



How does a weary world rejoice?

We acknowledge our weariness

The First Sunday of Advent
**Children's Curriculum
for Luke 1:1-23**

by Rev. Anna Strickland



MAIN IDEA *Sometimes it's hard to believe good news.*

Opening Song

Suggestion: "Down In My Heart"

Connection

Sometimes joy is hard to find, but it's deep down in our hearts if we look for it.

Lyrics

*I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy,
Down in my heart,
Down in my heart,
Down in my heart;
I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy,
Down in my heart,
Down in my heart to stay.*

*I've got the peace that passes understanding,
Down in my heart,
Down in my heart,
Down in my heart;
I've got the peace that passes understanding,
Down in my heart,
Down in my heart to stay.*

*I've got the love of Jesus, love of Jesus,
Down in my heart,
Down in my heart,
Down in my heart;
I've got the love of Jesus, love of Jesus,
Down in my heart,
Down in my heart to stay.*

Engaging the Story

Scripture Skit: Zechariah Meets an Angel

Using the suggestions included in the curriculum introduction, perform or act out the scripture skit (included in a separate document). If you are doing a puppet show or a simple table read of the skit, simplify the stage directions and mime props as needed.

Reflection

- Have you heard the phrase, “too good to be true”? What does that mean to you?
- Zechariah thought Gabriel’s good news was too good to be true. Has there ever been a time when you had trouble believing good news?
- Do you think it was fair that Zechariah wasn’t able to speak because he doubted? Why or why not?
- How do you think Zechariah communicated with people when he couldn't speak?

Prayer

Before praying, ask children to share some good news from the week.

Dear God, the world isn’t always fair, so it’s hard to believe good news sometimes. Thank you for all the ways you surprise us with good news. Help us to always be on the lookout for joy, especially when we doubt it’s there. In Jesus’ name we pray, amen.

Extension Activities

Depending on time, you might add one or more of the following activities. You could also set these activities up as centers or send them home with children.

Activity A) Game: Acting Out Zechariah’s Messages

Materials

- One set of message cards (included), or make your own message cards by writing any of the following on index cards:
 - “Get the doctor! My wife is having a baby!”
 - “I’m hungry. What’s for dinner?”
 - “I’d like a haircut, please. Not too short.”
 - “I saw an angel and now I can’t talk.”
 - “I got a papercut. Can I have a bandage?”
 - “Can you pass me the hammer?”
 - “Where is the nearest well? I need water for my donkey.”
 - “I need a gift for my brother. It’s his birthday.”
 - “What time is it? I think I’m late for work.”
 - “It’s your turn to light the candles.”
 - “Where is your bathroom? I’ve gotta go!”
 - “Don’t forget an umbrella—it’s supposed to rain today.”
- (Optional) Picture cards with photos or drawings of items Zechariah might need (such as food, scissors, bandage, pencil, etc.).

Extension Activities *(cont.)*

Activity A) Game: Acting Out Zechariah's Messages *(cont.)*

Instructions

Print the included message cards on paper and cut them apart, or create your own using index cards and markers. Take turns selecting a message to try to communicate to the group like Zechariah would—by silently acting it out or drawing the message. *Remember: even if Zechariah knew how to write, not everyone knew how to read!*

For pre-readers, draw some items Zechariah might need on index cards (such as food, scissors, bandage, pencil, etc.) or print photos of the objects. Invite children to select a picture card and ask for the item pictured without speaking. The group then guesses which item the child is asking for.

Activity B) Book: *The Magical Yet*

The Magical Yet. Written by Angela DiTerlizzi, illustrated by Lorena Alvarez Gómez. Disney Hyperion, 2020.

Zechariah had stopped believing he could ever have a child. The character in this story learns to believe that anything is possible. Read the book together or make it available for older children to read independently. You might also choose to read this book as a children's moment in worship or send a video read-aloud to parents during the week.

Activity C) Creative Expression: Scratch Art

Materials

- Pre-made scratch art boards, or make your own using cardstock, markers, and black crayon.
- Wooden skewers or toothpicks.

Instructions

Create scratch art to remember that joy exists even when we can't see it. Use pre-made scratch art boards (or make your own using the directions below) and invite children to scratch away images or words that remind them of joy.

To prepare a scratch art board, invite children to fill a piece of cardstock with color using markers. Abstract patches of color work best. Then fill the entire piece of paper with black crayon so the colorful design underneath is hidden. Invite children to scratch away the black crayon layer using wooden skewers or toothpicks in whatever design they choose.