

# Love is a Promise (1)



**Bible verses:**  
Luke 1:5-20



**Aim:**  
To know that Zechariah's prayers were answered



**Today's fruit:**  
Patience

**Resources:** *Zechariah and Elizabeth, Timeline*



## Memory verse

**'God will give us a son who will be responsible for leading the people. His name will be Wonderful Counsellor, Powerful God, Father Who Lives Forever, Prince of Peace.'**

(Isaiah 9:6 ERV)



## Start it

Play a favourite Christmas song. When the music stops, the children are to sit down and put their finger over their mouth – and not make any noise! Ask the children to think about patience, waiting and being silent.



## Share it

Use the *Zechariah and Elizabeth* handout. Cut out the characters and place them in the middle of the circle as you read the story, stopping to add in characters or ask questions.

I wonder:

- How might Zechariah have felt when the angel appeared?
- What did he think about the angels' message?
- Why might he have felt and thought that?

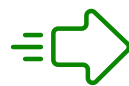


## Sing It

**'Isaiah 9:6' (memory verse song)** by Quest NC (1:15)

**'There are promises' (official kids worship music video)** by YancynotNancy (2:08)

**'God gave me Jesus' (pre-school worship song)** by KidSpring Children's Ministry (1:54)

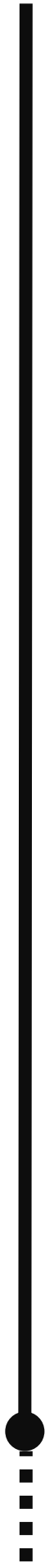


## Action it

Games and activities to reinforce the Bible passage:

- **Make:** Create an Advent timeline using the *Timeline* handout. Colour and stick the characters from the *Zechariah and Elizabeth* handout on to the first page. Keep the next four pages for the following sessions.

- **Play:** Play a game of *Ready, Steady, Go*. Give the children an action like jumping or wiggling and wait for the word 'Go!' to start the activity. Extend the time between the words to build anticipation. What did it feel like to wait for the word 'Go'?
- **Pray:** Remind the group of the story and that sometimes we need to wait to see God's promises, and sometimes waiting can feel hard. As you sit in a circle together, explain that you are going to turn a sand timer over, and while you all watch the sand fall, ask God quietly in your head to help you be patient.
- **Try:** Learn the memory verse together. What actions can you do to help you?



# Advent

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# Story

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# Timeline

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# Explore it Light

## Zechariah and Elizabeth

Luke 1:5-20

Adapted from the *Easy English Bible*.

There was a man whose name was Zechariah. Zechariah was a priest, a holy man who served God. His wife was called Elizabeth. Zechariah and Elizabeth obeyed God's commands and his rules. God saw that they were righteous people; they tried to live a good life and not do the wrong thing.

Zechariah and Elizabeth had no children. They were getting old, so it looked like they would never have any children.

One day Zechariah was working at the Temple when his fellow priests chose him to do a very special job. His job was to go to the most holy place in the Temple and burn incense there. It was a great honour to be chosen to do this.

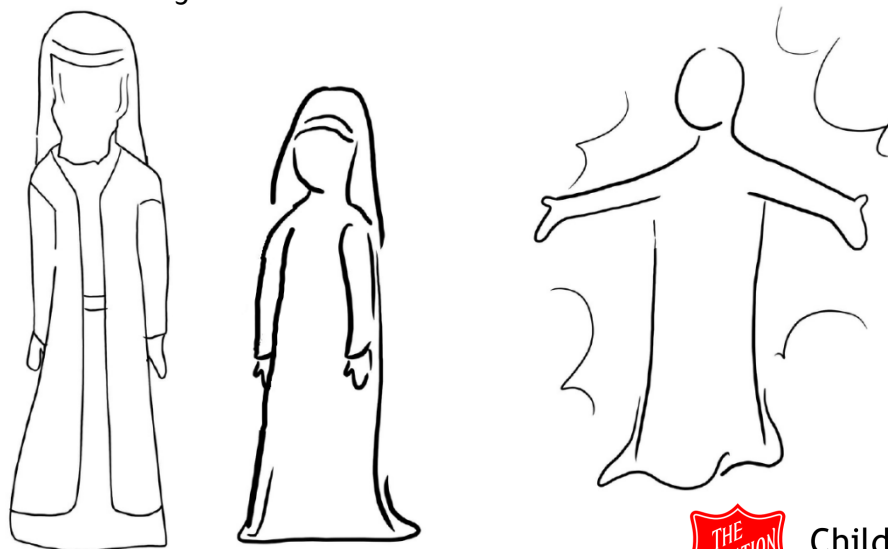
While Zechariah was burning incense in the special room, many men were outside in the yard praying to God. The incense was burning on a special altar, when suddenly one of God's angels appeared to Zechariah!

