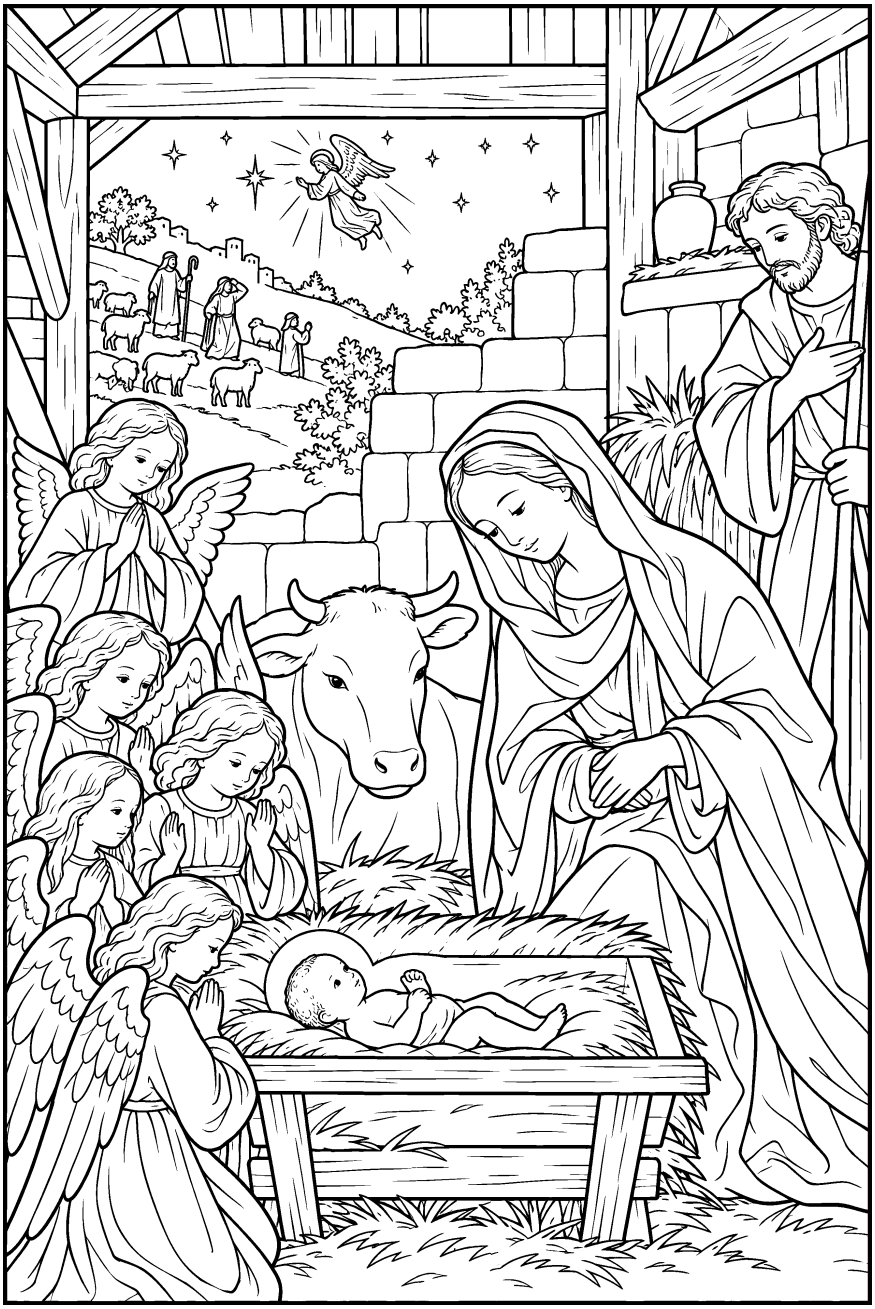
A FREE PRINTABLE COLORING BOOK

Nativity

COLORING PAGES

The Christmas story in twelve great paintings, to look at, to read about, and to color



FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND CLASSROOMS

https://jesuschrist.pictures

Contents

Before you begin *3*

PART ONE

The Angel's Message

Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus. LUKE 1 : 30-31

The Annunciation *Ambrogio Lorenzetti* 4
The Annunciation *Fra Angelico* 6

PART TWO

The Night Jesus Was Born

And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him up in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. LUKE 2 : 7

The Nativity *Master of Vyšší Brod* 8
The Nativity *Giotto* 10
The Nativity *Imitator of Fra Angelico* 12
Nativity at Night *Geertgen tot Sint Jans* 14
Mystic Nativity *Sandro Botticelli* 16
The Adoration of the Shepherds *Giorgione* 18
The Holy Night *Correggio* 20

PART THREE

The Wise Men

And entering into the house, they found the child with Mary his mother, and falling down they adored him: and opening their treasures, they offered him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh. MATTHEW 2 : 11

Adoration of the Magi *Gentile da Fabriano* 22
The Adoration of the Magi *Hieronymus Bosch* 24
Adoration of the Magi *Leonardo da Vinci* 26

More to color *28*

Before You Begin

Long before there were photographs, movies or picture books, the great painters told the story of Christmas with colors. Their paintings hung in churches, where everyone, even people who could not read, could see the angel, the stable and the star.

