



a Kendall Hunt Company

## Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A, Primary - RCLB Lectionary



### Primary Session

Matthew 1:18-24

# Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you.

Blessed are you among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.  
Amen.



### Opening Life Reflection

The theme for today is God's presence in the world through the virgin birth of Jesus. To begin, invite the children to make pinecone bird feeders. Provide one pinecone for each child, peanut butter, birdseed and yarn. Direct the children to spread peanut butter over their pinecone, then roll it in the birdseed and tie yarn on top of the pinecone for hanging on a tree. Discuss:

- Whose birthday do we celebrate at Christmas?
- How did Jesus' birth bring God into the world?
- How can a bird feeder help remind us of God's presence in the world?

Allow time for discussion. On this Fourth Sunday of Advent we celebrate God's coming into the world through the birth of Jesus. We thank God for coming to live among us.



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# Listening to the Word of God

In the Gospel today listen to how God prepared Joseph for the birth of Jesus.

Read Matthew 1:18-24.

Allow for silence.

## Scripture Discussion Starters

- How does God prepare Joseph for the birth of Jesus?
- What kind of a man is Joseph?
- What does the angel of the Lord tell Joseph?
- Does Joseph obey God's message?



## Scripture Background

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Provide 2-3 minutes of background information on the Gospel.

In the Gospel today, God prepares Joseph for the birth of Jesus. At first Joseph does not understand why Mary is with child and so he decides to divorce her quietly. But then an angel of the Lord appears to Joseph in a dream. Joseph listens to God's message and plans to take Mary as his wife, believing that the child in her womb is conceived through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph is a descendent of David, Joseph's acceptance of Mary gives Jesus a place in the family line of David.

Joseph is told by the angel of the Lord to give the child the name Jesus. The name Jesus means, "God saves." The angel helped Joseph understand that Mary's child would save all people from their sins.



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## Questions for Deeper Reflection

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- Why did an angel visit Joseph?
- What does the angel help Joseph to understand?
- Why is the birth of Jesus a sign of God's love?

[If you are not going to continue with the doctrinal discussion, proceed to the Gospel in Life.]

## Doctrinal Discussion Starters

### Virgin Birth

Virgin birth describes the coming of Jesus into this world. Catholics believe that the Holy Spirit is responsible for Jesus' birth. The miracle of Jesus' birth shows God's power and grace being born in the world.

The Catholic Church teaches that Jesus has only one father, his heavenly Father. Therefore, Jesus is truly God. Mary is Jesus' earthly mother and therefore he is also truly human.

Mary said yes to God's plan of salvation. The virgin birth reveals the miraculous action of God. Through the birth of Jesus, God has come to live among us. God is with us.

- What is a miracle?
- Why is the birth of Jesus a miracle?
- How will you celebrate the birth of Jesus this Christmas?

## The Gospel in Life

How can you be ready to celebrate the birth of Jesus this Christmas?

**Connecting to Faith First® Legacy Edition**

At Home Family Guide, theme 24

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