

Advent Kid's Kaleidoscope

Week #1 – HOPE

How do you prepare for Christmas where you live?

Welcome to Advent Kids Kaleidoscope Week #1 about hope! Do you know what Advent means? It means arrival, and over the next 4 weeks, we are going to prepare for and remember when Jesus arrived on earth as a baby. We are preparing for Christmas! How do you prepare for Christmas where you live? Do you put up decorations? Most people around the world prepare for Christmas with decorations. Those decorations can be lights, candles, stars, and maybe even setting off fireworks. Lights remind us that Jesus is the light of the world, and we are called to be like him and be light to those around us.

Another common decoration for Christmas is trees. For those of you who live in the Northern Hemisphere, Christmas might mean you have a big green pine tree that you decorate, like the one pictured above on the right-hand side. The weather is cool or cold and you might get snow. For those of you in the Southern Hemisphere, Christmas might mean you decorate a palm tree, have a plastic green tree or just a branch of a tree. The weather is warm, or hot and sunny, and maybe your family spends time at the beach.

Imagine that you grew up in a place that celebrated Christmas during the warmer weather and your Christmas tree was always a branch you cut down and decorated with ornaments; but then, God called you to be a missionary, and to go to a place where Christmas is celebrated during much colder weather... it might even snow, now you celebrate Jesus's birth wrapped up in blankets and trying to keep warm. The way to prepare and decorate for Christmas can be very different depending on where you live, but we are all filled with hope and excitement as we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus!

How can you share that hope and excitement and be a light shining for Jesus to those around you?

Below, you will find some Christmas decorations found around the world. See if you can connect them with their correct country. You can find the answers and more information about these photos on the next page.



