

Advent 2



# WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

## LESSON 14

### Angels Come to Mary and Joseph

#### Summary of Today's Story

In the Gospel of Luke, the angel Gabriel comes to Mary, who is betrothed but not yet married to Joseph. Gabriel announces to Mary that she will conceive a son by the Holy Spirit and is to call him Jesus. The angel tells Mary of her son's unique role in the salvation history of the people.

Mary then goes to visit her cousin Elizabeth, who is pregnant with a son who will be known to us as John the Baptist. After visiting, Mary returns home singing praise to God in the famous song known as the *Magnificat*.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Joseph receives a divine revelation from an angel who appears to him in a dream. Joseph is about to divorce Mary because of her pregnancy. In the dream, the angel tells Joseph, as he has already told Mary, that the son that she will bear will be the savior of their people. "You will name him *Jesus*, for he will save the people from their sins."

#### Where You'll Find Today's Story

##### In the Bible

We recommend the *New Revised Standard Version* Bible.

**Luke 1:26-38 (annunciation to Mary)**

**Luke 1:39-56 (includes Mary visiting Elizabeth, mother-to-be of John the Baptist and the Magnificat)**

**Matthew 1:18-25 (annunciation to Joseph)**

##### In Children's Bibles

If you plan to use a children's Bible for storytelling, write the page numbers in the space below.

#### In Our Sunday Lectionary

Today's story is told in church on the following Sunday:

*Annunciation to Mary (Luke 1:26-38):*

Year B: Fourth Sunday of Advent

*Mary with Elizabeth (Luke 1:39-56):*

Year C: Fourth Sunday of Advent

*Annunciation to Joseph (Matthew 1:18-25):*

Year A: Fourth Sunday of Advent



## Weaving Our Story with the Biblical Story

During Advent, we usually recognize Mary, the mother of Jesus. In the Advent wreath, she is often symbolically represented in the third, pink, candle.

For this lesson, we will cover two stories, recognizing the role of both mother and father in the preparation for the coming of our Lord and their son Jesus. The story of how the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary (called *The Annunciation*) is found in Luke. Joseph's story is found in Matthew.

When Gabriel appears to Mary, her first response is fear. One of the first words that the angel speaks is "Do not be afraid." The raw sense of divine presence can be frightening. At the moment when divine reality with its divine purpose breaks in upon the human consciousness, the effect is overwhelming. We tremble and shrink before the awful magnitude of new possibility and new life to which we are now called.

So Mary receives the call to a new and uncertain future. Gabriel informs Mary that she will bear a son, although she has not yet married and consummated her marriage. Her second response is perplexity to the angel's news. "How can this be?" Indeed, how does God make changes that to us, if in our control, seem inconceivable?

The angel gives Mary the answer that serves as God's answer to our own insufficiency and inabilities: "With God nothing is impossible."

Mary's final response is one of obedience and trust: "Let it be to me according to your word." When God calls us to a new commitment, that is the only sufficient response to God's commission.

And Gabriel says to Mary, "You are favored among women!" What favor is she given? She is given the favor of bearing a son far from her home, in a stable—a son who, though beloved by the humble, is hated by the powerful, often in danger and finally put to death on a cross amidst a jeering crowd. That was the "favor with God," a favor that many would be reluctant to claim. Mary may, even at this point, realize that God promises not unbroken happiness but a deeper truth, not ease and prosperity but reconciliation and union with God, through this child that she will bear.

Joseph discovers that Mary is "with child." Under Jewish law, he has two options: to "divorce her quietly" or bring her to court, which would "put her to shame." The first option is more merciful than the other, and Joseph, being a "just man," favors that option. His sympathy and kindness is apparent here.

But as Joseph is thinking about what to do, an angel comes to him in a dream. Like Mary, he is told that she has conceived a child by the Holy Spirit and that they are to call the child Jesus, "for he will save his people from their sins." *Jesus* in Hebrew means *Yahweh is salvation*.

Joseph, like Mary, is quietly obedient to the divine commission. Keeping in mind what the angel told him, he remains betrothed to Mary, then marries her but remains chaste until the birth of the baby Jesus.

