

FAITH IN 5

Advent: Week 3

Ages 3-8

- 1. What do we learn in Matthew 1:18-24?** In this Gospel passage we learn about St. Joseph. **Who is St. Joseph?** He is Jesus's foster Father. In the Gospel reading, we learn that he was engaged to Mary but did not yet live together as husband and wife. **How do you think St. Joseph felt when he learned Mary was going to have a baby?** He was probably really confused that she was pregnant since they were not yet married! **What do we learn about St. Joseph?** St. Joseph planned to quietly break off their marriage but then an Angel came to him! The angel said to him "Joseph, descendant of David, do not be afraid to take Mary to be your wife. For it is by the Holy Spirit that she conceived. She will have a son, and you will name him Jesus- because he will save his people from their sins." When Joseph woke up, he married Mary like the angel told him to! From this story, we can know that Joseph was an extremely obedient, trusting, loyal, and kind man. He was not concerned about what others would think- he trusted in God's plan and was obedient to Him! *St. Joseph, pray for us!*
- 2. Does your family have a nativity scene at home? Did you know that the Nativity scene dates back to the time of St. Francis?** It is believed that St. Francis had the first live nativity scene in the year 1223 in Italy. He received special permission from his Pope to set up a manger with hay and two live animals- a donkey and an ox. He then preached to the villagers about Mary and the baby Jesus. It is said that the hay that was used miraculously cured farm animals in the village, specifically cows from diseases! After St. Francis's first nativity scene, the idea of it quickly spread across Europe and it slowly became what it is today!
- 3. Do you know 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 all these events from the Bible? When do we pray the joyful mysteries?** We pray them on Sundays during Advent, and they are always said on Mondays! **Do the joyful mysteries make you think of Advent and Christmas?**

4. **Do you know the story of St. John of the Cross?** St. John of the Cross was a devout, Spanish man who lived during the 1500s. He was an artist- he wrote poetry, music and created sculptures and paintings! St. John of the Cross was a monk who dedicated his life to intense devotion to Jesus. He wanted to live the humblest, simplest life he possibly could and he didn't feel like the monasteries were the place to do it. He became good friends with St. Teresa of Avila who was dedicated to helping religious orders live a life more focused on Jesus. She asked John for help! He soon found himself in trouble, though. When the other monks found out he was trying to change their way of life, they kidnapped him and put him in prison! While he was in prison, he prayed and wrote beautiful poetry about God's love for us. In his poetry, he reminds us that God is always with us even when we can't feel his love or presence. When we're sad and lonely and suffering, we must continue to pray to God who loves us! If we focus on God's love, nothing will really ever hurt us. After almost a year in prison living off bread, water and sardines, John escaped through a small window in his cell! He ran to the nearest church and found St. Theresa of Avila, where they continued their ministry together! *St. John of the Cross, pray for us!*

5. **The Church- What is the ambo?** The ambo is the tall desk where our attention is focused during the Liturgy of the Word (during all the readings!) We also hear the prayer intentions at the ambo and often, the priest will preach the homily from the ambo. The ambo, like the altar, is a sacred object. What does the ambo look like at your Church?

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