When Zechariah saw the angel, he was very surprised and very afraid. The angel said to him, 'Zechariah, do not be afraid. God has heard your prayer. He will give you what you asked for. Your wife Elizabeth will give birth to a baby boy. You will give him the name John. He will be very important to God. Many people will be very happy because he has been born. He must never drink anything with alcohol in it. From the time that he is born, the Holy Spirit will live inside him.

'John will teach many people in Israel. They will turn their lives back to God and they will obey God again. John will prepare the people for the Lord to come to them. The Holy Spirit will lead John as he led Elijah. John will do powerful things as Elijah did.'

Zechariah questioned the angel, 'How can I be sure about this? You know that I am an old man. My wife is also old.'

The angel answered, 'I am called Gabriel. God has sent me to speak to you. He told me that I should tell you this good news. But because you did not believe my message, you will not be able to speak again until the time that your son is born. My message will become true at the right time.'



# Love is a Promise (2)


**Bible verses:**

Luke 1:26-38, 57-66


**Aim:**

To see how Zechariah, Elizabeth and Mary made choices of faith


**Today's fruit:**

Joy

**Resource:** *The Virgin Mary*



## Memory verse

**'God will give us a son who will be responsible for leading the people. His name will be Wonderful Counsellor, Powerful God, Father Who Lives Forever, Prince of Peace.'**

(Isaiah 9:6 ERV)



## Start it

Play a game of *This or that*. Ask the children to stand in the middle of the room, then give them two options to choose from, pointing at which side of the room represents each answer. For example: Christmas or Easter? Broccoli or cauliflower? Summer or winter? Sweeties or chocolate? Breakfast or lunch? Seaside or woods? Chips or mash? Loud or quiet? Drums or guitar? ...

The children go to the side of the room that they prefer, then return to the middle for the next two options.



## Share it

Use *The Virgin Mary* handout. Cut out the characters and place them in the middle of the circle as you read the story, stopping to add in characters or ask questions.

I wonder:

- How do you think Mary felt when the angel shared God's message?
- What did the angel say about the baby Mary would have?
- What happened when John was born?



## Sing It

**'Isaiah 9:6' (memory verse song)** by Quest NC (1:15)

**'There are promises' (official kids worship music video)** by YancynotNancy (2:08)

**'God gave me Jesus' (pre-school worship song)** by KidSpring Children's Ministry (1:54)



## Action it

Games and activities to reinforce the Bible passage:

- **Make:** Colour and stick the characters from *The Virgin Mary* handout on to the second page of the Advent timeline.
- **Play:** Give the children a choice of two activities, eg 'This' – building blocks, or 'That' – colouring in. Allow them to make their choice and play freely for a short while.
- **Pray:** Talk about your *This or that* game. Talk together about our choice to listen to and follow God. Think about the choices Zechariah, Elizabeth and Mary made to follow God. Ask God to help you when you make decisions.
- **Try:** Continue learning the memory verse together. What actions can you do to help you?

# Explore it Light

## The virgin Mary

Luke 1:26-38,57-66

Adapted from the *Easy English Bible*.

When Elizabeth's baby had grown inside her for nearly six months, the angel Gabriel went to visit a young woman. Her name was Mary. Mary had promised to marry a man called Joseph. His family was descended from King David.

