



## WEEK 2: Vision in the Night

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### SCRIPTURE

Read Matthew 1:18b-24a, Luke 1:26b-38

### REFLECTION

Did you know that long ago, before there were phones, computers, or even compasses, sailors used stars at night to find their way? The stars, of course, were made of light, but the night enabled the sailors to see stars clearly enough to navigate their path. Light and dark worked together to illuminate the way.

This week's scriptures include two essential Advent stories leading up to Jesus' birth. In these stories, darkness plays a significant role. Night tells our bodies it's time to sleep, and sometimes, we can even have dreams.

In these stories, both Joseph and Mary have visions of angels who bring good news: Mary will give birth to God's own Son. This miraculous news was scary for Mary and Joseph. They couldn't see how everything would work out. Though we don't know when the angel visited Mary, scripture says the angel came to Joseph at night. Perhaps darkness can feel scary because we can't see what's there. However, darkness doesn't stop the angel from visiting, nor does it make the news any less good.

In both visits, the angels say not to be afraid. Their message offers peace, even as Mary and Joseph face an unexpected future. Like the night sky for ancient sailors, these holy visits to Mary and Joseph point the way when they don't know what to do. And we know, of course, their message is very good news.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

As you color and cut out the shadow box characters of the City of Bethlehem, Mary, Joseph, and the angel, ponder these questions:

- Why do you think the angels told Mary and Joseph not to be afraid?
- Have you ever gotten big news that was scary and exciting at the same time? What was it?
- Have you ever had a dream that brought you comfort? What made it comforting?

## ACTIVITY

The angels delivered important messages to Mary and Joseph. Another word for angel is “messenger,” and we can all be messengers of hope. How can your family deliver a message of good news today? Take a moment to think of someone who could use a message of love. Then write a note, send a photo, draw a picture, or send a text to that person or family. Each person in your family can do it!

Grown-ups, take an extra moment and write a special message of encouragement to your child(ren).

## PRAYER

Dear God,

Thank you for the messages of hope we see in our world every day.

You send us messages of love in the daytime when it is sunny,  
and in the nighttime when it is dark, and sometimes even in our dreams.

Help us be messengers of hope to our neighbors and friends and family,  
especially for those who feel lonely or discouraged.

Bless those who will receive our letters and texts and pictures,  
that they might know that they are loved.

**Amen.**