

Instructions:

Group leaders, take some time before your gathering to look over these questions. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you pick 3-5 questions to discuss that pertain to your group's unique style and needs.



Series: What is God like?

While much about who God is and how God works remains a mystery, we can know what God is like through the revelations of God that have been given to us: the images and names of God revealed in scripture, the tradition and experience of the Church, and at Christmastime through the greatest revelation of all, the birth of Jesus Christ.

"For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell..." Col 1:19

Join us this Advent as we reflect on four of the many names given to the Messiah (Wonderful Counselor, Almighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace) and discover how the gift of Jesus fulfilled the long-awaited expectations of the people and the plan of God to bring hope, joy, peace, and love to all creation.

Message description:

Our God is so big, so strong, and so mighty, there's nothing our God cannot do! Mighty God, the second royal title given to the king in Isaiah 9... a human king, not God. The expectations of Israel remain great that a king from the line of David would come with power infused from God to bring economic prosperity and endless peace. But King Hezekiah could do neither. It is Jesus, we know, who was the only one who could fulfill these prophets and expectations, but in ways hardly imagined. Strong and mighty, but as a helpless baby. Powerful against the enemies of death, but through his own death on a cross. Jesus is mighty as he continues the work of re-creation from the Creator.

Key Scriptures

Colossians 1:15-20

Isaiah 9:6-7

Mark 1:21-28

Mark 4:35-41

Check out these additional resources with your group, family, or on your own:

- > Advent Countdown to Christmas with Names for Jesus- <https://revolutionky.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Advent-Countdown-to-Christmas.pdf>
- > Advent Wreath to color at home- <https://revolutionky.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Advent-Wreath.pdf>
- > Advent Prayer Walk- <https://revolutionky.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Advent-Prayer-walk.pdf>
- > Advent Devotional, *Unwrapping the Names of Jesus*- <https://www.amazon.com/Unwrapping-Names-Jesus-Advent-Devotional/dp/0802416721>

Questions Related to This Week's Message:

1. What is giving you hope for the future right now?
2. What images come to mind when you imagine God and Jesus as being "mighty"?
3. How does Jesus exhibit the power and strength of God in his earthly ministry in surprising or unexpected ways?
4. Where have you seen the power or might of God displayed recently?

Going Deeper:

I. The expectations for human leadership

Read the following excerpt from Walter Brueggemann in *Names for the Messiah*, pages 20-21:

The Hebrew Scriptures were written in a context where the king was in some sense regarded as "sacral," that is, as a carrier of some of the power that properly belonged to God and that transcended normal human power and authority. Thus, we may use the adjective 'divine' without drawing a firm conclusion about the noun "God."

The sacral identification of the king as a carrier of "divine power" indicated that the king bore responsibility for the prosperity of the entire realm that would be marked by *shalom*. Thus, an effective king would assure that his realm would be marked by victory war, by success in economics, by productivity in agriculture and by justice in social relations.

The biblical requirements of Israel, moreover, provided that the king must practice economic justice toward the poor and needy... But even with this royal performance, the gift of blessing is not in the power of the king; it is in the hand of God who "alone does wondrous things" (Psalm 72:18-19).

Now read Psalm 72. *This psalm is considered a royal psalm written by David that expressed his, and the people's, hopes for the reign of Solomon. It reads almost like a prayer to God for who this king will be and is another example in scripture that reveals the people's hopes and expectations for their human kings.*

1. Based on the words written here, what are some of the things the king will be expected to do?
2. What language do you see in this psalm that reflects the expectations articulated by Brueggemann in the above excerpt; that the king will have victory in war, success in economics, productivity agriculture, and justice in social relations?
3. What role does God seem to play in this psalm?
4. How do we balance these expectations and job description for the king with the end verses 18-19 that reveal "God alone does wondrous things"?
5. What temptations did the people of Israel face in seeing their king as associated with divine power, or imbued with power from God?
6. Do you think this is still tempting or dangerous to do today? Or, when have you seen others (or yourself) misplace your hope in human leaders?

II. For an experiential reading of Jesus calming the sea in Mark 4, consider participating in a lectio divina process together using this prompt from Lectio365 morning prayer from 10.12.21: <https://lectio365.24-7prayer.com/share/devotional/2021-10-12/day>

- How did you experience the story differently?
- How did Jesus speak to you through this story?
- Do you trust Jesus as your mighty God today?

III. To hear the interview of Father Richard Rohr by Dr. Kate Bowler on marveling at the mystery of God (referenced in the teaching), check-out: <https://katebowler.com/podcasts/richard-rohr-learning-to-hold-on-learning-to-let-go/>