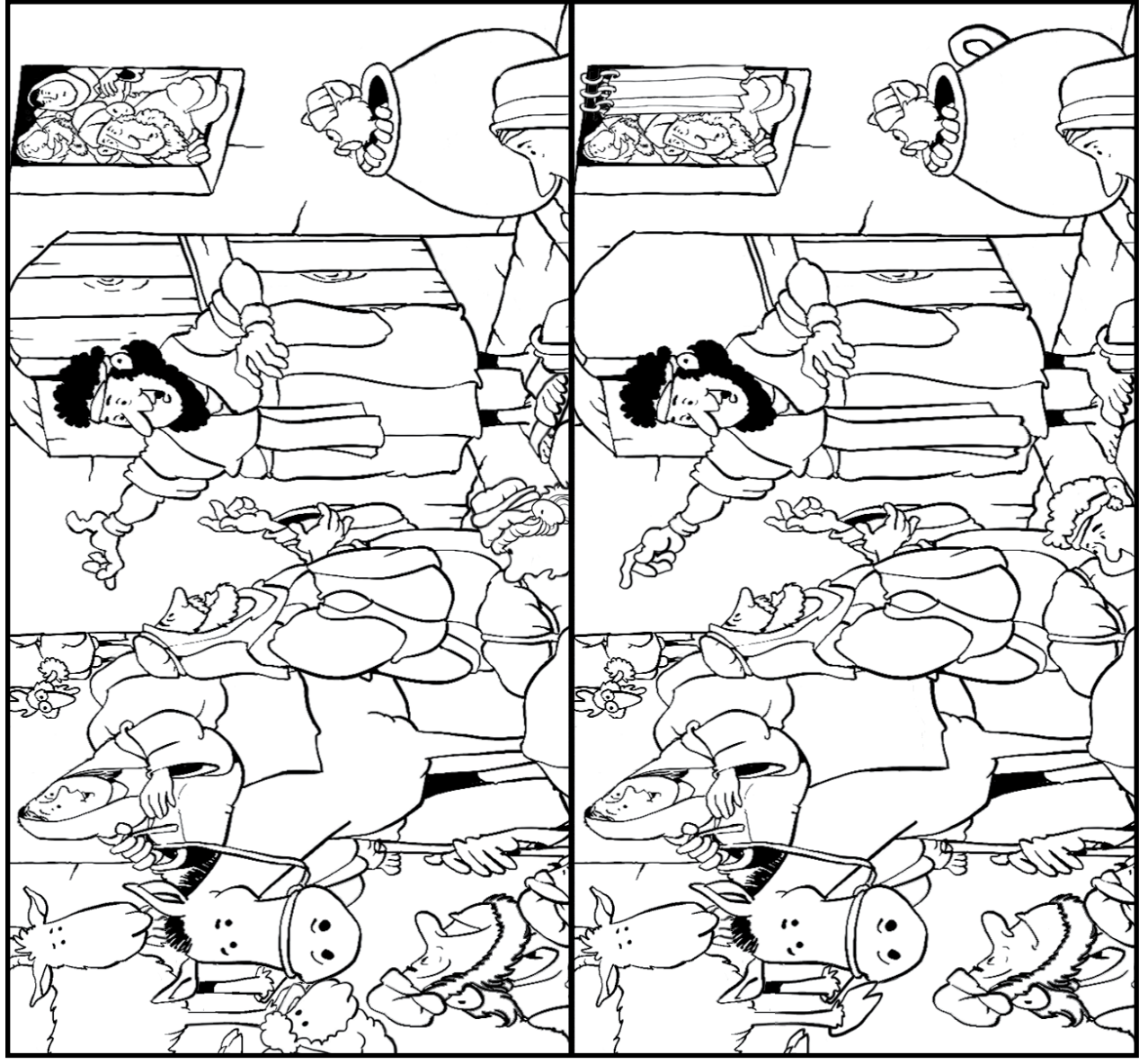


The birth of Jesus is good news! It is something different. Find ten things that are different in the two pictures.



WAYS TO PRACTICE AT HOME

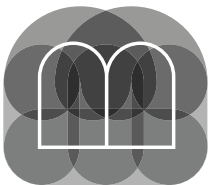
The story of the birth of Jesus is exciting news! At its core, the Christmas story is not just an event, it is the good news that is shared with the world. We hear the story in songs, experience it played out in pageants or with small figurines, and see depictions of it in art. This truly is good news that we share over and over, year after year.

- Do an internet image search for different depictions of the story of Jesus' birth with key words such as "birth of Jesus," "nativity scene," or "nativity scene from around the world." Look for depictions of the nativity in art or in nativity sets created by people from cultures different than your own. Talk together about the similarities and differences in how Jesus' birth is seen around the world.
- Listen to songs about Jesus' birth, such as "Away in a Manger," "What Child Is This?," "The First Noel," "O Holy Night," and "O Little Town of Bethlehem." Choose one that your family likes to sing and use it as a dinner-time prayer this week.
- Read together *The Night of His Birth* by Katherine Paterson (Flyaway Books, 2019) or watch "The Night of His Birth—Read-Aloud" (bit.ly/FMNNightOfHisBirth, 5:33). What did you see or hear in this story that you hadn't thought of before?

Dear God, thank you for sending your son, Jesus. Help me to tell the story of your good news to others. Amen.

Note: bit.ly addresses are case-sensitive.

belt, blanket, boy, curtain, hand, handle, sandals, sheep, smile



BIBLE STORY

Based on Luke 2:1-7

What do you know about the day you were born? Families love to tell stories about the day a child was born or came home for the first time. This is the story of the day Jesus was born. Mary and Joseph probably told this story over and over to their friends and family too!

Earlier, the angel Gabriel had given Mary and Joseph the news about the baby they were going to have. This baby would be God's son! And if that weren't enough, they got more news. The emperor Augustus decided he wanted a count of everyone in his empire. This was called a *census*, and it took place when a man named Quirinius was governor of the lands where Joseph and Mary lived. But it wasn't enough that there would be a census. No. Everyone had to go back to their hometowns and be counted there. So Joseph, along with Mary, who was pregnant, had to go to Bethlehem, the town where his family was from, to be counted. Bethlehem was the city that King David was from, and Joseph was a relative of King David.

So Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem. They traveled for several days. It was a hard journey. Everyone was traveling here and there to be counted. When they got to Bethlehem, they were very tired. They just wanted a place to lie down and rest, but all the guestrooms were full of other travelers. At last, they found a family who would give them space where the animals stayed.

Soon it was time for the baby to be born. Mary wrapped him in cloths and laid him in the manger, the box that held the animals' hay.