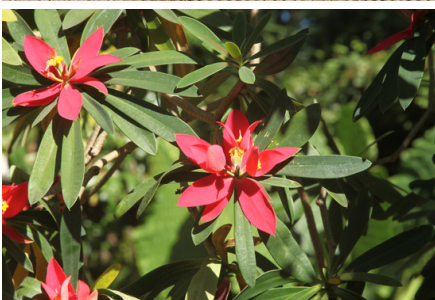
South Africa



Germany

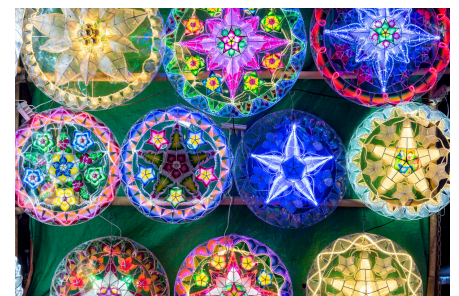
Philippines

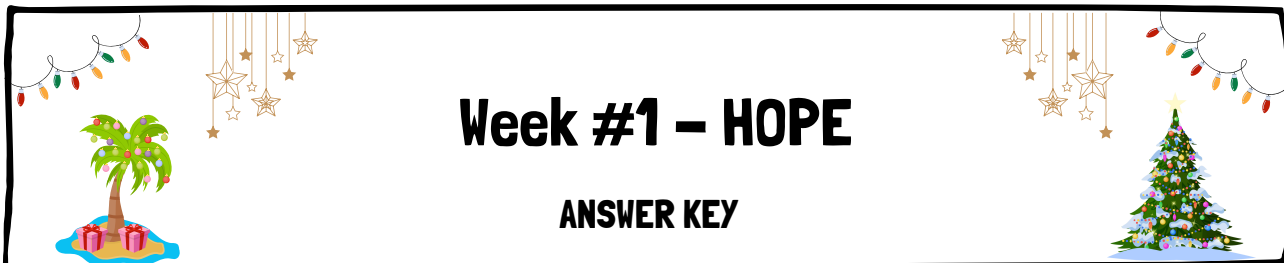
United States



Brazil

Jamaica



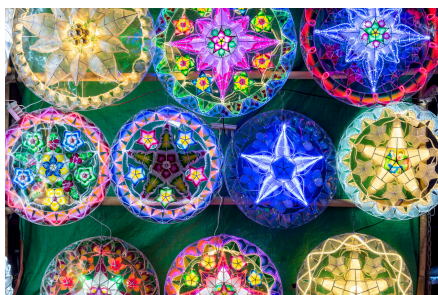


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ANSWER KEY



Germany - The Moravian star is a very popular symbol today, used to decorate windows, doors and Christmas trees. You can find them in all sorts of different sizes. They were first created in the 19th century by German students who attended a Moravian boarding school. It represents the star of Bethlehem and during the holiday season, it can be found in nativity scenes.



Philippines - The Philippine parol, inspired by Chinese lanterns and Mexican piñatas, brought by missionaries to the Philippines, represents the Star of Bethlehem that guided the three wise men to baby Jesus. You can find parols decorating houses and streets along with other Christmas symbols from September to January. They signal the start of the holiday season and are removed in January after Epiphany, to honor the Three Kings and their visit to baby Jesus.



Brazil - String lights and trees, two of the most popular items used to decorate for Christmas, or Natal, in Brazil. Many cities have enormous Christmas trees adorned with thousands of electric lights, creating stunning displays that draw many crowds. Most families choose an artificial Christmas tree because real evergreen trees are hard to find. The decorations usually remain until Three Kings Day on January 6th, which marks the official end of the Christmas season.



Jamaica - The Jamaican poinsettia, is a sign that Christmas has arrived on the island. This plant, real or artificial, is part of Christmas decor in many parts of the world, and especially in Jamaica. The poinsettia is so important to the Christmas season here that there are several songs about it by Caribbean artists. There are red, cream, and orange poinsettias, but red is the most popular around Christmas.



South Africa - In South Africa, beading is a common form of art. Different tribes, such as the Zulu, Xhosa, and Ndebele, use beadwork as a way to communicate and tell stories. South African beadwork has many different techniques. Two examples are: stringing--threading beads onto a string or wire which is common to make necklaces, bracelets and belts; and, wirework--manipulating wire to create intricate beaded sculptures, three-dimensional figures, and objects like baskets, bowls and even Christmas decorations.



