

St. Joseph's Children's Liturgy of the Word

Advent 2023 (Year B)



stjoe.fam.activities@gmail.com <https://www.theannunciation.org.uk/resources/>

St. Joseph is the patron saint of the family, and the family is the “domestic Church.” These sheets were developed to support my parish of St. Joseph in Great Malvern, Worcestershire, but they are now used by parishes and schools all over the country. As always, feedback and suggestions are most welcome.

Sunday Mass is the cornerstone of our week; These resources are designed to be used in a family setting or in Children's Liturgy of the Word at Mass, or in the classroom. Please make them your own and feel free to pass them on for free.



The Annunciation – from above a font in Luca Italy © Carol Ann Harnett 2016.

Happy New Year

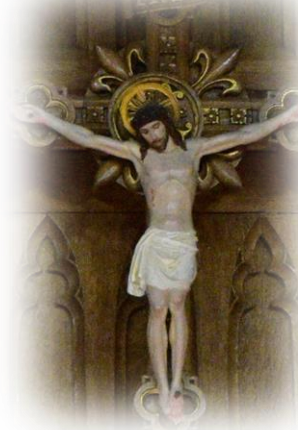
Advent marks the start of the Church's year. This year is Year B; and for most of the year on Sundays we hear from St. Mark's Gospel. The cycle of the liturgical year is something that we repeat again and again of course, but it may be more helpful to think of it as a spiral. We revisit the same feast and solemnities, but each year in a different place in our relationship with Jesus Christ. He is the centre of the Church's year and so every season we dwell on a different aspect of our salvation in Him.

Advent is about preparing for Christ's second coming in the fullness of time but of course it's also about being prepared to celebrate the first coming of Christ as a baby 2,000 years ago. With children and the commerciality of Christmas it's hard not to dwell on presents, decorations, food, parties and family gatherings, all of which are really important. However, these things are meaningless unless Christ is at the centre. One way we can keep Christ at the centre of our Christmas preparations is to have a crib which is built over the four weeks – each day adding something new to it, or as well as the chocolate advent calendar, have a prayer or scripture calendar as well. On the third and fourth Sundays of Advent a crib-making activity is suggested. If you do this, please send photos. Finally, there are several suggested activities depending upon the time and resources you have available.

There are Four Dimensions of our Faith, and the activities all reflect one or more of each of these dimensions.

Professing the faith (speaking about it and learning the faith)

Celebrating our faith in the liturgy and the sacraments



Living the faith in Christ (making choices by the grace of Jesus Christ)

A prayer-filled life where the Our Father takes centre stage

Children's liturgy of the word for this week



Gospel for 1st Sunday of Advent Year B

Mark 13:33-37



Jesus said to his disciples: 'Be on your guard, stay awake, because you never know when the time will come. It is like a man travelling abroad: he has gone from home, and left his servants in charge, each with his own task; and he has told the doorkeeper to stay awake. So stay awake, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming, evening, midnight, cockcrow, dawn; if he comes unexpectedly, he must not find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake!'

The Gospel of the Lord R/:
Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Discussion on the Gospel

This is New Year's Day! The first Sunday in Advent is the start of the Church's year. The Church's year begins with a look to the future coming of Christ in glory. No one knows when that will be, it could be tonight, it could be in thousands of years. The message is to live as if Christ is coming today, and then we will not be caught unawares. Today the children will make a liturgical year wheel and a bit of preparation is needed.



Q: What did Jesus ask His disciples/us to do? (A. Stay awake.)

Q: Does Jesus mean that we can never go to bed? (A. No, of course not.)

Q: Jesus is saying that we need to always think about Him and live every day as if we might meet Him at any moment. The Church does this all the time, and every day keeps Jesus at the centre of everything she does. Through the year, Like in nature, the Church has different seasons and so thinks about Jesus in a different way. What season of the Church's year starts today? (A: Advent.)

Q: All the different seasons of the Church's year are called the "liturgical year." Today is New Year's Day for the Church. What do we do in January for New Year's Day? (A: Make resolutions.)

Q: We can make some new year's resolutions for the new Church's year too. What could we decide to do better for our life of faith? (A: Open – but help the children to focus on prayer etc.)

Q: What is the next season after Advent that the Church celebrates? (A: Christmas.)