Gabriel went to Mary and said, 'Mary, the Lord God loves you very much. He is very near to you.'

Then Gabriel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary. God has been kind to you. Listen! A baby boy will grow inside you. When he is born, you will call him Jesus. He will be great. People will call him the son of the powerful God who is over all. The Lord God will make him king. He will be king for all time, without end.'

Mary asked, 'How can this happen?'

Gabriel answered, 'The Holy Spirit will come to you. So your child will be special to God. He will be completely good. He will be called God's Son. Your cousin, Elizabeth, is very old. People said that she could not have a baby. She also will have a son. The baby has grown inside her now for nearly six months. There is nothing that God cannot do.'

Mary answered, 'I am the servant of the Lord. I have heard what you have said. I want it to happen to me just as you have said.'

Then the angel left her.

The time arrived for Elizabeth to have her baby and it was a boy. Her family and the people who lived near her heard about her baby. They knew that the Lord had been very kind to her. They saw that she was happy. So they were happy too.

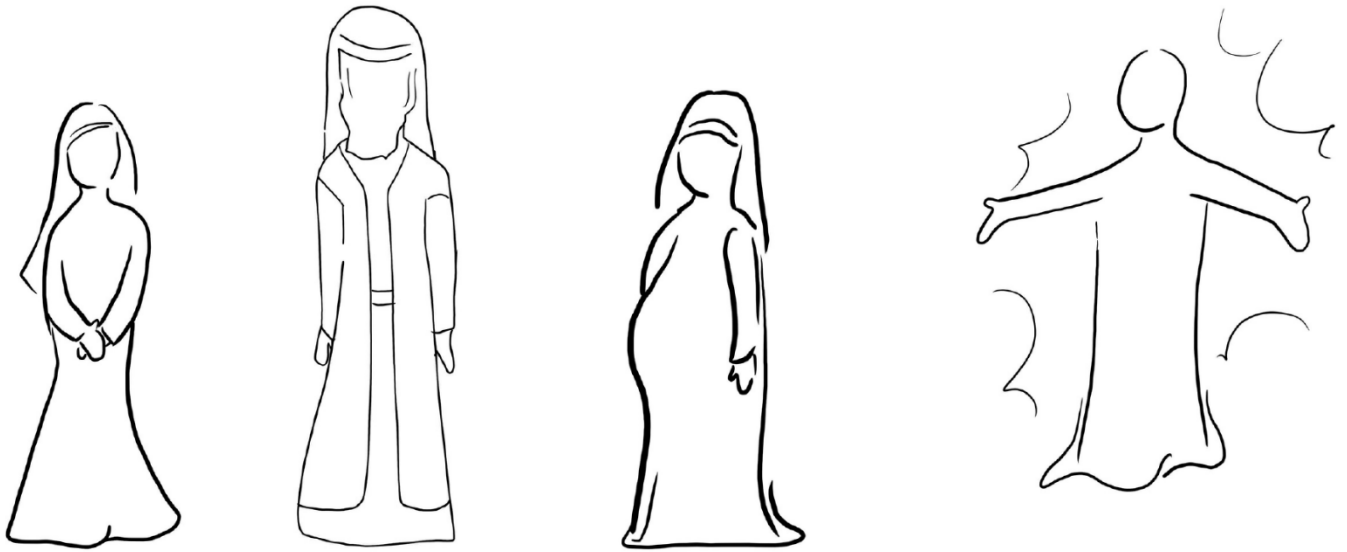
Everybody thought that the baby would be called Zechariah because this was the same name that his father had.

But Elizabeth said, 'No. His name will be John.'

They replied, 'But you do not have anyone in your family called John. That cannot be right.' So they used their hands to sign to the baby's father, Zechariah. They wanted to ask him what his son's name should be.

Zechariah asked for something to write on. He wrote, 'His name is John.' Everyone was very surprised at what he wrote. Immediately afterwards Zechariah could speak again, and so he started to praise God!

