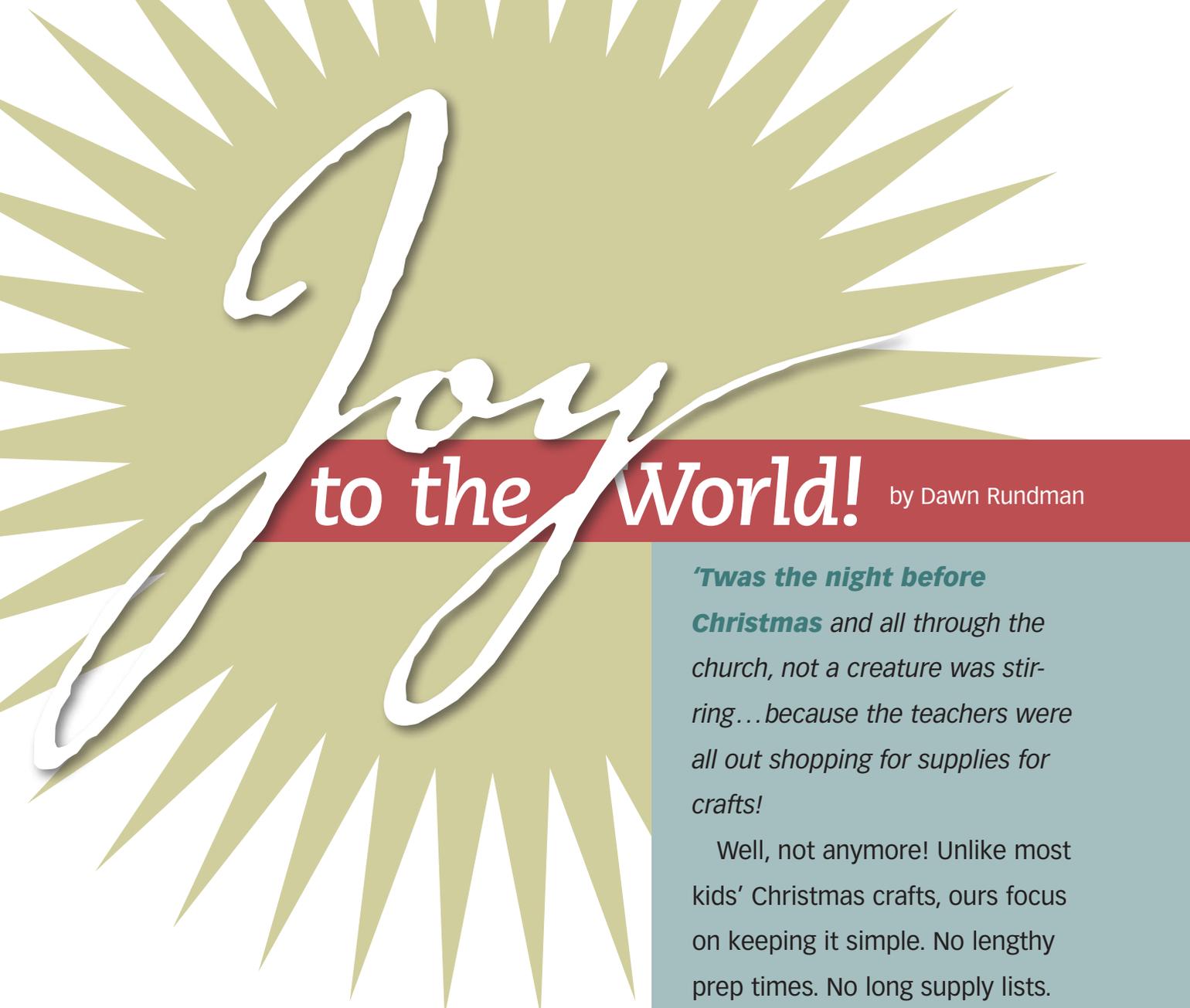# Joy to the World!

by Dawn Rundman

Joy to the *World!*

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Celebrate your easiest crafty Christmas ever with these 3-supply crafts. They're not nearly as amazing as the birth of our Savior, but they'll make you want to sing "The Hallelujah Chorus"!

'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the church, not a creature was stirring…because the teachers were all out shopping for supplies for crafts!

Well, not anymore! Unlike most kids' Christmas crafts, ours focus on keeping it simple. No lengthy prep times. No long supply lists. And no complicated directions. You only need three supplies for each project, giving you more time to spend enjoying the kids. Assuming you've got the basics on hand (markers, scissors, tape, glue, paper, pencils, and construction paper), you'll have no problem diving into these fun crafts to make your Christmas with kids one to remember.