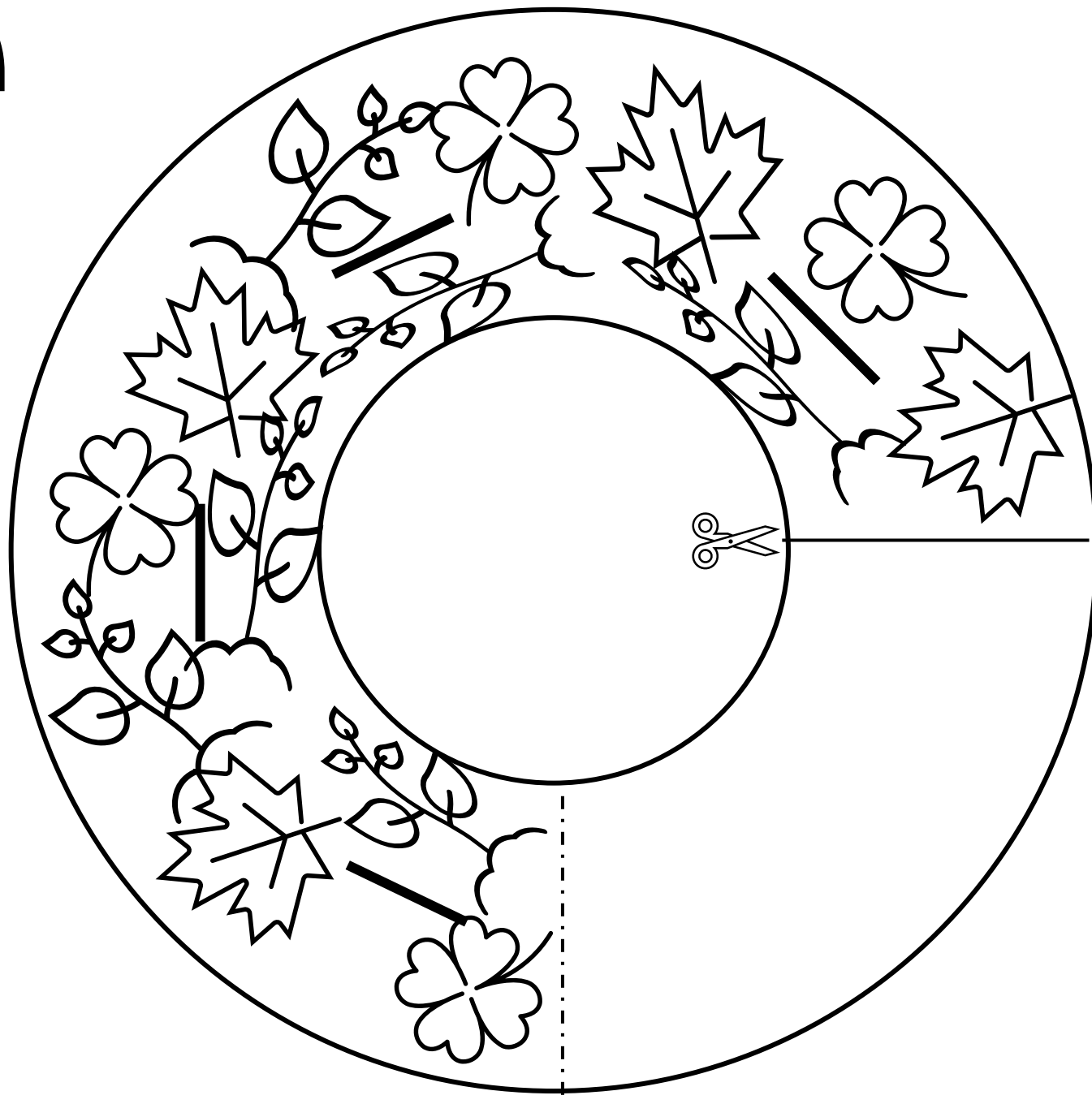
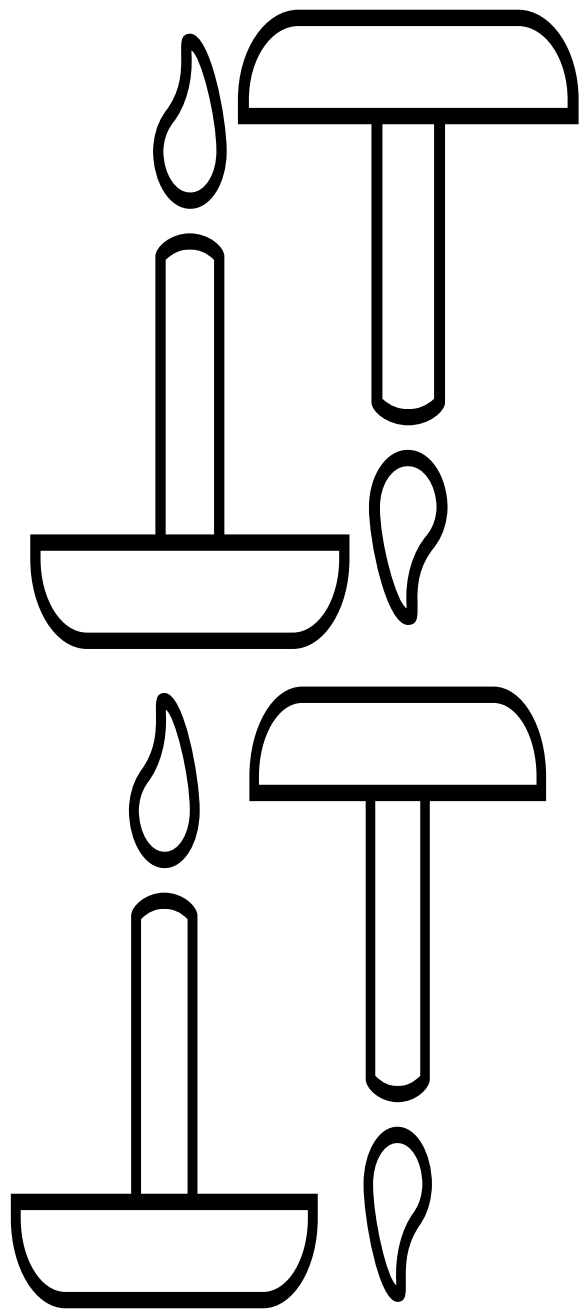
Q: What other seasons does the Church celebrate? (A: Ordinary time [green], Lent [purple] Easter[white/gold] and saints days [red or white usually].)