# Explore it Light



# Love is a gift

**Bible verses:**

Luke 1:57-66; 2:1-7;  
Matthew 1:18-25

**Aim:**

To celebrate the birth of Jesus  
as the gift of God's love and  
the sign that God is with us

**Today's fruit:**

Peace

**Resource:** *The Birth of Jesus*



## Memory verse

**'God will give us a son who will be  
responsible for leading the people.  
His name will be  
Wonderful Counsellor,  
Powerful God,  
Father Who Lives Forever,  
Prince of Peace.'**

(Isaiah 9:6 ERV)



## Start it

Bring a sharing snack, like a packet of biscuits, wrapped up in a box. (Please be aware of allergies.) Show the group the wrapped gift and ask them, 'What is the best gift this could be?'

Explain that today we are going to be thinking about a very special gift that we celebrate at Christmas – the gift of Jesus. Open the gift together and share the treat.



## Share it

Use *The Birth of Jesus* handout. Cut out the characters and place them in the middle of the circle as you read the story, stopping to add in characters or ask questions.

I wonder:

- How might Joseph have felt when he learnt that the person he was going to marry was going to have a baby who would be the son of God?
- What do you think it was like to travel all the way to Bethlehem?
- Why did Mary put the baby in an animals' food box?



## Sing It

**'Isaiah 9:6' (memory verse song)** by Quest NC (1:15)

**'There are promises' (official kids worship music video)** by YancynotNancy (2:08)

**'God gave me Jesus' (pre-school worship song)** by KidSpring Children's Ministry (1:54)

## Action it

Games and activities to reinforce the Bible passage:

- **Make:** Colour and stick the characters from *The Virgin Mary* handout on to the third page of the Advent timeline.
- **Play:** If you have a Nativity set, allow the children to play with it and re-enact the story. Alternatively make your own by cutting out Bible characters from the handouts and Blu-tack them on to some wooden blocks.
- **Pray:** Pray some Peace Prayers. Using a picture of the world or a globe, place it in the centre of the circle. Ask the children if they know the names of any countries. Talk about the memory verse. It says Jesus is the Prince of Peace. We know lots of places in the world that need the peace of Jesus. Pray together for peace in our world.
- **Try:** Have a little celebration together. This could include party decorations, games and maybe food. Talk together about why we celebrate the birth of Jesus.

# Explore it Light

## The birth of Jesus

Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 2:1-7

Adapted from the *Easy English Bible*.

Mary had promised to marry a man called Joseph. But now she was pregnant and told Joseph she was expecting a baby. Joseph was a good man, and he wanted to do what was right. He did not want her to embarrass her in front of people, so he decided to stop their marriage secretly.

But then an angel came from the Lord God to see him. The angel came to Joseph while he was dreaming.

The angel said, 'Joseph, you who are from the family of King David, take Mary home as your wife. Do not be afraid to do that. The baby that is growing inside her is from the Holy Spirit. Mary's baby will be a boy. He will save his people from their sins. Because of that, you must give him the name Jesus.'

The Lord God had given a message about this to one of his prophets long ago. Now that message will become true. The prophet had said, 'A young woman will have a baby boy. People will call her son Immanuel.' This name means 'God is with us'.

Then Joseph woke up from his sleep and he did what God's angel had said to him.

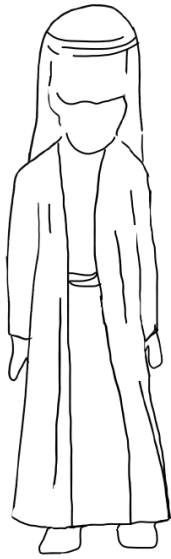
At that time, Caesar Augustus made a law. He told his men to count everyone who lived in all the countries that he ruled. This was the first time that the Romans had made a list of everyone's names. Everyone had to go back to their own hometown for the Romans to count them.

So Joseph went to his hometown of Bethlehem. King David had been born there, so Bethlehem was called the town of David and Joseph belonged to the family of David. That is why he went to Bethlehem.