Try a Triptych

Best for Ages 6 and up

You'll Need
1. Foam core
2. Hole punch
3. Chenille wires
(on-hand supplies:
scissors and markers)

A triptych is a three-paneled piece of art—the style has been used for centuries by religious painters. The three panels are hinged together, with the middle being the largest.
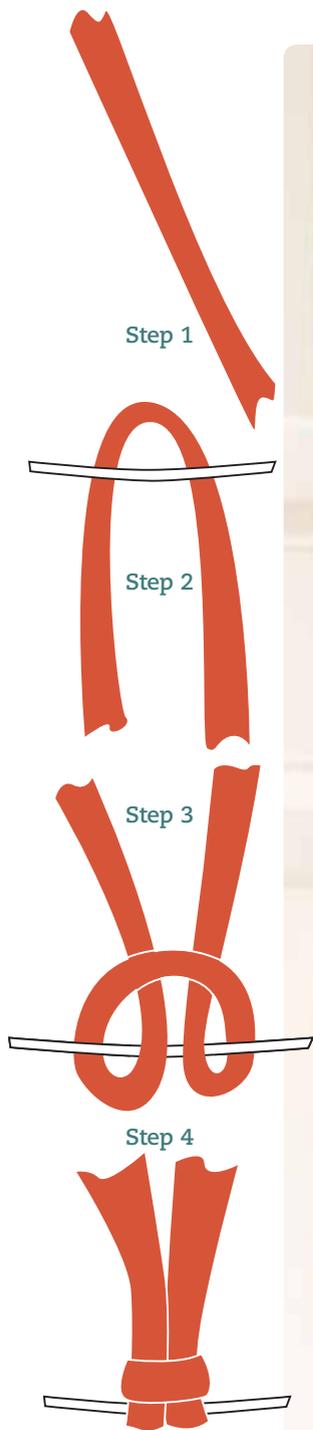
What Kids Do

Step 1 Cut two equal-sized panels of foam core, and then cut one panel in half. The large piece is the center panel and the two smaller pieces go on either side.

Step 2 Identify three parts of the Christmas scene to illustrate on the triptych. Draw a different picture on each panel. For example, Mary and Joseph traveling to Bethlehem on the left panel; the baby Jesus in the stable with Mary, Joseph, and the animals on the middle panel; and the shepherds' visit on the right panel.

Step 3 Set up the three panels. Then punch holes in the inside edges of each panel. Use chenille wires to connect them so they're hinged.

Once kids finish their drawings, ask them to each describe their triptych. If you have room, put the triptychs on display so you can enjoy these creative masterpieces in the weeks to come.

Step 1

Step 2

Step 3

Step 4

Cool Tulle Yule

You'll Need
1. Elastic
2. 2 yards of red tulle per child
3. 2 yards of green tulle per child
(on-hand supply: scissors)

Kids can make these beautiful wreaths to take home. Tulle is a wonderfully inexpensive way to add pop to your Christmas decorations.

What Kids Do
Step 1 Cut the tulle into 12-inch lengths. Cut a 10-inch length of elastic.

Step 2 Fold each tulle strip in half, and slide the midpoint under the elastic.

Step 3 Place the two lengths through the loop and pull them through. Tighten.

Step 4 Repeat with each tulle strip until you have the desired number on the elastic. More tulle strips will make a fuller circle. When finished, tie the ends of the elastic together.

Merry Clipmas!

Best for Ages 3 to 6

Got a window ledge in dire need of some Christmas spirit? Create a 3-D holiday message to greet everyone who walks by! Kids can also take these home.

What Kids Do

Step 1 Come up with a few Christmas messages your group wants to share.

Step 2 On 3x5 cards, decorate one letter of the message your group decided on.

Step 3 Insert each card into a binder clip so it can stand on its own. Tie a red ribbon to each clip for extra color.

Step 4 Arrange the letters on the ledge to spell your message, which will serve as a holiday greeting to your entire church. Change the message weekly for a fun way to get festive!

Sticky Note Nativity Mosaic

Best for Ages 6 and up

You'll Need
1. Christmas cards with nativity scenes
2. Foam core sheets
3. Multicolor sticky notes in different sizes

(on-hand supplies: scissors)

Have kids create a large abstract mosaic by looking at nativity scenes on Christmas cards.

What Kids Do

Step 1 Look through Christmas cards to find common elements.

Step 2 Create a nativity mosaic using sticky notes of different sizes on foam core. Rip, tear, or cut them to create variety.

