

St. Joseph's Family Activities Advent 2022 (Year A)

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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; it's the source of grace for living a life IN Christ. We can help the whole family to grow in faith by spending precious moments together to pray as a family, even if it is just a few minutes after a meal. It can be a fruitful time. Light a candle and have a few moments' silence and remind everyone that they are in the presence of God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Start with just a few moments and build up the scope and variety of prayers slowly. Give everyone the opportunity to voice their own prayers as well as reciting (and learning) traditional prayers.

Happy New Year

Advent marks the start of the Church's year. This year is Year A; and for most of the year on Sundays we hear from St. Matthew'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. On the final page are photos of the Zacchaeus “puppets” made by one parish.



The visit of the angel to St Joseph in a dream (4th Sunday of Advent) – photo from St Joseph's Malvern.

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

Discussion on the Gospel



Gospel for 1st Sunday of Advent Year A

27th November 2022

Matthew 24:37-44

Jesus said to his disciples: 'As it was in Noah's day, so will it be when the Son of Man comes. For in those days before the Flood people were eating, drinking, taking wives, taking husbands, right up to the day Noah went into the ark, and they suspected nothing till the Flood came and swept all away. It will be like this when the Son of Man comes. Then of two men in the fields one is taken, one left; of two women at the millstone grinding, one is taken, one left.

'So stay awake, because you do not know the day when your master is coming. You may be quite sure of this, that if the householder had known at what time of the night the burglar would come, he would have stayed awake and would not have allowed anyone to break through the wall of his house. Therefore, you too must stand ready because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.'

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

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

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: Jesus is telling us to be ready for when He comes back again at the end of time. What is He telling 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.)

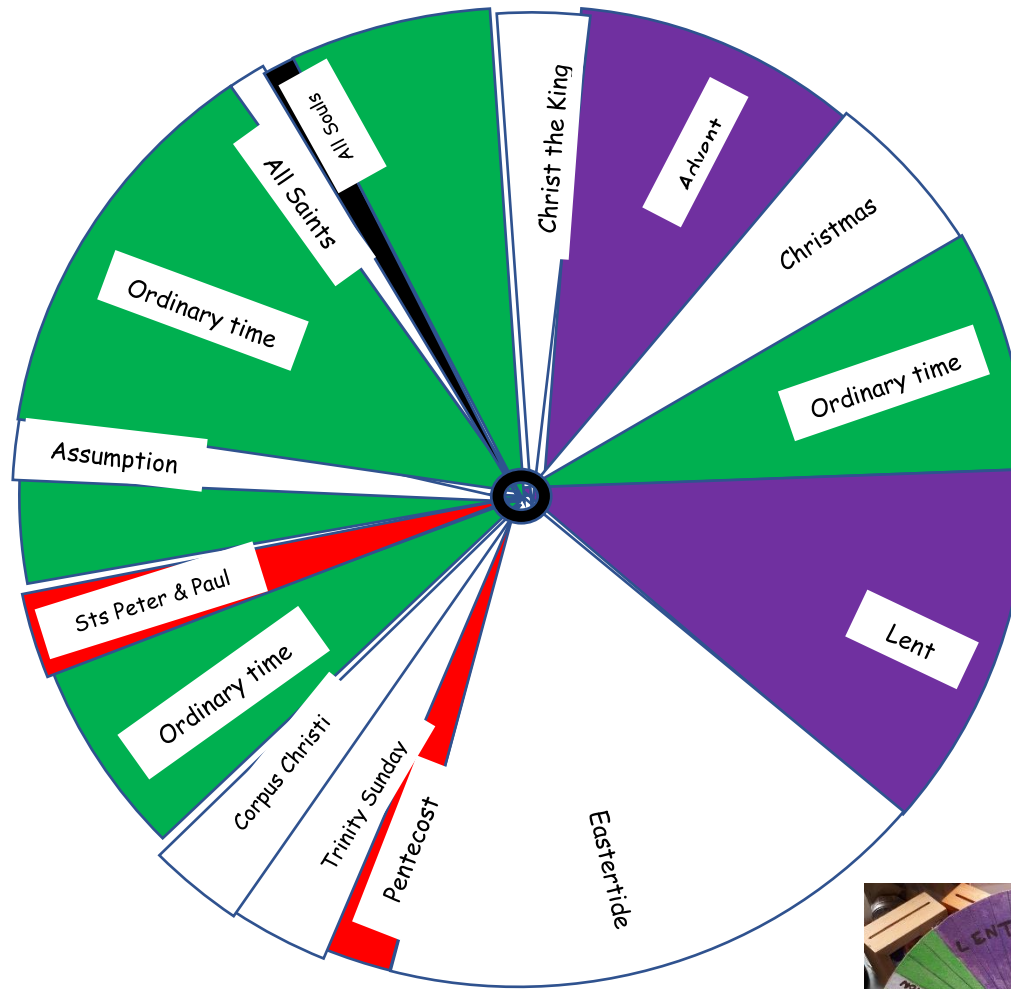
Q: What colour is Advent? (: Purple – show the purple cloth on the focal table.)