Q: Show the liturgical year wheel and say that this is a good way to keep up with the liturgical year. Where should the arrow point now? (A: To Advent.)

Q: What colour is Advent? (: Purple – show the purple cloth on the focal table.)

Q: What other colours are there? (A: Green, white, red [some have black for All Souls Day].)

End with a time of prayer asking Jesus to help us to stay awake and keep thinking about Him throughout the day, every day.



Instructions for making the advent wreath.

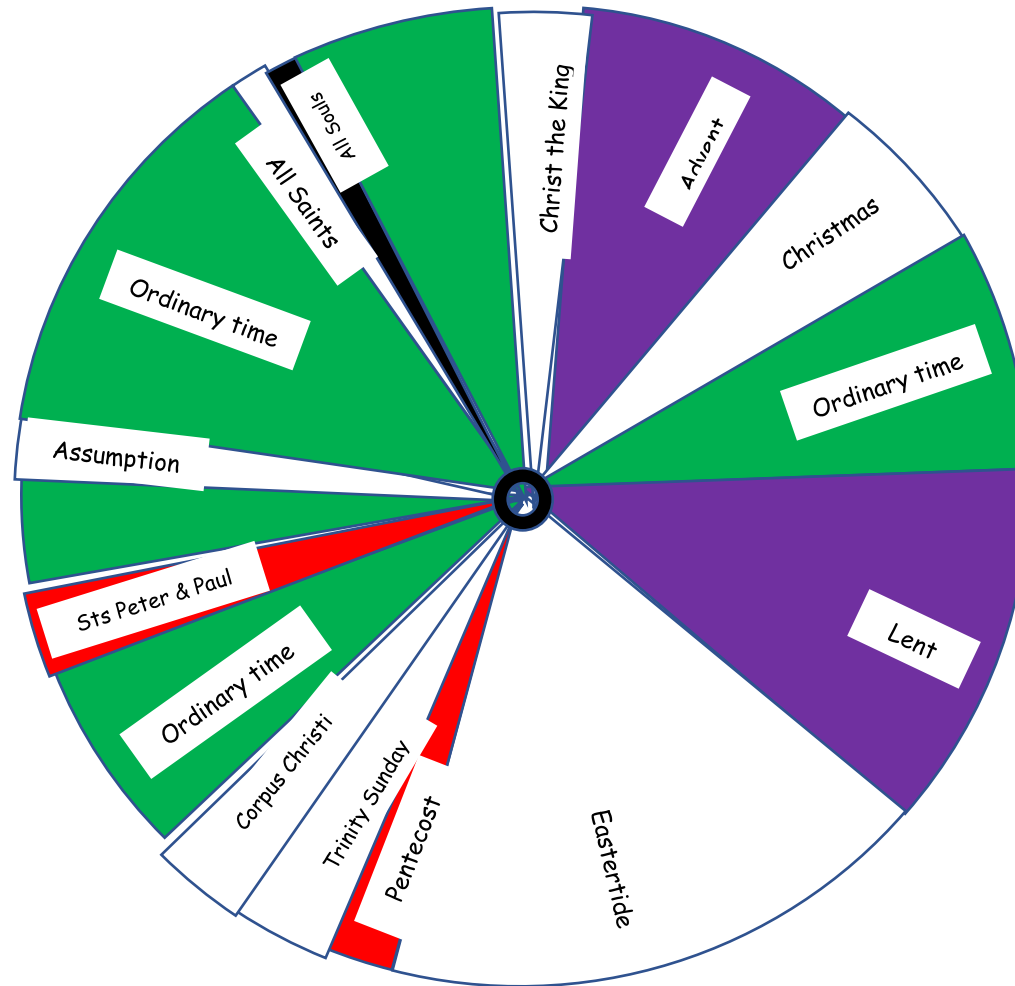
1. Print the above page on paper or card.
2. Cut out the ring with one slit to the centre ring (where the scissors are)
3. Cut each of a slit in the wreath (where the short black lines are. This is best done by folding the paper/card along the slit and making a small snip with scissors.
4. Cut out the candles.
5. Colour in the leaves on the wreath and the candles (three candles purple and one pink)
6. Colour in the flame of one purple candle - leave the others blank to complete each week.
7. Fold the ring so that the blank quarter sits under the coloured section and either glue together or staple.
8. Slot the candles through each of the slits with the pink candle opposite the candle with the coloured flame, and glue in place.

