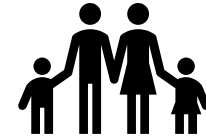




St. Joseph's Parish

Family Activity Sheet



Advent week 20th - 28th December 2020



With a Christmas week supplement

Introduction:

A blessed and most Joyous Christmas to all. This week's sheet, like the *Radio Times*, is a bumper double issue, but hopefully with activities which are in the long run, more fulfilling!

Please do send feedback of the activities which you have enjoyed, and we can include pics in next year's editions of this sheet. If anyone has any suggestions for future faith-based activities, please do let me know, either through the office or by emailing me directly.

There are Four Dimensions of the Faith which we can put around the cross, making sure that Jesus Christ is the centre of everything we do:



Speaking/Learning the faith
(which the Church calls
"professing the faith")

Living it (in Christ) – i.e. the
choices we make in everyday
life



Celebrating it in the liturgy
and the sacraments

Christian prayer.

Feast/memorial	Activity
<p data-bbox="358 183 963 215"><u>20th December: 4th Sunday of Advent</u></p> <div data-bbox="241 247 387 391">  </div> <p data-bbox="414 263 952 295">First reading 2 Samuel chapter 7</p> <p data-bbox="241 319 1079 518">The prophet Nathan said to King David, “The Lord will make you great; the Lord will make you a House. And when your days are ended, your House and your sovereignty will always stand secure before me and your throne be established for ever.”</p> <p data-bbox="241 566 571 598">Gospel Luke 1:26-38</p> <p data-bbox="241 630 1079 1412">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</p>	<p data-bbox="1265 183 1792 215"><u>Family reflection on the Gospel:</u></p> <div data-bbox="1960 215 2027 303">  </div> <ul data-bbox="1153 263 2094 391" style="list-style-type: none"> • Light a candle • Someone read the extract from the first reading and the Gospel aloud <p data-bbox="1108 399 1680 430"><i>Discuss together some of these questions</i></p> <p data-bbox="1108 438 2094 582"><i>In the first reading, the prophet Nathan is telling King David that one of his descendants will be king for ever. It's important to realise that the Jews thought that this meant that a political king would come one day and make Israel great again as it was when King David was king.</i></p> <p data-bbox="1108 590 2094 662"><i>The Annunciation account is very familiar to us, as it is the announcement of the coming of God’s Son.</i></p> <ul data-bbox="1153 670 2094 829" style="list-style-type: none"> • What did the prophet Nathan promise King David? (Ans: that His House (family) would stand for ever) • How is St. Joseph described in the Gospel? (Ans: of the house of David) <p data-bbox="1108 837 1870 869"><i>So, we know that St. Joseph is a descendant of King David.</i></p> <ul data-bbox="1153 877 2094 1396" style="list-style-type: none"> • What does the Angel Gabriel say to Mary? (Ans: 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) • What have we learned about the baby that Mary will have? (Ans; 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...) • What does it mean that Mary’s baby will have the throne of His ancestor David? (Ans: That Jesus will be the promised King that everyone was waiting for, that was promised by the prophet Nathan in the first reading.) • What does Mary say at the end? (Ans: “I am the handmaid of the Lord. Let what you have said be done to me”).

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.

- What does this mean? (Ans: that Mary gives the Father permission for her to be the mother of His divine Son, in other words, Mary says yes to God.)
- How was this going to happen? (Ans: The Holy Spirit would overshadow Mary.)
- When does the Holy Spirit work in our lives? (when we were baptised, when we celebrate any of the sacraments, He helps us to be strong, brave and teaches us, helps us to understand.... Etc.

The Beauty of Art

On the next 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.

- **Why is Mary wearing blue and red?** (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 as she watched her Son die)
- **What do you notice about the way the Angel Gabriel and Mary are looking at each other?** (Ans: 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.
- **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?** (Ans: brown/bare, to indicate sin and death.)
- **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?** (Ans: flowers are a sign of the new life and joy Jesus brings.)
- **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? Why do you think**

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

- **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?** (Ans: 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.)
- **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?** (Ans: The Holy Spirit comes down over the bread and wine and changes it to the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ)
- **In the story 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?** (Ans: Jesus is the new king, (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.)
- **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.



The Angelus

The Angelus is a prayer that is traditionally prayer at 12 Noon and 6pm (& 6 am if you are up then!). Some churches ring the angelus bell to remind people nearby to stop for this beautiful but short prayer. The Angelus honours that God became Man (the Incarnation) and Mary's free acceptance of God's will. May be as a family you can pray it at 6pm sometimes? It is said as a statement and response and then the "Hail Mary" in between each question.

The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary. **R/: And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.**

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Behold the handmaid of the Lord. **R/: Be it done unto me according to thy word.**

Hail Mary,

And the Word was made flesh. **R/: And dwelt amongst us.** (kneel)

Hail Mary....

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God. **R/: That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.**

Let us pray.

Pour forth, we beseech thee, O Lord, thy grace into our hearts; that we, to whom the incarnation of Christ thy Son was made known by the message of an angel, may, by his passion ☩ and cross, be brought to the glory of his resurrection. Through the same Christ our Lord, Amen.



Christmas Crib

Set up a Christmas crib if you have not done so already, Last year we made Christmas crib figures out of plastic bottles. If you are not sure how to, scrunch a ball of newspaper, cover with a neutral cloth and tie to the neck of a plastic bottle half filled with water (for stability). Wrap more cloth around the body and then add a head-covering and facial details. You can make as many figures as you like –you can also use cardboard rolls for the figures, or you can cut out pictures from old Christmas cards and put them on little cardboard stands. Do send us photos of your own home-made cribs.



