

SEARCHING WITH THE SHEPHERD

Serves: *The King*

Day 1 Recipe for FUN: Paper chain countdown & meet the Shepherd

Supplies: Shepherd, scissors, tape, or stapler, and construction paper

Story time: Advent means coming. Who is coming? The baby Jesus is coming, it's His birthday! Are you excited for the baby Jesus? The Shepherd was so excited for the baby Jesus, that he followed a star to find him. Let's countdown until Christmas. That's the day baby Jesus comes. There are 28 days until Christmas. Let's countdown! Let's make a paper chain countdown. Every day we will tear off one link as we wait for baby Jesus.

Introduce the Shepherd. This is our Shepherd. He is going to show up in a new place every day to remind us that Jesus is coming! Shepherd joins you—drape the chain across the shoulders of your shepherd and let him take a selfie!

Be thinking about a name, because tomorrow we are going to name our Shepherd.

Activity: Cut out 28 strips of paper and loop them to one another using glue, staples, or tape.

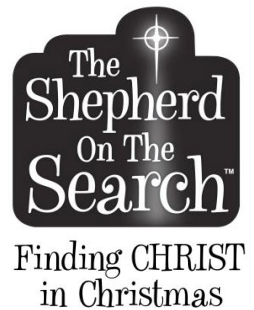
* You can also create a paper countdown chain with construction paper.

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Advent Week One, purple candle of Hope

This week's memory verse: "Then Jesus spoke to them again: 'I am the light of the world.

Anyone who follows Me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life.'" John 8:12 HCSB

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Day 2 Recipe for FUN: Read the book and name your Shepherd

Supplies: Shepherd, book, Crayola® Crayons and printable coloring page

Story time: Read the book together as a family. Point to the Shepherd every time.

Activity: Give each member of the family (grown ups too) the coloring page. As you color talk about what you should name your Shepherd. A name is a very important thing. You have it all your life. Jesus has many names in the Bible. He is called the Messiah, Savior, King, LORD, the lamb...

If you could have more than one name what would you pick?

Once the Shepherd is named fill in the blank on each person's coloring page.

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Advent Week One, purple candle of Hope

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Day 3 Recipe for FUN: *Memory Verse*

Supplies: Shepherd, printable memory verse cards

Story time: our verse this week is in the book of John, chapter 8, verse 12. Then Jesus spoke to them again: "I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows Me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life." John 8:12 HCSB
Jesus is the light of the world. He has many names and descriptions. This is one of them. The light of the world. What does light do? What does it mean to follow someone?

Activity: Color Scripture memory card . Take turns being the leader. Follow everything the leader does.

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Advent Week One, purple candle of Hope

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Anyone who follows Me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life.' " John 8:12 HCSB

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Day 4 Recipe for FUN: *Search for the Shepherd*

Supplies: Shepherd

Story time: The Shepherd traveled for a long, long time and a long, long way to meet baby Jesus. He didn't stop until he found Him.

Activity: Take turns hiding the Shepherd.

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Advent Week One, purple candle of Hope

This week's memory verse: "Then Jesus spoke to them again: 'I am the light of the world.

Anyone who follows Me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life.' " John 8:12 HCSB

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Day 5 Recipe for FUN: *Jesus is the light of the world*

Supplies: flashlights, candle, or glow sticks. Darkest room in the house (usually a bathroom with no windows).

Story time: Enter and ask, “Did you know that Jesus is the Light of the world?” Does anyone know what that means? When Jesus spoke again to the people, He said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” John 8:12

Activity: Gather the family and hand each one some type of light (flashlight, candle, battery candle, or glow stick). Before you enter the room make sure all light sources are extinguished or off. What was it like before Jesus? What is life like without Jesus? Let’s turn out the lights. Turn out the lights and talk in the dark. Can you see me? Do you like the dark? What do you like better, light or dark? Why do you like the light better? From the youngest to the oldest, turn on flashlights, candles, etc. If you have older children let each one take turns bringing light to the room. At the end have everyone light the room. Just like Jesus, we are to be the light of the world. Tomorrow we will be light in the world! (see day 6 activity) Shepherd joins you—take the Shepherd with you to the room.