This book gathers twelve of those paintings, in the order of the story: the angel's message, the night Jesus was born, and the visit of the wise men. For each one, the left page shows the real painting and tells you about it. The right page is a drawing of the same scene, for you to color. Follow the painter's colors, or choose your own!

Tips for printing and coloring

- **Print on one side of the paper only**, so that markers do not bleed onto the next page.
- **Print the painting pages in color** if you can: they are your color guide. To save ink, print only the coloring pages, which are the odd pages from 5 to 27.
- **Colored pencils** are best for faces and small details, **felt-tip markers** for big areas.

> ### The secret of the painters' colors
> In old paintings, Mary almost always wears a blue cloak. Blue was the most precious paint of all: it was made by grinding a stone called lapis lazuli, brought from very far away, and it could cost more than gold. Painters kept it for the Mother of God. And gold leaf? It shows the light of heaven.

Free to print for your family, your parish or your classroom, as many copies as you need.
To share it, please send the link rather than the file:
https://jesuschrist.pictures/christian-coloring-pages/nativity-coloring-pages

The Annunciation

Ambrogio Lorenzetti, 1344

PINACOTECA NAZIONALE, SIENA, ITALY

✦

The angel Gabriel has come from heaven with wonderful news: Mary is going to be the mother of Jesus, the Son of God. Ambrogio Lorenzetti covered the whole background with real gold, to show the light of heaven. Look carefully and you can even read their words, written in the gold! The angel's words fly straight from his lips to Mary. Mary's answer climbs up toward God: *Behold the handmaid of the Lord.* She says yes.

> **Look closely**
> The angel wears a crown of olive leaves and holds a palm branch. Can you find them? And the little book on Mary's lap?

Love this painting? Scan the code to see it as a museum-quality canvas print.

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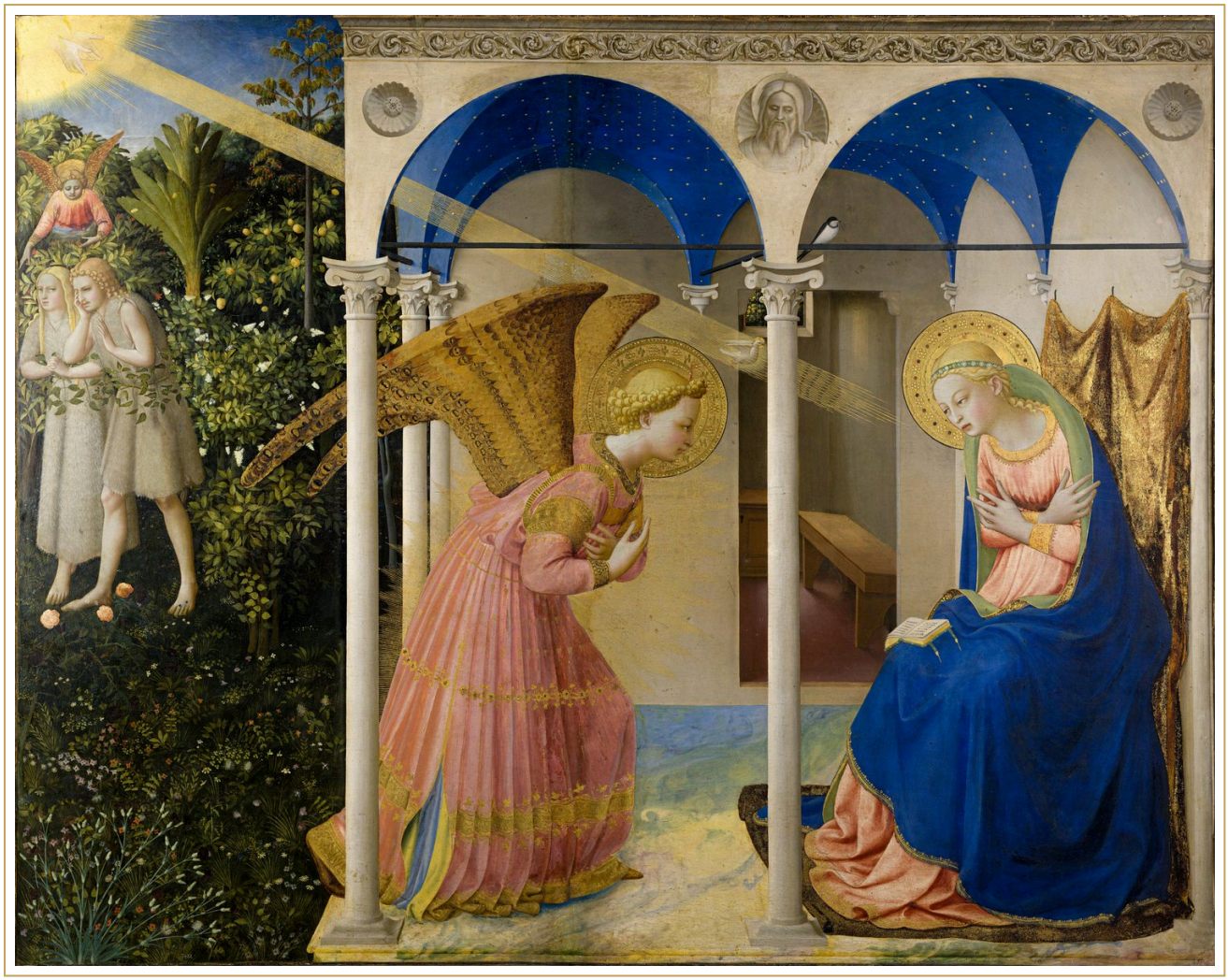