Mary and Joseph, in the midst of uncertainty and unexpected happenings, face a difficult choice: submit to the divine will or doubt it and try to control one's own destiny. Both choose to trust in God's word, even though it means leaving the old ways of living (Joseph not heeding the Jewish law), living in difficult circumstances (a stable, then as refugees in Egypt), and living in fear and anxiety for their lives (running from Herod, then following the path of Jesus to his rejection by the people and his death on the cross).

These two stories of Joseph and Mary are perfect examples of the kind of faith and obedience that we can try to imitate, the humble submission to the will of God when God calls us to mission.



## The Episcopal Thread

Look at Hymn 438 in the *Hymnal 1982* (New York, NY: Church Publishing, 1985) for a beautiful rendition of the *Song of Mary (Magnificat)*.

The *Magnificat* is also an important part of our Morning and Evening Prayer. It is suggested for use after the Old Testament reading during Evening Prayer on Sundays, at Evening Prayer on all Feasts of our Lord and other Major Feasts, and at any time if only one reading is used.



## Gathering

As the children enter the classroom, engage them in a simple opening activity.

On pages 8-9, you'll find two Gathering Activity handouts to use if you wish. Or you might have the children create an angel or a simple Christmas ornament. If you have a Jesse tree in the classroom, have the children make ornaments. (You'll find directions for making and hanging Jesse Tree ornaments on p. 12 in the activity section at the end of Lesson 13.) If you have a class Advent calendar, use it to count down the days until Christmas.

This is also a good time for all children to have a brief time of fellowship. Children will enjoy sharing with each other their sense of excitement and expectation during this Advent season.

After all the children have arrived, gather them together and say a simple opening prayer.



## Telling the Story

Read today's stories aloud from a children's Bible, showing the pictures, or tell the stories in your own words.

Begin with Mary's story, then tell Joseph's.

These stories are great when acted out, side by side. You'll find several suggestions of ways to dramatize a story along with other suggestions for ways to bring these stories to life on pages 2-3 under Storytelling Enhancements in the Appendix on the Website.

There is no need to analyze the stories immediately after telling them. For now, let the stories sink into the children's minds and hearts. Later, when having snacks or doing an activity, bring up the stories again, inviting the children to talk about them.



## Prayer

Set up a small worship center in your classroom.

### Materials

small table with a cloth to cover it  
 two candles  
 Advent wreath with Advent candles or one large Christ candle  
 matches  
 Bible  
 cross  
*optional: flowers (real, fake or handmade by the children)*

Have the children set up a simple altar with the materials listed above. Invite them to place on the altar any drawings or crafts that they created during Gathering time. Then light the candles. If you are using an Advent wreath, light the appropriate number of Advent candles.

Read one or two verses from today's scripture to help the children connect the story that they just heard with the Bible. If working with older children, you might expand the reading to several verses.

Suggestions for the reading:

*For younger children:* Luke 1:30

*For older children:* Luke 1:26-35 or Matthew 1:18-21

Help familiarize the children with our liturgy by doing the reading as it is done in church. Read as follows:

*Reader:* A reading from the Gospel of Luke:  
*(Read the selected passage.)*

*Reader:* The word of the Lord.

*All:* Thanks be to God.

Invite the children to sit in a circle and join in prayer. Say a brief prayer yourself then invite prayers from each child in the circle:

- Invite prayers of thanks to God for God's work in our lives during the past week. Ask the children to remember when God has been active in their lives, or when they have seen the work of God—at home, at school, with family or friends.
- Welcome intercessory prayers, asking for God's help or presence. Encourage children to pray for themselves or for others who are in any need or trouble. At this time of Advent, ask for special prayers for the needy and the poor in their neighborhood.
- Ask if anyone has had a birthday or celebrated a special day during the past week and give thanks for these special occasions.
- End the prayer time by praying together the Lord's Prayer.

Carefully extinguish the candles.



## Memorization

There is no new memorization for this lesson. However, encourage the children to continue to work on memorizing the Lord's Prayer and/or the Nicene Creed.