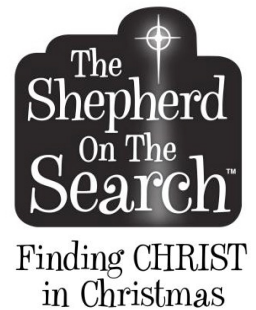
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Advent Week One, purple candle of Hope

This week’s memory verse: “Then Jesus spoke to them again: ‘I am the light of the world.

Anyone who follows Me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life.’” John 8:12 HCSB

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Day 6 Recipe for FUN: *Jesus is the light of world*

Supplies: Shepherd, paper lunch bags(white or brown), stickers, crayons, paint, battery-operated tealites. Consider having guests over for dinner or dessert.

Story time: Jesus is the light of the world. The Shepherd followed the bright star’s light to get to baby Jesus. How does light help? Does it help us find a place? A thing? Does it make us smile? Is it pretty?

Activity: Decorate paper bags, add a battery tealite, and set them outside to bring light to your porch or sidewalk. These lights will help our guests find their way to our door, just like the bright star helped the Shepherd find his way to baby Jesus.

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Advent Week One, purple candle of Hope

This week’s memory verse: “Then Jesus spoke to them again: ‘I am the light of the world.

Anyone who follows Me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life.’” John 8:12 HCSB

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Day 7 Recipe for FUN: *We will be light in the world*

Supplies: Shepherd, your favorite cookie recipe or slice and bake cookies. Small bags and ribbon for cookies.
Printable tag

Story time: You are the light of the world. Matthew 5:14
Jesus calls Himself the Light of the world, and He tells us to be a light in the world. How can we do this? Kindness is a great way to be a light in the world. Let's bake and take cookies to someone. This will brighten their day and we will be a light to them!

Activity: Bake cookies and leave outside the door of a neighbor's house.

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Anyone who follows Me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life.'" John 8:12 HCSB

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Day 8 Recipe for FUN: *Memory verse*

Supplies: Shepherd, printable memory verse cards

Story time: Our verse this week is in the book of Luke, chapter 10, verse 27. Some very smart people (you could insert priest, pastor, reverend) asked Jesus what is the most important thing and Jesus said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself."

Where is your heart? Is your body strong? What do you think with—your mind? Jesus wants us to love God with our whole self, our heart and soul, our strength, and our mind. All of it. And that's not all. He also tells us to love our neighbor. Who is our neighbor? Is your brother/sister your neighbor? A neighbor is someone who lives near you. That means Jesus wants us to love everyone close to us.

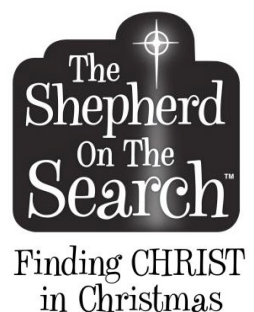
Activity: color Scripture memory card

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Advent Week Two, purple candle of Love

This week's memory verse: "He answered: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.'" Luke 10:27 HCSB

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SEARCHING WITH THE SHEPHERD

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Day 9 Recipe for FUN: *Love with all your heart!*

Supplies: Shepherd, printable heart coloring page

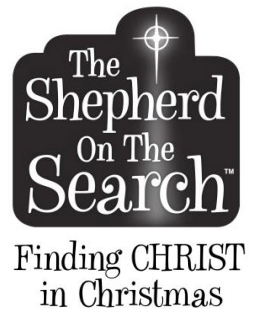
Story time: Did you know that Jesus loves you? And me? And He tells us to love God and others. What are some ways we can love Jesus? What are some ways we can love others? What is one thing you can do this week to show love to someone?

