



**WELCOMING
CHILDREN
in WORSHIP**

**THE CATHOLIC
UNIVERSITY
OF AMERICA**



EASTER SEASON

Adaptive Activities for Children



**National Catholic
Partnership on Disability**

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Introduction

Welcome and thank you for your ministry that serves the liturgical formation of children for their participation in the Eucharist, the “source and summit of the Christian life.” This resource is provided by the Committee on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities of the National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD). It aims to offer an adaptive catechetical opportunity for all who have a heart for disability ministry to reflect on the liturgical year. We welcome you to this virtual community and hope you find this resource beneficial.

Here you will find reflections to guide children with intellectual and developmental disabilities, or diverse learners, through the current liturgical season with adaptive catechesis to help them to participate fully. Each offering includes prayer, Scripture, activities and more that incorporate the senses and take into consideration the needs of all learners. We invite you to gather children around the table of the home or the table of the classroom as preparation for their participation at the sacred table of the Eucharist.

Each monthly edition incorporates the following:

- 1. Prayer**
- 2. Sacred Scripture**
- 3. Reflection**
- 4. Faith in Action**
- 5. Activities**
- 6. Saint**
- 7. Resources/Bibliography**

Prayer for the Annunciation of the Lord

Celebrated on March 25

Begin with the Sign of the Cross.

Leader:

Today we celebrate a very special time in Mary's life. We remember when the Angel Gabriel appeared to Mary to announce that she would become the Mother of God. Mary was a great woman of God and she said "yes" to giving birth to Jesus. We ask God to bless us with the grace and strength to say "yes" to His call in our own lives.

Mary, Mother of God...

All: Pray for us.

Leader:

Let us pray the Hail Mary together to remember the important role that Mary played in giving life to Jesus.

Hail, Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou amongst women
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death.

Amen.

Note: Song Suggestion - *Hail Mary, Gentle Woman*

https://youtu.be/OUey6ytEXqY?si=4eVX_ER4-KTZ8ctZ



Photo from Unsplash

Prayer for Easter Season

A Daily Prayer for Families

Begin with the Sign of the Cross.

Christ is risen! Alleluia, Alleluia!
Christ is risen! Alleluia, Alleluia!

Leader:

May the glory
and the promise
of this joyous time of year
bring peace
and happiness to you
and those you hold most dear.

And may Christ,
Our Risen Savior,
always be there by your side
to bless you
most abundantly
and be your loving guide.¹

Amen.

Note: Song Suggestion - *Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee*
<https://youtu.be/2yZVweZ2Cvg?si=XTqwPFCXSQSiKSPW>

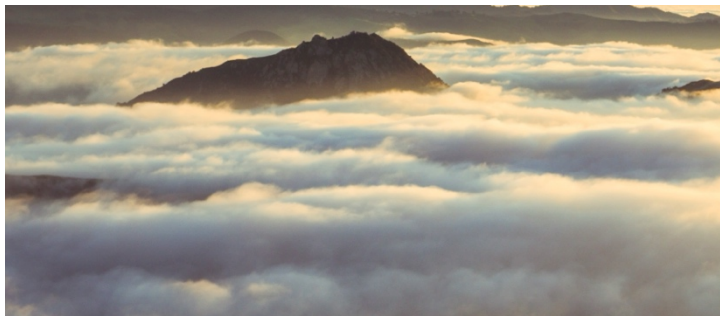


Photo by Ross van der Wal on Unsplash

¹ "Joyous Time of the Year." *Easter Prayers*. Author Unknown. Xavier University Website: www.xavier.edu. Accessed March 14, 2024. <https://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/prayer-index/easter-prayers>.

Reading of Sacred Scripture:

The **Annunciation** of the Lord

You will conceive and bear a son.

Luke 1:26-38

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

God sent the angel Gabriel to the town of **Nazareth** in Galilee with a message for a virgin named Mary.

She was **engaged** to Joseph from the family of King David.

The angel greeted Mary and said,

"You are truly blessed! The Lord is with you."

Mary was confused by the angel's words and wondered what they meant. Then the angel told Mary, "Don't be afraid!

God is pleased with you, and you will have a son.

His name will be Jesus.