## Weaving Our Faith

Before the closing prayer, take a few minutes to help the children think about today's story and what it teaches us about God by asking questions such as:

- What was our story about today?
- Who did we talk about?
- What did God do?
- What do we learn about God?
- How would we respond if God appeared to us?

To help the children recall the main points of the story, you may prompt them with key words, such as: *angel, praise to God, savior, Jesus.*



## Closing Prayer

Before the children leave, say a closing prayer to send them into the church worship service or back to their homes in the knowledge of the love and protection of God. You may say your own prayer or use one from the *Prayer Book* or say a simple one like the following:

- Thank you, Lord God, for sending your Son Jesus Christ to earth, to be born as a baby as we were, to live as we live. Help us now to prepare the way for the coming of your Son Jesus, so that we can learn from him how we can be close to you and live in your love, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

End the class with a dismissal that is used in church, such as:

- Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord.

The children respond:

- Thanks be to God.



# WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

## GATHERING ACTIVITY ANGEL

Draw what you think an angel from God might look like.



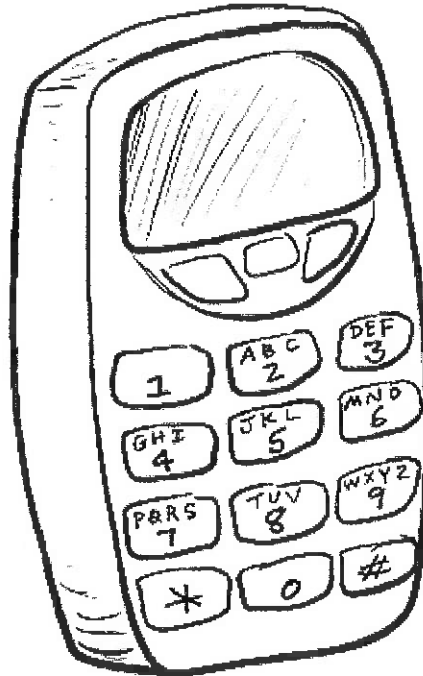
# WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

## CRYPTIC TELEPHONE MESSAGE DIAL-A-MESSAGE

Angels brought a message to Mary and to Joseph. Now we get telephone messages! Use the telephone dial below to unlock the coded message and find out what the angels on the other end of the telephone are saying to us.

Look at the dial. One number has 3 different letters. The right letter to use will have the right combination of line plus number: \2 = A, 2 = B, /2 = C, etc.

43 \9/4/5/5 23 /2\2/5/53\3 \843 /7/66 /6/3 \4/6\3





# WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

## CHRISTMAS CARD PUPPETS

### for Primary

Children make stick puppets out of nativity figures found on Christmas cards and act out the story of the birth of Jesus.

#### **Materials:**

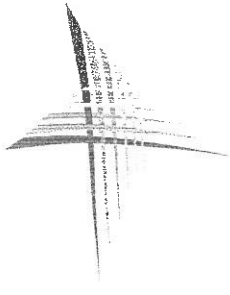
old Christmas cards, with nativity figures  
craft sticks  
glue  
scissors

#### **Directions:**

Set out Christmas cards and invite the children to make stick puppets and act out the Christmas story.

1. Ask the children to cut out nativity figures they find on the Christmas cards and glue them to craft sticks.
2. As you read the story of the birth of Jesus, have the children act out the story with their stick puppets.





# WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

## ANGEL HALOS for Preschool

Children make halos from paper plates and decorate them.

