

# Fourth Sunday of Advent

*For the Mighty One has done great things for me.*

—Luke 1:49 NRSV

## Explore

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### Joyful Impressions

old Christmas cards,  
large sheets of  
paper, tape, markers,  
media player with  
Christmas music

*On four or five large sheets of paper, tape the front of old Christmas cards that illustrate scenes of joy, rejoicing, or blessings. Place them around the room on a hard surface area and put a marker at each sheet. Play Christmas carols as background music. When students arrive, tell them to move around the room and write a one-word impression or response to each card. Hang the completed sheets where all can view them, if not already hanging. Look at each sheet and summarize the responses to the cards looking for the great things God does for us.*

## Extract

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Bible,  
paper, pens

### Mary's Song

In today's scripture lesson, we visit Mary, who was reflecting on the changes that were coming into her life and remembering the promises God made to her ancestors. Read her rejoicing and her praises to God in Luke 1:47–55 (Luke 1:46–54 IV). What are some of the things she praises? How does Mary's song apply to us today?

With the birth of Jesus, God blessed humankind. In Mary's praise, we sense her awesome joy, yet we wonder if she understood the full impact of what was happening.

Luke 1:47–55  
Luke 1:46–54 IV  
Hebrews 10:5–10

At the Christmas season, we celebrate the beginning of Jesus' life on earth. *Hold up a cross.* The cross represents the end of his earthly life, celebrated during the Easter season. We'll begin with the familiar Christmas story. *Hand the cross to one of the students and ask them to tell a part of the story. When they wish, they pass the cross on to the next person to continue the story. Tell students to feel free to pass the cross on if they only want to participate as listeners. Repeat this process until the birth story ends. At this point, direct the story to the in-between years, asking students to share stories they remember of Jesus' ministry, parables, or other events leading up to the Crucifixion. Close the activity with information students remember about the Resurrection. There is no specific order to passing the cross. It may travel randomly among the students. This is an opportunity for the teacher to take note of what information the students know of the Christian story and provide insight for the teacher as to what areas need more understanding.*

God surprises us because God does great things. The gift of Christ, from the story of his birth, through his ministry, to his crucifixion and resurrection, is God's greatest blessing to us—God's plan of salvation. Read Hebrews 10:5–10 where the connection between Christ's birth and death is made. Approaching Christmas Day by looking forward to the Resurrection intensifies the value of God's blessing, and we have renewed reason to rejoice! Ask: "How is your life different because of the blessing of Jesus?" Respond on the paper provided.

## Experience

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### Sharing Joy

Collect old Christmas cards before class. Cut apart the artwork from the message. Make several card patterns the size and shape of regular playing cards. Using the patterns, have the teens select portions of the artwork, trace around the pattern, then cut out a card from the recycled Christmas card. Other teens can be making cards from the messages using the same

size pattern. As they are cutting, be sure they eliminate any personal names and writing from the card. Then have the teens glue a message card to a picture card so there will be a new two-sided card. Collect the newly created cards and ask a teen to shuffle them. Ask another to deal the cards equally to the class members. The game, then, is having the teens look at each new card and message and determining who would rejoice from receiving the card. Teens may share to whom they will give their cards and why this person was chosen. Challenge them to be the first to distribute their cards within the next twenty-four hours.

old Christmas cards, scissors, glue, playing card to use as a pattern, paper, pens

## **God's Blessing to You!**

Think of God's blessing to you. What symbols can represent those blessings? Draw several designs on scrap paper before beginning. Using wire cutters, cut a ten- to twelve-inch piece of wire. Use round-nosed pliers (found in craft or jewelry-making supply stores) to form a paper clip shape from the wire. Cut the end of the wire to hide any sharp points. The shape should have at least two flat loops—like a paper clip—that will hold a piece of paper between them. When finished, attach the wire clip with tape or glue to a bookmark or card and give as a gift.

wire cutters, 20-gauge wire, round-nosed pliers, materials to make bookmarks or cards, ribbons, card stock, glitter, tape or glue

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## **Expand**

### **Unlimited Rejoicing**

The blessings of Christmas seem to get lost in today's commercialized society. We rejoice about limited experiences when God has offered the eternal. What would Mary think about the way we celebrate Christmas? What would the disciples think? Brainstorm alternative ways to celebrate the Christmas season that are more in touch with God's gift to us (gifts to charities, Outreach International, World Accord, environmentally friendly ways to celebrate, visit the sick, write to military personnel, and witness to others). Do any ideas suggest a project for the class?

Doctrine and Covenants

Doctrine and Covenants 140:5c–d

As a closing, read Doctrine and Covenants 140:5c–d. This scripture was given to the church in 1947 by Israel A. Smith, following a period of world history defined by World War II. The war had ended and people were returning home to rebuild their lives, communities, and futures, and to rejoice in God's blessings. Close with a prayer.