He will be great and will be called the Son of God Most High.

The Lord God will make him king, as his ancestor David was.

He will rule the people of Israel forever,

and his kingdom will never end."

Mary asked the angel, "How can this happen?

I am not married!"

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come down to you, and God's power will come over you.

So, your child will be called the holy Son of God.

"Your relative Elizabeth is also going to have a son, even though she is old.

No one thought she could ever have a baby,

but in three months she will have a son.

Nothing is impossible for God!"

Mary said, "I am the Lord's servant!

Let it happen as you have said."

And the angel left her.



Photo by Jakob-Owens on Unsplash

Vocabulary

Annunciation - to make an announcement

Engaged - a promise to someone to be married

Nazareth – a town in northern Israel that was the hometown of Jesus

(<https://www.dictionary.com>)

Annunciation – Reflection

How many of you have heard of Mother Theresa, or Blessed Theresa of Calcutta? She was a woman who loved Jesus so deeply, she worked all her life to help the poor. One time, after thinking about the angel Gabriel announcing to the Blessed Mother Mary that she was going to have God's son, Blessed Theresa said:

"Mary showed complete trust in God by agreeing to be used as an instrument in his plan of salvation. She trusted him in spite of her nothingness because she knew he who is mighty could do great things in her and through her. Once she said "yes" to him, she never doubted. She was just a young woman, but she belonged to God and nothing nor anyone could separate her from him."

Blessed Teresa of Calcutta

How many of us always say yes to God? When we say yes to God, do we bargain with Him to make it easier for us to complete something he wants us to do? Mary said yes, Mary said, "I am the Lord's servant! Let it happen as you have said." Are we afraid to do God's work? Or does knowing that He is always with us help us to "be not afraid" just like Mary in this gospel reading.

By choosing to let God's will be done, Mary changed the world forever, just by bringing her son, Jesus into the world.



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Faith in Action

The Annunciation and the Easter Season

April 2024

This year, the Solemnity of the Annunciation will take place on April 8th, a week into the Easter season. On this day we celebrate our blessed Mother Mary's saying "Yes" to God. It is on this day that the Angel Gabriel visited Mary and told her God's plan for her. He told her that she would be the Mother of God and Mary said "Yes!" During this beautiful season of Easter, where we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ, we are reminded on the feast of the Annunciation of the joy and peace that saying "Yes" to God brings.



Photo by Maria Oswalt on Unsplash

Mary's "Yes" to God is an inspiration to all of us to say "Yes" to our Heavenly Father today and every day. As a family we can remember this and celebrate throughout the Easter season, by saying our own "Yes" to God by first giving thanks to Him for Mary, our blessed Mother. We can also say "Yes" to God by reflecting and acting on what Jesus shared as the most important commandments - to love God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and to love your neighbor, as yourself. As a family we can take time out to reflect on each of these commandments and put our faith into action by doing the following:

Loving God with our all Heart, Soul, and Mind and Loving our Neighbor, as Ourselves.

"Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" He said to him, "You shall love the Lord, Your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Matthew 22:36-40 (NAB)

1 Scripture – Read aloud Matthew 22:36-40.

Ask your family to close their eyes, take a deep breath, breathe in through the nose slowly to the count of four, and breathe out through the mouth slowly to the count of 8 (or as long as you can do so comfortably). Do this three times.

Ask your family to listen carefully to God's word as you read the Gospel passage. Begin by saying "A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew." Read the passage aloud 2-3 times, or as many times as you would like. Each time ask your family 1) To use their imagination – what do they picture in their minds as they hear God's word? 2) Reflect on the words of the passage that stand out to them. 3) Ask them to think about what is the message that God is trying to tell them? And 4) How would they like to say "Yes" to God after hearing this passage? Encourage everyone to share their thoughts on what they heard and how they would like to say "Yes" to God like our Blessed Mother Mary did. They can express this in sharing aloud, drawing, or even acting it out or creating a dance that expresses their ideas.

2 Prayer – Pray together as a family. Ask our Mother Mary to strengthen and inspire us to continue to say "Yes" to God as she did. Pray aloud the Memorare.

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help. Or sought thine intercession was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my mother; to thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.