The Annunciation

Fra Angelico, about 1426

MUSEO DEL PRADO, MADRID, SPAIN

✦

Fra Angelico was a friar who prayed while he painted. Here the angel Gabriel bows before Mary, under a porch with a blue ceiling full of golden stars. In the top left corner, the hands of God send down a long ray of golden light, and in it flies a small white dove: the Holy Spirit. In the garden, an angel leads Adam and Eve out of Paradise. With Mary's yes, the way back to God is opening.

> **Look closely**
> A little bird is perched on the iron bar between the arches. Can you find it?

Love this painting? Scan the code to see it as a museum-quality canvas print.

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The Nativity

Master of Vyšší Brod, about 1350

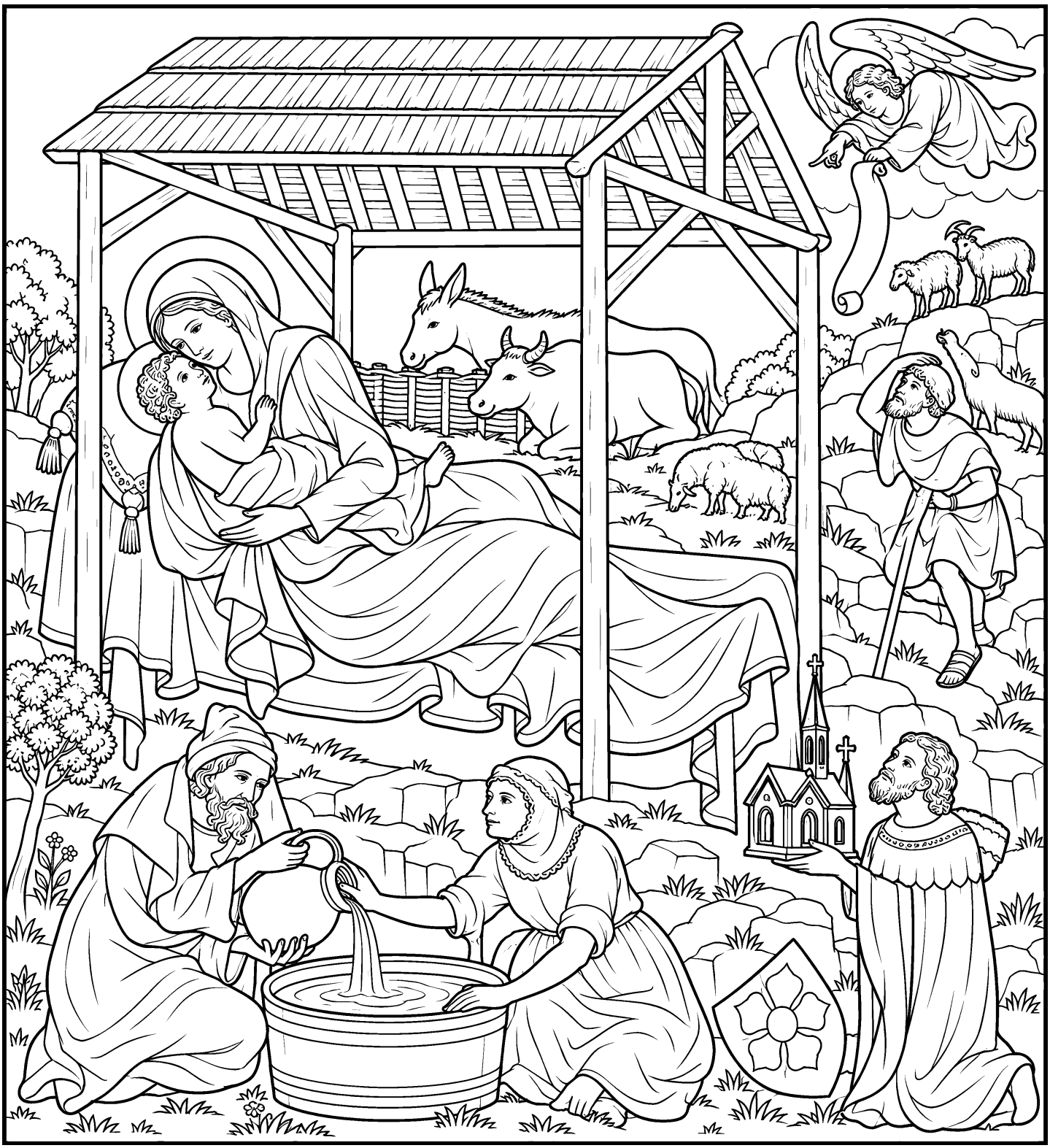
NATIONAL GALLERY PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC

✦

This painting comes from an abbey in the forests of Bohemia, in today's Czech Republic. Mary rests on a big bed and hugs her newborn baby cheek to cheek, as every mother does. Down below, Joseph pours water into a wooden tub while a woman checks that it is not too hot: it is time for baby Jesus's very first bath! Behind them, the ox and the donkey eat at the manger, and up on the hill an angel brings the good news to a shepherd.

> **Look closely**
> The man kneeling on the right holds a little church: he gave this painting to the abbey. Can you find his shield, with a red rose?

Love this painting? Scan the code to see it as a museum-quality canvas print.



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The Nativity

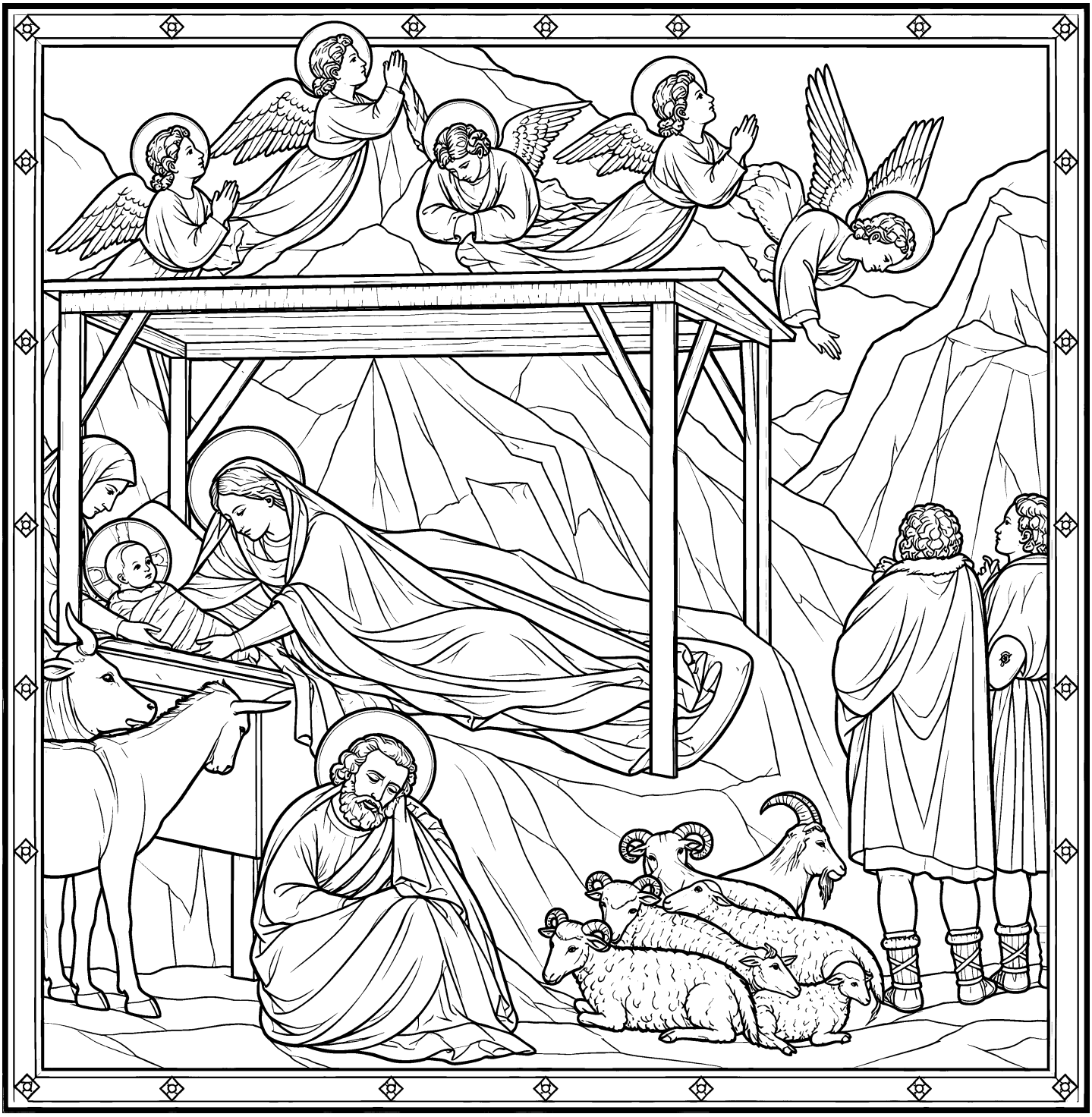
Giotto, about 1305

SCROVEGNI CHAPEL, PADUA, ITALY

✦

Giotto painted this scene straight onto the wall of a chapel, on wet plaster. A painting made this way is called a fresco, and it lasts for centuries. Mary lays her baby, wrapped tight in white, in the manger, with a helper beside her. Joseph sits on the ground, deep in thought. Above the roof, five angels fly in the blue sky: some pray, some look up to heaven, and one leans down to tell the shepherds.

> **Look closely**
> How many sheep and goats are resting at the shepherds' feet?



