

Children's liturgy – Fourth Sunday of Advent (Year B)

Preparing the worship space

Colour: purple.

Props: coloured card, scissors, pens and pencils.

Welcome: Today we are going to hear about how a very special messenger came to visit Mary to tell her that she was going to have a baby. Let's think how we can be God's messengers in the world too.

Song suggestions: *The angel Gabriel* (686, Celebration Hymnal for Everyone)

Opening prayer: God of all, you sent the angel Gabriel as your messenger to Mary. Help us to be your messengers in the world today. Amen.

First reading (optional): 2 Samuel 7:1-5

Psalm: Ps 88:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29

Gospel acclamation: *everyone stands and sings the gospel acclamation together.*

Gospel: Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy God sent the angel Gabriel to a town in Galilee named Nazareth. He had a message for a young woman promised in marriage to a man named Joseph, who was a descendant of King David. Her name was Mary. The angel came to her and said, "Peace be with you! The Lord is with you and has greatly blessed you!"

Mary was deeply troubled by the angel's message, and she wondered what his words meant. The angel said to her, "Don't be afraid, Mary; God has been gracious to you. You will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God. The Lord God will make him a king, as his ancestor David was, and he will be the king of the descendants of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end!"

Mary said to the angel, "I am a virgin. How, then, can this be?"

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and God's power will rest upon you. For this reason the holy child will be called the Son of God. Remember your relative Elizabeth. It is said that she cannot have children, but she herself is now six months pregnant, even though she is very old. For there is nothing that God cannot do."

"I am the Lord's servant," said Mary; "may it happen to me as you have said." And the angel left her.

(Gospel passage taken from Good News Translation® and used with permission, see details below)*

Gospel reflection: What do you remember from today's reading?

The angel Gabriel comes to tell Mary that she will have a very special baby, that he will be the Son of God and will be called Jesus.

How do you think Mary felt when she heard this news?

Mary was frightened at first. Her life was going to change forever. But she trusted in God and said "yes" to all that God asked of her.

The angel Gabriel is God's messenger to Mary and he brings some very important news.

Have you ever been told a very important piece of news? Who was the messenger? Was it someone in your family, a teacher or a friend?

What did they tell you? For example was it about a new baby brother or sister, or was it that someone was coming to visit? Or something else?

How did you feel? Were you happy, excited, sad or frightened?

God wants us all to be his messengers in the world. To share the message that God loves everyone and that we are all part of one global family.

What do you think it means to be a global family? It means that we believe that people all over the world are our brothers and sisters, wherever they live, whatever they believe. That is a message that God wants us to share.

This is what the organisation called CAFOD believes – that we are all equal. They help our sisters and brothers in the poorest countries make a better future for themselves.

This is especially important at this time of year with Christmas coming so soon. Even though we are very busy and excited, we should take time to think about the true meaning of Christmas - that God loves all of us, rich or poor, happy or sad, big or little.

Omar*, and his family, live in a remote, mountainous part of Afghanistan. It can get very cold in the mountains in winter, and heavy snowfall often leaves communities cut off from help.

There has been a bad drought, and the lack of rain has meant Omar's* community haven't been able to grow food or get the supplies they need to survive the cold weather.

For more children's liturgy resources and illustrations see cafod.org.uk/childrensliturgy

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Hassan* is one of the people who works in Afghanistan, making sure help can get through to families like Omars. It can be difficult, but Hassan is determined to help. "We will be here for as long as it takes," he says.

This week, could you be a messenger of good news to someone in your family, local community or around the world? Will you share God's message of love by loving others?

Christmas is nearly here. Spend some time today remembering why Christmas is so special. That we are celebrating God's love for us which he showed by sending his Son Jesus to live among us.

And let's remember all our brothers and sisters around the world in our prayers this week, because we are all part of one global family.

(Names have been changed to protect their identity)*

Intercessions: *You may want to ask the children to offer their own prayers or you can use the suggestions below.*

We want to be like Mary and answer "yes" to God when he calls us, spreading God's message of love and peace to all, and so we pray together:

We pray for our Church all over the world: that she may carry God's message of love by helping everyone in need. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for people in our world who try to share God's message of peace and love with others: that they may find strength to carry on even when it is difficult or dangerous. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for our parish, family and friends: that we may listen to God's message and share it with others in our words and in our actions. Lord, in your mercy...

Closing prayer: God of love, help us to be your messengers on earth, showing your love for all people in everything that we do. Amen.

Activity suggestions

Share the activity sheet with the children and encourage them to complete it either during the liturgy or afterwards.