Activity: Color heart coloring sheet.

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Advent Week Two, purple candle of Love

This week's memory verse: "He answered: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.'" Luke 10:27 HCSB

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Day 10 Recipe for FUN: *Names of Jesus*

Supplies: Shepherd and printable name cards

Story time: Have each family member tell their full name. We all have three names! Share any nicknames you might have for one another. Jesus had other names, too, in the Bible. He was called the Savior, the Messiah, the Lamb, King, LORD, Light of the world (remember our verse last week?)

Activity: Hide the Shepherd with a different name card. When the Shepherd is found, read the name and the meaning.

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Advent Week Two, purple candle of Love

This week's memory verse: "He answered: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.'" Luke 10:27 HCSB

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Day 11 Recipe for FUN: *Shepherds love their sheep*

Supplies: Shepherd, paper plate, glue, scissors, cotton balls, and googly eyes

Story time: The Shepherd's job is to take care of the sheep. The sheep like to run away and get into all kinds of trouble. And they get lost and cannot find their way back. Did you know Jesus is called the Good Shepherd? And guess who His sheep are? You and me. He came to help us when we are in trouble, to find us when we are lost.

Activity: Glue cotton balls to paper plate, add googly eyes, and cut out feet and ears and glue to plate.

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Advent Week Two, purple candle of Love

This week's memory verse: "He answered: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.'" Luke 10:27 HCSB

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Day 12 Recipe for FUN: *Dress like a Shepherd, Jesus is the Good Shepherd*

Supplies: Shepherd, dish towel, hair band, string or ribbon, and sandals from last summer.

Story time: Why do you think the Shepherd wears a cloth on his head? Is it hot where he lives? Is it dusty? The Shepherd is outside a lot. It is hot in the day and cool at night. The shepherd wore sandals to protect his feet and a cloth on his head for protection from the sun and the cold.

Activity: Place dish towel on child's head and secure with a headband, string, or ribbon. Let each child put on his or her sandals. Hide stuffed animals around the house and let the children search for the 'lost' sheep.

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Advent Week Two, purple candle of Love

This week's memory verse: "He answered: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.'" Luke 10:27 HCSB

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Day 13 Recipe for FUN: *Looking far and wide!*

Supplies: Shepherd hidden up high, toilet paper rolls (2 per child) duct tape, string, or ribbon.

Story time: The Shepherd followed the bright star way up in the sky on his journey. He looked and looked and watched and watched until he found the baby Jesus!

Activity: Making binoculars to search for the Shepherd.

Help each child tape the 2 toilet paper rolls together. Make a hole on the side of each paper roll and lace the string through to make a strap, decorate with markers, paint, or stickers. When finished show your child how to look through them to find things in the house, including the Shepherd.

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Advent Week Two, purple candle of Love

This week's memory verse: "He answered: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.'" Luke 10:27 HCSB

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Day 14 Recipe for FUN: *Giving to others*

Supplies: Shepherd, your toy box/room.

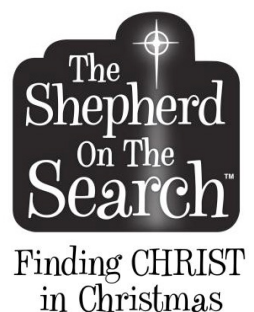
Story time: The Shepherd left behind everything to find Jesus. Jesus left behind everything to be born in a manger and be our Savior, King, Redeemer. Think of your very favorite thing. Could you give that up? It would be really hard to give _____ up. You have to really love someone to give them your favorite thing. God really loves us so He gave us His Son. Today, let's do a little giving. You don't have to give your favorite thing. Let's go through all the toys and pick a few to give away. We have so many wonderful things to share with other children.

Activity: Gather toys/clothes to donate. Take them to a shelter, thrift store, or Goodwill. As you drive back home, pray for the people who will receive these gifts.

