



St. Joseph's Family Activities

Lent week 5: 21st-27th March

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A warm welcome to week 5 of Lent. As ever, past editions all available on the parish website; <https://www.stjosephsmalvern.org/j/> and then click on the dropdown box for past editions.

St. Joseph is the head of the Holy Family and patron of the universal Church, the “family” of the Church. Although many of these activities are aimed at young families, the term “family” here is very loosely applied.

This week we celebrate the solemnity of the Annunciation. This wonderful feast of the Church can often get lost amongst the Holy Week and Easter festivities but this year it's on its own proper day. There is a reflection on a privately owned icon which you can cut out and use at home, and also an explanation of the history of the Hail Mary prayer which is so familiar to us.

The family is the “domestic Church” and if we are not able to gather in person with the parish, it's a good idea to set aside special times to pray with the family, even if it is just 10 mins two or three times a week. These are graced moments. 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. These times are very precious and even if it is just a few minutes after a meal, it can be a fruitful time. Don't bite off more than you can chew! 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 traditional prayers.

**Speaking/Learning the faith
(which the Church calls
“professing the faith”)**

**Celebrating it in the liturgy
and the sacraments**

*There are Four
Dimensions of the
Faith making sure
that Jesus Christ is
the centre of
everything we do*

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

Christian prayer.



Gospel for Sunday 21st March

For the sake of younger children, the reading has been shortened to be able to focus on key points from the Gospel passage.

John 12:20-33

Jesus (said) ... 'Now the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you, most solemnly, unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies, it yields a rich harvest...

Now my soul is troubled. What shall I say: Father, save me from this hour? But it was for this very reason that I have come to this hour.

Father, glorify your name!

A voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.' People standing by, who heard this, said it was a clap of thunder; others said, 'It was an angel speaking to him.' Jesus answered, 'It was not for my sake that this voice came, but for yours.

'Now sentence is being passed on this world; now the prince of this world is to be overthrown. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I shall draw all men to myself.'

By these words he indicated the kind of death he would die.

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Family discussion on the Gospel

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

***Brief background explanation:** Jesus calls Himself the "Son of Man" which is a title that helps us to understand that Jesus has come for all people, not just the Jews. When Adam and Eve were sent from the garden of Eden (Gen. 3:15) God promised that a descendant of Eve's would be the one to restore us to communion with the Father, by defeating Satan. Jesus is that descendant promised by God. Satan is the "prince" of this world.*

Q: "Now the hour has come" means "the time is right." What is Jesus talking about? (A: for Him to be glorified/His death).

Q: What does Jesus compare His death to? (A: A grain of wheat being sown in the ground and producing a rich harvest)

Q: Why does He compare His death to a grain of wheat? (A: It is something that His hearers would be familiar with/ When a seed is sown in the ground it first sends up shoots and then eventually disappears as the plant grows and produces a lot more seeds. Jesus' death and Resurrection will bring life to us all).

Q: How is Jesus feeling? (A: Worried/anxious/afraid).

Q: What happens when Jesus prays to be saved from His death on the Cross? (A: A voice from heaven is heard reassuring Jesus and everyone).

Q: When Jesus dies on the Cross, who will be overthrown? (A: The prince of this world/ the devil/Satan).

Q: What does this mean? (A: It means that because of Jesus' death and Resurrection we are restored to the communion with our heavenly Father which was lost by Adam and Eve. We can live as friends of Jesus and He can guide us in our lives by the grace of the Holy Spirit. We hope to join Jesus and all the saints in heaven.)

Q: When do we share in Jesus' victory? (A: Through Baptism and the sacraments/when we talk to Jesus in prayer/when by His grace we are loving and kind).

Plant some seeds or beans to help children to understand this:



1. Select a few fresh bean or other seeds which produce lots of seeds. Sunflowers are quite good as they produce lots of visible seeds but do need a bit of care. Make sure that seeds or beans are fresh as old seeds and beans may not germinate and are disappointing.

2. Sow according to packet instructions, beans are better sown on their ends like this →



3. Cover with a bit of compost, water and label. Put in a warm place such as a sunny windowsill and keep moist but not soggy.

4. After a week or 10 days (depending upon that you have sowed) shoots should begin to appear. →

5. If you can, plant outside in mid/late May or into a bigger pot if you don't have a garden. Keep watering and if plant is in a pot, it might need plant food. Beans and tall plants will need some support.



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6. In the autumn when the seeds appear, and you can dig up the plant to look for the original bean/seed and it will be clear that the original seed has "died" but there are now a lot more. You might need to go through the reading again to remind children of why you planted the seeds in the first place!



With thanks to Dr Caroline Farey for the use of this icon

25th March is the Solemnity of the Annunciation, when Mary agreed to give birth to the Son of God who came to save us from our sins and restore us to communion with Our Father in heaven.

This modern icon helps us to see the importance of the Annunciation in the History of Salvation.

Begin by reading the Gospel account of the Annunciation (Lk. 1:26-38) and then use this picture as a focus for discussion. Finish by praying the “Hail Mary” (on the next page).

Q: Who can we see in the icon? (A: The Angel Gabriel and Mary).