Photo by Marites Allen on Unsplash

Ask each family member to say a silent prayer in their hearts for the strength to say "Yes" to God.

3 Say “Yes” to God as a Family

Make a plan as a family to do one small thing each day and one big thing each week throughout the Easter season to say “Yes” to God. Let your actions show God how much you love Him and your neighbors. Saying “Yes” to God could involve daily family prayer and Scripture reading, going to Mass together and participating in the Sacraments as a family.

Saying “Yes” to God could also involve showing acts of kindness for other members of your family and community. Offering to do chores like setting the table, feeding your pet, or taking out the trash. Loving your neighbor could involve smiling and saying hello to persons you know, and persons you are meeting for the first time. Going through your closets to give away new or gently used clothing and other household items to those in need. Volunteering in your church and community to share your gifts and talents to benefit others. Sharing what you have with others is a beautiful way to say “Yes” to God.

Making a commitment to say “Yes” to God throughout the Easter season, and every single day, is a wonderful way to show God how much we love Him and appreciate all that He does for us.

Easter blessings to you and your family.



Photo by Alexander Dummer on Unsplash

Activities with Children

Activity for the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord

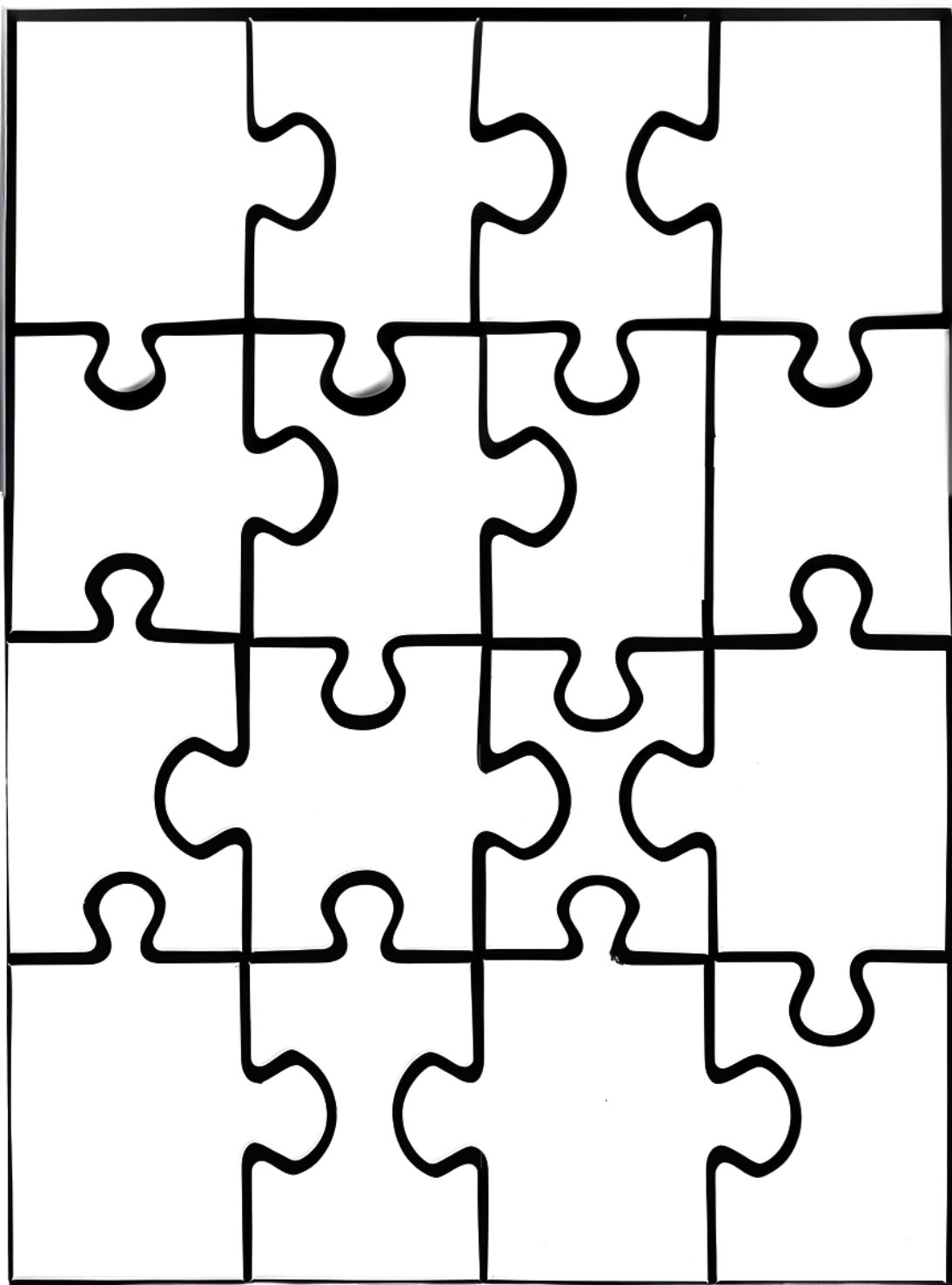
The Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord commemorates the day when the Archangel Gabriel came to the Blessed Virgin. It is usually celebrated on March 25th - which is nine months before Jesus' birth. However, because it would fall during Holy Week in 2024, the Annunciation will be observed on Monday, April 8.

