015/11/easy-nativity-discovery-box-for-under-5s.html>

17. Confetti Cookies

<https://www.taste.com.au/recipes/confetti-cookies/dd8493f7-cabf-4fc7-8276-e9fa12694be1>

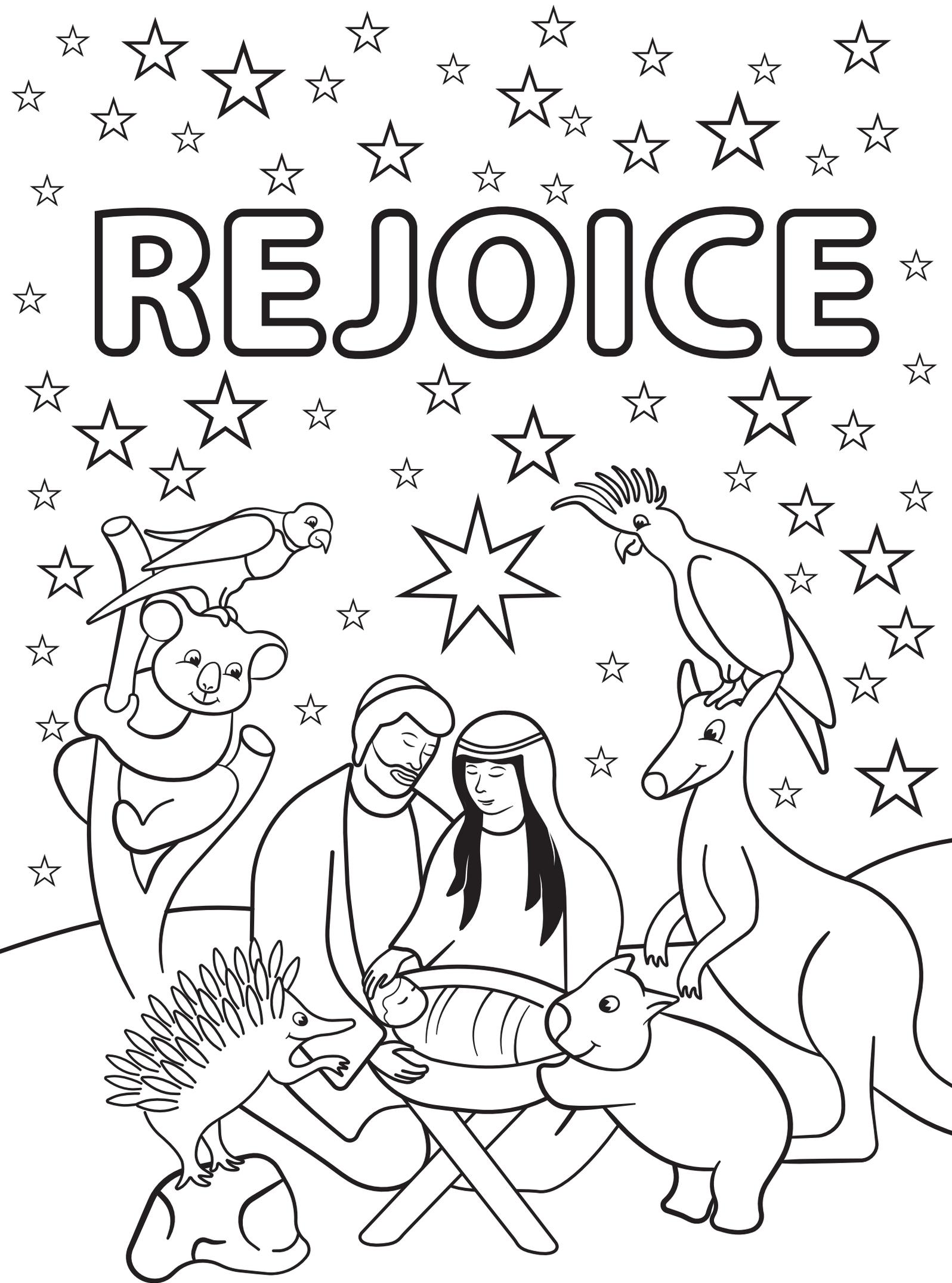
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A suite of additional materials including resource for worship and early learning are available from the Mission Accompanying Team via discipleship@ucaqld.com.au

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SEE

HEAR



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ACT

FEEL



FEEL