The example (pictured) does not have the leaves added to the wreath and is made out of paper. Card would be better. Also on this prototype, the candles are thinner.



How to make this Liturgical Year wheel:

1. It would be a good idea to print this on card for stability
2. Cut out the circle and the arrow below
3. Punch a hole in the bottom of the arrow and in the centre of the wheel
4. Place the arrow on the wheel and fix with a split pin.
5. Turn it so that it points to Advent.



Children's liturgy of the word for this week



Gospel for 2nd Sunday Advent Year B



Mark 1:1-8

The beginning of the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is written in the book of the prophet Isaiah:

Look, I am going to send my messenger before you;

he will prepare your way.

A voice cries in the wilderness:

Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight.

and so it was that John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. All Judaea and all the people of Jerusalem made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins. John wore a garment of camel-skin, and he lived on locusts and wild honey. In the course of his preaching he said, 'Someone is following me, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.'

The Gospel of the Lord. **R:/Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ**

Discussion on the Gospel



- ✚ Light a candle
- ✚ Make the Sign of the Cross
- ✚ Someone read the Gospel slowly

Q: This is the beginning of Marks' Gospel. What is the Good News? (A: Jesus is the Good News because He has come to lead us to His Father).

Q: Where did John the Baptist appear? (A: In the wilderness)

Q: What was he saying? (A: "Prepare a way for the Lord...someone is coming after me who is more powerful... will baptise with the Holy Spirit...")

Q: Who is John the Baptist talking about? (A: Jesus)

Q: What will Jesus do? (A: Baptise with the Holy Spirit)

Q: When do we receive the Holy Spirit? (A: We first receive the Holy Spirit when we are baptised and then at Confirmation this gift of the Holy Spirit is strengthened (made stronger) in us. However, whenever we receive any of the Sacraments, the Holy Spirit comes to us. The Holy Spirit also helps us whenever we ask Him!)

Q: How does the Holy Spirit help us? (A: He guides us and helps us to be strong especially when we are tempted to do something that we should not do. He helps us to understand right from wrong, and to go out and do nice and kind things.

Q: The Holy Spirit also helps us to be sorry for our sins – the bad things we do? When do we say sorry for our sins, at Mass? (A: At the "I confess ... or children may respond "Lord have mercy".)

Finish by Inviting the children to silently think of something bad they had done or for when they have made someone sad (in their minds, not aloud) and then leading them children in praying "Lord Have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy" together, encouraging the children to strike their breasts each time.

If you can get a dish of holy water, invite the children to dip their fingers in and slowly make the Sign of the Cross as a reminder of their own Baptism.