Step 3 Once the sticky notes are arranged in place, display your group's mosaic for all to see.

Here's a Green Tip: When the Christmas season is over, reuse the sticky notes to make another mosaic.

Royal Banner

Best for Ages 3 to 6

You'll Need
1. Felt
2. Sticks or dowel rods (12 inches or longer)
3. Plastic stick-on gems

(on-hand supplies: glue and scissors)

What Kids Do

Step 1 Cut a felt square a few inches shorter than the dowel rod.

Step 2 Loop one edge of the felt square around the rod and glue it to the back of the felt.

Step 3 Cut out a crown shape from a contrasting color of felt.

Step 4 Glue it to the felt square, and decorate it with the stick-on gems.

After the craft is made, read aloud Luke 2:1-7 recounting Jesus' birth. Then ask: "How would you know a king when you saw him? What's different about those kingly things and our king Jesus? What does it mean to you that Jesus is a king?"

Deck the Office

You'll Need
1. String or embroidery floss
2. Office dot stickers
3. Multicolored plastic paper clips
(on-hand supply: scissors)

Why not take a break from the traditional tinsel garland by creating something entirely unique? Use common office supplies for a fun twist on an old favorite. Ahead of time, ask your pastor or church secretary if your group can decorate the church office with the garlands.

What Kids Do

Step 1 Stretch out and cut a 24- to 36-inch length of string or embroidery floss.

Step 2 Place one office dot sticker underneath the string and one above, sticking them together with the string in the middle. Do this several times.

Step 3 Between each dot, affix a bright paper clip to add color and movement. Continue until happy with the garland's design.

Head to the church office and make the pastor's and secretary's day by decking the office with boughs of paper clips!

Christmas Bracelets

Best for ages 6 and up

You'll Need
1. Embroidery floss, cut in 6-inch lengths
2. Pony beads in assorted colors
3. Wooden beads
(on-hand supply: scissors)

Kids won't have any problem remembering the events of Jesus' birth with the help of these Christmas bracelets.

What Kids Do

Step 1 Take a 6-inch length of embroidery floss and colored beads (see the list below) and one wooden bead.

Step 2 String the beads in this order: black, yellow, white, blue, wooden.

Step 3 Listen to what each bead means. Then practice telling one another about Christmas, using your beads.

• Black symbolizes the dark night sky when Jesus was born.

• Yellow symbolizes the star that led the wise men to our Savior.

• White symbolizes the swaddling clothes wrapped around the baby Jesus.

• Blue symbolizes Jesus' mother, Mary.

• Wood symbolizes the manger and, at the end of Jesus' life, the cross.

Encourage kids to take their Christmas bracelets home to share with family and friends.

Nativity Blocks

You'll Need
1. Nativity set
2. Building blocks such as LEGO toys, Lincoln Logs, or wooden blocks
3. Digital camera
(on-hand supplies: paper and pencils)

With a little imagination and a pile of blocks, simple toys become a scene straight from the birth of Jesus.

Step 1 Clear an open space to build with blocks. Talk about which Christmas scenes you'd like to create with the blocks and the figures from the nativity set.

Step 2 Get in groups of four, and build a Christmas scene. For example, one group may build the road to Bethlehem, leading to the inn where Mary and Joseph were turned away and finally to the stable where Jesus was born.

Step 3 Pose for a photo or two of your scene.

When all the scenes are photographed, upload the photos to a computer and create a slideshow for all to view.

Christmas: The Game!

You'll Need

1. Foam core or sturdy cardboard
2. 3x5 cards
3. Coins
(on-hand supplies: pencils, paper, and markers)

Bored with the same old board games? Together with the kids in your ministry, set out to invent a new game using Christmas as your main theme.

