

# 2

## See Hope

LUKE 1:26–56



### GOAL

The children see signs of hope in the story of Mary and in the world around them.

- A** Art
- AM** Active/Movement
- C** Conversation
- D** Drama
- F** Food
- G** Game
- M** Music
- NS** Nature/Science
- QC** Quiet/Contemplative
- S** Service
- T** Technology
- X** Extra Prep

Note: bit.ly addresses are case-sensitive.



### PRAYER

God, help me to be open like Mary, hearing God's call and following it, even when it is difficult. Keep me alert for signs of the hope of your coming realm. Amen.

### THIS SESSION

In this session, the children will look for signs of hope in both Mary's story and their own lives and neighborhood.

### THE BIBLE STORY

The Bible story tells about the time when Mary heard the news from the angel that she would have God's child, went to see her cousin Elizabeth, and sang a song of the hope the world would see. As a twist, the adapted story in this session and the next is told from the perspective of Mary's donkey, who witnesses these events.

### CONNECTIONS WITH CHILDREN

*Hope* as an abstract concept is difficult for young children, so in trying to see hope we need to look for hopeful signs like seeds or bulbs planted in the ground that may sprout over time, or the smile on the face of a friend or neighbor we have helped.

### SESSION PREPARATION

- "Hope Is the Rope" (p. 18): Use rope from session 1, long enough that everyone in the group can hold onto it. Save for sessions 3–4.
- "Seeds of Hope" (p. 19): If paperwhite bulbs were planted last session, obtain them for the children to observe. You will keep these for sessions 3–4.
- "Through a Donkey's Eyes" (p. 19): Make a donkey puppet using Resource Page 1. See "Donkey Hope" (p. 18) for instructions. For children who were not present at session 1, provide red yarn rope (p. 10) and ornament cut from a card-stock copy of session 1's Resource Page 1 (p. 12).



## GETTING STARTED

- 
- Copies of Resource Page 1
  - Crayons, markers
  - Scissors
  - Glue or glue sticks
  - Large craft sticks

### DONKEY HOPE A

Greet each child as they arrive and give them a copy of Resource Page 1. Invite them to color the donkey. When the children have finished coloring their donkey, have them cut it out along the cutting lines. Assist with cutting as needed. Show the children where to fold the donkey in half so both sides of the donkey can be seen. Put glue on a large craft stick and place it between the folded halves of the donkey to use as a handle for their donkey puppet. Set aside donkey puppets for use in “Through a Donkey’s Eyes” (p. 19).

- 
- Rope

### HOPE IS THE ROPE AM QC

When everyone has arrived, gather the children and read the following litany that is in each session of this unit, inviting the children to repeat the bolded lines as they come to know it. Invite the children to grab hold of the rope and raise it up as the line “hope is the rope” is spoken.

When we feel lost,  
**hope is the rope**  
helping us find our way home.

When things are beyond our control,  
**hope is the rope**  
keeping us secure.

In the darkness of the night,  
**hope is the rope**  
giving us something to hold on to.

When we feel alone,  
**hope is the rope,**  
with strands that bind us together,  
helping us comfort and strengthen one another.  
**Thank God for the gift of hope.**

- 
- Bowl of water

### BAPTISM HOPE AM

Place a bowl of water in the center of the group. Tell the children that, when people are baptized, whether they are young or old, that is a sign of hope in God’s promises. Together have people dip their fingers in the water and make a cross mark on the back of their other hand. Say to the group, “Through the waters of baptism, God claims you as God’s own beloved child. This is God’s promise.”



## INTRODUCING THE PRACTICE

### SEEDS OF HOPE



Using the bowl of water from the baptism ritual, think together about how water is used and what hope it brings. Some things the children might mention are: drinking it when you're thirsty, washing your hands when there may be germs or dirt present, watering plants to help them grow.

If you planted the bulbs in water in the last session, take some time to study the bulbs for any changes. Have the children use a magnifying glass and/or a tape measure to see their growth. If the bulbs need some water, this is a good time to make sure a quarter of the bottom of the bulb is moist.