Lord have

mercy.

Christ have

mercy.

Lord have

mercy

Gospel for the 3rd Sunday of Advent Year B

John 1:6-8,19-28

A man came, sent by God.
His name was John.
He came as a witness,
as a witness to speak for the light,
so that everyone might believe through him.
He was not the light,
only a witness to speak for the light.

This is how John appeared as a witness. When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' he not only declared, but he declared quite openly, 'I am not the Christ.' 'Well then,' they asked 'are you Elijah?' 'I am not' he said. 'Are you the Prophet?' He answered, 'No.' So they said to him, 'Who are you? We must take back an answer to those who sent us. What have you to say about yourself?' So John said, 'I am, as Isaiah prophesied:

a voice that cries in the wilderness:
Make a straight way for the Lord.'

Now these men had been sent by the Pharisees, and they put this further question to him, 'Why are you baptising if you are not the Christ, and not Elijah, and not the prophet?' John replied, 'I baptise with water; but there stands among you – unknown to you – the one who is coming after me; and I am not fit to undo his sandal-strap.' This happened at Bethany, on the far side of the Jordan, where John was baptising.

*The Gospel of the Lord. R:/Praise to you
Lord Jesus Christ*



Children's liturgy of the word for this week



Discussion on the Gospel

- ✠ Light a candle
- ✠ Make the Sign of the Cross
- ✠ Someone read the Gospel slowly

This is the account of John the Baptist in John's Gospel and repeats some of last week's message.

Q: Who sent John the Baptist? (A: God.)

Q: How is John the Baptist described? (A: As a witness.)

Q: What is a witness? (A: Someone who tells others what they know or what they have seen or found out.)

Q: What does John the Baptist know about Jesus? (A: That He is coming and that He is so important that John the Baptist is not fit (worthy) of undoing His sandals).

Q: When did Jesus come? (A: At Christmas.)

Q: Where was He born? (A: In a stable in Bethlehem.)

Q: When He was born, some angels appeared to some shepherds on the hillside. The angels were also witnesses, what did they say? (A: I bring you good news of great joy for a saviour has been born [Lk. 2 10:11].)

Q: John the Baptist told people to get ready for Jesus and Jesus came 2,000 years ago. Every year at Christmas we remember that Jesus came, and one way we can do this is to set up a crib scene at home. What can we put in our crib scene? (A: Open.)

Q: One of the most important people we put in the crib scene is Mary, who is she? (A: Jesus' mother.)

Finish by praying the Hail Mary together.

On the next two Sundays the children can make crib figures – instructions on the next two pages. I suggest that Mary and baby Jesus are made this week and Joseph next week. If there is extra time next week, some shepherds could be made with additional blank figures.

Alternatively see the following page for another suggested activity.