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The Nativity

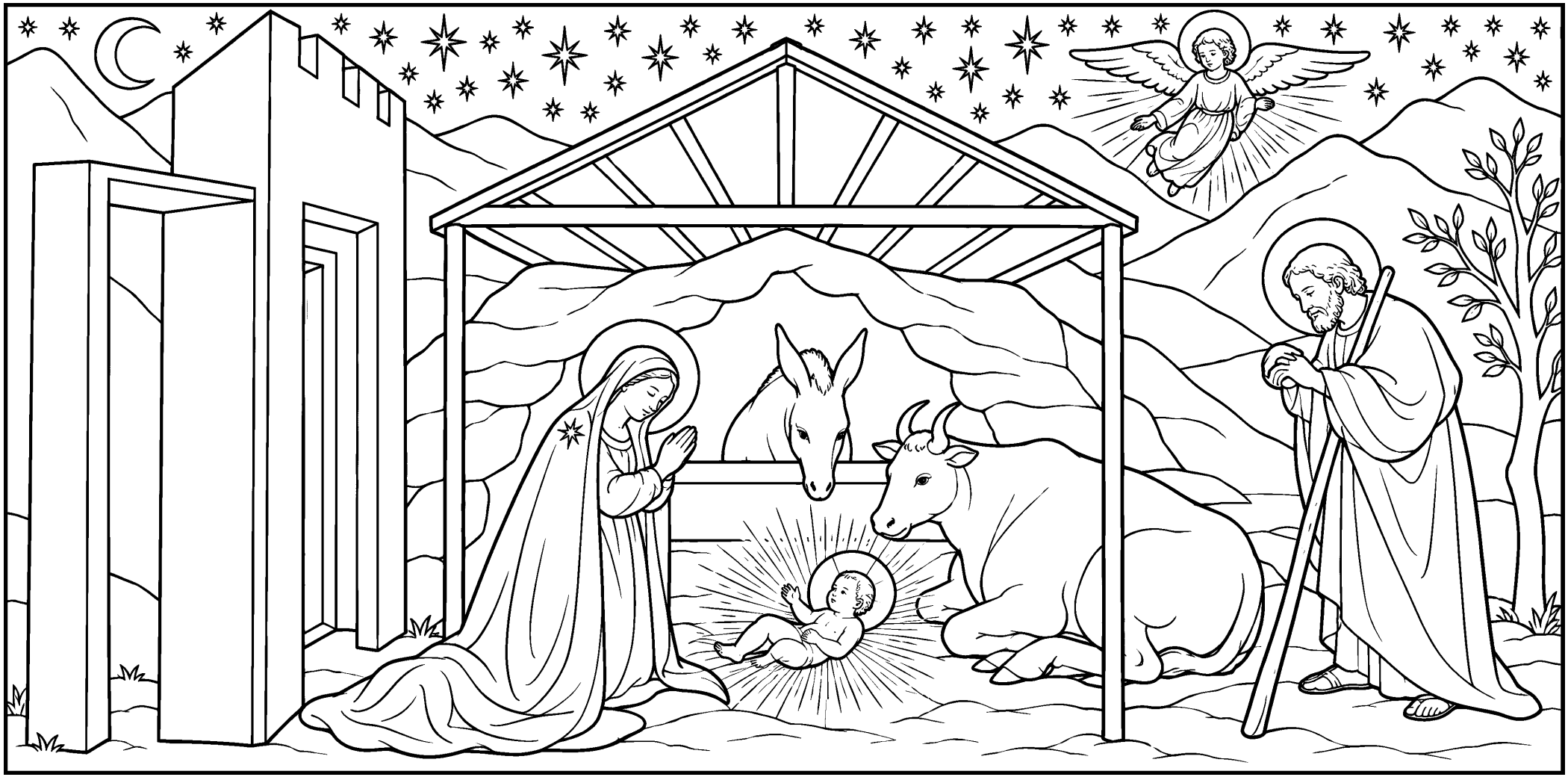
Imitator of Fra Angelico, date unknown

INDIANAPOLIS MUSEUM OF ART AT NEWFIELDS, USA

✦

Nobody knows who painted this little picture. The artist loved the paintings of Fra Angelico so much that they painted just like him: the starry sky, the golden halos, the gentle faces. Mary kneels before her baby, who shines on the bare ground. The ox and