

The Gospel at Home

This Week's Gospel: Matthew 11:2-11

In Advent, we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus, who is truly human and truly God. Healing actions prophesied by Isaiah—making the blind see, the deaf hear, and the lame leap, as well as preaching the Good News to the poor—all tell John the Baptist who Jesus is. Jesus' loving actions continued to be completed by his followers today. Jesus calls us to be just and loving as he is, especially by helping people unable to help themselves. All the readings for this Sunday recall the themes of reconciliation and wholeness.

Exploring the Gospel Message

Seeds (Preschool): This week the class learned to tell the Christmas story. They learned about Mary and Joseph's long trip to Bethlehem. Be sure to ask what they know about the people in the story and ask to see the ornament they drew for the Christmas story tree in this week's lesson. Don't forget to paste a new flaming candle on your child's little Advent wreath.

Promise (Grades K-1): Your child's class discussed Mary and Joseph's long journey to Bethlehem. Ask them to tell your family about the different characters in the story. The class also learned about the Good News Jesus shares with us, and how he brings happiness and joy. Invite your child to tell you about Jesus helping the blind, the sick, and the poor. Talk together about who helps your family and the ways your family helps others.

Good News (Grades 2-3): The class studied more of Isaiah's words that showed just what Good News Jesus brings to the world. Ask your child to tell you the story of Juan Diego, the beautiful lady, and the December roses. The

image of the Blessed Mother on Juan Diego's cloak is a reminder that Mary is a mother for all of us. Finally, the last page of this week's lesson features a little song from the Magnificat, the great prayer of praise from Mary. Ask your child what his or her favorite song about Jesus is. He or she can also explain who the Messiah is.

Venture (Grades 4-6): Your youngster's class learned about the Advent tradition of the Jesse Tree. Consider having a Jesse Tree in your home. Let your child head up the project. Talk about the Gospel story of John the Baptist's disciples who came to ask Jesus if he was the One. Discuss the answer Jesus gave to the disciples. What good things did Jesus say about John the Baptist? Finally, let your child make suggestions for activities the family can do together to prepare for Christmas. He or she can use the Week 3 Calendar, on page 5, for ideas.

Visions (Grades 7-9): Your young person's class read the story, "A Different Kind of Success." Ask your youngster what the Minnesota robotics team in the story experienced last Christmas. The class also learned about Second Isaiah's hope for a peaceable world. Share ideas of how your family can be peacemakers in your home, Church, community, and world.

Pray Together

As you say your Advent wreath prayer this week, include prayers for all the areas of the world where there is a need for peace. Family members can mention a need, and the whole family can respond: "Lord, make us all instruments of your peace."