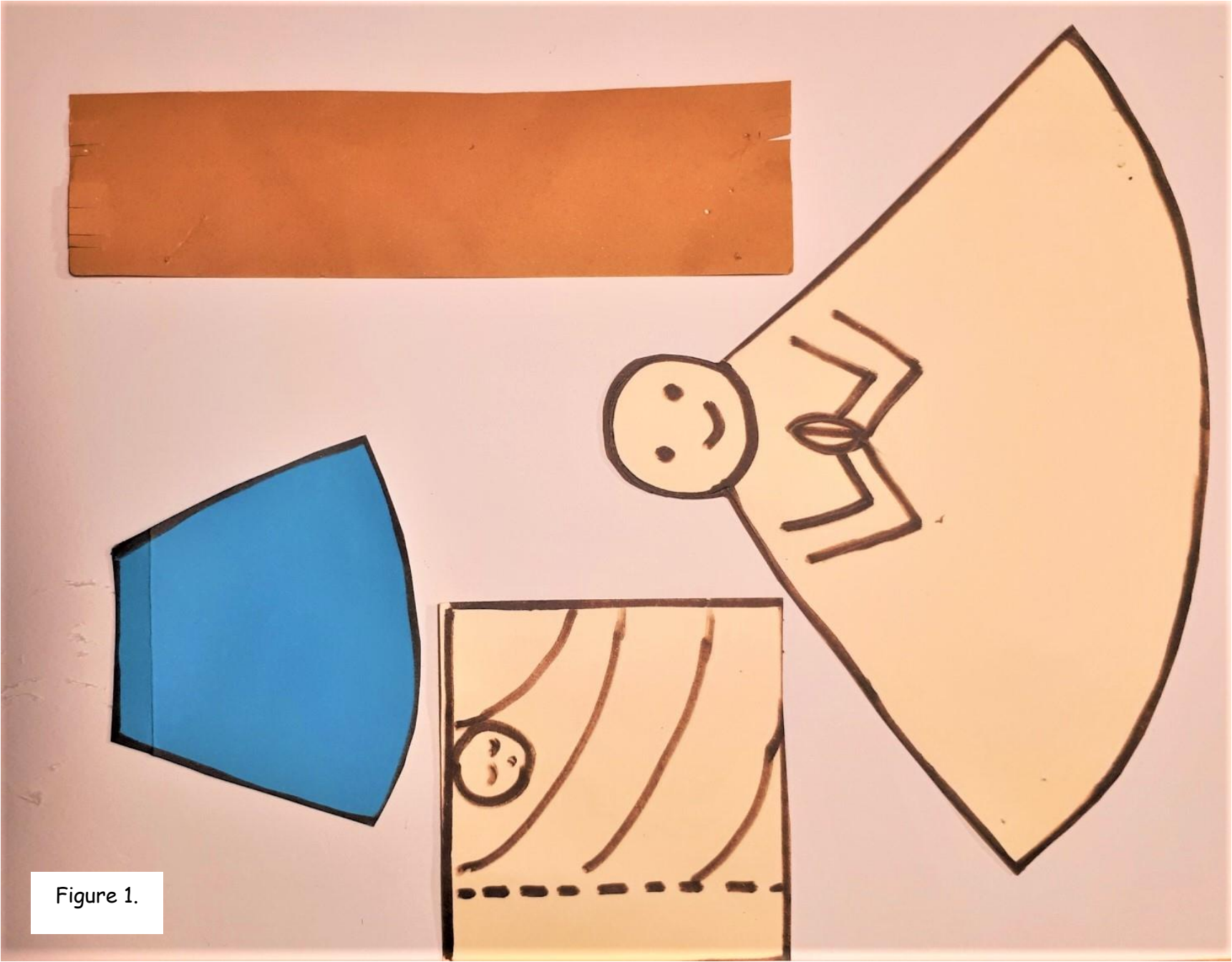


Figure 1.

How to make these crib figures.

1. To Make Mary:

- Cut out the shapes in figure 1.
- If desired, colour in Mary and Baby Jesus.
- Roll up the body and fix at the back with staple or paper clip (see figure 2). (Glue may not hold fast enough)
- Fold Mary's head-dress along the line on the shape
- Glue in place on the top of her head.
- Roll up and glue "Baby Jesus" at the back.

