

An Advent journey
for families

*Journey
with Mary*



ADVENT

ADVENT IS A TIME OF WAITING AND PREPARATION FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE BIRTH OF JESUS.

The season of Advent lasts for four Sundays leading up to Christmas and we use this time to prepare and remember the real meaning of Christmas. Advent means 'Coming' and is seen as the coming of Jesus into the world. This actually means three things. The first is the one we think of the most and it happened around 2000 years ago, when Jesus was born to live as a man and to die for us. The second is happening now! Jesus wants to come into our lives and be a part of it.

Finally, there is the future. Jesus will come back to the world as a King and a judge, not as a baby.

So spend some time together as a family and join Mary on her amazing journey! It doesn't matter how many people are in your family or how young they are. You can choose the activities to suit your family.

Spend time together with Mary and journey with her, journey with your family and friends, journey with your community and finally journey with the world.

How can we say 'Yes!' like Mary did this Advent?

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

Spend some time together each day. Make it a special time by lighting a candle. You could make your own Advent Wreath to light at home, use an Advent Candle with the days on it or use any candle that you have at home. The first session each week, will need a bit longer as there are things to read and talk about. The rest of the week will be time for daily prayer together and choosing activities to do. Above all, enjoy your time together, talk about what you read, ask questions and help each other to grow in faith.



READ THE STORY

Read the story

Each week begins with a passage from the Bible. The passage is provided in the booklet, but if you have a Bible at home you might like to use that instead. If you have younger members of the family, you might have a children's Bible that you could read from.

Make sure you talk about any words that your younger children don't understand or anything that they would like to ask. You might not have the answers (and there might not be an answer!) but that is OK. Just discuss your ideas.



REFLECT AND PRAY

Reflect and Pray

After the Bible passage there are some questions to talk about and discuss. Again, you might not know the answers and that is fine. Just talk together about what you think and don't be afraid to look things up! There is something to read and reflect on followed by 'Mary's Message' for the week. Talk about how you can try to follow it.

Also provided is a prayer or a prayer activity. Try to spend time each day together talking to God through prayer.



THINGS TO DO

Things to do

The last page is full of things to do. Many of them do not require special materials or the need to prepare anything and you can choose what you would like to do. They don't all involve making something and you might also have your own ideas of things you could do to fit the week's theme. Not everyone has to do the same thing and you can spread them out throughout the week.

WEEK 1

THE ANNUNCIATION

SAYING 'YES' TO THE JOURNEY



READ LUKE 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.



WEEK 1

SAYING 'YES' TO THE JOURNEY



REFLECT AND PRAY

Why did God choose Mary to be the mother of his Son?

How did Mary feel when the angel left?

When have you said yes to something that was new and scary?

What did Gabriel's words, "Nothing will be impossible with God" mean?



MARY'S MESSAGE

Mary did one simple thing. She listened to what God asked her to do and she said 'Yes'.

How can we say 'Yes' to God?

We too are called to be filled with the Holy Spirit. When the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary, she probably had important things to do. She wasn't ready for the drastic change in her life, but she was open to it. She set aside her plans and her intentions and opened herself up to what God wanted her to do.

Around the world, every day, many Christians stop whatever they are doing to pray the Angelus. By using the words of Mary in the Angelus, we let God know that his will for us is the most important thing.

When we pray the Angelus, we set aside our to do lists, our homework, our never-ending list of things we want to do and we turn to God and say, "Lord, let it be done to me according to your word (not mine)."

No matter what we do, no matter if we succeed or fail, we can trust in God to provide.

Maybe you pray the Angelus daily or maybe it is new to you. **Pray the Angelus together as a family each day this week.**

THE ANGELUS

The Angel of the Lord brought tidings to Mary,

And she conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed are 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;
Be it unto me according to thy word.

Hail, Mary, full of grace,...

And the Word was made flesh
And dwelt among us.

Hail, Mary, full of grace,...

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

Let us pray

We beseech Thee, O Lord, pour Thy grace into our hearts that as we have known the Incarnation of Thy Son, Jesus Christ, by the message of an angel, so by His Cross(+) and Passion we may be brought to the glory of His Resurrection, through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.



WEEK 1

SAYING 'YES' TO THE JOURNEY



ACTIVITIES TO DO

ANGEL CRAFT

Make your own angels to put on your Christmas tree or to decorate your home.

