

## PRAYER CELEBRATION

Preparation: Arrange a table with a purple cloth. Place on it an Advent wreath and a Bible. Gather the children into a large circle. Choose four people to proclaim the readings. Teach the refrain of the song, "O Come, O Come Emmanuel." As the song refrain is being sung, light one of the candles on the Advent wreath.

Leader: *Let us pray:*

*Come to us, Lord, and bring us peace.*

*We will rejoice in your presence and serve you with all our hearts.*

(Communion Rite, first week in Advent)

All: *Amen.*

Leader: *During Advent we listen to voices that tell us to prepare, to be joyful, and to be ready to follow God's plan. Let us listen now to God's holy Word.*

Reader 1: *Listen to the voice of the angel, Gabriel.*

*"... The angel said to [Mary]... , '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 called holy, the Son of God.'" (Luke 1:35)*

All sing: *Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to you, O Israel.*

Reader 2: *Listen to the voice of Elizabeth, cousin of Mary*

*"... Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit cried out in a loud voice and said, 'Most blessed are you among women...'" (Luke 1:41-42)*

All sing: *Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to you, O Israel.*

Reader 3: *Listen to the voice of an angel to Joseph, husband of Mary and protector of Jesus*

*"... the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you.'" (Matthew 2:13)*

All sing: *Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel*

Reader 4: *Listen to the voice of John, Baptizer and prophet*

*"John the Baptist appeared, preaching in the desert of Judea and saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matthew 3:1-2)*

All sing: *Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel*

Leader: *The voices of Advent remind us to watch and wait.*

*Let us listen to them as we watch and wait for Jesus during this holy season.*

All: *Amen.*

If desired, conclude with a favorite hymn.

 **Sadlier Religion**

Prayer adapted from Gather In My Name  
"Advent – A Time of Watching and Waiting"  
Published by William H. Sadlier, Inc.

## VOICES OF ADVENT

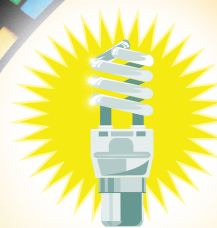
"Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths." (Mark 1:3). Mark begins his Gospel by echoing this message of the prophet Isaiah in an account of John the Baptist preparing people for the Son of God. The voices of Isaiah and John the Baptist are among several that we hear in the Scriptures of Advent, the season of preparation for Christmas. As the Church proclaims the Scriptures about Jesus' humble birth, we also hear from Mary, Joseph, Mary's cousin Elizabeth, and the angel Gabriel. We prepare for our own celebration of Christmas by remembering their words—and all the events surrounding the first coming of Jesus Christ.

But their voices don't belong to a long-ago story. The meaning of the Advent season is two-fold, reminding us both to remember the past and to look to the future. Although we prepare for Christmas by remembering the stories of Jesus' birth, Advent is also a time to direct our hearts and minds to the joyful expectation of Christ's Second Coming at the end of time (*Norms Governing Liturgical Calendars*, 39).

As we ready ourselves for the great Christmas festival, we reflect on the mystery of the Incarnation: The invisible God became visible through the coming of Jesus. Advent calls us to an awareness of God's life and love today—and a preparedness for Christ's coming again at the end of time. In the company of Mary, the expectant virgin, we pray with one voice, "Maranatha! Our Lord, come!"

### Suggested Activities

- Introduce your students to the "0 Antiphons," a tradition of praying during the seven days prior to Christmas Eve. Read the "0 Antiphons" at <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/prayers/the-o-antiphons-of-advent.cfm>. Have your class make an Advent calendar by joining two sheets of heavy poster board, one with cut-out fold-up windows for each day. Invite the students to decorate the calendar and design it so that the windows reveal an "0 Antiphon" on the appropriate days.
- Emphasize Advent as a time to look ahead to Christ's coming again. Make a class wish-list for the world's future and post it in your classroom. Offer prayers for peace throughout the world during the four weeks of Advent.
- On or around December 6, tell the story of Saint Nicholas. Use it to discuss the great generosity he showed to those in need. Invite the children to name a way they can be generous during the season of Advent. Distribute candy canes as a reminder of the love Saint Nicholas showed for children.



### Bright Ideas

To learn about celebrating the season of Advent, visit [WeBelieveWeb.com](http://WeBelieveWeb.com).

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**Directions:** During Advent we listen to stories from the Bible about the way people prepared for the coming of Jesus. Use the clues to unscramble the names of the people in each picture. Draw a picture that shows something you know about the coming of Jesus.