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

Show the liturgical year wheel and say that this is a good way to keep close to Jesus all

**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 so that it points to Advent.



Children's liturgy of the word for this week



Gospel for 33rd 2nd Sunday Advent Year A

4th December 2022

Matthew 3:1-12

In due course John the Baptist appeared; he preached in the wilderness of Judaea and this was his message: 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.' This was the man the prophet Isaiah spoke of when he said:

*A voice cries in the wilderness:
Prepare a way for the Lord,
make his paths straight.*

This man John wore a garment made of camel-hair with a leather belt round his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem and all Judaea and the whole Jordan district made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins. ...

I baptise you in water for repentance, but the one who follows me is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to carry his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fan is in his hand; he will clear his threshing-floor and gather his wheat into the barn; but the chaff he will burn in a fire that will never go out.'

*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

This week, the Gospel is referring to the coming of John the Baptist. He is urging us to prepare a way for the Lord – to prepare for Christ. This is what advent is all about.

Q: What did John the Baptist proclaim (announce)? (A: Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is near at hand/coming.)

Q: What does repent mean? (A: Being sorry.)

Q: What is a sin? (A: Something that we do on purpose that we know we should not do, or something that we don't do that we know we should do.)

Q: What are the kinds of things that we might do on purpose that are sins? (A: Open.)

Q: A mistake is not a sin – what are things that we might do by mistake? (A: Open)

Q: John the Baptist says that he baptises with water but someone is coming who will baptise with the Holy Spirit. Who is that? (A: Jesus.)

Q: What can we do to prepare, to get ready, for Jesus coming? (A: Open but you could suggest, saying extra prayers, children who have made their first Confession can receive that Sacrament....)

Q: When do we say sorry for the bad things we have done, our sins, at Mass? (A: At the "I confess ... or children may respond "Lord have mercy".)

Finish by leading the children in praying "Lord Have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy" together, encouraging the children to strike their breasts.

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

On the next page is an activity which I suggested last year. A variation is to make John the Baptist, Jesus and other people and place the characters in a scene for others in the parish to enjoy. An older child could make a label explaining the scene.

Make a mini John the Baptist to have at home to remind you that Advent is preparing for Jesus' coming.

Instructions:

You will need:

- Cardboard roll
- Round or oval disc for face
- Two strips of paper/card for arms
- Cloth for the "dress" cut long enough to wrap around the tube
- "Hair" made from cloth cut with strips either side but a solid section in the middle to cover top of tube
- Label saying "get ready for Jesus" (Older children can write their own which will drive the message home more, younger children may need it ready printed).



1. Roll the cloth for the "dress" around the cardboard tube to make the body, tucking excess up underneath the tube. Glue in place.
2. Draw eyes and an open mouth on the circle for the face.
3. Put some glue around the top of the tube, including along the top of the face.
4. Stick the "hair" in place.
5. Put glue on one end of the arms and stick in place either side of the body
6. Write the message on the label and stick to the other ends of the arms.

Your John the Baptist is now ready to display, to remind you that advent is about getting ready for Jesus.

