

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: Good News of Great Joy

The theme of joy comes up over and over again in the Christmas story. People experienced joy in times of darkness, uncertainty, and challenges back then, and we can too still today. Join us this Advent as we explore the moments of deep joy found throughout the story of Christmas in Luke and discover ways to cultivate that joy today. In this series, we don't just want to talk about joy, we actually want to practice experiencing joy in community together. Make plans to join us for one of the many ways we hope to experience the joy of Christmas this year!

Message description:

My soul magnifies the Lord. In response to Elizabeth's blessing of Mary and Mary realizing what her child will mean, she praises God! She finds joy in praising God for his mighty acts of salvation in Jesus Christ by first looking back to what God has done for her in her humble estate and then looking forward with assurance and hope that God will accomplish what he has promised through Christ! Like Mary, we too can find joy in praising God as we look back at God's faithfulness in our lives and look forward with confidence and hope. Even in the in between times as we wait for the coming Kingdom, there is joy in the presence and praise of God.

Key Scriptures

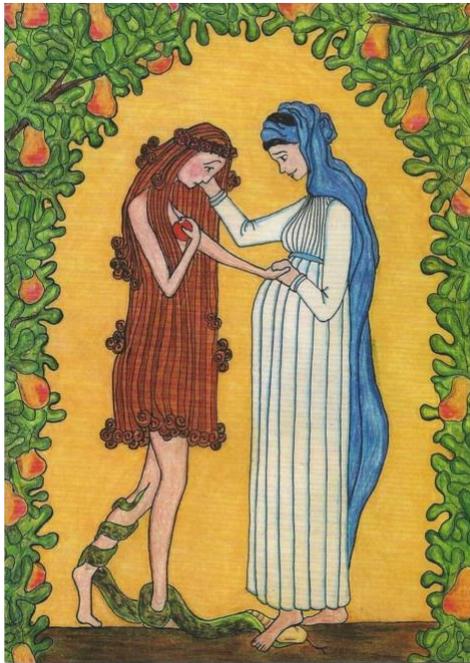
Luke 1:46-56

Questions Related to This Week's Message:

1. Where are you finding joy right now?
2. Share a glory sighting. Where have you experienced God's presence, seen God at work, or felt a "thin space" where you saw through to the glory of the Kingdom?
3. What can you look back and thank God for?
4. What are you looking forward to in confidence, faith, and hope?
5. How can this group help you expect to experience God, receive gifts with joy, and share the good news this Advent?

Going Deeper:

Contemplate the image below entitled "Mary and Eve" by Sr. Grace Remington, OCSO, of the Cistercian Sisters of the Mississippi Abbey.



- What do you notice about this drawing? From types of fruit to how each woman is depicted emotionally and physically- what stands out to you?
- What significance is there that this meeting seems to take place in a garden?
- Why do you think Mary is crushing the serpent wrapped around Eve's feet? What does the serpent represent for both women?
- How could this drawing capture the both/and or the "in-between" nature of the kingdom we find ourselves in? [maybe we like Eve get tripped up by sin, but Christ, the fruit of Mary's womb, remains our hope.]

For further reading on this drawing, check-out:

- <https://catholic-link.org/mary-and-eve/>
- <https://beadisciple.com/blog/mary-and-eve-a-new-way-of-looking-at-advent/>