

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

### Preparing the worship space

Colour: purple

Props: pictures of babies from around the world

**Song suggestions:** The angel Gabriel (113, Laudate)

**Welcome:** Today we hear how an angel appeared to Joseph to tell him what a special baby Jesus would be. We are going to be thinking about parents and babies from around the world.

**Opening prayer:** Loving God, as we wait for the birth of Jesus at Christmas, we give thanks for the wonderful gift of new life. We pray for all parents around the world and for their children, that they will be healthy, happy and love one another. Amen.

**First reading (optional):** Isaiah 7:10-14

**Psalm:** Ps 23:1-2, 3-4, 5-6

**Gospel acclamation:** *Everyone stands and sings the acclamation together.*

**Gospel:** Matthew 1:18-24

This was how the birth of Jesus Christ took place. His mother Mary was engaged to Joseph, but before they were married, she found out that she was going to have a baby by the Holy Spirit. Joseph was a man who always did what was right, but he did not want to disgrace Mary publicly; so he made plans to break the engagement privately. While he was thinking about this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, descendant of David, do not be afraid to take Mary to be your wife. For it is by the Holy Spirit that she has conceived. She will have a son, and you will name him Jesus — because he will save his people from their sins."

Now all this happened in order to make what the Lord had said through the prophet come true, "A virgin will become pregnant and have a son, and he will be called Immanuel" (which means, "God is with us").

So when Joseph woke up, he married Mary, as the angel of the Lord had told him to do. But he had no sexual relations with her before she gave birth to her son. And Joseph named him Jesus.

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

**Gospel reflection:** What do you remember from the story you just heard?

In this story an angel comes to tell Joseph that everything will be all right and that Jesus is not just an ordinary baby, but is very special. He is the son of God.

How do you think Joseph feels in this story?

Who here has a baby brother or sister? What is their name? They need lots of looking after. Even though they are very small, babies need lots of things to make sure that they are happy. Can you think of some of the things that babies need? (Food, warmth, love and attention, sleep, somewhere to live)

No matter where in the world they are born, babies need the same basic things. Sometimes it is hard for families to provide all of these things because of what is happening around them.

In Syria, Kadar and his family had to leave their home because of a war. Kadar has three children. They are five and three and the baby is not even one yet.

Kadar is a teacher, but even though he has a good job it is hard for him to buy all the things that he needs for his family. Because of the war, houses, food and other things that the baby needs, like nappies, have become very expensive.

The local Church in Syria has helped Kadar's family to pay for the house they live in now, so that they have more money to spend on the other things that they need.

Even though it is has been hard, Kadar and his family try to have lots of fun, talking and playing together. Kadar says: "Life would be awful without fun."

God loves us all, even the tiniest baby. As we get ready to celebrate the birth of Jesus, we think about all the other babies around the world and how special they are too.

In the coming week, perhaps you can keep babies, children and their parents around the world in your prayers.

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

The angel told Joseph that Jesus would be a very special baby. Together we pray:

We pray for all babies and children around the world: that they may get the food, shelter and love that they need and grow up to lead happy and healthy lives. Lord, hear us...

We pray for all parents: that they may be able to give their children a safe, warm and loving home to grow up in. Lord, hear us...

We pray for our parish, families and friends: that remembering that God loves everyone around the world, even the tiniest baby, we may share that love with others and help to care for them. Lord, hear us...

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For more children's liturgy resources and illustrations see [cafod.org.uk/childrensliturgy](http://cafod.org.uk/childrensliturgy)

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**Closing prayer:** God of light, you sent your angel to tell Joseph that Jesus was a special baby. Help us to remember that all babies are special because they are all part of your family and you love us all. Amen.

### **Activity suggestions**

Share the accompanying activity sheet with the children. Ask them to colour the illustration of the angel visiting Joseph. Ask them to do the other activities on the sheet either now or at home later.

Ask the children to write a prayer for all babies, children and their parents.

Ask the children to go home and share all that have heard thought about today. During the week, ask them to find pictures of themselves as a baby. How have they changed? Can they recognise themselves? Ask them to also find pictures of their parents or other family members as a baby, or pictures of babies from around the world in magazines, newspapers or on CAFOD's website. Are there any similarities or differences between the pictures? If they have written a prayer, ask them to say it at home together during the week.

### **Gospel passage taken from:**

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