the donkey lie close to him, and Joseph stands with his walking stick, holding his red hat in his hand. In the sky, a little angel flies in a cloud of light.

> **Look closely**
> Find the moon in the top left corner. Is it day or night?



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Nativity at Night

Geertgen tot Sint Jans, about 1490

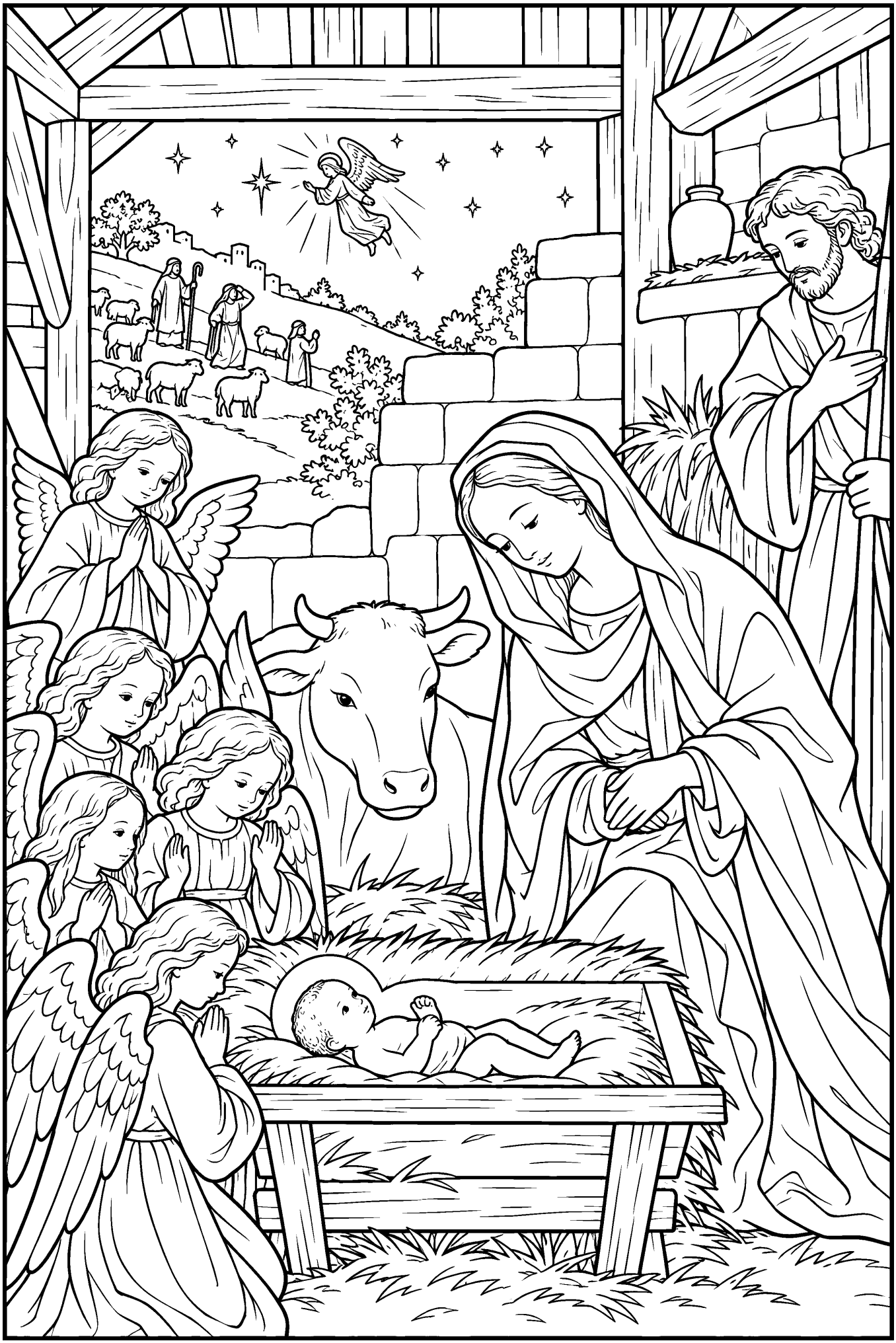
NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON, UK

