

An rfour.org Children's Time Message

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Written for December 18, 2022

Fourth Sunday in Advent

Lectionary Year A

Scripture: [Matthew 1:18-25](#) [**Summary:** *Joseph Listens To God And Helps Jesus*]

Supplies Needed: No supplies needed

ASK (a.k.a. [The On-Ramp](#))

- Good morning!
- I have a question for you: What can babies *do*? What are they good at doing? [Listen for responses – you might have to prompt them with: Babies are good at making noise, making a mess, and looking cute...sometimes]
- So – in other words – babies can't do very much, can they?
- They can't walk, talk, clothe or feed themselves.
- Because they need help to do all of those things, who usually helps babies do these things? [*Listen to a few answers*]
- That's right! Parents and family members and maybe even friends of the family help babies out.

TELL (a.k.a. [The Freeway](#))

- I wanted us to think about all of the help babies need from other people just to stay alive to also help us think about today's scripture story.
- At the start of today's scripture story, the soon-to-be-mother of Jesus, Mary, has a problem.
- She's going to give birth to Jesus sometime in the near future and she's not married.
- Not being married is a problem for her because when and where Mary lived, men were the people who were allowed to make money. It was very difficult for women to make money on their own.
- So, without someone who would have money and not being able to make her own money, it was going to be very difficult for Mary to buy the things that she needed to raise her baby.
- Plus, not being married meant Mary would have less people to help her take care of her baby.

- Things are starting to sound pretty scary for Mary and her soon-to-be baby.
- But, then, we hear how God speaks to Joseph in a dream and tells Joseph that he is to marry Mary and he is to help her, and help take care of and raise Jesus.
- Now, Joseph did not have to do what God told him to do.
- But Joseph *did* do what God told him to do.
- And, because Joseph chose to do what God told him, both he and Mary were able to give baby Jesus all the things that we just talked about that babies need to stay alive.
- And because both Joseph and Mary did what God said, baby Jesus grew up to be adult Jesus.

SHARE the Good News (a.k.a. *The Destination*)

- Today's story reminds us that even Jesus needed help.
- And, in the same way that Joseph was able to help Jesus, we can help others the same way that Joseph helped out – by listening to God.
- As we pay attention to what God calls us to do, then we will know how God is calling us to help and care for those who are around us.
- And that's the good news for today. Let's pray.
- This is a repeat-after-me prayer.

CLOSING Prayer

Dear God

Dear God

Thank you for Mary and Joseph...

Thank you for Mary and Joseph...

...who listened to you...

...who listened to you...

...and were then able to help Jesus.

...and were then able to help Jesus.

Help us to do the same.

Help us to do the same.

Thank you and Amen.