



## • • • • • CHRISTMAS DAY • • • • •

We can have these things—hope, peace, joy, love—  
because God is with us.

Scripture: Luke 2:8–20

### Reflection

- Merry Christmas! Or as the angels proclaimed: “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace and goodwill to all people!” We celebrate on Christmas Day because God is with us. Look around you this morning. Is God with you? Can you see the Spirit of God around you? The Holy Spirit is invisible. God is with us, but we cannot see God. Or can we?

We can't really take a picture of the electricity we feel when we love God and love our neighbors. We cannot draw a picture of hope, peace, or joy either. All these wonderful things which come with the story of Jesus' birth cannot be seen with our eyes. We can't even see the people in the story because there were no photos or cameras back then. Without pictures, we have to imagine what it looked like when Jesus was born.

If the shepherds had owned cell phones, maybe they would have gotten some amazing videos of those angels! They would have shown the photos to their friends...maybe the big news of Jesus' birth would have gone viral.

Everyone would have believed their story, and Jesus would have been a famous baby. The shepherds would have had so many followers! But they walked away from that exciting encounter without any proof. No pictures, no videos, nothing. Just their memories and the joy in their hearts.

Even though we cannot see God with us, and even though we cannot see hope, peace, joy, or love, we can look around and see people and things that represent hope, peace, joy, and love to us. We can even see hope, peace, joy, and love when we look at ourselves.

If the meaning of Christmas is that God is with us, then every good thing, every lovely moment, and every beautiful feeling we have is a little bit of Christmas. It does not end on the holiday of December 25. The invisible Spirit who guides us tenderly each day never leaves us behind.

And that is why they called Jesus “Emmanuel.” God is with us.

### For Discussion

- If you could carry a picture of God on your phone, what do you think God would look like? What would love look like? Peace? Joy? Hope?
- Where have you “seen” God during this Advent season?
- How will God be with you in the coming year?

## Family Activity: Savoring Christmas

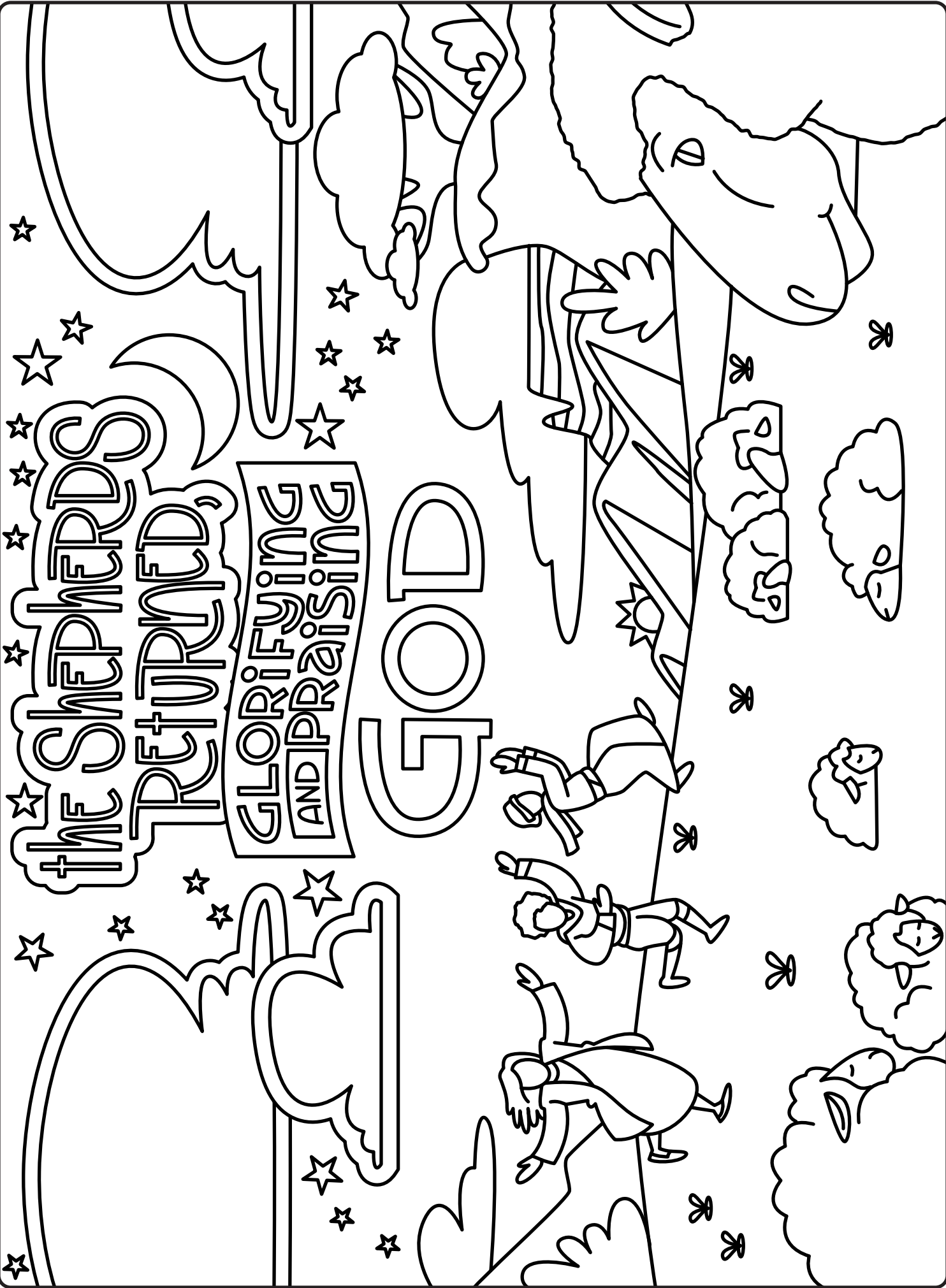
- Every family around the world has its own traditions to celebrate special and important days. These traditions are usually some blend of religion, culture, and family history and values, so there is no surprise there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach to celebrating Christmas Day!

There is, however, one thing almost all Christmas Day family traditions include: food. So whether you prepare a once-a-year kind of meal or an everyday kind of meal, we all eat food on Christmas—and we all experience the flavors of Christmas.

So today, whenever you taste something sweet, salty, savory, or spicy, take a moment to notice and appreciate the flavors. Remember that even though we can't see God, just like we can't see flavor, we can still feel and experience Emmanuel, God with us.

### Prayer

- Dear God, today is a special day! Let us celebrate the hope you bring, the peace you share, the joy you spread, and the love you wrap us in. You are Emmanuel, and you are God with us!
- Amen.



THE SHEPHERDS  
RETURNED,  
GLORIFYING  
AND PRAISING  
GOD