John the
Baptist said
that we must
repent (be
sorry) to get
ready for
Jesus' coming.

Gospel for the 3rd Sunday of Advent Year A

11th December 2022

Matthew 11:2-11

John the Baptist was in prison, and he heard what Christ was doing and he sent his disciples to ask him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or have we got to wait for someone else?' Jesus answered, 'Go back and tell John what you hear and see; the blind see again, and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised to life and the Good News is proclaimed to the poor; and happy is the man who does not lose faith in me.'

As the messengers were leaving, Jesus began to talk to the people about John: 'What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swaying in the breeze? No? Then what did you go out to see? A man wearing fine clothes? Oh no, those who wear fine clothes are to be found in palaces. Then what did you go out for? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and much more than a prophet: he is the one of whom scripture says:

'Look, I am going to send my messenger before you; he will prepare your way before you.

'I tell you solemnly, of all the children born of women, a greater than John the Baptist has never been seen; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he is.'

*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

John the Baptist has been arrested and is in prison. He is puzzled as he thought that Jesus would be the kind of Messiah who would be a political leader and get rid of the Romans but Jesus is not that kind of Messiah. Jesus wants us to be healed, well and to know that He has come to lead us to heaven.

Q: Where is John the Baptist? (A: In prison.)

Q: What did he want to know about Jesus? (A: If He was the promised Messiah.)

Q: What was Jesus' reply? (A: The lame walk, the blind see, etc.)

Q: Who did Jesus say that the Good News is proclaimed (told) to? (A: The poor.)

Q: What is the Good News? (A: That Jesus is the Messiah and He has come to save us from our sins so that we can go to heaven.)

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. What did the Angels 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? (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.