### Materials:

- paper plates
- glue
- glitter or glitter glue
- sequins
- markers or crayons
- scissors
- optional:* thin ribbons

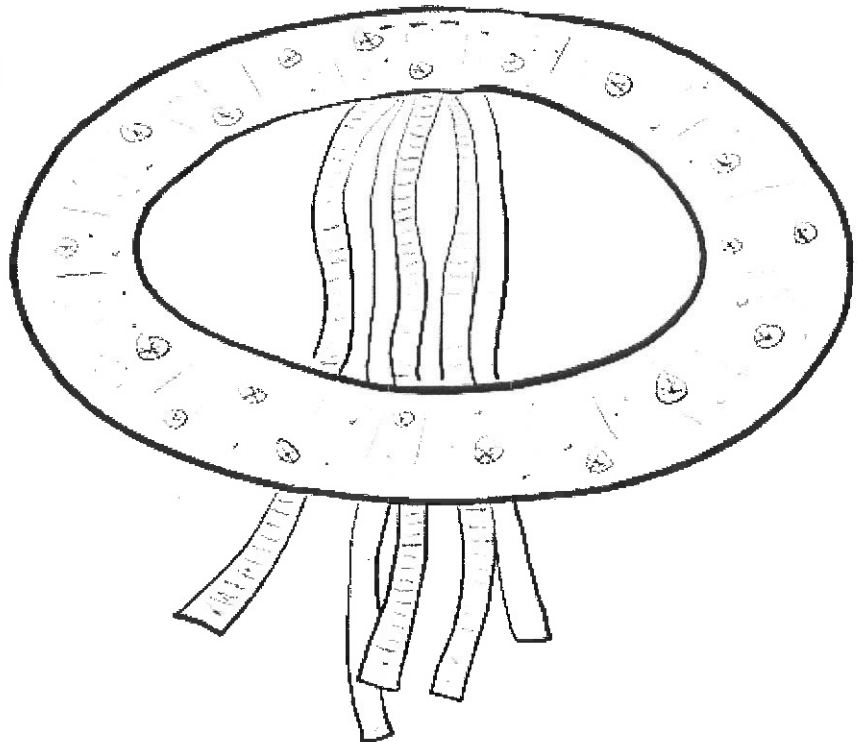
### Preparation:

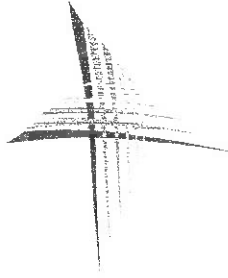
Cut the center out of the paper plates to make halos. Make one for each child.

### Directions:

Hand out the paper plates with the center removed and invite each child to make an angel halo.

1. Have the children decorate their halos with markers, glitter and sequins.
2. If the children want ribbons trailing behind, cut several lengths of ribbon and help the children tape the ribbons to the back of their halos.





# WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

## PAPER PLATE ANGELS for Primary

Children make stand-up angels from paper plates.