2. To make Joseph (and shepherds etc)

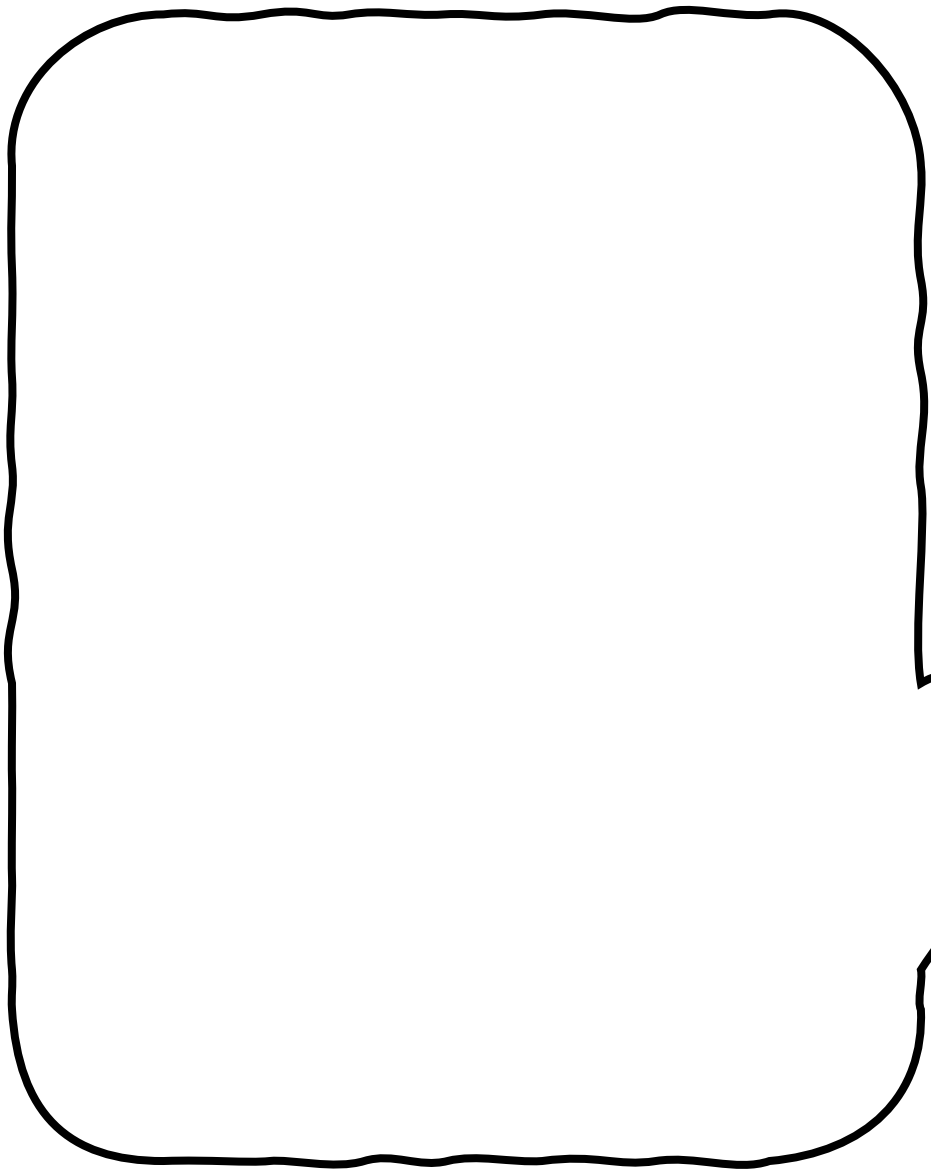
- Make further copies of the body shape and cut out
- Colour in his dress
- Roll up and fix as above
- Glue or staple Joseph's shawl and slip over the head.



Figure 2.




**When finished, maybe arrange
in a box as a stable scene.**



Write in the speech bubble what John the Baptist said and then colour in the picture of him.

Gospel for the 4th Sunday of Advent Year B

Luke 1:26-38



The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. He went in and said to her, 'Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you.' She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, 'Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour. Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?' 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you' the angel answered 'and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God. Know this too: your kinswoman Elizabeth has, in her old age, herself conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God.' 'I am the handmaid of the Lord,' said Mary 'let what you have said be done to me.' And the angel left her.

*The Gospel of the Lord. R:/Praise to you
Lord Jesus Christ*

Children's liturgy of the word for this week



Discussion on the Gospel

- ✠ Light a candle
- ✠ Make the Sign of the Cross
- ✠ Someone read the Gospel slowly

We are now coming to the heart of the Good News of the coming of Jesus Christ. This is the classic and most wonderful account of the Annunciation.

Q: What does the Angel Gabriel say to Mary? (A: Rejoice, Highly favoured, the Lord is with you.... (and also, about Mary bearing (giving birth to) a Son who will be son of the Most High and will be given the throne of his ancestor David)

Q: What have we learned about the baby that Mary will have? (A: He will be called Jesus, He will be the Son of the Most High (Most High means God), He is a descendant of King David...)

Q: How was this going to happen? (A: The Holy Spirit would overshadow Mary.)

Q: What does Mary say at the end? (A: "I am the handmaid of the Lord. Let what you have said be done to me").

Q: What does this mean? (A: That Mary gives the Father permission for her to be the mother of His divine Son, in other words, Mary says yes to God.)

Q: As the Holy Spirit made Jesus present in Mary's womb (tummy) the Holy Spirit makes Jesus present at Mass. When does He do that? (A: When He changes the bread and wine into Jesus Body and Blood for Holy Communion.)

Q: What are we doing at that part of Mass? (A: We are kneeling.)

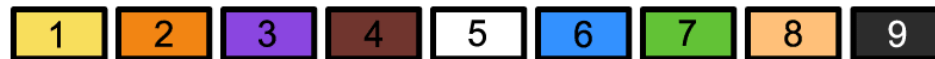
Q: What do we hear at that most important part of Mass? (A: A bell ringing.)

Q: We can make a short private prayer when the priest raised (lifts up) the Host and Chalice. What can we say? (A: Open, but you can suggest something like "I love you Jesus".)

Let's just finish by shutting our eyes and imagining we are looking at Jesus in the crib. Let's say in our hearts, "I love you Jesus"

Either carry on with the crib scene began last week, or colour in one of the attached pictures, or you can use the attached reflection on the Fra Angelico painting which the children can copy and colour in.





