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THE YEAR IN OUR CHURCH Advent

Mary and Joseph Prepare for Jesus' Birth

Activity: The child gathers together things that helped Mary and Joseph prepare for the birth of baby Jesus.

Concept

During Advent, we get ready for Jesus' birth, just as Mary and Joseph prepared for the birth of Jesus.

What You Need

- ▶ school backpack
- ▶ assorted school items: pencil, eraser, book, writing tablet, small tissue pack, ruler, hand pencil sharpener, etc.
- ▶ photocopy of Side B of this Lesson Card
- ▶ art supplies
- ▶ small gift bag or decorative box

At Home

Invite the parents to review the contents of the bag or box with their child. Have them ask questions about the cards that the child can answer by naming or pointing to the correct choice.

Lesson Steps

1 Opening Prayer

Pray the Sign of the Cross with the child, followed by: **Dear God, help us prepare for Jesus' birth. Fill us with love, listen to our prayers, and strengthen our faith as we look forward to the birth of our Savior.** Pray the Sign of the Cross.

2 Begin with Life Experience

Show the child a school backpack filled with a variety of objects needed for the school day. Say: **Each day we get ready to go to school. This backpack has things we need so we are prepared for school.** Invite the child to unpack the backpack and examine the objects as you identify each one and tell why it is needed, or invite the child to do so. Then say: **Mary and Joseph had to prepare for Jesus' birth just as we have to prepare to go to school. They found the things they needed so they would be ready for the baby Jesus.**

3 Connect

Help the child color and cut out the pictures from the photocopy of Side B of this card. Explain that each of these is something Mary and Joseph needed to help them prepare for Jesus' birth. Display and talk about each picture: love, prayer, Mary's faith in God, Joseph's faith in God, and Gabriel's promise. Identify each picture and describe how it connects to Jesus' birth. For example, say: **Joseph and Mary were filled with love. They loved God, one another, and their baby very much.** Have the child point to the matching picture (love) and then put it in the bag or box. Invite the child to repeat your description of the image or share one of his or her own. After all pictures are put away, say: **These are the things Joseph and Mary needed to get ready for Jesus' birth.**

4 Closing Prayer

Pray the Sign of the Cross with the child, followed by: **Dear God, thank you for guiding us to prepare for Jesus' birth this Advent as you guided Mary and Joseph.** Conclude by praying the Sign of the Cross.

