

FAITH IN 5
Christmas Week 1
Ages 8+

1. Merry Christmas! **What is the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord?** The Octave is an 8 day feast!! That means it is a most important feast! **What do we do during an Octave?** During an Octave, you continue celebrating. The 'Gloria' will be sung at every mass during those 8 days.

2. Read the gospel of Luke 2: 1-20 together as a family. This gospel is an account of Jesus' Nativity. **What else was happening that night?** Shepherds were watching over their sheep in a field where they were living. **Who appeared to them?** The angel of the Lord came to them and announced "Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all people." **Did just one angel appear?** No! Many, many angels filled the sky praising God! **What kind of people were shepherds at that time?** Shepherds were typically poor, uneducated, and considered unimportant. **Why do you think God chose the shepherds to first hear the most glorious news in the world?** Shepherds were able to be humbled. They had no power or influence or education to doubt that the King of Kings would be born in such an unconventional way. The angels also remind us that this news is for *all people*, even the people that nobody noticed, like the shepherds. Despite being afraid of the angel of the Lord at first, they were honored to receive the news. They immediately went to Bethlehem to honor and worship Jesus. The shepherds were the first evangelists! "When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about the child." God told the humble of the world, not the important or the wise or the rich. God shows us that is where His Heart is. Let us pray we can emulate the humility, obedience and zeal of the shepherds.

3. **Who is St. Stephen?** St. Stephen is the first martyr. In Acts of the Apostles we learn that he was a deacon in the early Church. **Why was he killed?** St. Stephen taught and preached about Jesus, making Jewish authorities very angry. The bible tells us he was working miracles and spoke with wisdom and spirit! He was accused of blasphemy, spreading offensive untruths about God. They put St. Stephen on trial, intending to kill him. Right before his death, St. Stephen had a vision of Heaven and God and Jesus. He witnessed this to the crowd and as he was dying he called out "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." **When is St. Stephen's feast day?** His feast day is December 26th, the day after Christmas. **What does St. Stephen model for us?** St. Stephen models true faith, incredible devotion and zeal for evangelization. Perhaps most important and poignant, St. Stephen models forgiveness. Forgiveness is the most Christ-like action we can take part in, and it is

born out of love for Jesus. **Why would the Church calendar have this feast day right after Christmas?** The [Magnificat devotional](#) explains beautifully "Lest we be tempted to sentimentalize the mystery of Christ's birth, the Church sets before us the example of St. Stephen. Bethlehem is the prelude to Calvary. We may not merely stand adoring at the crib; we must also follow Christ to the cross." St. Stephen, pray for us.

4. **Who are the Holy Innocents?** The Holy Innocents were all the babies murdered by the cruel King Herod in his search for the Christ Child. **When do we remember the Holy Innocents?** Their feast day is on December 28th.

5. **Do you know what feast we celebrate on December 30th?** We celebrate the feast of The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. **What do we know about the Holy Family?** Mary and Joseph escaped from King Herod to Egypt for a time. Joseph was led by dreams on when and where to return. They settled in Nazareth. **Why do we remember the Holy Family?** Remembering the Holy Family is focusing on their humanity. That they were real people who lived in a real city and worked, lived and worshiped together. It is a blessing on families everywhere and a reminder that God cares about family! The Catechism says "The family is the community in which, from childhood, one can learn moral values, begin to honor God, and make good use of freedom. (CCC 2207) The family is a path to holiness! **How can we celebrate this feast?** Honor the Holy Family with a Holy Family statue or picture, placed prominently in your home. Pray together with your family, either at mass or the rosary (particularly the 5th Joyful mystery) Have a family dinner or plan a fun family event, like ice skating or watching your favorite holiday movie together.

REVIEW QUESTION: 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.

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