If you did not plant bulbs in session 1 or you would like to show the children the growth of planting that they are hoping for, show the YouTube video "Growing Plants Time Lapse Compilation #2-190 Days of Growing in 3 minutes" ([bit.ly/FMSeedsGrowing](https://bit.ly/FMSeedsGrowing), 2:53).

- Bowl of water from "Baptism Hope" (p. 18)
- Paperwhite bulbs planted in session 1, magnifying glass, tape measure or internet-connected device



## FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

### THROUGH A DONKEY'S EYES



Invite the children to get their donkey puppets and wave them each time they hear Abe, the donkey, speak in the story. Read the adapted Bible story from Luke 1:26-56 on Resource Page 2.

After the story has been read once, ask the children to put their donkeys to bed and listen for the questions you will ask.

- Who took care of Abe in the story?
- What did Mary put around Abe's neck when she was ready to travel?
- What do you think Abe was hoping for in the story?
- What do you think Mary was hoping for?
- What do you think her cousin Elizabeth was hoping for?

Invite the children to listen to the story one more time, while their donkeys sleep, and see if they see any more signs of hope in the story. Wonder together what other signs of hope are seen in the story.

Give each child their HOPE ornament and a piece of twine to represent Abe's rope. Have the children tie the twine onto their ornament as a reminder of the hope seen in Mary, and soon, in her baby Jesus. Have the children hang their ornaments around the room.

- Resource Page 2
- Donkey puppets from "Donkey Hope" (p. 18)
- HOPE ornaments from session 1
- 12" lengths of twine
- Ornaments cut from card-stock copies of Resource Page 1 from session 1 (p. 12), crayons, red yarn rope, clear contact paper, and single-hole punch, as needed



If children were not present last session, give them an ornament to color. Find a few moments to help them make and attach a red yarn rope to their ornament as well. Be sure they put their name on the back of their ornament.



Save your donkey puppet for session 3. The children's puppets may go home with them.

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- Biblical costumes (optional)

## REENACTING THE STORY

D

Use biblical costumes if the children enjoy dressing up in them. Invite the children in groups of three to enact the story of the angel's encounter with Mary and her journey to visit Elizabeth. Encourage the children to tell the story in their own words. If the children are reluctant to speak, you could narrate while they pantomime the action.



## FINDING THE PRACTICE ALL AROUND US

Choose one or both options.

- 
- Internet-connected device

## MARY'S SONG OF HOPE

AM T

Tell the children that many people through many years have put Mary's song of hope to music. Listen to two songs, one that is in Latin and repeats the first words of her song, "My soul magnifies the Lord," and the other that is a paraphrase of her song; the children may dance along with the music for this second song. Show the following YouTube videos in the order you would like, quiet and then dancing or dancing and then quiet:

- "Magnificat (Taizé)" ([bit.ly/FMMagnificatTaize](https://bit.ly/FMMagnificatTaize), 2:41). This is a Taizé version of the Magnificat, which repeats the first sentence in Latin, *Magnificat anima mea dominum*. Invite the children to listen quietly, hearing the voices sing of the hope Mary may have felt being chosen by God to have Jesus as her baby.
- "Canticle of the Turning—Rory Cooney" ([bit.ly/FMCanticle](https://bit.ly/FMCanticle), 3:32). After listening to it once, invite any children who would like to dance to the music to do so. This is a joyful Irish tune that lends itself to movement.

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- Rope

## ADVENT SIGNS OF HOPE

AM

If you are doing this session during the Advent season, take a tour of your church, looking for signs of hope during the Advent season—banners, an Advent wreath, Advent calendars, purple or blue paraments—whatever you can find that children can see as a sign of the hope of Advent that leads to Christmas. Use the long rope to keep everyone together, further reinforcing the connection between the rope and hope.