Give each of the children an angel cut out of card (see template below). The children can write their name in the space. On the back encourage the children to write or draw the message that they are going to share with people in the following week as God's messengers, for example "God loves everybody". Or to write or draw how they will be God's messengers in the coming week.

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Invite the children to share all that they have heard and thought about today with the people at home. Encourage them to think about how they can share God's message as a family and to try to do at least one thing in the coming week to share God's message of love for everyone in the way they behave.

*Gospel passage taken from:

Good News Translation® (Today's English Version, Second Edition)
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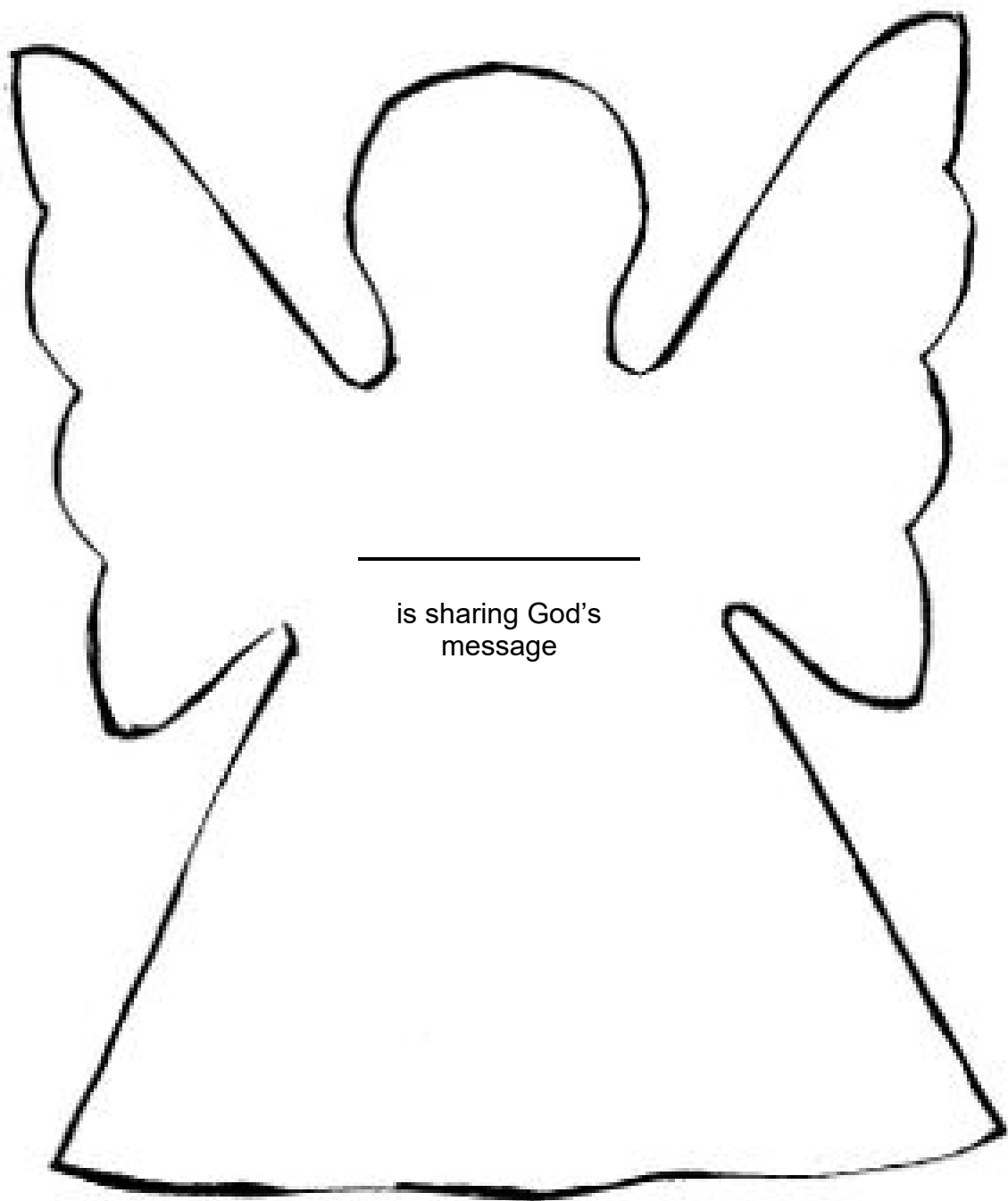
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is sharing God's
message

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