The website www.buggyandbuddy.com/30-angel-crafts-kids/ has plenty to choose from or you can get creative with whatever you have available! Or you could draw a picture of what you think the Angel Gabriel might have looked like.



PRAYER BOARD/JAR

Create a prayer board to use throughout Advent. You can decorate your board however you like and then add prayers to it when you would like to. It could also be a space on a wall, where you can add post-it notes, or decorate a jar or a box to put prayers in.

SAYING 'YES'

Jesus calls us to follow Him. Like Mary, we can choose whether or not we say 'Yes'. If we do decide 'Yes', it affects the way we live our lives and will change the people that we grow to become.

Talk together about how you think Jesus would like YOU to be. How does Jesus want you to behave and what would He like you to do?

Make a list or create a poster with your answers and put it up somewhere to remind you.



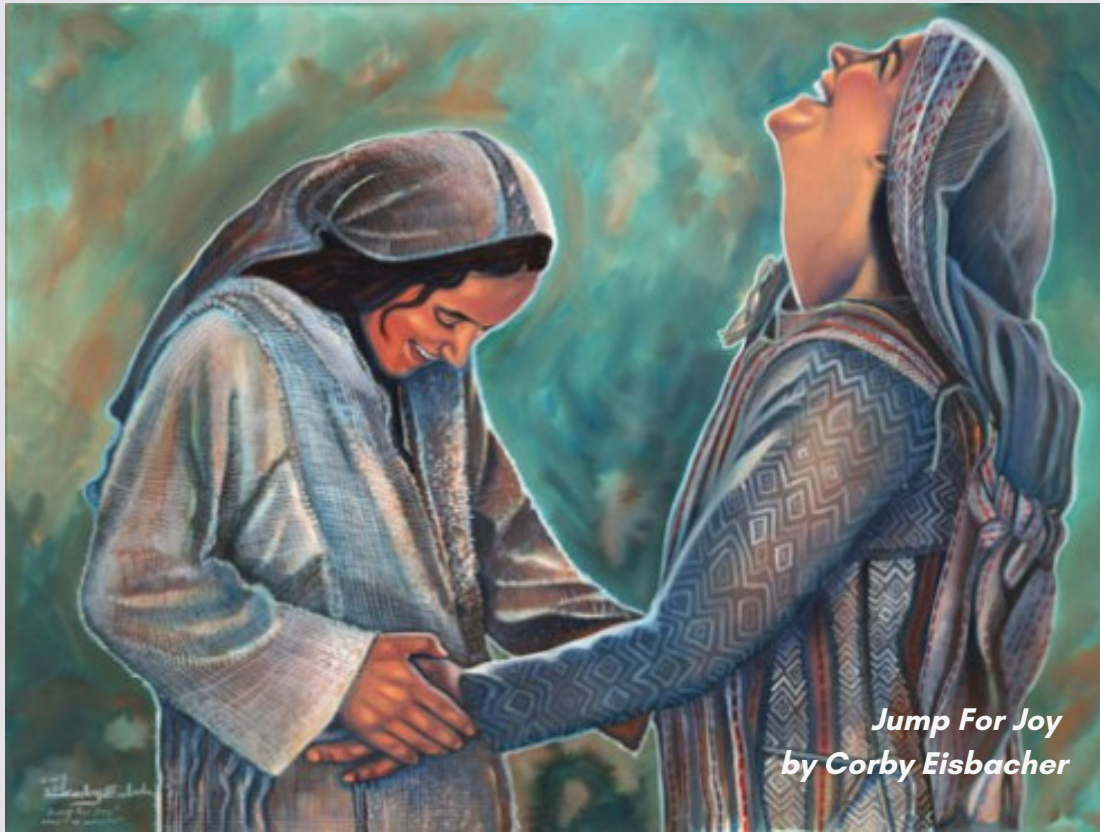
WEEK 2

MARY AND ELIZABETH

JOURNEY WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS



READ LUKE 1:39-45



In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."



WEEK 2

JOURNEY WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

REFLECT AND PRAY



Why do you think Mary chose to visit Elizabeth?

Why did Elizabeth's baby leap for joy in her womb when Mary arrived?

Have you ever had good news that you just couldn't wait to share?

What good news do you have to share with others?

Where have you heard Elizabeth's words before?