## PRACTICING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or both options.

- 
- Card-stock copies of Resource Page 3
  - Watercolor paint supplies

## GOD LOVES YOU CARDS

A S

If you are using this session during the Advent season and you live in the northern hemisphere, tell the children that the days are getting shorter and night is getting longer. Explain that, for some people, this is a difficult time of year because of less daylight. For some people, this is a difficult time of year because of the celebrations around the holidays, and they are missing people in their family. Tell the children that many churches have a service called a "Longest Night" service or a "Blue Christmas" service. Explain that this is a service to give comfort to those who may be sad or missing people at this time of year.

Tell the children that they will make small cards to give to people who need to see hope, God's love for them. Provide card-stock copies of Resource Page 3 and watercolor paint supplies. Invite the children to paint the whole page in bright colors that suggest hope. Demonstrate how they can paint brushstrokes all over the paper that adds color to each of the individual cards. Encourage them to use more paint than water, so the paper doesn't become soggy.

Have the children paint three or four sheets, or as long as it holds their interest. Once the papers are dry, cut them apart and give them to the appropriate person to have available for a worship service at your church or for a caring ministry of your church.

## SEEING HOPE

A

Tell the children that sometimes hope is hard to see, and we have to look carefully for signs of it. Wonder together what might be signs of hope they can see at this time of year. Some ideas might be people helping others, a hug from a friend, family celebrations, and so forth. Wonder together how Jesus is hope for the world. Some ideas might be that Jesus shows us how to follow God's way of living, Jesus shows us how to love one another, and so forth.

Hand out copies of Resource Page 4 and tell the children to color only the spaces where there is a star. Explain that they will see a message of hope when they have colored all the spaces with stars. When they are through coloring, help the children read, *JESUS* and *HOPE*. Invite the children to trace the letters at the bottom of the page that say, "Jesus is the hope of the world."

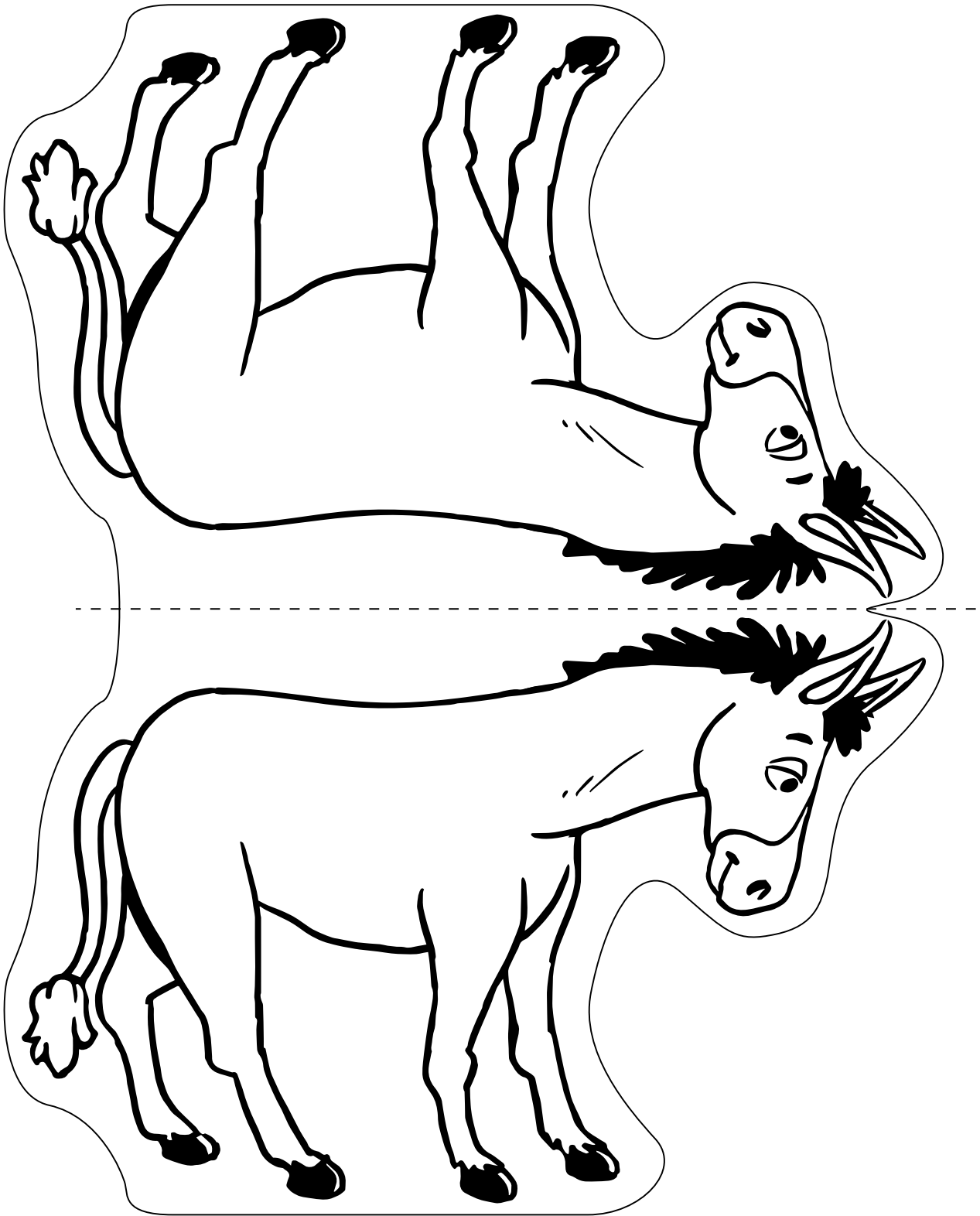
- Copies of Resource Page 4
- Crayons and/or colored pencils

