

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

### Preparing for worship

**Colour:** purple

**Props:** Advent wreath

**Song suggestions:** Sing and shout for joy (Share the light, OCP publications)

**Welcome:** Today we hear how cousins Mary and Elizabeth rejoiced when they saw each other and how Elizabeth knew straight away that Mary's baby was very special. Let's think a bit more about this and about babies around the world.

**Opening prayer:** Caring God, Elizabeth was filled with joy when she saw Mary and knew how special her baby would be. May all parents and their babies around the world have the chance to live healthy and happy lives, with hope for the future. Amen.

**First reading (optional):** Micah 5:1-4a

**Psalm:** Psalm 79: 2-3, 15-16, 18-19

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

**Gospel:** Luke 1:39-45

Soon afterwards Mary got ready and hurried off to a town in the hill country of Judea. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby moved within her. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and said in a loud voice, "You are the most blessed of all women, and blessed is the child you will bear! Why should this great thing happen to me, that my Lord's mother comes to visit me? For as soon as I heard your greeting, the baby within me jumped with gladness. How happy you are to believe that the Lord's message to you will come true!"

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

**Gospel reflection:** What do you remember from the reading today?

While Mary is pregnant with Jesus, she goes to visit her cousin Elizabeth who is also expecting a baby. As soon as Elizabeth sees Mary she is filled with joy. Why do you think this is?

Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit and recognises that Mary's baby will be the Son of God. How do you think Mary feels when Elizabeth says this to her?

Who here has a baby brother or sister? Do you remember when you were told that there would be a new baby in the family? How did it make you feel? How did you feel when they were born?

Babies are special. They need a lot of looking after. Can you think of some things that babies need?

Are there some things that you can do for yourself that a baby can't?

No matter where in the world that they are born, all babies need the same things. They need someone to love and care for them. They need someone to feed them and to keep them warm and clean.

Blanca lives in El Salvador. In some parts of El Salvador, especially in the countryside, it can be hard for people to see a doctor or get the healthcare that they might need.

But Blanca was able to visit a healthcare clinic supported by CAFOD when she was pregnant and when she had her babies. Along with other new mothers in her area, she has also learned about how to take care of her children and what food is healthiest for the baby and for the whole family. This helps them all to stay well.

She says, "Whenever I've come here. They've always taken care of me."

Blanca knows she has somewhere to go for help and support for herself and her baby, and that she and all the women in her community have health experts to turn to when they need.

As we remember how Mary and Elizabeth were filled with joy as they waited for their very special babies to arrive, let's pray for all the other babies around the world who are all special too.

God loves us all, even the tiniest baby. Let us remember God's love for us, and for all people, and think about how we can show love to others in this coming week.

How do you think you could show love to others? Either a baby or new parent in your family. Or to another family member, friend, or even to a person that you don't know.

We can show love by visiting someone, sharing things, sending a message, or by helping. We can show love for our brothers and sisters around the world by doing what we can to make the world a fairer place for all people to live and by treating others as we would like to be treated.

What will you do this week to show love for others?

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

We know that God loves us all, even the tiniest baby, and so we pray together:

We pray for all parents around the world: that they may be able to give their children a safe and loving home and encourage them to fulfil their dreams. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for all babies and children throughout the world: that they may live happy and healthy lives and have hope for a future free from poverty. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for our parish, family and friends: that we may be inspired to share God's love with all people, no matter where they are in the world. Lord, in your mercy...

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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 all, fill us with joy at the coming of your Son, as Mary and Elizabeth were filled with joy. Help us to spread your love by caring for all our brothers and sisters around the world. Amen.

### **Activity suggestions**

Share the accompanying activity sheet with the children. Invite them to decorate the bauble by writing the names of all the people who love them and who they love on it. Encourage them to cut it out and hang it on their tree once it is up. You could also encourage them to stick the paper template to card to make it stiffer.

Light four candles on your Advent Wreath if you have one. Use the prayer on the accompanying activity sheet to pray for your group's intentions at this time and encourage the children to take it home to pray during the week.

Encourage the children to discuss all that they have heard and thought about today with the people at home. Remind them to try and show their love for others in some way in the coming week.

\*Gospel passage taken from:  
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