

You will need a bag or box of props, which you invite children to come out and place on a table where everyone can see them. You will need: an angel, a CD of praise songs, a donkey, shepherd & wise man/king, Mary & Joseph, a first aid box, a cross, Jesus, a heart.

Put your hand up if you've come here today with a grown-up.

Put your hand up if you've come with your Mum or Dad.

Put your hand up if you're here today with someone else.

Next week it will be Mothering Sunday, when we think especially about our Mums. But there are other people who love us and take care of us, like our Dads, Grandmas, Grandads and the other special grown-ups in our lives.

Today, we're thinking about our mothers and others: all of the grown-ups who love us and take care of us.

Put your hand up if you sometimes find grown-ups a bit weird.

Put your hand up if you don't always get what they're talking about.

Put your hand up if you sometimes wonder whether they're from the same planet as you.

Ok - so we thought you might like to find out a bit about what it's like to be one of the grown-ups who looks after you and really loves you.

And we thought that the story of Mary, the mother of Jesus, might help.

Who can remember who told Mary that she was going to have a baby?

That's right. God sent the Angel Gabriel to Mary. He told her that she was going to have a baby and he would be the Son of God. He told her to call the baby Jesus.

[ANGEL]

Mary had to decide whether to say yes to God. She really had to trust him. And grown-ups have to do that sometimes, too. When we think that God is asking us to do something, we have to decide whether to say yes. When something new and surprising happens, we have to decide how much we trust him.

Ok, next question. Mary's cousin Elizabeth was also going to have a baby. Who knows, or who can guess, what the baby in her tummy did the first time he heard Mary's voice?

That's right. He jumped for joy. And that made Mary so excited that she sang a song of thanks and praise to Father God.

[CD OF PRAISE SONGS]

You sometimes make your parents feel like jumping for joy. Sometimes, when they see you or think about you, they want to sing and give thanks to Father God, because they love you so much.

Ok, next question. Who knows where Jesus was born?

In Bethlehem, after a very long journey. In a stable. I bet that wasn't easy for Mary and Joseph.

[DONKEY]

Sometimes, being a parent isn't very easy. Difficult things do happen.

Who can tell me some of the very first people to meet Jesus?

Shepherds and wise men. And do you remember that last month, at Messy Church, we heard about Anna and Simeon, who met Jesus at the Temple when he was a baby? God told all of these people that Mary's baby was his Son, and they all gave thanks and worshipped him.

[SHEPHERD AND KING]

The Bible tells us that Mary remembered all of these amazing things that happened when Jesus was born, and she often thought about them. Like you, grown-ups don't always really understand what's going on. Sometimes, things don't make sense until much later, when they've had chance to think about them.

Who can remember what happened when Jesus was about twelve, and he went back to the Temple with Mary and Joseph?

He stayed behind there, talking about God, and his Mum and Dad thought they'd lost him.

[MARY AND JOSEPH]

Sometimes, being a parent is pretty scary. Sometimes, the grown-ups who love you are really worried about you.

One of the scary things is letting go of you, as you grow bigger and more independent. When Jesus grew up, he left home and travelled

around the country teaching and healing people. I bet that was pretty worrying for Mary at times.

Can anyone tell me some of things that Jesus said or did?

[FIRST AID BOX]

Some people didn't like the things that Jesus said and did. Some people wanted to get rid of him. Eventually, they killed him on a cross. Does anyone know what Jesus said to Mary just before he died on the cross? Maybe a grown-up knows this one.

He told her that his best friend, John, would look after her now.

[CROSS]

Sometimes, when things are really difficult, God gives us other grown-ups to help to look after us. Grown-ups need each other when times are tough.

But things don't remain difficult for ever. Who can tell me what happened next, after Jesus died on the cross?

He came back to life. He died on the cross so that we can always be friends with God. And then he came back to life.

[JESUS]

God never lets us down. Even when things seem as terrible as they must have felt to Mary when Jesus died on the cross, God is always in charge. He can change everything.

God never lets us down, and he is always with us. When Jesus went back to heaven to be with Father God, he promised that he would send God's Holy Spirit to be with us forever.

Who can tell me the name of a grown-up who loves you?

[HEART]

Lots of people love you. But the amazing truth is that God loves you more than anyone else does. He made you, and he will always be with you. He will never let you down.

Maybe you can help the grown-ups who love you to remember this amazing truth. Father God loves you even more than they do! They can always ask him for help, and they can always trust him to look after you.

The great news is that we can all ask Jesus to help us. We aren't on our own. No matter how old or young we are, we can all invite God's Holy Spirit to live in us, to help us to be the people God made us to be.

So let us pray...