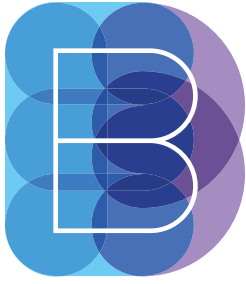


Invite the children to gather in a circle and bring their donkey puppets and anything they made in this session. Take notice of the signs of hope they created and encourage them to keep looking for hope in the coming week.

Invite the children to repeat after you as you pray:

God of hope, /  
help us to see the hope. (*hold right hand over eyes, look around*) /  
May we see others (*hold left hand over eyes, look around*) /  
who need hope this week. (*hold right hand over eyes, look around*) /  
Amen. /





## BIBLE STORY

### BASED ON LUKE 1:26–56

Hello, my name is Abe. I am a donkey, but not just any donkey. I am Mary's donkey. "Who is Mary?" you ask. She is one of my most favorite people in the whole world. She is often the one who brushes me, and sometimes she brings a treat of something to eat. Sometimes, she puts a rope around my neck and a pack on my back, and we go traveling. I wanted to tell you the most amazing story that has ever happened to me.

One day, Mary was brushing me when, suddenly, a very bright light appeared. There seemed to be someone standing in this light who spoke to Mary, saying, "Greetings, favored one, the Lord is with you."

I'm sure Mary was just as surprised as I was. Nothing like this had ever happened to either of us!

The person in the light must have seen that Mary was afraid, as was I. They said, "Don't be afraid, you are going to have a baby from God." (OK, they were talking to Mary, not to me!) They continued, "You will name the baby Jesus. He will be great and be called the Son of God. He will rule over the people like David the king, except Jesus' kingdom will never end." (Now I'm thinking this person is an angel, a messenger sent from God.)

Mary was confused, as well she should be, because she wasn't even married yet, even though she was engaged to Joseph. She asked the angel just how this was supposed to happen, and the angel told her that nothing was impossible with God! The angel said that her cousin, Elizabeth, was also going to have a baby and Mary should go spend time with her. Then the angel went away.

Mary went into the house and packed a bag. She got the rope down from where it was hanging, tied it around my neck, and we went to Elizabeth's house. Elizabeth saw Mary and made a funny little happy sound. She said that it felt like her baby did a somersault in her tummy as Mary approached. Elizabeth said, "Blessed are you, Mary, and blessed is the baby you will have."

