God’s Big Story: Advent Week 2

|  |
| --- |
| scripture focus |
| Luke 1:5-23 |

big picture

Finally, the waiting is over and God is on the move, preparing the way for the promised Rescuer to arrive! God’s plan begins with an old priest, Zechariah, and his wife Elizabeth. They had served God faithfully for many years, but had one enduring sorrow: they had never been able to bear their own children. When Zechariah’s turn comes to enter the temple and burn incense, God surprises him with the best news ever – a message of hope and life. The angel Gabriel proclaims that God will give them the child they have always longed for, a boy who will bring them joy and gladness. Ironically, Gabriel’s message was too good to believe for Zechariah, after so many years of waiting and disappointment. Zechariah’s doubt didn’t prevent God’s promise to him from coming true, but it did mean that he was unable to talk until his baby was born. He waited in silence, his heart full to bursting as God’s promised gift became flesh and blood within Elizabeth, and her barren womb grew large with their miracle child. Yet this was only the beginning – the deeper miracle was yet to come. Just a little more waiting to go!

|  | storybooks | bible readings |
| --- | --- | --- |
| read aloud | The story of Zechariah and Elizabeth is not in the *Jesus Storybook Bible* – so you could either read it from a different children’s Bible, paraphrase the story (it has some good action), or read it from Scripture. | Luke 1:5-23  Malachi 3:1, 4:2-5 (Gabriel refers to this prophecy when he talks to Zechariah.) |
| discuss/ ask | What did the angel promise to Zechariah and Elizabeth? What did the angel say about the baby who would be born to them?  Why do you think God sent a Preparer to get things ready for the Messiah?  Why do you think that Zechariah had trouble believing the angel’s message and promise? Is there any promise that you would find too good to believe?  Did Zechariah’s doubt mean that God wouldn’t follow through in giving Zechariah and Elizabeth a baby? Why not?  How do you think Zechariah “told” Elizabeth about his experience with the angel, since he wasn’t able to talk? How would you tell that story without talking? Try it! | |
| do together | Light last week’s Advent candle (hope) and the second one, which often signifies faith. Talk together about Zechariah and Elizabeth’s faith, shown in many years of faithfully following God, despite sadness and heartbreak – as well as Zechariah’s lack of faith when God finally answered his prayer! Happily, God remained faithful even when Zechariah wavered: just as God promised, Elizabeth became pregnant with John the Baptist. During this Advent season (and beyond), we can wait with confident faith that God will keep God’s promises to us, no matter what. Perhaps “O Come, All Ye Faithful” would be a good carol to sing together (the first verse of “Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus” is also good). | |