

Encountering THE SEASON

Advent for the Family

First Sunday of Advent (C)

Jeremiah 33:14-16
1 Thessalonians 3:12—4:2
Luke 21:25-28, 34-36

Dear Family:

Read the reflection on trust and discuss the “Ponder and Pray” questions and prompts, thinking about how Our Lord is calling you to act. Then consider the challenges of the “Live It” section, have fun with the family activities, and dive into the *visio divina* prayer exercise.

“ Your ways, O LORD, make known to me;
teach me your paths,
Guide me in your truth and teach me,
for you are God my savior,
and for you I wait all the day. ”
—Psalm 25:4-5

“Trust Me”

Truly trusting another person is one of the hardest things we can do. It’s easy to say, “I trust you,” but allowing others in our lives to *act* without our permission or supervision is difficult. It can be hard to trust people if we’re afraid of being let down or if we feel deep down they won’t come through for us.

It can be even harder to trust God. While God and his will for us are perfect, sometimes the way that will plays out in our broken human existence can cause us to question whether he truly knows what he’s doing. At such times, it’s natural and normal to want to grasp for control, to say, “It’s all right, I’ll take it from here ...”

Do you ever find yourself thinking, *If I want something done right, I have to do it myself?* We can become so self-reliant through repeatedly being let down that fully trusting someone can feel foreign and unknown. This is the place in your heart that God wants to enter this Advent.



Acceptance by Mike Moyers

Today, on this First Sunday of Advent, can you allow God to lead you one step forward? Can you let him show you he is worthy of your trust? What could be waiting for you on the other side of this leap of faith? Peace? Joy? Hope? Let

God give you these gifts by allowing him to carry you in his love. He wants the best for you and your loved ones even more than you do.

Ponder and Pray

- Resting for a moment in the uncomfortable feeling of letting go of control, talk to God about what is coming to the surface. What is it about trusting God that fills you with fear? Do you feel hopeful at all that God could take on some of your mental burden, giving you the peace you desire?
- We are entering into the busiest time of year: preparing for Christmas. What small thing can you trust God with this week? What if trusting God allowed him to come through for you in ways you never imagined?
- The Surrender Prayer is a powerful prayer to take into Advent: “O Jesus, I surrender myself to you; take care of everything!” This week, as you go about your life, practice trusting God by surrendering random moments throughout your day.

Visio Divina

Look at this week’s painting for a few moments and think about what it is saying. Then prayerfully read the questions, asking God to help you call to mind what he wishes to say to you through this image.

1. What do you think Mary and Joseph are talking about? How does the way they’re sitting make you feel?
2. Why do you think Mary is looking off into the distance? What could she be thinking?
3. Look carefully at Joseph. What does his posture say to you?

Live It

The foundation of any relationship is communication. We can’t have a relationship with God if we do not communicate with him and let him communicate with us. Focus on directing your heart and mind to God throughout your busy days. Getting swept up and distracted by everything we have going on is natural and normal, but this week, in a special way, let’s direct our hearts to God as we engage in all that demands our attention.



Fun For the Family

(From *Rejoice! An Advent Pilgrimage into the Heart of Scripture, Year C*)

For younger children:

Parents, in an adequate space in your house (or outside), set up a little obstacle course that your children can go through, and stay with them for support. Ask them what it feels like to go through something hard while trusting that you are there for them if they need help.

Ideas for your obstacle course:

- Hopscotch with chalk or tape
- Things to climb over or under
- Line on the floor to balance on
- An activity they need to complete before moving forward:
 - » Throwing a ball against the wall and catching it a few times
 - » Spinning around or touching their toes
 - » Singing a song while tapping their head and rubbing their belly

For older children:

As a family, go to a park you are familiar with or walk around your neighborhood. Choose one person to lead the way or ask for a volunteer. That person leads the whole group while everyone follows. Followers, notice how you have to trust the person leading you. Leader, notice how it feels to be trusted. You may wish to do this more than once, with everyone taking turns to be the leader and the followers. After each walk, take a few minutes to discuss what this felt like.

For free videos and downloadable resources featuring *Rejoice! An Advent Pilgrimage into the Heart of Scripture, Year C* with Fr. Mark Toups, scan this code with your camera.