What Kids Do

Step 1 Talk about the components usually found in board games, such as a game board, cards that describe actions or point values, and dice or a spinner to move spaces.
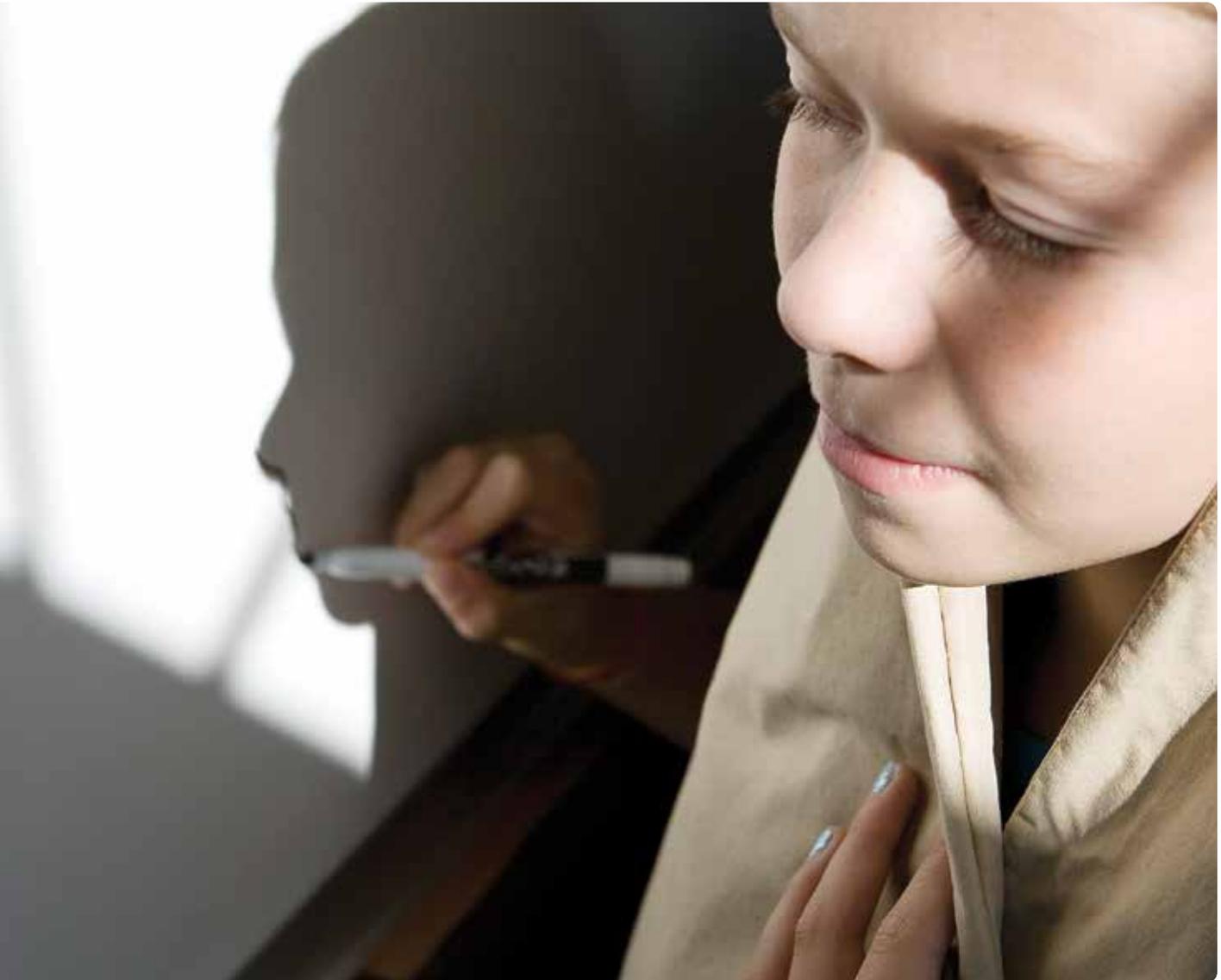
Step 2 Determine the goal of your game. Do they need to transport Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem or help the shepherds find the stable?

Step 3 Divvy up jobs so everyone can take part in the creation of the game. Kids could sketch out the spaces on the game board using pencil and then color the board with markers. Others can write instructions or point values on cards. Some could make dice, a spinner, or another way of getting around the board.

Step 4 When all the parts have been created, decide on the rules together.

Step 5 Choose coins to be your markers and start playing.

Who knows? Your kids may've just invented a new Christmas classic!

Seasonal Silhouettes

You'll Need
1. Desk lamp
2. Towel
3. White paper
(on-hand supplies: scissors, pencil, white and black construction paper, tape, and glue)

A silhouette is an outline of a person in profile, filled in with black color and attached to a white sheet of paper. This can be a dramatic way to highlight the people who were there when Jesus was born.

What Kids Do

Step 1 Have someone sit on a chair in front of a large piece of white paper taped to the wall. The "model" can dress up as a shepherd or Mary by wearing a head covering such as a towel.

Step 2 Move the lamp so the light shines on the side of the person's face and casts a sharp shadow on the paper. Adjust the chair as needed.

Step 3 Using a pencil, draw around the person's shadow on the white paper. Cut out the shape.

Step 4 Trace the shape onto black paper. Cut out this shape.

Step 5 Mount each black silhouette onto a sheet of white paper and display your silhouette gallery for all to see. **cm**

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