## BZAEHLITE



My cousin, Mary, came to visit me. We shared our joy over God's great work in our lives.



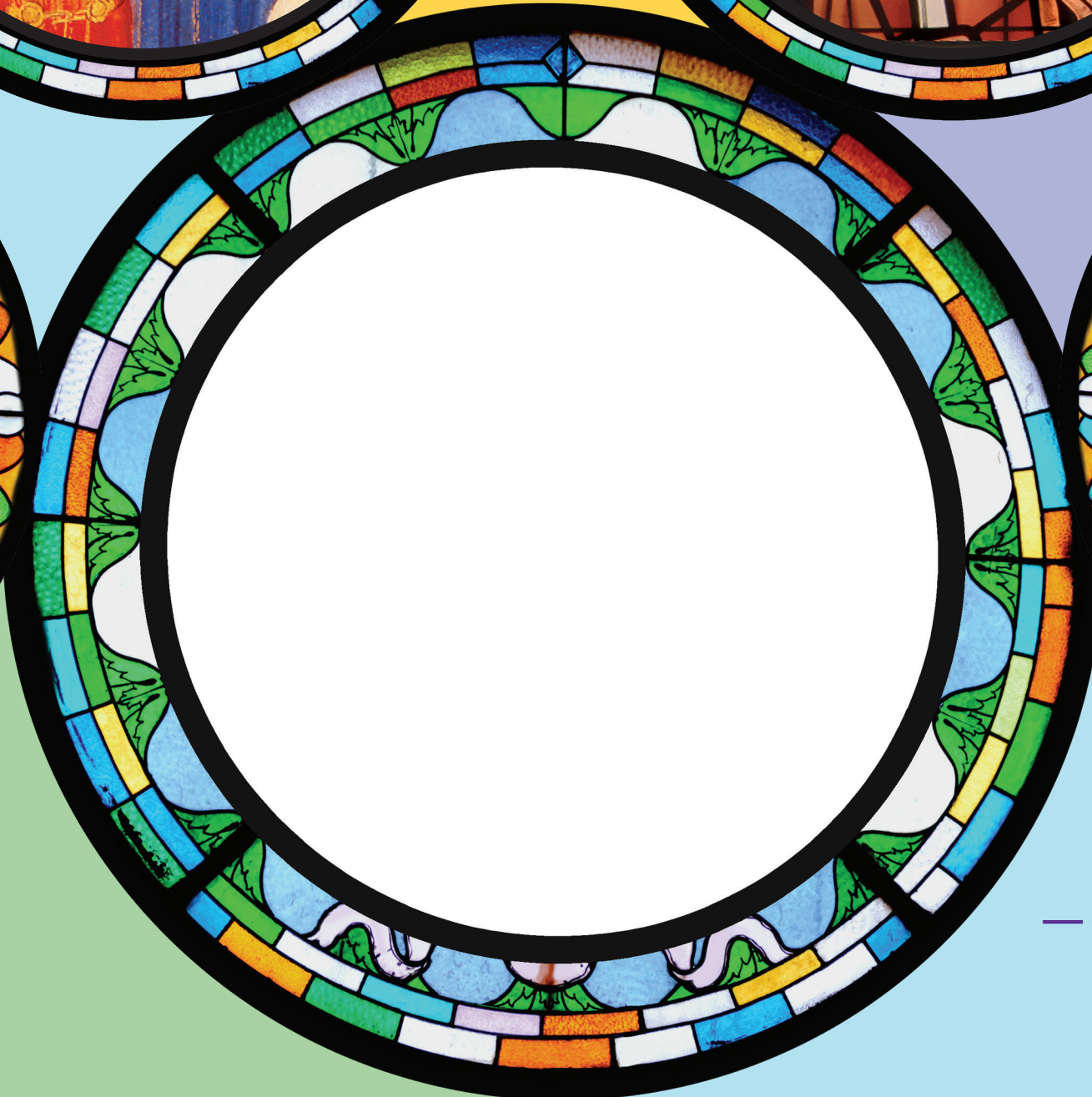
PSOJHE

I loved and took care of Mary and Jesus, and kept them safe.



## GNELA BLEGIAR

I brought Mary the good news that she would be the mother of Jesus.



## HJNO ETH SITBPAT

I told people to prepare for Jesus' coming by turning their hearts to God.