

THIS *Advent*, JOIN US IN DELIVERING

## *Life, Peace, and Hope*

TO MOTHERS AND BABIES IN THE HOLY LAND.

### *Babies in Bethlehem* – Sample Reflections for Students/Teens in Ministry

(It is recommended that this speech be used by older students, religious education participants, and youth ministry members as a way to introduce parishioners to *Babies in Bethlehem* and Holy Family Hospital. Parishes may choose to enlist students to speak at the end of Masses for one or several Sundays in Advent.)

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am here to tell you about how my class has been preparing this Advent for the birth of Jesus. We are participating in a project called *Babies in Bethlehem* to learn about Holy Family Hospital and its special ministry in the Holy Land. Located only 500 yards from the manger where Jesus was born, this Catholic maternity and neonatal hospital delivers thousands of babies every year. We've learned about how families in Bethlehem today – like Mary, Joseph, and Jesus – often are very poor and must travel great distances to access healthcare. Holy Family Hospital works to make sure all families are cared for and never turns anyone away.

This Hospital offers its state-of-the-art services to all women, children, and families in Bethlehem and beyond, regardless of their religion, nationality, or lack of funds. This makes Holy Family Hospital a modern-day manger, embracing families and helping bring new life into this world. The Hospital's Mobile Outreach Clinic travels to remote desert villages, where families are very poor. The Clinic also serves United Nations Refugee camps, where more than 25 percent of patients live.

To give an example of the amazing impact that Holy Family Hospital has, I brought a true story with me today to share with you. Not long ago, twin girls were born prematurely at the Hospital at 24 weeks. The smallest weighed less than 1.5 pounds. Their father travelled an hour and a half from their village each way to day to be with his new daughters. They were so small that, for some time, their dad couldn't even hold them. He was only able to sit with them and rub their foreheads with his little finger. After the girls' safe return home to their village, this grateful man sent a letter thanking Holy Family Hospital for not only saving his daughters, but for also teaching him to be a good parent. The letter that he sent said:

*“The hard-fought efforts of the doctors and nurses to save my daughters lives taught me patience and love, and how to be a real father.”*

Tragically, a baby weighing 1.5 lbs. cannot survive at the region's local government hospitals, where resources don't exist to care for babies born before 34 weeks. Holy Family Hospital values life in absolute terms and dedicates all the time and resources within its premier NICU to save the lives of the smallest of babies. This taught me a lot about the value of every life, especially those in a region that knows so much suffering.

Recognizing the daily hardship for these families, it has been so uplifting to raise contributions to bring these families comfort, relief and, perhaps most importantly, hope. We have been collecting donations in our Bethlehem Boxes from our friends and family all throughout Advent and now we'd like to invite you join in. Donation envelopes have been placed at the end of each pew for you to prayerfully consider what you feel called to give this Advent season. So far, my class has raised (\$ *amount*), which provides direct relief to poor and sick families cared for at Holy Family Hospital. As you can see, donations of ANY amount help to deliver life, peace, and hope to mothers and babies throughout the Holy Land.

We say that charity begins at home where we have pressing needs. So true, but for me, supporting this blessed Hospital that acts as an instrument of inter-religious peace just steps from Christ's birthplace truly reflects the core messages of Advent, Christmas, and all we stand for as Christians. Thank you and please visit [birthplaceofhope.org](http://birthplaceofhope.org) to learn more about the life-affirming ministry at Holy Family Hospital. God bless you all.



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