MARY'S MESSAGE

Mary travelled a very long distance to visit Elizabeth. She wanted to share her news and to celebrate Elizabeth's news. Mary wanted to take care of her as she was going to have a baby, even though she was going to have one of her own! **We need to care for other people in our family and our community, especially when things are difficult.**

Mary raced to go and see her cousin Elizabeth. She just had to share her good news with her and set out to the hill country of Judea, which was a very long journey.

Mary was pregnant herself; carrying the child none other than the Son of God. But why would she travel such a long distance and risk herself and the most important baby in the world... just for her old cousin? That's because Mary's heart had so much love for other people, inspired by her love and devotion to God. Even Elizabeth was astonished by Mary's visit and exclaimed, *"And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"*

Mary and Elizabeth were both on a journey of love and even though it was difficult Mary knew that Elizabeth needed her the most.

How might you support one another during Advent?

PRAY

Loving God,

Mary was always ready to trust God even when she didn't understand.

She was a kind, loving and generous person who cared for others.

May we look to Mary to show us how to live as faithful and trusting people ready to do your will.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen



WEEK 2

JOURNEY WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS



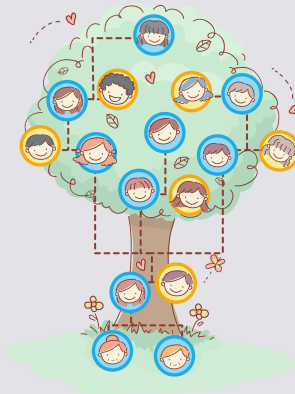
ACTIVITIES TO DO

CONNECT AND CARE

Are there members of your family or friends who you haven't spoken to for a while? Phone, write, email or message someone this week, to see how they are and what they have been doing. Is there anything they need?



FAMILY TREE



How much do you know about your family? Create a family tree together. If you are not sure how to start one visit www.family-tree.co.uk/getting-started/getting-started/how-to-start-your-family-tree/

Talk about the people you have met or remember. What do you know about the people who are part of your family tree? Is there anyone you can ask about the people you don't know anything about? How have all these people helped you become the person you are today?

FAMILY MEMORIES

Have an evening where you look through photographs of places and events that you have been to as a family. Are there any that you had forgotten about? Turn your favourite ones into a slideshow with music, or print them off and create a special family moments photo album.



MOVEMENT AND DANCE



Learn movement and signing by going to: www.youtube.com/watch?v=VZQjVI-P55w This is a lovely video with movement set to 'Hail Mary' by the wonderful CJM. You could also search the internet and learn sign language for Hail Mary too!

WEEK 3

THE MAGNIFICAT

JOURNEY WITH YOUR COMMUNITY



READ LUKE 1:46-56

And Mary said,

*"My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.*

*His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to
generation.*

*He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.*

*He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;*

*he has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.*

*He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."*

And Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.



WEEK 3

JOURNEY WITH YOUR COMMUNITY



REFLECT AND PRAY

Who do you think the 'lowly' are?

Mary thanks God for all the good things he has done for her.

What good things has God done for you?

Elizabeth gave Mary the highest praise; she called her "most blessed among women," and recognised her as the mother of God. It doesn't get much better than that! This is the second time in which Mary was praised so highly. The Angel Gabriel told her she was the "favoured one" of God.

If that had been you or me, I daresay there's a possibility that we would have been beaming with pride. We all want to claim the credit we deserve don't we?

Instead, Mary turned it all around and gave all of the credit to God. Mary's words are known as the Magnificat, a prayer of praise, thanksgiving, humility; a prophecy; and a history lesson all rolled into one.

God is way too big for our homes and church buildings. He is too concerned for all the people who are not there. God is going out into the world to find all the lonely, sad, trapped people and we are called to look for God there and help out.

So get involved! Watch for God at work and be ready to help.

MARY'S MESSAGE

Mary was a poor, simple girl from Nazareth. But she recognised and accepted the gift God had given her. She praised God for what He was going to do for the world through her.

Don't deny, play down or ignore your gifts!

Thank God for them and use them to do His will.

What can YOU do for your community this week?

PRAY

Talk together as a family to identify people and groups to pray for this week. Add those people to the gaps below and use this prayer each day to pray for them.

God of love and compassion,
We thank you for all the gifts you have given to us.

Thank you for all the people who are helping us in the world during this time when there is a lot of sickness.

We ask you for your strength and courage for all who are helping people get well.

We pray especially for _____

We ask you for peace and comfort for all who are lonely.

We pray especially for _____

We ask you for strength and healing for all who are sick.