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Advent Week Two, purple candle of Love

This week's memory verse: "He answered: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.'" Luke 10:27 HCSB

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Day 15 Recipe for FUN: *Memory Verse*

Supplies: Shepherd, printable memory verse cards

Story time: The Shepherd was out in the field taking care of all the sheep when an angel appeared. And the Shepherd was afraid. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Luke 2:10 ESV
The good news was that Jesus was born. The Savior that everyone had been waiting for was finally here. And that news brought joy. Do you remember waiting for your birthday? Christmas? It is hard to wait and it is fun when the waiting is over. There is joy when the waiting is over!

Activity: Color Scripture memory card.

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Advent Week Three, pink candle of Joy

This week's memory verse: 'And the angel said to them, 'Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.''' Luke 2:10 ESV

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Day 16 Recipe for FUN: *Help the Shepherd find Baby Jesus*

Supplies: Shepherd, printable maze

Story time: The Shepherd followed the star on his long journey to find baby Jesus. He walked and walked for a long time. He went up and down hills until he finally found baby Jesus.

Activity: Help the Shepherd find baby Jesus through this maze.

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Advent Week Three, pink candle of Joy

This week's memory verse: 'And the angel said to them, 'Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.''' Luke 2:10 ESV

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Day 17 Recipe for FUN: *Find the Shepherd*

Supplies: Shepherd and “Find Me” clue list.

Story time: The Shepherd never gave up looking. The journey was long and he only had the star to follow. No clues, no directions. He faithfully followed the star. I’m going to hide the Shepherd and give you a clue about where he is. Find him and bring him back to me for the next clue.

Activity: Use the clue list to hide the Shepherd. Give the clue and send the children on the search for the Shepherd.

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Advent Week Three, pink candle of Joy

This week’s memory verse: ‘And the angel said to them, ‘Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.’” Luke 2:10 ESV

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Day 18 Recipe for FUN: *Things aren’t always as they appear*

Supplies: Shepherd, white chocolate popcorn (see recipe below)

Pop two bags of microwaveable popcorn. Sort out all the kernels and place the popcorn in a large bowl. Melt 2 squares of white almond bark in the microwave. Pour over the popcorn and toss. Place in the freezer for 5 minutes to set the almond bark.

Story time: The Shepherd was on the search for the baby Jesus. The baby Jesus was God’s promise for a King. A king? How could a baby be the King? And why would a King be born in a barn with all the animals? Kings are rich and powerful. The Shepherd knew that this was the King, even though it didn’t look like it. Sometimes things don’t look like what they really are.

Activity: I made some popcorn for our snack. Take a bite and tell me if you like it. Wait—that’s not plain popcorn. It tastes sweet. But it looked like plain popcorn. Sometimes things don’t look like they really are. Our snack looked like plain popcorn, but it was really chocolate popcorn. The baby in the barn looked like an ordinary baby, but He was the promised King.

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Advent Week Three, pink candle of Joy

This week’s memory verse: ‘And the angel said to them, ‘Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.’” Luke 2:10 ESV

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Day 19 Recipe for FUN: *The bright Star*

Supplies: Shepherd, bread slices, star cookie cutter.

Story time:

The shepherds saw the angels while they watched their sheep one night;
they shook with fear and trembling when they saw the brilliant light!
An angel told them not to fear, good news was on the way;
he said Messiah had been born not far from them that day.

Activity: Toast the bread and cut the star out of the middle. Serve both pieces with jelly, peanut butter, butter and cinnamon or whatever your family likes on their toast.

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Advent Week Three, pink candle of Joy

This week's memory verse: 'And the angel said to them, 'Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.' Luke 2:10 ESV

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Day 20 Recipe for FUN: *Find the bright lights*

Supplies: Shepherd, pj's, and your car!