✦

It is the middle of the night, and the only light comes from the baby himself! Geertgen wanted to show that Jesus is the light of the world. His glow shines on Mary's face, on the little angels with folded hands, and on the ox and the donkey. Far away on the hill, an angel brings the news to the shepherds sitting by their fire. The real painting is not much bigger than this sheet of paper.

> **Look closely**
> Joseph is there too, almost hidden in the dark. Can you find him?

Love this painting? Scan the code to see it as a museum-quality canvas print.



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Mystic Nativity

Sandro Botticelli, 1500

NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON, UK

✦

Botticelli painted heaven celebrating! At the top, twelve angels dance in a circle in a golden sky, holding olive branches. On the roof of the stable, three angels sing from a book. At the bottom, angels hug people to welcome them, while little devils run off to hide in the rocks. In the middle, Mary kneels before her baby, with the ox and the donkey close by.

> **Look closely**
> Angels are leading the shepherds and the wise men by the hand. Can you find them?

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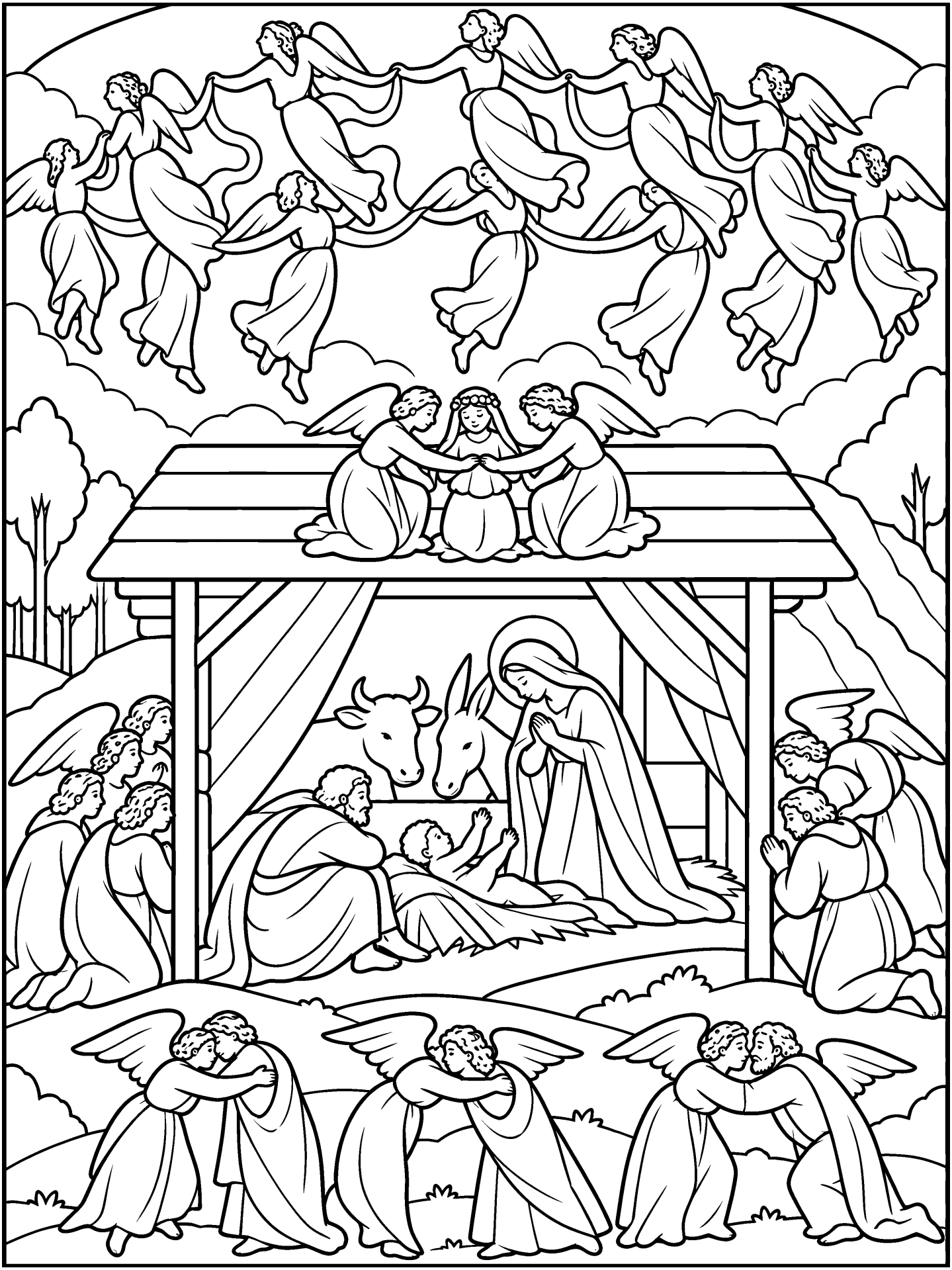