We pray especially for _____

We ask you for strength and consolation for all who have lost loved ones.

We pray especially for _____

Help us to use our gifts to care for others in our community.

You are with us always, O God of love and compassion.

Keep us close to you. **Amen**



WEEK 3

JOURNEY WITH YOUR COMMUNITY



ACTIVITIES TO DO

NEIGHBOURS



Are there people who live in your community that live alone or are struggling?

Write someone a letter, phone them or send them a Christmas card, to let them know you are thinking about them and praying for them. See if they need anything or just have a chat with them.

MAGNIFICAT BOOKMARK OR PRAYER CARD

Mary's words are very famous and are called the Magnificat. Using card or paper create your own book mark or card. Write Mary's words on it and then decorate it.

The band CJM have a lovely version of the Magnificat you can listen to at www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gz8QVxw9eBI

Can you find any other versions of it to listen to? There are lots!

HELP THOSE IN NEED

There are many ways to donate items to people in need in your area. Many supermarkets and churches have areas to donate things to the local food bank or a particular project. See if you can add something to it next time you go shopping.



You could also have a clear out and take some of the things you don't need or want anymore along to a charity shop.



CHRISTMAS CARDS

There have been many people who help us in our daily lives.

Make some home made Christmas cards this year to give to some of those people and say thank you for all that they have done. Who has helped your family this year?

Some ideas are: people working in shops, the doctors and nurses at your local hospital or surgery, your teachers and other people in schools, the postman, people at church or someone in your community who has helped others.

WEEK 4

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

JOURNEY WITH THE WORLD



READ LUKE 2:21-20

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours!" When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them

WEEK 4

JOURNEY WITH THE WORLD



REFLECT AND PRAY

Why do you think the angels appeared to the shepherds and not rich, important people?

Jesus wasn't born in a fancy hotel or a palace. **Why** do you think that was?

How do you think the shepherds felt at different parts in the story? **Did** their feelings change?

MARY'S MESSAGE

Mary did not become upset when there was no room anywhere for her to have her baby. She just trusted that, with God, everything would be ok.

When things are difficult, do we look to Mary to learn from her complete trust in God?

The angels appear, this time not to a single person in private, but before the shepherds to declare the good news of the birth of Jesus. The shepherds rushed straight away to see the baby and then told other people what they had seen and heard. They could not contain their joy and happiness any longer. The amazing love of Jesus cannot be kept hidden and to ourselves. It wants to burst out into the world.

The greatest event in history had just happened! The king had been born! For ages the Jews had waited for this moment, but it was announced to humble shepherds. Jesus comes to all, including the poor and ordinary. Whoever we are and whatever we do, we can have Jesus in our lives. We don't need extraordinary qualifications, money, popularity or anything else. He accepts us as we are.

We are in much the same position as the shepherds. We have heard the good news, and now the question is:
What will we do with it?

PRAY



Christmas Card Prayers

Pick one Christmas card at random, that you have received each day. Talk together about the person or people who sent it to you. What do you know about them? Then take time to pray for them.

Each member of the family could choose a different one, or you could choose one between you.



WEEK 4

JOURNEY WITH THE WORLD



ACTIVITIES TO DO

MANGER COMPETITION



Jesus was born in a manger, which is a feeding trough for animals. Have a competition to create a manger!

You could gather sticks from your garden or local park or other outdoor space? What else could you use? It could be a large manger or a model version.

NATIVITY CRAFTS

Make your own nativity set this week.

There is a lovely one to print and colour available from:

www.madebyjoel.com/2013/12/paper-city-nativity-scene-joyfully-expanded.html

Once you have made it, try retelling the story using the characters.

There are also some lovely free printables available from:

www.bakerross.co.uk/craft-ideas/?s=christmas including a nativity mobile and finger puppets!



JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM MEAL

Share a very simple meal together just like Mary and Joseph would have done on their way to Bethlehem.

- sit on blankets on the floor with only candles for light.
- eat with your hands and not with cutlery.
- you could dress up in biblical costumes.
- before you eat, re-read the Bible passage for this week.
- during you meal talk about the Bible passage and how Mary and Joseph might have felt.

What to eat:

A poor couple like Mary and Joseph, would usually have eaten:

- fish, poultry, eggs, goats cheese
- something like pitta bread
- lentils, chickpeas (e.g. hummus), onions, olives
- almonds, pistachios
- honey
- figs, dates, grapes, pomegranates
- wine or grape juice