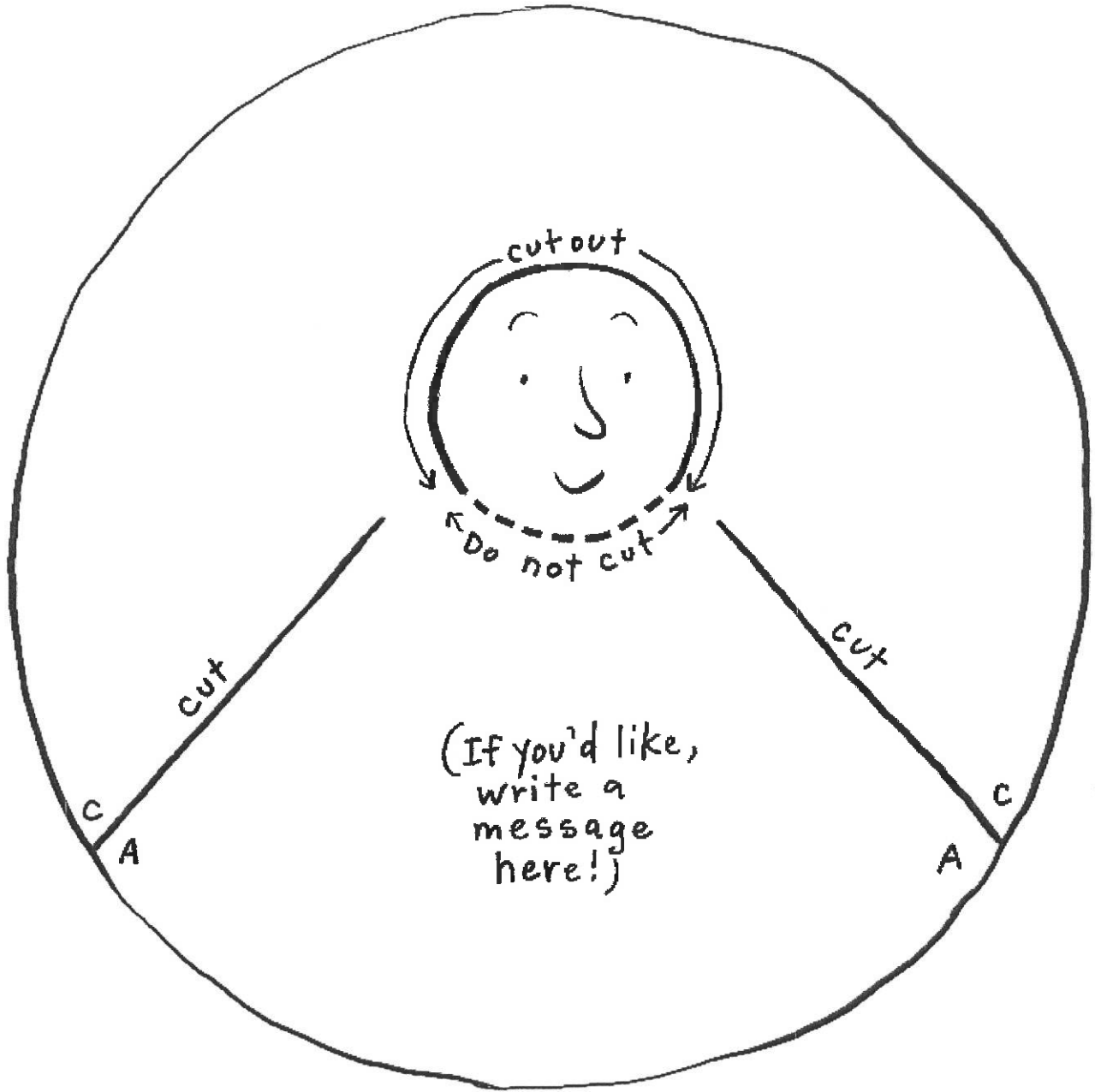
### Materials:

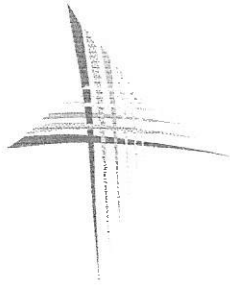
paper plates  
markers or crayons  
stapler  
scissors

### Directions:

Invite each child to make a paper plate angel. Give the children these directions:

1. Draw a face on the back of a paper plate.
2. Cut out the top part of the head and make two side cuts. (See illustration, p. 13.)
3. Bring both points A to the back to form a cone shape. Staple closed.
4. Fold B to the back. Head should stand tall. Points will move up to form the wings.





# WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

## ANGELS IN PARADES

### for Primary

Children color pictures of angels and make them into magnets.

#### **Materials:**

angel picture (p. 15)

foam sheets

scissors

glue

magnetic strips

crayons

*optional:* digital camera and printer or instant print camera and film

#### **Preparation:**

Make a copy of the angel picture for each child.

#### **Directions:**

Hand out the angel pictures and invite each child to make an angel magnet. Offer these directions:

1. Color the angel picture and cut it out.
2. Glue the picture onto a piece of foam sheet and cut out again.
3. Cut a piece of the magnetic strip to fit your picture, remove the adhesive backing and stick it to the back of the angel.

#### *Variation:*

Take a picture of each child and cut around the outline. Have the child glue this photo to a piece of foam sheet and add a magnetic strip, giving each angel someone to talk to!





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for Primary, Elementary

Children “etch” angel pictures in black paint, which has been brushed over brightly colored blocks of color.