Joseph took Mary with him so that the Romans could count them both. Mary went as she was going to marry Joseph. She was pregnant, and while they were in Bethlehem the time came for her baby to be born. This was her first baby, and it was a boy. She put cloths around him. Then she put him in an animals' food box. She did this because the rooms for visitors were full.

And this is how Jesus was born.

# Explore it Light



# Love is powerful



**Bible verses:**  
Luke 2:8-20



**Aim:**  
To consider why the angels appear to shepherds, and why the 'outsiders' receive the good news first



**Today's fruit:**  
Love

**Resource:** *Some shepherds hear about Jesus*



## Memory verse

**'God will give us a son who will be responsible for leading the people.**

**His name will be**

**Wonderful Counsellor,**

**Powerful God,**

**Father Who Lives Forever,**

**Prince of Peace.'**

(Isaiah 9:6 ERV)



## Start it

Ask if anyone has ever had any exciting news and encourage the children to share it. Say that today we will be exploring the story of some very exciting news and wonder together why it might be important. Can they guess what the exciting news is?



## Share it

Use the *Some shepherds hear about Jesus* handout. Cut out the characters and place them in the middle of the circle as you read the story, stopping to add in characters or ask questions.

I wonder:

- Why did the angels appear to the shepherds?
- Why did God want the shepherds to be the first people to meet Jesus?
- What did they do after they met him?



## Sing It

**'Isaiah 9:6' (memory verse song)** by Quest NC (1:15)

**'There are promises' (official kids worship music video)** by YancynotNancy (2:08)

**'God gave me Jesus' (pre-school worship song)** by KidSpring Children's Ministry (1:54)



## Action it

Games and activities to reinforce the Bible passage: Love is Powerful

- **Make:** Colour and stick the characters from the *Some shepherds hear about Jesus* handout on to the fourth page of the Advent timeline.
- **Play:** Play a game of *Round-up*. Scatter cotton-wool balls around your space and call them 'sheep'. Ask the children to 'round up' the sheep and make sure they're safe. To make it trickier, you could give the children some card to waft the sheep rather than using their hands!
- **Pray:** Sit in a circle and give each person a cotton-wool ball to hold carefully in their hands. Thank God for the shepherds, who told everyone about the birth of Jesus. Thank God that they were chosen to see this very special part of his story.
- **Try:** If you have people who will be coming to your church in the next couple of days, you might like to make some Christmas cards that could be given out with food parcels / gift boxes / warm meals, or sent to those in hospital ... They can include a simple Christmas greeting inside them from your church.

# Explore it Light

## Some shepherds hear about Jesus

Luke 2:8-20

Adapted from the *Easy English Bible*.

That night, some shepherds were living out in the fields near Bethlehem. They were keeping their sheep safe when suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared to them. A bright light from God shone all around them. It really frightened them.

The angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. Listen! I bring you good news. This news will make everyone very happy. Something happened today in the town of David. Someone special was born. He is the one who will save you. He is the Messiah. I will tell you how you will know this baby. You will find him with cloths around him. He is lying in an animals' food box.'

At that moment, a great crowd of angels appeared. They were praising God. They said, 'God is great! He lives in the highest place above. He will bless the people on earth who please him. They will have peace in their minds.'

After that, the angels went away and returned to Heaven.

The shepherds said to each other, 'We should leave the sheep and go to Bethlehem immediately! The Lord God has sent his angels to tell us what has happened. We want to see this baby.'

So they went quickly to Bethlehem. When they got there, they found Mary and Joseph with the baby. The baby really was lying in an animals' food box.

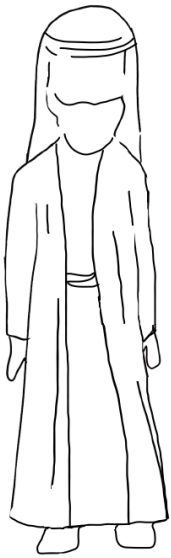
After they had seen the baby, they told everybody about him. They told them what the angel had said to them about him. Many people heard what the shepherds said and they were very surprised.