The Beauty of Art

On the last page is a picture by a 15th century artist called “Fra Angelico”. This is one of his most famous paintings and it was originally painted as an altarpiece (to go behind the altar during Mass). When this was painted altars were against the East Wall of the Church, and the priest faced East so was facing the same way as everyone else. (Church Tradition is that when Jesus comes again, He will come from the East, so Mass was always said with everyone facing East, not just the congregation, looking for Christ to come again.)

Here are some discussion points about this picture which will help you to understand the mystery of the why Jesus came.

Q: Why is Mary wearing blue and red? (A: Blue, because she is chosen by God (note the cloak goes over her as if God has laid in on her shoulders) and red because it is a sign of humanity, humility and martyrdom. Mary did not die for her faith, but she suffered watching Jesus die)

Q: What do you notice about the way the Angel Gabriel and Mary are looking at each other? (A: Eye-contact; Mary, who is full of grace, (has no sin in her) can look directly at the Angel Gabriel and know that she is loved by the Father. Note also that the Angel Gabriel is bowing towards her. In every mention of meeting angels in the Old Testament, people bowed to the angels. No angel ever bowed at people. This shows us how unique and special Mary is.)

Q: The two figures at the top left are Adam and Eve, being sent out of the garden of Eden because they disobeyed God. But before they left, God promised that a descendant of Eve would defeat the devil/Satan. Jesus is that descendant of Eve. What colour is the ground under Adam and Eve’s feet? (A: Brown/bare, to indicate sin and death.)

Q: See the fence below Adam and Eve. In front there is lots of greenery and lots of little flowers. What do you think that means? (A: flowers are a sign of the new life and joy Jesus brings.)

Q: See the single palm tree on the edge of the building? A Palm tree is a sign of victory and a tree is a sign of Jesus’ cross which brought victory over the Devil. Who appears to be walking into the top leaves of the tree? (A: Adam and Eve)

Q: Why do you think that Fra Angelico painted the picture like that? (A: Jesus will be born to Mary and will die on the Cross to set all people free from sin, including Adam and Eve.)

Q: See the red curtain in the room behind Mary. A red curtain in Sacred Art means the Temple, which had a big red curtain in the middle separating the holy of holies [the holiest place] from the main part where ordinary people could go. The Holy of Holies was too sacred for ordinary people to go into, only priests could and they, only once a year. When Jesus died, the Temple Curtain was torn in two (Mt. 27:51). Why do you think that Fra Angelico has painted a red curtain here? (A: To show that the baby who was to be born would be the one who would die on the cross for us and would end the separation between God and man which began with the original sin of Adam and Eve.)

Q: See the Holy Spirit in a bright light above Mary's head? In the Gospel we read that the Holy Spirit would overshadow Mary, and Fra Angelico has painted the Holy Spirit above Mary's head. The overshadowing of the Holy Spirit made it possible for baby Jesus to be born. At Mass, the priest asks the Father to send His Holy Spirit over the bread and wine. Why? (A: The Holy Spirit comes down over the bread and wine and changes it to the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ)

Q: In the account of the Annunciation, it is by the action of the Holy Spirit, Jesus comes to earth (still inside Mary) and at Mass, the action of the Holy Spirit makes Jesus present on the Altar, even though it still looks like bread and wine. Note that Fra Angelico paints Mary sitting on a gold throne. Why do you think that he did that? (A: Jesus is the new King, a descendant of King David, so it really his throne that Mary is sitting on. At Mass we use gold and/or silver chalices and our tabernacle is gold, as a suitable throne for Jesus the King.)

Q: There are some other things to look out for: The stars on the ceiling above Mary indicate God's promise to Abraham that he would have more descendants than stars and through Jesus, Abraham is our spiritual father; the dark sky around Adam and Eve is also a sign of sin; the figure in the roundel is Isaiah who foretold that the virgin would give birth (Isaiah7:14); the book on Mary's lap is a sign of Jesus who is the Word of God; the words in gold are a summary of the conversation between Mary and the Angel Gabriel. They indicate that God is Trinity because one line goes from the Angel Gabriel towards Mary's womb showing us that she will have a baby (Jesus Christ, God the Son), another line curves up to say that Mary will be overshadowed by the Holy Spirit, and the middle line is Mary's response to the Father. It is upside-down indicating that she is talking not to the Angel Gabriel but to God the Father.