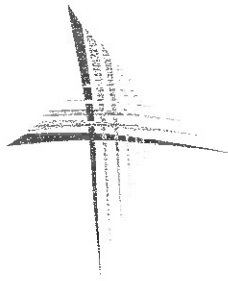
## Materials:

white paper  
crayons in bright colors  
black poster paint  
saucers or small bowls  
paintbrushes  
dishwashing liquid  
craft sticks  
toothpicks

## Directions:

Invite each child to create an angel picture. Offer these directions:

1. On the white paper, make large blocks of color with crayons. Use bright colors and cover the entire page.
2. In a bowl or saucer, mix a little black paint with a couple of drops of dishwashing liquid.
3. Cover the crayon-colored page with black paint and let dry.
4. Use a craft stick to scratch off the black paint so the colors underneath show through. Scratch out an angel picture. For thinner lines and sparkles, use a toothpick.



# WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

## ANGELS COME TO MARY AND JOSEPH for Elementary

Children make stained glass angels from black poster board and tissue paper or cellophane.

### Materials:

- angel pattern (p. 15)
- colored cellophane or tissue paper
- light colored pencils
- black poster board
- scissors
- glue
- hole punch
- ribbon or paper clip

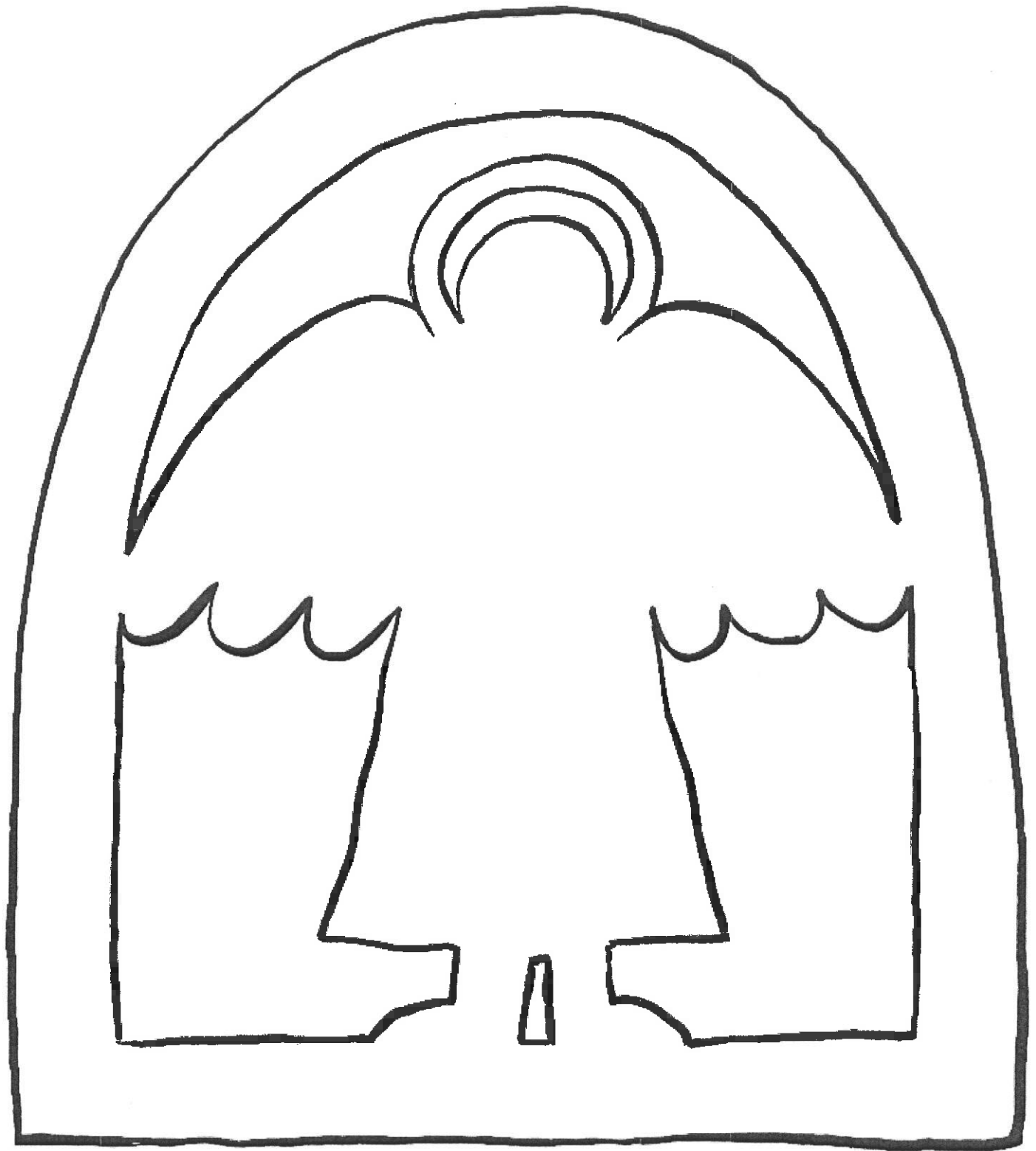
### Preparation:

Copy the stained glass angel pattern onto poster board and cut it out. This is the template for the stained glass picture.

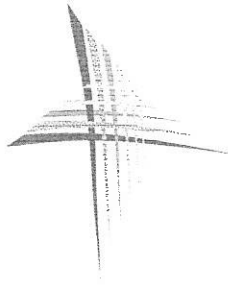
### Directions:

Set out the template and invite each child to make a stained glass angel. Offer these directions:

1. With a colored pencil, trace around the template to make an outline on the black poster board.
2. Cut out the empty (non-pictorial) areas.
3. Cut pieces of tissue paper or cellophane and glue them to the back of the poster board to create a stained glass effect.
4. Punch a hole at the top. Use a paper clip or thread ribbon through the hole for hanging.







# WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

## ANGEL PRAYER CATCHER

### for Intermediate

Children make ribbon angels and hang them inside paper plate rings, which they cover with prayers.

#### Materials:

- wired 2" ribbon, white with gold trim
- scissors
- round doll heads, ½" in diameter
- doll hair
- glue gun
- prayers (p. 20)
- stiff white paper dinner plates
- thread, yarn or ribbon for hanging (monofilament [fishing] line works well)
- hole punch

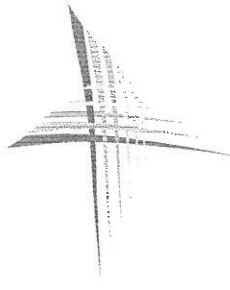
#### Preparation:

Make a copy of the prayers for each child.

#### Directions:

Distribute copies of the prayers and invite each child to make an angel prayer catcher. Give the children these directions:

1. Cut the center out of the paper plate. Punch a hole near the inside edge.
2. Cut off two pieces of ribbon, one 4" long and one 2" long.
3. Fold the 4" piece of ribbon accordion style. Then pinch one end and open up the ribbon to make the angel's gown. Use a glue gun to glue a doll head on the pinched end. Now you have the angel body.
4. Fold the 2" ribbon accordion style. Then pinch it in the middle and spread both sides out to make the angel's wings. Use a glue gun to glue the wings to the back of the angel.
5. Cut off a piece of doll's hair and glue it to the top of the head.
6. Cut a short length of ribbon or thread and glue it to the back of the angel. Thread the end of the ribbon or thread through the hole in the plate and tie, allowing the angel to hang inside the plate ring.

