

## 4th Sunday of Advent (Year A)

### Sunday, December 18, 2022

**First Reading:** Isaiah 7:10-14

**Psalm # 24 R: May the Lord come in, He is King of glory**

**Second Reading:** Romans 1:1-17

**Gospel Acclamation Verse:** The virgin shall be with child and bear a son;  
and they shall name him Emmanuel: God is with us.

**Gospel:** Matthew 1:18-24

**Theme:** God chose a family for Jesus

#### **Commentary:**

Have you heard the story of your birth? Do you have details of the kind of day or night it was, the hour you were born and who your parents first told that you had arrived? I know our sons still like to hear their birth story even now that they are fathers themselves.

In Matthew's telling of the birth of Jesus, we learn that the Word truly dwelt among us, that he was part of a long family line of both good and bad characters,(1:1-17) and in a few short sentences, we learn a little bit about Mary and Joseph; the couple God chose to be parents for Jesus. The focus is on Joseph, a righteous man from the house of David. We meet Mary, who is pregnant before she and Joseph are married, and we learn what Joseph decides to do. God has a better plan. He sends an angel to appear to Joseph in a dream. This angel calls him, "Joseph, son of David", showing us that it is through Joseph that Jesus will be from the house and ancestry of King David. Then the angel tells him that 'she shall bring forth a son. You shall call his name, Jesus, for it is he who will save his people from their sins'. (Verse 21a) Mary is to give birth to Jesus and Joseph is to name him. All Joseph is told is that this child will 'save his people from their sins.'

Joseph is called righteous because he chose to obey God rather than observe a law requiring him to divorce Mary. He would rather be looked down on by his community, than put Mary and her child in danger. The scriptures never mention any words of Joseph, only his actions. Joseph trusts God, even when he has no idea what will happen or understands how everything will turn out. He paid attention to his dreams more than once, saving both Mary and Jesus' life. (See Matt.2:13-23)

Sometimes you and I may find ourselves in a situation where we don't know what to do. Like Joseph, we might ask ourselves, "What do I do now?" If we listen, God will tell us what to do. He probably won't speak to us through an angel, but he will speak to us through His Word in the Bible! It is up to us to listen and obey. We know that God's plan is always the better plan. We can choose to trust that God always takes care of us, and we can obey him.

**Prayer for Families:** Heavenly Father, we are filled with joy by the many lessons we learn when we accept Jesus as God's Son. Help us read Your WORD and listen as you give us the answers to life's difficult questions. We pray this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever, AMEN.

#### **Discussion starters: (Choose one or more of these after reading today's scripture readings)**

1. As we make final preparations for the celebration of the birth of Jesus, our saviour, take a few minutes to re-read the story of Jesus' birth and discuss what stands out. Why does it?
2. Share a time when you were struggling with a difficult decision. Did you ask God for help? What happened?
3. Enjoy one of the activities on the following pages as a family.

#### **Family Activities, Colouring Page, Cross Word Puzzle and Word Search:** Pages 2-5

Resources used for inspiration in this post: Holy Heroes, Sermon Writer, Dynamic Catholic, Sermons4Kids

## **Family Activities Based on Matthew 1:18-24**

**CHRISTMAS CARD MATCH GAME:** Before this game, cut Christmas cards with angels, and nativity scenes in half and retain one half of each card but throw all the other halves of cards into a designated area of a room. When the children are told to begin, they will receive one half of a card and continue to look for matching card. The cards can then be taped together or onto a CHRISTMAS poster board!

**CANDY CANE PICKUP:** Give each child a bowl of mini candy canes. When the leader says GO, the children will see how many candy canes they can put into a bucket (ice cream bucket or bigger bowl) before the whistle blows. The FUN part: NO HANDS allowed in moving the canes.

**ANGEL CANDLE:** Give each child an empty toilet paper roll to decorate with Christmas paper or green construction paper by wrapping it around the roll. Use angel stickers to decorate the sides and add some crinkled red and yellow tissue paper to the inside of the roll, to look like the flame. The "candle" can be glued or taped to a red or yellow circle cut out of construction paper as the candle holder.

**HEART ANGEL:** Each child will cut out a large red heart and glue it to a piece of construction paper or card stock. Two smaller hearts will be cut out and glued to the large upside down heart to form angel wings. Glue a circle to the top of the large, upside down heart to form the angel's head. Colour and decorate the heart and write words from today's lesson to remember to obey and trust the Lord, as Joseph did. A chenille wire can be formed into a halo for the angel's head.

**ANGEL TREE:** The children will cut out a green triangle to form a Christmas tree. Cut out a picture of an angel and glue to card stock and attach to the Christmas tree. Write words from today's lesson on the tree and use colourful markers to place dots on the tree as the "lights". Hang the trees as Christmas decorations.

**JOY TREE BULBS:** Purchase inexpensive Christmas tree bulbs for the children to use a permanent marker to write JOY on their bulbs to hang on the Christmas tree to remember the JOY we have when we trust and obey God!