Mary was so happy that she sang a song of praise to God and about the baby she would be caring for. I remember this song because she sang of all the hope God would bring into the world through this baby Jesus.



God loves you!



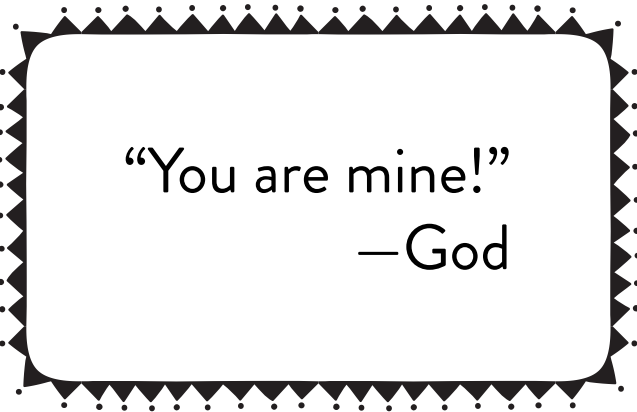
God loves you!



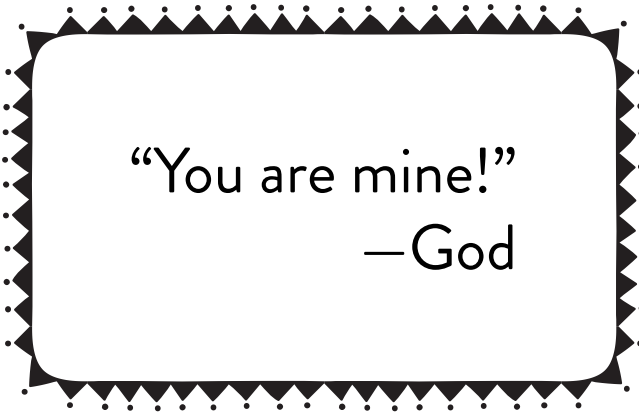
Jesus loves you!



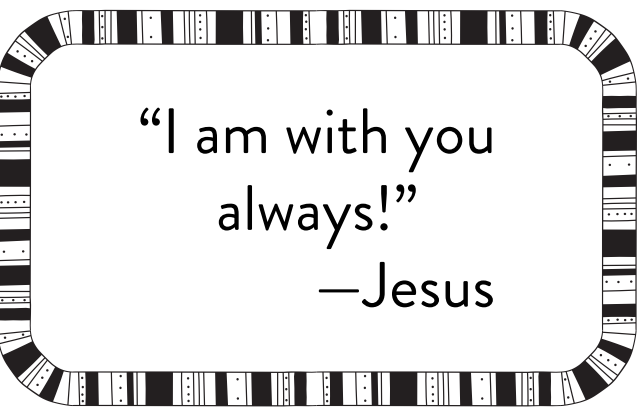
Jesus loves you!