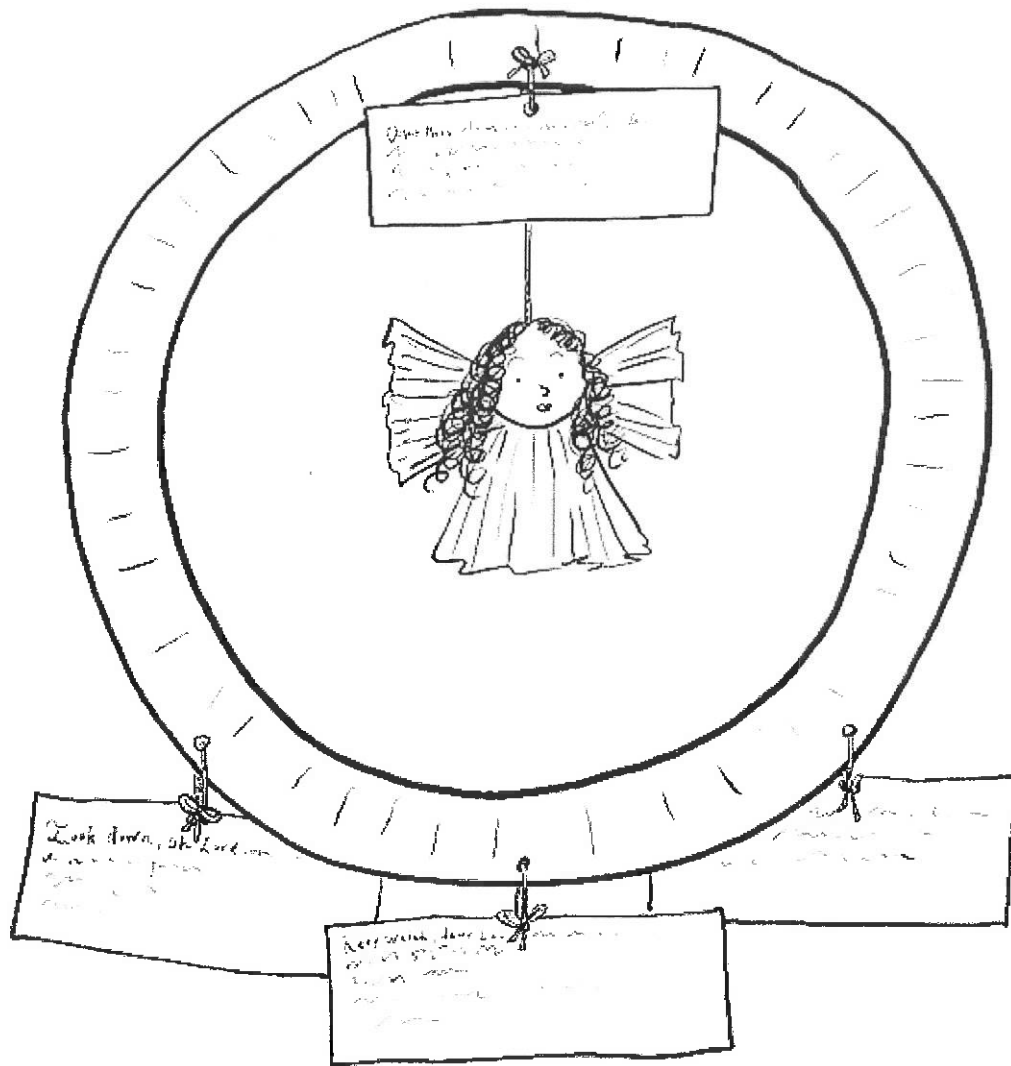


# WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

7. Cut out the prayers. Decorate them if you wish. Glue them to the plate or hang them from the bottom.
8. Punch a hole at the top of the plate and thread a piece of yarn or ribbon through the hole for hanging.

*Easy Variation:*

For an easier project, have the children draw an angel picture and cut it out, then decorate it and hang it.





# WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

Be our light in the darkness, O Lord,  
and in your great mercy defend us  
from all perils and dangers of this night;  
for the love of your only Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Be present, O merciful God,  
and protect us through the hours of this night  
so that we who are wearied by the changes and chances of this life  
may rest in your eternal changelessness;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Look down, O Lord, from your heavenly throne,  
and illumine this night with your celestial brightness;  
that by night as by day your people may glorify your holy Name;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Visit this place, O Lord,  
and drive far from it all snares of the enemy;  
let your holy angels dwell with us to preserve us in peace;  
and let your blessings be upon us always;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night,  
and give your angels charge over those who sleep.  
Tend the sick, Lord Christ;  
give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering,  
pity the afflicted, shield the joyous;  
and all for your love's sake. *Amen.*