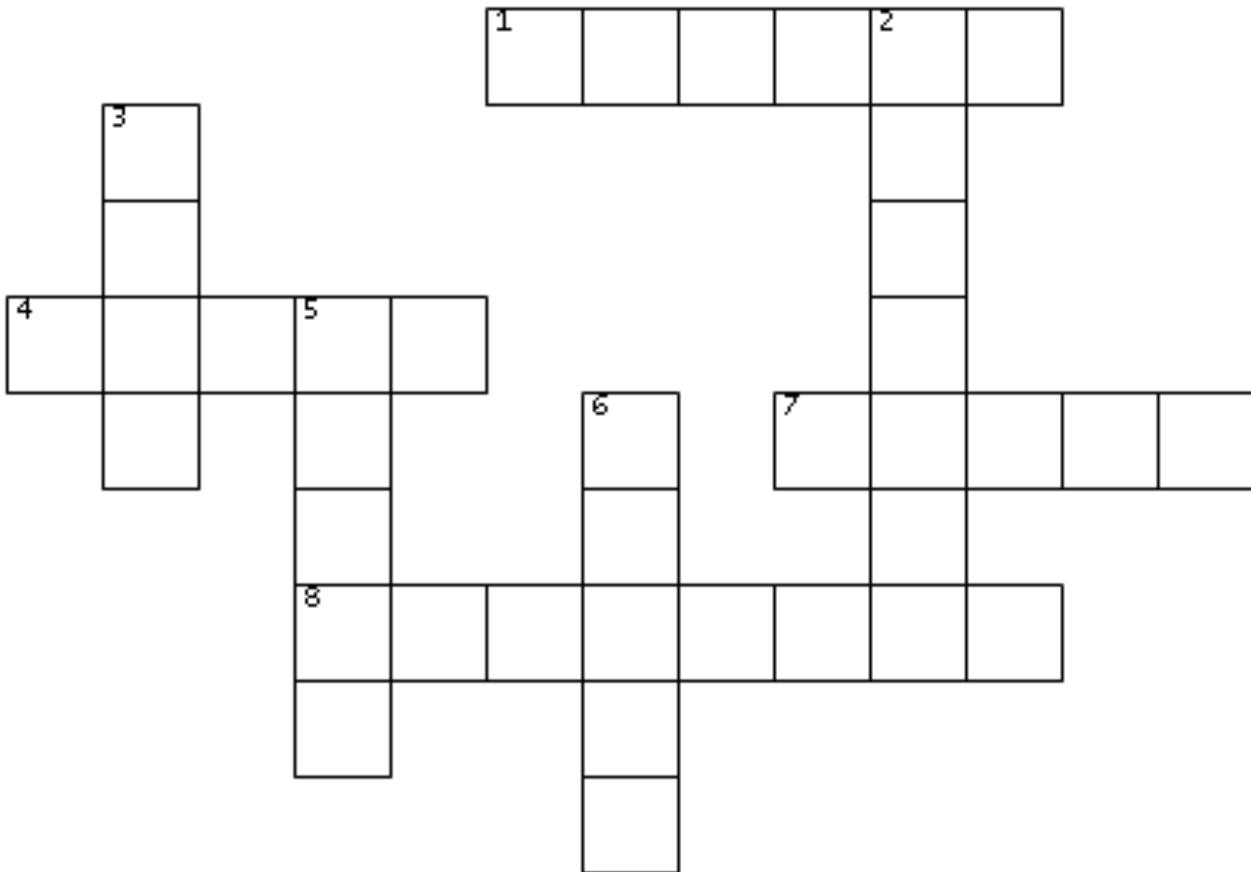
**ANGEL VISIT SKIT:** One child (if older) can narrate today's Bible lesson while other children play-act the angels, Joseph, Mary, etc. The children can repeat the narrators questions or statements such as "What do I do now"; "Don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife"; "She will have a son", etc.

**COLOURING PAGE**  
Based on Matthew 1:18-24



God chose Mary and Joseph for a family for Jesus.

**CROSSWORD**  
**Based on Matthew 1:18-24**



Use the clues to fill in the words above.  
Words can go across or down.  
Letters are shared when the words intersect.

**ACROSS**

1. The Earthly father of Jesus
4. Thoughts or images that come to mind when sleeping
7. The act of being born
8. Name means, "God is with us"

**DOWN**

2. To prepare or make ready ahead of time
3. Mother of Jesus
5. Also called a "messenger of God"
6. The act of showing favour

ANSWERS: ANGEL. BIRTH. DREAM. EMMANUEL. GRACE. JOSEPH. MARY. PROVIDE

**WORD SEARCH**  
**Based on Matthew 1:18-24**

Find the word in the puzzle. Words can go in any direction.  
Words can share letters as they cross over each other.

P	R	F	Q	W	U	L	L	O	H	D	K	C	D	E
F	R	K	X	S	O	E	T	I	R	I	P	S	F	V
A	J	E	V	I	U	C	S	R	F	S	O	I	X	X
I	N	K	S	N	A	H	U	H	K	E	W	E	O	L
T	O	O	A	E	O	R	S	J	P	G	R	A	C	E
H	W	M	S	L	N	C	E	N	D	E	F	N	S	G
Z	M	C	Y	B	T	C	J	A	R	M	S	S	L	N
E	C	K	W	K	L	L	E	V	E	U	J	O	J	A
K	Y	N	M	C	M	E	I	Q	A	B	A	N	J	I
M	O	T	H	E	R	R	S	M	M	N	Y	Z	W	A
V	L	G	P	F	G	D	C	S	O	Y	R	A	M	T
X	I	T	Y	I	K	D	E	S	I	M	O	R	P	Y
Z	Q	X	N	S	C	C	H	Y	S	N	Y	M	K	B
P	R	O	V	I	D	E	S	H	S	H	G	U	C	K
Y	P	X	V	W	C	A	U	V	S	S	H	G	H	B

ANGEL	BLESSING	DREAM	EMMANUEL	FAITH	GRACE
HOLY	JESUS	JOSEPH	MARY	MOTHER	PRESENCE
PROMISED	PROVIDES	SON	SPIRIT	VIRGIN	WIFE