

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

Advent Year A



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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. It's 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.



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

May I wish you a very happy and holy Advent season and a blessed Christmas at the climax of this season of preparation.

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 A

Matthew 24:37-44

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples:

‘For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left.

Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left.

Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.

But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into.

Therefore, you also must be ready, for 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

Discussion on the Gospel

✠ Light a candle

✠ Introduce the Gospel liturgically

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 the start of Advent, and its 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 to help us keep thinking about Jesus? (A: Open – but help the children to focus on prayer etc.)

Q: What other seasons does the Church celebrate? (A: Christmas [white] 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.])

Finish with a prayer asking Jesus to help them to stay close to Him every moment of every day.

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.



Gospel for 2nd Sunday Advent Year A

Matthew 3:1-12

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight."' "

Now John wore a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt round his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, and they were baptised by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not presume to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our father", for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees.

Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 'I baptise you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

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
- ✠ Introduce the Gospels liturgically

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, invite 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 has been suggested before. 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. Or there is a poster to colour and decorate on the following page.

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 alms
- 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

Matthew 11:2-11

At that time: When John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?'

And Jesus answered them, 'Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them.

And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.' As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John:

'What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses.

'What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written,

"Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you."

'Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.'

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 and introduce the Gospel liturgically

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 came as a humble baby and shows us a different kind of way to live.

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 do we celebrate Jesus' birthday? (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 God the Son came and was called Jesus when He was born. 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.

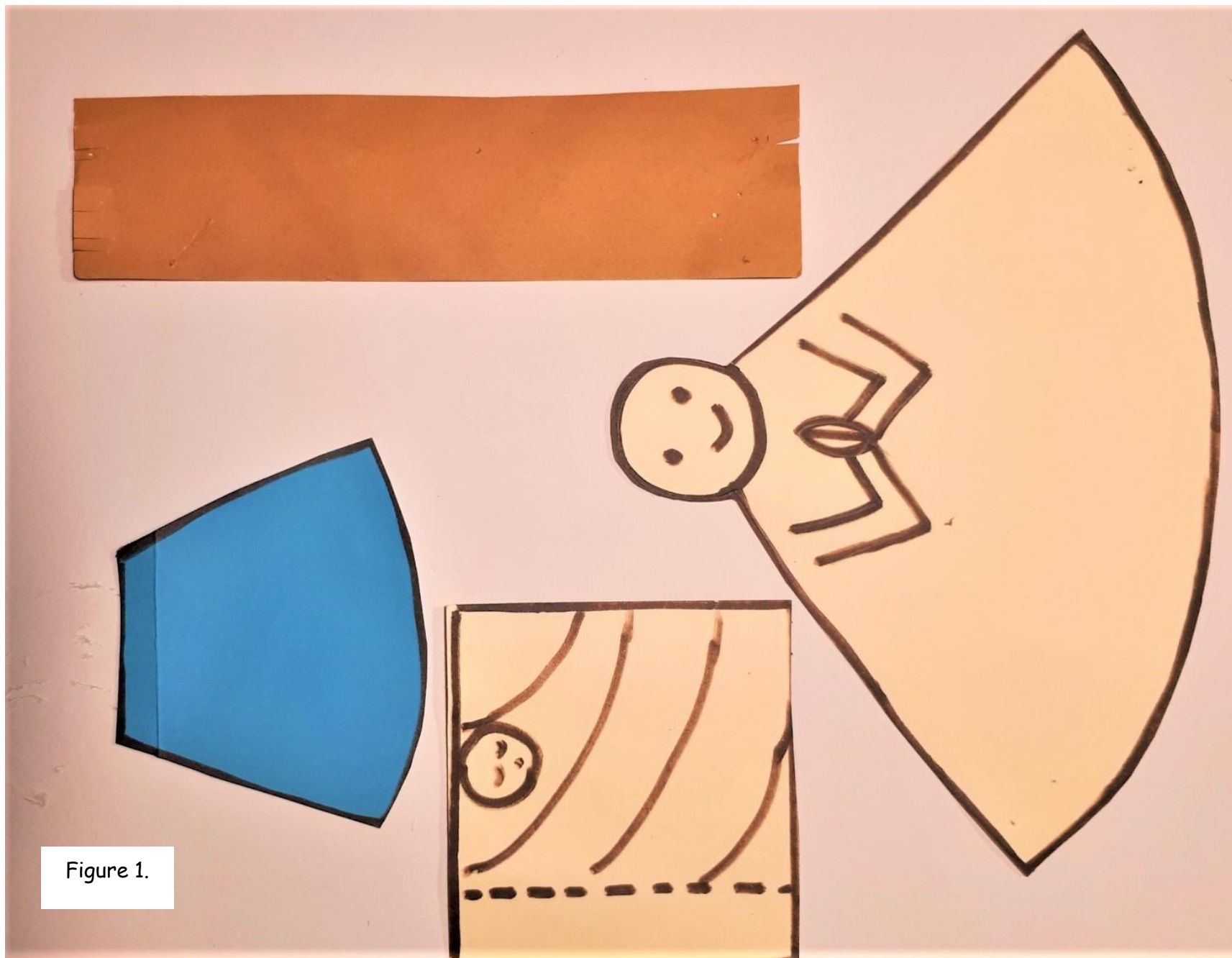


Figure 1.

How to make these crib figures.

1. To Make Mary:

- 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.

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



Figure 2.





Children's liturgy of the word for this week

Gospel for the 4th Sunday of Advent Year A

Matthew 1:18-24

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to send her away quietly.

But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.'

All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

'Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel' — which means, God with us.

When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife.

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 and introduce the Gospel liturgically

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 let's 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 just man).

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: Send Mary away quietly.).

Q: An Angel then appeared to Joseph— what did the angel tell Joseph to do? (A: To take Mary as his wife/take her home/marry her.)

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.

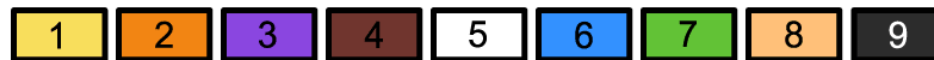
Last week we made Mary for a crib scene, this week, let us make Joseph and baby Jesus so that like St. Joseph, we can have Mary and Jesus in our home at Christmas. Otherwise there are two colouring activities on the next two pages.



Activity for 4th Sunday of Advent



Activity for 4th Sunday of Advent



<https://www.supercoloring.com/coloring-pages/christmas-nativity-scene-color-by-number?version=print>