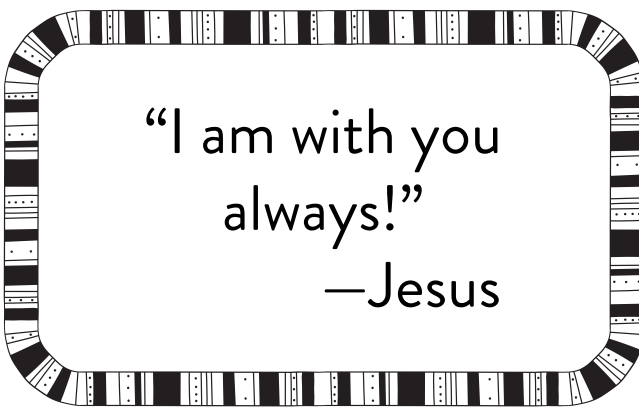
“You are mine!”  
—God



“You are mine!”  
—God

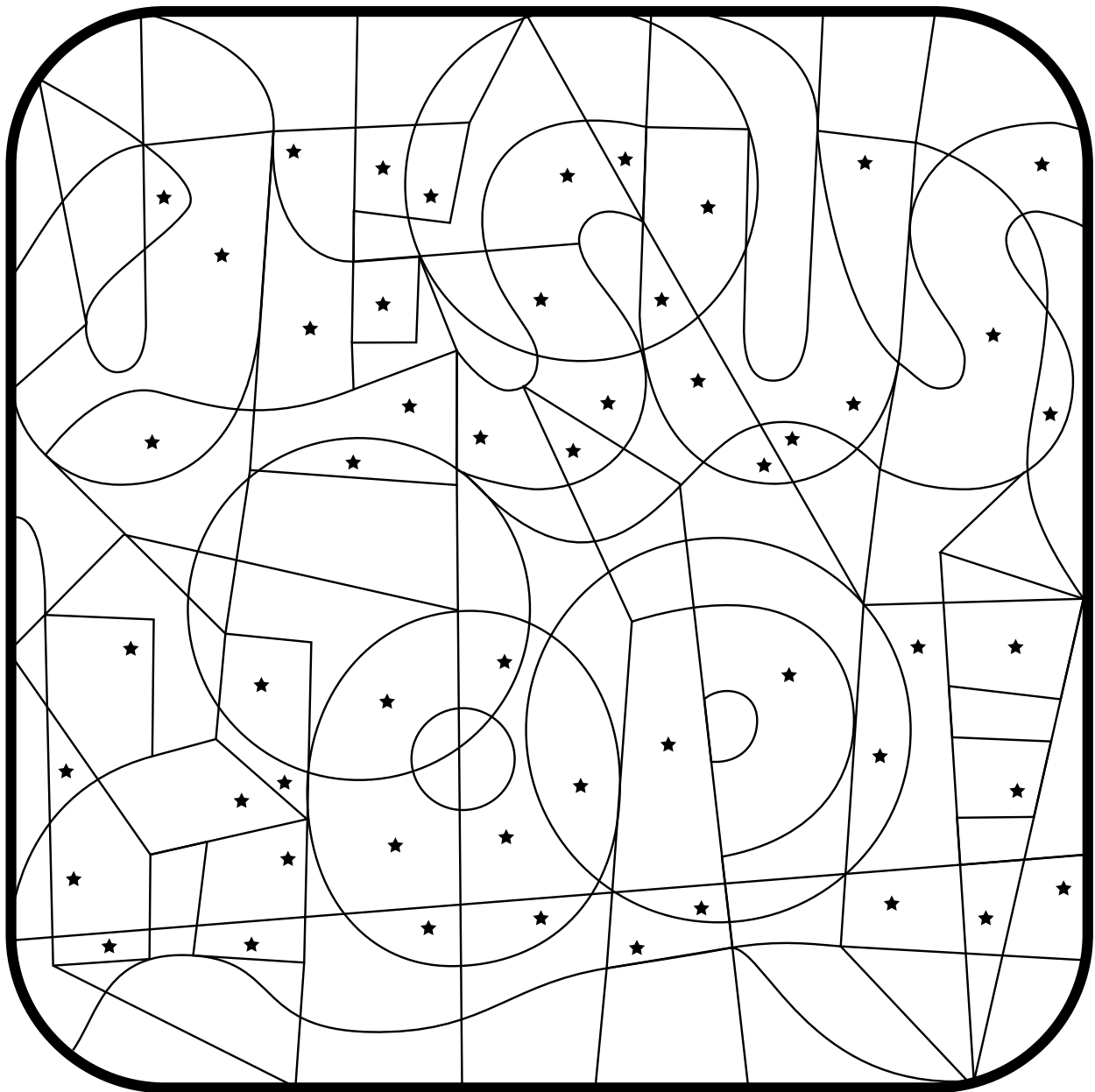


“I am with you  
always!”  
—Jesus



“I am with you  
always!”  
—Jesus





Jesus is  
the hope of  
the world.