Story time: (once you are in the car) When the angel appeared to the Shepherd, the Shepherd was a little afraid. The light was so bright. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Luke 2:10 ESV Jesus is the Light of the world. So at Christmastime we put out lots of lights to remind us of the night the Light of the world, Jesus, was born. These lights help us remember that the Shepherd followed the bright star to find baby Jesus.

Activity: After dinner instruct everyone to get into their jammies, grab a cozy blanket or their lovey (special stuffed animal or blankie) and head to the car! Don't forget the Shepherd!

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Advent Week Three, pink candle of Joy

This week's memory verse: 'And the angel said to them, 'Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.' Luke 2:10 ESV

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SEARCHING WITH THE SHEPHERD

Serves: *The King*

Day 21 Recipe for FUN: *Joy to others*

Supplies: Shepherd, printable Christmas cards here

Story time: When the angel appeared to the Shepherd, he brought good news of great joy. What was the good news? What are some ways we can bring joy to someone else? Today we are going to decorate Christmas cards for older neighbors, grandparents, or the nursing home. We want to bring the good news of great joy that baby Jesus is on His way.

Activity: Print out copies of the Christmas card and decorate. Then deliver.

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Advent Week Three, pink candle of Joy

This week's memory verse: "And the angel said to them, 'Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.'" Luke 2:10 ESV

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SEARCHING WITH THE SHEPHERD

Serves: *The King*

Day 22 Recipe for FUN: *Memory Verse*

Supplies: Shepherd, printable memory verse cards (4 to a sheet)

Story time: Our verse this week is in the book of Colossians, chapter 3, verse 15.
Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. Colossians 3:15 NASB

Do you know what peace means? Is it like a piece of candy or a piece of pie? No, it is a different kind of peace. It's calm, still, happy, content. When our house is all quiet and we are snuggled on the couch, that feels peaceful. When you and your siblings are fighting that is not peaceful. Jesus brings a whole different kind of peace. A peace that lasts even when it doesn't seem peaceful. He makes your heart still, happy, and content. And when we have that kind of peace, we are thankful. What kinds of things are you thankful for?

Activity: Color Scripture memory.

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Advent Week Four, purple candle of Peace

This week's memory verse: "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful." Colossians 3:15 NASB

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SEARCHING WITH THE SHEPHERD

Serves: *The King*

Day 23 Recipe for FUN: *Yummy Garlands for the Birds*

Supplies: Shepherd, fresh cranberries, popcorn, thread, and plastic needles. Or if you have little ones, use ribbon and Froot Loops® or Cheerios™.

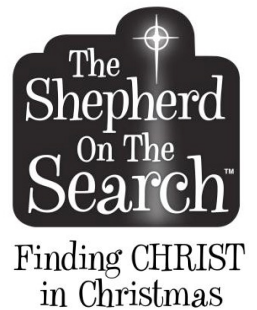
Story time: Jesus brings peace and we are thankful. What are some things that we are thankful for? Our house? Our family? Our dolly? Our bicycle? Sometimes we forget to be thankful for food. We have so many yummy things to eat and drink. God promised to always provide for us. He said, "I provide for the birds of the air, of course I will provide for you." Let's make a special treat for our birds today. And let's remember to be oh, so thankful for our breakfast, lunch, dinner, and all our snacks.

Activity: Give each child a plastic needle that is threaded and knotted at the end. Help him/her create a cranberry and popcorn garland for the birds. Once you are finished, hang that garland outside for the birds to eat. Each time you see the garland, remind your littles to be thankful for all that Jesus does for us.

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Advent Week Four, purple candle of Peace

This week's memory verse: "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful." Colossians 3:15 NASB

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SEARCHING WITH THE SHEPHERD

Serves: *The King*

Day 24 Recipe for FUN: *All the animals*

Supplies: Shepherd and the book

Story time: Did you know that God made you and me? He also made all the animals. Jesus was born in a stable or a barn where the animals lived. They were his first visitors! Would that be funny if a horse came to visit a new mommy and baby in the hospital? Let's read our book again and find and name all the animals that were there when Jesus was born.

