



1 Listen for God





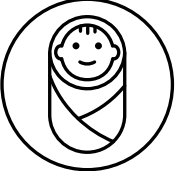
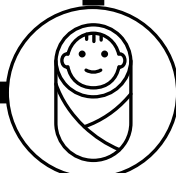
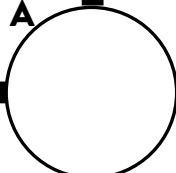

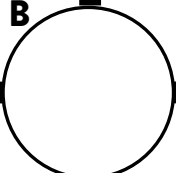

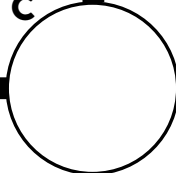



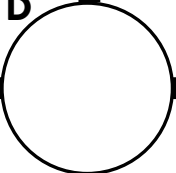


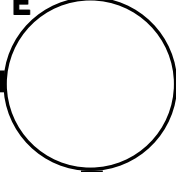
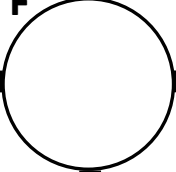

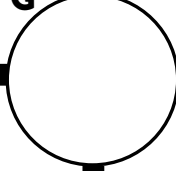






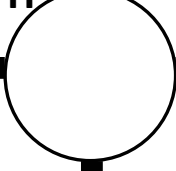
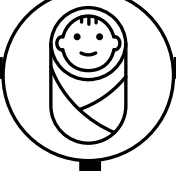
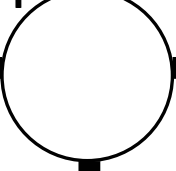
WAYS TO PRACTICE AT HOME

Listening is active and a way that forms connections and requires paying attention. In the same way, we can listen for God through connections that are formed with the world around us and with faithful followers. We also need to pay attention so that we can listen for God and to what we are hearing as we listen. The fact that God has messages for us is amazing. God wants to connect with us and let us know that we are not alone, whether it is through God's words in Scripture, through the words and/or actions of others, or through God's actions in the world.

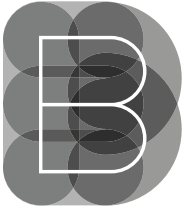
- Play a listening game. Take turns being the leader and the listener. The listener closes their eyes as the leader plays the sounds on "Environmental Sounds Outside Sounds" (bit.ly/FMListenSounds, 3:12). After each sound, the leader pauses while the listener identifies the sound. Talk about where God may be with each sound.
- When we listen carefully to a story, we can pass it on to other people. Read aloud the Bible story on the other side to another person or family members. Then have the listener(s) retell the story.
- One way to listen to God is to act kindly toward others. Choose one thing per day that you and your family can do, such as: compliment a stranger, feed the birds, smile at people you see, leave an encouraging sticky note on a door for someone to find, call a relative, do a family member's chores for a day, make someone laugh, and so on.
- Watch "The Story of Christmas (Mary and Joseph)" (bit.ly/FMJosephAngel, 3:02) beginning at 1:43 for a fun retelling of the angel coming to Joseph in a dream.

God, you know that sometimes I am a good listener and sometimes I am not. Help me to be a better listener so that I can know you and serve you more completely. Amen.

Fill in the blank circles using pictures from the top row. Each row and each column should have only one of each picture.

				
1	2	3	4	5
	A 		B 	
C 				D 
		E 	F 	
G 				
		H 		I 

A-3, B-1, C-4, D-5, E-5, F-2, G-2, H-1, I-4



BIBLE STORY

Based on Matthew 1:18–24

Joseph and Mary were two people who were going to get married. They probably spent a lot of time together. Perhaps Joseph went on walks with Mary, climbed trees with Mary, and maybe even Joseph danced with Mary. They loved each other.

One day, Joseph learned that Mary was going to have a baby. That was very surprising to Joseph. He was sad about this news. When he came home, he realized he was angry because in Joseph's and Mary's time, this meant that he couldn't marry Mary. He stomped around his room.

That night, Joseph got ready for bed. He changed into his pajamas, he brushed his teeth, and he said his nighttime prayers. Then Joseph laid down in his bed and went to sleep.

While he was sleeping, a messenger from God, an angel, appeared to him in his dream. Joseph was surprised and afraid. Sometimes angels can be scary when we do not expect them to appear. The angel said, "Don't be afraid!" That probably made Joseph feel better. Joseph listened for God's message. The angel said that God had given Mary the baby, the baby would be a son, and they should name him Jesus. This probably made Joseph take a deep breath. He was going to be a father to a son. The angel told Joseph that the baby also would be called *Emmanuel*, which means "God with us." Now Joseph was probably really surprised and took two deep breaths. He was going to be a father to God's son!

The next morning, Joseph woke up and ran to Mary. Joseph gave Mary a big hug. Joseph told Mary everything: how he listened to the angel, that their baby would be a son, and that they would name him Jesus. Joseph loved Mary. He loved the baby that was growing inside of her. He was very excited and probably a little bit afraid but mostly happy that he listened to God and would do what God asked him to do.