Q: The Angel Gabriel is pointing to Mary, why? (A: To show that he is talking to her)

Q: Look at the Angel Gabriel’s wings, where are they pointing? (A: One up (to heaven) and one down (to earth)).

Q: Who came to earth from heaven? (A: The Angel Gabriel was sent by God to Mary/ The Son of God who was to be born and called Jesus).

Q: The Angel Gabriel told Mary that the Holy Spirit would overshadow her, and she would become pregnant with God’s Son. How has the artist depicted the Holy Spirit in this icon? (A: The bolt of light with three prongs coming down from the centre top of the picture).

Q: The Angel Gabriel said that Mary’s Son would “sit on the throne of His ancestor David” (v.32). How is this shown in the icon? (A: Mary is sort of sitting on a throne).

Q: Jesus was born to save us from our sins, and He did this by dying on a cross, or as is often said “the wood of a tree.” How is this shown in the icon? (A: the stylised tree in the middle of the picture, the cross on the Angel Gabriel’s staff, and the use of red indicates Jesus’ Passion.).

Q: When Jesus died on the cross the curtain in the Temple was torn in two. How is this alluded to in the icon? (A: The red curtain behind Mary is pulled back).

Q: In the Gospel account we hear all three persons of the Holy Trinity mentioned (Father, Son and Holy Spirit). This is indicated by the number 3 in the picture. Count how many times 3 is used, or triangles are shown. (A: Open-ended).

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed are thou amongst 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.

Why not spend some time this week praying some "Hail Mary's" for people who need our prayers? People who are sick, who are dying, or who have died. People who are struggling with life in general, or who are having to work too hard. People without work... the list goes on. Make a list of people you would like to pray for and then say a "Hail Mary" for each of them. E.g....

For John who is ill... Hail Mary, full of grace....

For Bert who died last week..., Hail Mary, full of grace...

You could choose one or two people a day to pray for.

The Hail Mary is made up of three parts:

"Hail (Mary) full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou amongst women", is what the Angel Gabriel says to Mary at the Annunciation (Lk. 1:28).

The angel does not address Mary by her name, but as "Full of Grace" which is the English translation of the Greek which means "mightily favoured". In other words, Mary is the one chosen by God - the favoured one and who is "full of grace." We receive grace in the sacraments and grace is the "stuff" which enables us to live our Christian lives. Mary, conceived without original sin is therefore FULL of grace, whereas we have grace but because of our habit of sinning, are rarely, if ever FULL of grace.

"and blessed is the fruit of thy womb (Jesus)", comes from the greeting of St. Elizabeth (Lk. 1:42)

When Mary arrives at her older, pregnant cousin's home, Elizabeth recognises that Mary, also pregnant, brings with her, her Lord, in her (Mary's) womb. In the "Hail Mary" prayer, we too acknowledge that Mary is the new "tabernacle" of Jesus. The Blessed Sacrament, Jesus, is reserved, (kept) hidden, in the tabernacle of our churches, and before He was born, He was hidden in Mary's womb, so her womb was a kind of tabernacle. (In the icon above, the building behind Mary can also be thought of as a tabernacle, reminding us that Jesus is present hidden in Mary's womb as He is present in the tabernacle of our churches).

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

This petition began to be added in about the fifteenth century. (The first two parts are really a greeting, and people had been individually adding their own private prayers to the greeting). The first recorded version of the prayer as it is now, comes from 1514, and in 1568 the Church officially recognised the form of the "Hail Mary" prayer as we know it now.

Stations of the Cross

Reflecting on the stations of the Cross can help us to enter more deeply into what Lent is all about. It does not have to be morbid or gloomy, and children can express their real sense of injustice in their simple words and drawings.

St. Joseph's parish is inviting anyone from anywhere (in the world) to write a reflection or prayer and/or to submit an artwork or small model. on one or more of the stations of the Cross. The submissions will be used for a "stations of the cross which will be live-streamed at 6.30pm on Friday 26th March. Please send your reflections/prayers or scans of drawings before 20th March to stjoe.fam.activities@gmail.com

- (1) Jesus is condemned to death,
- (2) Jesus carries his cross
- (3) Jesus falls the first time
- (4) Jesus meets his mother
- (5) Simon of Cyrene helps to carry Jesus' cross
- (6) Veronica wipes Jesus' face
- (7) Jesus falls the second time
- (8) The women of Jerusalem weep over Jesus,
- (9) Jesus falls the third time
- (10) Jesus is stripped of his garments
- (11) Jesus is nailed to the cross
- (12) Jesus dies on the cross
- (13) Jesus is taken down from the cross
- (14) Jesus is placed in the tomb
- (15) Jesus rises on Easter Sunday morning



A prayer and work of art by a some parishioners for the thirteenth station, "Jesus is taken down from the Cross."

Mary receives Jesus as He was taken down from the Cross

Dear Mary, our mother most holy, you agreed to receive God's Son into your womb and to bring Him for the world at the Annunciation. You brought Him up in your home, and then accompanied Him on His travels all the way to the Cross. At His side at His death, you then embraced His lifeless body as you once embraced Him in His birth.

Pray for us, that we may embrace Jesus Christ as Our Lord and saviour each day and draw ever closer to Him in love and trust.

Amen.