Activity: Note all the animals on each page. Ask the children to name the animal (that's a sheep). Then ask what does the sheep say? Who takes care of the sheep? Did you know their fur/wool is used to make warm comfy clothes? Ask similar questions for each animal you see.

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Advent Week Four, purple candle of Peace

This week's memory verse: "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful." Colossians 3:15 NASB

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Day 25 Recipe for FUN: *Were reindeer in the barn?*

Supplies: Shepherd, candy canes, brown pipe cleaners, googly eyes, hot glue gun, small brown pompoms.

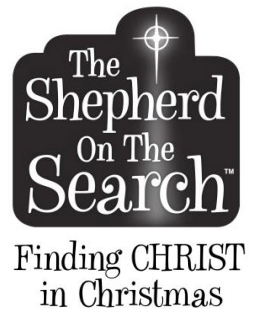
Story time: Did reindeer come to visit Jesus? Probably not. Do you remember what animals did come to visit? Do you think it was smelly in the barn? Would you want to sleep in the barn? Jesus didn't seem to mind. We see lots of reindeer at Christmas time. They are just for fun! Like cartoons. Let's make one, just for fun!

Activity: Glue googly eyes and one pompom (nose) to the candy cane. Take a pipe cleaner and wrap around the child's finger and then slide it off. Do this twice, one for each antler.

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Advent Week Four, purple candle of Peace

This week's memory verse: "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful." Colossians 3:15 NASB

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Day 26 Recipe for FUN: *The Shepherd says*

Supplies: Shepherd, printable commands for "Shepherd Says"

Story time: The Shepherd did just what the angel told him to do. He followed the bright light—the star—to find Jesus. The Shepherd was obedient. God says we are to be obedient to what He says. Love God and love others. Today let's practice obedience and do just what the Shepherd says.

Activity: The Shepherd Says is played just like Simon Says.

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Advent Week Four, purple candle of Peace

This week's memory verse: "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful." Colossians 3:15 NASB

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Day 27 Recipe for FUN: *Baby Jesus is the King*

Supplies: Shepherd, crayons, stickers, paint, printable crown template

Story time: Where was baby Jesus born? Who was there? Who came to visit? How did the Shepherd find Him? The angel said that the baby Jesus was the King. Did He have a crown? Even though He doesn't wear a crown, Jesus is the King of Kings, and that means He's the BEST!!!

Activity: Let's make a crown today.

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Advent Week Four, purple candle of Peace

This week's memory verse: "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful." Colossians 3:15 NASB

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SEARCHING WITH THE SHEPHERD

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Day 28 Recipe for FUN: *It's almost time for baby Jesus*

Supplies: Shepherd, cake mix, frosting, cupcake liners

Story time: What happens tomorrow? Yes, it's Christmas and Christmas is Jesus' birthday. And it's the day the Shepherd finds baby Jesus. Finally his long long journey is over. Today let's bake a cake for baby Jesus' birthday.

Activity: Bake a cake or cupcakes. You can celebrate baby Jesus' birthday today or on Christmas day. Be sure to light the candles and sing happy birthday to baby Jesus. Then everyone blows out the candles! Now it's time to be thankful for yummy birthday cake.

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Advent Week Four, purple candle of Peace

This week's memory verse: "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful." Colossians 3:15 NASB

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CHRISTMAS DAY!

Supplies: Before your little ones get up, set the nativity scene under the tree with all the presents. Place the Shepherd in the scene.

Story time: Look! The Shepherd found baby Jesus! Now let's open up all the presents and remember that the greatest gift ever was baby Jesus!

Activity: After the gifts are open, be sure all are thanked. All these presents are so wonderful and we are all so grateful. What was the greatest gift ever? Baby Jesus. And we are so grateful!

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Advent Week Four, purple candle of Peace

This week's memory verse: "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful." Colossians 3:15 NASB

