

Joyful Catholic Families
Lesson #4
The Nativity Story and Discover Our Church

The Nativity Story:

What are we going to be celebrating soon? (Christmas)

What do we celebrate at Christmas? (Jesus' birthday)

Tell the nativity story with the nativity magnets. Use a magnetic board to stick them to or use tape to stick to some other type of board.

(Note: I made my magnets from [Kate Hadfield's Nativity Clip Art](#). I sized the figures to the size I wanted, printed them onto paper, stuck the paper to magnetic sheets, and cut out the figures.)

Nativity story:

God promised His people that someday he would send a Savior to save his people. The people waited and waited.

- **They thought the Savior might be a mighty warrior who would win the wars for them.**
- **They thought the Savior might be a powerful king.**

They waited and waited.

(Begin with Mary on one edge of the board. Put the angel by Mary.)

And then one day an angel appeared to Mary. The angel said, "You are going to have a son. You shall call him Jesus."

(Put Joseph on the other edge of the board. Put the angel by Joseph.)

Awhile later the angel appeared to Joseph while he was asleep and said, "Do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. She is going to have a son and you shall call him Jesus."

(Remove angel.)

When it was getting close to the time for Mary to have her baby, the ruler of the time (Caesar Augustus) said that everyone had to be counted in a census.

Joseph needed to travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem because that was the city of David (Joseph's ancestor).

(Put Mary and Joseph, like they are walking together)

So Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem.

- **We don't know how they traveled but people like to picture it as Mary riding on a donkey with Joseph walking.**

When they arrived in Bethlehem, they went from inn (like a hotel) to inn – looking for a place to stay.

- **The inns were all full because there were lots of people who had to come to Bethlehem to register in the census.**

Finally, one of the inn keepers said that they could stay in the stable.

(Draw a simple stable on the board.)

We don't know what the stable was like. What do you think it was like?

- **not clean**
- **maybe animals**
- **maybe hay**
- **maybe a wooden building**
- **maybe a cave**
- **maybe a part of a building**

(put Mary and Joseph in the stable)

Mary had her baby in this stable. What did she name the baby?

(Add Jesus)

Mary laid Jesus in a manger – place where animals eat hay from.

(Add star over stable)

A bright star was over the stable where Jesus was born.

(On another part of the board, put the shepherds and sheep. Put angel by shepherds and sheep.)

The night that Jesus was born, there were shepherds in the fields watching the sheep. An angel appeared to the shepherds and told them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy. Tonight a Savior has been born. You will find him wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.”

(move shepherds and sheep to the stable)

The shepherds hurried to Bethlehem and found Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus lying in a manger.

(On another part of the board, add the wise men and camel)

Some wise men saw the star in the sky.

How did the wise men find Jesus?

(move wisemen to Jesus)

They followed the star to Jesus and gave Jesus gifts of

- **gold (symbol of royalty),**
- **frankincense (used in worship of God so points to Jesus' divinity), and**
- **myrrh (a burial ointment).**

Discover Our Church:

Would you each like to have magnets like these to take home?

I have some for each of you but first we must go find them.
There are bags of magnets throughout our church.

I have a clue.

It will help us find a bag with some magnets in it.

When we find the bag we will find another clue that will help us find more magnets.

We will keep following clues until we find all the magnets.

As we follow the clues, we will get to see different parts of our church building – maybe places that you have never seen.

Remember that there are other people using the building right now, so don't run and talk quietly.

Give each child a bag to put their magnets in.

(Go through the Church looking for the bags and clues.)

Clues: (Note: These are the clues I use. Maybe they will give you ideas of where you can hide magnets in your church.)

1. Find the Our Lady of Guadalupe Shrine. (magnet = Mary)
2. Find the room where the musicians practice the songs they sing or play at Mass. (magnet = Joseph)
3. Find the room where Father puts on his vestments before Mass. This room is called the vesting sacristy. (magnet = Shepherd)
4. Find the room where the chalices are kept. (Note: Chalices are the cups used at Mass.) This room is called the work sacristy. (magnet = big sheep)
5. Find where the parish sells books and other things. (magnet = Shepherd)
6. Find Father's office. (magnet = little sheep)
7. Find the copier where I make copies for class. (magnet = angel)
8. Find the chapel where we have Mass when there is a smaller group of people. (magnet = Star)
9. Find the Adoration chapel. (magnet = King)
 - Note: The Adoration Chapel is where the Body of Jesus is kept (it looks like a round piece of flattened bread). There is someone praying in the Adoration Chapel all the time — all day and all night. Anyone can go into the chapel to pray.
 - We will go into the chapel and spend a short time kneeling and silently praying before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Enter the Adoration Chapel very quietly. Not talking. If you have any questions, you can ask them after we leave the chapel.
10. Find the statues of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph when Jesus was a little boy. (magnet = King)
11. Find the ambo (where the readings are read from during Mass). (magnet = King)
12. Find the holy water font. (magnet = camel)
13. What magnet have we not found? (magnet = baby Jesus)
 - How did the wise men find baby Jesus? (followed the star)
 - Jesus is in every Catholic church. Does anyone know where Jesus is in a church? (in the tabernacle)
 - How do we find where Jesus is? How do we find the tabernacle? (Look for the sanctuary lamp)
 - When you find the sanctuary lamp, you know the tabernacle is nearby.
 - Does anyone see the sanctuary lamp in our church?
 - Because Jesus is in the tabernacle, we need to genuflect when we get to the tabernacle.

Children Tell the Nativity Story to their Parent(s) Using their Magnets:

The children lay their magnets on the table as they tell the Nativity story.

Play Nativity BINGO:

(Go [this post](#) for Nativity BINGO PDF and more information.)

Stickers:

- Give each child a sticker as they leave.

Supplies:

nametags & permanent markers
prayers for prayer rings
snack
plates/napkins
water
glasses
stickers

Nativity figure magnets (one set for each child and one set for use in classroom)
Board to stick magnets to
Marker to draw stable on board

Scavenger hunt clues on brightly colored paper

A gift bag for each magnet

- (all the Mary magnets in one bag, all the camel magnets in another bag,...)
- Put scavenger hunt clue in these bags in the order you want to go through the building

Bags for children to put their magnets in

Nativity BINGO cards

Nativity BINGO call cards

Something to mark the spaces with (pieces of paper, cheerios, pennies,...)