Remembering our neighbours:

This year there may be more people on their own than is usual. If you know someone is on their own, may be take then some mince pies or a little treat. Of course we cant go into their homes but wear disposable gloves as you prepare the treat and stand back as they open the door. May be you can collect some greenery from the garden to make a little “green bouquet” for them.

Heres’ a fun Quiz: Questions in black, answers in red!

1. In the advent carol “The Angel Gabriel from heaven came” how is Mary described at the end of each verse? **Most highly favoured lady.**
2. In the medieval carol “Gaudete” what does *Gaudete Christus est natus* mean? **Rejoice, Christ is born. (1 point for each correct word).**
3. Why did Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem? **2 possible answers: 1. Because there was a census and Joseph needed to be enrolled in Bethlehem. 2. Because Joseph was of the line (a descendant of) David and his home town/city was Bethlehem.**
4. Who called a census? **Caesar Augustus (Lk. 2:1).**
5. What is the other name given to Bethlehem in the Gospel? **City of David (Lk. 2:4, 11).**
6. What does “Bethlehem” mean? **House of bread.**
7. What comes next in this verse of “O little Town of Bethlehem”: “And praises sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth”? **For Christ is born of Mary and gathered all above.....”**
8. How many inns did Mary and Joseph call at before they found a place to stay? **The correct answer is, we dont know, it only says that there was no place for them at THE inn.**
9. Who wrote the tune for “Silent Night” **Franz Gruber.**
10. Which of the 4 Gospels tells us about the visit of the shepherds? **Luke’s, (chapter 2).**
11. Which carol is this from? “He came down from earth to heaven, who is God and Lord of all”? **Once in Royal David’s City.**
12. How did the angel who appeared to the shepherds, describe Jesus? **A Saviour who is Christ the Lord (Lk. 2:11).**
13. What prayer at Mass quotes from the Christmas story? **The Gloria (Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to people of good will – c.f. Lk. 2:14).**
14. What was Mary’s reaction to the visit of the shepherds? **She kept these things and pondered in her heart (Lk. 2:19)**
15. Where in the Bible will we find mentioned the ox and the ass (donkey) that is so common in the stable scene? **Isaiah 1:3; “The ox knows its owner and the donkey it’s master’s crib, but Israel does not know, my people does not understand.”**
16. In the carol “In the Bleak mid winter,” what would the shepherd bring? **A lamb.**
17. What are the words of the verse of “O Come all ye faithful”? that is only sung on or after Christmas? **Yea Lord we greet thee, born this happy morning, Jesu to thee be glory given. Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing....**
18. What date does the Church traditionally celebrate the feast of Epiphany (when the magi/wise me/kings arrived)? **6th January.**
19. Which Gospel has the account of the visit of the Magi? **Matthew’s, (chapter 2).**
20. How many Kings are mentioned in the account of the visit of the Magi? **Two: King Herod and Jesus, the new baby King. We do not know how many wise men/kings there were, the number 3 arose because of the 3 gifts.**

21. What are the three gifts brought by the Magi? **Gold, Frankincense, Myrrh (Mt. 2:11).**
22. What is the Latin title of “O Come all ye faithful”? **Adeste fidelis.**
23. In the carol “We Three Kings” in what verse are the words “Myrrh is mine, it's bitter perfume” sung. **Verse 4 (out of 5).**
24. Of all characters mentioned in the Christmas stories, who actually worshipped Jesus? **The wise men (Magi) who “when they saw the child, with Mary His mother... they fell down and worshipped Him” (Mt. 2:11).**
25. What are the different ways in which Jesus is described in “Hark the Herald Angels Sing? (1 point for each). **New born King; Christ; By highest heaven adored; Everlasting Lord; Offspring of a virgin’s womb, Godhead (veiled in flesh); Incarnate Deity, Emmanuel; Prince of Peace; Sun of Righteousness; Bringer of light and life; Risen; born to raise mankind. (You may interpret more!)**

27th December the feast of the Holy Family

Let us pray today for all families that the Holy Family will keep them together, support them and that the practice of love will override any stresses and strains within the individual members.

How about making a phone call to a family member that you have not been able to see over Christmas.

Don't forget those all-important thank you letters!

1st January 2021 Mary, Mother of God

Eight days after we celebrate the birth of Jesus, today we focus on Mary, the Mother of God. Because Jesus is fully God and fully man, Mary is mother of not just Jesus the man but also of Jesus who is God. This is one of the oldest celebrations of the Church. Like all teaching about Mary, it tells us more about Jesus than it does about Mary.

Try to learn the central words of this blessing from the Old Testament: May be you can say it as a family prayer at bedtime or at meal times.

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May the Lord let his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

May the Lord uncover his face to you and bring you peace.”

This is the first reading from Mass today and it's a beautiful prayer

Numbers 6:22-27

The Lord spoke to Moses and said, ‘Say this to Aaron and his sons: “This is how you are to bless the sons of Israel. You shall say to them:

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May the Lord let his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

May the Lord uncover his face to you and bring you peace.”

This is how they are to call down my name on the sons of Israel, and I will bless them.’

A blessing for each person:

Each member of the family says the central blessing on another and mark the Sign of the Cross on their forehead as they say it. The person can respond “Amen” and then turn to pray this on another person.