

Our Lady has appeared in many places throughout the world to many different people.

She often brings a message of hope, inviting people to turn back to God, and to pray.

Mary appeared to a girl called Bernadette in Lourdes in 1858, and also to three children in the Portuguese town of Fatima in 1917. In 1879, Mary appeared in a village called Knock in County Mayo.

Read the following story to the children

The Story of a Beautiful Lady

On Saturday, December 9, 1531 a man called Juan Diego set off to walk the 10 km journey to Mass. Juan was a member of the Aztec people and he had become a Catholic. He was on a hill called Tepeyac near Mexico City when a beautiful woman surrounded by light appeared to him. She told him that she was the Immaculate Virgin Mary, the true Mother of God. She told Juan that she wanted the local bishop to build a church on that hill so that the people would have somewhere to go and pray. Mary told him that she wanted a place where she could show how much she loved the people. She said that they could come to this place and

'Ask for my help. Here I will listen to people's prayers, and I will help them.'

Juan did what Mary asked and went to the bishop. The first time he went the bishop didn't believe him. Juan told Mary that perhaps she should send someone else to talk to the bishop. But Mary told Juan that she wanted him to do it, to be her messenger.

The second time the bishop asked for a sign that the woman really was the Mother of God. When Juan gave Mary the bishop's message she told him to come back on the following Monday.

Juan's uncle became very sick and so he could not go back to see Mary on the day that she had said. The following day Juan's uncle was so sick that Juan decided to go and get the priest to come and visit him. On the way to get the priest Mary appeared to Juan again. She told him not to be worried about his uncle that he would be alright. Then she sent him to the top of the hill to gather the flowers that he would find there. It was the month of December and Juan was sure that no flowers would be growing but, he did what Mary asked him. To his surprise when he got to the top of the hill there were the most beautiful roses growing there. Juan picked the roses and carried them back to Mary. She took the roses and arranged them in his tilma or cloak. Juan went back to the bishop. When the bishop saw Juan he wanted to know what was in his cloak. When Juan opened his cloak the beautiful roses fell out. The bishop was very surprised to see roses in December. But, he was to have an even greater surprise because as he stood there, a beautiful painted image of our Lady began to appear on Juan's cloak. The bishop was so overcome that he shouted out, 'The Immaculate!' and knelt down to ask Mary to forgive him for not believing Juan. At the same time that this was happening Mary appeared to Juan's uncle and cured him. She gave him another message for the bishop. She told him to tell the bishop that she would '*crush the serpent's head.*' The bishop did not understand the Aztec language that the man spoke and he thought that he said '*Guadalupe,*' the name of a Shrine to Mary in Spain. He decided to call her Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Juan Diego's cloak was made from the fibres of a cactus plant. Normally this would only have lasted about twenty years. But Juan's cloak with the image of Mary on it can still be seen today. It is kept in Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City.

What did you learn?

- I. Who was Juan Diego?
- II. Where was he going?
- III. How long was his journey to Mass?
- IV. What was the date?
- V. Who did the Lady say she was?
- VI. What did she want him to do?
- VII. Why did she want a church or shrine built on the hill?
- VIII. What happened the first time that Juan went to the bishop?
- IX. Did Juan want to go back a second time to the bishop?
- X. What did the bishop ask for the second time?
- XI. What happened to stop Juan returning to our Lady on the Monday?
- XII. How did Juan meet our Lady again?
- XIII. What did she ask him to do this time?
- XIV. Was the bishop surprised when Juan returned?
- XV. What surprised him most?
- XVI. How did the bishop show that he was sorry?
- XVII. Why did the bishop give her the name Our Lady of Guadalupe?