On the Annunciation of the Lord, the Archangel explains to Mary that God has chosen her to be the mother of his son, Jesus. Although Mary was troubled by what was said, she responded, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Luke 1:38.

Through Mary's fiat, her "Yes" to God, she made the Divine Plan of salvation effective in history. As Eve disobeyed and set humanity on a path of sin, Mary was perfectly obedient and set us on the path of grace. EWTN Global Catholic Network, *"Why is the Annunciation celebrated on March 25?"* - <https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/seasons-and-feast-days/annunciation-20873>

In recognition of Mary's courage to say, "Yes," consider praying the Hail Mary with your child. Keep in mind that prayer can take different formats. For example, besides verbally saying the prayer, perhaps your child can do one of the following -

- listen while another individual recites the Hail Mary
- hold onto or look at a statue of the Virgin Mary
- put together a puzzle of the prayer (see the following puzzle sample)



Directions: copy puzzle onto card stock paper; write the Hail Mary on the puzzle; then cut out pieces along the lines. Assist your child in putting the puzzle pieces back together, then pray the Hail Mary.

Activity for the Easter Season

The Easter season is the second-longest liturgical season in the Catholic Church; only Ordinary Time is longer. The Church celebrates the Easter season for 50 days, beginning on Easter Sunday and ending on Pentecost. In all four Gospels, between the time of Jesus' resurrection and ascension into heaven, there are multiple accounts of the Lord appearing to the disciples and others.

In Luke 24:36, John 20:19, and John 20:21, Jesus tells the disciples, "Peace be with you." In Matthew 28:10, Jesus says to the women at the tomb, "Do not be afraid." Consider reading any of these passages to your child. Afterwards, help your child create or select an item that will bring peace to him/her when he/she is afraid or anxious. The following are suggested items for your child.



Comfort Pillow:

Ask your child to choose the fabric, then together you can make a small pillow.

Silicone Rosary Beads:

These rosary beads are flexible and stretchy. It is available at many locations, including at St. Patrick's Guild - <https://stpatricksguild.com/>





Clinging Cross:

This wooden cross can fit into most hands. It is available at many locations, including:

<https://www.amazon.com/Wonderful-Clinging-Cross-Comfortable-Perfectly/dp/B000WZCNLW>

Picture of Jesus:

Have your child color a picture of Jesus. It can then be kept as a visual reminder of the peace that Jesus wants for everyone.



www.clipart-library.com

Activity for Easter Season

Divine Mercy Sunday is celebrated on the Second Sunday of Easter - April 7, 2024. The focus on this day is the forgiveness of sins and God's infinite mercy. According to the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston Office of Worship -

The Congregation for Divine Worship decreed (May 23, 2000) that "throughout the world, the Second Sunday of Easter will receive the name Divine Mercy Sunday, a perennial invitation to the Christian world to face, with confidence in divine benevolence, the difficulties and trials that humankind will experience in the years to come."