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The Adoration of the Shepherds

Giorgione, about 1505 to 1510

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, WASHINGTON, USA

✦

Two shepherds have come down from the hills. One kneels, the other bows, in front of a dark cave where Mary and Joseph watch over the baby. Giorgione loved to paint the countryside: look how much room he gives to the trees, the river and the faraway town, all in the soft light of evening. The shepherds are poor, but they were the first to hear the news.

> **Look closely**
> The ox and the donkey are hiding in the shadows of the cave. Can you see them?

Love this painting? Scan the code to see it as a museum-quality canvas print.

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The Holy Night

Correggio, about 1530

GEMÄLDEGALERIE ALTE MEISTER, DRESDEN, GERMANY

✦

Here again, the light comes from the baby. It is so bright that a young shepherd girl has to shield her eyes with her hand! Mary holds Jesus close, and her face shines with his light. Above them, angels tumble out of a cloud, and at the back Joseph is busy with the donkey. This painting is so famous that people simply call it *The Night*.

> **Look closely**
> Find the tall shepherd with his long stick. What is he looking at?

Love this painting? Scan the code to see it as a museum-quality canvas print.

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Adoration of the Magi

Gentile da Fabriano, 1423

UFFIZI GALLERY, FLORENCE, ITALY

✦

The three kings arrive with their whole court: horses, servants, hunting dogs, even monkeys! Gentile painted their clothes with real gold so that the picture sparkles in candlelight. The oldest king has taken off his crown and kneels to kiss the baby's foot, and baby Jesus gently touches his head. Up in the hills, you can follow the kings' long journey.

> **Look closely**
> Can you find the star at the top? And a monkey, a falcon or a leopard in the crowd?

Love this painting? Scan the code to see it as a museum-quality canvas print.

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Adoration of the Magi, after Gentile da Fabriano · https://jesuschrist.pictures

The Adoration of the Magi

Hieronymus Bosch, about 1475

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK, USA

✦

Two angels hold up a green cloth like a royal canopy over Mary and Jesus, as if the stable were a palace. The three kings bring their gifts in shining golden cups. Joseph kneels to one side, with his hood on. Behind them all, Bosch painted a wide country with rivers, fields and towns, stretching all the way to the sky.

> **Look closely**
> The kneeling king has taken off his crown. Where did he put it? And who is watching, sitting very still?

Love this painting? Scan the code to see it as a museum-quality canvas print.

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Adoration of the Magi

Leonardo da Vinci, 1481

UFFIZI GALLERY, FLORENCE, ITALY

✦

Leonardo da Vinci started this painting when he was 29 years old, then left for Milan and never came back to finish it. That is why it looks like a giant drawing in brown and gold. Mary and Jesus sit in the middle, and all around them a crowd leans in, amazed at the baby. In the background, horses gallop and rear up near some ruins. Leonardo never finished it. Now you can!

> **Look closely**
> Find the tree growing right behind Mary, and the stairs that lead nowhere.

Colored by _____

Merry Christmas!

We hope you enjoyed coloring these twelve masterpieces.
There are many more free coloring pages waiting for you on our website:

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Bible Coloring Pages

Adam and Eve Coloring Pages

Jesus on the Cross Coloring Pages

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https://jesuschrist.pictures/christian-coloring-pages

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