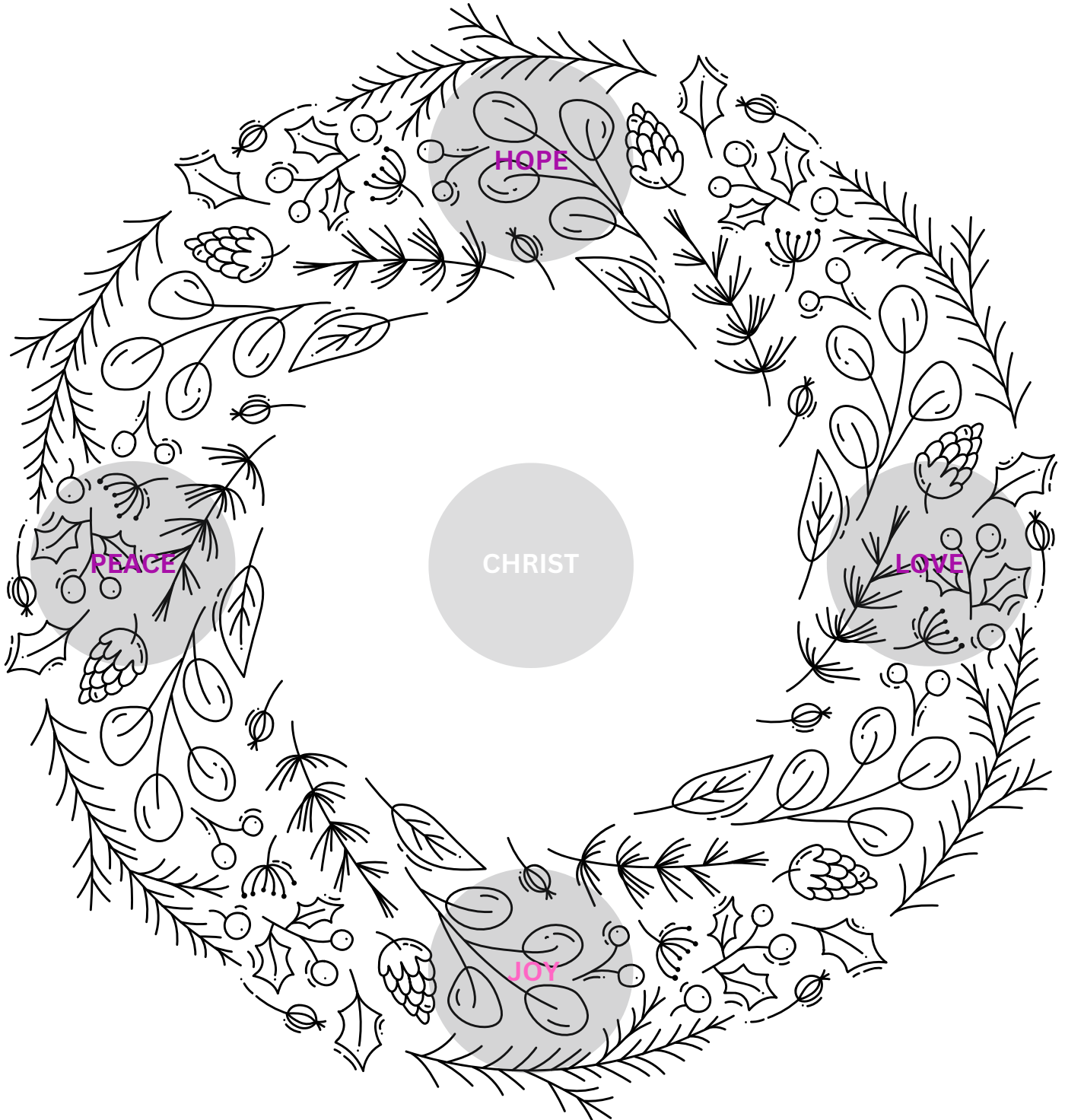
The United States - The candy cane is believed to have been created by a choir master in Germany who needed a way to keep the children quiet during the Christmas eve service. With the help of the local candy maker, the "sugar sticks" with a crook at the top, were created to help the children remember the shepherds who visited Jesus. Around 1847, candy canes arrived in the United States with a German-Swedish immigrant, and are a common symbol of Christmas in the United States.

ADVENT KALEIDOSCOPE

The Kaleidoscope for the Advent Season is very different, in fact it isn't a kaleidoscope, it is an Advent wreath. There are many places around the world that have the tradition of lighting a candle on the Advent wreath as an important way to prepare for Christmas. In other places, this is not a familiar activity.

The Advent wreath is believed to have been created in Germany in the 1800's by a pastor to help children in his mission school count the days until Christmas. In some places the wreath is made with things found in nature, and there are four candles on the wreath, and one larger candle in the center, which is the Christ candle. One candle is lit each week leading up to Christmas, and each candle has a special meaning, which you will learn about in the weekly Advent NMI Central and Kids Kaleidoscope.

Below you will see a drawing of a wreath made out of items found in nature. Color this wreath, but also feel free to go outside and gather items from nature where you live and glue them onto your Advent wreath. The next page will give you instructions for the candles.



But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord."

Luke 2:10-11 NIV

Each week you will add a candle to your Advent wreath. To make your wreath, cut out the two candles below: One for this week, and one for week #2. Color the Hope and Love candles purple, leaving the word HOPE and LOVE white. Draw and color some of your own special traditions on the candle as well. Then, make a cylinder shape and tape or glue your candle so it keeps that shape. You can twist red, orange, and yellow tissue paper together and stick it inside the top to look like a flame. Then set, tape, or glue your candle on your advent wreath, and place it somewhere in your home, where you will see it, and be reminded of ways you can share and prepare for the birth of Jesus.



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