** Advent Guided Reflection - Week 3**

 **Jump for Joy**

**Teacher Notes**

A PowerPoint of the image opposite accompanies this reflection,

which may be projected for the children to look at.

The painting is called ‘Jump for Joy’ by Corby Eisbacher and

illustrates the story of Jesus’ mother, Mary, visiting John the

Baptist’s mother Elizabeth.

**Explain to the children:**

In this third week of Advent, we have been thinking about John the Baptist and how he went out into the countryside to tell people that Jesus was coming to lead them in the way of peace and love. Today we are going to think about something that happened when Jesus’ mother, Mary, visited John the

Baptist’s mother Elizabeth. The picture on our board is an artist’s impression of how he imagined the scene in the story, you may find it helpful to look at the picture carefully while I tell the story.

**The Story (from the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 1)**

You may not have heard this part of the story but before the Angel Gabriel visited Mary to tell her that that she was going to have baby Jesus, Gabriel had already visited Mary’s relatives, Elizabeth and Zechariah, to tell them that they were also going to have a baby. Elizabeth and Zechariah were very surprised at this news because they were quite old and didn’t think that they could have a baby even though they wanted one very much. The Angel Gabriel told them that they had been especially chosen because they loved God and said that the baby would be called John. Gabriel told them that John would be filled with the Holy Spirit and that when he grew up, he would go out and get people ready to hear about Jesus. When they heard this, Elizabeth and Zechariah were very happy.

After he had visited Elizabeth and Zechariah, the Angel Gabriel next visited Mary to tell her that she was going to have baby Jesus. When Mary heard this news, she hurried off to see her cousin Elizabeth to tell her about everything that the Angel Gabriel had said. Both women were filled with love and joy and Mary said these words:

My soul is bursting with God’s good news.
Even though I’m nobody important, I am the one He chose,
And what God has done for me will never be forgotten.
His mercy flows in wave after wave on those who love him.

He has shown his strength by casting off those who are full of pride and selfishness.

He has knocked tyrants off their thrones, and has lifted up the lowly.
He has prepared a feast for the poor and hungry; the greedy rich are left out in the cold.
Just as He promised, He has remembered those who share his love.

**Reflection**

Let’s now look at the picture together….

I wonder what it must have felt like to find out that you were part of God’s plan for the future of all people….

What words would you use to describe the picture of Mary and Elizabeth?

Do Mary and Elizabeth look like grand and proud people or humble and modest people?

Let’s read Mary’s words through again……What do they tell you about the things that are most important to God?

Do we always remember the things that are most important to God or do we sometimes forget?

**Closing prayer**

I’d like you to close your eyes now. I’m going to finish with our prayer for the week and if you’d like to make it your prayer, you can say amen at the end.

Dear God

Help me to remember that Jesus came to earth to spread

A message of love for those who are most in need.

Give me the courage to show kindness to others

So that love may grow in my heart and in the world.

Amen