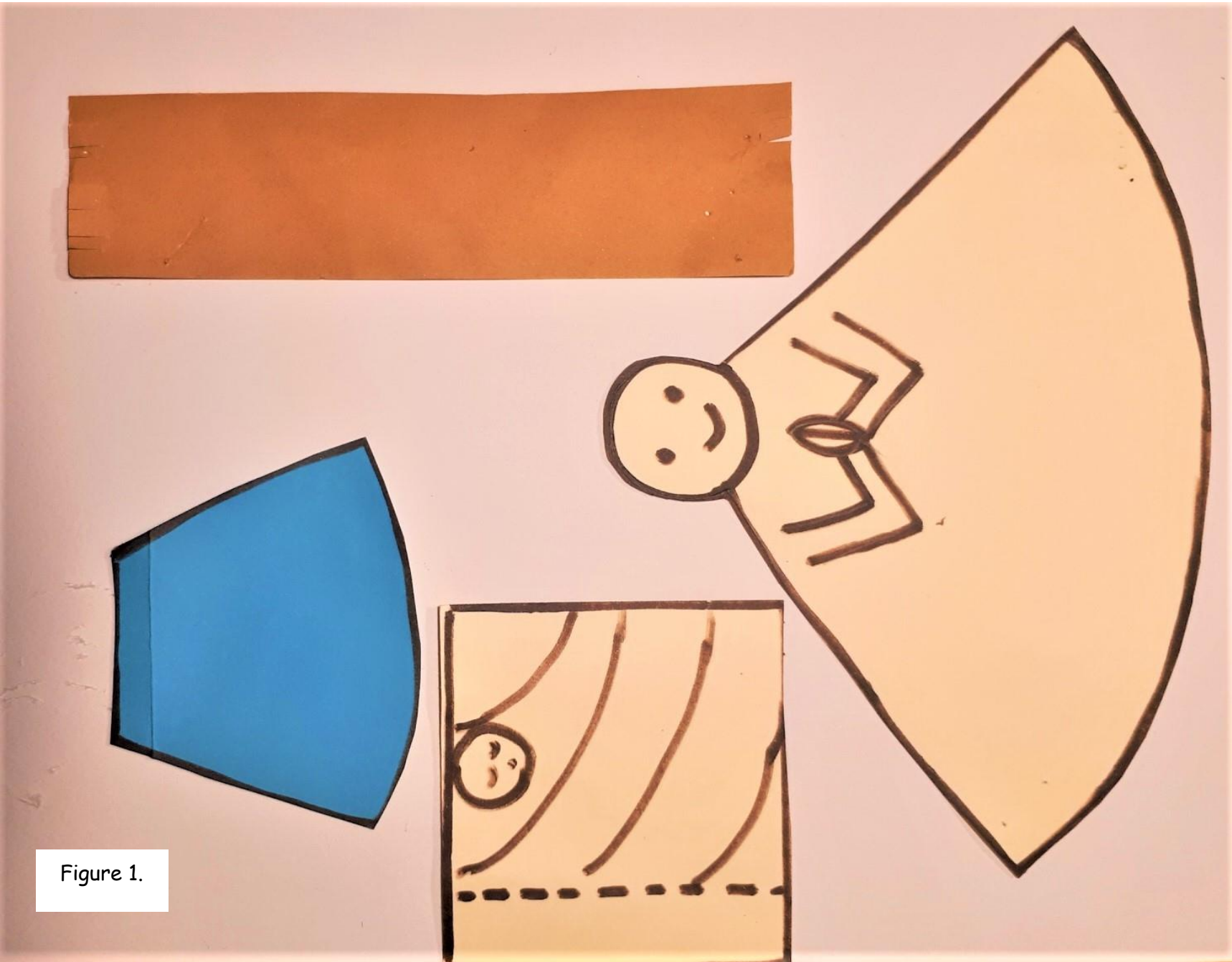


Figure 1.

How to make these crib figures.

1. To Make Mary:

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

2. To make Joseph (and shepherds etc)

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

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



Figure 2.



Gospel for the 4th Sunday of Advent Year A

18th December 2022

Matthew 1:18-24

This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His mother Mary was engaged to Joseph; but before they came to live together she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph; being a man of honour and wanting to spare her publicity, decided to divorce her informally. He had made up his mind to do this when the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.' Now all this took place to fulfil the words spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and they will call him Emmanuel, a name which means 'God-is-with-us.' When Joseph woke up he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do: he took his wife to his home.

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. Children are familiar with Luke's version of the Christmas story but here, the focus is on St. Joseph. He does not feature very much in the Gospels, but lets focus on this person who accepted Jesus and brought Him up as his own Son.

Q: Who was Mary engaged to? (A: Joseph.)

Q: What did Joseph discover about Mary? (A: That she was pregnant by the Holy Spirit.)

Q: Who was the baby that Mary was carrying in her tummy? (A: Jesus.)

Q: How does the Gospel describe Joseph? (A: A man of honour).

Q: What does that mean? (A: He was honest, brave, strong, did not want to hurt anyone, kind...).

Q: What did Joseph decide to do? (A: Divorce Mary).

Q: An Angel then appeared to Joseph– what did the angel tell Joseph to do? (A: To take Mary home.)

Q: What did the Angel say that Joseph was to call Mary's Baby? (A: Jesus.)

Q: What does "Jesus" mean – can anyone guess? (A: God Saves.)

Q: Jesus was going to be born so that He could save us from our sins. How did He do this? (A: He died on the Cross.)

Q: What did St. Joseph do when he woke up? (A: Took Mary into his home.)

Q: What else do we know about St. Joseph? (A: Open.)

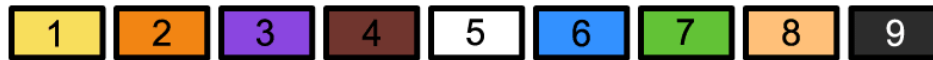
Q: How is St. Joseph an example for us? (A: Open.)

St. Joseph, pray for us.

Last week we made Mary for a crib scene, this week, let us make Joseph and baby Jesus so that like St. Joseph, we can have Mary and Jesus in our home at Christmas. Otherwise there are two colouring activities on the next two pages.



Activity for 4th Sunday of Advent



Photos of the Zacchaeus “puppets” created during Children’s Liturgy of the Word from 31st Sunday of Ordinary time.

Please do send photos of anything that you have done/written etc from these pages.

