

Our Sabbath Scripture Stories



F A M I L I E S R E C L A I M I N G S U N D A Y

Read aloud: 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16
Romans 16:25-27

Gospel: **Luke 1:26-38**

Fun and anticipation reigned supreme this Sunday morning at the Pauline house. For starters, it was the Fourth Sunday of Advent! There was only a short time left to the joy and splendor of Christmas.

The other reason for the excitement was that today was Pageant Day! At 2 p.m., the Pauline family would be at church reliving the birth of the Christ Child. And this year, Vincent and Lucy had landed two prominent roles. Vincent got picked to be the Archangel Gabriel, and Lucy's name was drawn to be Mary.

To begin the celebration of this Fourth Sunday of Advent, Mom gathered everyone into the dining room to light the fourth candle on the Advent wreath. Mom lit the last candle, and the entire wreath dazzled. Then she said this prayer: *"Lord God, heavenly King, as we light this last candle on our Advent wreath, we rejoice in the nearness of Your birth. May our preparations be as complete as our lighted wreath is now so that we can welcome You anew into our hearts this Christmas. As we look upon this symbol of Advent, all glowing with light, ignite our hearts with Your love. We ask this in the name of the Lord of light, Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen."*

The family stared at the radiance of the wreath. Advent season was nearing its end. The joy of the Christmas season was only days away.

Dad brought the family back to attention. "What a privilege and an honor it is to have with us today two of the characters from our Gospel reading!" Pointing at Vincent, he said, "We have the Angel Gabriel," and motioning towards Lucy, he said, "and we have the Blessed Virgin Mary. They will be acting out our Gospel reading this morning because they have memorized all the lines!"

"Dad?" Vincent asked sheepishly. "I don't have to put on that big white gown just for the family now, do I?"

"No, no," Mr. Pauline visualized in a sweeping dramatic fashion. "We will all just imagine you as a breath-taking angel of God, all aglow in a sparkling garment, holy and radiant!"

"It will take some imagination!" Peter teased his little brother until they both were laughing hard.

"All right, let's get started!" Dad said. Dad read the part of the narrator. Then it was Vincent's turn to speak to Lucy as Gabriel spoke to Mary. " *'Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you.'* " (Luke 1:28b)

Then Vincent added in his best stage voice, " *'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus.'* " (Luke 1:30b-31)

The narrator, Dad, and Vincent and Lucy continued with the rest of the passage complete with motions, voice variations, and dramatic pauses. Then Lucy, as Mary, took the center of the living room and announced, " *'I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.'* " (Luke 1:38b)

The room was silent.

Then Dad concluded the reading by saying, " *'Then the angel departed from her.'* (Luke 1:38c) And ..." he added, "that was the YES that changed the world forever!"

"That's right, Dad," Peter agreed. "There is no imagining that!"

Then, fun-loving Peter walked in front of Vincent and pretended to trip. "Oh, sorry, Vincent, I accidentally stepped on your gown!" he told his brother. Vincent looked stunned for a second, and then burst into laughter. "You got it dirty!" Vincent quipped back.

And this time, the entire family joined in the laughter as they watched Peter and Vincent tussle and hug. You could tell that the joy of Christmas was very near!