Mary remembered everything that the shepherds had said. She thought about it all for a long time.

The shepherds then went back to their sheep. As they went, they praised God.

'How great you are!' they said to him. 'How good you are! Everything that the angel told us was true! We have heard good news. We have seen very special things!'

# Explore it Light



# Love is an action



**Bible verses:**  
Matthew 2:1-12



**Aim:**  
To see how the wise men faithfully responded to God's gift of Jesus, and to learn that we can also respond by giving ourselves fully to God



**Today's fruit:**  
Faithfulness

**Resource:** *Wise men come to visit Jesus*



## Memory verse

**'God will give us a son who will be responsible for leading the people. His name will be Wonderful Counsellor, Powerful God, Father Who Lives Forever, Prince of Peace.'**

(Isaiah 9:6 ERV)



## Start it

A game of *Follow the star*. Choose someone to be the star and the rest of the group follows them around the room. When the star stops moving, everyone kneels down! Ask if the group knows what today's story might be about today.



## Share it

Use the *Wise men come to visit Jesus* handout. Cut out the characters and place them in the middle of the circle as you read the story, stopping to add in characters or ask questions.

I wonder:

- How did the wise men feel when they saw the star stop above the place where Jesus was?
- What did they do when they finally found him?
- Was this an important part of the story?



## Sing It

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**'There are promises' (official kids worship music video)** by YancynotNancy (2:08)

**'God gave me Jesus' (pre-school worship song)** by KidSpring Children's Ministry (1:54)



## Action it

Games and activities to reinforce the Bible passage: Love is an Action

- **Make:** Colour and stick the characters from the *Wise men come to visit Jesus* handout on to the final page of the Advent timeline.
- **Play:** Think of what gift you would have given baby Jesus if you were there and ask around the circle. You could use the alphabet to guide your ideas: 'I would give Jesus ... alphabet blocks!'
- **Pray:** On an A4 piece of paper, write out the words 'To ...' at the top, and then at the bottom 'With love from God'. Think together about how Jesus was God's gift to the world. We can choose to accept the gift if we want to, but the gift of Jesus is for everyone. Say to the group that to help us talk to God, they can write their name or draw an image of themselves on the paper. Thank God for the gift of Jesus that is for us all.
- **Try:** Make junk model gifts – they could be covered in craft paper or wrapping paper.

# Explore it Light

## Wise men come to visit Jesus

Matthew 2:1-12

Adapted from the *Easy English Bible*.

After Jesus was born, some wise men came to Jerusalem from a country in the east. When they arrived there, they asked people, 'Where is the baby who has been born as the king of the Jews? We saw his special star when it first appeared in the sky. So now we have come here to worship him.'

When King Herod heard what the men said, he was very upset. All the people in Jerusalem were afraid too. Then Herod asked all the leaders of the priests and the teachers of God's law to meet with him. He asked them, 'Where will God's Messiah be born?'

They replied, 'The Messiah will be born in Bethlehem in Judea. This is what the prophet wrote about it: "People who live in Bethlehem, your town is a very important town in Judea. A person born in your town will become a leader of my people Israel. He will lead my people like a shepherd leads his sheep."''

Then Herod secretly told the wise men to come to meet with him. They told Herod the time that the star had appeared. So Herod sent the men to Bethlehem. He said to them, 'Go and look everywhere for this child. When you find him, come back here and tell me where he is. Then I can also go and worship him.'

After the wise men heard the king, they left to go to Bethlehem. They could see the same star that they had seen before. They were very happy when they saw the star. It moved along in front of them. And then it stopped above the place where the child was staying.

The wise men went into the house and they saw the child. He was with Mary, his mother. They went down on their knees in front of the child and they worshipped him. Then they opened their bags. They took out valuable gifts and they gave them to the child. The gifts were gold, an incense called frankincense, and one called myrrh.

After that, God said to them in a dream, 'Do not go back to see Herod again.' So the men followed a different road to return to their own country.

# Explore it Light