Consider celebrating this day with your child by praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet. The Chaplet is prayed on a five-decade rosary. You can print a copy of the Chaplet from USCCB's website - <https://www.usccb.org/prayers/chaplet-divine-mercy>

On the ten small beads of each decade, you can lead by saying, "For the sake of His sorrowful Passion." Then your child can respond with, "have mercy on us and on the whole world." There are a variety of ways that your child can declare this response besides verbally saying the words. For example, by using the following response card, he/she could:

- gaze at the card
- point to the card
- hold up the card





Saint for March

St. Mark the Evangelist

Solemnity – April 25th

Saint Mark is one of the four authors of the Gospels, along with Matthew, Luke, and John. The word gospel means news. Saint Mark and the others wrote about the life of Jesus on earth and so, Catholics refer to all four Gospels as the “good news.” As this news of the work of Jesus spread, more people followed Him. In Jesus’ time, they did not have the internet, or tv, or phones. News traveled to other parts of the world because people traveled to other parts of the world and told of what they saw and heard. Saint Mark was an important person in his time for just this reason. He traveled to different areas with Paul and his cousin Barnabas, both apostles of Jesus, and shared news about His teachings. Mark is known as an Evangelist. What is an evangelist? An evangelist is a person who preaches about something important in a faraway place. Saint Mark left Israel and went to Cyprus and preached the “good news” about Jesus. Saint Mark is often pictured as a winged lion because Ezekiel’s described evangelists as winged creatures – one of which is a lion. The next time you are in a cathedral or basilica, look up. You might see the image of Saint Mark the Evangelist, as a winged lion, flying above.

Prayer for Wisdom

May God give us, like Mark, the wisdom and
grace to preach the Gospel of Christ:
O God,
who raised up Saint Mark,
your Evangelist,
and endowed him with the grace
to preach the Gospel,

grant we pray,
that we may so profit from his teaching,
as to follow faithfully in the footsteps of
Christ. Who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen

Easter Season & the Annunciation of the Lord - Resources

The Catholic Crusade, “The Divine Mercy Chaplet” video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5pdnzUjmkzA&t=4s>

The Catholic Talk Show, “What Did Jesus Do for the 40 Days After the Resurrection?” video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4qhuxlZe_7s&authuser=0

Divine Mercy Chaplet Explained (St. Faustina) - Catholic Video by Speaker Ken Yaskinski:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-YrfxXb8Uwk&t=1s>

EWTN Global Catholic Network, “My Time with Jesus - The Annunciation” video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WWBbB8vcx98&t=11s>

EWTN Global Catholic Network, “Why is the Annunciation celebrated on March 25?”:

<https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/seasons-and-feast-days/annunciation-20873>

Free Bible Images, “Resurrection of Jesus” & “Mary and the Angel Gabriel”:


<https://freebibleimages.org/illustrations/>

Mercy Home for Boys and Girls, “The Importance of the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord”: <https://www.mercyhome.org/blog/sunday-mass/the-importance-of-the-solemnity-of-the-annunciation-of-the-lord/#:~:text=The%20Annunciation%20of%20the%20Lord%20refers%20to%20the%20time%20when,what%20he%20promised%20the%20world.>

St. Luke Productions, “What is Divine Mercy?” video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oj2pq7dhLzI>

USCCB, Chaplet of Divine Mercy - <https://www.usccb.org/prayers/chaplet-divine-mercy>



USCCB, Daily Readings for April 8, 2024, Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord:
<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/040824.cfm>

USCCB, “Respect Life Action Guide: Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord,” February 2021:
<https://www.usccb.org/resources/respect-life-action-guide-solemnity-annunciation-lord>

Vatican News - Liturgical Feasts - Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord:
<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/liturgical-holidays/solemnity-of-the-annunciation-of-the-lord.html>

[Annunciation Activities and Worksheets for Kids \(thereligionteacher.com\)](https://thereligionteacher.com/annunciation-activities-and-worksheets-for-kids/)

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Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston Office of Worship, The Year of Grace - 2024, Liturgical Calendar Notes for the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston

EWTN Global Catholic Network, “Why is the Annunciation celebrated on March 25?”:
<https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/seasons-and-feast-days/annunciation-20873>