

FAITH IN 5  
Advent Week 4  
Ages 8+

1. **Who do we learn about in Matthew 1:18-24?** In Matthew 1:18-24, we read about St. Joseph, the foster father of Jesus. We learn he was betrothed to Mary. **What does betrothed mean?** Betrothal is the first half of a two part process for a Jewish marriage of that time. It is not the same as being engaged. The couple is legally married at betrothal, but not yet living together. **After reading this gospel, what type of man do you think St. Joseph was?** The bible says he was righteous. We also learn of his kindness and compassion as he doesn't want Mary to be shamed by a public divorce. St. Joseph is also a man of faith, obedient to the will of God. When an angel visits him in a dream, St. Joseph doesn't doubt, but believes the angel. He obeys all the commands given to him in the dream. St. Joseph, pray for us!
  
2. **Have you heard of the 'O Antiphons'?** An antiphon is a short phrase or sentence that is sung, chanted or recited after a psalm or canticle from the Bible. The 'O Antiphons' have been prayed in the Church since the 8th century. They are added to the Liturgy of the Hours prayers but can be prayed on their own. **When do they begin?** They begin December 17th **Are they just scripture verses?** Each 'O Antiphon' has a different name for Jesus (Root of Jesse or Key of David) from the Old Testament. They represent the longing and expectation throughout history for mankind's savior. These prayers are a wonderful way to close out Advent! Try praying the ['O Antiphons'](#) together as a family in front of the Christmas Tree or Advent Wreath before bedtime. Some parishes may also have 'O Antiphon' prayer services.
  
3. **Did you know the Nativity Scene is full of rich symbolism for our faith?** Yes! We can begin by looking at the meaning of the city of Bethlehem. **Do you know what the word Bethlehem means?** Bethlehem means "House of Bread." Jesus tells us all in the Bible "I am the Bread of Life." (John 3:16). We know Jesus was born in a stable and laid in a manger. **What exactly is a manger?** A manger is a feeding trough for horses and cattle. It looked like a long, open box. Jesus himself is our spiritual food and nourishment! **What do we see in the sanctuary when Jesus is present in the tabernacle?** We see the red sanctuary lamp. Just like the sanctuary light, the bright star over Bethlehem served as the first sanctuary flame, announcing the presence of the Savior. **What is the origin of Nativity Scenes?** Tradition tells us that St. Francis of Assisi, in 1223, was preparing to celebrate Christmas midnight mass in the city of Greccio. St. Francis realized the chapel would be too small to hold all the villagers so he planned to hold mass outside. In order to honor Christ's birth and make the mass very solemn and special, he decided to make a living re-enactment of the baby Jesus' arrival. He wanted children

especially to understand the reason for the feast. It is said by St. Bonaventure that St. Francis, gazing at the Nativity Scene that night, was so moved by love and emotion, could not utter the name Jesus, instead lovingly calling him the 'Babe of Bethlehem.'

4. **What are the joyful mysteries of the rosary?** The joyful mysteries of the rosary are The Annunciation, The Visitation, The Nativity, The Presentation of the Christ Child and The Finding of the Christ Child in the Temple. **Do you remember each of those events?** The Annunciation is when the angel Gabriel visits Mary and she gives her "Yes!" to God. The Visitation happened when Mary went to see her cousin Elizabeth who was pregnant with John the Baptist. The Nativity remembers Jesus' birth, The Presentation is when Mary brings Jesus to the temple, according to Jewish law. Finally, the Finding in the temple is when Jesus becomes separated from his parents and they find him teaching in the temple. **When do we pray these mysteries?** The joyful mysteries are traditionally prayed on Mondays and during Advent, on Sundays. These mysteries are an incredible meditation for Advent!
5. **Apologetics- In Matthew's gospel it says "When you pray do not use vain repetition." Does that mean the rosary is not biblical?** Jesus was against vain (meaning empty or worthless), insincere repetition, not ALL repetition. In fact, in Matthew 26:44 we read Jesus himself using repetition, "He prayed a third time, saying the same words." There is absolutely nothing vain about greeting and invoking Mary just as she was invoked in the Bible by the angel Gabriel and her cousin Elizabeth. Also, with each decade of the rosary we are meditating on the life of Jesus. That is not an empty practice, but a rich and lovely way to honor Mary and Our Savior.

**REVIEW QUESTION: Have you heard of St. Lucy?** St. Lucy is a martyr from Syracuse, Sicily. She came from a wealthy family and her father hoped she would marry a certain nobleman. St. Lucy had made a vow to be a bride of Christ and refused to marry. The rejected nobleman complained to the governor. At this time, being a Christian was a crime. St. Lucy was taken to court to be tried. Soldiers tried to remove St. Lucy, but they physically couldn't! Miraculously, God made St. Lucy stuck fast to her spot. They also tried to burn her but were unsuccessful. Eventually St. Lucy was martyred for her faith, around the year 304.

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