

The Gospel at Home

This Week's Gospel: Luke 1:39-45

In Sunday's Gospel, Mary visits her cousin Elizabeth. The two of them demonstrate just how to trust God's word and to rejoice in God's blessings. They both praise God, and Elizabeth gives us the words that are central to the Hail Mary—"Blessed is the fruit of your womb." The mystery of the Incarnation—God taking on human flesh by the Virgin Mary—is the great sign of divine care for us all.

Exploring the Gospel Message

Seeds (Preschool): Your child decorated a Christmas tree with pictures of some of the characters and creatures from the Christmas story. Ask your child to tell you about each of the ornaments on his or her tree. If you decorate a tree this week, be sure to invite your child to help you. It is a good opportunity to talk about Christmas and its meaning for your family.

Promise (Grades K-1): During this week's lesson, the class shared the joy people feel when a favorite relative visits or when a new baby arrives. Ask your child to share with the family the story "Welcome Home, Donnie." Your child will also be happy to share with the family the story of Mary and Elizabeth, using a picture they colored plus a code that shows where some of the words for the Hail Mary were first spoken.

Good News (Grades 2-3): During this week's class, your child played a game that dramatizes the journey to Bethlehem. Ask your child to teach the family how to play the game and play it together. Talk about all the people and information in the squares of the game board. Ask your child to tell the family about Saint Francis and the first Christmas crib scene.

Venture (Grades 4-6): Christmas is almost here! Your child learned about ways to live and to share the spirit of Christmas. They learned about the custom of Los Posadas (the inns) and how that public celebration spreads the good news of Jesus' coming into the world. What customs does your family or nationality have that help you celebrate the true meaning of Christmas? Let your child share with the family the Scriptural sources for the Hail Mary—based on the angel's greeting to Mary and Elizabeth's welcome when Mary came visiting.

Visions (Grades 7-8): This week, your young teen learned that Mary's visit to Elizabeth showed her generous response to God's call as well as her trust in God. Talk together about the family's need for trust and how each member can grow in trust. The readings throughout Advent have been filled with God's promises. A sign of Christmas spirit is trust in those promises. Read together Mary's beautiful response to God's action in her life—the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55).

Pray Together

One Christmas carol is perfect for the last few days before Christmas—"O Come, O Come Emmanuel." The song contains all the longing, hope, and trust in God's Promise the season provides. You can use a YouTube video of this carol as your prayer for the week. You will find it at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7xtpJ4Q_Q-4.