



Children's liturgy – Fourth Sunday of Advent

Welcome: Today we hear how cousins Mary and Elizabeth rejoiced when they saw each other and how Elizabeth knew straight away that Mary's baby was very special. Let's think a bit more about this and about babies around the world.

Opening prayer: Caring God, Elizabeth was filled with joy when she saw Mary and knew how special her baby would be. May all parents and their babies around the world have the chance to live healthy and happy lives, with hope for the future.

Gospel: Luke 1:39-45

Soon afterwards Mary got ready and hurried off to a town in the hill country of Judea. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby moved within her. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and said in a loud voice, "You are the most blessed of all women, and blessed is the child you will bear! Why should this great thing happen to me, that my Lord's mother comes to visit me? For as soon as I heard your greeting, the baby within me jumped with gladness. How happy you are to believe that the Lord's message to you will come true!"

Gospel reflection: What do you remember from today's reading?

While Mary is pregnant with Jesus, she goes to visit her cousin Elizabeth who is also expecting a baby. As soon as Elizabeth sees Mary she is filled with joy. Why do you think this is?

Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit and recognises that Mary's baby will be the Son of God. How do you think Mary feels when Elizabeth says this to her?

Who here has a baby brother or sister? Do you remember when you were told that there would be a new baby in the family? How did it make you feel? How did you feel when they were born?

Babies are special. They need a lot of looking after. Can you think of some things that babies need?

Are there some things that you can do for yourself that a baby can't?

No matter where in the world that they are born, all babies need the same things. They need someone to love and care for them. They need someone to feed them and to keep them warm and clean.

Blanca lives in El Salvador. In some parts of El Salvador, especially in the countryside, it can be hard for people to see a doctor or get the healthcare that they might need.

But Blanca was able to visit a healthcare clinic supported by CAFOD when she was pregnant and when she had her babies. Along with other new mothers in her area, she has also learned about how to take care of her children and what food is healthiest for the baby and for the whole family. This helps them all to stay well.

She says, “Whenever I’ve come here. They’ve always taken care of me.”

Blanca knows she has somewhere to go for help and support for herself and her baby, and that she and all the women in her community have health experts to turn to when they need.

As we remember how Mary and Elizabeth were filled with joy as they waited for their very special babies to arrive, let’s pray for all the other babies around the world who are all special too.

God loves us all, even the tiniest baby. Let us remember God’s love for us, and for all people, and think about how we can show love to others in this coming week.

How do you think you could show love to others? Either a baby or new parent in your family. Or to another family member, friend, or even to a person that you don’t know.

We can show love by visiting someone, sharing things, sending a message, or by helping. We can show love for our brothers and sisters around the world by doing what we can to make the world a fairer place for all people to live and by treating others as we would like to be treated.

What will you do this week to show love for others?

Activity

Colour in the accompanying activity sheet. Use Cafod’s family prayer resource sheets (<https://cafod.org.uk/pray/prayer-resources/advent-family-prayer-ideas>) to create a Christmas tree bauble reflecting on loving others during Advent. This can be cut out and hung it on your tree once it is up. Then you can stick the paper template to card to make it stiffer.

Remember to share all that you have read with the people at home during the week and to try and show your love for others in some way in the coming week.

