

# The Joy of Advent: Week 4, Middle and Upper Elementary

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## Learning Goals

- ▶ Advent is a time for waiting and for preparing for the coming of Jesus Christ, not only as a baby at Christmas, but also at the end of time in His promised Second Coming.
- ▶ Mary is Jesus' mother and our mother. She is blessed among women.
- ▶ Jesus is the Light of the World. During Christmas, especially, we celebrate His light shining in the darkness.



## Connection to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

- ▶ CCC 484-487
- ▶ CCC 522-525



## Vocabulary

- ▶ Annunciation
- ▶ Christmas

## BIBLICAL TOUCHSTONES

Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word."

LUKE 1:38

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

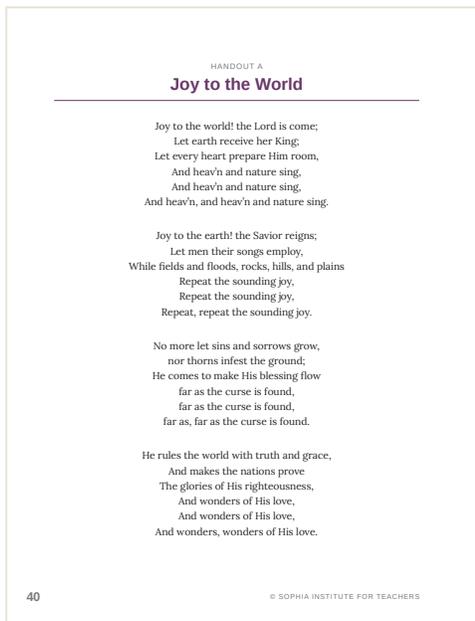
JOHN 1:5

# Lesson Plan

## Materials

- Handout A: Joy to the World
- Handout B: Teaching the Liturgical Year: Fourth Week of Advent Packet

**Teacher’s Note:** Because of this year’s calendar, the Fourth Sunday of Advent falls on December 20. Therefore, this year, the fourth week of Advent is only five days. You and your students may already be on Christmas vacation. You may complete this lesson (or parts of it) with your students in class and then have them complete the rest at home with their parents over Christmas vacation.



## Warm-Up

Ask your students to sing the Christmas carol “Joy to the World” with their families or read the lyrics on **Handout A: Joy to the World** as a class. Encourage them to sing the carol as a prayer, listening carefully to the words of the song and thinking about why we celebrate the joy of Christmas.

## Activity

- Explain to your students that even though the fourth week of Advent is only five days this year, very soon we will celebrate the birth of Jesus! This begins a new season in the life of the Church: Christmas. The Christmas season lasts until the feast of the Baptism of the Lord. During this period of more than two weeks, we celebrate the coming of the Light of the World, the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We joyfully reflect on the Good News of Jesus Christ: that our salvation has come.
- Send home with your students the **Handout B: Teaching the Liturgical Year** worksheets. Have them complete the following with their families:
  - **Gospel Reading: Luke 1:26-38:** Read with their families and answer and discuss the focus questions together.
  - **Impossible Things:** Read about God’s people throughout Salvation History and discuss the reflection questions together.



- ▶ **Teaching the Liturgical Year: Christmas Day:** Read the Gospel passage, then answer the focus questions.
  - ▶ **Adoration of the Shepherds:** Reflect on the painting together using the conversation questions provided.
  - ▶ **Adoration of the Shepherds Coloring Page:** Encourage your students to display the coloring page at home during the Christmas season as a reminder of the true meaning of Christmas.
- E. Finally, encourage and challenge your students to think of different ways in which they can share the joy of Christ with others during their Christmas vacation. Specifically challenge them to imitate Christ by loving and serving others in concrete ways. Perhaps they can help serve at a soup kitchen with their families or visit a sick family member or friend. Perhaps they can spend extra time in prayer for someone who is need of prayer. Encourage them to be creative and think of ways to share the joy of Christmas with others that they might not ordinarily do.

# Answer Key

## Teaching the Liturgical Year: Fourth Week of Advent

1. The angel Gabriel. He greeted her by saying, “Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you.” The angel Gabriel’s greeting is part of the Hail Mary prayer.
2. Mary was greatly troubled and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel told her not to be afraid because she had found favor with God.
3. He would be great and called Son of the Most High, and God would give Him the throne of David, and He would rule over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom would never end.
4. She “had no relations with a man”; in other words, she was not yet married.
5. By the power of the Holy Spirit, which would come upon her and overshadow her.
6. “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.”

## Teaching the Liturgical Year: Christmas Day

1. He was in the beginning with God and was (is) God.
2. All things, specifically, life.
3. Life, the light of the human race.
4. Jesus is the light of the world, who shined in the darkness of sin. He is fully God, through whom all things were made, and He became man, born as a human infant. He was rejected by His own people and was crucified and died. But, by His Resurrection, He defeated sin and death, and opened the path to Heaven to all who accept Him. His sacrifice made it possible for all men to be sons and daughters of God again.
5. It is on Christmas that we celebrate the birth of Jesus, and His Incarnation, when God Himself entered into human history as Jesus Christ. Throughout His life, Jesus revealed the Father to us and made known His glory.

## Adoration of the Shepherds

1. Accept reasoned answers.
2. Mary, Joseph, Baby Jesus, and Shepherds.
3. Jesus Himself is the only source of light in the painting. The artist was depicting the Light of the World shining in the darkness, and the glory of God (as John speaks of in His Gospel).
4. Mary is looking directly at Jesus, and she is pulling back His blanket to reveal Him to the shepherds. Mary’s role in our faith is always to reveal her Son, Jesus, to us and direct us to Him.
5. Accept reasoned answers.

## **Teaching the Liturgical Year: Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph**

1. To present Him to the Lord in the Temple, according to the law of Moses.
2. The Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon that “he should not see death before he had seen the Messiah of the Lord.”
3. He prophesied that Jesus was destined for the rise and fall of many in Israel, and that He would be a sign that was contradicted. He also told Mary that a sword would pierce her heart “so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”
4. She gave thanks to God, and “spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem.”
5. That He “grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon Him.”